

## Trends in Broadband Adoption

### Trends within demographic groups

The following two tables decompose trends in broadband adoption across demographic and socio-economic characteristics of respondents.

### Trends in home broadband adoption by demographic group

Percentage of adults in each group with broadband at home, 2006-2009.

	2006	2007	2008	2009
<b>Yearly adoption</b>				
All adults	42%	47%	55%	63%
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	45%	50%	58%	64%
Female	38	44	53	63
<b>Families</b>				
Parents with minor children at home	51%	60%	69%	77
<b>Age</b>				
18-29	55%	63%	70%	77
30-49	50	59	69	7
50-64	38	40	50	6
65+	13	15	19	3
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>				
White (not Hispanic)	42%	48%	57%	65
Black (not Hispanic)	31	40	43	4
Hispanic (English-speaking)	41	47	56	6

Sources: 2006 data come from the Pew Internet Projects February 15 through April 6 survey of 4,001 adults; 1,562 were home broadband users.  
 2007 data are drawn from our March survey of 2,200 adults; 966 were home broadband users.  
 2008 data are from our April-May of 2008 survey of 2,251 adults; 1,153 were home broadband users.  
 2009 data are from our April 2009 survey of 2,253 adults; 1,332 were home broadband users.

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## Trends in home broadband adoption by demographic group

Percentage of adults in each group with broadband at home, 2006-2009.

	2006	2007	2008	2009
<b>Yearly adoption</b>				
All adults	42%	47%	55%	63%
<b>Educational attainment</b>				
Less than high school	17%	21%	28%	30%
High school grad	31	34	40	52
Some college	47	58	66	71
College +	62	70	79	83
<b>Household income</b>				
Under \$20K	18%	28%	25%	35%
\$20K-\$30K	27	34	42	53
\$30K-\$40K	40	40	49	54
\$40K-\$50K	47	52	60	71
\$50K-\$75K	48	58	67	80
\$75K-\$100K	67	70	82	82
Over \$100K	68	82	85	88
<b>Community type</b>				
Non-rural	45%	50%	59%	67%
Rural	25	31	38	46

Sources: 2006 data come from the Pew Internet Projects February 15 through April 6 survey of 4,001 adults; 1,562 were home broadband users.

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## Year-to-year changes, 2008-2009

	Percentage point change, 2008-2009	Percent change, 2008-2009
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	6	10%
Female	10	19%
<b>Families</b>		
Parents with minor children at home	8	12%
<b>Age</b>		
18-29	7	10%
30-49	3	4%
50-64	11	22%
65+	11	58%
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>		
White (not Hispanic)	8	14%
Black (not Hispanic)	3	7%
Hispanic (English-speaking)	12	21%

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project Surveys.

## Year-to-year changes, 2008-2009

	Percentage point change, 2008-2009	Percent change, 2008-2009
<b>Education</b>		
Less than high school	2	7%
High school grad	12	30%
Some college	5	8%
College +	4	5%
<b>Household income</b>		
Under \$20K	10	40%
\$20K-\$30K	11	26%
\$30K-\$40K	5	10%
\$40K-\$50K	11	18%
\$50K-\$75K	13	19%
\$75K-\$100K	0	0%
Over \$100K	3	4%
<b>Region</b>		
Non-rural	8	13%
Rural	8	21%

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project Surveys.



In looking across these tables, several groups stand out as having gained a great deal from 2008 to 2009, while several show gains that are below average.

On the upswing, starting with the largest gainers, are:

- **Senior citizens:** Americans age 65 and older had broadband adoption grow by 58% from 2008 to 2009, from 19% to 30%.
- **Low-income Americans:** Those who report household incomes of \$20,000 per year or less (16% of the sample) saw broadband adoption growth from 25% in 2008 to 35% in 2009. This 40% growth represents a reversal of fortune from the 2007 to 2008 timeframe, when this group saw a slight (and not statistically significant) drop in broadband penetration from 28% to 25%.
- Another group of low-income Americans, the 10% of respondents living in households with incomes between \$20,000 and \$30,000 annually, saw broadband adoption grow from 42% to 53%, or a growth of 26%.

Overall, the one-quarter of Americans living in homes with annual household incomes below \$30,000 experienced a 36% growth in home broadband adoption from 2008 to 2009.

- **High school graduates:** Americans whose highest level of educational attainment is a high school degree (which amounts to 35% of the sample) experienced an increase of broadband adoption of 30% from 2008 to 2009, from 40% to 52%.
- **Older baby boomers:** Americans in the 50 to 64 age group saw an increase in home broadband adoption from 50% to 61% last year, a 22% increase from 2008 to 2009.
- **Rural Americans:** Adults living in rural areas had a 21% increase in broadband adoption last year, as 46% of rural Americans now have broadband at compared with 38% in 2008.

Groups whose growth rate trailed the average include (starting with slowest growing):

- **Upper and upper middle-income Americans:** Respondents who report annual household incomes over \$75,000 saw a small

uptick in home broadband adoption from 84% to 85% last year – groups whose adoption levels are approaching a saturation level. These groups are some 24% of the sample.

- **Ages 30-49:** This large swath of Americans (36% of the population) saw broadband adoption rise 4% from 69% in 2008 to 72% in 2009.
- **College educated Americans:** Respondents with college degrees or higher (29% of the sample) witnessed a modest increase in broadband adoption from 79% to 83% last year, a 5% growth rate.
- **African Americans:** Among non-Hispanic African Americans (11% of the sample), broadband adoption increased from 43% in 2008 to 46% in 2009. This change is not significant statistically and represents the second consecutive year that African Americans have had below-average growth in home broadband adoption.

The preceding tables characterize the place where users live as rural or non-rural, a departure from past practice of identifying where people live by rural, urban, or suburban locations. It is straightforward to identify the locations of respondents using landline phones according to the Census Bureau's definitions of rural, urban, or suburban. This is more difficult for respondents contacted on cell phones, since blocks of cell phone numbers do not neatly map to Census definitions of urban, suburban, and rural. However, samples of cell phone numbers do include the Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) in which the cell phone was activated, which is a close proxy for where the user lives.

Respondents who do not live in MSAs live (to a very close approximation) in rural areas and in this report such respondents are categorized as rural residents. It is challenging, though not impossible, to differentiate urban from suburban residents using MSA codes. That effort is not undertaken here and the cost of doing this is small; the difference between urban and suburban broadband penetration in the past has never been more than 3 percentage points, usually favoring suburbia.



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