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October 18, 2007

J. B. Van Hollen
Wisconsin Attorney General
114 East, State Capitol
Madison 53702

Re: Opinion Request Re: Publication of
Legal Notices

Dear Attorney General Van Hollen:

Kenosha County submits the following questions for opinions pertaining to the publication of legal notices by the county:

1. Must the county designate an official newspaper?
2. Must the county seek bids for the publication of legal notices and if so must the award go to the lowest bidder?
3. In lieu of bidding the publication of its proceedings, may the county print its own proceedings or in the alternative post them to its official web site?
4. In lieu of "publication in a newspaper" or posting, may the county post its legal notices on its official web site?

DESIGNATION OF OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER

With respect to designating an official newspaper, it is the opinion of this office that there is no requirement that the county designate an official newspaper. Unlike the statutory requirements of Wisconsin Statutes § 985.06 as it pertains to cities, we find no such mandate in the state statutes that would pertain to county government. Furthermore we would reference Attorney General Opinion 60 Attorney General 95 which states at page 96:

It should first be pointed out that ch. 985, Stats., does not require that your county designate **any** newspaper as its official newspaper [emphasis added].

BIDDING REQUIREMENT

With respect to bidding the publication of legal notices, we find no state statute that mandates that the county bid the publication of legal notices or for that matter the proceedings of the County Board as required in Wis. Stats. § 59.14 (2)¹ other than the publication of the proceedings of the county board in book form once a year as called for in Wisconsin Statutes §59.14(3)². These services, in our opinion, are professional services not subject to any bidding requirement. In our opinion, the criteria for choosing where to publish and how to seek a provider for these publications is a policy decision for the County Board. If an RFP is sought, we find no obligation to award to the lowest bidder and we would opine that considerations other than cost can be taken into consideration, such as circulation, frequency of publication, and the likelihood of notice being given to persons to whom the notices are intended to reach.

IN-HOUSE ANNUAL PUBLICATION OF PROCEEDINGS

With respect to the publication of the county board proceedings in book form as called for in Wisconsin Statutes § 59.14(3), we read that statute as requiring bidding only if the publication in book form is done by an entity other than the county. We find no prohibition

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§ 59.14 (2) The board shall, by ordinance or resolution, provide for publication in one or more newspapers in the county as a class 1 notice, under ch. 985, a certified copy of all its proceedings had at any meeting, regular or special; said publication to be completed within 60 days after the adjournment of each session.

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§ 59.14 (3) The board may at any meeting, regular or special, provide by resolution for the publication in pamphlet form by the lowest and best bidder therefor, of a sufficient and designated number of copies of its duly certified proceedings, for general distribution.

as to the county printing and binding its own booklet of county board proceedings on county printers and by county personnel. It is our opinion that there is no set number of booklets that are required to be printed and that, with the computer technology that exists today, these booklets containing the annual proceedings of the county board can be printed and bound in-house in whatever number are needed and ***OR*** on an "as needed" basis or in the alternative printed or posted to the county's official website where any individual can print the annual proceedings of the county board booklet either in whole or in part through their home computer.

SUFFICIENCY OF INTERNET POSTING OF LEGAL NOTICES

Lastly, for the following reasons it is the opinion of this office that posting legal notices to its official web site will satisfy the statutory requirements pertaining to the publication of legal notices. In this regard, our analysis begins with the requirements of the state statutes as they relate to the publication of legal notices. For purposes of this analysis the following state statutes are pertinent:

1. **Wisconsin Statutes § 985.01 Definitions.**

(2) "Legal notice" means every notice required by law or by order of a court to be ***published in a newspaper OR other publication***, except notices required by private and local laws to be published in newspapers, and includes all of the following:

(a) Every publication of laws, ordinances, resolutions, financial statements, budgets and proceedings intended to give notice in an area.

(b) Every notice and certificate of election, facsimile ballot, referenda, notice of public hearing before a governmental body, and notice of meetings of private and public bodies required by law.

(c) Every summons, order, citation, notice of sale or other notice that is intended to inform a person that the person may or shall do an act or exercise a right within a designated period or upon or by a designated date.

(4) "Proceedings", when published in newspapers, mean the substance of every official action taken by a local governing body at any meeting, regular or special.

(5) A newspaper is "published" at the place from which its mailing permit is issued, except that if the place where the newspaper has its major concentration of circulation has no primary post office, then at the place it shall designate as its place of publication in the affidavit required by s. 985.03 (2), but no newspaper shall have more than one place of publication during the same period of time. *[Emphasis added]*

2. **985.02. Method of notification.**

(1) Except as otherwise provided by law, a legal notice shall be **published** in a **newspaper likely to give notice in the area or to the person affected**. Whenever the law requires publication in a newspaper published in a designated municipality or area and no newspaper is published therein publication shall be made in a newspaper likely to give notice. *[Emphasis added]*

3. **985.03. Qualifications of newspapers.**

(1) (a) No publisher of any newspaper in this state shall be awarded or be entitled to any compensation or fee for the publishing of any legal notice unless, for **at least 2 of the 5 years immediately before the date of the notice publication, the newspaper has been published regularly and continuously** in the city, village or town where published, and has had a **bona fide paid circulation**:

1. That has **constituted 50% or more of its circulation**; and,

2. That has had **actual subscribers at each publication of not less than 1,000 copies in 1st and 2nd class cities, or 300 copies if in 3rd and 4th class cities, villages or towns.**

(b) Suspension of publication resulting from the mobilization of troops being called to active duty with the armed forces, strike, lockout or damage, or destruction due to war, fire or act of God, shall not count as an interval in publication.

(bm) A period of disqualification not to exceed 2 years due only to the place of publication shall not count as an interval in publication.

(c) A ***newspaper***, under this chapter, is a publication appearing at ***regular intervals and at least once a week, containing reports of happenings of recent occurrence of a varied character***, such as political, social, moral and religious subjects, ***designed to inform the general reader***. The definition includes a daily newspaper published in a county having a population of 500,000 or more, devoted principally to business news and publishing of records, which has been designated by the courts of record of the county for publication of legal notices for a period of 6 months or more. ***[Emphasis added]***

Unless technical terms and definitions are to control the general rule is that statutory words are to have their common and generally accepted definition. In this regard, we would look to the commonly accepted definition for the following words:

- Publish: To make or effect a publication. To give publicity. [BALLENTINE'S LAW DICTIONARY]
- Publish: 1a. to declare publicly: make generally known: disclose, circulate . . .
. b. to proclaim officially: promulgate. . . . c. to make public announcement d. publicize: to give publication [Webster's Third New International Dictionary]
- Publication: A newspaper or magazine; a book. Dissemination of information by notice given the public. . . . [BALLENTINE'S LAW DICTIONARY]
- Publication: 1. Communication [as of news or information] to the public: public announcement: proclamation: legal notification. 2a: the act or process of issuing copies . . . for general distribution to the public [Webster's Third New International Dictionary]
- Newspaper: A publication appearing at regular, or almost regular, intervals at short periods of time, as daily or weekly, usually in sheet form, and containing news, that is, reports of happenings of recent occurrence of a varied character, such as political, social, moral, religious, and other subjects of a similar nature, local or foreign, intended for the information of the general reader. [BALLENTINE'S LAW DICTIONARY]
- Newspaper: A publication, usually in sheet form, intended for general circulation, and published regularly at short intervals, containing intelligence of current events and news of general interest. [Blacks Law Dictionary, Fourth Edition]

Does an Internet Site Meet the Definition of a "Newspaper"?

HERNANDEZ v. ALCORTA ,45 V.I. 305 (2003) is a recent case that stands for the proposition that "publication" on the internet is an acceptable form of giving notice. In that case the court summary stated:

Plaintiff entered into an agreement with the owners' agent to use equipment to raze damaged buildings and remove debris at the condominium complex. Plaintiff later filed an action to recover money that was owed to him for the clean-up work. Plaintiff moved to serve the owners by publication, stating that, after a diligent search, they could not be located in the Virgin Islands. Plaintiff was given leave to serve the owners by publication in a newspaper of general circulation. Plaintiff provided an affidavit stating that the summons was published for four consecutive weeks in a **newspaper that was published solely on the Internet.** After the owners failed to plead to the complaint, plaintiff moved to have their default entered. In granting the motion, **the court found merit to plaintiff's argument that a notice printed on paper was not inherently more likely to reach the intended recipient than one published on the Internet.** The Internet newspaper possessed numerous attributes that made it a desirable vehicle for alerting defendants to cases pending against them. Accordingly, the court held that the Internet newspaper was an appropriate means of serving the owners by publication. [Emphasis added]

In fact, if one views the official website for the State of Wisconsin and its link to "Government" and then its link to "Legislature" there is a link to "Legal Notices" which takes the individual to legal notices at the Capital Times web site <http://www.madison.com/marketplace/>. Many local municipality web sites with legal notices can also be accessed through the state's own web site.

If the elements of the definition of a "newspaper" are dissemination of news or to give notice, then it is submitted that internet sites fit the definition. It is recognized that newspapers today are 1) not always in sheet form and 2) that if sheet form is desired, it can be accomplished by hitting the "print" button. It would be disingenuous for a news organization to suggest that a website does not fit that definition when in fact all such major news organizations have, in fact, their own web sites that do just that, ie., disseminate news and give notice to the public. In fact the Wisconsin Newspaper Association web site at <https://wisconsin.arcasearch.com/us/wi/?paper=uswi> is devoted to the dissemination of legal notices for the State of Wisconsin and must therefore be indicative of their

acceptance of the fact that the internet can be and is in fact used as a vehicle for providing legal notice. Other sites such as Legalnotice.org are more ambitious and attempt to provide a forum for posting legal notices on a national scale.

The official county web site for Kenosha County is located at: <http://www.co.kenosha.wi.us/> with its legal notices posted at http://www.co.kenosha.wi.us/news_releases.phtml. The Legal Notices and Press Release page is a work in progress and is currently not operational but can serve as a template of what is going to be available on the web site.

If an Internet Site can be a "Newspaper," Is It a "Qualified" Newspaper?

If one can accept the fact that an internet site can be classified as a "newspaper" in the generic sense of the word, that is, a public communication intended to put people on notice or to disseminate information at regular intervals, then the question remains as to whether it is a "qualified" newspaper as called for in [Wisconsin Statutes § 985.03](#). In other words:

1. **has this site been published regularly and continuously for at least 2 of the 5 years immediately before the date of the notice publication, and**
2. has it published at **regular intervals and at least once a week**, and
3. does it contain **reports of happenings of recent occurrence of a varied character**, such as political, social, moral and religious subjects, **designed to inform the general reader**, and
4. does this site have a bona fide paid circulation of 50% of its readership;
5. does this site have 300 actual subscribers for cities, villages and towns of the 3rd and 4th class, and

With respect to qualifications 1 and 2 above, the official County web site has "published," as this word is defined above, regularly and continuously at regular intervals evinced by daily updates since 1997.

Furthermore, with respect to qualification number 3 above, this site, in addition to posting news of county government, links to such newspapers as the Kenosha News and the Milwaukee Journal- Sentinel as well as to a multitude of other general interest web sites which also contain a broader spectrum of news "designed to report happenings of recent occurrences of a varied character . . . designed to inform the general reader." Furthermore, the on-line newspapers can themselves link to the Kenosha County legal notices web site.

As to qualifications 4 and 5 above pertaining to a paid circulation of 50% of its readership and 300 actual subscribers we would note that the cost and upkeep of this site is paid for through the county property tax levy. As to the requirement of 300 actual subscribers for cities of the 3rd and 4th class, the law is ambiguous in that it is not clear as to whether that

pertains to a city's publication of legal notices or to a county which has a 3rd or 4th class city located within that county. Also, are we to assume that if a county had both a 3rd and a 1st class city that the larger number applies?

While, it could charge a subscription for access to its posted legal notices on this site, the County provides this service free of charge because the taxpayer subscriber has in fact already paid for access through the property tax levy. The County obviously has more than 300 taxpayers contributing to the cost and upkeep of this site. Furthermore, while the County does not currently track or report the number of "hits" to this site it will in the future and it is submitted that more than 50% of its readership are County taxpayers paying for this site through their property tax.

Realizing that the use of the word "subscribers" in Wis. Stats. § 985.03 may be problematic, we are of the opinion that any objection to the validity and legality of internet posting based upon the argument that the paid "subscriber" criteria for a qualified newspaper is not met can in fact be complied with by offering a paid subscription service to the public for the convenience of having direct e-mail of notices to them for a fee.

A second alternative would be to simply pay for an advertisement of the web site as the place to view public notices in an otherwise already qualified newspaper. By way of an analogy, the advertisement by reference is already provided for with respect to the printing of lengthy ordinances or codes by Wisconsin Statutes § 61.0103.³ This statute states that there can be a legal notice that an ordinance has been passed and is available for viewing in the office of the County Clerk.

Facts Supporting Internet Posting of Legal Notices

Other facts to supplement the above position appear in the United States Census Bureau Special Study on Computer and Internet Use in the United States: 2003⁴ [a copy of which is attached] [at page 5] which reports that approximately 62% to 67% of Wisconsin households have a computer and approximately 55% to 60% of all Wisconsin households

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66.0103. Code of ordinances.

(1) The governing body of a city, village, town or county may authorize the preparation of a code of some or all of its general ordinances. The code maybe enacted by an ordinance that incorporates the code by reference. A copy of the code shall be available for public inspection not less than 2 weeks before it is enacted. After the code is enacted, a copy shall be maintained and available for public inspection in the office of the city, village, town or county clerk.

(2) Publication of a code enacted under sub. (1), in book or pamphlet form, meets the publication requirements of ss. 59.14, 60.80, 61.50 (1)and 62.11 (4) (a)

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<http://www.census.gov/prod/2005pubs/p23-208.pdf>

have internet access. On a national scale, that report indicates [page 13] that over 40% used the internet for news in 2003 and that almost 33% used the internet for information on government services. Almost 30% of individuals age 65 or older had access [page 2]The United States Department of Commerce for 2001 at www.ntia.doc.gov/ntiahome/dn/nationonline_020502.htm reported 50.2% of Wisconsin households had internet access. These surveys along with their degree of accuracy strongly evince a conclusion that more households and businesses in Kenosha County, which has a population of over 150,000, [and which is in the process of installing "broadband" throughout the entire county] have access -----in fact instant access to these legal notices posted on the internet than subscribe to either of the two Kenosha area newspapers certified to publish legal notices. The Kenosha News has a daily circulation of 28,683 and a Sunday circulation of 31, 587 and the Kenosha Labor Paper [which is published weekly and which has outbid the Kenosha News for publication of legal notices] has a circulation of 10,312. These figures are from June, 2006. Furthermore, internet access is available to those who do not have home access by going to the public library. The method of notification prescribed in Wisconsin Statute § 985.02, which is to publish in a **newspaper likely to give notice in the area or to the person affected**, we would submit, is best adhered to by internet posting. In fact, notice is given to the entire world! Since 1990 total morning and evening circulation has steadily declined [<http://web.naa.org/info/facts04/circulation-daily.html>] while, in 2004, more than 1,500 daily newspapers in North America had sites on the World Wide Web [<http://web.naa.org/info/facts04/highlights.html>] .

Additional benefits of posting legal notices on the County's web site include instantaneous posting allowing for longer deadlines for the submission of notices, instantaneous corrections, the ability to archive notices and perform cumulative searches, the ability to provide more information such as posting not only the text of a proposed zoning amendment but also a link to the actual zoning map and the posting of not only the heading of a resolution that will appear on an agenda but also the actual resolution in its entirety and the actual posting dates of the first and last posting as well as an affidavit of posting utilizing a certified digital signature. The other obvious benefit is the savings to the taxpayer in publication costs.

Your assistance in regard to this issue is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Frank Volpintesta
Corporation Counsel

Attachment: Census Bureau Report on Internet Use: 2003 at <http://www.census.gov/prod/2005pubs/p23-208.pdf>

Computer and Internet Use in the United States: 2003

Issued October 2005

Special Studies

P23-208

Introduction

This report provides information about the characteristics of households and people who have and have not adopted use of computers and the Internet. The findings in this report are based on data collected in a supplement to the October 2003 Current Population Survey that included questions about computer and Internet use at home, school, and work.¹ The U.S. Census Bureau has asked questions in the Current Population Survey to assess computer use since 1984 and Internet use since 1997.

The first part of this report examines computer and Internet use in households. The

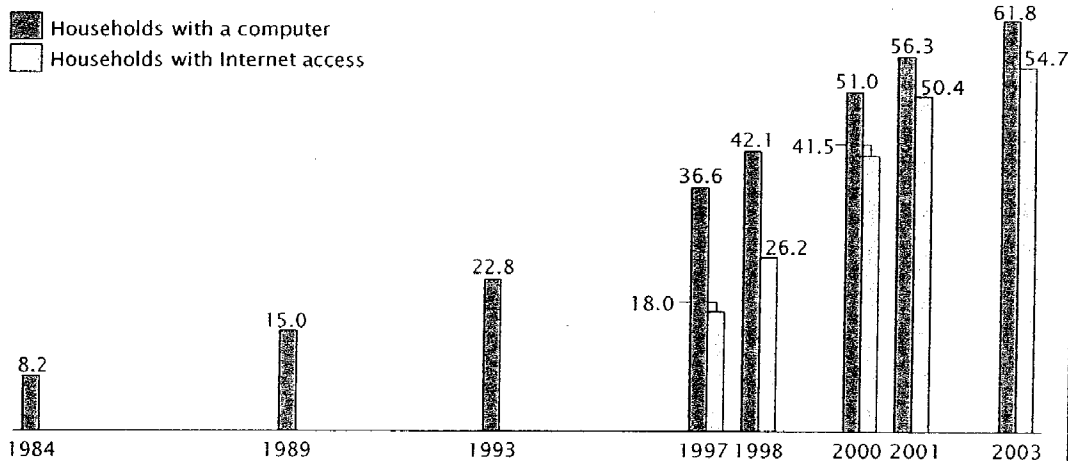
second and third parts of the report deal with computer and Internet use among children and adults, respectively.

COMPUTERS AND INTERNET ACCESS IN HOUSEHOLDS

Prevalence of Personal Computers and Internet Access

The majority of households have personal computers and Internet access. In 2003, 70 million American households, or 62 percent, had one or more computers, up from 56 percent in 2001 (Figure 1).² In 1984, the proportion of households with a computer was 8 percent.

Figure 1.
Households With a Computer and Internet Access: 1984 to 2003
(In percent)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 1984, 1989, 1993, 1997, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2003.

¹ The data in this report are from the Computer and Internet Use Supplement to the October 2003 Current Population Survey. The population represented (the population universe) is the civilian noninstitutionalized population living in the United States.

² The estimates in this report (which may be shown in text, figures, and tables) are based on responses from a sample of the population and may differ from actual values because of sampling variability or other factors. As a result, apparent differences between the estimates for two or more groups may not be statistically significant. All comparative statements have undergone statistical testing and are significant at the 90-percent confidence level unless otherwise noted.

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Table A.
Households With a Computer and Internet Access by Selected Characteristics: 2003

(Numbers in thousands)

| Characteristic | Total households | Computer in household | | | Internet access | | |
|--|------------------|-----------------------|-------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|--------------------------------|
| | | Number | Percent | | Number | Percent | |
| | | | Estimate | 90-percent confidence interval | | Estimate | 90-percent confidence interval |
| Total | 113,126 | 69,912 | 61.8 | 61.5-62.1 | 61,852 | 54.7 | 54.4-55.0 |
| AGE OF HOUSEHOLDER | | | | | | | |
| 15 to 24 years | 7,115 | 4,034 | 56.7 | 55.4-58.0 | 3,350 | 47.1 | 45.8-48.4 |
| 25 to 34 years | 19,718 | 13,543 | 68.7 | 68.0-69.4 | 11,901 | 60.4 | 59.6-61.2 |
| 35 to 44 years | 23,856 | 17,482 | 73.3 | 72.7-73.9 | 15,572 | 65.3 | 64.6-66.0 |
| 45 to 54 years | 22,905 | 16,464 | 71.9 | 71.2-72.6 | 14,922 | 65.1 | 64.4-65.8 |
| 55 to 64 years | 16,488 | 10,405 | 63.1 | 62.3-63.9 | 9,335 | 56.6 | 55.7-57.5 |
| 65 years and over | 23,044 | 8,005 | 34.7 | 34.0-35.4 | 6,773 | 29.4 | 28.7-30.1 |
| RACE/HISPANIC ORIGIN OF HOUSEHOLDER | | | | | | | |
| White alone | 93,014 | 59,482 | 63.9 | 63.5-64.3 | 53,038 | 57.0 | 56.6-57.4 |
| White alone, non-Hispanic | 81,857 | 54,541 | 66.6 | 66.2-67.0 | 49,017 | 59.9 | 59.5-60.3 |
| Black alone | 13,746 | 6,136 | 44.6 | 43.7-45.5 | 4,951 | 36.0 | 35.1-36.9 |
| Asian alone | 4,009 | 2,923 | 72.9 | 71.4-74.4 | 2,674 | 66.7 | 65.1-68.3 |
| Hispanic (any race) | 12,023 | 5,321 | 44.3 | 43.0-45.6 | 4,326 | 36.0 | 34.8-37.2 |
| HOUSEHOLD TYPE | | | | | | | |
| Family household | 76,617 | 53,292 | 69.6 | 69.2-70.0 | 47,536 | 62.0 | 61.6-62.4 |
| Married-couple family | 58,433 | 43,152 | 73.8 | 73.4-74.2 | 39,176 | 67.0 | 66.6-67.4 |
| Male householder, no wife present | 4,824 | 2,701 | 56.0 | 54.4-57.6 | 2,310 | 47.9 | 46.3-49.5 |
| Female householder, no husband present | 13,360 | 7,438 | 55.7 | 54.7-56.7 | 6,049 | 45.3 | 44.3-46.3 |
| Nonfamily household | 36,509 | 16,644 | 45.6 | 45.0-46.2 | 14,316 | 39.2 | 38.6-39.8 |
| PRESENCE OF SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN IN HOUSEHOLD | | | | | | | |
| With children 6 to 17 years | 30,271 | 23,054 | 76.2 | 75.7-76.7 | 20,293 | 67.0 | 66.4-67.6 |
| Without children 6 to 17 years | 82,854 | 46,881 | 56.6 | 56.2-57.0 | 41,559 | 50.2 | 49.8-50.6 |
| HOUSEHOLD SIZE | | | | | | | |
| 1 person | 29,926 | 12,318 | 41.2 | 40.6-41.8 | 10,434 | 34.9 | 34.3-35.5 |
| 2 people | 38,034 | 23,963 | 63.0 | 62.4-63.6 | 21,430 | 56.3 | 55.7-56.9 |
| 3 or more people | 45,165 | 33,655 | 74.5 | 74.0-75.0 | 29,988 | 66.4 | 65.9-66.9 |
| EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF HOUSEHOLDER | | | | | | | |
| Less than high school graduate | 16,972 | 4,740 | 27.9 | 27.1-28.7 | 3,434 | 20.2 | 19.5-20.9 |
| High school graduate/GED ¹ | 34,377 | 17,567 | 51.1 | 50.5-51.7 | 14,813 | 43.1 | 42.5-43.7 |
| Some college or associate's degree | 30,320 | 21,439 | 70.7 | 70.1-71.3 | 18,967 | 62.6 | 62.0-63.2 |
| Bachelor's degree | 20,464 | 16,753 | 81.9 | 81.3-82.5 | 15,720 | 76.8 | 76.1-77.5 |
| Advanced degree | 10,993 | 9,437 | 85.8 | 85.1-86.5 | 8,918 | 81.1 | 80.3-81.9 |
| FAMILY INCOME (annual) | | | | | | | |
| Total families | 76,617 | 53,292 | 69.6 | 69.2-70.0 | 47,536 | 62.0 | 61.6-62.4 |
| Less than \$25,000 | 13,905 | 5,706 | 41.0 | 40.0-42.0 | 4,276 | 30.7 | 29.8-31.6 |
| \$25,000-\$49,999 | 18,281 | 12,232 | 66.9 | 66.1-67.7 | 10,468 | 57.3 | 56.4-58.2 |
| \$50,000-\$74,999 | 12,979 | 10,858 | 83.7 | 82.9-84.5 | 10,117 | 77.9 | 77.0-78.8 |
| \$75,000-\$99,999 | 7,918 | 7,112 | 89.8 | 89.0-90.6 | 6,796 | 85.8 | 84.9-86.7 |
| \$100,000 or more | 9,292 | 8,795 | 94.7 | 94.2-95.2 | 8,564 | 92.2 | 91.6-92.8 |
| Not reported | 14,242 | 8,589 | 60.3 | 59.3-61.3 | 7,315 | 51.4 | 50.4-52.4 |
| REGION | | | | | | | |
| Northeast | 21,570 | 13,474 | 62.5 | 61.8-63.2 | 12,155 | 56.4 | 55.7-57.1 |
| Midwest | 26,139 | 16,029 | 61.3 | 60.7-62.0 | 14,010 | 53.6 | 52.9-54.3 |
| South | 40,746 | 23,974 | 58.8 | 58.2-59.4 | 21,082 | 51.7 | 51.1-52.3 |
| West | 24,671 | 16,459 | 66.7 | 66.0-67.4 | 14,605 | 59.2 | 58.5-60.0 |

¹ General equivalency diploma.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 2003.

Sixty-two million households, or 55 percent, had Internet access, up from 50 percent in 2001, and more than triple the proportion of households with Internet access in 1997 (18 percent). Most households with a computer also had Internet access (88 percent).³ In 1997, less than half of households with computers had someone using the Internet.

While computer ownership and home Internet access have been adopted widely, some groups had lower adoption rates. For instance, 35 percent of households with householders aged 65 and older, about 45 percent of households with Black or Hispanic householders, and 28 percent of households with householders who had less than a high school education had a computer (Table A).⁴ In addition, 41 percent of one-person households and 46 percent of nonfamily households owned a computer.⁵ Differences among households in Internet access mirror those for computer ownership.

³ Twelve percent of households with a computer did not have Internet access, and another one-half million (less than 1 percent) without a computer accessed the Internet using some other device.

The presence of a school-aged child also influenced whether a household had a computer or Internet access. More than three-quarters of households with a school-aged child (6 to 17 years) had a computer, and 67 percent had Internet access. In comparison, 57 percent of households without a school-aged child had a computer, and 50 percent had Internet access.

High-income households were more likely to have a computer or Internet access. Among family households with incomes of \$100,000 or more during the 12 months prior to the survey, 95 percent had at least one computer and 92 percent had Internet access at home. Among family households with incomes below \$25,000, 41 percent had a com-

⁴ Hereafter, this report uses the term non-Hispanic White to refer to people who reported they are White only and not Hispanic or Latino. The term Black is used to refer to people who reported the single race Black or African American, the term Asian refers to people who reported the single race Asian, and the term Hispanic refers to people who are Hispanic or Latino. Because Hispanics may be any race, data in this report for Hispanics overlap slightly with data for the Black population and for the Asian population. Based on the October 2003 Current Population Survey, 3.6 percent of the single-race Black population 3 years and older and 1.0 percent of the single-race Asian population 3 years and older were Hispanic.

puter and 31 percent had Internet access.

Households Without Internet Access

Forty-five percent of households did not have Internet access at home in 2003.⁶ The three most common reasons were "don't need it, not interested" (39 percent), "costs are too high," and "no computer or computer inadequate" (each at 23 percent, Table B). A few households had "access elsewhere" (2 percent). "Language barriers," "concern that children will access inappropriate sites," and "privacy and security concerns" were rarely given as reasons (each 1 percent).⁷

Among households without the Internet, more than 4 out of 5 also did

⁵ The percent of households with computers with either Black or Hispanic householders is not significantly different from the percent of nonfamily households with computers.

⁶ The Current Population Survey asked why respondents did not have Internet access. It did not ask reasons for not having a home computer.

⁷ The value for "language barriers" is statistically different from the values for "concern that children will access inappropriate sites" and "privacy and security concerns."

Table B.
Reasons for Not Using the Internet at Home by Presence of a Computer in the Household: 2003

(Numbers in thousands)

| Characteristic | Total | | Computer in household | | No computer in household | |
|--|----------------|--------------|-----------------------|--------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| INTERNET ACCESS | | | | | | |
| Total households | 113,126 | 100.0 | 69,912 | 100.0 | 43,214 | 100.0 |
| Internet access | 61,852 | 54.7 | 61,258 | 87.6 | 594 | 1.4 |
| No Internet access | 51,274 | 45.3 | 8,654 | 12.4 | 42,620 | 98.6 |
| REASONS FOR NO INTERNET ACCESS | | | | | | |
| Total households | 51,274 | 100.0 | 8,654 | 100.0 | 42,620 | 100.0 |
| Don't need it, not interested | 20,185 | 39.4 | 2,649 | 30.6 | 17,537 | 41.1 |
| Costs are too high | 11,950 | 23.3 | 2,694 | 31.1 | 9,256 | 21.7 |
| No computer or computer inadequate | 11,777 | 23.0 | 717 | 8.3 | 11,060 | 26.0 |
| Lack of confidence or skills | 2,282 | 4.5 | 375 | 4.3 | 1,907 | 4.5 |
| Lack of time to use the Internet | 1,177 | 2.3 | 521 | 6.0 | 656 | 1.5 |
| Have access to Internet elsewhere | 1,064 | 2.1 | 445 | 5.1 | 619 | 1.5 |
| Concern that children will access inappropriate sites | 451 | 0.9 | 284 | 3.3 | 166 | 0.4 |
| Privacy and security concerns | 402 | 0.8 | 184 | 2.1 | 217 | 0.5 |
| Language barriers | 266 | 0.5 | 7 | 0.1 | 259 | 0.6 |
| Other reason | 1,720 | 3.4 | 778 | 9.0 | 942 | 2.2 |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 2003.

not have a computer (83 percent). For 41 percent of these computer-less households, "don't need it, not interested" was the primary reason for not having Internet access. For about one-fourth of these households, the lack of a computer was the primary reason.

As shown in Figure 2, disinterest in the Internet is related to the age of the householder. Of the 20 million householders who stated they were not interested in the Internet, over 60 percent (12.7 million) were aged 55 and older. Householders aged 15 to 44 without Internet access most frequently cited "costs are too high" as the reason.

Regional and State Rates of Computer and Internet Access

While households in the West had the highest rates of access to these technologies, households in the Northeast, Midwest, and South were close behind (Table A). In 2003, 67 percent of households in the West had at least one computer in the home, and 59 percent of house-

holds had Internet access. Southern households had the lowest rates of access: 59 percent had a computer and 52 percent had an Internet connection.

Since 2000, rates of computer use have become more uniform across the country, narrowing the technology gap between the West and the South. The difference between the two regions decreased from 10 percentage points in 2000 (57 percent in the West and 47 percent in the South) to 8 percentage points in 2003.

Households in Utah, Alaska, New Hampshire, and Washington were among those with the highest rates of computer ownership (about 72 percent, Figure 3), while the rates in Mississippi, Arkansas, and Louisiana were among the lowest (about 50 percent). Alaska and New Hampshire were also among the states with the highest proportions of households with access to the Internet (about 65 percent). Households in Mississippi and Arkansas were among those with the lowest

proportions of Internet access in the home: about 40 percent.⁸

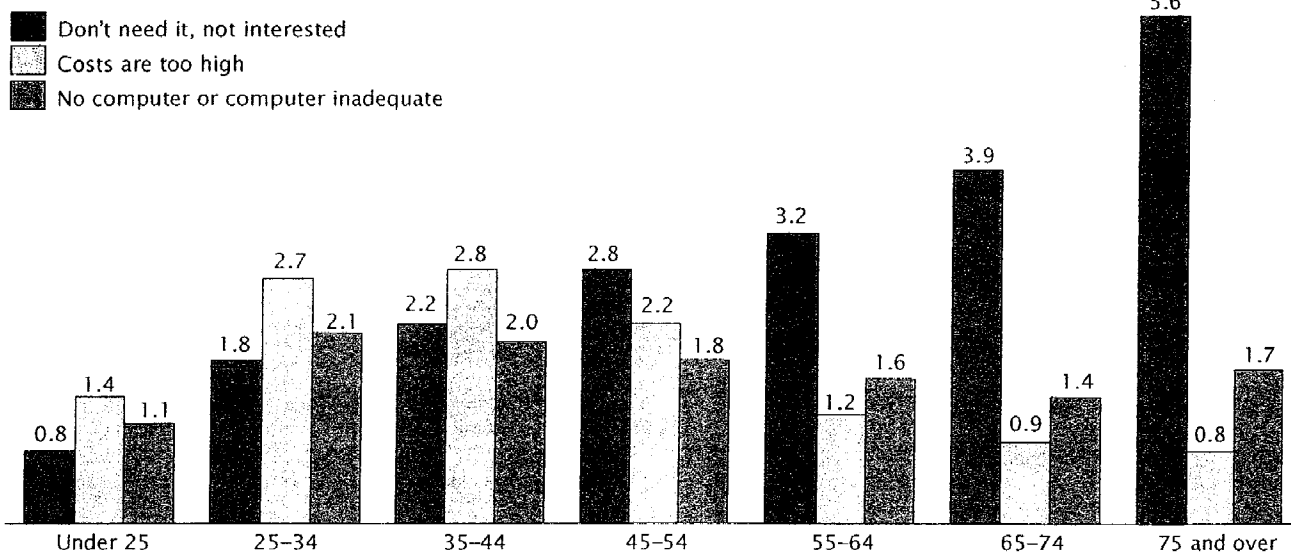
COMPUTER AND INTERNET USE AMONG CHILDREN

Historically, access to computer and Internet technology has been discussed separately from its actual use. Since almost 9 in 10 children living in a household with a computer used it in 2003, the difference between access and use is minimal (Table C). The percentage of children living in a household with a computer who used it increased from 75 percent in 1993 to 86 percent in 2003.⁹

⁸ Utah's rate of computer ownership was higher than that of other states except for Alaska, New Hampshire, and Washington. Mississippi's rate of computer ownership was lower than that of other states except for Arkansas and Louisiana. Alaska's rate of Internet access was higher than that of other states except for New Hampshire. Mississippi's rate of Internet access was lower than that of other states except for Arkansas.

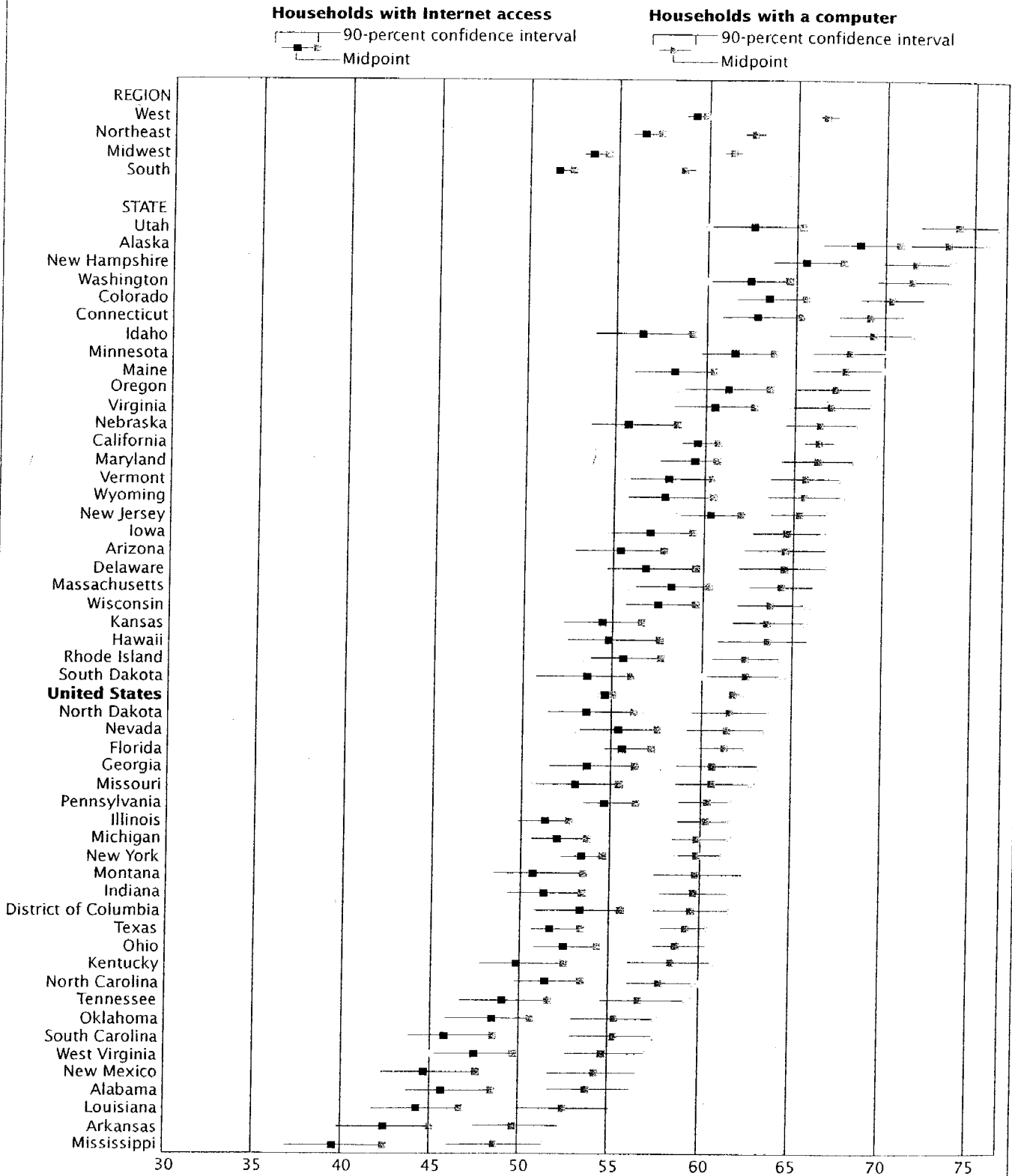
⁹ For more information on computer use in 1993, see the detailed tables at <www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/computer/computer93.html>.

Figure 2.
Selected Reasons for No Internet Access in Household by Age of Householder: 2003
(In millions)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 2003.

Figure 3.
Households With a Computer and Internet Access by Region and State: 2003
 (In percent)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 2003.

Table C.
Computer and Internet Use for Children 3 to 17 Years: 2003

(Numbers in thousands)

| Characteristic | Total | Computer at home | | | Internet at home | | | Enrolled in school | | | Percent ¹ using a computer anywhere | Percent ¹ using Internet anywhere |
|--|---------------|------------------|----------------------|--|------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|---|---|--|--|
| | | Number | Percent ¹ | Percent ² using home computer | Number | Percent ¹ | Percent ³ using Internet | Number enrolled | Percent ⁴ using computer at school | Percent ⁴ using Internet at school | | |
| Total | 61,897 | 46,746 | 75.5 | 86.3 | 40,923 | 66.1 | 63.5 | 56,588 | 83.4 | 43.1 | 86.1 | 56.1 |
| AGE | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 to 5 years | 12,204 | 8,565 | 70.2 | 67.1 | 7,512 | 61.6 | 24.6 | 8,144 | 52.5 | 10.8 | 59.2 | 23.4 |
| 6 to 9 years | 15,793 | 11,584 | 73.3 | 86.0 | 9,981 | 63.2 | 47.5 | 15,461 | 83.6 | 28.7 | 88.9 | 44.8 |
| 10 to 14 years | 21,147 | 16,496 | 78.0 | 91.3 | 14,407 | 68.1 | 77.3 | 20,788 | 90.3 | 53.4 | 94.2 | 68.9 |
| 15 to 17 years | 12,753 | 10,101 | 79.2 | 94.7 | 9,023 | 70.8 | 91.5 | 12,195 | 92.0 | 65.5 | 94.9 | 80.0 |
| SEX | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 31,778 | 23,886 | 75.2 | 86.0 | 20,900 | 65.8 | 62.4 | 29,046 | 83.2 | 42.0 | 86.0 | 55.1 |
| Female | 30,119 | 22,860 | 75.9 | 86.6 | 20,023 | 66.5 | 64.6 | 27,542 | 83.6 | 44.3 | 86.2 | 57.0 |
| RACE/HISPANIC ORIGIN | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| White alone | 47,410 | 37,732 | 79.6 | 87.1 | 33,583 | 70.8 | 64.5 | 43,336 | 83.8 | 44.9 | 87.3 | 58.8 |
| White alone, non-Hispanic | 37,164 | 32,140 | 86.5 | 88.2 | 29,321 | 78.9 | 65.4 | 34,309 | 84.9 | 48.5 | 90.1 | 63.9 |
| Black alone | 9,705 | 5,238 | 54.0 | 81.9 | 4,098 | 42.2 | 58.8 | 8,885 | 82.3 | 35.5 | 80.8 | 43.5 |
| Asian alone | 2,273 | 1,901 | 83.7 | 83.9 | 1,685 | 74.2 | 59.1 | 2,099 | 77.8 | 39.5 | 85.3 | 53.9 |
| Hispanic (any race) | 11,167 | 6,129 | 54.9 | 80.9 | 4,672 | 41.8 | 57.6 | 9,845 | 79.9 | 31.0 | 77.5 | 40.6 |
| HOUSEHOLD TYPE | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Family household | 61,237 | 46,339 | 75.7 | 86.4 | 40,564 | 66.2 | 63.5 | 56,016 | 83.4 | 43.1 | 86.1 | 56.1 |
| Married-couple family | 43,602 | 35,897 | 82.3 | 86.8 | 32,400 | 74.3 | 62.5 | 39,953 | 83.3 | 44.2 | 87.5 | 58.6 |
| Male householder, no wife present | 3,364 | 2,161 | 64.2 | 84.0 | 1,739 | 51.7 | 67.8 | 3,008 | 83.6 | 41.7 | 83.4 | 51.0 |
| Female householder, no husband present | 14,271 | 8,281 | 58.0 | 85.2 | 6,425 | 45.0 | 67.5 | 13,055 | 83.8 | 40.1 | 82.8 | 49.6 |
| Nonfamily household | 660 | 407 | 61.7 | 76.8 | 360 | 54.5 | 61.8 | 572 | 82.9 | 41.2 | 80.9 | 51.6 |
| GRADE IN SCHOOL | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Less than 1st grade | 8,647 | 6,439 | 74.5 | 73.2 | 5,713 | 66.1 | 26.7 | 8,647 | 53.3 | 10.9 | 72.4 | 27.0 |
| 1st to 4th grade | 15,947 | 11,619 | 72.9 | 85.9 | 9,997 | 62.7 | 49.0 | 15,947 | 84.3 | 29.7 | 90.1 | 46.0 |
| 5th to 8th grade | 16,580 | 12,890 | 77.7 | 91.4 | 11,262 | 67.9 | 76.6 | 16,580 | 90.5 | 53.1 | 94.9 | 68.6 |
| 9th to 12th grade or higher | 15,413 | 12,508 | 81.1 | 95.1 | 11,154 | 72.4 | 91.1 | 15,413 | 91.7 | 64.3 | 97.0 | 80.9 |
| Not enrolled in school | 5,309 | 3,290 | 62.0 | 59.6 | 2,798 | 52.7 | 27.8 | 0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 37.2 | 22.0 |
| EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF HOUSEHOLDER | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Less than high school graduate | 9,746 | 4,539 | 46.6 | 81.9 | 3,129 | 32.1 | 62.0 | 8,569 | 79.2 | 31.4 | 75.6 | 37.9 |
| High school graduate/GED ⁵ | 18,082 | 12,363 | 68.4 | 84.2 | 10,358 | 57.3 | 62.2 | 16,497 | 83.5 | 41.9 | 84.7 | 52.2 |
| Some college or associate's degree | 17,465 | 14,311 | 81.9 | 86.4 | 12,613 | 72.2 | 64.1 | 15,977 | 85.1 | 45.2 | 88.4 | 59.6 |
| Bachelor's degree | 11,131 | 10,319 | 92.7 | 88.7 | 9,824 | 88.3 | 63.6 | 10,369 | 84.2 | 47.9 | 91.0 | 66.1 |
| Advanced degree | 5,474 | 5,214 | 95.3 | 89.7 | 4,999 | 91.3 | 65.3 | 5,176 | 83.1 | 50.7 | 92.1 | 69.3 |
| FAMILY INCOME (annual) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total families | 61,237 | 46,339 | 75.7 | 86.4 | 40,564 | 66.2 | 63.5 | 56,016 | 83.4 | 43.1 | 86.1 | 56.1 |
| Less than \$25,000 | 12,611 | 5,949 | 47.2 | 80.3 | 4,158 | 33.0 | 58.3 | 11,103 | 80.3 | 32.2 | 77.1 | 38.4 |
| \$25,000-\$49,999 | 14,805 | 10,997 | 74.3 | 84.8 | 9,196 | 62.1 | 60.6 | 13,409 | 84.0 | 42.2 | 85.6 | 54.1 |
| \$50,000-\$74,999 | 10,327 | 9,098 | 88.1 | 87.2 | 8,491 | 82.2 | 61.8 | 9,511 | 83.9 | 46.6 | 89.4 | 62.2 |
| \$75,000-\$99,999 | 6,293 | 5,891 | 93.6 | 90.4 | 5,686 | 90.4 | 68.9 | 5,920 | 85.8 | 51.9 | 92.0 | 71.1 |
| \$100,000 or more | 7,798 | 7,575 | 97.1 | 90.1 | 7,395 | 94.8 | 67.8 | 7,493 | 86.3 | 52.2 | 93.2 | 72.7 |
| Not reported | 9,403 | 6,830 | 72.6 | 85.6 | 5,639 | 60.0 | 63.7 | 8,579 | 82.6 | 41.0 | 85.7 | 52.5 |
| REGION | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Northeast | 11,009 | 8,928 | 81.1 | 88.3 | 8,154 | 74.1 | 66.4 | 10,212 | 83.1 | 45.0 | 87.9 | 60.8 |
| Midwest | 14,025 | 10,885 | 77.6 | 88.5 | 9,569 | 68.2 | 65.6 | 12,890 | 85.6 | 47.5 | 88.8 | 59.9 |
| South | 21,969 | 15,682 | 71.4 | 85.5 | 13,527 | 61.6 | 62.8 | 19,986 | 84.3 | 41.8 | 85.1 | 53.6 |
| West | 14,894 | 11,252 | 75.5 | 83.7 | 9,675 | 65.0 | 59.9 | 13,501 | 80.1 | 39.5 | 83.7 | 52.5 |

¹ Percent based on all children.

² Percent based on children with a computer at home.

³ Percent based on children with Internet access at home.

⁴ Percent based on children enrolled in school.

⁵ General equivalency diploma.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 2003.

Children's access to a computer at home and at school has increased in recent years. In 1993, 32 percent of children had access to a computer at home and 61 percent used a computer at school. In 2003, about three-quarters (76 percent) of all children 3 to 17 years lived in a household with a computer, and 83 percent of the 57 million enrolled children used a computer at school, giving this generation more exposure to technology than their predecessors.

Despite these increases, rates of access to and use of computers continued to vary among groups (Table C). In 2003, the percentage of children living in homes with a computer ranged from 70 percent for young children (aged 3 to 5) to 79 percent for older teenagers (aged 15 to 17). Among children who lived in a home with a computer, older children were more likely than younger children to use the computer—usage was nearly universal among older children, 95 percent, compared with 67 percent of younger children.

Rates of children's home computer access and use varied by race and Hispanic origin. Non-Hispanic White or Asian children (each about 85 percent) were more likely to have a computer at home than Black or Hispanic children (each about 54 percent). Among those who lived in households with a computer, the differences in usage rates within those households were 88 percent for non-Hispanic Whites and about 82 percent each for Blacks, Asians, and Hispanics.

Educational attainment of the householder continued to show a relationship to the presence of a computer in the household. While 47 percent of children living with a householder who had less than a high school education had a computer, 94 percent of the children in households where the householder had a bachelor's degree or more education had a computer available to them at home. The difference in

computer use rates between these groups with access to a computer was 82 percent and 89 percent, respectively.

Children's family income had a similar relationship to computer presence in the household. Forty-seven percent of children with family incomes under \$25,000 lived in a household with a computer, compared with 97 percent of those with family incomes of at least \$100,000. Eighty percent of children in families with lower incomes used the computer if one was in the household, compared with 90 percent of children from families with higher incomes.

Computer Use at School and at Home

School affects children's access to and use of computers. Among schoolchildren enrolled in kindergarten through 12th grade (K-12), about 8 in 10 used a computer at home, and about 9 in 10 used a computer at school in 2003 (Figure 4).

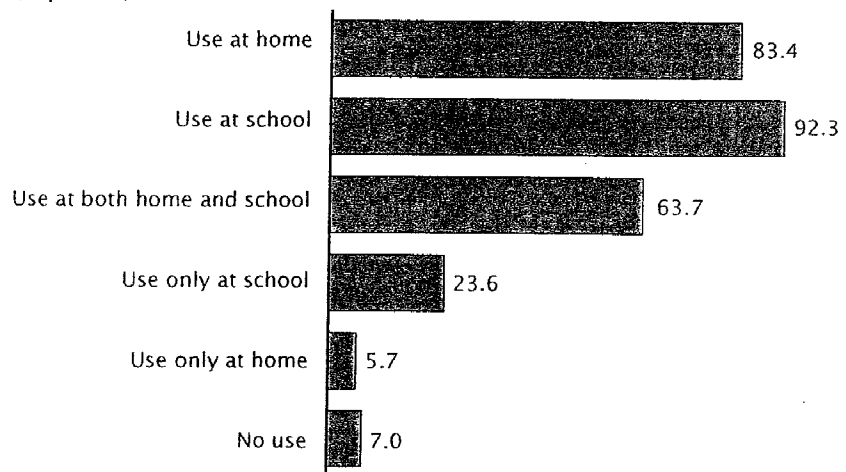
More than half (64 percent) of schoolchildren used computers both

at home and at school. Among children who used a computer in one location, more used a computer at school than at home, 24 percent compared with 6 percent. Adding all three groups (at home, at school, in both locations) together, more than 9 in 10 schoolchildren used a computer somewhere, leaving 7 percent who did not use a computer in any location.

Schools give computer access to children who do not have it at home. As illustrated in Figure 5, schools provided computer access to all groups regardless of family income, race, and Hispanic origin.

Children from family households with incomes of \$100,000 or more enrolled in kindergarten through 12th grade had the highest rates of home computer use, 92 percent, compared with 41 percent of children from households with incomes below \$25,000, a difference of about 50 percentage points. At school, 91 percent of children from families with the highest incomes used a computer, compared with 84 percent of those with the lowest incomes, a difference of 6 percentage points.

Figure 4.
Use of Computers Among Children Enrolled in Grades K-12: 2003*
(In percent)



* The percentages for home and school computer use differ from the corresponding percentages in Table C because this figure excludes children who were not enrolled in grades K-12.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 2003.

Figure 5 illustrates a similar effect among children by race and Hispanic origin. The highest and lowest rates for computer use at home differed by 33 percentage points, with

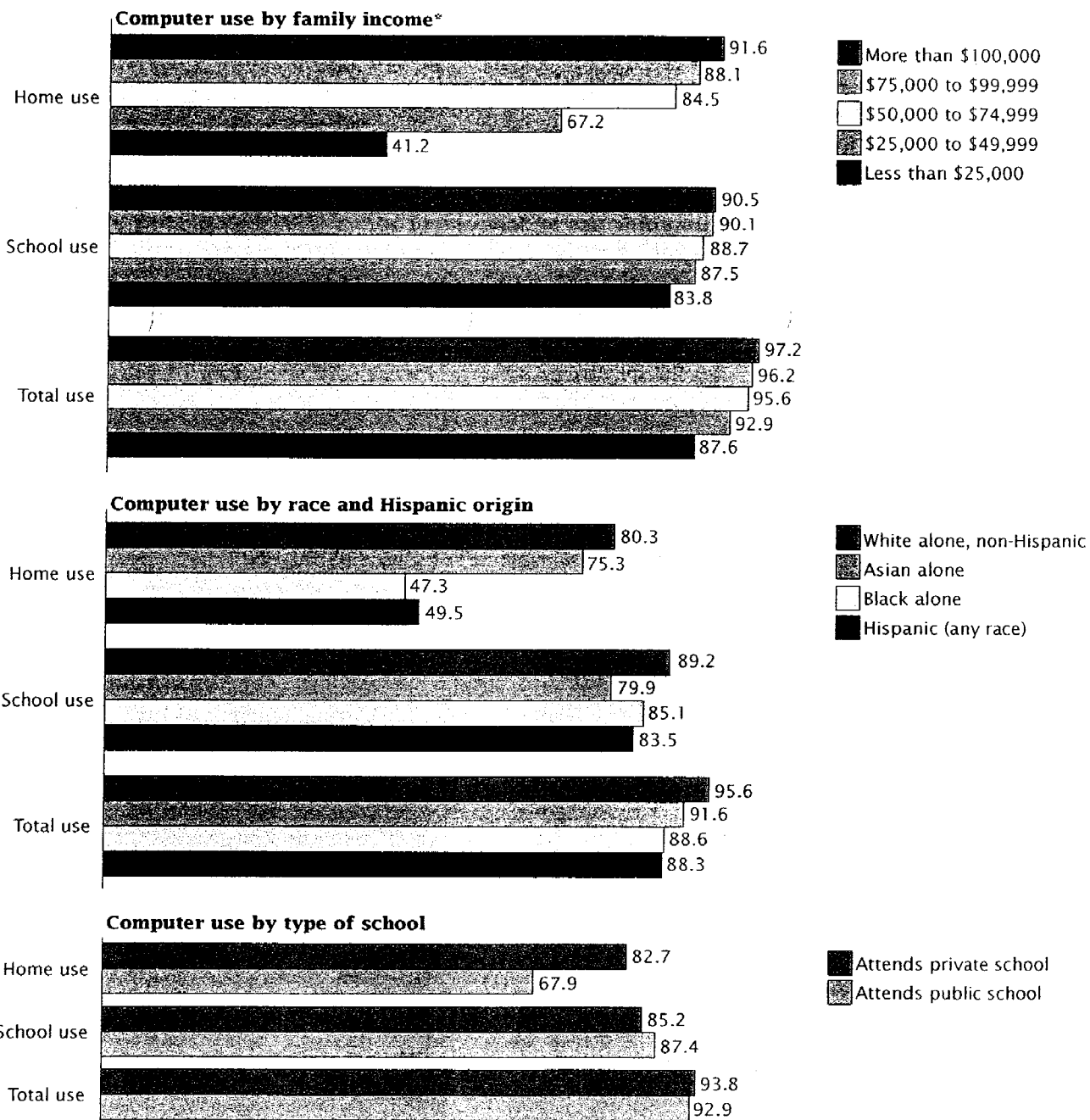
80 percent of non-Hispanic White children using a computer at home, compared with about 48 percent each of Black children and Hispanic children. At school, the differences

diminished, with 89 percent of non-Hispanic White children and about 85 percent of Black and Hispanic children using computers there.

Figure 5.

Computer Use at Home and School Among Children Enrolled in Grades K-12 by Family Income, Race and Hispanic Origin, and Type of School: 2003

(In percent)



*Among children in families.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 2003.

The 15-percentage-point difference between public and private school-children in home computer-use rates disappeared when the children were at school. The percentage of students who used a computer at public school was marginally higher than that of children who used a computer at private school (87 percent compared with 85 percent), reversing a historical trend.¹⁰

Eighty-three percent of children aged 3 to 17 with a computer at home used it to play games, the most common single use, followed by school assignments (66 percent) and connecting to the Internet (64 percent, Figure 6). Children used a broader range of computer applications as they aged. Playing games was the most frequent activity among the youngest children (85 percent). For the oldest children, school assignments and accessing the Internet were more common activities (91 percent and 86 percent, respectively).

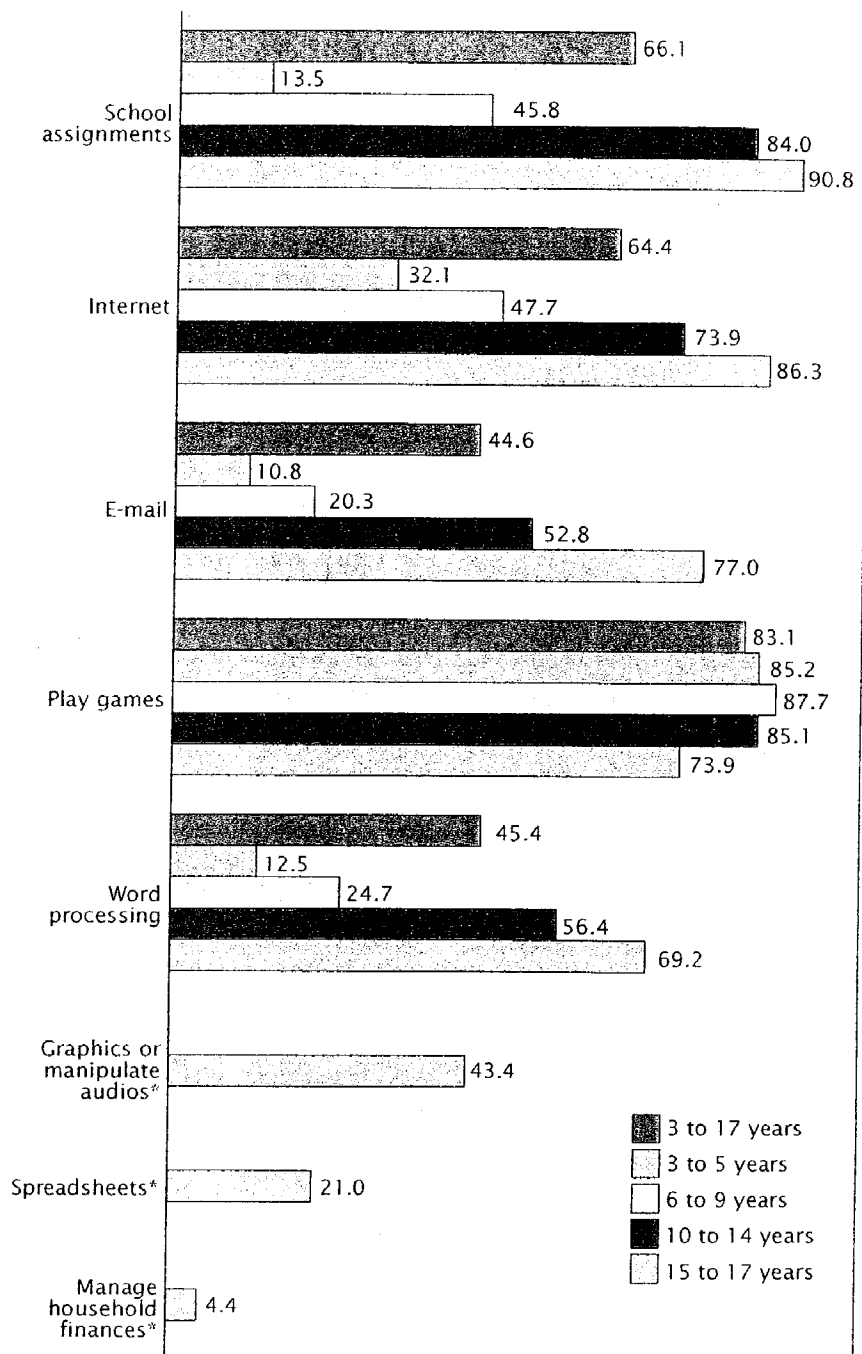
Children who accessed the Internet, whether at home, school, or elsewhere, most often used online connectivity to complete school assignments (75 percent). The next most common Internet use among children was playing games (65 percent), followed by e-mail or instant messaging (60 percent).¹¹

COMPUTER AND INTERNET USE AMONG ADULTS

Overall, use of computers by adults (people 18 years and older) was less prevalent than use by children. Sixty-four percent of adults used a computer at some location (home, school, or work) in 2003, compared with 86 percent of children (Tables C and D). Due to the large proportion of very young children who

Figure 6.
Types of Computer Use at Home for Children 3 to 17 Years by Age: 2003

(Percentage of children who use a computer at home)



*Asked only of children aged 15 to 17.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 2003.

¹⁰ For more information on computer use in earlier years, see <www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/computer.html>.

¹¹ For more information on children's activities on the Internet, see the 2003 Detailed Table 9A at <www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/computer.html>.

used a computer and did not use the Internet, a larger proportion of adults than children used the Internet at some location (60 percent compared with 56 percent).

Over the past two decades, the proportion of adults (people 18 years and over) using a computer anywhere has grown, from 18 percent in 1984, to 36 percent in 1993, to

Table D.
Computer and Internet Use for the Population 18 Years and Older: 2003

(Numbers in thousands)

| Characteristic | Total | Computer at home | | | Internet at home | | | Employed | | | Enrolled in school | | | Percent ¹ using a computer anywhere | Percent ¹ using Internet anywhere |
|--|----------------|------------------|----------------------|--|------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|---|---|--------------------|---|---|--|--|
| | | Number | Percent ¹ | Percent ² using home computer | Number | Percent ¹ | Percent ³ using Internet | Number | Percent ⁴ using computer at work | Percent ⁴ using Internet at work | Number enrolled | Percent ⁵ using computer at school | Percent ⁵ using Internet at school | | |
| Total | 213,426 | 141,022 | 66.1 | 82.5 | 125,756 | 58.9 | 82.4 | 136,606 | 56.1 | 42.3 | 18,323 | 84.9 | 66.4 | 63.7 | 59.5 |
| AGE | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 18 to 24 years | 27,404 | 18,719 | 68.3 | 90.5 | 16,438 | 60.0 | 89.2 | 17,086 | 38.5 | 23.9 | 11,937 | 89.4 | 70.9 | 75.4 | 70.6 |
| 25 to 34 years | 39,094 | 27,066 | 69.2 | 89.0 | 23,951 | 61.3 | 89.7 | 30,401 | 58.0 | 44.8 | 3,589 | 80.3 | 63.4 | 72.1 | 68.5 |
| 35 to 44 years | 43,670 | 32,838 | 75.2 | 84.3 | 29,391 | 67.3 | 84.5 | 34,854 | 59.7 | 46.6 | 1,635 | 74.8 | 50.6 | 73.0 | 68.2 |
| 45 to 54 years | 40,760 | 30,213 | 74.1 | 81.5 | 27,563 | 67.6 | 80.7 | 32,221 | 60.9 | 46.6 | 879 | 69.5 | 51.9 | 70.5 | 65.7 |
| 55 to 64 years | 28,112 | 18,387 | 65.4 | 77.6 | 16,587 | 59.0 | 77.7 | 17,202 | 57.7 | 43.6 | 218 | 62.7 | 53.0 | 60.7 | 55.7 |
| 65 years and over | 34,385 | 13,799 | 40.1 | 63.9 | 11,826 | 34.4 | 63.7 | 4,842 | 41.7 | 27.0 | 65 | 61.1 | 40.6 | 27.7 | 25.1 |
| SEX | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Men | 102,460 | 68,970 | 67.3 | 81.5 | 61,724 | 60.2 | 81.4 | 73,251 | 50.5 | 39.2 | 8,277 | 85.7 | 67.9 | 63.3 | 59.1 |
| Women | 110,966 | 72,052 | 64.9 | 83.5 | 64,032 | 57.7 | 83.4 | 63,355 | 62.5 | 45.8 | 10,046 | 84.3 | 65.2 | 64.1 | 59.8 |
| RACE/HISPANIC ORIGIN | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| White alone | 175,230 | 119,072 | 68.0 | 83.2 | 107,015 | 61.1 | 83.0 | 113,241 | 57.2 | 43.5 | 14,056 | 84.7 | 67.2 | 65.2 | 61.2 |
| White alone, non-Hispanic | 150,508 | 107,539 | 71.5 | 84.8 | 97,684 | 64.9 | 84.3 | 97,083 | 61.6 | 47.2 | 12,131 | 85.1 | 69.5 | 69.2 | 65.5 |
| Black alone | 24,482 | 12,128 | 49.5 | 78.9 | 9,880 | 40.4 | 79.8 | 14,570 | 45.9 | 31.1 | 2,523 | 84.5 | 57.6 | 51.4 | 45.3 |
| Asian alone | 9,023 | 6,905 | 76.5 | 78.6 | 6,373 | 70.6 | 77.0 | 5,776 | 61.0 | 49.9 | 1,214 | 89.1 | 75.0 | 69.1 | 65.3 |
| Hispanic (any race) | 26,565 | 12,412 | 46.7 | 68.8 | 10,091 | 38.0 | 70.2 | 17,366 | 31.2 | 21.3 | 2,085 | 82.3 | 53.1 | 41.1 | 35.8 |
| HOUSEHOLD TYPE | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Family household | 169,340 | 119,475 | 70.6 | 81.1 | 107,033 | 63.2 | 80.8 | 110,262 | 55.3 | 41.4 | 14,662 | 84.7 | 65.0 | 65.8 | 61.2 |
| Married-couple family | 134,584 | 99,856 | 74.2 | 82.2 | 90,639 | 67.3 | 81.6 | 88,570 | 57.8 | 43.9 | 10,524 | 84.6 | 66.5 | 68.6 | 64.0 |
| Male householder, no wife present | 10,323 | 5,782 | 56.0 | 75.2 | 4,983 | 48.3 | 75.6 | 6,877 | 37.7 | 26.0 | 1,080 | 83.5 | 64.8 | 51.9 | 48.3 |
| Female householder, no husband present | 24,434 | 13,837 | 56.6 | 75.6 | 11,411 | 46.7 | 76.7 | 14,815 | 48.7 | 33.5 | 3,058 | 85.4 | 60.2 | 55.8 | 50.7 |
| Nonfamily household | 44,086 | 21,547 | 48.9 | 90.4 | 18,723 | 42.5 | 91.7 | 26,344 | 59.2 | 45.8 | 3,661 | 85.8 | 71.8 | 55.9 | 53.0 |
| ENROLLED IN SCHOOL | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Enrolled in school | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Less than college | 1,836 | 1,225 | 66.7 | 90.5 | 1,042 | 56.8 | 85.2 | 631 | 23.8 | 11.7 | 1,836 | 85.9 | 51.5 | 92.8 | 67.6 |
| College | 13,222 | 11,214 | 84.8 | 94.4 | 10,270 | 27.7 | 92.4 | 7,575 | 49.1 | 31.4 | 13,222 | 85.3 | 67.2 | 97.3 | 87.7 |
| Graduate school | 3,265 | 2,967 | 90.9 | 96.9 | 2,808 | 86.0 | 95.8 | 2,345 | 85.4 | 74.0 | 3,265 | 82.7 | 71.4 | 98.6 | 95.0 |
| Not enrolled in school | 195,103 | 125,616 | 64.4 | 81.1 | 111,636 | 57.2 | 81.1 | 126,054 | 56.1 | 42.3 | 0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 62.8 | 58.8 |
| EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Less than high school graduate | 32,558 | 11,244 | 34.5 | 55.2 | 8,511 | 26.1 | 54.3 | 13,816 | 15.6 | 7.7 | 1,788 | 87.3 | 52.7 | 23.9 | 19.6 |
| High school graduate or GED ⁶ | 68,720 | 39,469 | 57.4 | 74.4 | 33,863 | 49.3 | 73.7 | 41,888 | 40.4 | 24.8 | 2,739 | 82.4 | 58.2 | 52.4 | 46.7 |
| Some college or associate's degree | 57,601 | 43,659 | 75.8 | 86.6 | 39,240 | 68.1 | 86.1 | 39,445 | 58.0 | 41.0 | 10,282 | 85.9 | 69.0 | 76.6 | 71.8 |
| Bachelor's degree | 36,528 | 30,791 | 84.3 | 92.0 | 29,069 | 79.6 | 91.0 | 27,491 | 82.0 | 70.2 | 2,656 | 83.0 | 70.0 | 87.4 | 85.5 |
| Advanced degree | 18,019 | 15,859 | 88.0 | 92.8 | 15,084 | 83.7 | 91.7 | 13,966 | 86.6 | 77.4 | 858 | 82.5 | 78.1 | 89.7 | 88.0 |
| FAMILY INCOME (annual) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total families | 169,340 | 119,475 | 70.6 | 81.1 | 107,033 | 63.2 | 80.8 | 110,262 | 55.3 | 41.4 | 14,662 | 84.7 | 65.0 | 65.8 | 61.2 |
| Less than \$25,000 | 27,310 | 11,374 | 41.6 | 70.0 | 8,599 | 31.5 | 71.1 | 12,121 | 27.6 | 15.9 | 2,193 | 84.4 | 57.1 | 36.2 | 31.9 |
| \$25,000-\$49,999 | 39,457 | 26,163 | 66.3 | 76.6 | 22,316 | 56.6 | 77.0 | 24,896 | 43.7 | 28.6 | 2,993 | 82.1 | 90.9 | 60.0 | 54.1 |
| \$50,000-\$74,999 | 29,673 | 24,713 | 83.3 | 82.6 | 23,037 | 77.6 | 81.5 | 22,216 | 60.2 | 44.1 | 2,628 | 83.4 | 68.0 | 77.9 | 73.5 |
| \$75,000-\$99,999 | 18,578 | 16,649 | 89.6 | 86.6 | 15,933 | 85.8 | 85.5 | 14,568 | 69.1 | 55.4 | 1,948 | 87.4 | 72.9 | 85.1 | 82.0 |
| \$100,000 or more | 22,304 | 21,124 | 94.7 | 89.9 | 20,571 | 92.2 | 88.2 | 17,673 | 78.6 | 67.9 | 2,401 | 85.9 | 74.2 | 91.1 | 89.6 |
| Not reported | 32,018 | 19,453 | 60.8 | 77.6 | 16,576 | 51.8 | 76.3 | 18,789 | 50.0 | 36.1 | 2,500 | 86.3 | 58.9 | 58.1 | 51.5 |
| REGION | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Northeast | 41,252 | 27,884 | 67.6 | 81.8 | 25,451 | 61.7 | 81.1 | 25,766 | 56.8 | 43.0 | 3,501 | 87.4 | 68.9 | 64.2 | 60.1 |
| Midwest | 48,404 | 32,030 | 66.2 | 83.5 | 28,312 | 58.5 | 83.1 | 31,906 | 57.0 | 42.0 | 4,199 | 86.5 | 72.0 | 65.2 | 61.0 |
| South | 75,678 | 47,484 | 62.7 | 82.6 | 41,961 | 55.4 | 83.1 | 47,668 | 54.2 | 40.5 | 6,024 | 85.7 | 65.3 | 61.2 | 56.5 |
| West | 48,092 | 33,624 | 69.9 | 82.1 | 30,032 | 62.4 | 82.0 | 31,266 | 57.4 | 44.6 | 4,599 | 80.7 | 60.8 | 65.8 | 62.1 |

¹ Percent based on all adults.

² Percent based on adults with a computer at home.

³ Percent based on adults with Internet access at home.

⁴ Percent based on employed adults.

⁵ Percent based on adults enrolled in school.

⁶ General equivalency diploma.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 2003.

64 percent in 2003. From 1997 (the first year in which the CPS collected information on Internet use) to 2003, use of the Internet among adults jumped from 22 percent to 60 percent.

Among adults, two-thirds (66 percent) had a computer at home, and among those, 83 percent used the computer. Fifty-nine percent of adults had Internet access at home, and 82 percent of them used it. More than half of working adults used a computer at work (56 percent), and 42 percent used the Internet on the job. Among adult students, 85 percent said they used a computer at school, and 66 percent used the Internet there.

As was the case for children, adults' use of these technologies varied with their socioeconomic and demographic characteristics. Adults with an advanced degree, for example, had the highest rates of computer use anywhere. Asian or non-Hispanic White adults (about 69 percent each) were more likely to use a computer than Blacks or Hispanics (51 percent and 41 percent, respectively).

People 65 and older had lower rates of computer use (28 percent) and Internet use (25 percent) than was the case for other age groups. Adults 18 to 24 years of age were most likely to use a computer or the Internet someplace (75 percent and 71 percent, respectively).

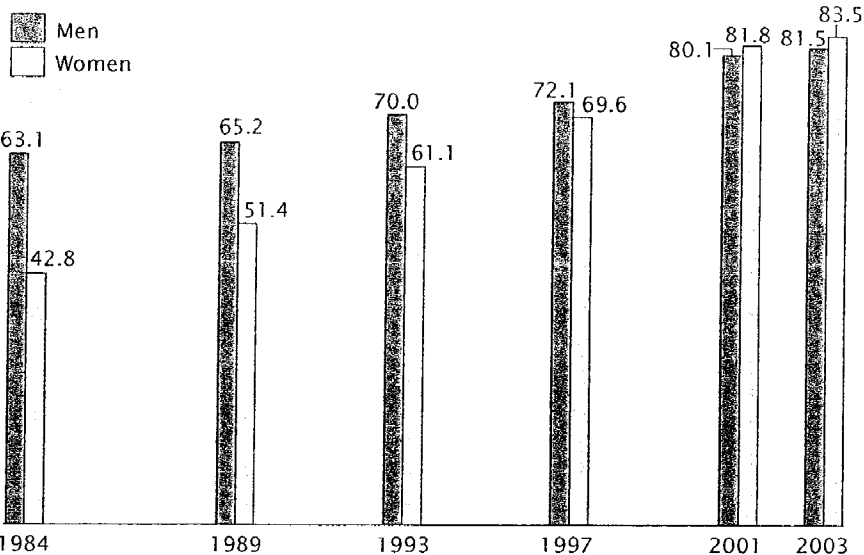
Computer Use by Sex

In 2003, more women than men used a computer at home by a small margin, reversing the computer use "gender gap" exhibited during the 1980s and 1990s.¹² In 1984, men's home computer use was 20 percentage points higher than that of women (Figure 7). This gap decreased to 3 percentage points in

¹² For more information on computer use by sex in the 1980s and 1990s, see *Computer Use in the United States: 1984, Computer Use in the United States: 1989, and Computer Use in the United States: 1997*, at <www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/computer.html>.

Figure 7.
Population 18 Years and Older Using a Computer at Home by Sex: 1984 to 2003

(In percent)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 2003.

1997 and reversed in 2001, favoring women by 2 percentage points. Similarly, women's Internet use at home exceeded men's in 2003.

At work, women have had higher rates of computer use than men since the CPS first collected data on computer use in 1984, when 29 percent of working women used a computer on the job, compared with 21 percent of working men. In 2003, 63 percent of women and 51 percent of men used a computer at work. Forty-seven percent of women and 39 percent of men used the Internet on the job in 2003 (Table E).

Some of the historically higher rates of women's computer use at work may derive in part from the type of jobs they have held. In 2003, the technology use-intensive office and administrative support occupations accounted for 23 percent of all working women and 6 percent of working men. While office and administrative support occupations accounted for 7 percent of men using computers on the job, this cat-

egory accounted for 29 percent of all women using computers at work.

The percentages of women and men who use computers at work also differ by occupation group. Among men, the group with the highest percentage of workers using a computer was professional occupations. For women, the most computer users were in the management, business, and financial occupations.

Internet Use for Communication and Commerce

Over the last few years, computer and Internet technologies have merged into a communications device for both home and work life. By 2003, more adult computer users accessed the Internet than performed any other computing task: 89 percent of home users and 75 percent of those at work (Table F). Nearly 9 in 10 adult Internet users (88 percent) used the Internet to send or receive e-mail, and nearly 8 in 10 (78 percent) used the Internet to get information on products or services.

Table E.
Computer and Internet Use at Work for the Employed Population 18 Years and Older by Sex: 2003

(Numbers in thousands)

| Characteristic | Employed | | Use computer at work | | | Use Internet at work | | |
|---|---------------|--------------|----------------------|-------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------------------|
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Percent distribution | Number | Percent | Percent distribution |
| OCCUPATION OF HOUSEHOLDER | | | | | | | | |
| Men | 73,250 | 100.0 | 36,976 | 50.5 | 100.0 | 28,733 | 39.2 | 100.0 |
| Management, business, and financial | 11,402 | 15.6 | 8,813 | 77.3 | 23.8 | 7,868 | 69.0 | 27.4 |
| Professional | 12,513 | 17.1 | 10,460 | 83.6 | 28.3 | 9,102 | 72.7 | 31.7 |
| Service | 8,880 | 12.1 | 2,539 | 28.6 | 6.9 | 1,595 | 18.0 | 5.6 |
| Sales | 7,975 | 10.9 | 5,296 | 66.4 | 14.3 | 4,094 | 51.3 | 14.2 |
| Office and administrative support | 4,675 | 6.4 | 2,611 | 55.9 | 7.1 | 1,803 | 38.6 | 6.3 |
| Farming, fishing, and forestry | 947 | 1.3 | 86 | 9.1 | 0.2 | 52 | 5.5 | 0.2 |
| Construction and extraction | 8,108 | 11.1 | 1,518 | 18.7 | 4.1 | 996 | 12.3 | 3.5 |
| Installation, maintenance, and repair | 5,092 | 7.0 | 2,098 | 41.2 | 5.7 | 1,278 | 25.1 | 4.4 |
| Production | 6,675 | 9.1 | 2,059 | 30.8 | 5.6 | 1,152 | 17.3 | 4.0 |
| Transportation and material moving | 6,983 | 9.5 | 1,496 | 21.4 | 4.0 | 793 | 11.4 | 2.8 |
| Women | 63,353 | 100.0 | 39,594 | 62.5 | 100.0 | 30,009 | 47.4 | 100.0 |
| Management, business, and financial | 8,190 | 12.9 | 7,027 | 85.8 | 17.7 | 6,068 | 74.1 | 20.2 |
| Professional | 16,052 | 25.3 | 12,057 | 75.1 | 30.5 | 9,344 | 58.2 | 31.1 |
| Service | 12,002 | 18.9 | 3,359 | 28.0 | 8.5 | 1,850 | 15.4 | 6.2 |
| Sales | 7,526 | 11.9 | 4,169 | 55.4 | 10.5 | 2,819 | 37.5 | 9.4 |
| Office and administrative support | 14,536 | 22.9 | 11,595 | 79.8 | 29.3 | 9,192 | 63.2 | 30.6 |
| Farming, fishing, and forestry | 273 | 0.4 | 46 | 16.8 | 0.1 | 24 | 8.8 | 0.1 |
| Construction and extraction | 238 | 0.4 | 67 | 28.2 | 0.2 | 50 | 21.0 | 0.2 |
| Installation, maintenance, and repair | 219 | 0.3 | 130 | 59.4 | 0.3 | 90 | 41.1 | 0.3 |
| Production | 3,010 | 4.8 | 810 | 26.9 | 2.0 | 422 | 14.0 | 1.4 |
| Transportation and material moving | 1,307 | 2.1 | 334 | 25.6 | 0.8 | 150 | 11.5 | 0.5 |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 2003.

Table F.
Uses of the Computer at Home and Work and of the Internet Anywhere by the Population 18 Years and Older: 2003

(Numbers in thousands)

| Specific use | Computer users | | Internet users | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|---------------|--|----------------|
| | At home | At work | Specific use | Anywhere |
| Total | 116,410 | 76,570 | Total | 126,937 |
| Percent using: | | | Percent using: | |
| Internet and e-mail | 89.0 | 75.4 | E-mail | 88.3 |
| Word processing | 55.8 | 67.8 | Information on products or services | 78.1 |
| Spreadsheets | 32.9 | 64.4 | News, weather, or sports information | 67.4 |
| Scheduling | (NA) | 57.0 | Purchase products or services | 54.2 |
| Graphics and design | (NA) | 29.7 | Playing games | 36.1 |
| Programming | (NA) | 16.4 | Viewing TV, movies, listening to radio | 21.0 |
| Playing games | 49.9 | (NA) | School assignments | 11.5 |
| Graphics or manipulate audios | 37.2 | (NA) | Take a course online | 6.6 |
| Manage household finances | 33.0 | (NA) | | |
| School assignments | 11.6 | (NA) | | |

(NA) Not available. Some categories not included on the questionnaire for both home and work.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 2003.

The proportions of the population performing tasks online, and the activities they choose, demonstrate some of the ways the technology is affecting society:

- The Internet has become a major venue for the dissemination of news. In 6 years, the proportion of adults who used the Internet to find information on “news, weather, or sports” increased from 7 percent in 1997 to 40 percent in 2003 (Figure 8), and the proportion using the Internet to find information on government or health services increased from 12 percent to 33 percent.¹³
- The Internet is also changing interpersonal communication. More than half (55 percent) of all adults used e-mail or instant messaging in 2003, compared with 12 percent of adults in 1997.
- The Internet has become an integral part of the economy. Eighteen percent of adults conducted banking online in 2003. Twelve percent of adults used the Internet to search for a job. Nearly half of adults (47 percent) used the Internet to find information on products or services. About one-third of adults (32 percent) actually purchased a product or service online, compared with 2.1 percent of adults who used the Internet for “shopping” in 1997.

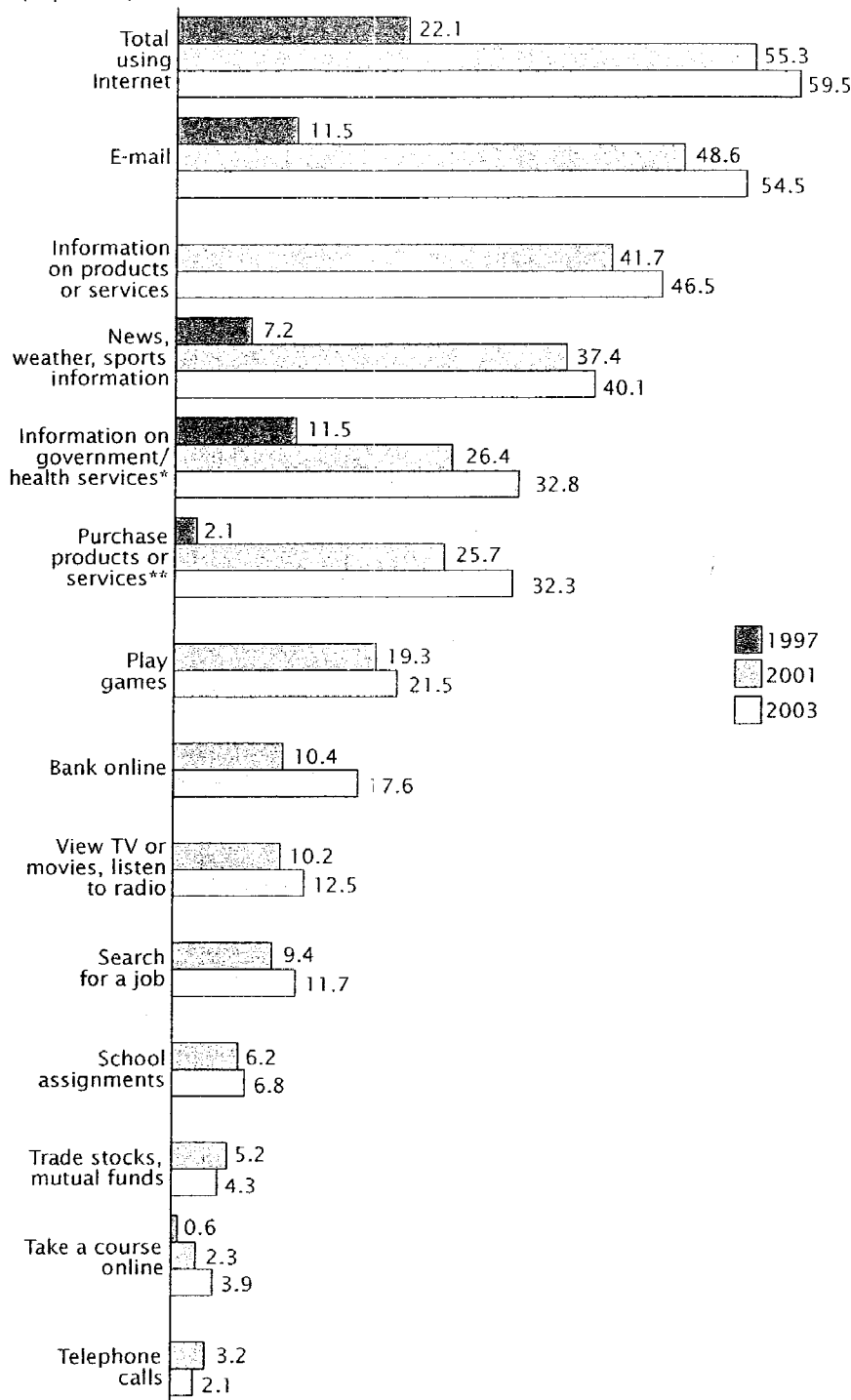
SOURCE OF THE DATA

The population represented (the population universe) in the Computer and Internet Use Supplement to the October 2003 Current Population Survey is the civilian noninstitutionalized population living in the United States. The institutionalized population, which is excluded from the population universe, is com-

¹³ Data from 1997 derive from the answer “Search for information such as government, business, health, education” to the question “What do you use the Internet for at home?” In 2001 and 2003, household members were asked about specific uses of the Internet anywhere, not at home.

Figure 8.
Population 18 Years and Older Using the Internet for a Specific Task: 1997, 2001, and 2003

(In percent)



*Data from 1997 derive from the answer “Search for information such as government, business, health, education.”

**Data from 1997 derive from the answer “Shopping.”

Note: Data from 1997 derive from the question “What do you use the Internet for at home?”

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 1997, September 2001, and October 2003.

posed primarily of the population in correctional institutions and nursing homes (91 percent of the 4.1 million institutionalized people in Census 2000).

Most estimates in this report come from data obtained in October 2003 from the Current Population Survey (CPS). Some estimates are based on data obtained from the CPS in earlier years, including October 1984, October 1989, October 1993, October 1997, December 1998, August 2000, and September 2001. The U.S. Census Bureau conducts this survey every month.

ACCURACY OF THE ESTIMATES

Statistics from surveys are subject to sampling error and nonsampling error. All comparisons presented in this report have taken sampling error into account and are significant at the 90-percent confidence level. This means the 90-percent confidence level for the difference between estimates being compared does not include zero. Nonsampling error in surveys may be attributed 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. To minimize these errors, the Census Bureau employs quality control procedures in sample selection, the wording of questions, interviewing, coding, data processing, and data analysis.

The Current Population Survey weighting procedure uses ratio estimation whereby sample estimates are added to independent estimates of the national population by age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin. This weighting partially corrects for bias due to undercoverage, but biases may still be present when people who are missed by the survey differ from those interviewed in ways other than age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin. How this weighting procedure affects other variables in the survey is not precisely known. All of these considerations affect comparisons across different surveys or data sources.

For further information on the source of the data and accuracy of the estimates, including standard errors and confidence intervals, contact Jana Shepherd of the Demographic Statistical Methods Division via e-mail at <dsmd.source.and.accuracy@census.gov>.

MORE INFORMATION

Detailed tabulations with characteristics of households, children, and adults by computer presence in the home, computer use, Internet use, and other variables are available on the Internet at the Census Bureau's Web site <www.census.gov>. Once on the site, in the "Subjects A-Z" area, click on "C," and then on "Computer Use and Ownership."

CONTACT

For additional information on these topics, contact Jessica Davis, Education and Social Stratification Branch, 301-763-2464 or via e-mail at <Jessica.W.Davis@census.gov>.

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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Percent of Households with Internet Access, by State, 2001

| State | Total Households | Percent with Internet | 90% Confidence Interval |
|----------------|------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Alabama | 1,731 | 37.6 | 2.85 |
| Alaska | 221 | 64.1 | 2.96 |
| Arizona | 1,891 | 51.9 | 2.79 |
| Arkansas | 1,017 | 36.9 | 2.73 |
| California | 12,260 | 55.3 | 1.24 |
| Colorado | 1,659 | 58.5 | 2.85 |
| Connecticut | 1,297 | 55.0 | 3.27 |
| Delaware | 300 | 52.5 | 3.20 |
| Florida | 6,302 | 52.8 | 1.52 |
| Georgia | 3,064 | 46.7 | 2.66 |
| Hawaii | 391 | 55.2 | 3.52 |
| Idaho | 496 | 52.7 | 2.76 |
| Illinois | 4,608 | 46.9 | 1.73 |
| Indiana | 2,391 | 47.3 | 2.82 |
| Iowa | 1,137 | 51.0 | 2.93 |
| Kansas | 1,032 | 50.9 | 2.94 |
| Kentucky | 1,609 | 44.2 | 2.85 |
| Louisiana | 1,663 | 40.2 | 2.79 |
| Maine | 521 | 53.3 | 3.10 |
| Maryland | 2,030 | 57.8 | 3.03 |
| Massachusetts | 2,407 | 54.7 | 2.21 |
| Michigan | 3,806 | 51.2 | 1.88 |
| Minnesota | 1,922 | 55.6 | 2.79 |
| Mississippi | 1,081 | 36.1 | 2.83 |
| Missouri | 2,177 | 49.9 | 2.97 |
| Montana | 369 | 47.5 | 2.82 |
| Nebraska | 654 | 45.5 | 2.99 |
| Nevada | 732 | 52.5 | 3.02 |
| New York | 7,089 | 50.2 | 1.35 |
| New Jersey | 3,106 | 57.2 | 1.92 |
| New Hampshire | 477 | 61.6 | 3.29 |
| New Mexico | 696 | 43.1 | 2.88 |
| North Carolina | 3,077 | 44.5 | 2.11 |
| North Dakota | 248 | 46.5 | 3.00 |
| Ohio | 4,439 | 50.9 | 1.80 |
| Oklahoma | 1,362 | 43.8 | 2.74 |
| Oregon | 1,326 | 58.2 | 3.09 |
| Pennsylvania | 4,652 | 48.7 | 1.69 |
| Rhode Island | 401 | 53.1 | 3.23 |
| South Carolina | 1,542 | 45.0 | 3.06 |
| South Dakota | 288 | 47.6 | 2.87 |
| Tennessee | 2,251 | 44.8 | 2.92 |
| Texas | 7,666 | 47.7 | 1.51 |
| Utah | 705 | 54.1 | 3.08 |
| Vermont | 250 | 53.4 | 3.25 |
| Virginia | 2,678 | 54.9 | 2.79 |
| Washington, DC | 237 | 41.4 | 3.03 |
| Washington | 2,345 | 60.4 | 3.00 |
| West Virginia | 756 | 40.7 | 2.61 |

| | | | |
|-----------|-------|------|------|
| Wisconsin | 2,064 | 50.2 | 2.82 |
| Wyoming | 197 | 51.0 | 2.92 |