

# How Women and Men Use the Internet

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**Women are catching up to men in most measures of online life. Men like the internet for the experiences it offers, while women like it for the human connections it promotes**

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# Summary of Findings

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## **Shifting internet demographics: Women have caught up to men online. Younger women and black women outpace their male peers. Older women lag dramatically.**

The internet was dominated by men in its early days, but by 2000 and continuing on to today, the user population has been evenly divided between men and women. Further, the proportion of women online is nearly equal to that of men. A review of the findings of the Pew Internet & American Life surveys between March 2000 and September 2005 highlights some particularly interesting trends and correlations: Young women are more likely to be online than young men. And black women have surged online in the last three years.

- Pew Internet Project surveys between January and June in 2005 show that 67% of the adult American population goes online, including 68% of men and 66% of women. But women slightly outnumber men in the internet population because they make up a greater share of the overall U.S. population.
- Younger women are more likely than younger men to be online; older men are more likely than older women to be online: 86% of women ages 18-29 are online, compared with 80% of men that age. On the other hand, 34% of men 65 and older use the internet, compared with 21% of women that age.
- Black women are more likely than are black men to be online: 60% of black women are internet users compared with 50% of black men.
- Unmarried men are more likely than unmarried women to be internet users. 62% of unmarried men compared with 56% of unmarried women go online. Married women are slightly more likely than married men to be online. 75% of married women and 72% of married men go online.
- Men without children under age 18 are more likely than women without children under age 18 to be online. Some 61% of childless men compared with 57% of childless women go online. Men and women with minor children are equally likely to be online. Some 81% of men with children and 80% of women with children go online.

This Pew Internet & American Life Project report is based on the findings of a variety of tracking surveys on Americans' use of the Internet between March 2000 and September 2005. All numerical data was gathered through telephone interviews conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates.

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### **Patterns of internet use: Men are slightly more intense internet users than women.**

Various measures of intensity of internet use suggest men are slightly more engaged with their internet use than women.<sup>1</sup>

- On a typical day, wired men are more likely than wired women to go online: 61% of men and 57% of women go online on a typical day.
- Men go online more frequently than women. 44% of men go online at least several times a day, compared with 39% of women.
- Men are more likely than women to have high-speed connections at home. 52% of men and 48% of women have high-speed connections at home.
- Men and women are equally likely to access the internet from home. 89% of men and 87% of women use the internet at home.
- Men and women are equally likely to access the internet from work. Among internet users who work full-time or part-time, 65% of men and 66% of women use the internet at work.

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### **Online activities: Men are more likely than women to use the internet for many online activities, but women are catching up.**

Men and women are equally likely to go to the internet for a wide variety of activities, from getting travel information to doing banking to looking up phone numbers and addresses. Men go online in greater numbers than women for a vast, but scattered array of other activities. Women outpace men for a small number of activities, including the areas of health and medicine and religion.

At the same time, women are closing the gap with men. Comparing where internet users were in 2002 to where they are today:

- Compared with women, online men are more likely to use the internet to: check the weather, get news, get do-it-yourself information, check for sports information, get political information, get financial information, do job-related research, download software, listen to music, rate a product/person/service through an online reputation system, download music files, use a webcam, and take a class.
- Compared with men, online women are more likely to use the internet to: send and receive email, get maps and directions, look for health and medical information, use web sites to get support for health or personal problems, and get religious information.

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this report there are references to men and women. Under most circumstances those references specifically refer to men who use the internet and women who use the internet, rather than to all women and all men.

- The growth rate for women's participation in these online activities is greater than the growth rate for men: using government web sites, getting religious information, watching video clips or listening to audio clips, getting news and maps or directions, researching products

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### **Using the internet to communicate: More than men, women are enthusiastic online communicators and they use email in a more robust way.**

More women than men send and receive email, and they use it in a richer and more engaging way. Women are more likely than men to use email to write to friends and family about a variety of topics, from sharing news and worries to planning events to forward jokes and funny stories. Men and women both appreciate email for its efficiencies and convenience, but women are more likely to feel satisfied with the role of email in their lives, especially when it comes to nurturing their relationships.

In emailers' working life, women are more likely than men to value the positive effects of email for improving relationships, from expanding their circle of colleagues to encouraging teamwork. Women also value email for a kind of positive, water-cooler effect, which lightens the atmosphere of office life.

Men are more likely than women to participate in a big variety of interest groups, like fan clubs or community groups. Men and women both engage with such groups for the hard facts and news they learn online. Women place a higher value than men on what email does for the relationships within the group.

- Women send and receive email more than men. Some 94% of online women and 88% of online men use email.
- Women do more in personal emails with friends and family. More women than men write emails about news, worries, advice and planning.
- Women are more likely than men to value their email with friends, family, and work colleagues. Women say email improves relationship with friends, family, and colleagues more than men do, and that it improves the work climate as well.
- Men communicate online with more kinds of special interest groups.

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### **Using the internet for transactions: More men than women perform online transactions, although both share a rapidly growing enthusiasm for the internet's function as a tool of commerce.**

Men and women use the internet similarly for the many of the most standard kinds of transactions, from purchasing products to doing travel arrangements to banking. More men than women use the internet for some less predictable and even more risky transactions, such as doing auctions or trading stocks.

## Summary of Findings

Transactions represent some of the fastest-growing online activities among men and women alike, with participation in banking more than doubling over the last five years, and doing travel arrangements, auctions, and purchasing not far behind.

Both men and women value the internet for its famous speed and efficiency in making transactions easier.

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### **Using the internet to get information: Men pursue and consume information online more aggressively than women.**

Men look for information on a wider variety of topics and issues online than women do, from researching products to buy to getting information on their hobbies to looking for political news. Sometimes, men and women look for different kinds of information. After the events of September 11, men visited more websites to tell them about things that were happening; more women said the internet helped them find people they needed to reach.

As vehicles for finding information, search engines are extremely popular among both men and women. About 90% of men and women who go online use search engines, and about 40% use them on a typical day. Men and women generally use the same kinds of search strategies, using search engines most commonly, but also starting searches on familiar, proprietary websites or following recommended links.

Although men and women say equally that they find the information online that they are looking for, men are a lot more confident in themselves as searchers, and they are less overwhelmed by the glut of information that's out there.

- Men and women both use search engines heavily. 90% of online men and 91% of online women use search engines; 43% of those men and 39% of those women use them on an average day.
- Men and women are equally satisfied users of search engines, but men are more confident than women as searchers. Among searchers, 88% of men and 86% of women say they find the information they are looking for; 54% of men and 40% of women have self-confidence as searchers.
- Women feel the glut of online information more than men do. Although both men and women like having a lot of information available in their world, 24% of women feel its overload compared with 19% of men.

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### **Using the internet for entertainment: Men use the internet more than women as a destination for recreation.**

Men use the web for more kinds of entertainment and recreation than women do, with just a few exceptions. Women play games as much as men, they listen to audio clips and watch video clips, and they share files. But men pursue a host of other activities with greater enthusiasm.

- Men are more likely than women to engage in lighthearted activities online, such as pursuing their hobbies, participating in sports fantasy leagues, downloading music and videos, and remixing files, as well as more serious activities, such as reading for pleasure and taking informal classes.

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**Issues about gender and the internet: Men are more interested in technology than women, and they are also more tech savvy. Men value the internet for the breadth of experience it offers; women value it for enriching their relationships, but they're more concerned about its risks.**

The Pew Internet Project surveys show that compared with women, men are more interested in the world of technology and how their own gadgets and systems work. Men try more new things, from hardware to software. As a natural consequence, men are more adept at dealing in the tech world, from installing filters to troubleshooting repairs. And they are more confident in their roles as techies and geeks.

Men and women share an appreciation of what the internet does for their lives, particularly in making their lives more efficient and expanding their world of information. Men seem to value these strengths most in the context of the activities of their lives, from jobs to pastimes, while women seem to value them most in the context of the relationships with family, friends, colleagues, and communities.

Men and women share concerns about personal risks and dangers from being online, from privacy concerns to credit card theft to contracting computer viruses. But women have expressed more fears than men have about the internet being a vehicle for national and worldwide problems. These include general criminal use of the internet, child pornography, organized terrorism, and hacking into government information. For online chats and discussion groups, women's dramatic decline in participation rates coincided with increased public awareness about worrisome behavior in chat rooms.

- Men are significantly more likely than women to know the latest terms, from "RSS feed" to "phishing," and to have heard about the latest tech-related issues.
- Significantly more men than women maintain and fix their own computers.
- Men are more likely than women to try new gadgets and applications and software.
- Significantly more men are more confident in themselves as searchers and geeks.
- Women are more concerned than men about general criminal use of the internet.

## Summary of Findings

<b>How Women and Men Use the Internet: Summary of Findings at a Glance</b>
Shifting internet demographics: Women have caught up to men in being online. Younger women and black women outpace their male peers. Older women lag dramatically.
Patterns of internet use: Men are slightly more intense internet users than women.
Online activities: Men are more likely than women to use the internet for many online activities, but women are catching up.
Using the internet to communicate: More than men, women are enthusiastic online communicators and they use email more a more robust way.
Using the internet for transactions: More men than women perform online transactions, although both share a rapidly growing enthusiasm for the internet's function as a tool of commerce.
Using the internet to get information: Men pursue and consume information online more aggressively than women.
Using the internet for entertainment: Men use the internet more than women as a destination for recreation.
Issues about gender and the internet: Men are more interested in technology than women, and they are also more tech savvy. Men value the internet for the breadth of experience it offers; women value it for enriching their relationships, but are more concerned about its risks.
Source: Deborah Fallows, <i>How Women and Men Use the Internet</i> . Washington, DC: Pew Internet & American Life Project, December 28, 2005.

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About the Pew Internet & American Life Project: The Pew Internet Project is a nonprofit, non-partisan initiative of the Pew Research Center explores the impact of the internet on children, families, communities, the work place, schools, health care, and civic/political life. The Project aims to be an authoritative source for timely information on the internet's growth and societal impact. Support for the project is provided by The Pew Charitable Trusts. The project's Web site: [www.pewinternet.org](http://www.pewinternet.org)

About Princeton Survey Research Associates International: PSRAI conducted the survey that is covered in this report. It is an independent research company specializing in social and policy work. The firm designs, conducts, and analyzes surveys worldwide. Its expertise also includes qualitative research and content analysis. With offices in Princeton, New Jersey, and Washington, D.C., PSRAI serves the needs of clients around the nation and the world. The firm can be reached at 911 Commons Way, Princeton, NJ 08540, by telephone at 609-924-9204, by fax at 609-924-7499, or by email at: [ResearchNJ@PSRA.com](mailto:ResearchNJ@PSRA.com)

# Part 1.

## Introduction

Over the last six years, the Pew Internet Project has asked tens of thousands of people thousands of questions about the internet. We have measured internet users' online behavior, we have probed their awareness and attitudes about computers and the internet, and we have gathered impressions of how the internet fits into social lives, work lives, civic and personal lives. In this report we compare and contrast how men and women have answered our questions.

Beyond addressing the measurable commonalities and differences of what men and women do online and how they engage with the internet, we also wanted to see how and where the internet was important to men and women and how they used it to change or improve their lives.

If the starting point is clear – that there are things so attractive or compelling about the internet to equally draw and keep men and women there – the rest is less clear. Men and women share an appreciation of many obvious appeals of the internet: its efficiencies and time savings; its ease for communicating; its open door to a limitless world of information; its opportunities for fun and relaxation.

There are other areas where men and women lean in different directions: their varying levels of engagement with the world of technology; their different inclinations toward a more open versus a more controlled online environment; their divergent priorities for using the internet to cultivate experiences versus relationships. Usually, these leanings seem to reflect familiar gender<sup>2</sup> differences in offline life, but sometimes they don't.

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<sup>2</sup> Academic discussions of the definitions of the words “gender” and “sex” present the difference as sociological /cultural vs. biological. For the purpose of this report, we are generally, but not strictly adhering to that distinction.

## Part 2.

### Demographics

Men, especially young, white, educated, and fairly affluent men, were the earliest adopters of the internet. Surveys by the Pew Research Center for The People & The Press in 1995 showed that about 20% of American adults used the internet and the online population was 58% male. By March 2000, the internet population had grown to 46% of the American adult population and internet users were evenly divided between men and women, although the proportion of men and women who went online was not.

In the first nationwide poll conducted by the Pew Internet & American Life Project in March 2000, significantly more men, 49%, than women, 44%, were internet users. Over the years, the proportion of men and proportion of women who went online drew closer, and by 2005, they were almost equal. Some 68% of men and 66% of women are now internet users, with no statistically significant difference between the groups.

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#### **Men and women are equally likely to go online.**

In the following demographic section of the report, the data come not from individual surveys, but instead have been aggregated from all surveys conducted in 2002 and through June 2005. The total number of respondents polled from 2002 was 14,416 and for 2005 was 6,403.

In 2002, a slightly higher proportion of men, 61%, were online than women, 57%. Though the difference was not large, it was statistically significant. It is important to note, though, that there were actually slightly more women online than men in 2002. There are more women than men in the country, so the smaller proportion of women using the internet still yielded a larger overall number of female internet users than male internet users.

By 2005, men and women were equally likely to be online, including 68% of men and 66% women. And it was still the case that the absolute number of women online slightly exceeded the number of men.

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#### **Younger women and older men more likely go online.**

There are significant differences within groups at each end of the age spectrum: more younger women, age 18 – 29, go online than younger men, and conversely, more older men, over age 65, than older women.

## Part 2. Demographics

Percentage of men and women who go online		
	% Men	% Women
<b>Online overall</b>	68	66
<b>Age in years</b>		
18 – 29	80	86*
30 – 49	76	79
50 – 64	63	66
65 and older	34*	21
<b>Education</b>		
No high school diploma	32	27
High school	58	56
Some College	79	79
College grad or graduate degree	89	89
<b>Race</b>		
White	70*	67
Hispanic	67	66
Black	50	60*
Other	72	66
<b>Annual household income</b>		
< \$30,000	49	48
\$30,000 – \$50,000	66	76*
\$50,000 – \$75,000	84	87
> \$75,000	90	95*
<b>Marital status</b>		
Married	72	75
Not married	62*	56
<b>Parental status</b>		
Parent (of child under 18)	81	80
Non-parent (of child under 18)	61*	57

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project, for all surveys for 2005. N=6,403. Margin of error±2%.

\* Represents statistically significant difference

These data suggest an interesting future possibility that the percentage of women who go online will continue to approach and even surpass that of men as the younger cohort of women ages.

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### **White men outnumber white women online, while black women have surged online to outnumber black men.**

When it comes to sex differences, there are also significant differences within the races. In 2005, more white men, 70%, than white women, 67%, were online. The same was true in 2002, when 62% of white men and 58% of white women were online. White women increased their online presence 16% during the last three years, compared with 13% for white men.

Most strikingly, more black women, 60%, are online than black men, 50%. Over the last three years, 30% more black women have surged online, increasing from 46% in 2002. During that same time, the number of black men increased from 48% to 50%, for an increase of just 4%.

Also during this time, English-speaking Hispanic men and women both increased their online presence in nearly lockstep. The number of English-speaking Hispanic women has increased from 56% to 66%, a rise of 18%. English-speaking Hispanic men increased their online presence from 59% to 67%, for a rise of 14%.

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### **The percentage of both men and women who go online increases with the amount of household income.**

In 2005, about half of both men and women who earn less than \$30,000 per year go online. The percentages increase at every higher income level, and do so somewhat more so for online women than men.

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### **For both men and women, married people are more likely to be internet users than unmarried people. Among those who are unmarried, men are more likely than women to be online.**

In 2005, 75% of women who are married or living-as-married are online, compared with 56% of single women. Likewise, 72% of similarly-attached men are online, compared with 62% of single men.<sup>3</sup>

While these married or living-as-married men and women are about equally likely to be online, the unmarried women, at 56%, are somewhat less likely than unmarried men, at 62%, to be online.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Overall, married people are more likely than unmarried people to be online, at a 10% level of statistical certainty.

<sup>4</sup> Other factors in our data probably drive this difference as well. For example, women report lower income levels (which correlate with lower online penetration rates) than men. And age, where older (often unmarried) women have among the lowest internet penetration rates recorded.

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### **Parents are more likely to be online than nonparents. Among nonparents, men are more likely than women to be online.**

In 2005, both men and women who have children under age 18 are significantly more likely than the rest of adult Americans to go online. There is a dramatic 80% online rate for both mothers and fathers, compared with about a 60% rate for others.

Among adult Americans who have no children under age 18, men, at 61%, are more likely than women, 57%, to go online.

## Part 3.

### Patterns of internet use: The where, when, and how much of men's and women's internet use

Various measures of intensity of internet use suggest men are slightly more engaged with their lives online than women. Measures of overall time spent online, frequency of going online, and likelihood to go online on any given day are all stronger for men than women. More men also have fast internet access, presumably allowing them more productive time online with less waiting.<sup>5</sup>

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#### Overall, men spend slightly more time online than women.

On a typical day in 2005, 61% of men and 57% of women went online. Predictably, use of the internet on a typical day declines as people grow older; younger users are more likely to go online on a typical day. Men and women follow this pattern, with the surprising exception of the youngest men. In aggregate figures from 2005, some 57% of men ages 18 – 29 go online on an average day, fewer than the 60% of the youngest women and also fewer than the 65% of men ages 30 - 49 and 61% of men, ages 50 – 64.

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#### Men go online more frequently than women.

In 2005, more wired men, 44%, go online several times a day than women, 39%. About a fifth of both men and women go online once a day. Significantly more women go online less frequently.

Among the most frequent users, those who go online several times a day, the difference between sexes flattens the younger the cohort is. Among those over age 65, 31% of men and 21% of women go online at least several times a day. The most frequent users among those ages 50 – 65 include 48% of men and 38% of women. The gap between men and women closes for those under age 50, and the differences are no longer significant. Of those ages 30 – 49, the most frequent users include 47% of men and 42% of women. And among the youngest users, age 18 – 29, it includes 40% of men and 38%

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<sup>5</sup> Regression analyses done on some individual surveys suggest that for some variables measuring of intensity of use – for example the likelihood to go online on any given day, for which men are slightly significantly more likely than women – sex was not a determining factor, while age and access speed were. That is, broadband access was a positive predictor of likelihood to go online on a given day, and increase in age was a negative predictor. The regression analyses done were not comprehensive and the results were not consistent, so there is a need to do more before saying anything conclusive. Furthermore, it seems likely that as more women get broadband access, which they likely will, women will make up the small differences from men in their intensity of use. It further seems likely that over time, as older women (who are markedly less intense as users) graduate out of the online population, this will also lead women to close the gap and as a result, age will no longer be a determining factor of intensity of use.

### **Part 3. Patterns of Internet Use: The where, when, and how much of men's and women's internet use**

of women. Data from teen users collected in November 2004, pushes this one step further: 24% of both girls and boys generally go online several times a day.

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#### **Broadband users log on more frequently, and men more than women.**

Broadband users go online more frequently than dial-up users, but the distinction between sexes remain. Among broadband users, significantly more men, 59%, than women, 53%, go online several times a day.

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#### **White men log on more frequently than white women and non-white men.**

White men are significantly more likely to be most frequent users than most other groups. White men, 46%, use the internet at least several times a day compared with white women, 39%; to black men, 34%, or English-speaking Hispanic men, 33%. They log on more than black women, 35%, and English-speaking Hispanic women, 40%, although not significantly so.

There are no significant differences between men and women among blacks or English-speaking Hispanics for any measure of frequency.

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#### **Men and women are equally likely to access the internet from home, although men do it more often.**

In 2005, 89% of men and 87% of women went online from home. Further, online patterns at home mirror online patterns overall: Men log on more frequently than women, and they are more likely to go online on an average day.

In significant numbers, more men, 31%, than women, 26%, log on from home at least several times a day; more women than men log on less than daily; and on a typical day, more men, 50%, than women 44%, were likely to go online from home.



### Part 3. Patterns of Internet Use: The where, when, and how much of men's and women's internet use

**Men and women are equally likely to log on from work.**

<b>Measures of intensity of internet use by sex</b>			
<b>Time online</b>	<b>% of online men</b>	<b>% of online women</b>	<b>Date of PIP survey</b>
More than an hour during a typical day's sessions	50	45	Sep 05
About an hour	20	24	Sep 05
Up to one hour	30	31	Sep 05
<b>Frequency of logging on</b>			
Several times/day	44*	39	All 05
Daily	21	22	All 05
1 – 5 times/week	23	28*	All 05
Every few wks or less	7	8	All 05
<b>Online on a typical day</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>All 05</b>
<b>Log on from home</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>All 05</b>
<b>Along workers, log on from work</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>All 05</b>
<b>Type of Connection</b>			
High-speed at work	78*	69	All 05
High-speed at home	52*	48	All 05
Dial-up at home	45	49	All 05
Dial-up at work	13	12	All 05
Don't know what kind of access is used at work	6	16*	All 05

\* indicates a statistically significant difference

Among those internet users who work full-time or part-time, equal numbers of men, 65%, and women, 66%, log on from work.

Among those who log on from work most often, at least several times a day, there were significantly more men, 56%, than women, 49%. Men and women logged on from work daily in equal numbers, 19%. More women, 31%, than men, 24%, logged on at work less often than once a day.

On a typical day, men and women who go online at work are equally likely to do so.

### Part 3. Patterns of Internet Use: The where, when, and how much of men's and women's internet use

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#### Men are more likely to have high-speed connections.

In 2005, more men, 52%, than women, 48%, say they have high speed internet connections at their homes, a difference that is small but statistically significant. These numbers are up dramatically from 2002, when 26% of men and 20% of women said they have high speed connections at home.

At work, a greater overall number of users, 74%, say they have high speed connections, although 11% said they either don't know the answer, or refused to answer.<sup>6</sup> Significantly more men, 78%, than women 69% said they have high speed connections at work. However, a very large 16% of women, compared with 6% of men, said they didn't know the answer or refused to answer the question.

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<sup>6</sup> Generally, the percentage of respondents who answer "don't know" or who refuse to answer a question will be about 1 – 3%. For this question, the percentage is very high. As will be seen later in the report, we have in various other surveys asked about technological familiarity, and have found that women are less likely than men to be knowledgeable about many issues, including their access speed. That suggests that in this case, many women simply don't know about their access speed at work, and it stands to reason that many of those do actually have high speed connections, which would, if reported, close the gap with men.

## Part 4.

### Activities and trends: The different activities men and women do online and how their participation rates are changing

The Pew Internet Project has been tracking internet users' participation in online activities since we began polling in March 2000. We have asked about nearly 94 web activities over that time. Two of them, email use and news gathering, have been included in every survey. We have polled other activities intermittently, from about 6 to more than a dozen times. We have added new activities along the way, as uses of the internet have evolved.

The activity tracking question is worded this way:

Please tell me if you ever do any of the following when you go online: Do you ever \_\_\_\_\_ (send or read email; get news online; look for health or medical information; etc...)

While men and women both use the internet to do lots of their activities, men do more of them than women. There are some variances that are worth noting.

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#### **Men and women are equally likely to do many online activities.**

Men and women are about equally likely to engage in many of the activities we have polled. They include: using a search engine, getting information on travel, jobs, places to live; finding phone numbers, addresses; doing research for training or school, or finding information from the government; buying products and groceries online, making travel plans or purchases; banking online, giving to charity, paying bills, although men have been leading the latter lately.

Both men and women do instant messaging, and exchange invitations. Men and women are about equally likely to go online to listen to music, and watch videos. Sharing files has a more volatile history. First men did this more often, and now women do. Finally, men and women are equally likely to go online for no particular reason and to play online games.

**Part 4. Activities and trends: The different activities men and women do online and how their participation rates are changing**

<b>Online activities done by men and women equally</b>			
<b>Activity</b>	<b>% of online men</b>	<b>% of online women</b>	<b>Date of PIP survey</b>
Use a search engine	90	91	Sep 05
Get info on hobbies	80	75	Nov 04
Get travel info	74	71	Jun 04
Surf the web for fun	70	63	Nov 04
Buy a product	68	66	Jun 05
Buy or make travel reservations	61	65	Sep 05
Get political campaign news	60	56	Nov 04
Research for school/training	59	55	Jan 05
Watch video/listen audio	56	57	Nov 04
Visit a government website	55	54	Nov 04
Look up phone/addresses	53	55	Feb 04
Get Info on a job	46	42	Jan 05
Take a virtual tour	45	46	Nov 04
Get info on a college	44	47	Jan 05
Instant message	42	39	Mar 05
Do banking	41	41	Mar 05
Play online games	36	37	Jun 05
Get info on where to live	33	34	Jun 04
Get info on someone	29	28	Sep 05
Read a blog	29	25	Sep 05
Share files	25	28	Jun 05
Download computer games	22	19	Jun 05
Donate to charity	18	19	Sep 05
Send e invitation	11	13	Nov 04
Create a blog	11	8	Sep 05
Take class for credit	10	13	Jan 05
Use dating website	10	7	Jun 04
Order from spam	6	5	Feb 05
Play lottery or gamble	4	4	May 03

\* indicates a statistically significant difference

## Part 4. Activities and trends: The different activities men and women do online and how their participation rates are changing

<b>Online activities: Where men's and women's use of the internet differs</b>			
<b>Activities where women lead</b>	<b>% of online men</b>	<b>% of online women</b>	<b>Date of PIP survey</b>
Send email	88	94*	Sep 05
Get maps or directions	82	87*	Feb 04
Look for health and medical med info	58	74*	Dec 02
Get support for a medical issue or personal problem	50	66*	Nov 04
Get religious/spiritual info	25	34*	Nov 04
<b>Activities where men lead</b>			
Research product/service	82*	75	Mar 05
Check weather	82*	74	Nov 04
Get news	75*	69	Mar 05
Use do-it-yourself website	60*	50	Mar 05
Check sports information	59*	27	Feb 04
Get financial info	56*	33	Nov 04
Do job-related research	54*	48	Mar 05
Download a computer program	48*	31	Jun 05
Pay bills	42*	35	Jan 05
Listen to music at website	38*	29	Jun 04
Listen to radio broadcast	38*	20	Jun 04
Rate a product, service, person	33*	28	Sep 05
Download music files	30*	20	Jun 05
Do online auction	30*	18	Mar 05
Participate in chat room or discussion	24	20	Sep 05
Download video files	22*	13	Jun 05
Remix content	21*	15	Jan 05
Visit adult website	21*	5	Jun 05
Trade stocks, bonds, funds	20*	6	Nov 04
Use webcams	19*	13	Mar 05
Take class for personal enrichment	15*	11	Jan 05
Pay for digital content	14*	7	Jun 04

\* indicates a statistically significant difference

### Women lead online activities in some areas.

Women are significantly more likely to send and receive email, to search for maps and directions, and to get religious or spiritual information. Over time, women have consistently engaged more in health-related online activities. They are significantly more likely than men to look for general health and medical information, as well as

## Part 4. Activities and trends: The different activities men and women do online and how their participation rates are changing

information on specific diseases or medical conditions, treatments or procedures. They also are more likely to look for support groups to communicate with for diseases or conditions.

In November 2004, we polled users more extensively on a battery of specific health related activities. We found women were more likely to look for information on diet and nutrition, on how to quit smoking, and on mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, and stress. In some cases, men and women were about equally likely to do online research: to look for information on health insurance, a particular doctor or hospital, experimental treatments or medicines, environmental health hazards, immunizations and vaccinations, sexual health information, and problems with drugs and alcohol. In December 2002, women were also more likely to email with friends or family about health or medical issues.

Health topics searched for by internet users		
Topics	% of online men	% of online women
Specific disease or medical problem	60	71*
Certain medical treatment or procedure	46	57*
Diet, nutrition, vitamins, nutritional supplement	43	59*
Exercise or fitness	40	45
Prescription drugs or over-the-counter drugs	36	43
Health insurance	30	31
Alternative treatments or medicines	27	33
A particular doctor or hospital	27	30
Depression, anxiety, stress, mental health issues	19	26*
Experimental treatments or medicines	21	24
Environmental health hazards	18	18
Immunizations or vaccinations	15	17
Sexual health information	11	11
Medicare or Medicaid	9	13
Problems with alcohol or drugs	7	9
How to quit smoking	5	10*

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project November 2004 Survey. N=537. Margin of error is  $\pm 4\%$ . (\*) indicates statistically significant difference.

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### Men lead online activities in many areas.

## **Part 4. Activities and trends: The different activities men and women do online and how their participation rates are changing**

Men have traditionally been more likely than women to get news from the internet. They also are more likely to get information on sports, financials, and weather, where men have recently increased the spread.

More men than women do research online for their jobs and research products or services. Men are more likely to trade stocks online, to participate in online auctions. They participate more in chat rooms and discussion groups. They are more likely to look for hobby information, do-it-yourself websites, and they visit adult websites.

They download music, videos and games more than women, as well as listen to more music, and use webcams.

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### **Trends in participation in online activities.**

There are about 15 activities that have grown demonstrably in popularity since we began tracking them in 2000. For some, men and women both have increased their participation rates similarly; for most others, women have leapt forward.

Several activities have become more popular among both men and women. The runaway leader was online banking, where participation rates more than doubled, from 17% to 41%. The others include auctions, gathering political news, buying products and services, checking the weather, looking for health and medical information and also making or booking travel arrangements.

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### **Activities where growth has been greater for men.**

Men's participation rates increased more than women's for checking online sports scores, where they have always lead, and going online just to pass the time, where men grew 15% and women actually dropped by 2 points.

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### **Activities where growth has been greater for women.**

Women have gone online at faster rates to close the gap with men in getting information on government and in watching audio and video clips. They have grown to overtake men's participation rates in getting maps and directions. They also increased their lead in seeking religious information. They have narrowed the gaps with men in seeking general news and in researching products and services.

## Part 4. Activities and trends: The different activities men and women do online and how their participation rates are changing

### Activities with unusual volatility.

In one dramatic exception, participation rates have fallen, entirely due to women. The proportion of internet users who have participated in online chats and discussion groups dropped from 28% in 2000 to as low as 17% in 2005, entirely because of women's fall off in participation. The drop off occurred during the last few years coincided with increased awareness of and sensitivity to worrisome behavior in chat rooms.

<b>Women show more growth in many online activities than men in recent years</b>				
Activities with roughly equal growth rates	% increase in online men's participation	% increase in online women's participation	Dates of PIP surveys	% overall participation in this activity in most recent PIP survey
Banking	130	140	'00 – '05	41
Auctions	58	64	'00 – '05	24
Political news	46	40	'00 – '04	49
Buy products/services	40	43	'00 -'05	68
Weather	29	25	'00 – '05	78
Health and medical information	21	23	'00 – '02	66
Travel info	16	9	'00 – '04	73
<b>Where men's growth is greater than women's</b>				
Check sports	28	17	'00 – '04	42
Go online just to pass the time	15	-2	'00 – '04	66
<b>Where women's growth is greater than men's</b>				
Religion	32	48	'00 – '04	30
Government info	1	32	'00 – '04	54
Watch video/audio clips	10	30	'00 – '04	56
Getting news	14	25	'00 – '05	72
Maps and directions	5	13	'01 – '04	84
Research products/services	3	12	'00 – '05	78

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project Surveys 2000 - 2005.

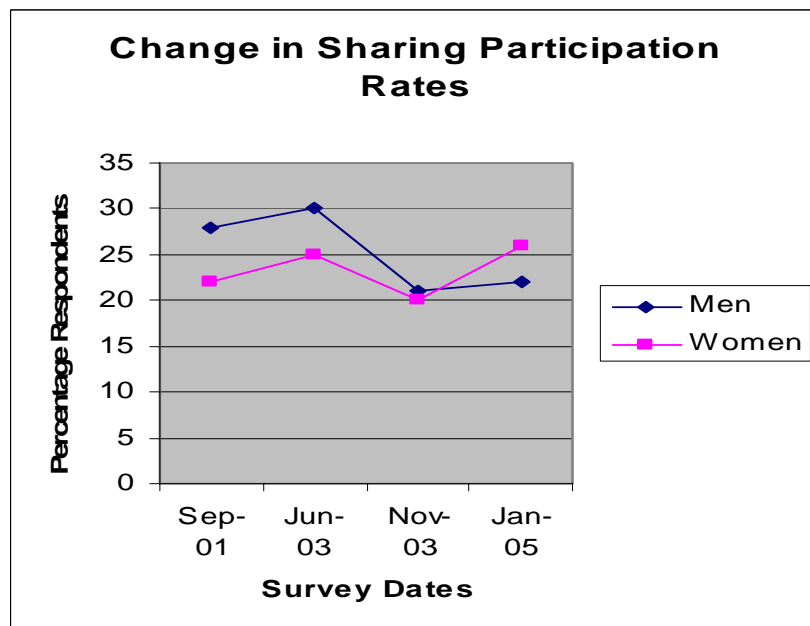
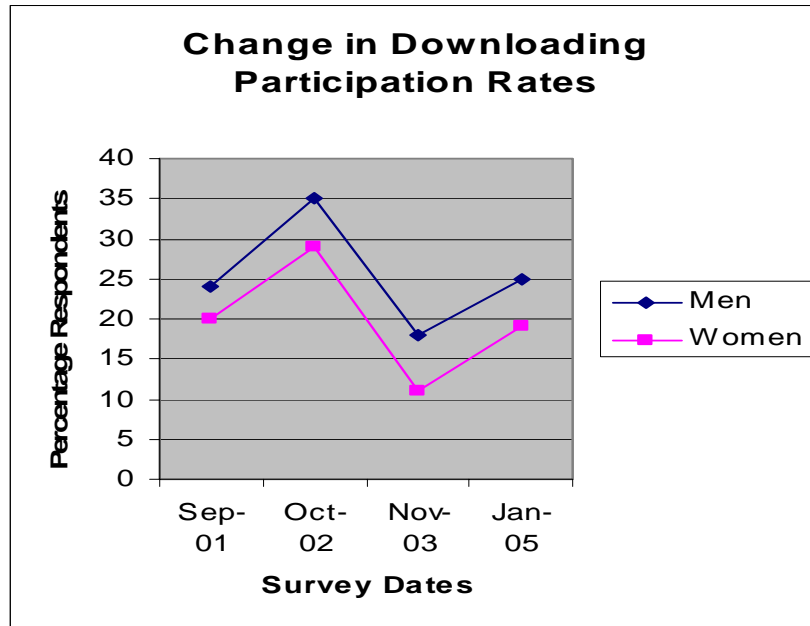
For two final activities, we have tracked much fluctuation: In September 2001, we asked both about downloading music files and sharing files with others. Some 26% of users overall downloaded music files and 25% shared files. Two years later, in November 2003, following publicity challenging the legality of downloading and sharing, numbers dropped dramatically. Downloading numbers, having risen as high as 32% in October of



#### Part 4. Activities and trends: The different activities men and women do online and how their participation rates are changing

2002, plummeted to 14% of users overall. Similarly for file sharing, having risen to as high as 28% overall, fell to 20% overall.

Our last measure, in January 2005, the numbers crept back up again to 22% overall for downloading and 24% for file sharing.



## Part 5.

# Functions of the internet: How men and women use it as a tool to communicate, transact, get information, and entertain themselves.

The Pew Internet Project has looked at how people use the internet in four major ways: to communicate, to gather information, to transact personal and professional business, and to entertain themselves.

### 1. Communications

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#### **Men and women communicate online differently.**

In principle, internet users have high regard for the internet as a tool of communication; 85% of both men and women say they consider the internet to be a good way to interact or communicate with others in their everyday lives.<sup>7</sup> But similarities end there. Men and women differ in their modes of online communication, in what they communicate about, and in how much they value their online communications.

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#### **Women are more voracious online communicators.**

Over the last 5 years, we have polled users about different forms of online communications, both through our regular tracking polls and through one-time modules on communications within topics as varied as health care, civic and community life, and email in the workplace.

Women have always been slightly more likely than men to use email and to send cards, greetings and invitations and are pulling ahead of men in instant messaging and text messaging on cell phones. Men are more likely to have communicated online in chats or discussion groups and by making voice calls by voice over internet protocol, or VOIP.

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<sup>7</sup> [http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP\\_Internet\\_and\\_Daily\\_Life.pdf](http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP_Internet_and_Daily_Life.pdf)

**Part 5. Functions of the internet: How men and women use it as a tool to communicate, transact, get information, and entertain themselves.**

<b>How men and women use the internet to communicate</b>			
	<b>% of online men</b>	<b>% of online women</b>	<b>Date of PIP survey</b>
Email	88	94*	Sep 05
Instant message	46	48	Sep 05
Greetings/invites	41	44	Dec 03
Text messaging	33	37	Sep 05
Chats or discuss.	24	20	Sep 05
Placing internet phone calls	9*	5	Jun 03

(\*) indicates statistically significant differences.

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**Email is for everyone.**

Email has always been the most popular application on the internet. Over 90% of internet users send and receive email. Since we began tracking email use in 2000, the number of men and women who do email has been about equal, with women sometimes taking a slight lead. Further, on an average day, just about the same number of men and women will access their email. As for volume on a typical day, men and women also say they receive about the same number of emails in both their work and personal accounts. But what goes into those emails and how the application is valued differs for men and women.

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**Women do more with personal email.**

In March 2001, we asked users about email habits with their most frequent email correspondents. Women proved to email about a wider variety of topics with both friends and family. They were more likely to correspond with the favored family member about getting together; to pass along some interesting non personal or personal news; to discuss worries as well as information about jobs or other activities; and to forward jokes or humorous stories.

From time to time we have asked about emailing with family for other reasons. In November 2002, significantly more women than men said they emailed with family about health or medical issues. In March 2003, significantly more women than men said they emailed with family about the likelihood of upcoming war in Iraq. Immediately after the events of September 11, 2001, more women than men said they emailed with family about news of terror attacks and their aftermath.

**Part 5. Functions of the internet: How men and women use it as a tool to communicate, transact, get information, and entertain themselves.**

<b>What men and women write about in their emails with friends and family</b>			
	<b>% of online men</b>	<b>% of online women</b>	<b>Date of PIP survey</b>
<b>Total who email with family</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>88*</b>	<b>Oct 01</b>
Personal news	80	86*	Mar 01
Non-personal news	76	87*	Mar 01
Jokes or funny stories	77	84*	Mar 01
News on job or activities	72	74	Mar 01
Advice seeking	50	61*	Mar 01
Getting together	34	39	Mar 01
Sept. 11 news	27	33	Oct 01
Worries	30	57*	Mar 01
Health information or news	20	27*	Nov 02
The Iraq war	11	18*	Mar 03
<b>Total who email with friends</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>Oct 01</b>
Non-personal news	88	84	Mar 01
Jokes or funny stories	86	83	Mar 01
News about user's job or activities	72	81*	Mar 01
Personal news	71	80*	Mar 01
Advice seeking	53	58	Mar 01
Getting together	48	52	Mar 01
Sept. 11 news	33	39	Oct 01
Worries	38	55*	Mar 01
Health information or news	16	26*	Nov 02
The Iraq war	17	23	Mar 03

(\*) indicates statistically significant difference

With the favorite friend, the picture was much the same: Women emailed more than men about getting together, to discuss worries, to pass along personal news and information about jobs or other activities. In two cases, men were more likely to email about topics with a favored friend: to pass along some interesting non personal news, and to forward jokes or humorous stories.

From time to time, we also asked users about emailing on various topics with friends. In November 2002, significantly more women than men said they emailed with friends about health or medical issues. In March 2003, more women than men said they emailed with friends about the possibility of upcoming war in Iraq. Immediately after the events of September 11, 2001, more women than men said they emailed with friends about the terror attacks.

## **Part 5. Functions of the internet: How men and women use it as a tool to communicate, transact, get information, and entertain themselves.**

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### **Women find emailing with friends and family both more useful and more valuable than men do.**

#### **Where email is useful**

In November 2001, significantly more women than men said emailing with family is very useful to them. Slightly more women than men said this is true for friends, as well.

Of the most important reasons they choose to email with family, both men and women say convenience, 30% for men and 27% for women, and speed, 29% for men and 30% for women. More women, 19%, than men, 12%, appreciate that email is inexpensive. And 12% of both men and women find it useful for attaching pictures or documents to the emails.

Both men and women say the most important reason they choose to email with friends is also for convenience, 39% each for men and women. That is followed by speed, 31% for men, compared with 30% for women, and that it's less expensive, 14% for women and 8% for men, and that they can attach pictures or documents, 11% for men and 9% for women.

#### **Where email is valuable**

We asked about some of the softer measures of the value of email. In March 2001, more women, 43%, than men, 33%, said that communicating by email has improved relationships with their family members. More women than men said email has brought them closer to their family, and that they have learned more about their family by using email.

**Part 5. Functions of the internet: How men and women use it as a tool to communicate, transact, get information, and entertain themselves.**

<b>Where men and women who email with friends and family find it useful and valuable</b>			
<b>With family</b>	<b>% of online men</b>	<b>% of online women</b>	<b>Date of PIP survey</b>
Useful	46	52*	Nov 01
Improve relationship with	33	43*	Mar 01
Brought close to	33	42*	Mar 01
Convenient	30	27	Nov 01
Fast	29	30	Nov 01
Learn more about	19	32*	Mar 01
Inexpensive	12	19*	Nov 01
Send attachments	12	12	Nov 01
<b>With friends</b>			
Useful	51	55	Nov 01
Improve relationship with	39	49*	Mar 01
Convenient	39	39	Nov 01
Brought closer to	36	49*	Mar 01
Fast	31	30	Nov 01
Learn more about	30	37	Mar 01
Send attachments	11	9	Nov 01
Inexpensive	8	14	Nov 01

(\*) indicates statistically significant difference.

With respect to their friends, some 49% of women say this improved relationships with friends compared with 39% of men. More women than men say email has brought them closer to their friends and that they have learned more about friends by using email.

In November 2001, significantly more women, 52%, than men 45% , said they would miss using email a lot if they could no longer use it.

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**Women find emailing at work more effective and valuable than men do.**

In May 2002, we asked users a battery of questions to compare email with phone or face-to-face contact for handling various tasks at work. More women than men named email as the most effective way to handle every work situation we queried: to make appointments; to edit or review documents; to ask questions about work issues; and to deal with problems with supervisors. Women were also consistently more likely than men to see email as a positive force in the workplace. More women than men said email improves teamwork in the workplace; expands their circle of colleagues at work; makes them more available to co-workers; helps them stay current with events at work; provides

**Part 5. Functions of the internet: How men and women use it as a tool to communicate, transact, get information, and entertain themselves.**

moments of relief from work; saves them time; and liberates them from being tied to the office.

Women were less likely than men to cite email’s negative effects. Women were less likely to say email makes it too easy for outsiders to reach them and makes them too accessible to others inside the company. Men and women were equally likely to consider email at work to be a source of stress, gossip, misunderstanding, and to say they can’t get away from it. Overall, more women, 20%, than men, 15%, give email in the workplace the highest praise, saying they “can’t live without it.”

<b>How men and women value their email in the workplace</b>		
	<b>% of online men</b>	<b>% of online women</b>
<b>Work emailers</b>	<b>55*</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Email most effective to ...</b>		
Edit documents	64	69
Make appointments	61	65
Ask questions	32	39*
Raise problem with boss	5	6
Deal with sensitive issues	4	4
<b>Email’s positive impact ...</b>		
Helps me stay current with events	50	55
Expand my contacts at work	48	52
Saves time	40	46
Helps me be available to co-workers	37	40
Improves teamwork	26	31*
Provides moments of relief	12	17*
Liberates me from office	8	12
<b>Email’s negative impact ...</b>		
Makes me too accessible inside work	21	17
Too accessible to outsiders	20*	13
Adds new stress	7	6
Is distracting	6	6
Can’t get away from work	6	5
Encourages gossip	6	4
Causes misunderstandings	5	5

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project April-May 2002. Margin of error is ±3%. (\*) indicates statistically significant difference.

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**Men use the internet more than women to communicate and discuss issues with special interest groups.**

**Part 5. Functions of the internet: How men and women use it as a tool to communicate, transact, get information, and entertain themselves.**

In February 2001, we found that 84% of internet users belonged to some kind of online group or organization and that many of them had joined those groups *after* they had gotten internet access. In that survey there were some differences between men and women and the kinds of groups to which they belonged. More men said they went to the internet to communicate with or get information from a variety of special interest groups: trade and professional groups; hobby or interest groups; fan groups for a sport or sports team; groups for a sport team they participate in; lifestyle groups; groups for those who share personal beliefs; and political groups. For a number of other groups, men and women responded equally: entertainment fan groups; local or community groups; religious, cultural or ethnic groups; and labor unions. More women said they went to support groups for medical or personal situations.

<b>The kinds of online groups and other communities of interest that wired men and women belong to</b>		
	<b>% of online men who belong to this kind of group</b>	<b>% of online women who belong to this kind of group</b>
Trade or professional	58*	42
Hobby	57*	44
Sports fan	38*	19
Pop culture fan	31	30
Lifestyle	31*	24
Community organization	29	29
Political	27*	17
Groups that shared their personal beliefs	26*	21
Groups that offered support on medical issues or personal problems	25	30*
Sports team participant	25*	15
Religious	22	19
Cultural or ethnic group	16	14
Labor union	7	5

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project. February 2001 survey. Margin of error is  $\pm 3\%$ . (\*) indicates a statistically significant difference.

When asked about the special interest group they contact most often, nearly equal numbers of men, 63%, and women, 57%, say they use email. Also, significantly more men, 65%, than women, 53%, said they read or post messages on a special group's listserv or bulletin board.



## Part 5. Functions of the internet: How men and women use it as a tool to communicate, transact, get information, and entertain themselves.

Using email with special interest groups is important to both men and women for getting hard news and information. Significantly more men than women think that discussing issues is an important reason to email with these special interest groups. More women than men say that maintaining or building personal relationships among group members is important to them.

Why online men and women value their email contact with their favorite groups		
Reasons	% of online men	% of online women
Membership news and info	75	77
Discuss issues	72*	65
Group activity participation	71	71
Nurture member relationships	46	52

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project February 2001 Survey Margin of error is ±3 points.

## 2. Transactions

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### Men do more a few more online transactions than women, including some with less predictable or controlled outcomes.

In their day-to-day lives, 75% of internet users believe that the internet offers them a good way to conduct their everyday business like banking or buying tickets, although men, at 78%, say this in significantly higher numbers than women, at 71%.<sup>8</sup>

Over the last five years, the Pew Internet Project has been tracking users' participation in more than a dozen kinds of online transactions. Men and women are about equally likely to go online to do many of these: to buy products, as well as everyday items like groceries, food, and household items and prescriptions; to make travel arrangements or to purchase tickets; to do their banking; and to donate to charities.

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<sup>8</sup> [http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP\\_Internet\\_and\\_Daily\\_Life.pdf](http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP_Internet_and_Daily_Life.pdf)

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<b>The transactions men and women do online</b>			
<b>Online transaction</b>	<b>% of online men</b>	<b>% of online women</b>	<b>Date of PIP survey</b>
Buy a product	68	66	Jun 05
Do travel reservations	60	63	Nov 04
Pay bills	42*	35	Jan 05
Bank online	41	41	Feb 05
Buy tickets for events	40	42	Dec 03
Develop/display photo	31	35*	Sep 05
Do auction	30*	18	Feb 05
Buy everyday items	26	26	Dec 03
Trade stocks, bonds	20*	6	Nov 04
Donate to charity	18	19	Sep 05
Pay for digital content	14*	7	Jun 04
Buy groceries	12	14	May 03
Order from spam	6	5	Feb 05
Play lottery or gamble	4	4	May 03
Buy Rx drugs online	3	4	Jun 04

(\*) indicates statistically significant difference.

Men are significantly more likely to pay bills online and to pay for online content. They are also more likely to do more of the online transactions with less predictable outcomes: bidding in auctions and trading stocks, bonds or mutual funds. A very small and equal number of both men and women also order from unsolicited email and gamble online.

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**Men and women share an increasing enthusiasm for doing transactions on the internet.**

The ability to do different kinds of transactions online has been one of the biggest attractions of the internet over the last few years. Participation rates among some of the transactional activities the Pew Internet Project has tracked regularly have eclipsed those for other online functions, including communications, getting information, and enjoying entertainment.

Participation in online banking grew from 17% in 2000 to 41% in 2005; in doing travel arrangements online grew from about a third in 2000 to nearly two-thirds in 2004; in

**Part 5. Functions of the internet: How men and women use it as a tool to communicate, transact, get information, and entertain themselves.**

buying products like books, music, toys, and clothing from 48% in 2000 to 67% in 2004; in online auctions from 15% overall in 2000 to 24% in 2005, including men’s rate from 19% to 30%, and women’s from 11% to 18%.

Some online transaction activities have not taken off as dramatically. In March 2000, 16% of men and 9% of women bought or sold stocks. By November 2004, men’s participation rose to 20%, while women’s fell to 6%.

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**Men and women like online transactions for mostly the same reasons, with convenience and speed leading.**

The Pew Internet Project has polled internet users about the reasons they value three online transactions, banking, shopping, and buying prescriptions.

<b>Why men and women who do online transactions value them</b>		
<b>Banking</b>	<b>% of online men</b>	<b>% of online women</b>
Convenience	79	79
Save time	72	71
Own control	50	54
Privacy	41	41
Information	36	36
Services	27	22
Save money	25	35*
<b>Shopping</b>		
Save time	74	73
Convenience	72	75
Unusual gift	47	54
Save money	35	28
<b>Prescriptions</b>		
Save money	69	60
Save time	69	51
Convenience	68	52
Privacy	22	19

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project September 2002 for banking; December 2002 for Shopping; June 2004 for Rx. \* indicates a statistically significant difference

Men and women share most reasons they value online banking. About three-quarters of both men and women said they appreciated both the convenience and time savings. Many also said they appreciate the privacy of online banking and the accessibility to so much information and so many services online. Men and women differed significantly in

## **Part 5. Functions of the internet: How men and women use it as a tool to communicate, transact, get information, and entertain themselves.**

only one element: More women than men said they valued online banking for the savings in cost.

For online shopping, both men and women cite convenience and time savings as major reasons to like shopping online. Further, more men than women value cost savings, and more women than men appreciate the chance to find unusual gifts.

And finally in June 2004, both men and women cited convenience and savings of time and money as very important reasons to have bought prescription drugs online, although the overall number of internet users who have bought drugs online remains very low, about 4%.

### **3. Getting information**

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#### **All internet users have a high regard for the internet as a source of information, but men look for a broader range of information online than women do.**

Nearly all internet users, 91%, agree that the internet is a good source of information for everyday interests like news, weather reports, and sports scores.<sup>9</sup> About 80% of both men and women also expect to find information online about more specialized topics of government issues and health or medical issues. The same number also say they expect to find information on particular products they want to purchase, although this includes more men, 82%, than women, 77%. About a third of internet users say they expect to find reliable information online about individuals.<sup>10</sup>

Beginning in 2000, we asked users about the kinds of information they look for online. Men and women are equally likely to get travel information and to look up phone numbers and addresses. They also look for information about the government, about colleges, jobs, and places to live.

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<sup>9</sup> [http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP\\_Internet\\_and\\_Daily\\_Life.pdf](http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP_Internet_and_Daily_Life.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Pew Internet & American Life Project Survey, Sept 9 – Oct 6, 2002. *Margin of error is ±3%.*

**Part 5. Functions of the internet: How men and women use it as a tool to communicate, transact, get information, and entertain themselves.**

<b>Men look for information online on more topics than women do</b>			
<b>Topics of information</b>	<b>% of online men</b>	<b>% of online women</b>	<b>Date of PIP survey</b>
Maps/driving	82	87*	Feb 04
Research product/service	82*	75	Mar 05
Check weather	82*	74	Nov 04
Info on hobby	80	75	Nov 04
News	75*	69	Feb 05
Travel info	74	71	Jun 04
Gov website	67	65	Aug 03
Research for school/training	59	55	Jan 05
How-to/Do-it-yourself	60*	50	Mar 05
Sports scores	59*	27	Feb 04
Health/med	58	74*	Dec 02
Political campaign news	60	56	Nov 04
Financial info	56*	33	Nov 04
Work/Research for job	54*	48	Feb 05
Phone, address	53	55	Feb 04
About a job	46	42	Jan 05
Place to live	33	34	Jun 04
Religion	25	34*	Nov 04
Genealogy	24	24	May 03
College or Univ to attend	44	47	Jan 05

(\*) indicates statistically significant difference.

Significantly more men than women go online to get news and financial information, to check the weather and look up sports scores. Men also do research about products and services as well as research for their jobs. They look up more how-to information.

More women look for health and medical information, for maps and driving instructions and for information on religion.

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**In emergencies, more men use the internet to focus on information and more women to focus on people.**

The Pew Internet Project looked in depth at a few extraordinary instances where users might go to the internet for information. In the fall of 2001, we asked users about the

**Part 5. Functions of the internet: How men and women use it as a tool to communicate, transact, get information, and entertain themselves.**

kinds of websites they had visited after the events of September 11. Significantly more men had visited a larger variety of different kinds of websites that would be sources of information, including news media sites, business sites, government or military sites, international sites, political sites, discussion groups, and portals. Men and women were equally as likely to visit personal websites, sites for charities, religious groups, and interest or advocacy groups.

<b>Men and women visited different kinds of websites after September 11 terror attacks</b>		
<b>Kinds of websites</b>	<b>% of online men</b>	<b>% of online women</b>
News media	71*	62
Business	62*	51
Government or military	36*	22
Personal sites	35	34
International	26*	17
Charities	18	16
Special interest	15	14
Religious	13	16
Political	13*	9
Discussion groups	12*	8
Portals	12*	4

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project Oct19 – Nov18, 2001 Survey. Margin of error is ±2.7%. (\*) indicates statistically significant difference.

In the same survey, we asked users how the internet helped through the events of September 11. More men, 30%, than women, 25%, said the internet helped them a lot to learn more about what was going on, while more women, 56%, than men, 50%, said it helped them connect with people they needed to reach. These differences are statistically significant.

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**Men and women share similar search habits to get information.**

In September 2005, about 90% of both men and women were using search engines to find information. Women’s history with search engine use is more volatile than men’s. In June 2003, 88% of women used search engines; it dipped to 79% in June 2004, and rose back to 91% in September 2005. Men’s use has held steady at about 90%.

The rise in search engine use on an average day, from about 35% for men and 25% for women in June 2003 and June 2004, soared for both in September 2005, to 43% for men

## **Part 5. Functions of the internet: How men and women use it as a tool to communicate, transact, get information, and entertain themselves.**

and 39% for women. This coincides with the recent popular excitement about major search engines, including the vastly expanding volume searchable content, the IPOs, and the widely reported competition among them.

Search engines are just one way to find information online. As alternatives, searchers return to familiar websites or follow recommended links. The Pew Internet Project looked more closely at searchers' strategies for three specific kinds of informational searches: for health and medical issues, government issues, and religious issues.

Men and women use similar strategies in launching their searches. Most users who are looking for information about health or government issues will start with search engines or portals. For instance, when asked about their most recent searches for health information, 85% of men and 78% of women said they went first to search engines or to general portals that included search engines.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, when asked about the last time they searched for government information or services, 48% of men and 51% of women started at engines or portals.<sup>12</sup> Then, as a secondary strategy, 29% of men and 28% of women went to sites they had already used. In looking for religious information, both men, 44%, and women, 49%, were most likely to start their searches at familiar religious websites.<sup>13</sup> Both turned to search engines or general portals as a second resort; 37% of men and 35% of women.

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### **Women handle less information online but feel the information glut more.**

Although men gather and consume more information online, women seem more overwhelmed by the volume of information around them. In October 2002, we asked users about their sense of information overload in the context of growing volumes of easily-attainable information from TV, newspapers, online information services, magazines, etc. Although most users, including 65% of women and 70% of men, said they like having lots of information, significantly more women, 24%, than men, 19%, felt overloaded by it.

## **4. Entertainment**

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### **Men participate in more kinds of online entertainment than women.**

Just over two thirds of users think the internet is a good place to pursue entertainment or personal enjoyment, including significantly more men, 72%, than women, 66%.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Pew Internet & American Life Project Survey, Aug., 2001, margin of error is +/- 4%

<sup>12</sup> Pew Internet & American Life Project callback Survey, September, 2001.

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP\\_CyberFaith\\_Report.pdf](http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP_CyberFaith_Report.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> [http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP\\_Internet\\_and\\_Daily\\_Life.pdf](http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP_Internet_and_Daily_Life.pdf)

**Part 5. Functions of the internet: How men and women use it as a tool to communicate, transact, get information, and entertain themselves.**

Over the years, the Pew Internet Project has asked internet users about a grab bag of activities they do online for fun, recreation, and entertainment. Men and women participate equally in about half the activities we polled, but men are more likely than women to participate in the rest of the activities.

In the light entertainment category, about two-thirds of men and women surf the web for fun. With hobbies, slightly more men than women go online looking for information about their hobbies and many more actually pursuing their special interests online. Men also participate more seriously than women in sports fantasy leagues. A small but equal number of men and women said they have gone online to play the lottery or gamble.

<b>Men do more entertainment online than women</b>			
<b>Entertainment activities</b>	<b>% of online men</b>	<b>% of online women</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Miscellaneous</b>			
Hobby info	80	75	Nov 04
Surf the web	70	63	Nov 04
Pursue hobbies	33*	22	Dec 03
Read for pleasure	20*	11	Dec 03
Adult website	21*	5	Jun 05
Take class	15*	11	Jan 05
Sports fantasy league	15*	3	Mar 05
<b>Playing Games</b>			
Play games	36	37	Jun 05
Download games	22	19	Jun 05
Play lottery or gamble	4	4	May 03
<b>Watching and listening</b>			
Video/audio clips	56	57	Nov 04
Listen to music at websites	38*	29	Jun 04
Listen to live or recorded broadcasts	38*	20	Jun 04
Download music	30*	20	Jun 05
Share files	25	28	Jun 05
Download video	22*	13	Jun 05
Remix files	21*	15	Jan 05

(\*) indicates statistically significant difference.

We have occasionally asked users about visiting adult websites. The overall participation rates have remained constant, from about 13% - 15%. Traditionally, three to five times as many men as women have responded positively to this question.



## **Part 5. Functions of the internet: How men and women use it as a tool to communicate, transact, get information, and entertain themselves.**

Men have recently closed the gap with women in playing online games. Women have traditionally led men in this data point; as late as November 2004, significantly more women, 44%, than men, 34%, said they had played games online. In that same survey, about equal numbers of men and women also said they downloaded such games to play online.<sup>15</sup>

Among more serious endeavors, significantly more men than women said they read for pleasure online and have taken a class online for personal enjoyment or enrichment.

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### **Men do more online watching and listening**

We have asked about online audio and video activities in a variety of ways. Overall, men are more enthusiastic than women about using the internet as kind an entertainment center for watching and listening.

Just over half of both online men and women have watched video clips or listened to audio clips online, a number that has risen slowly but steadily over the last 5 years, with women closing an earlier gap.

About a third of internet users, including significantly more men than women, have listened to music online at websites of places like a radio station, music store, recording artist or music service. Similar numbers have listened to live or recorded broadcasts of shows like newscasts, sporting events, or a radio show.

We also asked about downloaded entertainment. About a quarter of users have downloaded music files for later, anytime use, including significantly more men than women. This number had been growing to nearly a third of internet users at the end of 2002 and the first half of 2003, when suits against illegal file sharing brought by the Recording Industry Association of America encouraged many internet users to stop downloading music. In June 2003, the total number was 30%. By November 2003, the participation rate fell to 14%. The number has risen since then to the current 25% in May 2005. Men have always led women in downloading.

Significantly more men than women have downloaded other kinds of files as well, including video files, games, and picture files.

An equal number of men and women, about a quarter of all internet users, have shared various kinds of files as well.

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<sup>15</sup> In 2003, the Pew Internet Project reported that among college students, 60% of women and 40% of men reported playing computer or online games. Men and women reported playing specifically video games in equal numbers. The authors suggested one reason for the popularity among women for online and computer games over video games could be the contrast between action/adventure – and often violent – video game, compared to the more traditional offline-like nature of computer or online games – ones like solitaire and board games. [http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP\\_College\\_Gaming\\_Reporta.pdf](http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP_College_Gaming_Reporta.pdf)

**Part 5. Functions of the internet: How men and women use it as a tool to communicate, transact, get information, and entertain themselves.**

In a first-time question in January 2005, we also asked users if they ever take online material, like songs, text, or images to remix. Significantly more men than women have done this.

## Part 6.

### Issues about computers and the internet: Awareness, interest, attitudes, aptitude, self- confidence

The Pew Internet Project has probed some of the softer issues surrounding men's and women's internet use. Over the years, we have asked a variety of questions about users' awareness of internet issues and developments, and about their general interest in technology and the internet. We have asked about users' perceived aptitude and self-confidence in dealing with computers and software, the internet and applications. We have also asked users about their attitudes toward the internet and the value it adds to their lives.

The data we have collected suggest men are more interested and aware about the world of technology and how their own systems work, from computers to internet connections. They try more new things, from hardware to software. As a natural consequence, men are more adept about dealing in the tech world, from installing filters to troubleshooting repairs. And they are more confident, in their roles as techies and geeks.

Men and women share an appreciation of what the internet does for their lives, particularly in making their lives more efficient and expanding their world of information. Men seem to value these strengths most in the context of the activities of their lives, from jobs to pastimes, while women seem to value them most in the context of the relationships in their lives, with family, friends, colleagues, and communities.

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#### **Tech terminology and issues: More men than women are familiar with tech terms and issues.**

In June 2005, we asked internet users if they had a good idea of what various new technology terms means. Men reported being significantly more knowledgeable than women for every one of the following terms: spam, spyware firewall, internet cookies, adware, internet phishing, podcasting, and RSS feed.

In February 2004, twice as many men, 36%, as women, 18%, had heard of Voice over Internet Protocol, or VOIP service.

In June 2004, significantly more men, 43%, than women, 32%, were aware of the difference between paid or sponsored and unpaid ads.

## Part 6. Issues about computers and the internet: Awareness, interest, attitudes, aptitude, self-confidence

In August 2001, significantly more men, 41%, than women 27%, said they had heard a lot about the recent financial problems of internet or dotcom companies. By contrast, significantly more women had heard only a little or nothing at all.

Men's and women's awareness of technology terms		
<i>Percentage of internet users who have a good idea of what the term means</i>		
Terms	% of online men	% of online women
Spam	90*	87
Firewall	83*	73
Spyware	82*	74
Internet cookies	74*	62
Adware	60*	44
Phishing	36*	23
Podcasting	16*	11
RSS feeds	12*	6

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project May 4-June 7, 2005 Survey, N=1336 internet users. Margin of error is  $\pm 3\%$ . (\*) indicates a statistically significant difference.

In February-March 2004, significantly more men, 50%, than women, 36%, said they were aware that Congress had recently passed anti-spam legislation. In January 2005, significantly more men, 36%, than women, 26%, said they had heard or read “a lot” about spam.

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### Software: More men take the lead on computer maintenance.

In June 2005, significantly more men than women said they are the main person responsible for maintaining the home computer. Further, more men than women have installed software on their home computers.

Of those who said they had virus protection on their home computers, significantly more men than women said they were responsible for setting up the protection.

Men have dealt with computer problems more thoroughly than women. In June 2005, of the two-thirds of users who said they had experienced some kind of problem with their computers in the past year, significantly more men, 44%, than women, 34%, said they knew the source of the problem and tried to fix it themselves. More women than men asked a friend or family member or colleague for help.

## Part 6. Issues about computers and the internet: Awareness, interest, attitudes, aptitude, self-confidence

Men reported they were more successful at solving the problem, regardless of the manner they fixed it; 53% of men and 43% of women said the problem was solved “quickly and easily.”

Men do more than women with computer maintenance			
Activities on home computer	% of online men	% of online women	Date of PIP survey
Responsible for maintenance	68*	45	Jun 05
Have Installed software	65*	47	Jun 05
Have changed homepage	50*	34	Oct 02
Set up virus protection, if have it	47*	26	Jun 05
Tried themselves to fix computer problem	45*	32	Jun 05
Use spam filters in personal acct.	37	36	Jun 03
Set up spam filters in work acct	21	15	Jun 03

(\*) indicates statistically significant difference.

In June 2003, we asked about spam filtering. More men than women who have email accounts at work said they applied their own filters to block or manage spam on them., while equal numbers of men and women said they used filters on their personal accounts.

In October 2002, significantly more women, 14%, than men, 8%, said they didn’t know if the homepage that first appeared when they fire up the computer is one provided by their ISP or computer maker. More men than women said they had changed that page for their home computers at some point.

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### Internet access: More men are knowledgeable about their internet access, and more of them either have or would like to have high speed internet access.

In February-March 2004, we asked users who go online at work if they knew what kind of internet connections they had at work. Significantly more women, 22%, than men, 10%, said they didn’t know if they had high speed connections or dial-up connections.<sup>16</sup> In the same survey, more men than women said they had high speed connections.

Nearly all internet users were aware of the kind of internet connections they had at home. Significantly more men than women had some kind of high speed connections at home.

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<sup>16</sup> The percentage for “don’t know” includes those who “refused to answer”. In typical questions, about 1% – 3% of people fall into this category. Such a high percentage of “don’t know” responses suggests that these people literally don’t know the answer, rather than that they refused to answer the question.

## Part 6. Issues about computers and the internet: Awareness, interest, attitudes, aptitude, self-confidence

Further, women were not as interested as men in making an upgrade from slow to fast connections: Of those with dial-up connections, significantly more men than women said they were interested in getting high speed connections.

<b>Men are more involved with internet connections than women.</b>		
<b>Traits</b>	<b>% of online men</b>	<b>% of online women</b>
Those who go online at work and have hi-speed connections at work	75*	59
Dial-up users at home who would like to have hi-speed connections at home	47*	34
Those who go online at home and have hi-speed connections at home	46*	39
Dial-up users not aware of hi-speed availability at home	22	30*
Those who go online at work and don't know about connections at work	10	22*
Those who go online at home and don't know about connections at home	2	3

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project Survey Feb-Mar, 2004 Margin of error is  $\pm 3\%$ . (\*) indicates a statistically significant difference.

Women also knew less about the availability of high speed access in their homes: Significantly more women than men said they didn't know if high-speed service was available or if there were multiple providers in their area.

Similarly, in November 2004, we asked if people had computer networks linking their computers together at home. Again, significantly more women, 13%, than men 4%, said they did not know. And again, more men, 54%, than women, 45%, said they did have home networks.

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### **Pushing the edge: More men than women try the new technologies.**

In February 2004, more men than women had made a telephone call over the internet. In November 2004, more men than women had logged onto the internet using a wireless device. In the same month, equal numbers of men and women had cell phones, 65%.

**Part 6. Issues about computers and the internet: Awareness, interest, attitudes, aptitude, self-confidence**

<b>Men push the tech edge more than women.</b>			
<b>Entertainment activities</b>	<b>% of online men</b>	<b>% of online women</b>	<b>Date of PIP survey</b>
Download computer programs	48*	31	Jun 05
Text messaging	33	37	Sep 05
Wireless log on	27	22	Nov 04
Share files	25	28	Jun 05
Remix files	21*	15	Feb 05
Use webcam	19*	13	Mar 05
Maintain website	16*	11	May 03
Own iPods or Mp3 players	13*	9	Mar 05
Made VOIP call	13*	9	Feb 04
Create a blog	11	8	Sep 05

(\*) indicates statistically significant difference.

In March 2005, men were more likely than women to view live images from a webcam and to have iPods or MP3 players -- although, as owners, equal numbers, 29%, have downloaded podcasts on them.

In September 2005, men were more likely than women to create a blog. In April - May 2003, more men than women maintained their own websites. In February 2005, more men than women had taken material like songs, images or text to remix into own artistic creation.

In January 2005, 58% of men and 47% of women said they know how to upload images or other files to a website so others could see them. Also, more men than women reported doing the following creative endeavors for the web: writing, 19% v 14%; artwork, 7% v 4%; audio files 8% v 3%; video files, 5% v 2%, and photography, 22% v, 19%. Only the last is not statistically significant.

In June 2005, men were significantly more likely than women to download many kinds of files: video files, 22% v. 13%; music files, 30% v 20%; computer programs, 48% v 31%; download or share adult content, 6% v 3%. They are equally likely to download screensavers, 23% v 24%; computer games, 22% v. 19% and to share files, 25% v. 28%.

## Part 6. Issues about computers and the internet: Awareness, interest, attitudes, aptitude, self-confidence

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### Teen girls are breaking the online mold for women.

A November 2004, survey with American teen-agers shows that the youngest female internet users are trying out the newest and more challenging online technologies as much as boys are. Teen age girls may do more or less than boys of certain activities, like downloading, but the important message is that the technology is not standing in their way.

<b>Teen girls and boys both do technology-heavy activities online.</b>		
<b>Activities</b>	<b>% boys</b>	<b>% girls</b>
Download music files	57*	45
Share files	42*	33
Download video files	38*	24
Text messaging	33	45*
Help others with blogs	32	31
Share own creation online	31	35
Create or work on own web page	21	23
Remix content	21	18
Create own blog or online journal	17	22

*Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project Survey, Nov., 2004. Margin of error is  $\pm 4\%$ . (\*) indicates a statistically significant difference.*

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### Confidence: Men have more confidence about dealing with computers and technologies than women.

In June 2005, we asked about online Americans' confidence of keeping things like computer viruses, spyware, and adware off home computers. Significantly more men, 22%, than women, 17%, said they were "very confident" they could do this.

In June 2004, significantly more men, 54%, than women, 40%, said they were confident in their abilities as searchers.

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### Those not online: Lack of Interest dominates, especially among women.

In the spring of 2002, we asked non-users about some of the reasons for not going online. Women were significantly more likely than men to cite many possibilities as "major reasons" they didn't use the internet: they didn't need it; didn't want it; were worried about online porn, credit card theft, and fraud; said it is too expensive; and too complicated and hard to understand. Equal numbers of men and women said they didn't have time.



## Part 6. Issues about computers and the internet: Awareness, interest, attitudes, aptitude, self-confidence

We asked these same non-users if they would be interested to start using the internet or email. Significantly more men, 19%, than women, 10%, said they would be interested, and more men, 46%, than women, 35%, said they would probably start using the internet some day.

Women are more likely than men to cite some reasons for not using the internet		
Major reasons	% of online men	% of online women
Don't need it	45	58*
Don't want it	43	58*
Worried about porn, theft, fraud	34	49*
Don't have time	29	29
Too expensive	25	34*
Too complex/hard to understand	22	30*

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project Survey. Mar-May 2002 Margin of error is  $\pm 3\%$ . (\*) indicates a statistically significant difference.

In June 2005, in a variation of the earlier question, we asked non-users to identify the main reason they were not online. Similar numbers of men and women, about one third, say they are just not interested. Another third, including significantly more women, 37%, than men, 25%, cite lack of access as their main reason. The remaining third cite a variety of other reasons: the internet is too difficult or frustrating, too expensive; they are too busy; they think it's a waste of time.

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### Risks and fear: Women harbor more fears about online risks and dangers than men do.

Over the years, the Pew Internet Project has asked about fears and anxieties about being online. Overall, more women than men have expressed concerns about the online environment. Women are much more concerned than men about the internet enabling crimes in general. Men and women share similar concerns over personal privacy and personal threats, although women show more concern in two particular areas: dangers from spam and trespassing on personal health issues.

In February 2001, women expressed much more concern than men about criminals using the internet to plan and carry out their crimes, including ones about child pornography, credit card theft, organized terrorism, destructive computer viruses, wide scale fraud, computer hacking into government and business networks, web sites and files, and computer hacking into business networks.

## **Part 6. Issues about computers and the internet: Awareness, interest, attitudes, aptitude, self-confidence**

The newest threat, spyware, concerns men and women equally. About three-quarters of both men and women said they considered it a serious problem if programs installed or websites they visited on their computers reported back to a source about their internet habits. And half of both men and women who are internet users say that spyware is a serious threat to their online security.

In June 2003, significantly more women than men were bothered by some harms they feared might come from unsolicited emails, including possible damage to computers and concern that their privacy might have been compromised.

In June 2000, we asked about some personal concerns: About half of both men and women said they were confident that the things they did online were private and not used without their permission. They worried equally about most things: hackers getting personal credit card information (just over 40%) and someone learning personal things from what they have done online (just over 30%); and less than 20% about downloading viruses, others tracking their web site visits, that their email would be read by unintended recipients.

In August 2000, we asked more personal privacy questions about health care in particular. Despite this being an area where women are much more active online than men, they also expressed much more concern about the risks. Women feared more than men that employers might find out about sites they were visiting, that health insurance companies might as well, and alter their policies because of it, and that sites might sell or give away information about what they did online. And finally, when asked how they would feel if health care providers put medical records on a password protected, secure web site, 65% of women and 55% of men agreed that would be a bad thing because others might be able to access the information.

**Part 6. Issues about computers and the internet: Awareness, interest, attitudes, aptitude, self-confidence**

<b>Women are more likely to fear the internet than men</b>			
	<b>% online men</b>	<b>% online women</b>	<b>Date of PIP survey</b>
<b>Various internet crimes that concern internet users</b>			
Child pornography	74	86*	Feb 01
Credit card theft	65	72*	Feb 01
Organized terrorism	57	64*	Feb 01
Destructive computer viruses	54	56	Feb 01
Wide scale fraud	49	55*	Feb 01
Hacking to government info	49	54	Feb 01
Hacking into business info	47	46	Feb 01
General criminal use	35	50*	Feb 01
<b>The personal privacy concern and threats that worry internet users</b>			
Damage to own computer from spam	79	86*	Jun 03
Spyware reporting personal habits	77	78	Jun 05
Privacy compromised by spam	73	79*	Jun 03
Spyware a personal security threat	50	49	Jun 05
Personal credit card theft	42	44	Jun 00
Others knowing about online activity	31	32	Jun 00
Contract virus from download	17	16	Jun 00
Others knowing about web sites visited	10	7	Jun 00
Others reading personal email sent	7	8	Jun 00
<b>Specific concerns about health privacy</b>			
Insurance company knowing sites I visited	68	70	Aug 00
Web site selling info on my online activity	65	73	Aug 00
Others knowing health site I visited	40	44	Aug 00
Employer knowing health sites I visited	37	37	Aug 00

(\*) indicates statistically significant difference.

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**Valuing the internet: Men and women value the internet for a few different reasons.**

At various times, the Pew Internet Project has asked users how they feel about the internet -- how and where it helps them in their lives, or what they'd miss about it if it disappeared.

## Part 6. Issues about computers and the internet: Awareness, interest, attitudes, aptitude, self-confidence

In October 2002, we asked users a general question about how they liked computers and technology. In significant numbers, more men said they like them and more women said they had mixed feelings.

We also asked online adults who were also users of different technologies how difficult it would be for them to give them up. Men said slightly more than women that it would be very hard for them to give up computer, the internet, and PDAs. Significantly more women than men said it would be very hard to give up email.

<b>When men and women find it very hard to give up technology</b>		
<b>Things hard to give up</b>	<b>% of online men</b>	<b>% of online women</b>
Computer	41	36
Internet	41	35
Email	32	38*
PDA	25	20

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project Oct. 2002 Survey. Margin of error is  $\pm 3\%$  and considerably more for PDAs.

In July 2004, men and women agreed that the internet improved how they did their everyday tasks, like shopping or paying bills, and how they got news they otherwise couldn't find. In significant numbers, more men than women said the internet improved the way they pursue their hobbies or interests, or their ability to do their job, while more women said that the internet greatly improved their ability to keep in touch with friends and family.

In June 2004, about a third of both men and women agree that when it comes to relying on search engines as a way of finding information, they couldn't live without them.

**Part 6. Issues about computers and the internet: Awareness, interest, attitudes, aptitude, self-confidence**

<b>How men and women value the internet in their lives</b>		
<b>Where the internet helps a lot</b>	<b>% of online men</b>	<b>% of online women</b>
Get hard-to-find news	53	51
Pursue hobbies or interests	43*	31
Keep touch w/ friends and family	42	57*
Ability to do job	38*	31
Complete everyday tasks	27	25

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project June 14 – July 3 2004 Survey. Margin of error is  $\pm 3\%$ . (\*) indicates a statistically significant difference.

# Methodology

This report cites findings from many of the separate surveys that have been conducted by the Pew Internet & American Life Project since March 2000. The comparisons in use of the internet by men and women in 2002 and 2005 are derived from combining several survey data sets in each of those years. The total number of respondents included in the 2002 findings was 14,416 and for 2005 was 6,403. The 2005 material includes surveys through June of this year. In each of those larger data sets the margin of error is less than plus or minus 2%.

As a general rule the findings issued by the Project are based on the findings of a daily tracking survey on Americans' use of the Internet conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates. Our standard poll is in the field for a month and aims to complete about 2,200 interviews. For results based on the total sample of any given monthly sample of that size, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects is plus or minus 2.2 percentage points.

The number of internet users has grown in our samples over the years as more and more Americans embrace the internet. Usually the margin of sampling error is plus or minus 3 percentage points.

The sample for each of our tracking surveys is a random digit sample of telephone numbers selected from telephone exchanges in the continental United States. The random digit aspect of the sample is used to avoid "listing" bias and provides representation of both listed and unlisted numbers (including not-yet-listed numbers). The design of the each sample achieves this representation by random generation of the last two digits of telephone numbers selected on the basis of their area code, telephone exchange, and bank number.

In tracking surveys, new sample is released daily and was kept in the field for at least five days. The sample was released in replicates, which are representative subsamples of the larger population. This ensures that complete call procedures are followed for the entire sample. At least 10 attempts are made to complete an interview at sampled households. The calls are staggered over times of day and days of the week to maximize the chances of making contact with a potential respondent. Each household receives at least one daytime call in an attempt to find someone at home. In each contacted household, interviewers ask to speak with the youngest male currently at home. If no male is available, interviewers ask to speak with the oldest female at home. This systematic respondent selection technique has been shown to produce samples that closely mirror the population in terms of age and sex. All interviews completed on any given day are considered to be the final sample for that day.

## **Part 6. Issues about computers and the internet: Awareness, interest, attitudes, aptitude, self-confidence**

Non-response in telephone interviews produces some known biases in survey-derived estimates because participation tends to vary for different subgroups of the population, and these subgroups are likely to vary also on questions of substantive interest. In order to compensate for these known biases, the sample data are weighted by form in analysis. The demographic weighting parameters are derived from a special analysis of the most recently available Census Bureau's Annual Social and Economic Supplement, usually issued in March of each year. This analysis produces population parameters for the demographic characteristics of adults age 18 or older, living in households that contain a telephone. These parameters are then compared with the sample characteristics to construct sample weights. The weights are derived using an iterative technique that simultaneously balances the distribution of all weighting parameters.

Those interested in the sample size of each specific survey can download the crosstab files of those surveys, which are available at: [http://www.pewinternet.org/PPF/r/42/dataset\\_display.asp](http://www.pewinternet.org/PPF/r/42/dataset_display.asp), or they can contact Project staff through [data@pewinternet.org](mailto:data@pewinternet.org).