

Online in Wisconsin

Findings from the Wisconsin Family Health Survey, 2015 Release

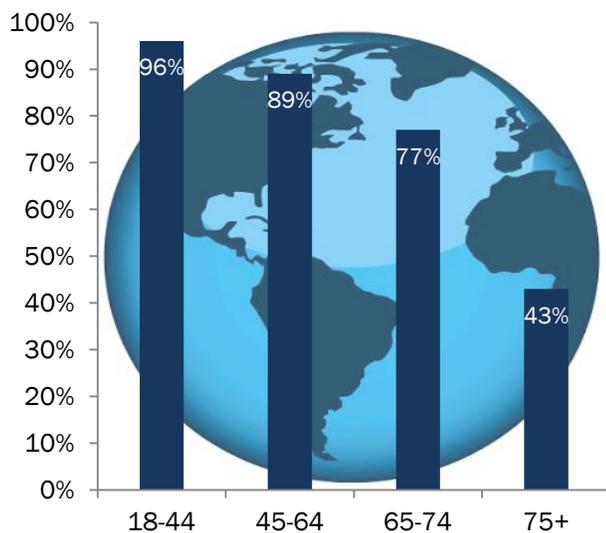
This report offers information about Internet access among adult Wisconsin household residents. Estimates are based on results from the 2014 Wisconsin Family Health Survey (FHS). The FHS is a population survey that uses address-based random sampling and telephone interviewing of selected respondents conducted each year by the Department of Health Services (DHS). An adult respondent in each sampled household answers the survey questions on behalf of all people living in that household.

In 2014, respondents were asked the following question about themselves and each adult in the household. The question asked for one response for each adult household member. Listed below the question are the estimated percentages of Wisconsin adults categorized by responses to the question.

How do you/how does your household member primarily access the Internet?

<i>Home personal computer or laptop</i>	54%
<i>Smartphone or cellphone</i>	22%
<i>At work</i>	5%
<i>Tablet/I-Pad</i>	2%
<i>At school</i>	1%
<i>At the library</i>	1%
<i>Use someone else's device</i>	1%
<i>Other</i>	1%
<i>Don't use the Internet</i>	<u>13%</u>
<i>All adults</i>	100%

Figure 1. Internet access among Wisconsin adults by age group



Source: Wisconsin Family Health Survey, 2014.

Internet Access by Age Group

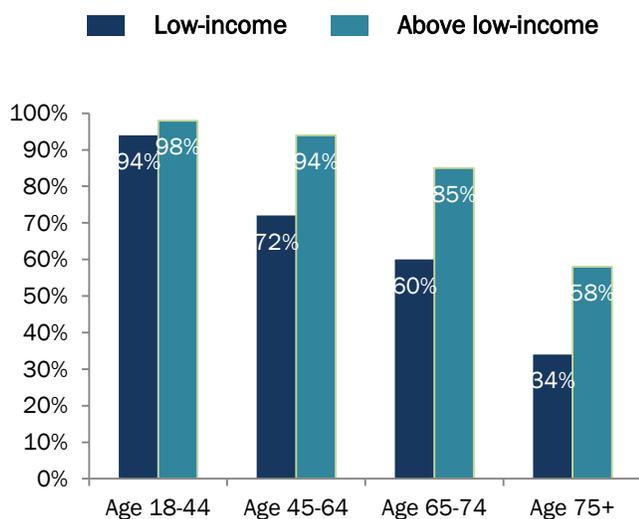
As shown in Figure 1, Internet access in Wisconsin is essentially universal among younger adults, but decreases with age. An estimated 96% of all residents aged 18-44 accessed the Internet in 2014, a percentage that stayed relatively high at 89% among adults aged 45-64. However, access gradually decreased to less than half of adults age 75 and older. Note that this does not include people living outside of households; for example, dormitories and nursing homes.

The majority of adults aged 45 and older used a personal computer to access the Internet, while adults younger than age 45 were about evenly divided between using a personal computer and using a smartphone as their primary way to access the Internet.

Internet Access by Income Level

Poverty may be a barrier to Internet access. Overall, an estimated 77% of low-income adults accessed the Internet, compared to 93% of adults who were above the low-income threshold. As seen in Figure 2, low-income adults in each of the four age groups were significantly less likely to access the Internet than those who were above low-income. Low-income adults were those who lived in households where income was less than 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL). Above low-income adults were those who lived in households where income was above 200% of the FPL.²

Figure 2. Internet access in Wisconsin, by age group and income level



Source: Wisconsin Family Health Survey, 2014.

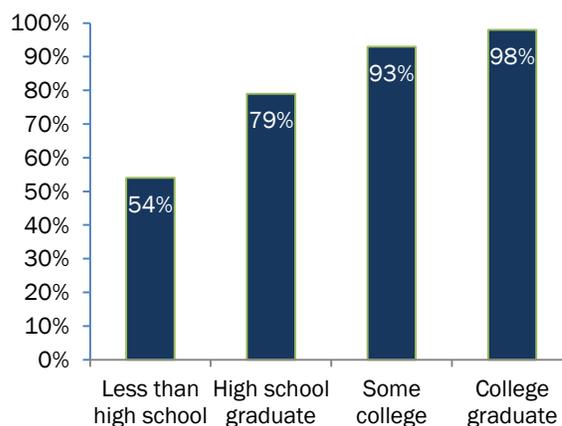
Notes:

1. Estimates have been rounded to the nearest whole percentage.
2. The Federal Poverty Level (FPL) is based on household size and income. Examples of the 200% FPL are: one-person household, \$23,000; two-person household, \$31,000; three-person household, \$39,000; four-person household, \$47,000. See: <http://aspe.hhs.gov/prior-hhs-poverty-guidelines-and-federal-register-references>
3. For more information about the Wisconsin Family Health Survey: <http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/stats/familyhealthsurvey.htm>
4. For questions or more information, please contact: DHShealthstats@dhs.wisconsin.gov

Internet Access by Education Level

As seen in Figure 3, the more education reported, the more likely it was that an adult accessed the Internet. An estimated 98% of adults who have graduated from college access the internet, compared to 54% who have not completed high school.

Figure 3. Internet access in Wisconsin, by education level



Source: Wisconsin Family Health Survey, 2014.

Conclusion

Not all adults access the Internet, particularly those who are older, have low income, or have less education. Online communication does not reach all adults, thus different communication strategies may be required to reach different people. Family Health Survey results show that we cannot assume that everyone is online in Wisconsin.