# Report: Smartphone Ownership Increases Overall Broadband Access

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A new survey from the Pew Internet and American Life project shows that 10 percent of Americans use their smarpthone as their sole connection to the Internet. The survey also found that 56 percent of American adults own a smartphone of some kind, compared with 70 percent who have broadband at home.

**Broadband and smartphone adoption**

*Among all American adults ages 18 and older, the % in each group who...*

| | | Have broadband at home | Have home broadband or smartphone | Difference |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **All adults** | | 70% | 80% | +10 |
| a | **Men** (n=1029) | 71 | 81 | +10 |
| b | **Women** (n=1223) | 69 | 78 | +9 |
| **Race/ethnicity** | | | | |
| a | **White, Non-Hispanic** (n=1571) | $74^{bd}$ | 80 | +6 |
| b | **Black, Non-Hispanic** (n=252) | 64 | 79 | +15 |
| c | **Hispanic** (n=243) | 53 | 75 | +22 |
| **Age** | | | | |
| a | **18-29** (n=404) | $80^{cd}$ | $95^{bcd}$ | +15 |
| b | **30-49** (n=577) | $78^{cd}$ | $88^{cd}$ | +11 |
| c | **50-64** (n=641) | $69^{d}$ | $77^{d}$ | +11 |
| d | **65+** (n=570) | 43 | 46 | +3 |
| **Education attainment** | | | | |
| a | **No high school diploma** (n=168) | 37 | 52 | +15 |
| b | **High school grad** (n=363) | $57^{c}$ | $70^{c}$ | +13 |
| c | **Some College** (n=348) | $78^{ad}$ | $87^{ad}$ | +9 |
| d | **College +** (n=834) | $89^{abc}$ | $93^{abc}$ | +4 |
| **Household income** | | | | |
| a | **Less than $30,000/yr** (n=580) | 54 | 67 | +13 |
| b | **$30,000-$49,999** (n=374) | $70^{c}$ | $79^{c}$ | +9 |
| c | **$50,000-$74,999** (n=298) | $84^{ad}$ | $91^{ad}$ | +9 |
| d | **$75,000+** (n=582) | $88^{ab}$ | $95^{ab}$ | +7 |
| **Urbanity** | | | | |
| a | **Urban** (n=763) | $70^{c}$ | $80^{c}$ | +10 |
| b | **Suburban** (n=1057) | $75^{c}$ | $83^{c}$ | +10 |
| c | **Rural** (n=430) | 62 | 70 | +8 |

Source: Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project Spring Tracking Survey, April 17 – May 19, 2013. N=2,252 adults ages 18+. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish and on landline and cell phones. The margin of error for results based on all adults is +/ -2.3 percentage points.

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).

"And indeed, 10 percent of Americans indicate that they do not have a broadband connection at home but that they do own a smartphone (another way to say this is that 32 percent of non-broadband users own a smartphone)," the report states.

In all, nearly 80 percent of Americans have either a broadband connection, a smartphone, or both. The findings breakdown as follows: 46 percent of Americans have both a home broadband connection and a smartphone; 24 percent have a home broadband connection, but not a smartphone; 10 percent have a smartphone, but not a home broadband connection; the remaining 20 percent of Americans have neither a home broadband connection nor a smartphone.

The report goes on to break out groups and their access by age and ethnicity. Differences between racial and ethnic groups are an example of smartphones narrowing the “broadband gap”, the report conclude. While blacks and Latinos are less likely to have access to home broadband than whites, their use of smartphones nearly eliminates that difference.

On the other hand, including smartphones in the broadband definition actually exacerbates differences in broadband adoption rates between young and old. "Looking just at our standard definition of home broadband adoption, we find that 80 percent of young adults ages 18-29 have a high-speed broadband at home, compared with 43 percent of seniors ages 65 and older—a gap of 37 percentage points," the report found.

If smartphone ownership iis included in the definition of home broadband, that gap actually increases to 49 percentage points, because young adults are more likely than seniors to own smartphones as well.

"Adding smartphone ownership to home broadband use, we see that the proportion of young adults who have ”home broadband” under this definition increases from 80 percent to 95 percent, while including smartphones has no discernible impact on access rates for seniors—the 46 percent of seniors who have broadband or a smartphone is little different from the 43 percent who have broadband at all."

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