



Average American Means PC Ownership , Internet Connection...Almost

Dan Ness, Principal Analyst, MetaFacts, December 1, 2004

Almost three-fifths of American households own a PC, and nearly all of those households have some kind of Internet connectivity. However, the rate of broadband Internet use is much lower—about 27 percent of American homes have such a connection, or 46 percent of PC owners. The flip side is that there are still tens of millions of Americans who have never owned a PC. Furthermore, some groups of Americans have less than half the adoption rate of other Americans.

Why is this important?

Anyone that believes that all Americans are home computer users with fast, broadband Internet connections are just barely a quarter right. More importantly, there is a persistent gap between the connected and disconnected, with some market segments having five times the adoption rate of others.

These are some of the insights culled from the latest research undertaken by MetaFacts, Inc., based on responses to questionnaires submitted by 32,130 U.S. households. The responses showed that about 58 percent of U.S. homes own a PC, representing 64.3 million households. The most likely to own a computer are the affluent empty nesters and older SINKs (single income no kids), whose rate is 25 percent higher than average. The least likely are the single heads of households who are 75 or older; whose rate is 40 percent less than average. But, interestingly, almost all other groups are within 15 percent of the norm for the general population.

The rate of Internet connectivity (of any kind) is 57 percent, or only one point lower than the rate of PC ownership. Apparently, if they are going to have a PC, they are going to connect it. In all groups the rate of Internet connectivity is within a few points of the rate of PC ownership.

However, the same cannot be said of broadband Internet connections. Only 27 percent of households have one (although this still amounts to almost 30 million subscribers) and the adoption rate varies considerably among various groups. Unsurprisingly, affluent, traditional families are the most likely to have a broadband Internet connection. In fact, they are 53 percent more likely than the average American household to have it. They are closely followed by affluent, young singles; affluent empty nesters and older SINKs; DINKs (double income no kids); working parents; and younger, mid-income empty nesters.

The least likely to have a broadband connection are single heads of households who are 75 or older. Their rate of connection is about a third of the average. Married heads of households who are 75 and older follow next, but are nearly half the average, as are single active seniors, plus middle-income older singles. The next tier are the married active seniors, who are connected at about three-fourths the average rate. Most of the other classifications clustered around the average.

Meanwhile, there are still pockets of resistance to the computer revolution, especially among the aged. Single heads of household who are more than 75 years old are twice as likely as average to report no PC usage. That might seem like a niche, but it's still 2.7 million households. The next group that is least likely

to use a PC are the married heads of households who are at least 75—but they are only about a third more likely than average to be non-users. Older, mid- to low-income singles and single active seniors are in that same tier as well. (The least likely to not use a PC are affluent singles, regardless of age.) The scattered resistance is enough to add up to 35 million households without a PC—a significant market, but since they are committed non-users the question is whether they are a viable market.

Lifecycle Stage and Home Computer / Broadband Use

(Projected Number of Households)

Lifecycle	Total Households	No PC Usage	Home Owned PC	Home PCs & Broadband Internet Connection
Affluent Singles/Unmarried, Younger	5,880	1,173	3,329	2,254
Affluent Singles/Unmarried, Older	7,696	1,455	3,966	2,014
Low/Mid Income Singles/Unmarried, Younger	7,312	2,527	3,481	1,699
Low/Mid Income Singles/Unmarried, Older	8,370	3,460	3,953	1,240
DINKs	5,410	1,353	3,372	1,984
Working Parents	12,293	3,467	7,759	4,125
Single Parents	8,463	3,032	4,514	2,054
Affluent Traditional Families	6,033	1,799	4,068	2,530
Low/Mid Income Traditional Families	9,873	2,986	6,235	2,310
Affluent Empty Nesters/SINKs, Younger	1,055	304	681	357
Affluent Empty Nesters/SINKs, Older	8,807	1,831	6,372	3,283
Low/Mid Income Empty Nesters, Younger	1,326	430	831	434
Low/Mid Income Empty Nesters, Older	12,042	3,435	7,282	2,902
Single Active Seniors	5,452	2,274	2,619	759
Married Active Seniors	5,330	1,686	3,367	1,082
Married, Household Head 75 + Years	1,944	830	965	245
Single, Household Head 75+ Years	4,215	2,699	1,473	362
Total	111,500	34,739	64,266	29,633

Source: MetaFacts, Inc. – Technology User Profile – 2004 Annual Edition

Background & Methodology

Factual, decision-making information like this is only found in one place, the Technology User Profile from MetaFacts. The Technology User Profile market research information service is based on extensive primary research selected and balanced to represent the American population - including technology users and non-technology users. Drawn from more than 30,000 surveys per year reporting on over 250 questions, it is the most comprehensive total market technology study available. TUPdates are brief summaries of information contained in the Technology User Profile.

Links to Source Data

Current Technology User Profile subscribers may be interested in the following links with related, more detailed or updated information:

[Lifecycle \(Households/Adults-Home/Family\)](#)

[TUP 2004 Annual Edition](#) (Excel)

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Links to TUP Online Store

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