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2010 USC Annenberg Digital Future Study Finds Strong Negative Reaction to Paying for Online Services

Annual Report Also Reveals Internet Reliance Reaching New Peak

Millions of Americans use Twitter -- just don't ask any of them to pay for it.

The annual study of the impact of the Internet on Americans by the Center for the Digital Future found that 49 percent of Internet users said they have used free micro-blogs such as Twitter.

But when asked if they would be willing to pay for Twitter, zero percent said yes.

"Such an extreme finding that produced a zero response underscores the difficulty of getting Internet users to pay for anything that they already receive for free," said Jeffrey I. Cole, director of the Center for the Digital Future at USC's Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism.

"Twitter has no plans to charge its users, but this result illustrates, beyond any doubt, the tremendous problem of transforming free users into paying users," said Cole. "Online providers face major challenges to get customers to pay for services they now receive for free."

The responses about Twitter are reinforced by other findings in the Digital Future Study that explore Internet users' opinions about online advertising. The current study found that half of Internet users never click on Web advertising, and 70 percent said that Internet advertising is "annoying."

Yet 55 percent of users said they would rather see Web advertising than pay for content.

"Internet users can obtain content in three ways: they can steal it, or pay for it, or accept advertising on the Web pages they view," said Cole. "Users express strong negative views about online advertising, but they still prefer seeing ads as an alternative to paying for content. Consumers really want free content without advertising, but ultimately they understand that content has to be paid for -- one way or another."

The responses about Twitter and Web advertising are among the more than 180 issues explored in the 2010 Digital Future Project, which is marking its 10th year of exploring the digital realm -- the longest continuing study of its kind and the first to develop a longitudinal survey of the views and behavior of Internet users and non-users.

Americans on the Internet

The current study reveals a profile of American Internet users who go online more than ever, almost two-thirds who buy online, most households now using broadband, a majority of families that own two or more computers, and large percentages of users saying that the Internet is important in political campaigns.

However, troubling issues emerge as well, with the study finding large percentages of users who express deep distrust in online information, surprising gaps in Internet use within some age groups, low percentages of users who said that the Internet gives them more political power, and continuing declines of users who say that online technology makes the world a better place.

Among the study's findings:

* **Americans on the Internet** -- For the first time, the Internet is used by more than 80 percent of Americans -- now 82 percent.

* **Weekly hours online** -- The average time online has now reached 19 hours per week. Although more than two-thirds of Americans have gone online for a decade, the largest year-to-year increases in weekly online use have been reported in the two most recent Digital Future studies.

* **Gaps in Internet use in age groups** -- Not surprisingly, Internet use continues to increase as age decreases, with 100 percent of those under age 24 going online. However, a surprisingly high percentage of Americans between 36 and 55 are not Internet users: among respondents age 46 to 55, 19 percent are non-users; among those 36 to 45, 15 percent are non-users.

* **Low adoption of new media** -- Although new media is used by large percentages of Internet users age 24 and under, overall large percentages of Internet users never go online to do instant messaging (50 percent), work on a blog (79 percent), participate in chat rooms (80 percent), or make or receive phone calls (85 percent).

* **Does technology make the world a better place** -- The percentage of users age 16 and older who said that communication technology makes the world a better place has declined to 56 percent of users from its peak of 66 percent in 2002.

* **Internet and Political Campaigns** -- although more than 70 percent of users agree that the Internet is important for political campaigns, only 27 percent of users said that by using the Internet public officials will care more about what people think, and 29 percent said that the Internet can give people more of a say in what government does.

* **Buying online** -- 65 percent of adult Internet users buy online (the same as in 2008), and make an average of 35.2 purchases per year (up from 34.1 per year in 2008).

* **Internet impact on traditional retail declines** -- 61 percent of Internet users said that online purchasing has reduced their buying in traditional retail stores -- down from 69 percent in 2008.

* **Top 10 online purchases** -- 59 percent of Internet users said they purchase books or clothes online, followed by gifts (55 percent), travel (53 percent), electronics/appliances (47 percent), videos (46 percent), computers or peripherals (41 percent), software or games (40 percent), CDs (40 percent), and products for hobbies (38 percent).

Newspapers: The Decline Continues

The Digital Future Project has identified a range of findings that illustrate the continuing decline of American daily print newspapers:

* The study found that as sources of information – their primary function – newspapers rank below the Internet or television. Only 56 percent of Internet users ranked newspapers as important or very important sources of information for them – a decrease from 60 percent in 2008 and below the Internet (78 percent), and television (68 percent).

* Even lower are the percentages of users who consider newspapers important as sources of entertainment for them, now considered important by 29 percent of Internet users, and down from 32 percent in 2008 – also last among principal media.

* Eighteen percent of Internet users said they stopped a subscription to a newspaper or magazine because they now get the same or related content online – down slightly from 22 percent in 2008, but nevertheless a strong indication that print newspapers can be sacrificed by a significant percentage of Internet users.

* Internet users were asked where they would go for information provided by their newspaper if the print edition ceased, 59 percent said they would read the online edition of the publication; only 37 percent said they would instead read the print edition of another newspaper.

* Twenty-two percent of users who read newspapers said they would not miss the print edition of their newspaper.

"The downward spiral in print newspaper circulation no doubt will be accelerated by advances in online delivery of news content through e-readers or other handheld electronic devices," said Cole. "After years of aborted attempts, these advances finally appear to be practical and affordable methods of providing electronic news content to readers. If so, what will that mean for the future of the traditional print newspaper?"

Where is the Trust?

Although going online is unquestionably a vital tool for communication, entertainment, and purchasing, and Internet use is at its highest level thus far, several issues that have emerged from the findings of the current Digital Future Study raise questions about why such vital technology is considered unreliable or mistrusted by significant percentages of its users:

* Sixty-one percent of users said that only half or less of online information is reliable -- a new low level for the Digital Future Project.

* Even more disturbing is that 14 percent of Internet users said that only a small portion or none of the information online is reliable – a percentage that has grown for the past three years and is now at the highest level thus far in the Digital Future Project.

* Also revealing is the percentage of users who have limited trust even in the Web sites they visit regularly: although 78 percent said that most or all of the information on the sites they visit regularly is reliable (a decline from the previous two years), 22 percent of users say that only one half or less of information on sites they visit regularly is reliable.

* Even search engines such as Google and Yahoo – traditional stalwarts of online credibility – have lost some of their luster. While 53 percent of Internet users said that most or all of the information provided by search engines is reliable and accurate, that percentage declined slightly in the current Digital Future Study and is well below the peak of 64 percent in 2006.

* 36 percent of users said only about half of information provided by search engines is reliable and accurate, and 12 percent said only a small portion or none of it was reliable.

* Only 46 percent of users said they have some trust or a lot of trust in the Internet in general. Nine percent of users have no trust in the Internet.

While these issues focus primarily on the views of users about trust in online information, perceptions of reliability, and concerns about security. But we also have to consider if these responses represent the tip of an iceberg that includes deeper concerns among users about the role of online technology in their lives.

"Internet users deal with an unprecedented level of online connections and communication beyond basic e-mail that did not exist a decade ago: social networking sites, online video, PDAs, texting, IM, e-readers, portable video devices, and most recently the iPad and competing devices to come," said Cole. "Through this technology, users must rely on the Internet more than ever before, yet at the same time this survey is identifying growing concern about reliability of the technology and user trust in it. Have we reached the point at which users are going into 'online overload?'"

The Center for the Digital Future: 10 years of exploring the digital realm

The Center for the Digital Future at the USC Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism created and organizes the World Internet Project, which includes the Digital Future Project and similar studies in North America, South America, Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and Australasia.

The Digital Future Project provides a broad year-to-year exploration of the influence of the Internet and online technology on Americans. Since 2000, the project has examined the behavior and views of a national sample of Internet users and non-users, as well as comparisons between light users (5 hours or less per week using the Internet) and heavy users (more than 24 hours per week on the Internet).

The project also explores differences in online behavior among users of telephone modems compared to broadband.

"When the Center for the Digital Future began its work in 1999, it was one of the first research organizations to devote its primary efforts to the study of online behavior, yet at that point Internet use was already relatively mature," said Cole. "Conventional wisdom could have suggested that with such a high level of Internet penetration and several years of use, views and behavior about online technology might be stable – or stagnant.

"Yet beginning with our first Digital Future Study in 2000, and in every year since, we have found extraordinary levels of shifting views, new and evolving attitudes about technology, adoption of new media, and casting off of old methods as part of involvement – or not being involved -- in the online experience," said Cole.

For highlights of the 2010 Digital Future Project or to order a copy of the complete report, visit www.digitalcenter.org.

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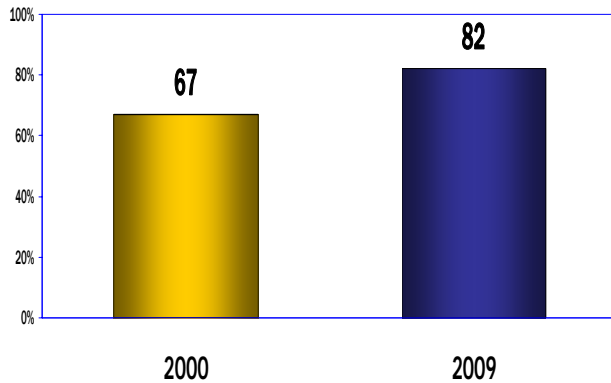
Digital Future Project 2010

Ten Comparisons of Internet Views and Behavior: 2000 vs. 2009

Internet use in America was already well-established in the United States when the first Digital Future Study was conducted in 2000, becoming the first longitudinal study of the views and behavior of Internet users and non-users in the United States. That early broad use of technology did not result in unchanging views and actions; our annual national surveys over the past decade identified – and continue to identify -- profound changes in the adoption and use of the Internet, as well as what users and non-users think about the digital realm.

Here are 10 examples comparing views and behavior in 2000 and in 2009; more details on each issue are explored in the Digital Future Report..

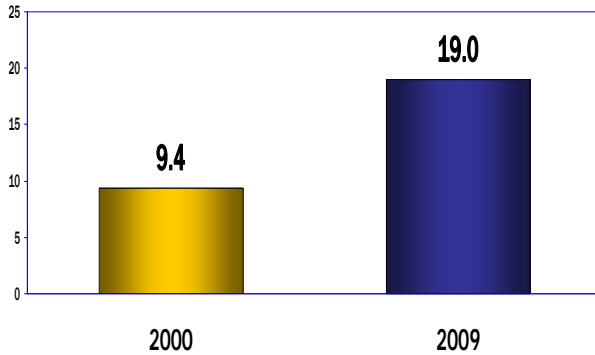
Overall Internet Use: 2000 vs. 2009



Internet Use in the United States

In 2000, six years after the portals of the Web were opened to public use, more than two-thirds of Americans were Internet users. That percentage surpassed 70 percent in 2001 and 75 percent in 2003, and reached 80 percent in 2008. The current Digital Future Study reported that 82 percent of Americans now go online – the highest level thus far. *(See page 35)*

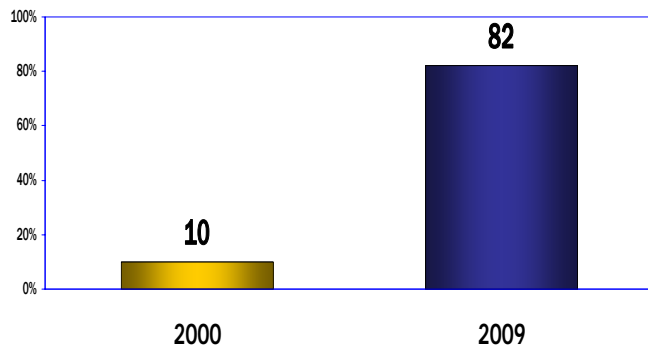
Hours Per Week Online



Hours Per Week Online

In 2000, Internet users went online an average of 9.4 hours per week, a figure that has more than doubled in the current Digital Future Study – now 19 hours. Of particular interest: even though Internet use has been a regular habit since the mid-1990s, the largest year-to-year increases in weekly hours online have been reported in the two most recent years of the Digital Future Studies. *(See page 39)*

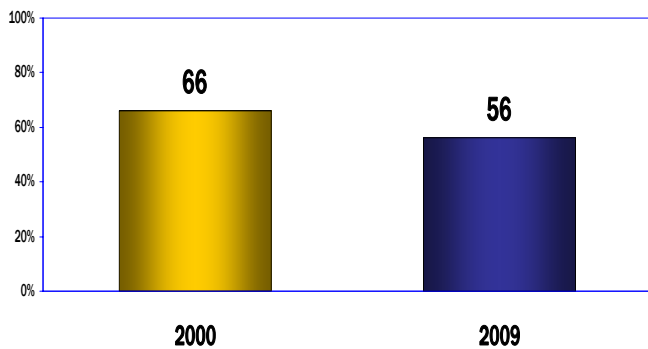
**Broadband Access at Home
(Percentage of Users)**



Internet Connection at Home by Broadband

Access to the Internet at home through a broadband connection was almost non-existent in 2000; only 10 percent of users chose to pay for a fast, always-on link as an alternative to access through a telephone modem. On a steady increase in every year of the Digital Future Project, broadband is now used by more than 80 percent of Internet users. *(See page 51)*

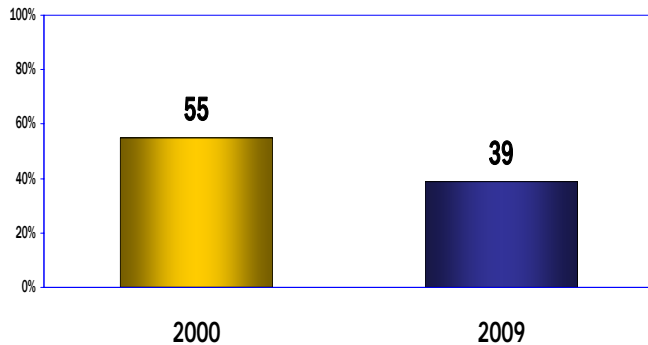
**Internet Users Who Say Communications
Technology Makes the World a Better Place**



Communication Technology: How Does it Affect the World?

In 2000, 66 percent of Internet users said communication technology makes the world a better place. That percentage has risen and fallen modestly over the last decade, but the percentage this year has now declined to 56 percent of users – the lowest level thus far in the Digital Future Project. *(See page 58)*

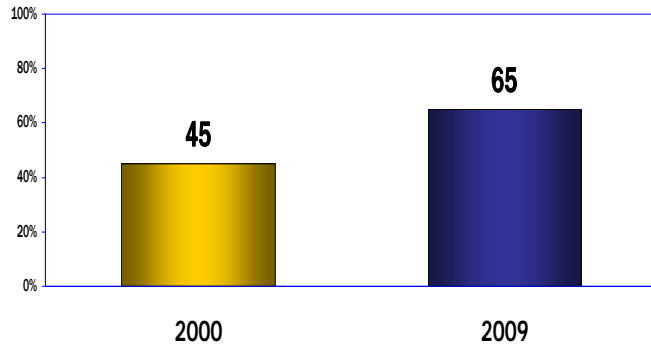
**Internet Users Who Say Most or All
Information Online is Reliable**



Information Online: Is it Reliable?

Nearly 80 percent of Web users rely on the Internet as an important source of information *(see page 67)*, but a much smaller percentage of those users believe that the online information is reliable – and that percentage continues to decline. In 2000, 55 percent of users said that most or all of online information is reliable; in the current study, 39 percent had the same response – a new low level for the Digital Future Project. *(See page 71)*

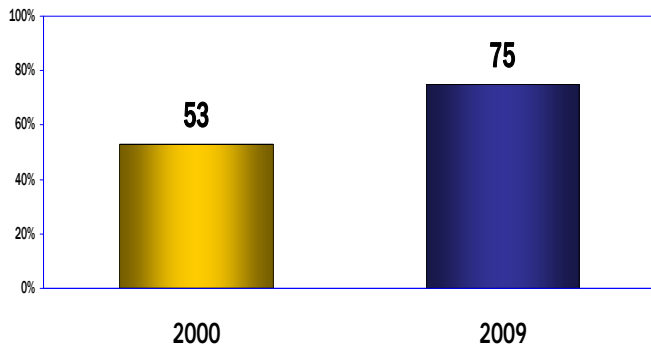
**Percentage of Internet Users
Who Buy Online**



Who is Buying Online?

Almost half of Internet users (45 percent) were buying online in 2000. In spite of the economic recession last year, almost two-thirds (65 percent) of Internet users now buy online. (*See page 105*)

**Internet Purchasers Who Browse in Retail
and Then Buy Online**

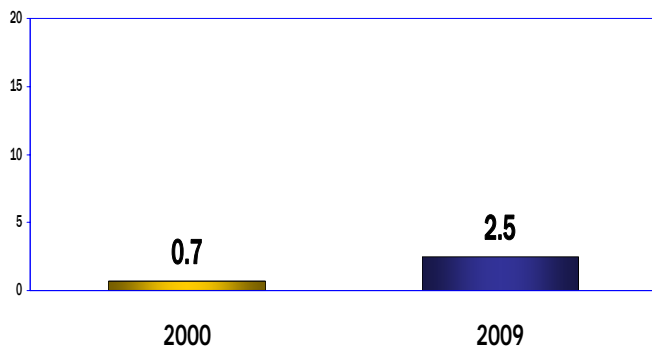


Browsing in Stores, then Buying Online

The Internet became competition for traditional brick-and-mortar retail stores as soon as products began to sell online. In 2000, 53 percent of users said they browsed in retail stores and then bought online; in the current Digital Future Study, that figure has grown substantially to 75 percent of users who browse in stores and then buy online. But traditional retail also gains from Internet use; although large percentages of Internet users buy

online (*see page 105*), even larger percentages continue to use the Web as a browsing reference before they purchase at local retail stores. (*See page 120*)

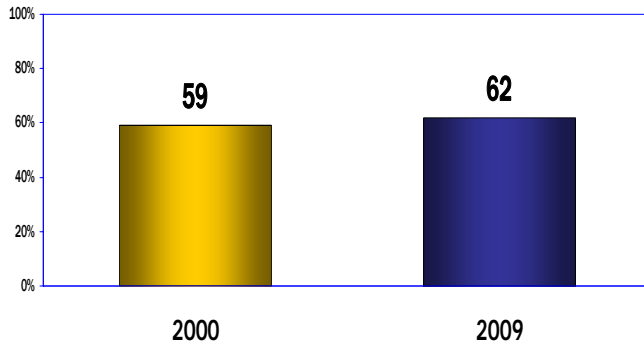
Online Friends Met in Person



Online Friends Become In-Person Friends

Internet users in 2000 reported an average of less than one person who they originally connected with online and then later met in person. Since then, the average has risen steadily, and in the current Digital Future Study has reached 2.5 friends originally met online who are now known in person – a high for the studies. (*See page 140*)

Internet Users Who are Not Likely to Go Online in the Next Year

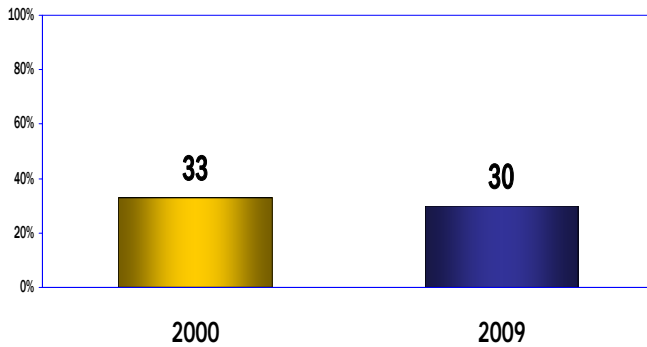


Will Internet Non-Users Go Online?

Not all of the findings in 10 years of Digital Future Studies represent large changes in opinion or behavior. For example, although the percentage of Internet non-users continues to shrink – now only 18 percent of Americans – the percentage who say they are not likely to go online in the next year has remained remarkably consistent over the decade, fluctuating only a few percentage points to its

current 62 percent figure – compared to 59 percent in the first study. (See page 65)

Internet Non-Users Who Don't Go Online Because They Have "No Interest" or the Internet is "Not Useful"



Non-Users: Reasons for not Going Online

Before 2008, the reason most cited by non-users for not going online was “no computer” or “no Internet connection.” Since then, however, the reason for not going online most reported by non-users is “no interest” or “not useful,” mentioned by 30 percent of non-users in the two most recent studies, compared to 33 percent in 2000. This response is a reminder that although the Internet is considered indispensable

by the 82 percent of Americans who are users, the primary reason why the other 18 percent do not go online is they consider the Internet unnecessary in their lives. (See page 62)

Highlights: The 2010 Digital Future Project – Year Nine

“Light users” = 5 hours or less per week using the Internet

“Heavy users” = more than 24 hours per week on the Internet

Internet Users and Non-Users: Who is Online? Who is Not? What are Users Doing Online?

Internet Use in the United States

For the first time in the decade of studies conducted by the Digital Future Project, Internet use has surpassed 80 percent of Americans – now 82 percent. Less than 20 percent of Americans are not Internet users. *(Page 35)*

Internet Use and Age

Not surprisingly, Internet use continues to increase as age decreases. In the current study, 100 percent of respondents age 24 or under use the Internet. However, a surprisingly high percentage of Americans between 36 and 55 -- those who most likely would have been early adopters of technology -- are not Internet users. *(Page 37)*

Internet Use and Income

Even though the expense of using the Internet is cited by only 11 percent of non-users as a reason for not going online, the Digital Future Project continues to find that Internet use has a strong relationship with income. *(Page 38)*

Hours per Week Online

The amount of time that Internet users spend online has grown in each year of the Digital Future studies, and has now reached an average of 19 hours per week. Even though more than two-thirds of Americans have gone online for a decade, the largest year-to-year increases in weekly online use have been reported in the two most recent Digital Future Studies. *(Page 39)*

Activities on the Internet: Communication

Users frequently go online for a variety of communications activities, but a notable percentage of users do not participate in more recently-developed Internet applications, such as instant messaging, working on blogs, participating in chat rooms, or making or receiving phone calls (85 percent). *(Page 40)*

Working Computers in the Home

Multiple computer ownership continues to be a growing trend. In the current study, more than half of respondents (51 percent) said they own two or more computers; of those, 28 percent own three or more computers. The largest overall growth in computer ownership was reported by respondents with four or more computers. *(Page 45)*

The Internet at Work: Active Use

Internet users report that they are actively going online nine hours per week at work on average – a significant increase for the second straight year and the highest level thus far in the Digital Future Project. *(Page 47)*

The Internet at Work: Non-Work Activities

An increasing percentage of users who go online at work said they use the Internet for non-work related reasons, among them general Web surfing, chatting, instant messaging, and reading and writing e-mails. *(Page 48)*

Using the Internet at Home for Work

In the current study, 57 percent of respondents who use the Internet at work said they sometimes or often go online at home for their jobs – the same percentage as in 2008. *(Page 49)*

Productivity and the Internet at Work

The percentage of users who said the Internet at work makes them more productive remains high, but nevertheless continued to decline from previous years. *(Page 50)*

Internet Connection at Home: Modem, Broadband, Cell Phone

Internet access through a broadband connection has increased in every year of the Digital Future Project, and has now surpassed 80 percent of Internet users -- up from only 10 percent in 2000. *(Page 51)*

Internet Access by Cell Phone and Wireless Computer

Internet access through cell phones and wireless computers continues to increase, growing substantially in the current Digital Future Project and reaching a new high level for the study. *(Page 54)*

Communication Technology: How Does it Affect the World?

Internet users and non-users continue to express divergent views about the impact of new communication technology on the world. The percentage of users who said communication technology is making the world a better place has generally been declining for five years. *(Page 58)*

Internet Non-Users

Internet Non-users: Were They Ever Online?

Of the 18 percent of Americans who are not currently using the Internet, 39 percent had previously gone online, and had used the Internet for an average of three years before stopping. *(Page 61)*

Internet Non-Users: Reasons for Not Being Online

Those who do not go online continue to offer four principal reasons for not going online -- but some new trends are developing. *(Page 62)*

“Internet Dropouts”: Why Do Users Stop Going Online?

“Internet dropouts” -- those who previously used the Internet but no longer go online -- continue to report several principal reasons for continuing to be non-users. But as with other non-users, some of the responses by Internet dropouts changed significantly in the current Digital Future study. *(Page 63)*

Internet Dropouts: Will They Go Back Online?

The percentage of Internet dropouts who said they will go back online declined considerably in the current study. *(Page 65)*

Media Use And Trust

Views about Sources of Information and Entertainment

In the current Digital Future Project, a large majority of respondents age 17 and older said that the Internet was an important or very important source of information for them -- higher than the figure reported for television, newspapers, or radio. Comparing the views of users about the importance of entertainment sources, television ranks highest, with 79 percent of users saying it is an important or very important entertainment source for them, compared to the Internet, radio, and newspapers. *(Page 67)*

Reliability of Information Online: Views of Internet Users

For the third year in a row, a declining percentage of Internet users said that most or all of the information online is reliable. *(Page 71)*

Online Information: Reliability and Accuracy of Frequently-Visited Web Sites

Internet users have much more faith in the Web sites they visit regularly than they do in information online overall, but that faith continues to decline. *(Page 73)*

Web Sites: Which Are Reliable and Accurate, and Which Are Not?

The percentage of Internet users who said that most or all of the information posted by individuals, governments, and established media is reliable and accurate rose slightly in the current Digital Future Study. *(Page 75)*

Social Networking Sites: Reliability and Accuracy

A new question for the Digital Future Project found that only 15 percent of users said that most or all of the information on social networking sites is reliable and accurate. *(Page 81)*

Search Engines: Reliability and Accuracy

A majority of Internet users said that most or all of the information provided by search engines such as Google is reliable and accurate. However, 12 percent of users said that only a small portion or none of the information provided by search engines is reliable and accurate, up slightly from 10 percent in 2008.

(Page 82)

Trust in the Internet

Forty-two percent of respondents said they have some trust or a lot of trust in the Internet. Fourteen percent of respondents said they have no trust in the Internet. *(Page 84)*

TV Viewing and Time-Shifting

Time-shifting of video viewing is increasing, but only marginally. *(Page 86)*

Trends in Online Media Use

Internet users continue to report considerable time each week using a variety of online media, but in the current study, use of the two most popular online media declined. *(Page 88)*

Twitter, E-books, Internet Video, and Audio Podcasts

In several new questions for this year's Digital Future Study, Internet users were asked about their use of media that have been growing in popularity, including Twitter, e-books, and audio podcasts. Among other responses, the study found that nearly half of those who go online have used free micro-blogs such as Twitter or Facebook. However, zero percent of users said they would be willing to pay for Twitter, if the free social networking service required a fee. *(Page 89)*

Would You Miss The Print Edition of Your Newspaper?

While Internet users report that they devote significant amounts of time to reading online newspapers, 62 percent of users who read newspapers offline said they would miss the print edition of their newspaper if it ceased to exist -- an increase for the second year in a row. However, 22 percent of users who read newspapers said they would not miss the print edition of their newspaper, down from 24 percent in 2008. *(Page 91)*

Does Online Content Lead to Cancelled Print Subscriptions?

Even though large percentages of users who read newspapers would miss the print edition of the publication if it was no longer available (see the previous question), a notable percentage of Internet users -- 18 percent -- said they stopped a subscription for a newspaper or magazine because they now get the same or related content online, a decline from 22 percent in 2008. *(Page 91)*

Alternatives to Print Newspapers

A new question for the current Digital Future Study found that if the print edition of Internet users' newspaper stopped publishing, 59 percent would read the online edition of the publication for the same information. Only 37 percent said they would read the print edition of another newspaper if their publication ended its print edition. *(Page 92)*

Cell Phones and Text Messages

Text messaging by cell phone users has more than doubled in only two years; overall, cell phone users who send text messages average 38 messages per day, compared to 16 in 2007. More specifically, text messaging is almost exclusively a medium for young cell phone users; the number of messages sent per day is by far the highest among those under 18 -- 81 per day in the current study, up from 33 per day in 2007. *(Page 99)*

Posting Information Online: Blogs, Photos, and Maintaining Personal Web Pages

Content creation and distribution by Internet users on a blog, through a display of photos, or on a personal Web page, continues to increase substantially, while the percentage of respondents maintaining a personal Web site has remained generally stable for three years. *(Page 100)*

Consumer Behavior

Who Is Buying Online?

In spite of the slumping economic conditions last year, almost two-thirds (65 percent) of Internet users continue to buy online – the same percentage as in 2008. *(Page 105)*

Who Is Buying Online: Light Users Vs. Heavy Users

Three-quarters of heavy users buy online -- the same percentage as in 2008. Among light users, 48 percent buy online. *(Page 105)*

Types of Online Purchases

The percentages of users who bought in almost every category of online purchases (such as clothes, gifts, travel, or electronics) declined in the current Digital Future Study. *(Page 107)*

Online Purchasing Frequency

The average number of annual online purchases for Internet users age 18 and above increased slightly in the current Digital Future study to slightly more than 35 purchases. *(Page 108)*

Privacy Concerns when Buying Online

Very high levels of concern about privacy and security when or if buying online have been reported in all of the studies in the Digital Future Project. Looking at the views of all respondents, the level of concern is near its peak thus far in the current Digital Future Project. *(Page 109)*

Would Users Reveal Personal Information In Exchange for Services or Content?

Only eight percent of users said they would be willing to reveal personal information online in exchange for extra services and content. *(Page 112)*

Credit Card Information: Concerns about Security

Concerns about credit card security when or if buying online have been high among all respondents in all of the Digital Future studies, but the highest levels of concern (very or extremely concerned) have been in a general decline since this question was first asked in 2001. *(Page 113)*

Credit Card Security: Comparing Concerns Based on Frequency of Purchasing

Although the frequency of online use relates to reduced concerns about credit card use, the number of online purchases plays only a limited role in concerns about credit card security. *(Page 117)*

Buying Online: Effects on Traditional Retail Purchasing

A still-large but declining percentage of online purchasers said that their purchasing online has reduced their buying in retail stores. *(Page 118)*

Browsing for Products: Retail Stores Vs. The Internet

Although large percentages of Internet users buy online, even larger percentages continue to use the Web as a reference service before purchasing locally. *(Page 120)*

Views About Risking Privacy by Going Online

The percentage of Internet users who agree that people who go online put their privacy at risk has increased. *(Page 121)*

Do You Click on Web Advertisements?

Internet users continue to express strong negative views about advertising online, but their negative views declined slightly in the current study. *(Page 123)*

Web Advertisement and Purchase Decisions

Users continue to be very unenthusiastic about making purchase decisions based on responses to Web advertisements. *(Page 123)*

Web Advertising: Information Value

A growing percentage of Internet users said they find Web advertising to be less informative than traditional advertising. *(Page 124)*

Do You Find Web Advertising Annoying?

Seventy percent of users agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “I find Web advertising annoying,” the same level as in 2008. *(Page 124)*

Online Advertising vs. Paying for Internet Content

Even though users express strong negative views about online advertising, a growing percentage nevertheless prefers Web ads to support Internet pages rather than personally paying for content. *(Page 125)*

Communication Patterns

How Many Americans Are Using E-mail?

Almost all respondents who go online use e-mail (96 percent), but the percentage of Internet users who use e-mail has declined slightly for the second year in a row. *(Page 127)*

Regular contact by e-mail

E-mail users maintain weekly personal e-mail contact with an average of 6.7 people in the current study, slightly lower than the 7.3 people reported in 2008 and down from the peak of 8.9 in 2006. *(Page 128)*

How Quickly Should Users Reply to Personal E-mail?

Although a slightly smaller percentage of e-mail users in the current study said they expect a quick response to their online communications, expectations about fast response to e-mails remain high. *(Page 130)*

E-mail Communication with Teachers, Government Officials, And Health Care Professionals

Growing percentages of e-mail users are going online to communicate with teachers, government officials, and health care professionals. *(Page 132)*

The Internet and Social Relationships

The percentage of Internet users who said that going online is important in helping to maintain social relationships remained constant in the current Digital Future Study. *(Page 135)*

Cell Phones and Social Relationships

More than 70 percent of cell phones users said their phone helped them to maintain their social relationships, an increase from 64 percent in 2008. *(Page 136)*

Instant Messaging and Social Relationships

Instant messaging remains one of the most frequently-used communication tools for some age groups, but looking at all respondents shows that overall, relatively small percentages of Internet users said that instant messaging is important in maintaining social relationships. *(Page 138)*

The Internet and Online Friends

Internet users report an increase in the number of online friends, an average that in the current Digital Future Study has reached a peak thus far in the project. *(Page 140)*

Friends Met Online, then Met In Person

While the number of online friends is increasing, so is the number of friends that users meet in person after initially meeting them online. *(Page 140)*

Time Spent Socializing with Friends and Family

The percentage of Internet users in the current study who said that they spend about the same amount of face-to-face time with friends since being connected to the Internet remained stable for the third year in a row (79 percent). *(Page 141)*

Are You Ignored Because of Television or the Internet?

Forty-seven percent of Internet users said they were sometimes or often ignored because another member of the household spends too much time online. An even higher percentage (50 percent) said they were ignored because others spend too much time watching TV. *(Page 143)*

Internet Use and Contact with Others

Even though users report some negative issues involving the Internet and time spent socializing in the family, they also report that Internet use has almost no effect or a positive effect on contact with the key groups in the lives of users, including family, friends, and people who share hobbies, political beliefs, religious beliefs, and professional interests. *(Page 144)*

The Recession: Internet Use during the Economic Crisis

The current Digital Future Project asked five new questions that explored Internet users' views and behavior about going online during the economic recession. In general, low percentages of users went online to communicate about the recession or to cope with tough economic times. However, a moderate percentage said that the Internet was helpful to them during the economic crisis. *(Page 145)*

Going Online to Cope with the Recession

Only a small percentage of users agreed that they dealt with the economic downturn by spending more time online. *(Page 145)*

The Internet: Does Information Online Help Users Better Understand the Economic Crisis?

Forty-four percent of Internet users said that information online helps them better understand the economic crisis. *(Page 146)*

Do Internet Users Share Their Thoughts and Feelings about the Recession with Others Online?

Sixteen percent of Internet users share their thoughts and feelings about the current economic crisis with others online. *(Page 146)*

Reaching Out to Others Online for Help During the Economic Crisis

Compared to those who say they share their views about the economic crisis with others online, fewer – 12 percent – reach out more often to others online to get help through the recession. *(Page 147)*

Social Effects: Online Communities

Are You a Member of an Online Community?

Membership in an online community has remained generally stable for three years in the Digital Future Studies, increasing only marginally to 16 percent in the current study, but nevertheless a peak level in the project thus far. *(Page 149)*

Membership of Online Communities

Online communities involving hobbies are joined by 49 percent of users who are members of online communities. Thirty-six percent of online community members said their community was for social purposes, while 22 percent said they were involved in communities related to their professions. *(Page 150)*

Online Community Members: How Often Do They Log In?

In the current study, the online community members who said they logged into their community several times a day increased to 31 percent, a new high for the Digital Future Project. *(Page 151)*

Online Communities: Are They Useful and Important?

A larger percentage of online community members in the current Digital Future study compared to 2008 said their online communities were useful and important. *(Page 153)*

Participation in Online Communities: Does it Affect Involvement in Offline Communities?

Although most online community members said that their participation in those communities does not affect their involvement in offline communities, a growing percentage said that this involvement has decreased their involvement in offline communities somewhat or a lot. *(Page 154)*

Online Community Members: Online Interaction

Among all online community member, 52 percent said they usually interact with other members once they are logged into their online community. *(Page 154)*

Online Communities: Connection to Offline Actions

In the current study, an increasing percentage of online community members (35 percent) said they take actions offline at least monthly that are related to their online community, such as attending a meeting or seeing a doctor – up from 23 percent in 2008. *(Page 155)*

Online Communities: Are They Beneficial for Members?

For the third year in a row, the percentage who find a large amount of benefit from their online community declined. *(Page 155)*

Online Community Members: Do They Contribute to Building Their Communities?

A growing percentage of online community members said they contribute to the building of that community. *(Page 156)*

Online Community Members: Do They Meet Members of Their Community in Person?

Half of online community members said they meet in person with members of their online communities. *(Page 156)*

Social Networking Sites

Web Sites for Video Sharing or Social Networking: How Often Do You Visit?

When asked how often they visit Web sites for video sharing or social networking such as YouTube or Facebook, 58 percent of Internet users said they use these sites once a week or more – up considerably from 44 percent in 2008. *(Page 157)*

Creating Content for Video Sharing or Social Networking Sites

Compared to those who visit video sharing or social networking sites, a much smaller but growing percentage of Internet users create video content for these sites. *(Page 158)*

Why Do Online Community Members Visit Web Sites for

Video Sharing and Social Networking?

The largest and a growing percentage of Internet users who visit social networking sites such as YouTube, and social networking Web sites such as Facebook and MySpace do so to relax or fill time. *(Page 159)*

Online Communities And Social Causes

Participation In Online Communities Related to Social Causes

A very large and growing percentage of members of online communities participate in communities related to social causes. *(Page 160)*

The Internet as an Information Source about Social Causes

The percentage of online community members who said the Internet helps them stay informed about social causes remains high in the current study, at 91 percent. *(Page 161).*

Do Online Communities Encourage Members to Participate in Social Causes?

Seventy-one percent of online community members said they participate in social causes new to them since they became involved in online communities. *(Page 162)*

Social Activism and Participation In Online Communities

A smaller percentage of users in the current Digital Future study compared to 2008 said their social activism has increased since they began participating in online communities. *(Page 163)*

Has Offline Participation in Social Issues Changed because of Online Involvement?

While large percentages of online community members report that they participate in social causes online, only 12 percent said that their offline involvement in social issues has increased as a result of their online participation. *(Page 163)*

Online Communities: Participation In Non-Profit Organizations

A small but growing percentage of online community members said that their participation in non-profit organizations has decreased since their Internet use began. *(Page 164)*

Online Communities: Are They as Important as the Real World?

The percentage of members of online communities who feel as strongly about their online communities as they do about their real-world communities increased in the current study compared to 2008, growing to 53 percent. *(Page 165)*

Children And The Internet

Internet Use: The Right Amount of Time for Children?

In the current Digital Future Study, a large and growing majority of adults said the children in their households spend the right amount of time online, or need to spend more time on the Internet. And for the first time since 2003, the percentage of adults who said that the children in their households spend too much time using the Internet has declined. *(Page 168)*

Internet Use and School Grades: Children vs. Adults

Each of the Digital Future Studies has produced widely different views among children and adults about the value of the Internet for schoolwork. The current study found an even greater contrast in opinions about the value of the Internet for schoolwork. *(Page 170)*

Internet Use and Television Viewing: Use As a Punishment Tool

Punishing children by denying them access to either the Internet or television has declined for the second year in a row, in both cases decreasing from peak levels reported in 2007. *(Page 172)*

Children and Time Spent with Friends

For the third year in a row, 87 percent of adults said that the children in their household spend the same amount of time or more time with friends since using the Internet. *(Page 173)*

Political Power And Influence

The Internet's Importance in Political Campaigns

With online technology and communication playing an increasingly visible role in American politics, respondents report the highest level of agreement with the assertion that the Internet has become important for political campaigns. *(Page 175)*

Is the Internet A Tool for Political Influence?

Even though large percentages of respondents age 16 and older believe that the Internet is important in political campaigns, much smaller percentages of Americans believe that by using the Internet, public officials will care more about what people like them think. *(Page 178)*

The Internet: A Tool for Understanding Politics

While low percentages of respondents age 16 and older believe that the Internet is a tool for public influence, a large and growing percentage said that going online can help people better understand politics. *(Page 180)*

Does the Internet Give People More Say in What the Government Does?

Only modest percentages of respondents age 16 and older believe that the Internet gives people more say in what the government does. *(Page 182)*

The Internet as a Tool to Help Gain Political Power

Thirty-one percent of respondents age 16 and older agree or strongly agree that by using the Internet, people like them can have more political power, a marginal increase over 2008. *(Page 184)*

Elections and Online Information

The Internet and Information-Gathering during Election Campaigns

The percentage of adult Internet users who went online to gather information increased significantly in the current Digital Future Study, growing to 58 percent of users, up from 37 percent in 2008. *(Page 187)*

Where Do You Get Election-Related Information?

Many adult users in the current Digital Future Project accessed the four principal online sources to find information about candidates: traditional media Web sites, candidates' Web sites, Web portals such as Yahoo, and (to a much lesser extent) blogs. *(Page 188)*

The Internet and Gathering Information about Candidates and Issues

Almost all adult Internet users who go online for information-gathering during an election said they sought information about issues or candidates they supported (96 percent) – an increase over the already-high figures reported in the three previous studies. *(Page 189)*

Election Information Online: Satisfaction Levels

A large and growing percentage of adult Internet users who go online for election information were satisfied with what they found. *(Page 190)*

Volunteering Online for Political Campaign Work

A small but growing percentage of adult Internet users said they volunteered over the Internet to work for a political candidate – four percent in the current study, up from two percent in 2008. *(Page 190)*

Campaign Contributions Online

With online solicitation of campaign contributions at unprecedented levels, eight percent of adult Internet users said they contributed money to a candidate through the Internet -- an increase from five percent in 2008. *(Page 191)*

Voting Online

Even after a presidential election that featured vast Internet outreach by candidates and connection to voters, a declining percentage of respondents age 16 and older want to expand their online experience to include voting. *(Page 192)*

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