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The Demographics of Social Media Users — 2012

Young adults are more likely than older adults to use social media. Women, African-Americans, and Latinos show high interest in sites like Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest.

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<http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2013/Social-media-users.aspx>

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The State of Social Media Users

A late 2012 survey by the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project shows that young adults are more likely than others to use major social media. At the same time, other groups are interested in different sites and services. In the case of Pinterest, Instagram, and Tumblr, these are the first reportable survey readings by Pew Research allowing comparison of whites, African-Americans, and Latinos.

The Landscape of Social Media Users

	% of internet users who....	The service is especially appealing to ...
Use Any Social Networking Site	67%	Adults ages 18-29, women
Use Facebook	67	Women, adults ages 18-29
Use Twitter	16	Adults ages 18-29, African-Americans, urban residents
Use Pinterest	15	Women, adults under 50, whites, those with some college education
Use Instagram	13	Adults ages 18-29, African-Americans, Latinos, women, urban residents
Use Tumblr	6	Adults ages 18-29

Source: Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project Post-Election Survey, November 14 – December 09, 2012. N=1,802 internet users. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish and on landline and cell phones. Margin of error is +/- 2.6 percentage points for results based on internet users. Facebook figures are based on Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project Omnibus Survey, December 13-16, 2012. Margin of error for Facebook data is +/- 2.9 percentage points for results based on internet users (n=860).

These readings come from a national survey conducted between November 14 and December 9, 2012 on landline and cell phones and in English and in Spanish. The results reported here come from the 1,802 respondents who are internet users and the margin of error is +/- 2.6 percentage points.

Figures on Facebook usage are taken from a separate Pew Research Center survey conducted in December 2012. For more in-depth information about Americans' Facebook habits, see our recent report "[Coming and Going on Facebook.](#)"

Social Networking Site Users

Internet users under 50 are particularly likely to use a social networking site of any kind, and those 18-29 are the most likely of any demographic cohort to do so (83%). Women are more likely than men to be on these sites. Those living in urban settings are also significantly more likely than rural internet users to use social networking.

Social Networking Sites

% of internet users who use social networking sites

		Use Social Networking Sites
All internet users (n=1,802)		67%
a	Men (n=846)	62
b	Women (n=956)	71 ^a
Race/ethnicity		
a	White, Non-Hispanic (n=1,332)	65
b	Black, Non-Hispanic (n=178)	68
c	Hispanic (n=154)	72
Age		
a	18-29 (n=318)	83 ^{bcd}
b	30-49 (n=532)	77 ^{cd}
c	50-64 (n=551)	52 ^d
d	65+ (n=368)	32
Education attainment		
a	Less than high school/high school grad (n=549)	66
b	Some College (n=519)	69
c	College + (n=721)	65
Household income		
a	Less than \$30,000/yr (n=409)	72
b	\$30,000-\$49,999 (n=330)	65
c	\$50,000-\$74,999 (n=283)	66
d	\$75,000+ (n=504)	66
Urbanity		
a	Urban (n=561)	70 ^c
b	Suburban (n=905)	67
c	Rural (n=336)	61

Source: Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project Post-Election Survey, November 14 – December 09, 2012. N=1,802 internet users. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish and on landline and cell phones. Margin of error is +/- 2.6 percentage points for results based on internet users.

Note: Percentages marked with a superscript letter (e.g., ^a) indicate a statistically significant difference between that row and the row designated by that superscript letter, among categories of each demographic characteristic (e.g. age).

Twitter users

The percentage of internet users who are on Twitter has doubled since November 2010, currently standing at 16%. Those under 50, and especially those 18-29, are the most likely to use Twitter. Urban-dwellers are significantly more likely than both suburban and rural residents to be on Twitter.

Twitter

% of internet users who use Twitter

		Use Twitter
All internet users (n=1,802)		16%
a	Men (n=846)	17
b	Women (n=956)	15
Race/ethnicity		
a	White, Non-Hispanic (n=1,332)	14
b	Black, Non-Hispanic (n=178)	26 ^a
c	Hispanic (n=154)	19
Age		
a	18-29 (n=318)	27 ^{bcd}
b	30-49 (n=532)	16 ^{cd}
c	50-64 (n=551)	10 ^d
d	65+ (n=368)	2
Education attainment		
a	Less than high school/high school grad (n=549)	15
b	Some College (n=519)	17
c	College + (n=721)	15
Household income		
a	Less than \$30,000/yr (n=409)	16
b	\$30,000-\$49,999 (n=330)	16
c	\$50,000-\$74,999 (n=283)	14
d	\$75,000+ (n=504)	17
Urbanity		
a	Urban (n=561)	20 ^{bc}
b	Suburban (n=905)	14
c	Rural (n=336)	12

Source: Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project Post-Election Survey, November 14 – December 09, 2012. N=1,802 internet users. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish and on landline and cell phones. Margin of error is +/- 2.6 percentage points for results based on internet users.

Note: Percentages marked with a superscript letter (e.g., ^a) indicate a statistically significant difference between that row and the row designated by that superscript letter, among categories of each demographic characteristic (e.g. age).

Pinterest users

Pinterest, the online pinboard, has attracted 15% of internet users to its virtual scrapbooking. Whites, young people, the well-educated, those with higher income, and women are particularly likely to use the site. Pinterest is equally popular among those 18-29 and 30-49 (19%). Women are about five times as likely to be on the site as men, the largest difference in gender of any site featured in this report.

Pinterest

% of internet users who use Pinterest

		Use Pinterest
All internet users (n=1,802)		15%
a	Men (n=846)	5
b	Women (n=956)	25 ^a
Race/ethnicity		
a	White, Non-Hispanic (n=1,332)	18 ^{bc}
b	Black, Non-Hispanic (n=178)	8
c	Hispanic (n=154)	10
Age		
a	18-29 (n=318)	19 ^{cd}
b	30-49 (n=532)	19 ^{cd}
c	50-64 (n=551)	12 ^d
d	65+ (n=368)	4
Education attainment		
a	Less than high school/high school grad (n=549)	11
b	Some College (n=519)	16 ^a
c	College + (n=721)	20 ^a
Household income		
a	Less than \$30,000/yr (n=409)	10
b	\$30,000-\$49,999 (n=330)	15
c	\$50,000-\$74,999 (n=283)	23 ^{ab}
d	\$75,000+ (n=504)	18 ^a
Urbanity		
a	Urban (n=561)	13
b	Suburban (n=905)	16
c	Rural (n=336)	18

Source: Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project Post-Election Survey, November 14 – December 09, 2012. N=1,802 internet users. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish and on landline and cell phones. Margin of error is +/- 2.6 percentage points for results based on internet users.

Note: Percentages marked with a superscript letter (e.g., ^a) indicate a statistically significant difference between that row and the row designated by that superscript letter, among categories of each demographic characteristic (e.g. age).

Instagram users

Thirteen percent of internet users are taking and sharing pictures with Instagram. Women are more likely than men to use the site, as are those under 50. African-Americans and Hispanics are more likely than whites to use Instagram, along with urban residents.

Instagram

% of internet users who use Instagram

		Use Instagram
All internet users (n=1,802)		13%
a	Men (n=846)	10
b	Women (n=956)	16 ^a
Race/ethnicity		
a	White, Non-Hispanic (n=1,332)	11
b	Black, Non-Hispanic (n=178)	23 ^a
c	Hispanic (n=154)	18 ^a
Age		
a	18-29 (n=318)	28 ^{bcd}
b	30-49 (n=532)	14 ^{cd}
c	50-64 (n=551)	3
d	65+ (n=368)	2
Education attainment		
a	Less than high school/high school grad (n=549)	12
b	Some College (n=519)	15
c	College + (n=721)	12
Household income		
a	Less than \$30,000/yr (n=409)	15
b	\$30,000-\$49,999 (n=330)	14
c	\$50,000-\$74,999 (n=283)	12
d	\$75,000+ (n=504)	12
Urbanity		
a	Urban (n=561)	17 ^{bc}
b	Suburban (n=905)	11
c	Rural (n=336)	11

Source: Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project Post-Election Survey, November 14 – December 09, 2012. N=1,802 internet users. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish and on landline and cell phones. Margin of error is +/- 2.6 percentage points for results based on internet users.

Note: Percentages marked with a superscript letter (e.g., ^a) indicate a statistically significant difference between that row and the row designated by that superscript letter, among categories of each demographic characteristic (e.g. age).

Tumblr users

Tumblr is significantly less popular among internet users than the other social networking sites featured in this report. Just 6% of those online use the site. It is much more popular, however, among the youngest cohort — 13% of those 18-29 are blogging on Tumblr.

Tumblr

% of internet users who use Tumblr

		Use Tumblr
All internet users (n=1,802)		6%
a	Men (n=846)	6
b	Women (n=956)	6
Race/ethnicity		
a	White, Non-Hispanic (n=1,332)	6
b	Black, Non-Hispanic (n=178)	5
c	Hispanic (n=154)	8
Age		
a	18-29 (n=318)	13 ^{bcd}
b	30-49 (n=532)	5 ^d
c	50-64 (n=551)	3 ^d
d	65+ (n=368)	1
Education attainment		
a	Less than high school/high school grad (n=549)	5
b	Some College (n=519)	6
c	College + (n=721)	7
Household income		
a	Less than \$30,000/yr (n=409)	6 ^b
b	\$30,000-\$49,999 (n=330)	3
c	\$50,000-\$74,999 (n=283)	5
d	\$75,000+ (n=504)	8 ^b
Urbanity		
a	Urban (n=561)	7
b	Suburban (n=905)	5
c	Rural (n=336)	6

Source: Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project Post-Election Survey, November 14 – December 09, 2012. N=1,802 internet users. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish and on landline and cell phones. Margin of error is +/- 2.6 percentage points for results based on internet users.

Note: Percentages marked with a superscript letter (e.g., ^a) indicate a statistically significant difference between that row and the row designated by that superscript letter, among categories of each demographic characteristic (e.g. age).

Facebook users

Facebook remains the most-used social networking platform, as two-thirds of online adults say that they are Facebook users. Women are more likely than men to be Facebook users, and Facebook use is especially common among younger adults.

Facebook

% of internet users who use Facebook

		Use Facebook
All internet users (n=860)		67%
a	Men (n=418)	62
b	Women (n=442)	72 ^a
Age		
a	18-29 (n=164)	86 ^{bcd}
b	30-49 (n=254)	73 ^{cd}
c	50-64 (n=231)	57 ^d
d	65+ (n=183)	35
Education attainment		
a	Less than high school/high school grad (n=261)	60
b	Some College (n=250)	73 ^a
c	College + (n=345)	68
Household income		
a	Less than \$30,000/yr (n=223)	68
b	\$30,000-\$49,999 (n=152)	62
c	\$50,000-\$74,999 (n=127)	69
d	\$75,000+ (n=248)	73
Urbanity		
a	Urban (n=261)	72
b	Suburban (n=442)	65
c	Rural (n=157)	63

Source: Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project Omnibus Survey, December 13-16, 2012. N=860 internet users. Interviews were conducted on landline and cell phones. The margin of error is +/- 2.9 percentage points for results based on internet users.

Note: Percentages marked with a superscript letter (e.g., ^a) indicate a statistically significant difference between that row and the row designated by that superscript letter, among categories of each demographic characteristic (e.g. age).



About the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project

The Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project is one of seven projects that make up the [Pew Research Center](#), a nonpartisan, nonprofit "fact tank" that provides information on the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world. The Project produces reports exploring the impact of the internet on families, communities, work and home, daily life, education, health care, and civic and political life. The Pew Internet Project takes no positions on policy issues related to the internet or other communications technologies. It does not endorse technologies, industry sectors, companies, nonprofit organizations, or individuals.

Survey Questions

2012 Post-Election Tracking Survey

Final Topline

12/12/2012

Data for November 14–December 9, 2012

Princeton Survey Research Associates International for
the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project

Sample: n=2,261 national adults, age 18 and older, including 908 cell phone interviews
Interviewing dates: 11.14.2012 – 12.09.2012

Margin of error is plus or minus 2.3 percentage points for results based on Total [n=2,261]

Margin of error is plus or minus 2.6 percentage points for results based on internet users [n=1,802]

Margin of error is plus or minus 2.5 percentage points for results based on cell phone owners [n=1,954]

Margin of error is plus or minus 2.6 percentage points for results based on registered voters/don't have to register [n=1,886]

Margin of error is plus or minus 3.3 percentage points for results based on SNS users [n=1,089]

Margin of error is plus or minus 3.3 percentage points for results based on SNS or Twitter users [n=1,111]

Margin of error is plus or minus 2.8 percentage points for results based on online political users [n=1,591]

INTUSE Do you use the internet, at least occasionally?

EMLOCC Do you send or receive email, at least occasionally?

INTMOB Do you access the internet on a cell phone, tablet or other mobile handheld device, at least occasionally?¹

USES INTERNET

DOES NOT USE
INTERNET

¹ The definition of an internet user varies from survey to survey. From January 2005 thru February 2012, an internet user is someone who uses the internet at least occasionally or sends/receives email at least occasionally (two-part definition with question wording "Do you use the internet, at least occasionally?" OR "Do you send or receive email, at least occasionally?"). Prior to January 2005, an internet user is someone who goes online to access the internet or to send and receive email (question wording "Do you ever go online to access the Internet or World Wide Web or to send and receive email?").

Current	81	19
November 2012	85	15
September 2012	81	19
August 2012	85	15
April 2012	82	18
February 2012	80	20
December 2011	82	18
August 2011	78	22
May 2011	78	22
January 2011	79	21
December 2010	77	23
November 2010	74	26
September 2010	74	26
May 2010	79	21
January 2010	75	25
December 2009	74	26
September 2009	77	23
April 2009	79	21
December 2008 ⁱ	74	26
November 2008	74	26
August 2008	75	25
July 2008	77	23
May 2008	73	27
April 2008	73	27
January 2008	70	30
December 2007	75	25
September 2007	73	27
February 2007	71	29
December 2006	70	30
November 2006	68	32
August 2006	70	30
April 2006	73	27
February 2006	73	27
December 2005	66	34
September 2005	72	28
June 2005	68	32
February 2005	67	33
January 2005	66	34
Nov 23-30, 2004	59	41
November 2004	61	39
June 2004	63	37
February 2004	63	37
November 2003	64	36
August 2003 ⁱⁱ	63	37
June 2003	62	38
May 2003	63	37
March 3-11, 2003 ⁱⁱⁱ	62	38
February 2003	64	36
December 2002	57	43

WEB-1 Next... Please tell me if you ever use the internet to do any of the following things. Do you ever...[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]?²

Based on all internet users [N=1,802]

	TOTAL HAVE EVER DONE THIS	----- DID YESTERDAY	HAVE NOT DONE THIS	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
Use a social networking site like Facebook, LinkedIn or Google Plus³					
Current	67	N/A	33	*	*
August 2012	69	N/A	31	0	*
February 2012	66	48	34	*	0
August 2011	64	43	35	*	0
May 2011	65	43	35	*	0
January 2011	61	N/A	39	0	0
December 2010	62	N/A	38	*	0
November 2010	61	37	39	*	*
September 2010	62	39	38	*	0
May 2010	61	38	39	0	0
January 2010	57	32	43	*	0
December 2009	56	33	44	0	*
September 2009	47	27	52	*	*
April 2009	46	27	54	*	*
Use Twitter					
Current	16	N/A	84	*	*
August 2012	16	N/A	84	*	0
February 2012	15	8	85	*	0
August 2011	12	5	88	*	0
May 2011	13	4	87	*	0
January 2011	10	N/A	90	*	*
December 2010	12	N/A	88	*	0
November 2010	8	2	92	0	*
Use Tumblr					
Current	6	N/A	93	1	*
August 2-5, 2012iv	5	N/A	94	1	0
Use Instagram					
Current	13	N/A	87	*	0
August 2-5, 2012	12	N/A	88	1	0

² Prior to January 2005, question wording was "Please tell me if you ever do any of the following when you go online. Do you ever...?" Unless otherwise noted, trends are based on all internet users for that survey.

³ From April 2009 thru August 2011, item wording was "Use a social networking site like MySpace, Facebook or LinkedIn." In December 2008, item wording was "Use a social networking site like MySpace or Facebook." In August 2006, item wording was "Use an online social networking site like MySpace, Facebook or Friendster". Prior to August 2006, item wording was "Use online social or professional networking sites like Friendster or LinkedIn"

Use Pinterest

Current	15	N/A	83	2	0
August 2-5, 2012	12	N/A	87	1	*

Methodology

This report is based on the findings of a survey on Americans' use of the Internet. The results in this report are based on data from telephone interviews conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates International from November 14 to December 9, 2012, among a sample of 2,261 adults, age 18 and older. Telephone interviews were conducted in English and Spanish by landline (1,353) and cell phone (908, including 471 without a landline phone). For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling is plus or minus 2.3 percentage points. For results based on Internet users⁴ (n=1,802), the margin of sampling error is plus or minus 2.6 percentage points. In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting telephone surveys may introduce some error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

A combination of landline and cellular random digit dial (RDD) samples was used to represent all adults in the United States who have access to either a landline or cellular telephone. Both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International, LLC (SSI) according to PSRAI specifications. Numbers for the landline sample were selected with probabilities in proportion to their share of listed telephone households from active blocks (area code + exchange + two-digit block number) that contained three or more residential directory listings. The cellular sample was not list-assisted, but was drawn through a systematic sampling from dedicated wireless 100-blocks and shared service 100-blocks with no directory-listed landline numbers.

New sample was released daily and was kept in the field for at least five days. The sample was released in replicates, which are representative subsamples of the larger population. This ensures that complete call procedures were followed for the entire sample. At least 7 attempts were made to complete an interview at a sampled telephone number. The calls were staggered over times of day and days of the week to maximize the chances of making contact with a potential respondent. Each number received at least one daytime call in an attempt to find someone available. For the landline sample, interviewers asked to speak with the youngest adult male or female currently at home based on a random rotation. If no male/female was available, interviewers asked to speak with the youngest adult of the other gender. For the cellular sample, interviews were conducted with the person who answered the phone. Interviewers verified that the person was an adult and in a safe place before administering the survey. Cellular sample respondents were offered a post-paid cash incentive for their participation. All interviews completed on any given day were considered to be the final sample for that day.

⁴ Internet user definition includes those who access the internet on their cell phones or other mobile handheld device.

Weighting is generally used in survey analysis to compensate for sample designs and patterns of non-response that might bias results. A two-stage weighting procedure was used to weight this dual-frame sample. The first-stage corrected for different probabilities of selection associated with the number of adults in each household and each respondent's telephone usage patterns.⁵ This weighting also adjusts for the overlapping landline and cell sample frames and the relative sizes of each frame and each sample.

The second stage of weighting balances sample demographics to population parameters. The sample is balanced to match national population parameters for sex, age, education, race, Hispanic origin, region (U.S. Census definitions), population density, and telephone usage. The Hispanic origin was split out based on nativity; U.S. born and non-U.S. born. The White, non-Hispanic subgroup is also balanced on age, education and region. The basic weighting parameters came from a special analysis of the Census Bureau's 2011 Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC) that included all households in the United States. The population density parameter was derived from Census data. The cell phone usage parameter came from an analysis of the July-December 2011 National Health Interview Survey.⁶

Following is the full disposition of all sampled telephone numbers:

Sample Disposition		
Landline	Cell	
33,785	19,800	Total Numbers Dialed
1,465	345	Non-residential
1,421	69	Computer/Fax
14	----	Cell phone
16,896	7,758	Other not working
1,655	125	Additional projected not working
12,335	11,504	Working numbers
36.5%	58.1%	Working Rate
552	42	No Answer / Busy
3,347	2,843	Voice Mail
37	7	Other Non-Contact
8,399	8,612	Contacted numbers
68.1%	74.9%	Contact Rate
483	1,137	Callback
6,446	5,956	Refusal
1,470	1,519	Cooperating numbers
17.5%	17.6%	Cooperation Rate
58	48	Language Barrier
----	518	Child's cell phone

⁵ i.e., whether respondents have only a landline telephone, only a cell phone, or both kinds of telephone.

⁶ Blumberg SJ, Luke JV. Wireless substitution: Early release of estimates from the National Health Interview Survey, July-December, 2011. National Center for Health Statistics. Jul 2012.

1,412	953	Eligible numbers
96.1%	62.7%	Eligibility Rate
59	45	Break-off
1,353	908	Completes
95.8%	95.3%	Completion Rate
11.4%	12.6%	Response Rate

The disposition reports all of the sampled telephone numbers ever dialed from the original telephone number samples. The response rate estimates the fraction of all eligible respondents in the sample that were ultimately interviewed. At PSRAI it is calculated by taking the product of three component rates:

- Contact rate – the proportion of working numbers where a request for interview was made
- Cooperation rate – the proportion of contacted numbers where a consent for interview was at least initially obtained, versus those refused
- Completion rate – the proportion of initially cooperating and eligible interviews that were completed

Thus the response rate for the landline sample was 11 percent. The response rate for the cellular sample was 13 percent.

ⁱ December 2008 trends based on the Fall Tracking survey, conducted November 19-December 20, 2008 [N=2,253, including 502 cell phone interviews]. Trends do not include California oversample.

ⁱⁱ August 2003 trends based on 'E-Government' survey conducted June 25-August 3, 2003 [N=2,925].

ⁱⁱⁱ March 3-11, 2003 trends based on daily tracking survey conducted March 3-11, 2003 [N=743].

^{iv} August 2-5, 2012 trends based on an omnibus survey conducted August 2-5, 2012 [N=1,005, including 405 cell phone interviews].