

THE CONTINUUM CONTINUES

A Broad Look at Barriers to Internet Access and Use Among American Adolescents

Cyberworld Unlimited? Digital Inequality & News Spaces of Informal Education for Young People

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Youth Net Access Themes: Location, Circumstances & Frequency

- **Who is not online?**
- **Why?**
- **Other variations in access**
 - **Location**
 - Home
 - School
 - Library & Beyond
 - **Circumstances**
 - Shared/Private
 - Filtered/Unfiltered
 - Dialup/Broadband
 - **Frequency**
 - Low Users



Methodology

- Random digit dial telephone survey of 1100 teen/parent dyads
- Interviewed teens ages 12-17
- Focus groups with middle & high schoolers, summer of 2004
- Builds on teen/parents survey work done in 2000

Internet Use Basics

- 68% of American adults go online
- 87% of American teens ages 12 to 17 use the internet, or about 21 million teens
- 80% of all parents online
- 50% of families have broadband @ home
- 27% of internet users are low frequency users – online 2x a week or less.
- 14% of online teens go online a few times a month or less often



Who is Not Online?

- 13% of teens 12-17 don't go online
- 47% of offline teens once went online
- 52% of offline teens say they would like to go online
- 7% of all teens have *never* been online

Demographics of Offline teens

- **Close to 7 in 10 teens who don't go online are younger (12-14); remaining 30% are older (15-17).**
- **One third (1/3) are non-white, two thirds (2/3) are white.**
- **One third (35%) live in households earning less than \$30,000 annually; two-thirds live in households that earn more.**
- **One quarter live in urban areas, about 2 in 5 live in the suburbs, and the remaining third live in rural areas.**



Why Not Online?

- Themes: Access, Time and Desire
- Major reasons not online:
 - Not interested
 - Too busy
 - No access
 - Too frustrating
- 1 in 10 say that fears, bad experiences, or their parents keep them offline



Location: Where do teens go online?

- 87% of online teens have access at home
- 78% have internet access at school
- 74% go online from a friend's or relative's house
- 54% have gone online from a library
- 9% go online from a community center or house of worship
- 93% of online teens have multiple points of access—home AND school AND the library AND a friend's house...



Circumstances of Internet Use

- 90% of online teens share the computer with other family members
- 73% of teens with home internet access use a computer in a public space in the home
- 54% of teens use computers with filters or monitoring software
- More 60% of parents report monitoring their child's internet use, including setting rules about how long a child can go online
- 83% of all teens say that *most* of the other people they know go online; 10% say some, 6% say very few.



Broadband vs. Dialup Users

- Teen broadband users go online more often and engage in a wider array of activities than dial up users
- 51% of all online teens with home access have high speed internet at home.
- More dial up teens are likely to be low users (online less than 3 times a week)
- More on low-frequency users...



Broadband vs. Dialup (2)

- More dial up teens (21%) report that they'd like to go online more than they currently do; only 11% of bbd users say the same.
- Why aren't they online more often
 - Too many other responsibilities
 - No time
 - No access
 - Not allowed



Frequency of Use: Basics

- 51% of online teens go online daily
 - 24% several times a day
 - 27% about once a day
- 21% go online 3 to 5 days a week
- 13% go online 1 to 2 days a week
- 14% go online less often



Low Users: Teens online less than 3x a week

- About ¼ of online teens are low users: online one or two times a week or less.
- More likely to be boys
- Younger, 12-13 years old
- Offline parents
- Dial up users
- 34% do NOT have desktop computer (vs. 18% of higher frequency users), and another 15% have a desktop that is not net connected.



Low Users (2)

- More likely to say they'd like to go online more than they do
- Smaller universe of known 'net users for low users: 75% say most of the people they know are online, compared to 93% of high frequency users
- Lack of “personal” internet opportunities: Less to go online from home, friend's house
- Hint of lagging skills; more likely to need help with computer-related activities



Continuum Continues

- High Frequency Users
 - 3 days a week or more
 - Broadband, Access at home, No time limits,
- Low Frequency Users
 - 2 times a week or less
 - Dial up or non-home access
 - Younger, Boys
 - Limited skills
 - Many would like to go online more
- Non-Users
 - Previous Users: access problems
 - Never Used: no interest in using



Questions remain

- Is it ok to be a low user or non-user by choice?
- Or are non-users and low-users at a significant disadvantage in opportunities for learning, job skill acquisition, social development and participation in civic discourse?
- Or are they better managing an enormous flow of information and the expectation of constant contact?
- What does it mean that low levels of use appear to be related to lack of home use?

Thank You! Danke!

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Pew Internet & American Life Project

<http://www.pewinternet.org>