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ARIZONA CAPITOL TIMES &gt; LATEST NEWS &gt; INTER-NYET: REPORT SAYS THREE ARIZONANS IN 10 HAVE NO INTERNET ACCESS

## Inter-nyet: Report says three Arizonans in 10 have no Internet access

By Xi Chen, Cronkite News Service  
Published: June 11, 2013 at 5:49 pm

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San Francisco residents get training in computer use at this senior center in California. Senior citizens are less likely than other age groups to be connected to the Internet, according to a recent Census bureau report. (Photo courtesy the National Telecommunications and Information Administration)

WASHINGTON – Platforms for jobs, government and other services are increasingly moving online, but 30 percent of Americans do not have an Internet connection to access to those resources, a new Census Bureau report says.

The number in Arizona mirrored the nation, with just over 31 percent of state residents having no Net connectivity in 2011, the year profiled in the report.

“It may be surprising to some people, because a lot of people think everyone has a computer, everyone has Internet at

home, everyone knows how, and that’s not true,” said Annette Vigil, manager of South Mountain Community Library in Phoenix.

The lack of access is particularly common for seniors, with about 54 percent of Americans 65 and older having no Internet access. That makes computers and computer classes at libraries and senior centers “really popular,” said Vigil, whose library offers free computer classes in English and Spanish every week.

South Mountain’s experience is not unusual, said Kathryn Zickuhr, an analyst from the Pew Research Center, which has reported on the digital divide.

“When seniors or other people who don’t use the Internet very much need to go online, to access government forms that are now online-only, they go to libraries for help,” Zickuhr said.

The Census survey described a “connectivity continuum” that ranged from people with no computer at home and no Net access up to those who have multiple devices with which to access the Internet.

Nationally, 15.9 percent of people had no home computer and another 14.4 percent had a computer but no Internet access in 2011, the report said. In Arizona, the numbers were 16.2 percent and 15.4 percent, respectively.

On the other end of the spectrum, 37.3 percent of Americans were “highly connected,” with access from home and elsewhere. In Arizona, 36.5 percent of residents fell in that category.

Men and women were about even in terms of access, while Asians and whites had higher levels of connectivity than blacks and Hispanics.

Greta Byrum, an analyst from the Open Technology Institute at New America Foundation, said it is essential that “people from all walks of life have access to the Internet and digital resources.”

“This should be a leading policy priority and a focus of investment,” Byrum said.

Vigil agreed that it is important for citizens to get online, which is “the way the world is now.”

“The world has changed from 10 years ago,” Vigil said. “You can’t apply for jobs any more, unless you know how to get on the Internet.”

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That's where libraries and other facilities come in.

"There are many people in our community, who don't have computers at home and don't know how to use them, so it's very important that they have a place that they can come learn the basics and practice," Vigil said.

At the city of Chandler's Senior Center, classes teach people "how to move the mouse, how to type and everything," said Loretta Colson. She said many of the seniors have never used the Internet before and don't have anyone to learn from.

The Surprise Senior Center has been operating a computer lab and offering training classes for 10 years, said Leslie Rudders, a supervisor at the center. Classes are held six times a month on the basics of the computer and Internet.

"They want to learn, they realize it is the way of the future," Rudders said. "To function in today's modern world, everybody needs to have basic computer skills."

And Rudders said senior citizens want to be able to email family members or stay in touch with friends, like everyone else.

"They want to send pictures, see pictures, email back and forth, which gives them nice context," she said.

Rudders said seniors at her center are starting to buy tablets and smartphones, pushing the center to upgrade its service.

"Hopefully this coming year we are going to try to get wireless in here, so we can teach some of the newer devices as well," she said.

### Web, not quite worldwide

Individuals age 3 and older and their connection to the Internet in 2011, according to the U.S. Census Bureau:

#### **NATIONAL**

No connection anywhere: 30.3 percent

Connection, but not at home: 5.6 percent

Connection at home only: 26.7 percent

Connection at home and elsewhere: 37.3 percent

#### **ARIZONA**

No connection anywhere: 31.6 percent

Connection, but not at home: 4.9 percent

Connection at home only: 28.1 percent

Connection at home and elsewhere: 35.5 percent

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1.



[Mykola](#) Says:

[June 12th, 2013 at 8:05 am](#)

Our experience shows that seniors need to go through a very steep learning curve when learning basic computer skills, e.g. Windows operations or how to use email. Tablets such as iPad or Amazon Kindle HD are easier to learn and are more intuitive for the elderly – they are worth for the senior schools to add to the curriculum.

The complexity of the standard applications could be a deterrent for seniors as well. Once frustrated with the Facebook interface, a grandma may not want to try to learn again. Easy applications such as <http://www.EasyFamilyApps.com>, available for iPad, Android tablets, and Windows for free, would ensure an easy and enjoyable start with the basic services – easy email, Skype, Facebook, web browser, online photo albums & other Internet service.

Finally, printed illustrated step-by-step user guides help seniors to keep using the technology after the classes are over. For example, if grandma has clear instructions with pictures on how to send email, she will send it!

2.



*Phil Mason Says:*

[June 12th, 2013 at 9:47 am](#)

I presume that since we are counting 3 yr olds, we are also counting 103 yr olds, solitary confinement felons, those on life support and those who have no interest in using a computer or are mentally incompetent?

I know many people who want nothing to do with the internet, yet, in this article, they would be included in the group listed "with no internet access."

Statistics -- aren't they great? These stats remind me of the stacked numbers put out by the education bureaucrats

3.



*Mykola Says:*

[June 13th, 2013 at 5:23 am](#)

The Census Bureau sample seems to be legitimate.

Quotes on methodology from "Computer and Internet Use in the United States" original study:

The population represented (the population universe) in the Computer and Internet Supplement to the July 2011 CPS is the civilian noninstitutionalized population living in the United States.

The CPS sample is a multistage stratified sample of approximately 72,000 assigned housing units from 824 sample areas designed to measure demographic and labor force characteristics of the civilian noninstitutionalized population 16 years of age and older. Approximately 12,000 of the assigned housing units are sampled under the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) expansion that has been part of the official CPS sample since July 2001. The CPS samples housing units from lists of addresses obtained from the 2000 Decennial Census of Population and Housing. The sample is updated continuously for new housing built after Census 2000.

All comparisons presented in this report have taken sampling error into account and are significant at the 90 percent confidence level.

There are also alternative surveys that show similar results:

1) Pew Internet Research: "Older adults and internet use" reports that 53% of American adults ages 65 and older use the internet or email.

The methodology:

Interviewing conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates International, March 15 – April 3, 2012 and based on 2,254 telephone interviews. Sample: National adult. 1351 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 903 were interviewed on a cell phone.

2) Google/Ipsos study: 52% of seniors 65+ years old are online.

The methodology:

15 minute Attitude & Usage survey to examine attitudes and behaviors among a total of 6,100 U.S. respondents; recruited from March 6th to March 18th, 2013

• N=5,100 Boomers/Seniors ages 45+

• A general population control cell of 1,000 respondents ages

18–64 year olds was also included for comparison purposes

The numbers seem to match in all three studies – so at least the share of seniors who use internet seems to be valid.

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