



APS

STAMP COLLECTOR SURVEY 2007

Report Executive Summary



THE AMERICAN PHILATELIC SOCIETY

has over 40,000 members and is the largest nonprofit society in the world for stamp collectors. For more information on the APS, please visit www.stamps.org.

HART BUSINESS RESEARCH

is a leader in hobby and craft industry surveys and reports. For more information, please visit www.HartBusinessResearch.com.

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

The American Philatelic Society is pleased to present this executive summary to its members and the stamp collecting community. The goal of the 2007 APS survey is to provide information on how best to serve existing APS members, attract new members, and promote and enhance stamp collecting.

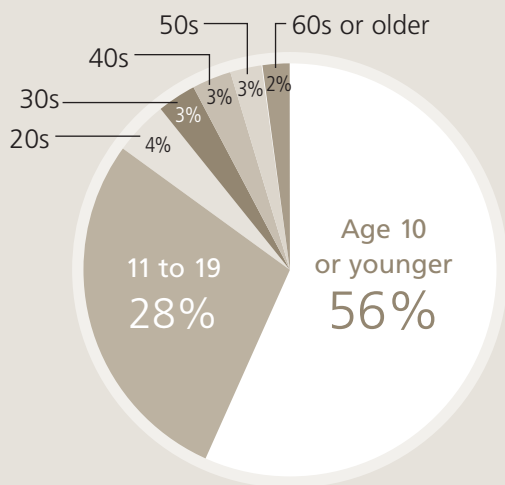
Hart Business Research conducted the study. The APS mailed surveys in June 2007 to 3,900 stamp collectors, including 1,000 current members, 900 former members, and 2,000 never-member stamp collectors (chapter and affiliate members and prospects). The response rate was 53% for members, 28% for former members, and 35% for never-members; this yielded over 1,550 responses. About 15% of respondents took the option to complete the survey online.

The Stamp Collector Life Cycle

●● Age when started collecting

Almost half (44%) of members began to collect stamps between the ages of 8 and 10. Other Hart research indicates this is a “golden age” for future enthusiasts to start a hobby. 29% of never-members started at this age. Other than this variation, the starting-age distribution is basically the same for members, former members, and non-members.

Portion of APS members who started stamp collecting at various ages:



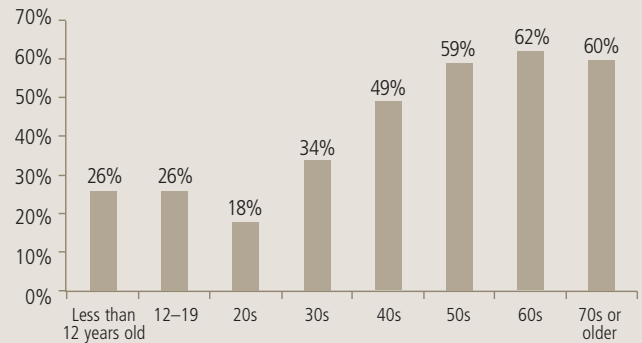
●● Who or what helped them get started

Relatives helped 58% of members and about 50% of non-members get started collecting stamps. Friends their age or dealers each helped about 20% of collectors, and adult friends or books each helped about 15%. Fewer than 10% of collectors cited each of these other sources: Scouts or after-school programs, club members, shows, or Web sites.

●● Life cycle from childhood to old age

APS members and those who have never been members have the highest participation in collecting when they are in their 50s and older. Former members, however, had the highest participation in collecting in their 50s and into their 60s and then taper off. This could indicate that those who leave the APS do so because they are doing less stamp collecting. About 40%–45% of philatelists stop the hobby for a while, usually in their 20s. Stamp collectors noted that a change in available time and/or money (due to family, work, school, or retirement) affected their collecting activities.

Percentage of APS members who did “a lot” of collecting at various ages:



●● Year when started collecting

1982–2007 comparison of average starting age for member stamp collecting:

	1982 survey	1989 survey	1996 survey	2007 survey
Average member age	44	52	56	63
Median age when started collecting	12	11	10	12
Inferred average year when started	1950	1948	1950	1956

●● Why they collect

They collect stamps to explore history and geography, appreciate artwork and beauty, stimulate their minds, relax, and basically have fun. Younger collectors are more interested in collecting stamps to explore history, and to relax.

Philatelic Spending

●● Annual spending amounts

The average member spent about twice as much as non-members. Member spending is at about the same level as in 1996 (not including inflation).

Percentage noting they spent various amounts on stamp collecting in the last 12 months:

(Include purchases, supplies, subscriptions, travel, insurance, etc. Medians are in bold.)

Spending level	Never members	Former members	Members
Over \$10,000	1%	3%	9%
\$5,001–\$10,000	3%	3%	6%
\$2,501–\$5,000	5%	8%	11%
\$1,001–\$2,500	15%	12%	15%
\$751–\$1,000	12%	8%	11%
\$501–\$750	10%	8%	9%
\$251–\$500	19%	14%	14%
\$101–\$250	21%	17%	13%
Less than \$100 or none	14%	26%	13%

●● Spending locales

Percentage of total amount of spending by each group, by retail outlet:

(Percentages in bold are largest outlets for each group.)

	Never members	Former members	Members
Retail store (not online)	8%	6%	8%
Mail, including mail-order, approvals, circuits, etc.	39%	26%	19%
Web, including online auctions	22%	27%	20%
Public auctions (not online)	12%	26%	29%
Show	11%	9%	15%
Post office	2%	1%	1%
Club or club auctions	0.4%	0.4%	0.0%
Other	6%	5%	7%

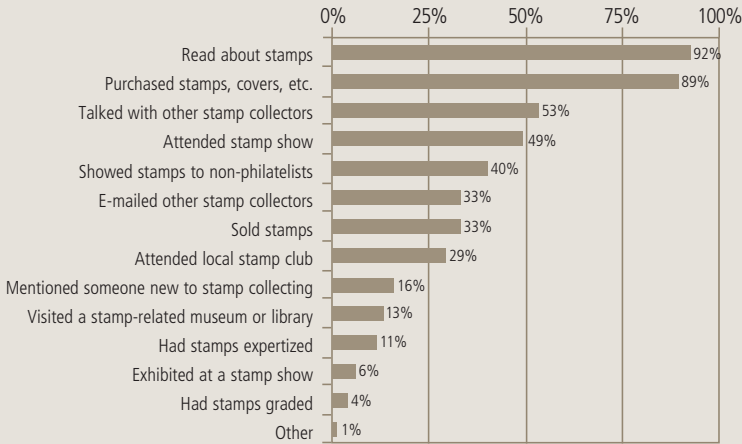
●● Online spending sites

The most popular Web site for purchasing stamps last year was eBay—two-thirds of members who bought stamps online used eBay auctions. One-quarter to one-third of philatelists used eBay Buy It Now, USPS.com, or other dealer Web sites. APS StampStore was used by 21% of members. MysticStamp.com was used by 30% of never-members and 10% of members.

Philatelic Activities

●● Overview

Percentages of APS members who did these activities in the last 12 months:



●● Philatelic experience levels

APS members are twice as likely as never-members to be experienced collectors. The percentage of experienced members hovered around 40% to 47% from 1982 to 1996, and then increased to 55% in 2007. The percentage of beginners has never been higher than 5% of APS members surveyed. About 10% of members have been dealers over the years.

●● Why they collect stamps

Percentage of collectors who mentioned these reasons why they collect stamps:

(This was an open-ended question, so the actual percentages would be much higher. Reasons were same for members and non-members.)

	Collectors	Collectors below age 50
History	25%	48%
Overall enjoyment	20%	7%
Fun	15%	14%
Artwork/Beauty of stamps—especially engraved ones	15%	12%
Geography—learn about countries & people	15%	12%
Interesting	10%	0%
Relaxing	10%	33%
Started young—did since kid	10%	5%
Educational	10%	12%
Investment	5%	10%
Hunt, discovery	5%	14%
Pass time, stay busy	5%	0%
Challenge and intellectual stimulation	5%	14%
Friendship, meet people	5%	0%

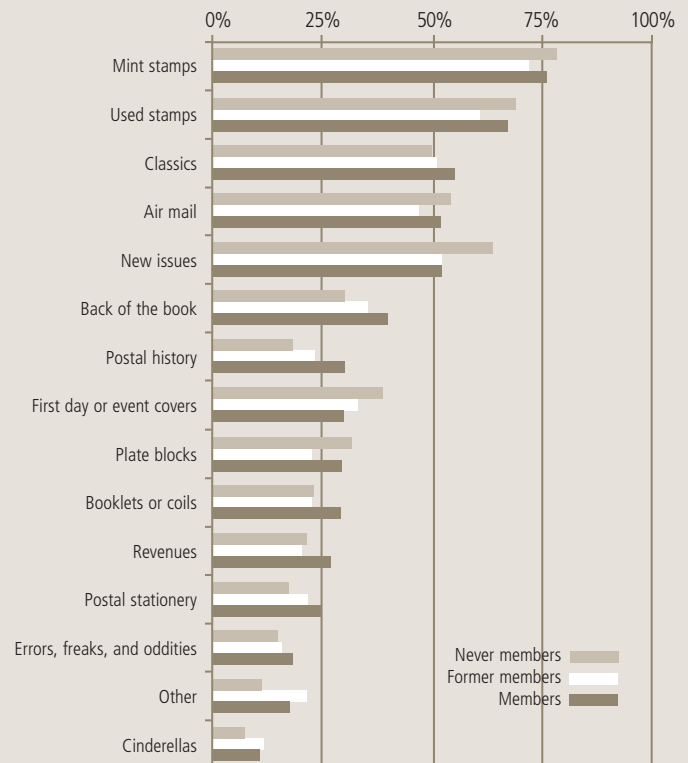
●● Collecting activities

Collecting by Country or Topic

About two-thirds of the survey respondents collect by country only, about 5% by topic only and about 30% by both country and topic. This did not differ significantly by membership status. The most popular topics were animals, ships, birds, trains, space, history, sports, flowers, art, and Disney. The most popular countries or regions were U.S.A., worldwide, Canada, and Great Britain.

Collecting by Kinds of Material

Percentages that collect these kinds of materials:



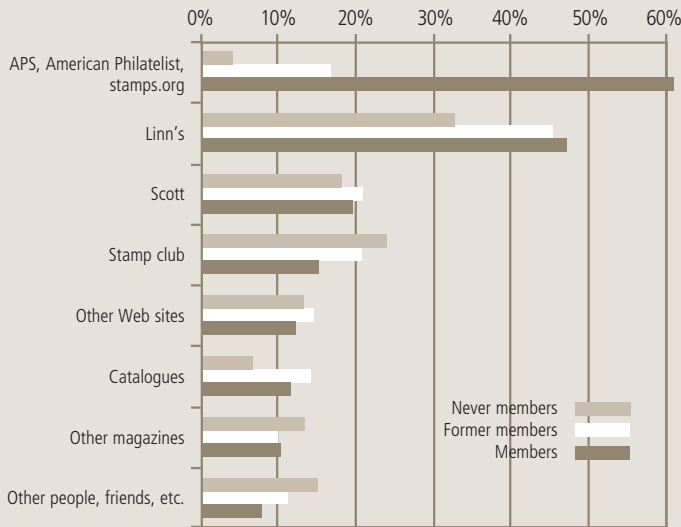
OTHER COLLECTING ACTIVITIES

About 60% of non-member stamp collectors and 45% of APS members collect coins or paper money. About one-third of philatelists (members and non-members) also collect books, postcards, and/or antiques.

●● Learning activities—favorite sources of learning and information

Percentage of each group that listed these as one of their three favorite sources of learning and information about stamps:

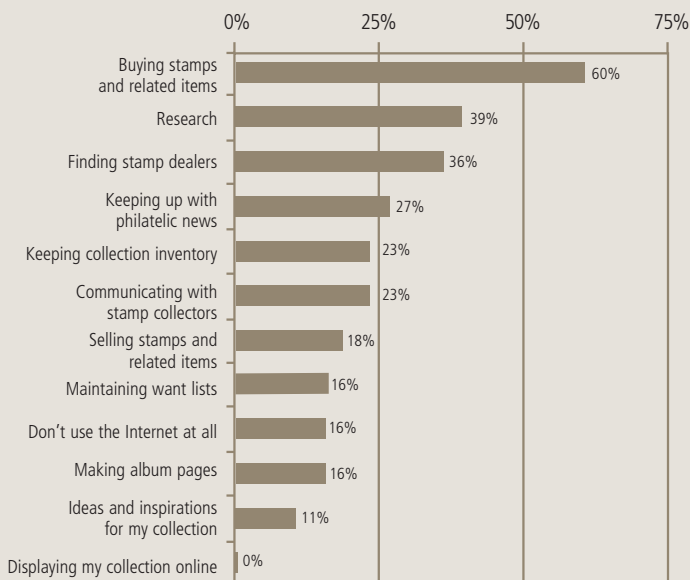
(Note that 5%–10% of each group also listed books, stamp dealers, shows, libraries, or Mystic.)



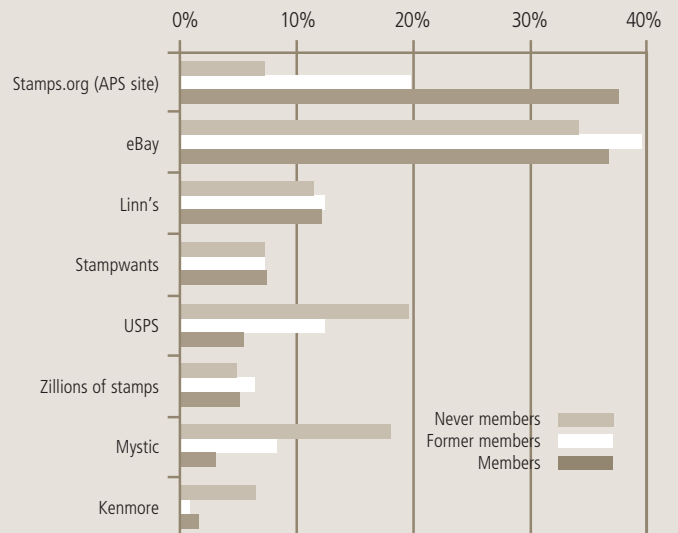
●● Online activities

80% of respondents indicated they have Internet access; about half of all collectors indicated they buy stamps over the Internet. Never-members and former members used the Web in the same ways as members.

Percentage of member Web users who used the Internet or their computer for these stamp-related interests:



Percentage of Web users in each group who visited the following sites regularly in the last 12 months:



●● Organizational activities

About 40% of APS members belong to at least one other national philatelic group

This percentage has not changed significantly from 1982 to 2007. One-third of members today also belong to a local stamp club; this fraction has been the same since 1982 as well.

APS Membership & Programs

●● Length of membership

Half of the APS members surveyed this year have been members for 20 years or more. This percentage has increased steadily since 1982, when just 9% had been members for 20+ years. The percentage who have been members for 2 years or less was 20% in 1982, shrank to 3% in 1996, and then increased back up to 9% in 2007. This year 16% of respondents were life members.

●● Why they join the APS

Most APS members joined because they wanted to learn more about stamps. The other major reason was to get *The American Philatelist* (most read it to keep up with what is going on in philately). Half the members joined because they wanted to support the hobby. These top three reasons are the same for members who joined in the last 2 years, 12 years ago, or 20 years ago.

●● Why they renew

These top 10 reasons why they renew are the same as why they joined in the first place, except learning is less important to established members.

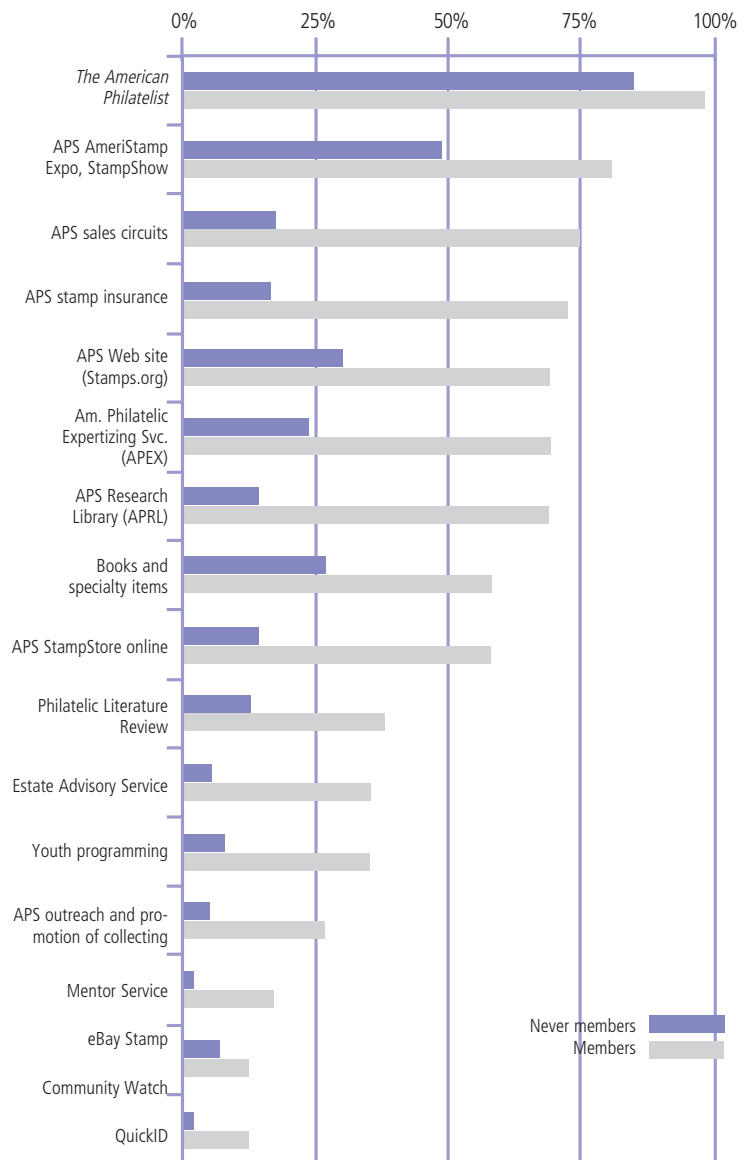
- #1 Magazine
- #2 Support stamp collecting
- #3 Know what is going on in the hobby
- #4 Information
- #5 Learning, gain knowledge
- #6 Buying or selling
- #7 Circuits
- #8 Habit
- #8 Life member
- #8 Reference
- #9 Be part of philately
- #10 Insurance

●● Why they *haven't* joined the APS

The main reason collectors haven't joined the APS is because they don't think there are sufficient benefits to justify the cost. They think mostly in terms of having a fixed budget for stamp collecting; if they get an APS membership, they then have \$45 less to spend on stamps. They also noted they haven't joined the APS because they haven't been invited.

●● Awareness of APS programs

Percentage of members and never members who have heard of these APS programs:

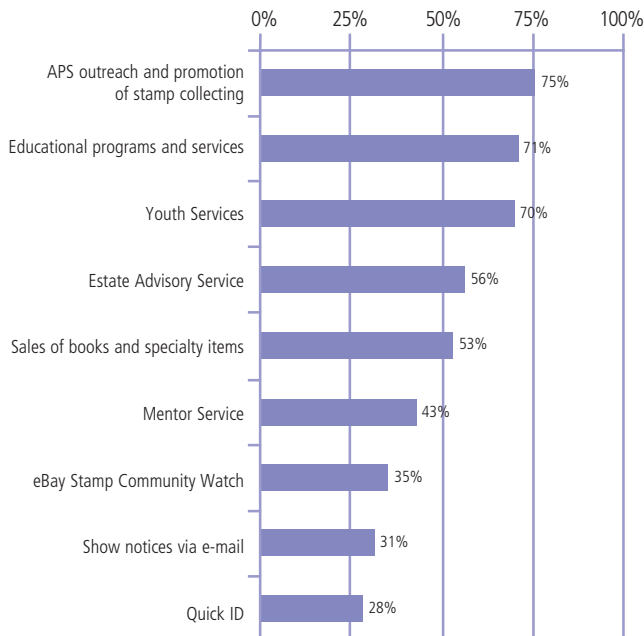


●● Quality ratings of APS programs

Members gave quality ratings (scale 1 poor to 5 excellent) which averaged above a 3.8 for every APS program listed; fewer than 15% of members rated any service a 1 or 2. The highest-rated services were *The American Philatelist*, APRL, and the stamp shows. The services receiving the fewest 5s were the StampStore and the APS Web site.

●● Importance of selected APS programs

Percentage of members who rated these programs a 4 or 5 regarding the importance of the APS offering them, on a scale of 1 (not at all important) to 5 (very important):



●● *The American Philatelist* magazine

The percentage of members who read *The AP* regularly is at a 25-year high. 90% look at the ads.

	2007	1996	1989	1982
Read most or nearly all	66%	54%	58%	58%

●● APS and other stamp shows

The percentage of APS members who have attended stamp shows increased from 1996 to 2007. In 1996, 25% of members noted they had *ever* attended sTaMpsSHOWS; in 2007 35% noted they attended APS shows sometime in the last 3 years. About 2/3 of members have attended stamp shows in the last 3 years.

	Never members	Former members	Members
Shows with exhibits (non-APS)	35%	38%	45%
Bourses	33%	36%	48%
APS shows (StampShow, AmeriStamp Expo)	21%	27%	35%
Other	8%	7%	7%
None	41%	38%	29%

Demographics

Note the core demographic for philately, men over age 45, is growing more than twice as fast as the U.S. population overall. (Source: 2005 U.S. Census)

Selected demographics for members and non-members:

	Never members	Former members	Members	U.S. Census Data, 2006
Average age	62	63	65	36
Median household income	\$50,000–\$75,000	\$50,000–\$75,000	\$75,000–\$100,000	\$48,000
Female	18%	14%	11%	51%
College graduates	52%	60%	73%	27%
Retired	50%	53%	53%	—
Work full-time for employer	29%	31%	31%	—
Have disability	14%	10%	6%	15%

Census Data from 2006 American Community Survey

● Member demographic changes from 1982 to 2007

APS members have gotten better-educated and older, but have lower average incomes. The percentage of APS members with college degrees has increased steadily from 65% in 1982 to 73% today. The percentage of APS members age 60 or older increased from 31% in 1982 to 70% today. The percentage of female APS members has not changed much, increasing from 9% in 1982 to 11% today. In 1989, 47% of members had household incomes of over \$100,000 (in today's dollars). Today, 34% of members have this income level. This decrease in income could be offset by greater assets, however, given that so many members now are retirees.



THE FUTURE OF PHILATELY

Today's stamp collector is wealthier, older, and better-educated than the average American. This relaxing and mind-stimulating hobby is a great fit with the millions of Baby Boomers who will retire in the next 20 years with time and money on their hands. The key is to get philately into their hands, too, and make them aware of how much the APS can enhance the hobby. This survey indicates the APS has the well-regarded services, excellent reputation, and membership size to ensure philately is there for older Americans as they become the defining demographic.