

CALIFORNIA'S DIGITAL DIVIDE

Mark Baldassare, Dean Bonner, Sonja Petek, and Jui Shrestha

► **Broadband access is up significantly since 2008.**

A large majority of Californians—69%—have a broadband Internet connection at home, up sharply from 55% in 2008. Broadband access at home in California is similar to the nation as a whole: nationwide, 70% of adults report having broadband (Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project). Overall, 86% of Californians currently use the Internet (up from 70% in 2008), compared to 85% of adults nationwide.

► **The digital divide is closing, but striking demographic differences persist.**

Broadband access among Latinos has increased 18 points since 2008, but Latinos (52%) are still much less likely to use broadband than blacks (71%), Asians (75%), and whites (81%). Broadband access among noncitizens has increased 20 points since 2008 (from 23% to 43%), and the divide between noncitizens and the U.S.-born has narrowed by 8 points. But U.S.-born residents (79%) and naturalized citizens (62%) are still much more likely than noncitizens to report broadband access. Broadband access is higher among college graduates (88%) and those with some college education (83%) than among less-educated Californians (47%)—and connectivity among the less educated dropped 9 points since 2012 (56%). Similarly, access is higher among adults with household incomes of \$80,000 or more (92%) and among those who earn between \$40,000 and \$80,000 (84%) than among less-affluent Californians (53%). Broadband access is also more prevalent among residents in the San Francisco Bay Area (80% today, 65% in 2008) and in Orange/San Diego (77% today, 58% in 2008) than in the Central Valley (60% today, 53% in 2008—but down 11 points from 2012), the Inland Empire (68% today, 56% in 2008), and Los Angeles (64% today, 48% in 2008).

► **Latino Internet access disparities have narrowed but still exist—even across Latino subgroups.**

The Latino-white access gap has narrowed only 5 points since 2008, but Latinos have made greater gains in relation to other racial/ethnic groups: the divide has narrowed 13 points with blacks and 10 points with Asians. Some Latino subgroups are similar to other racial/ethnic groups in their access to broadband. For example, there are relatively high rates of access among Latinos who are U.S. born (74%), prefer to speak English (78%), or earn at least \$40,000 per year (81%). But other Latino subgroups still lag far behind, including those who are foreign born (35%), prefer to speak Spanish (28%), or earn less than \$40,000 (45%).

► **Older residents and those with disabilities lag behind.**

Older Californians are less likely than younger residents to have a broadband connection at home. Those who are age 55 and older are the least likely to have broadband access (63%) compared to those in the 35–54 age group (71%) and the 18–34 age group (74%). Not every adult with a disability is able to participate in telephone surveys. Among those in our surveys who do report a disability, handicap, or chronic disease, or who say they have difficulty seeing, hearing, talking, or walking, 56% report they have broadband access (up 20 points since 2008), compared to 72% of those without a disability.

► **Younger, more-educated, and wealthier adults are more likely to access the Internet with a cell phone.**

Fifty-six percent of adults use a cell phone to access the Internet, a 37-point increase since 2008 (19% 2008, 56% today). Residents age 18 to 34 are far more likely than adults age 55 and older to use a cell phone to go online (78% compared to 30%). Use of a cell phone to access the Internet is highest among blacks (73%), followed by whites (59%), Asians (55%), and Latinos (52%). The percentage of adults using cell phones to connect to the Internet increases with education and is far higher among those with household incomes of \$80,000 or more (76%) than among less-affluent Californians (46%).



California's digital divide

		Internet use*		Broadband at home					2013
		2008	2013	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	
All adults		70%	86%	55%	62%	70%	72%	73%	69%
Race/ Ethnicity	Asians	80	89	67	74	77	76	76	75
	Blacks	82	91	66	62	70	74	74	71
	Latinos	48	77	34	39	50	55	58	52
	Whites	81	93	68	75	82	81	84	81
Citizenship	U.S.-born	81	92	67	71	79	80	82	79
	Naturalized citizen	62	82	46	57	60	64	64	62
	Noncitizen	36	72	23	31	36	50	51	43
Education	No college	47	72	32	37	46	53	56	47
	Some college	81	96	63	69	75	84	81	83
	College graduate	92	97	81	83	90	90	91	88
Household income	Under \$40,000	49	77	33	40	49	58	60	53
	\$40,000 to \$80,000	83	94	64	74	78	82	80	84
	\$80,000 or more	92	99	85	89	94	93	93	92
Homeownership	Own	76	88	64	73	77	78	77	75
	Rent	61	85	44	48	61	63	70	64
Disability**	Yes	57	74	36	47	55	49	56	56
	No	73	89	60	65	75	76	77	72
Age	18 to 34	78	95	60	65	76	81	82	74
	35 to 54	73	88	61	64	73	72	74	71
	55 and older	58	77	44	57	64	61	63	63
Gender	Men	71	89	59	65	74	74	78	74
	Women	68	84	52	59	67	69	68	64
Children age 18 or younger?	Yes	69	89	54	62	71	72	73	68
	No	71	86	57	63	71	72	74	71
Region	Central Valley	71	81	53	51	64	70	71	60
	San Francisco Bay Area	77	92	65	73	79	78	78	80
	Los Angeles	61	86	48	58	67	68	69	64
	Orange/San Diego	73	89	58	70	75	76	78	77
	Inland Empire	70	86	56	60	71	66	71	68

* For 2009–2010, "Internet use" includes those who answered yes to the question "Do you ever go online to access the Internet or send or receive email?" or to the question "Do you send or receive email, at least occasionally?" For 2011, it includes those who said yes to the question "Do you use the Internet, at least occasionally?" or to the question "Do you send or receive email, at least occasionally?" For 2012 and 2013, it includes those who said yes to the question "Do you use the Internet, at least occasionally?" or to the question "Do you send or receive email, at least occasionally?" or to the question "Do you access the Internet on a cell phone, tablet, or other mobile handheld device, at least occasionally?"

** "Disability" includes those who answered yes to the question "Does any disability, handicap, or chronic disease keep you from participating fully in work, school, housework, or other activities, or not?" or "Do you often have difficulty seeing, hearing, talking, or walking in the course of your everyday life?"

Sources: PPIC Statewide Surveys, June 2008 (2,503 adults), June 2009 (2,502 adults), July 2010 (2,502 adults), June 2011 (2,502 adults), July 2012 (2,500), June 2013 (2,502). The margin of error for all adults in 2013 is ±2.9%; the margin of error for subgroups is larger. Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project.

Contact: surveys@ppic.org

Supported with funding from the California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF) and ZeroDivide.