



Pew & Internet American Life PROJECT

PEW INTERNET PROJECT DATA MEMO

FROM: Lee Rainie, Director, Director, 202-296-0019
RE: Latest Internet tracking data
DATE: April 13, 2004

HIGHLIGHTS:

In our Internet tracking survey in February, we recorded our highest readings ever on the number of Internet users who are e-shoppers, the number who participate in online auctions, and the number of Americans who use computers. In addition, we got our first reading ever on wireless connectivity.

- 17% of Internet users have logged on using a wireless device. This is the first reading we have ever attempted on wireless connectivity. Members of Gen Y (those ages 18-27) are far and away the most likely to have used wireless devices – 28% have done so.
- 65% of Internet users have bought products online. This is the highest reading on e-shopping we have ever recorded and the growth has occurred across all demographic groups.
- 23% of U.S. Internet users have participated in online auctions. This is the highest reading on online auctions we have ever recorded. This online activity is still the province of men more than women, the relatively well-to-do, and those who have lots of online experience.
- 73% of American adults (those 18 and over) use computers. This is the highest computer-adoption rate we have ever measured. This file has a table of the basic demographics of computer users.
- 63% of American adults use the Internet – that translates to 128 million people. This file has a table of the basic demographics of Internet users.
- 55% of Internet users go online during a typical day.
- 53% of Internet users have six or more years of experience.

The results reported here come from a national phone survey conducted between February 3 and March 1, 2004. Some 2,204 adults (those 18 and older) were interviewed, of whom 1,371 were Internet users. The margin of error is plus or minus two points for the full sample and plus or minus three points for results drawn from the Internet user population.

The Pew Internet & American Life Project is a non-profit, non-partisan research organization funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts to examine the social impact of the Internet. It does not advocate any policy outcomes.

More material from the February survey

COMPUTER USE – NEW HIGH: 73%

73% of U.S. adults say they use a computer at work, at school, at home, or some other place. This is the highest reading ever found by the Pew Internet & American Life Project.

Computer penetration demographics <i>% of U.S. adults in each group who use computers</i>	
Men	73%
Women	72%
Generation	
Gen Y (ages 18-27)	85%
Gen X (ages 28-39)	87%
Trailing Boomers (ages 40-49)	84%
Leading Boomers (ages 50-58)	76%
Matures (ages 59-68)	57%
After work (ages 69+)	24%
Race and ethnicity	
Whites	73%
Blacks	62%
Hispanics (English speaking)	75%
Household income	
<\$30,000	55%
\$30,000-\$49,999	82%
\$50,000-\$74,999	92%
\$75,000+	93%
Community type	
Urban	75%
Suburban	76%
Rural	61%
Educational attainment	
Less than high school	39%
High school graduate	67%
Some college courses	84%
College graduate/graduate degree	91%

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project February 2004 Tracking Survey. Feb. 3- March 1, 2004. N=2,204. Margin of error is ±2%.

INTERNET PENETRATION

63% of U.S. adults use the Internet. That amounts to 128 million people. There has been some modest growth in the Internet population since the end of 2003, when roughly 60% of adults said they were Internet users.

Internet penetration demographics <i>% of U.S. adults in each group who use the Internet</i>	
Men	65%
Women	61%
Generation	
Gen Y (ages 18-27)	78%
Gen X (ages 28-39)	78%
Trailing Boomers (ages 40-49)	71%
Leading Boomers (ages 50-58)	62%
Matures (ages 59-68)	47%
After work (ages 69+)	17%
Race and ethnicity	
Whites	64%
Blacks	46%
Hispanics (English speaking)	63%
Household income	
<\$30,000	41%
\$30,000-\$49,999	69%
\$50,000-\$74,999	86%
\$75,000+	89%
Community type	
Urban	65%
Suburban	67%
Rural	48%
Educational attainment	
Less than high school	24%
High school graduate	54%
Some college courses	78%
College graduate/graduate degree	85%

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project February 2004 Tracking Survey. Feb. 3- March 1, 2004. N=2,204. Margin of error is $\pm 2\%$.

A TYPICAL DAY ONLINE

55% of the 128 million Americans who describe themselves as Internet users go online during a typical day. Online whites are substantially more likely than online blacks to go online during a typical day – 59% of wired whites are online on that average day, compared to 35% of wired blacks. Hispanics fall in between: 41% of wired Latinos go online during a typical day. Generally, the more education, the more household income, the more Internet experience a person has, the more likely it is that he or she will be online during a typical day.

FREQUENCY OF USE OF THE INTERNET

64% of Internet users say they go online at least once a day

- 42% of Internet users say they go online several times a day
- 22% say they go online once a day

14% say they go online 3-5 times a week

11% say they go online 1-2 times a week

4% say they go online every few weeks

2% say they go online less often than that

4% did not answer the question

ONLINE EXPERIENCE

More than half of online Americans (53%) have used the Internet for six years or longer. This large veteran cohort is the most likely to use the Internet frequently, to have broadband connections, to do every type of online activity. Experience is one of the strongest indicators of a person's online behavior and his attitudes about the relative importance of the Internet in his life.

HOW PEOPLE ACCESS THE INTERNET

90% of U.S. Internet users go online from home

50% of U.S. Internet users go online from work

(We did not ask it in this survey, but in the past we have found that 23% of Internet users go online from some place other than work or home, such as a school, library, friend's house, or cyber café.)

46% of U.S. Internet users go online exclusively from home

6% of U.S. Internet users go online exclusively from work

44% of U.S. Internet users go online from both home and work

WIRELESS CONNECTIVITY

17% of Internet users have logged on using a wireless device. This is the first reading we have ever gotten on this subject and it means that more than 21 million people have used wireless connections to access the Internet.

Members of Gen Y with their Internet-connected mobile phones and WiFi-enabled laptops are the most likely to have a wireless connection. Some 28% have logged on to the Internet this way.

As in the case of other technologies, those with resources and education are more likely than other Internet users to have gone online wirelessly.

INTERNET ACTIVITIES

A full accounting of our latest readings on Internet activities can be found at http://www.pewinternet.org/reports/chart.asp?img=Internet_Activities_3.22.04.htm (for the things that Internet users have ever done online) and http://www.pewinternet.org/reports/chart.asp?img=Daily_Activities_3.22.04.htm (for the things that the Internet users do on a typical day online).

In our February survey, these are the highlights:

- 65% of Internet users have bought products online. This is the highest reading we have ever recorded on e-shopping.

Below are some figures that show growth in online shopping in certain populations and a narrowing of the differences between groups of Internet users. In each case, the size of each population grew substantially in the intervening three years, so the higher percentages relate to even greater base line populations:

African-Americans

Percentage of online African-Americans who were e-shoppers in December 2000: 47%
Percentage who were e-shoppers in February 2004: 59%

Latinos

Percentage of online Latinos who were e-shoppers in December 2000: 41%
Percentage who were e-shoppers in Feb 2004: 63%

Senior Citizens

Percentage of online seniors (65 and older) who were e-shoppers in December 2000: 38%
Percentage who were e-shoppers in Feb 2004: 49%

- 23% of Internet users participate in online auctions. This is the highest reading we have ever recorded on Internet auction participation.
 - Online men (25%) are much more likely than online women (16%) to have participated in auctions.
 - Whites are more likely than minorities
 - Those living in high-income households and those with high levels of education are more likely than those with high school diplomas and those living in households with modest amounts of income

- Those with six or more years of Internet experience are the most likely to have participated in online auctions.
 - Members of Gen X are the most likely to have done auctions.
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- 78% of Internet users research products and services online.
 - 70% of Internet users get news online.
 - 51% of Internet users do work-related research online, not including their use of email.
 - 43% of Internet users check sports scores and information online.
 - 12% of Internet users buy or sell stocks, mutual funds, or bonds online.