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November 7, 2018

PWR 381

**Who Uses the Internet?**

In August 2000, 116.5 million Americans were using the internet. This was 31.9 million more compared to 20 months before. People who use the internet make up about 44.4% of the U.S population (age 3 or older), up from 32.7% in December 1998. The number of people using the internet increased across all classes, genders, age and ethnic groups.

Even groups that haven’t used the internet much in the past are now a part of this increasing internet usage in the U.S. These groups include people who come from low-income households, low-education levels, and minority groups. Despite this, the rates in which they use the internet still falls below the national average.

This report looks at individuals using and accessing the internet. This is because when we look at households instead of single persons, the data that we get becomes less precise. For this report, we want to learn how individuals use the internet, not households or families. We also want to know where these individuals use the internet, and where they get to use the internet if they’re not at home.

This is a summary of important things that we learned:

* People over 50 are less likely to use the internet. At the same time, though, the number of people in this group who use the internet grew the most in the country. People in this age group were 3 times more likely to use the internet if they worked.
* In August 2000, men and women used the internet at almost the same rates. But in December 1998, more men used the internet than women—about 2.8% more.
* Having more places to use the internet outside the home seemed to have increased the number of internet users in groups below the national average. More people used the internet at home in August 2000 than in December 1998. Also, African-American users were more likely than other groups to rely totally on internet access outside their homes.
* Most people who used the internet outside their homes said that they accessed it at work or at school. People without jobs were more likely to use it from someone else’s computer, or from libraries.
* 79.9% of internet users used e-mail. Shopping and paying bills were the fastest-growing activities on the internet. People who weren’t employed and had low income were most likely to use the internet to look for jobs.

In the future, getting data from individuals will probably be even more important because of growing and improving technologies. Internet access is getting more and more mobile. The internet is now with the individual, instead of being stuck in one physical place like back then. We see this in laptop computers, which allow us to access the internet anywhere. Even phones now give us access to the internet using wireless technology.

If you want to look at the complete data for yourself, see below:

