

# Home Computers and Internet Use in the United States: August 2000

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## Defining computer and Internet access

All individuals living in a household in which the respondent answered "Yes" to the question, "Is there a personal computer or laptop in this household?" are considered to have "access" to that computer.

Households with 'Internet access' are those which have at least one member using the Internet at home.

questions raised by the nation's changing technological base.

## HOME COMPUTERS AND INTERNET USE

### More than half of households have computers.

In August 2000, 54 million households, or 51 percent, had one or more computers, up from 42 percent in December 1998 (Figure 1).<sup>1</sup> Since 1984, the first year in

<sup>1</sup>The estimates in this report are based on responses from a sample of the population. As with all surveys, estimates may vary from the actual values for the entire population because of sampling variation, or other factors. All statements made in this report have undergone statistical testing and meet Census Bureau standards for statistical accuracy.

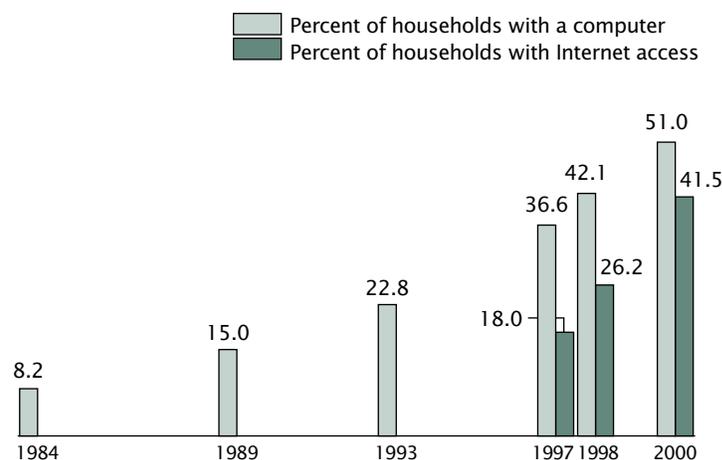
## Current Population Reports

By  
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The rapid adoption of computer and Internet technology by the U.S. population has raised many questions. Which households have computers, and which have Internet access? Do children have the access to computer technology that they need to prepare them for jobs in a human capital economy? Do some children have access while others do not? Who uses the Internet, among both children and adults? How might this use change society? This report uses Current Population Survey (CPS) data to address some of the primary

Figure 1.  
**Computers and Internet Access in the Home: 1984 to 2000**

(Civilian noninstitutional population)



Note: Data on Internet access were not collected before 1997.  
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, various years.

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which the Census Bureau collected data on computer ownership and use, the country has experienced more than a fivefold increase in the proportion of households with computers.

### **More than 2 in 5 households have Internet access.**

Forty-four million households, or 42 percent, had at least one member who used the Internet at home in 2000. This proportion was up from 26 percent in 1998, and more than double the proportion of households with Internet access in 1997 (18 percent), the first year in which the Census Bureau collected data on Internet use.<sup>2</sup> In households which have computers, Internet use has rapidly become so common as to make computer availability and Internet access nearly synonymous. In 1997, less than half of households with computers had someone using the Internet. In 2000, more than 4 in 5 households with a computer had at least one member using the Internet at home.

### **High-income households are more likely to have computers or Internet access.**

Among family households with incomes of \$75,000 or more during the 12 months prior to the survey, 88 percent had at least one computer, and 79 percent had at least one household member who used the Internet at home in 2000. Among family households with incomes below \$25,000, only 28 percent had a computer, and 19 percent had Internet access (Table A).

One-person households were the least likely to have a computer or Internet access. While 58 percent of households with two to four people had a computer, only 30 percent of

<sup>2</sup>Data for 1997 include only those accessing the Internet through a computer. Data for 1998 and 2000 include those accessing the Internet through all types of Internet devices.

one-person households had a computer. Forty-seven percent of two-to-four-person households had Internet access compared with 24 percent of one-person households.

Similarly, married-couple households were the most likely to have a computer or Internet access. Sixty-four percent of married-couple households had a computer, and 53 percent had Internet access. Fewer than half of all other households combined had a computer, and less than one-third had Internet access.

The presence of a child also influences whether a household has a computer or Internet access. Two-thirds of households with a school-age child (6 to 17 years) had a computer, and 53 percent had Internet access. In comparison, only 45 percent of households without a school-age child had a computer, and only 37 percent had Internet access.

Household computer presence and Internet access varied among the four regions of the country. For example, households in the West were the most likely to have computers or Internet access (57 percent and 47 percent, respectively). Those in the South were least likely (47 percent and 38 percent, respectively).

Households situated in metropolitan areas, but outside central cities, were most likely to have a computer (58 percent) or Internet access (48 percent). Only 46 percent of households in central cities had a computer, and just 38 percent had Internet access. Nonmetropolitan households were least likely to have a computer or Internet access (42 percent and 32 percent, respectively).

### **About 94 million people use the Internet at home.**

Among people 3 years old or over, 36 percent used the Internet at home in 2000, including 18 million children 3 to 17 years, and

75 million adults 18 years old and over.<sup>3</sup> In 1998, only 57 million people, or 22 percent of those 3 years and over, used the Internet.

### **CHILDREN'S ACCESS TO COMPUTERS AND THE INTERNET**

#### **More children have access to a computer or use the Internet at home than ever before.**

Nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of all children 3 to 17 years lived in a household with a computer in 2000, up from 55 percent in 1998. Thirty percent of all children used the Internet at home in 2000 (Table B), compared with just 19 percent in 1998.

Although girls were as likely as boys to use the Internet at home, children's Internet use varied with age. Only 7 percent of the youngest children, those 3 to 5 years, used the Internet at home. Among children 6 to 11 years, 25 percent used the Internet at home, and 48 percent, nearly half, of children 12 to 17 years used the Internet at home.

#### **White non-Hispanic children are more likely to have home computer access or use the Internet than are Black or Hispanic children.**

Among children 3 to 17 years, 77 percent of White non-Hispanics and 72 percent of Asians and Pacific Islanders lived in households with computers, while only 43 percent of Black children and 37 percent of Hispanic children did so.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Some estimates may not add up to the total population because of rounding.

<sup>4</sup>Based on the August 2000 Current Population Survey sample, 3 percent of Black children 3 to 17 years and 3 percent of Asians and Pacific Islanders 3 to 17 years are also of Hispanic origin. Hispanics may be of any race.

Data for the American Indian and Alaska Native population are not shown in this report because of the small sample size in the August 2000 Current Population Survey.

Table A.  
**Households With Computers and Internet Access by Selected Characteristics:  
 August 2000**

(Numbers in thousands. Civilian noninstitutional population)

Characteristic	Total households		Computer in household		Home Internet access		
	Number	Number	Percent	90 percent C.I. (+ -) <sup>1</sup>	Number	Percent	90 percent C.I. (+ -) <sup>1</sup>
<b>TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS</b> .....	<b>105,247</b>	<b>53,716</b>	<b>51.0</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>43,639</b>	<b>41.5</b>	<b>0.4</b>
<b>AGE OF HOUSEHOLDER</b>							
Under 25 years .....	6,104	2,675	43.8	1.5	2,179	35.7	1.5
25 to 44 years .....	42,545	25,944	61.0	0.6	21,353	50.2	0.6
45 to 64 years .....	34,800	19,800	56.9	0.6	16,251	46.7	0.6
65 years and over .....	21,798	5,297	24.3	0.7	3,856	17.7	0.6
<b>RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN OF HOUSEHOLDER</b>							
White .....	87,746	46,846	53.4	0.4	38,380	43.7	0.4
White non-Hispanic .....	78,719	43,829	55.7	0.4	36,260	46.1	0.4
Black .....	13,171	4,317	32.8	0.9	3,111	23.6	0.8
Asian and Pacific Islander .....	3,457	2,250	65.1	1.8	1,944	56.2	1.9
Hispanic (of any race) .....	9,565	3,224	33.7	1.4	2,255	23.6	1.3
<b>HOUSEHOLDER'S EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT</b>							
Less than high school diploma .....	17,402	3,162	18.2	0.7	2,032	11.7	0.6
High school diploma/GED .....	32,278	12,783	39.6	0.6	9,666	29.9	0.6
Some college .....	27,883	16,807	60.3	0.7	13,661	49.0	0.7
Bachelors degree or more .....	27,684	20,963	75.7	0.6	18,279	66.0	0.7
<b>SIZE OF HOUSEHOLD</b>							
One person .....	27,167	8,165	30.1	0.7	6,533	24.0	0.6
Two to four people .....	67,461	38,853	57.6	0.5	31,829	47.2	0.5
Five or more people .....	10,619	6,697	63.1	1.1	5,277	49.7	1.1
<b>HOUSEHOLD TYPE</b>							
Family households .....	72,044	42,238	58.6	0.4	34,315	47.6	0.4
Married-couple household .....	54,830	34,875	63.6	0.5	28,872	52.7	0.5
Male householder .....	4,179	1,879	45.0	1.8	1,455	34.8	1.7
Female householder .....	13,035	5,484	42.1	1.0	3,988	30.6	1.0
Nonfamily household .....	33,203	11,478	34.6	0.6	9,323	28.1	0.6
<b>PRESENCE OF SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN IN HOUSEHOLD</b>							
Without children 6 to 17 years .....	76,558	34,537	45.1	0.4	28,360	37.0	0.4
With children 6 to 17 years .....	28,689	19,179	66.8	0.7	15,279	53.3	0.7
<b>REGION</b>							
Northeast .....	20,051	10,283	51.3	0.8	8,620	43.0	0.8
Midwest .....	24,276	12,442	51.3	0.8	9,929	40.9	0.8
South .....	38,009	17,891	47.1	0.6	14,404	37.9	0.6
West .....	22,912	13,099	57.2	0.8	10,685	46.6	0.8
<b>METROPOLITAN STATUS</b>							
Metropolitan .....	84,646	45,110	53.3	0.4	37,124	43.9	0.4
Inside central city .....	31,806	14,727	46.3	0.7	11,987	37.7	0.6
Outside central city .....	52,840	30,382	57.5	0.5	25,137	47.6	0.5
Nonmetropolitan .....	20,601	8,606	41.8	1.0	6,515	31.6	0.9
<b>FAMILY INCOME</b>							
<b>TOTAL FAMILIES</b> .....	<b>72,044</b>	<b>42,238</b>	<b>58.6</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>34,315</b>	<b>47.6</b>	<b>0.5</b>
Under \$15,000 .....	7,458	1,747	23.4	1.2	1,068	14.3	1.0
15,000-19,999 .....	3,298	1,021	30.9	2.0	674	20.4	1.7
20,000-24,999 .....	4,173	1,437	34.4	1.8	1,040	24.9	1.6
25,000-34,999 .....	8,553	4,031	47.1	1.3	2,982	34.9	1.3
35,000-49,999 .....	9,918	6,131	61.8	1.2	4,766	48.1	1.2
50,000-74,999 .....	12,555	9,424	75.1	1.0	7,825	62.3	1.1
75,000+ .....	15,040	13,198	87.8	0.7	11,886	79.0	0.8
Not reported .....	11,050	5,249	47.5	1.2	4,074	36.9	1.1

<sup>1</sup>This figure added to or subtracted from the estimate provides the 90-percent confidence interval.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, August 2000.

Table B.  
**Access to a Home Computer and Use of the Internet at Home by Children 3 to 17 Years:  
 August 2000**

(Numbers in thousands. Civilian noninstitutional population)

Characteristic	Children 3 to 17 years old	Home computer access		Use Internet at home	
	Number	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>TOTAL</b> .....	<b>60,635</b>	<b>39,430</b>	<b>65.0</b>	<b>18,437</b>	<b>30.4</b>
<b>AGE</b>					
3 to 5 years .....	11,915	6,905	58.0	864	7.3
6 to 11 years .....	24,837	15,924	64.1	6,135	24.7
12 to 17 years .....	23,884	16,600	69.5	11,439	47.9
<b>SEX</b>					
Male .....	31,055	20,273	65.3	9,392	30.2
Female .....	29,580	19,156	64.8	9,045	30.6
<b>RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN</b>					
White .....	47,433	33,062	69.7	15,940	33.6
White non-Hispanic .....	38,438	29,731	77.3	14,773	38.4
Black .....	9,779	4,161	42.5	1,441	14.7
Asian and Pacific Islander .....	2,581	1,855	71.9	909	35.2
Hispanic (of any race) .....	9,568	3,546	37.1	1,229	12.8
<b>HOUSEHOLDER'S EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT</b>					
Less than high school diploma .....	10,159	3,060	30.1	1,126	11.1
High school diploma/GED .....	18,915	10,559	55.8	4,600	24.3
Some college .....	16,994	12,712	74.8	5,926	34.9
Bachelors degree or more .....	14,567	13,098	89.9	6,786	46.6
<b>HOUSEHOLD TYPE</b>					
Family households .....	60,012	39,119	65.2	18,284	30.5
Married-couple household .....	42,936	31,593	73.6	15,050	35.1
Male householder .....	3,092	1,508	48.8	740	23.9
Female householder .....	13,984	6,017	43.0	2,493	17.8
Nonfamily household .....	620	310	50.0	154	24.8
<b>REGION</b>					
Northeast .....	10,794	7,576	70.2	3,832	35.5
Midwest .....	14,302	9,816	68.6	4,591	32.1
South .....	20,870	12,711	60.9	5,756	27.6
West .....	14,668	9,327	63.6	4,258	29.0
<b>METROPOLITAN STATUS</b>					
Metropolitan .....	49,316	32,513	65.9	15,187	30.8
Inside central city .....	17,478	9,341	53.4	4,149	23.7
Outside central city .....	31,839	23,171	72.8	11,038	34.7
Nonmetropolitan .....	11,319	6,917	61.1	3,250	28.7
<b>FAMILY INCOME</b>					
<b>TOTAL 3 TO 17 YEARS IN FAMILIES</b> .....	<b>59,288</b>	<b>38,729</b>	<b>65.3</b>	<b>18,139</b>	<b>30.6</b>
Under \$15,000 .....	7,480	2,041	27.3	578	7.7
15,000-19,999 .....	2,896	1,044	36.0	373	12.9
20,000-24,999 .....	3,596	1,507	41.9	547	15.2
25,000-34,999 .....	6,967	3,755	53.9	1,463	21.0
35,000-49,999 .....	8,463	6,044	71.4	2,694	31.8
50,000-74,999 .....	10,374	8,574	82.6	4,142	39.9
75,000+ .....	12,115	11,294	93.2	6,263	51.7
Not reported .....	7,395	4,470	60.4	2,079	28.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, August 2000.

While 38 percent of White non-Hispanic children and 35 percent of Asian and Pacific Islander children used the Internet at home, just 15 percent of Black children and 13 percent of Hispanic children did.<sup>5</sup>

**More school-age children use computers at school than have access to them at home.**

School is a major influence on children’s access to computers. Among children of school age (6 to 17 years), 2 in 3 had access to a computer at home in 2000. However, 4 in 5 actually used a computer at school.

More than half of school-age children had access to computers both in school and at home (57 percent). However, many children had access in only one location or the other. Of them, far more had access in school than had access at home. Twenty-three percent of school-age children had access to a computer only at school, compared with just 10 percent who had access only at home. Adding all three groups together, 9 in 10 school-age children had access to a computer somewhere, leaving just 10 percent of children who had no access to a computer in any locale (Figure 2).

**Schools level the playing field by giving computer access to children who have none at home.**

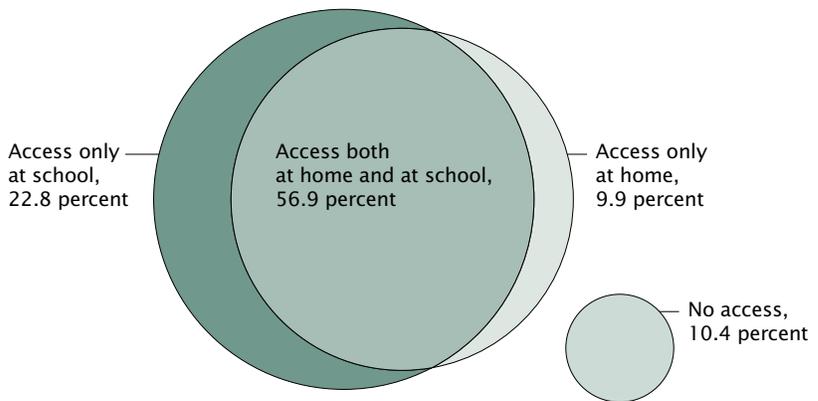
For children 6 to 17 years old, computer use at school was more nearly equal across different income, race, or ethnic groups than computer access at home (Figure 3).

School-age children in family households with incomes of \$75,000 or more had the highest rates of home

<sup>5</sup>The proportions of home Internet users among Asian and Pacific Islander and White non-Hispanic children were not significantly different. The proportions of home Internet users among Black and Hispanic children were also not significantly different.

Figure 2.  
**Access to Computers Among School-Age Children: August 2000**

(Civilian noninstitutional population)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, August 2000.

computer access, at 94 percent, compared with those with incomes below \$25,000, at 35 percent (a difference of about 60 percentage points). But at school, while 87 percent of those with the highest incomes used a computer, 72 percent of those with the lowest incomes did so, a difference of only 15 percentage points.

Figure 3 illustrates a similar equalizing effect observed among children of different racial or ethnic groups. At home, access varied from high to low by 41 percentage points. However, at school the range was much smaller, just 14 percentage points.

The net result of the effect schools have in giving computer access across income, racial, and ethnic groups is a leveling of the computer access that children of different groups have compared to what they would have had if home were the only place available for them to use computers. The absolute percentage-point gap in total computer access between children from family households with the highest and lowest incomes was only about one-third as large as the gap in

home access between these two groups. Similarly, the overall computer access gap between White non-Hispanic school-age children and Black or Hispanic school-age children was just over one-third the size of the gap between these groups in home computer access.<sup>6</sup>

**ADULT ACCESS TO COMPUTERS AND THE INTERNET**

**More adults have computers and use the Internet at home than ever before.**

More than half of all adults 18 years old and over, 55 percent, lived in a household with at least one computer in 2000, compared with only 46 percent in 1998. Thirty-seven percent of all adults used the Internet at home, compared with just 23 percent in 1998 (Table C).

The oldest adults had the lowest rates of home Internet use. Only 13 percent of those 65 years old or over used the Internet at home.

<sup>6</sup>The proportions of overall computer access among Black and Hispanic school-age children were not significantly different.

Among those 55 to 64 years, 31 percent used the Internet at home.

Interestingly, among adults less than 55 years old, the proportion using the Internet at home showed little variation by age group. Only about 4 percentage points separated the groups with the lowest and highest proportions of Internet users: 42 percent for 18 to 24 years and 46 percent for 35 to 44 years.

A small difference existed between the proportions of men and women who used the Internet at home (39 percent of men compared with 36 percent of women). However, this difference was due to the higher proportion of women 55 years old and over — an age group with lower rates of Internet use regardless of sex.

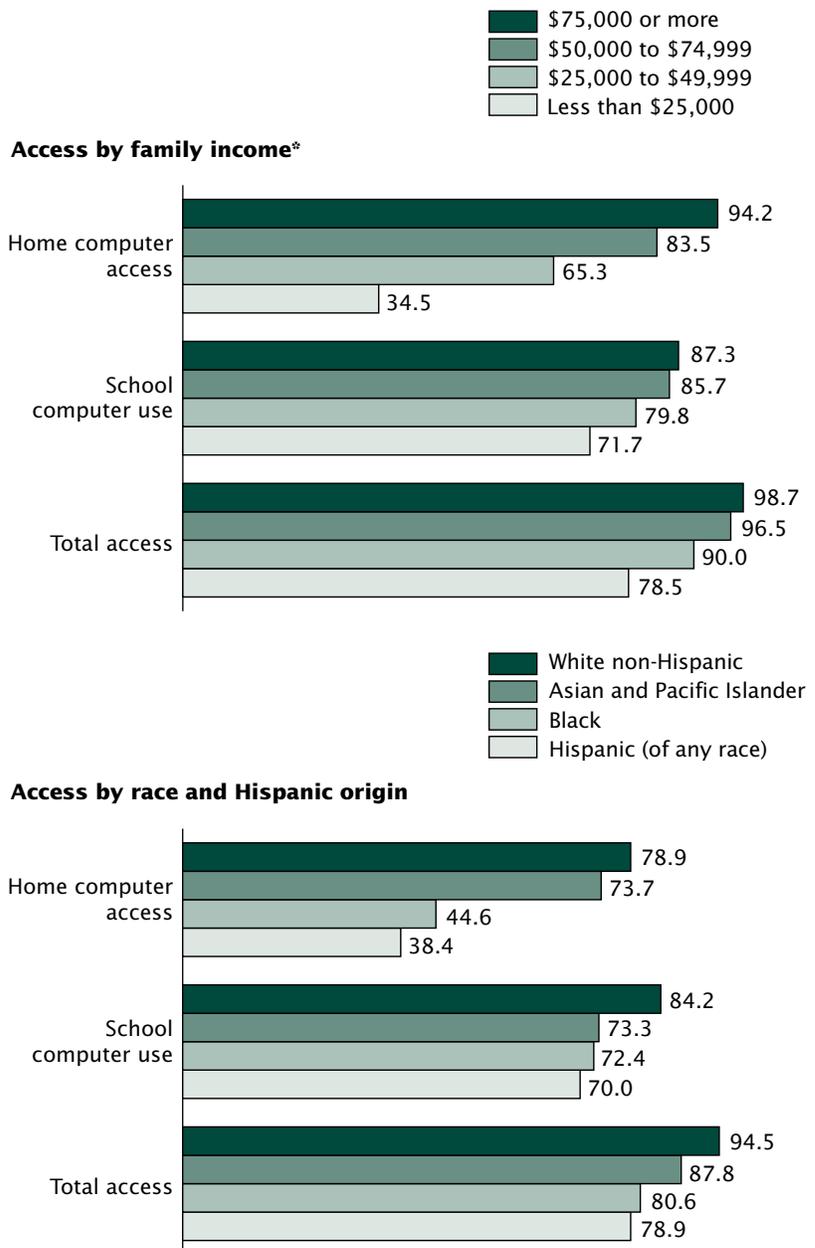
**More affluent and more highly educated adults are more likely to have computers or use the Internet.**

Eighty-seven percent of related adults living in family households with incomes of \$75,000 or more had a computer, compared with 28 percent of adults living in family households with incomes less than \$25,000. Two-thirds (67 percent) of related adults living in the wealthiest family households used the Internet at home, compared with 14 percent of those living in households with the lowest family incomes.

The most highly educated adults were the most likely to have a computer or use the Internet at home. Seventy-eight percent of adults with a bachelor's degree or more had access to a computer at home, compared with 46 percent of those holding only a high school diploma.

Figure 3.  
**Computer Access at Home and School Among Children 6 to 17 Years Old by Family Income, Race, and Hispanic Origin: August 2000**

(Percent of civilian noninstitutional population)



\*Among children in families.  
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, August 2000.

Table C.

## Access to a Home Computer and Use of the Internet at Home by Adults 18 Years and Over: August 2000

(Numbers in thousands. Civilian noninstitutional population)

Characteristic	Total 18 years and over	Home computer access		Use Internet at home	
	Number	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>TOTAL</b> .....	<b>201,985</b>	<b>111,935</b>	<b>55.4</b>	<b>75,322</b>	<b>37.3</b>
<b>AGE</b>					
18 to 24 years .....	26,458	15,256	57.7	10,984	41.5
25 to 34 years .....	37,394	22,004	58.8	16,406	43.9
35 to 44 years .....	44,665	29,294	65.6	20,306	45.5
45 to 54 years .....	37,007	24,003	64.9	16,196	43.8
55 to 64 years .....	23,710	12,062	50.9	7,240	30.5
65 years and over .....	32,751	9,316	28.4	4,190	12.8
<b>SEX</b>					
Men .....	96,789	55,023	56.8	37,243	38.5
Women .....	105,196	56,912	54.1	38,079	36.2
<b>RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN</b>					
White .....	168,293	97,094	57.7	66,488	39.5
White non-Hispanic .....	148,001	89,958	60.8	62,942	42.5
Black .....	23,998	8,890	37.0	4,927	20.5
Asian and Pacific Islander .....	7,993	5,277	66.0	3,491	43.7
Hispanic (of any race) .....	21,350	7,530	35.3	3,740	17.5
<b>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT</b>					
Less than high school diploma .....	33,055	7,687	23.3	2,792	8.4
High school diploma/GED .....	66,401	30,635	46.1	17,182	25.9
Some college .....	54,376	35,876	66.0	25,284	46.5
Bachelor's degree or more .....	48,153	37,737	78.4	30,065	62.4
<b>LABOR FORCE STATUS</b>					
Employed .....	132,772	84,382	63.6	59,020	44.5
Unemployed .....	5,346	2,626	49.1	1,808	33.8
Not in labor force .....	63,866	24,928	39.0	14,494	22.7
<b>SIZE OF HOUSEHOLD</b>					
One person .....	27,237	8,195	30.1	6,354	23.3
Two to four people .....	143,968	84,757	58.9	57,596	40.0
Five or more people .....	30,779	18,983	61.7	11,373	37.0
<b>REGION</b>					
Northeast .....	38,771	22,043	56.9	14,833	38.3
Midwest .....	46,383	26,236	56.6	17,551	37.8
South .....	71,688	36,601	51.1	24,569	34.3
West .....	45,143	27,055	59.9	18,369	40.7
<b>METROPOLITAN STATUS</b>					
Metropolitan .....	163,441	93,773	57.4	64,066	39.2
Inside central city .....	58,521	29,042	49.6	19,721	33.7
Outside central city .....	104,920	64,731	61.7	44,344	42.3
Nonmetropolitan .....	38,544	18,162	47.1	11,256	29.2
<b>FAMILY INCOME</b>					
<b>TOTAL ADULTS IN FAMILIES</b> .....	<b>157,897</b>	<b>94,911</b>	<b>60.1</b>	<b>62,671</b>	<b>39.7</b>
Under \$15,000 .....	13,604	3,237	23.8	1,531	11.3
15,000-19,999 .....	6,470	1,982	30.6	954	14.7
20,000-24,999 .....	8,390	2,866	34.2	1,515	18.1
25,000-34,999 .....	18,102	8,392	46.4	4,700	26.0
35,000-49,999 .....	21,738	13,309	61.2	8,136	37.4
50,000-74,999 .....	28,526	21,242	74.5	14,529	50.9
75,000+ .....	36,398	31,812	87.4	24,199	66.5
Not reported .....	24,668	12,071	48.9	7,107	28.8

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, August 2000.

Among adults with at least a bachelor's degree, 62 percent used the Internet at home, compared with only 26 percent of adults with only a high school diploma.

**Asian and Pacific Islander adults are the most likely to have computers at home.**

Among Asians and Pacific Islanders 18 years old and over, 66 percent lived in a household with a computer, the highest of any race or ethnic group. In turn, 61 percent of White non-Hispanic adults lived in households with a computer, significantly more than Black or Hispanic adults (37 and 35 percent, respectively).<sup>7</sup>

The proportion of Asian and Pacific Islander and White non-Hispanic adults using the Internet at home was more than double that of Black adults (44 percent, 43 percent, and 21 percent, respectively).<sup>8</sup> Hispanic adults had the lowest home Internet use (18 percent).

**USES OF THE INTERNET**

**E-mail is the most common use of the Internet at home.**

More home Internet users, both adults and children, sent or received e-mail in 2000 than did any other online activity. Among children, 73 percent of those who used the Internet at home used e-mail, compared with 68 percent who used the Internet to do research for school or to take courses online, the next most common use (Table D). Eighty-eight percent of adult Internet users sent or

<sup>7</sup>The proportions of Black or Hispanic adults with a computer at home were not significantly different. Based on the August 2000 Current Population Survey sample, 2 percent of Black adults 18 years old or over and 2 percent of Asians and Pacific Islanders over 18 years are also of Hispanic origin. Hispanics may be of any race.

<sup>8</sup>The proportions of Asians and Pacific Islanders and White non-Hispanic adults who were home Internet users were not significantly different.

Table D.  
**Specific Uses of the Internet at Home by Adults and Children: August 2000**

(Numbers in thousands. Civilian noninstitutional population)

Specific use	People using the Internet at home			
	Children 3 to 17 years		Adults 18 years and over	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Any Internet use</b> .....	<b>18,437</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>75,322</b>	<b>100.0</b>
E-mail.....	13,438	72.9	66,046	87.7
School research or courses.....	12,560	68.1	18,080	24.0
Check news, weather, sports .....	3,658	19.8	39,528	52.5
Make phone calls .....	630	3.4	4,831	6.4
Information search.....	6,079	33.0	48,358	64.2
Job search .....	418	2.3	14,930	19.8
Job-related tasks.....	272	1.5	25,347	33.7
Shop or pay bills.....	1,467	8.0	30,014	39.8
Play games, entertainment, fun .....	1,981	10.7	3,655	4.9
Other .....	1,099	6.0	7,051	9.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, August 2000.

received e-mail, far more than performed information searches (64 percent), the next most common adult use.

**Internet use is influencing how society manages information.**

Although the online activities of Internet users show how people with the technology use it, the total proportion of people in the population performing certain tasks online demonstrates how the technology might impact society.

The Internet has become a major venue for the dissemination of news (Figure 4). Among adults, nearly 1 in 5 used the Internet at home to check on news, weather, or sports. Nearly 1 in 4 adults used the Internet for other sorts of information searches, such as information about businesses, health practices, or government services.

The Internet also affects interpersonal communication. About 1 in 3 adults used e-mail from home. More than 1 in 5 children (22 percent) used home e-mail.

Finally, the Internet acts as a venue for work and school to enter the

home. One adult in eight used the Internet to perform job-related tasks using a home Internet connection. Twenty-one percent of children used the Internet to perform school-related tasks, such as research for assignments or taking courses online.

**SOURCE OF THE DATA**

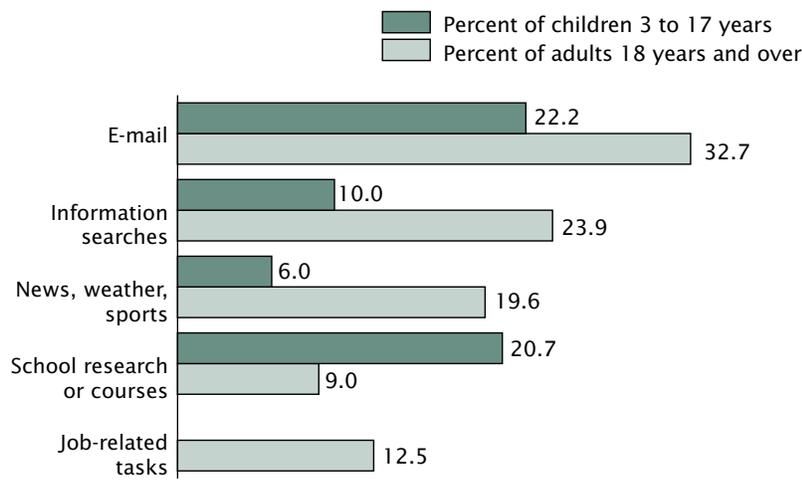
Most estimates in this report come from data obtained in August 2000 from the Current Population Survey (CPS). Some estimates are based on data obtained from the CPS in earlier years or other months. The U.S. Census Bureau conducts the Current Population Survey every month, although this report uses only data from months during which a Computer Use or Internet supplement were administered for its estimates.

**ACCURACY AND RELIABILITY OF THE DATA**

Statistics from sample surveys are subject to sampling and nonsampling error. All comparisons presented in this report have taken sampling error into account and meet the Census Bureau's standards for statistical significance. Nonsampling errors in surveys may be attributed

Figure 4.  
**Adults and Children Using the Internet for  
 a Specific Task: August 2000**

(Percent of civilian noninstitutional population)



Note: While some older children used the Internet to work at home, the proportion was too small to be shown.  
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, August 2000.

to a variety of sources, such as how the survey was designed, how respondents interpret questions, how able and willing respondents are to provide correct answers, and how accurately answers are coded and classified. The Census Bureau employs quality control procedures throughout the production process — including the overall design of surveys, testing the wording of questions, review of the work of interviewers and coders, and statistical review of reports.

The CPS employs ratio estimation, whereby sample estimates are adjusted to independent estimates of the national population by age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin. This weighting partially corrects for bias due to undercoverage, but how it affects different variables in the survey is not precisely known. Moreover, biases may also be present when people who are missed in the survey differ from those interviewed in ways other than the categories used in weighting (age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin). All of these considerations affect

comparisons across different surveys or data sources. Please contact the Demographic Statistical Methods Division via Internet e-mail at [dsmd\\_s&a@census.gov](mailto:dsmd_s&a@census.gov) for information on the source of the data, the accuracy of the estimates, the use of standard errors, and the computation of standard errors.

### MORE INFORMATION

The electronic version of this report is available on the Internet, at the Census Bureau's World Wide Web site ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)). Once on the site, click on "C" under the "Subjects A-Z" heading, and then "Computer Use and Ownership."

### CONTACTS

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### USER COMMENTS

The Census Bureau welcomes the comments and advice of data and report users. If you have any suggestions or comments, please write to:

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