

2016 Digital Future Project

# Surveying the Digital Future

Year Fourteen



Center for the  
Digital Future

The 2016 Digital Future Report

# Surveying the Digital Future

Year Fourteen

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The 2016 Digital Future Report  
**Surveying The Digital Future**  
Year Fourteen

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# The 2016 Digital Future Report

## Surveying The Digital Future

### Year Fourteen

Welcome to “Surveying the Digital Future,” the fourteenth study conducted by the Center for the Digital Future on the impact of the Internet on Americans.

The Center for the Digital Future was among the earliest research organizations to devote its primary efforts to exploring the views and behavior of Internet users and non-users in the United States, and was the first to develop a longitudinal panel study of these issues. The annual report we produce is the longest continuing study of its kind.

The Center initiated its work in 1999, and we published our first study in 2000. This project has become the comprehensive, year-to-year examination of the impact of online technology in the United States.

The objective of our fourteenth report is the same as the first: to explore actions and opinions related to the use – or non-use – of online technology, as well as to chronicle the emergence of changes as they occur.

The ongoing evolution in digital technology and how Americans adapt to these developments are a primary focus of our research. Through our 14 studies, we have found that online behavior changes constantly, and the views and behavior of both users and non-users adjust as technology emerges, and then thrives, fades away, or morphs in new directions. This report, the 13 studies that preceded it, and those that will follow, represent our commitment to chronicle this fascinating relationship between technology and behavior.

This work is part of the World Internet Project, which is organized and coordinated by the Center for the Digital Future in the USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism. Included in the World Internet Project are the **Center’s work and partner studies in countries in North America, Europe, South America, Asia, the Middle East, Australasia, and Africa.**

#### **The USC Annenberg School Center for the Digital Future: Exploring the Internet’s impact**

We created this project because the Internet represents the most important technological development of our generation; its effects may surpass those of television and could someday rival those of the printing press. If similar research had been conducted as television evolved in the late 1940s, the information would have provided policy-makers, the media, and ultimately historians with insights about how broadcasting changed the world.

Our objective is to ensure that the Digital Future Project studies online technology and capitalizes on the opportunity that was missed as television developed. By beginning our study of the Internet early in its evolution as a worldwide communication and information-gathering tool, we are able to understand the effects of the Internet as it grows, and not as a postscript after it has matured.

To achieve this objective, the Digital Future Project surveys individuals in more than 2,000 households across the United States, compiling the responses of Internet users and non-users. Each year we contact the same households to explore how online technology affects the lives of those who continue to use the Internet, those who remain non-users, and those who move from being non-users to users, and vice versa. (Those households that drop out of the survey sample are replaced with new ones.) We are also noting changes in behavior and views as users shift their Internet access from traditional desktop computers to other devices, starting with laptops several years ago, then tablets, and now smartphones.

The Digital Future Project is not restricted to investigating a particular method of accessing the Internet. The project also explores many aspects of change on the Internet and its evolving applications; such as

social networking, unwanted attention online, bullying, the cloud, and online dating. We will continue to monitor online technology as it transforms in unexpected ways.

### Why an ongoing study of the Internet?

The Digital Future Project differs from most other studies of the Internet in five principal areas:

- The Digital Future Project looks at the social impact of the Internet – Most Internet studies gather data about who is online, how long they are online, and what they do online. The Digital Future Project also compiles this information, but then examines the implications of the use of online technology, and links this use to a broad range of values, behavior, attitudes, and perceptions.
- The project focuses on Internet non-users as well as users – The Digital Future Project follows how the behavior and views of Internet users differ from those of non-users. Especially important is noting changes in the behavior and views of individuals who are initially non-users and later become users.
- The project looks at the same group of people year after year – The Digital Future Project comprehensively examines the effects of the Internet over the course of years on the same group of people. The research team maintains a core sample of respondents, and tracks short-term and long-term changes in their behavior, lifestyle, attitudes, and Internet use.
- A worldwide effort – The USC Annenberg School Center for the Digital Future created and organizes the World Internet Project, which includes the Digital Future Project and similar studies in countries worldwide (for contacts of the worldwide partners, see page 166). Through this team of international partners, the World Internet Project studies and compares changes associated with the Internet in different countries and regions, creating an international picture of change in online technology, use, and impact.
- A principal goal of the Digital Future Project is to engage government and private industry decision-makers who can create policy based on our findings – For this project to be truly effective, we involve public and private organizations that are committed to using our results. We have been allied with an unprecedented array of corporations – several of which are direct competitors – and foundations, all of whom are engaged with us in an ongoing dialogue about the issues we explore in our studies.

### The Digital Future Project: Key Areas

The current Digital Future Report includes findings that explore the views and behavior of users, and compare Internet users to non-users.

The survey is organized into five general subject areas:

- Internet Users And Non-Users: Who Is Online? Who Is Not? What Are Users Doing Online?
- Media Use And Trust
- Consumer Behavior
- Communication Patterns
- Social Effects

The 2016 **Digital Future Report** includes a broad sampling of more than 100 major issues from this year's survey.

We hope you will be enlightened by our fourteenth study of the views and behavior of Americans, as we continue to develop our understanding of how the Internet is transforming our world.

Jeffrey I. Cole, Ph.D.

Director, USC Annenberg School Center for the Digital Future  
 Founder and Organizer, World Internet Project-

The 2016 Digital Future Report

# Surveying The Digital Future

Year Fourteen

Each Digital Future Project explores more than 100 major issues in broad categories involving the impact of online technology in the United States.

This report explores only a sampling of the findings from the survey. For more detailed data, contact the Center for the Digital Future at [info@digitalcenter.org](mailto:info@digitalcenter.org).

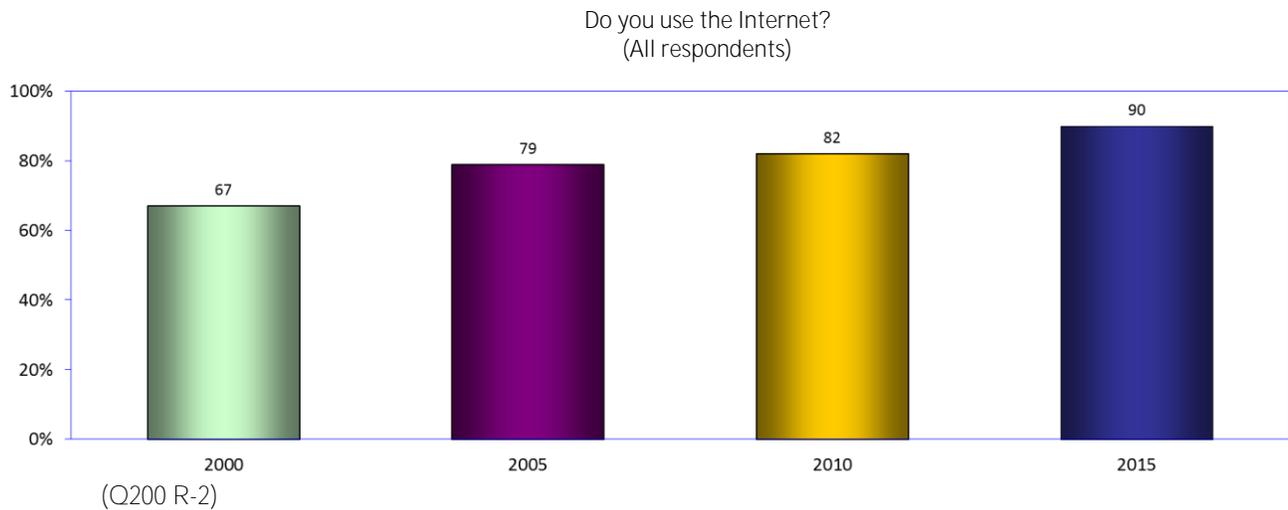
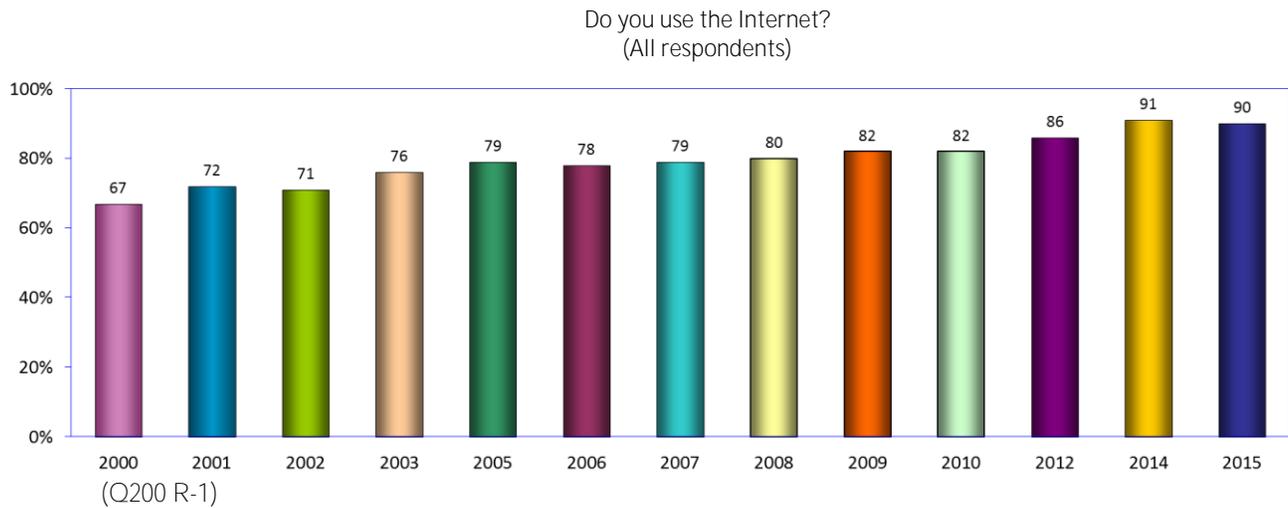
**For trends and issues in this year's findings, see page 162.**

## America on the Internet

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| Percentage of American Internet users                          | 90%  |
| Average hours per week online                                  | 23.5 |
| Average hours per week<br>online at home                       | 17.2 |
| Internet users who go online<br>on a mobile phone              | 83%  |
| Internet users who use mobile phone<br>as preferred connection | 45%  |
| Hours online at work (weekly)                                  | 13.5 |
| Hours actively using the Internet<br>at work (weekly)          | 10.9 |

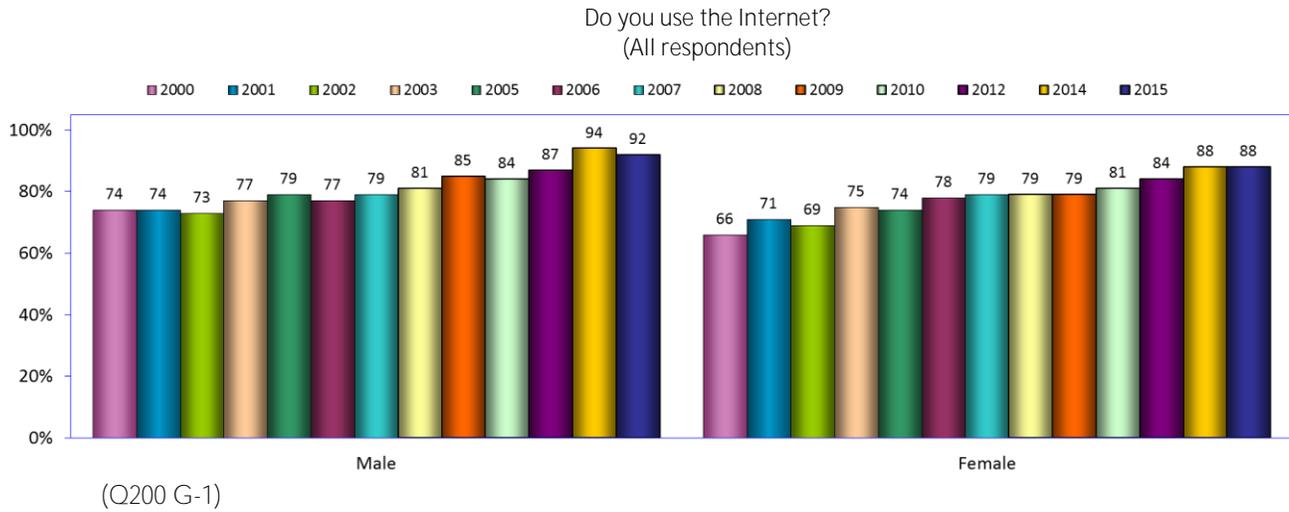
## 1. Do you use the Internet?

Very large percentages of respondents in all of the Digital Future studies have reported being Internet users – more than two-thirds (67 percent) in 2000, and 80 percent or more since 2008. In 2015, 90 percent reported using the Internet, a statistically insignificant difference from 2014.



## 2. Do you use the Internet? (men and women)

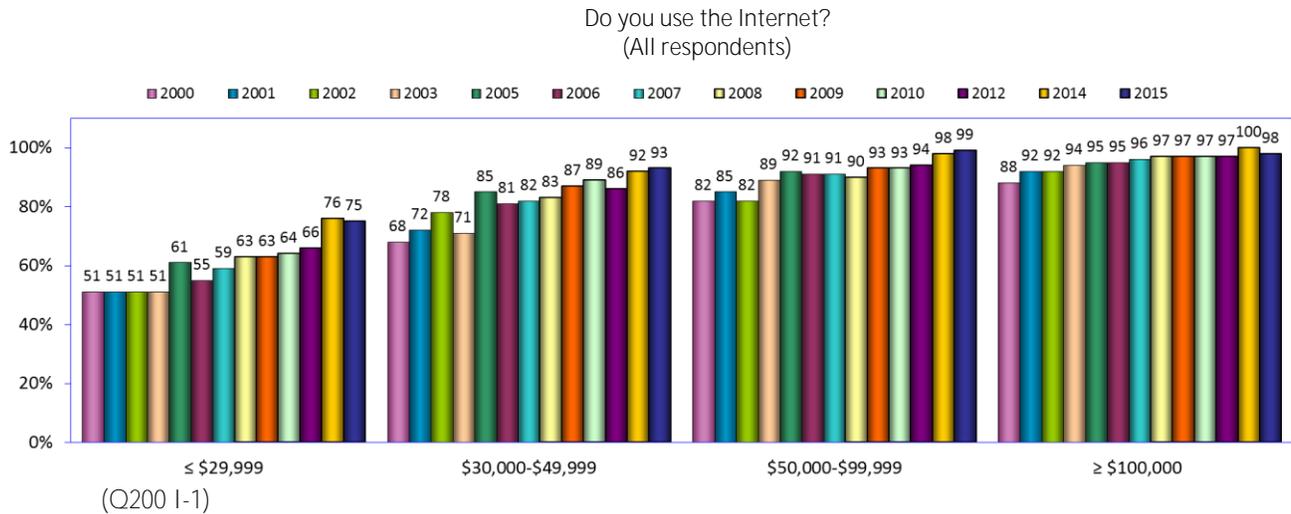
In most years of the Digital Future Study, a modestly higher percentage of men than women report that they are Internet users. This was also the case in 2015.



### 3. Do you use the Internet? (by income)

In general, Internet use increases with income; nearly all respondents in the current study with annual incomes of \$30,000 or more – 93 percent or more – go online.

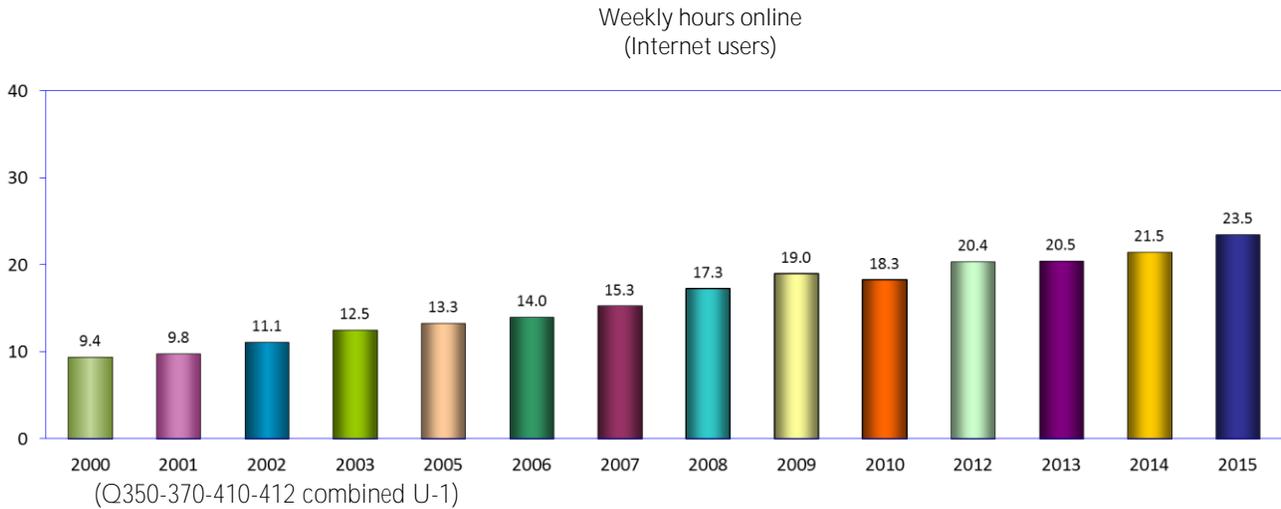
Yet very large percentages of low-income users go online as well; in the current Digital Future study, three-quarters of respondents with annual incomes of less than \$30,000 use the Internet.



#### 4. Hours per week online

The average number of hours online has reached a new high level – now 23.5 hours per week.

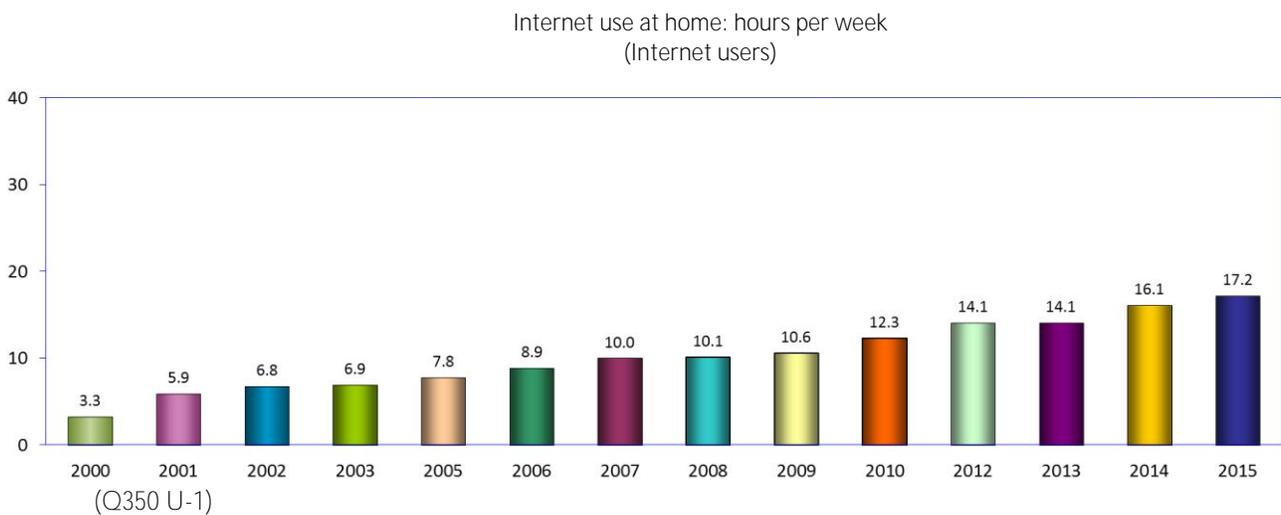
The average number of hours spent online each week is now two and a half times the number reported in 2000. The average number of hours spent online each week has continued to increase – long after regular Internet use was the norm.



#### 5. Using the Internet at home: hours per week

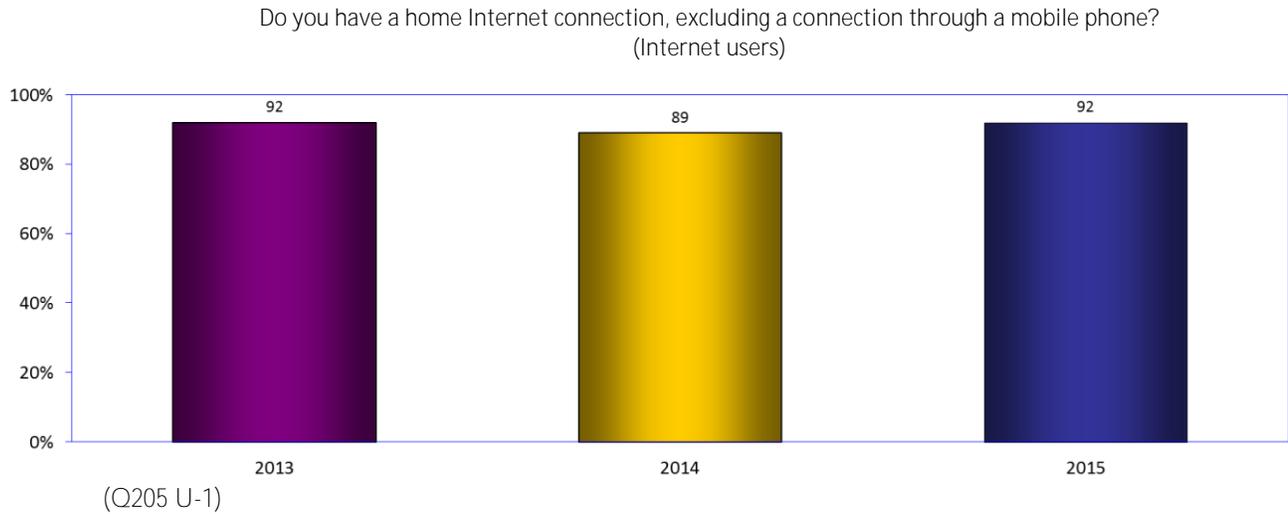
As with the total number of hours online per week (see the previous page), the average hours per week online from home had stabilized in 2012 and 2013, but jumped by two hours per week in 2014 and by more than another hour in the current survey – now 17.2 hours, another new high for the study.

Internet use at home in 2015 is nearly six times the number of hours reported in 2000.



## 6. Internet connection at home

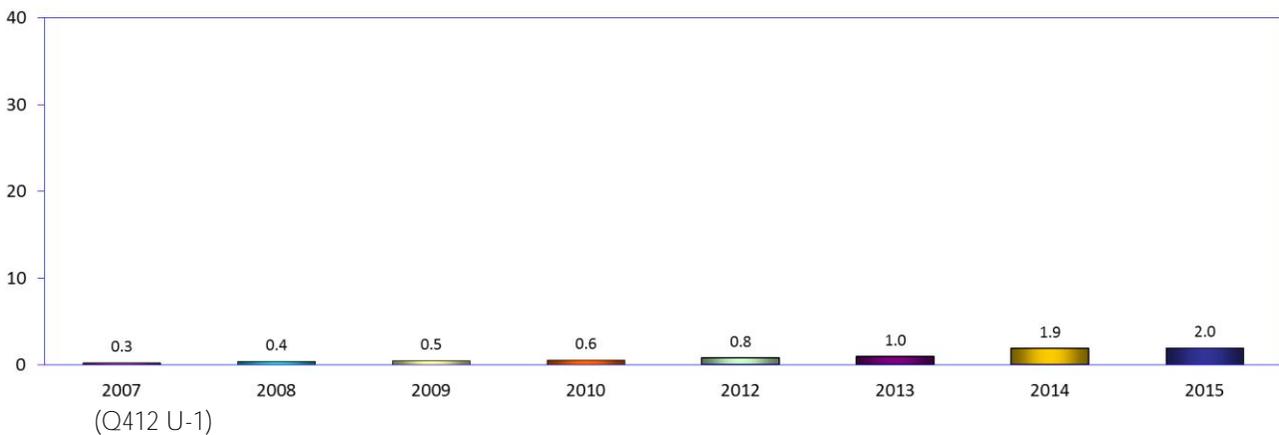
Despite increasing use of mobile devices to access the Internet, for the third year in a row, a generally steady number of users said they still have an Internet connection at home.



## 7. Using the Internet away from home, work, or school

The average hours per week spent online away from work, home, or school continued to grow in the current Digital Future study; although a relatively small amount of Internet use – 2.0 hours per week – the average is nevertheless the highest number reported thus far in the surveys.

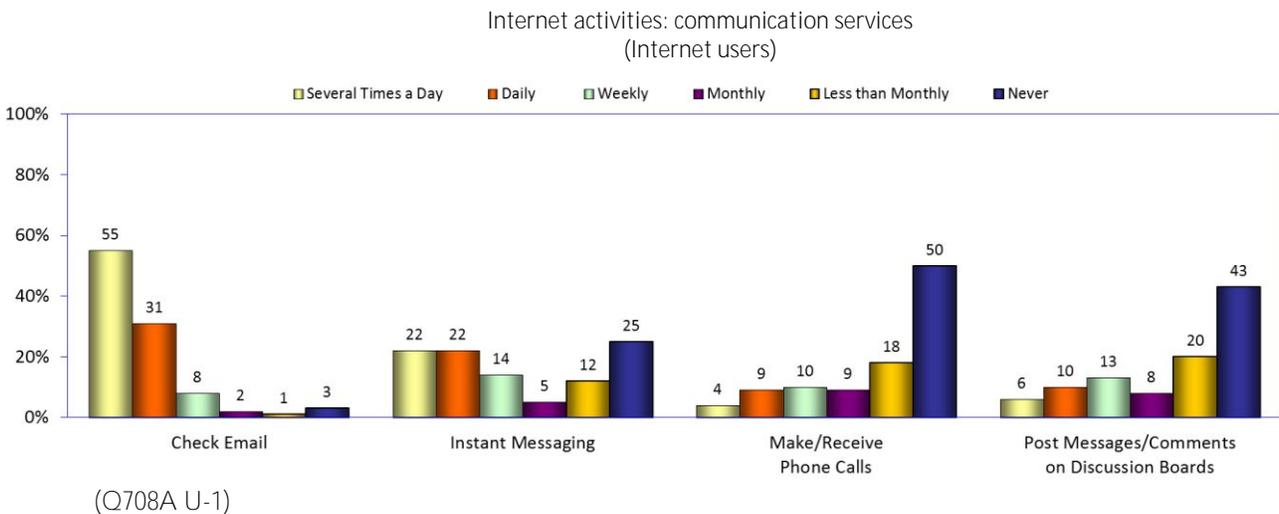
How many hours per week do you use the Internet from anywhere else,  
such as Internet cafes, other people's homes, libraries, etc.?  
(Internet users)



## 8. Activities on the Internet: communications

Large percentages of users frequently go online to send or receive email, but much smaller percentages go online at least daily for other communication-related activities, such as instant messaging, to make or receive phone calls, and to post messages on discussion boards.

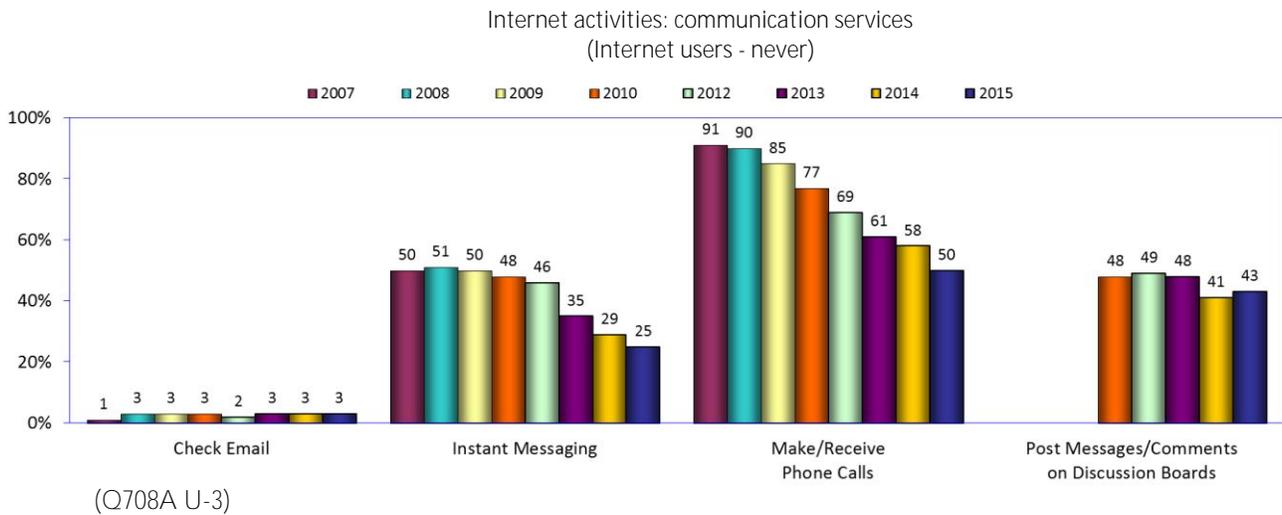
The current Digital Future study found that 86 percent of Internet users said they check their email at least daily (defined as once a day or several times a day). Forty-four percent said they send instant messages at least daily, while 17 percent post on discussion boards, and 13 percent make or receive phone calls online that often.



## 9. Activities on the Internet: communications never used

The number of users who never make or receive online phone calls continues to decline. In the current study, 50 percent of users never make or receive online phone calls, down from 58 percent in the previous study. Twenty-five percent of users said they never send instant messages, down from 29 percent in the previous study.

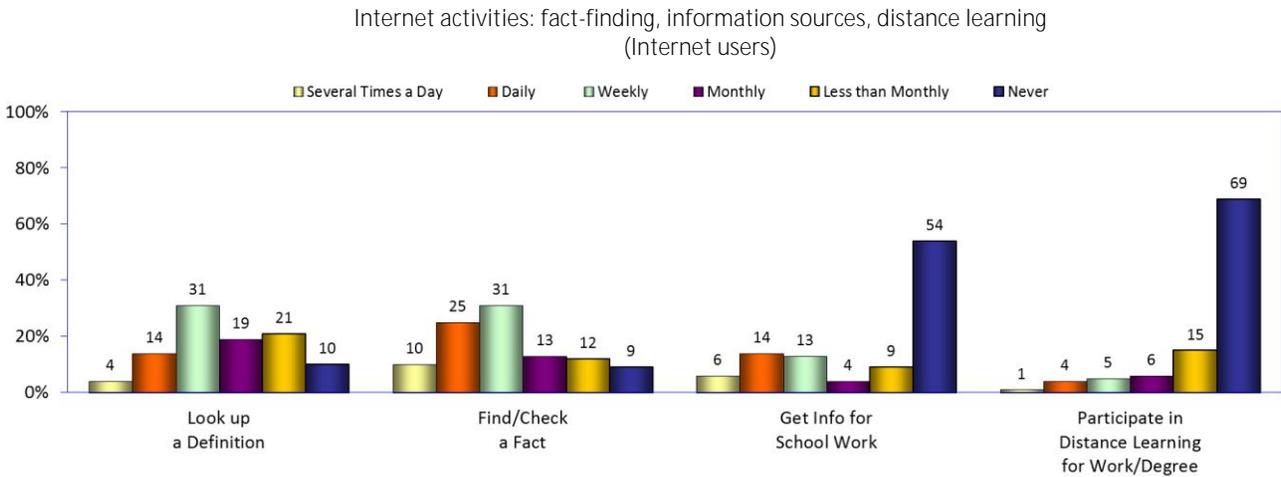
The numbers who never check email (three percent) or never post on discussion boards (43 percent) have remained relatively stable.



10. Activities on the Internet: fact-finding, information sources, and education

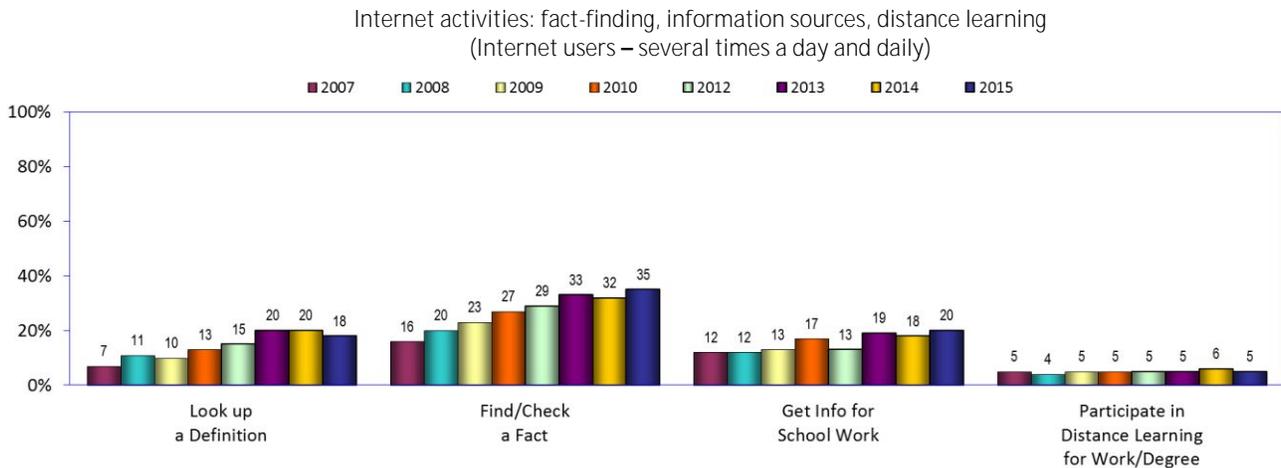
Large percentages of Internet users go online at least weekly for basic information (several times a day, daily, or weekly).

Sixty-six percent go online at least weekly for fact-finding, and 49 percent for looking up the definition of a word.



(Q708E U-1)

The percentages of Internet users who go online at least once daily to look up a definition, fact-check, or get information for school remain at or near peak levels in the Digital Future study – now 35 percent for daily fact-checking, 18 percent to look up a definition, and 20 percent to get information for school.

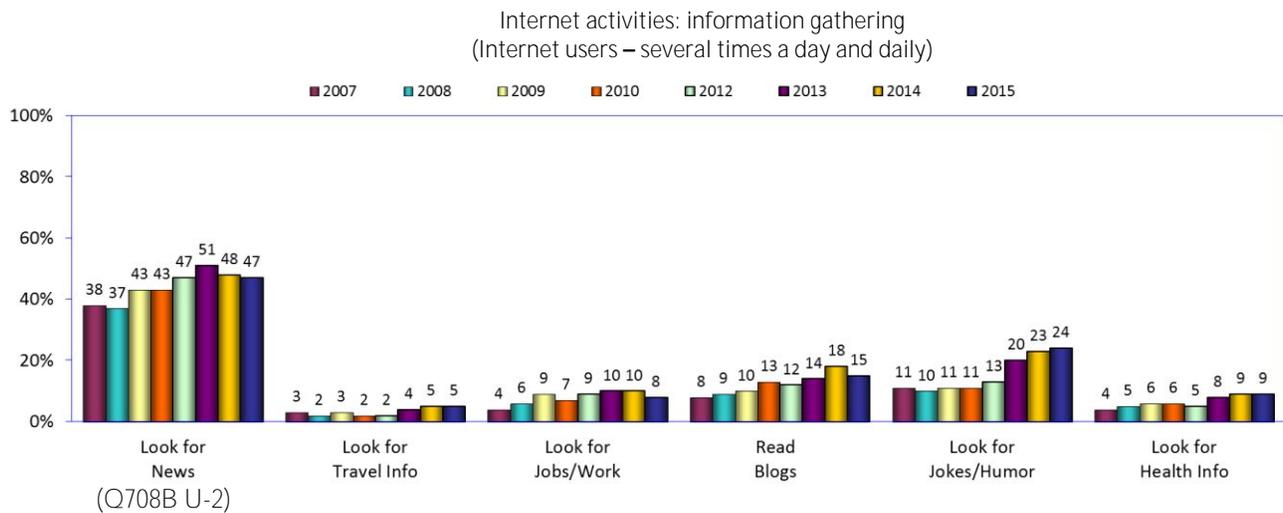
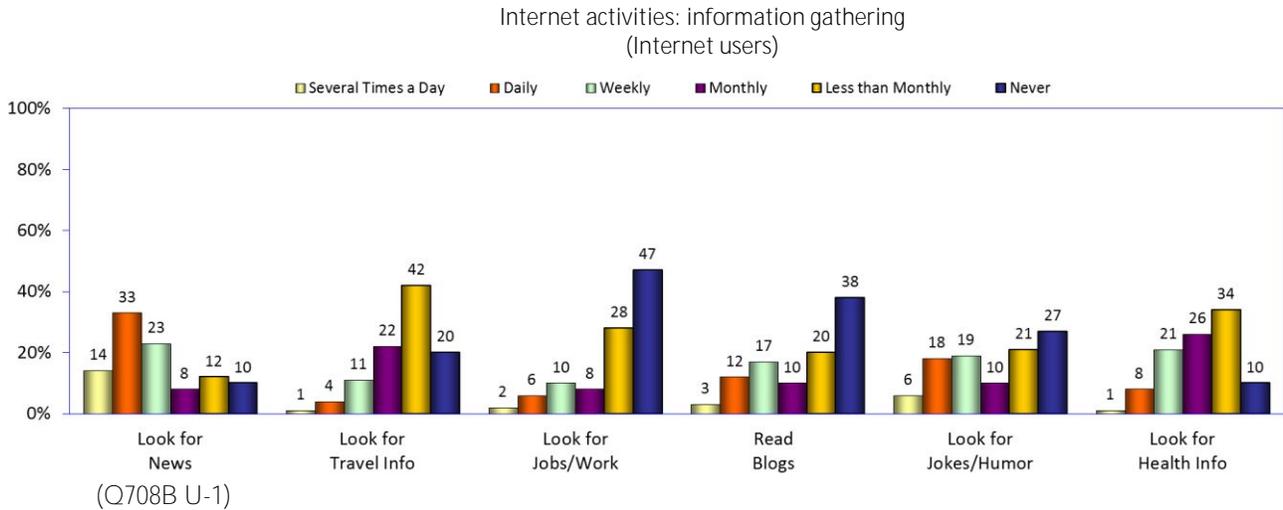


(Q708E U-2)

### 11. Activities on the Internet: information gathering

Large percentages of Internet users go online regularly for news, as well as for health and travel information, but smaller percentages seek job information, read blogs, or look for humorous content.

Forty-seven percent of users go online to look for news at least daily, and 70 percent of users go online for news at least weekly. Forty-three percent go online at least weekly to look for jokes or humorous content, 32 percent to read blogs, and 30 percent to look for health information.



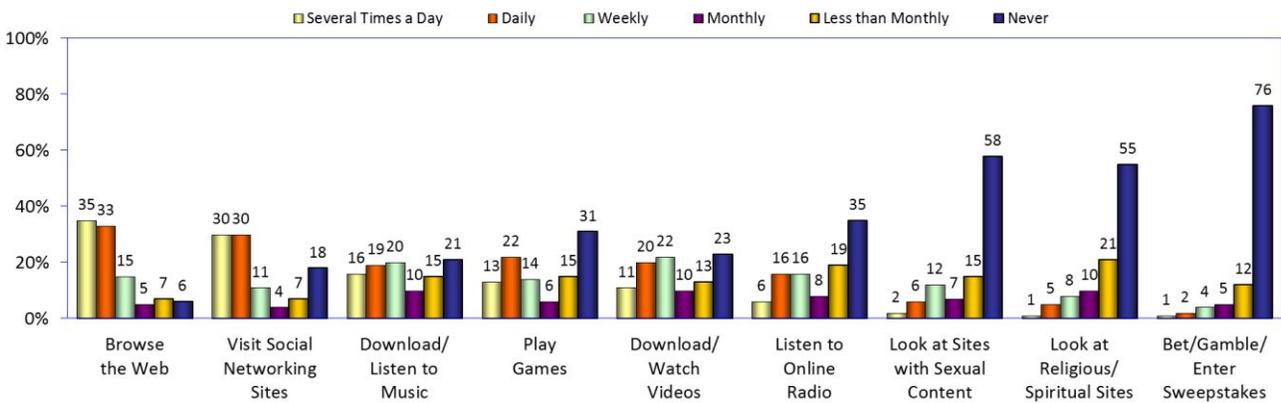
## 12. Activities on the Internet

Eighty-three percent of users report going online at least weekly (defined as several times a day, daily, or weekly) to generally browse the web, and 71 percent do so to visit social networking sites.

The next highest percentages were reported for those who download or listen to music (54 percent), download or watch videos (53 percent) or play games (49 percent).

Internet users have reported the highest percentages thus far for daily use of many of the general online activities in the Digital Future studies (see the second chart below).

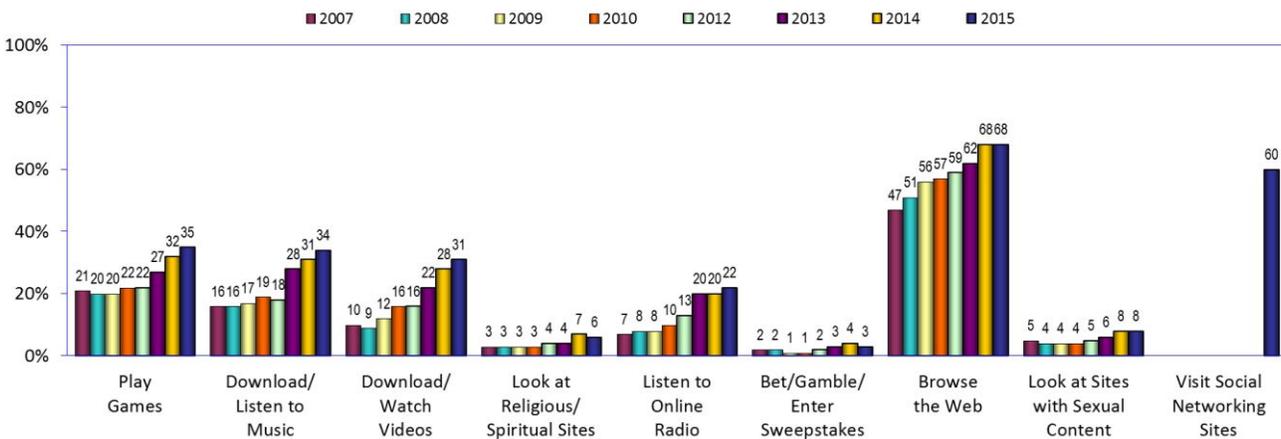
General Internet activities  
(Internet users)



(Q708C U-1)

(Questions about sexual content asked only of users age 18 and older)

General Internet activities  
(Internet users – several times a day and daily)



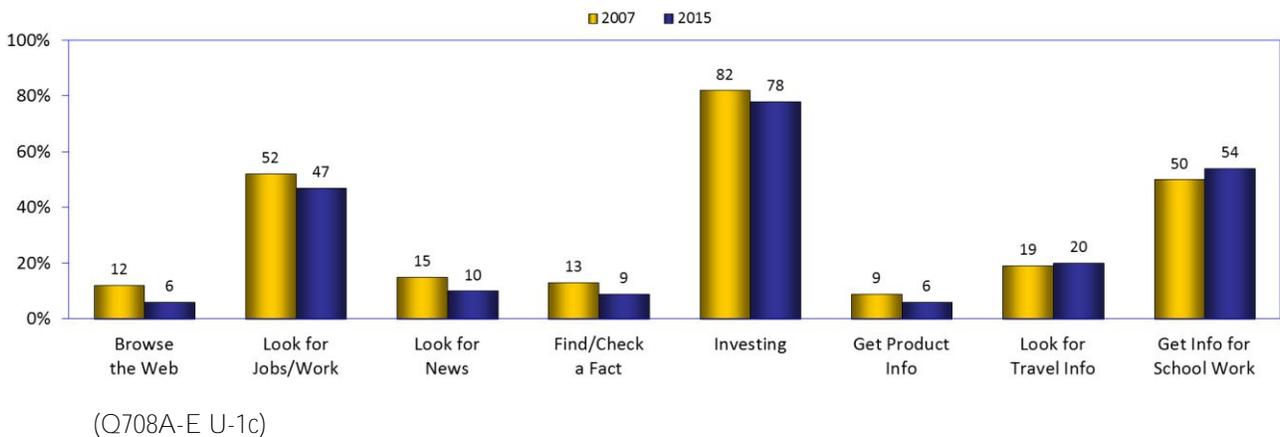
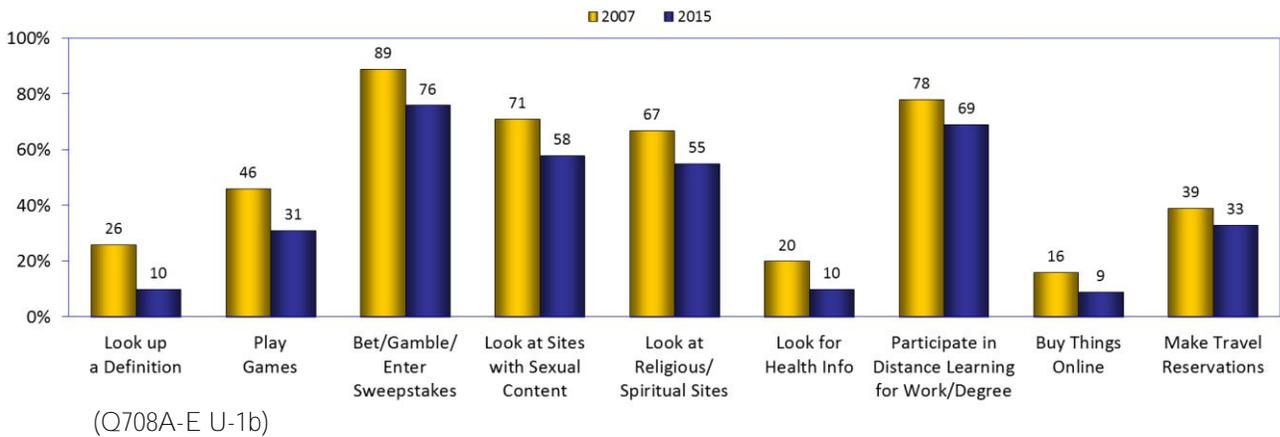
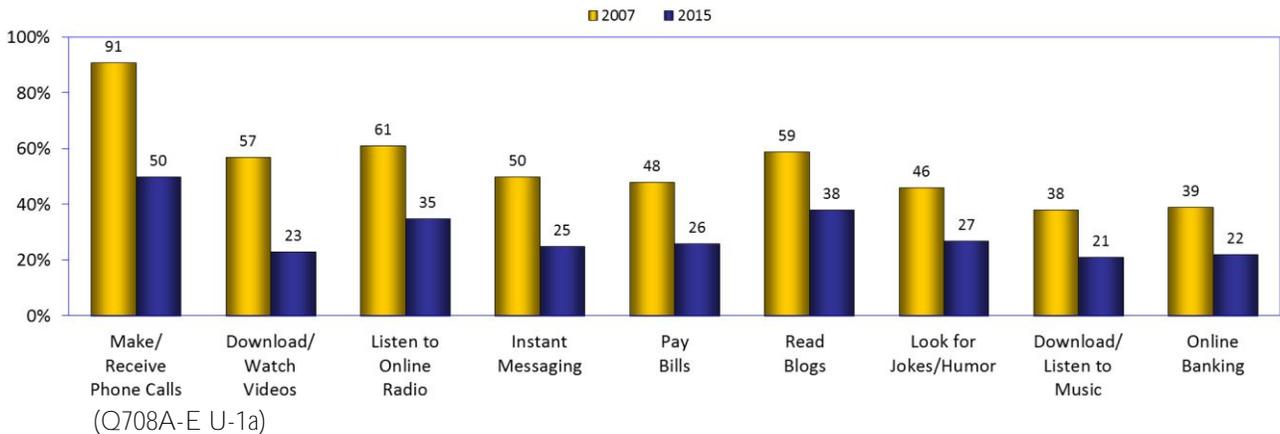
(Q708C U-2)

(Questions about sexual content asked only of users age 18 and older)

13. Online activities never done by some Internet users: nine-year trends

What do some Internet users never do online? Comparing current findings to 2007 about what some users never do on the Internet shows large drops in the percentages of those who do not go online for all of the major online activities, such as watching videos, looking up a definition, downloading music, paying bills, and online banking.

General Internet activities  
(Internet users – never)

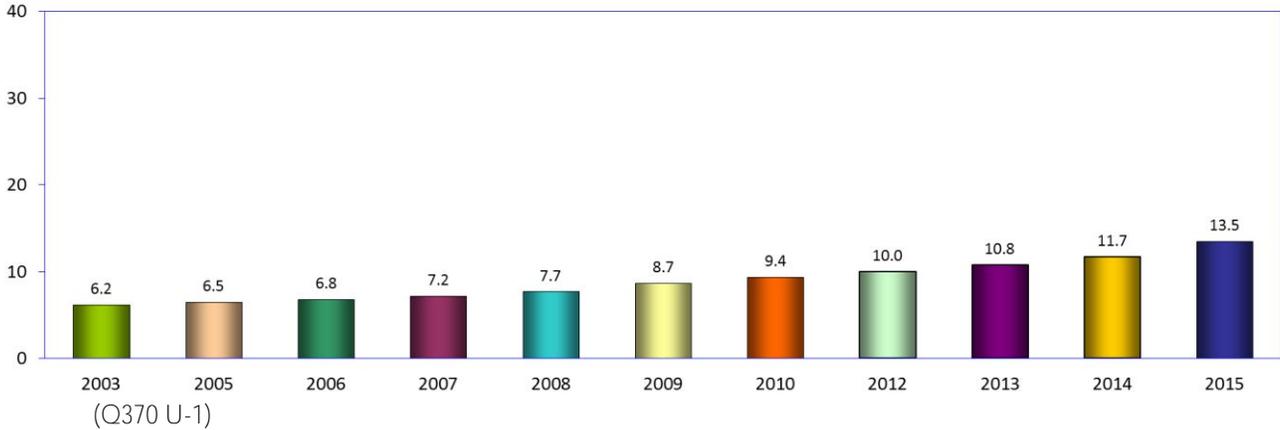


14. The Internet at work

The number of hours employed Internet users go online at work has continued to increase in the current Digital Future study.

The average number of hours online at work has grown or remained stable in every study since this question was first asked in 2003, and has now reached an average of 13.5 hours per week – the highest level reported to date.

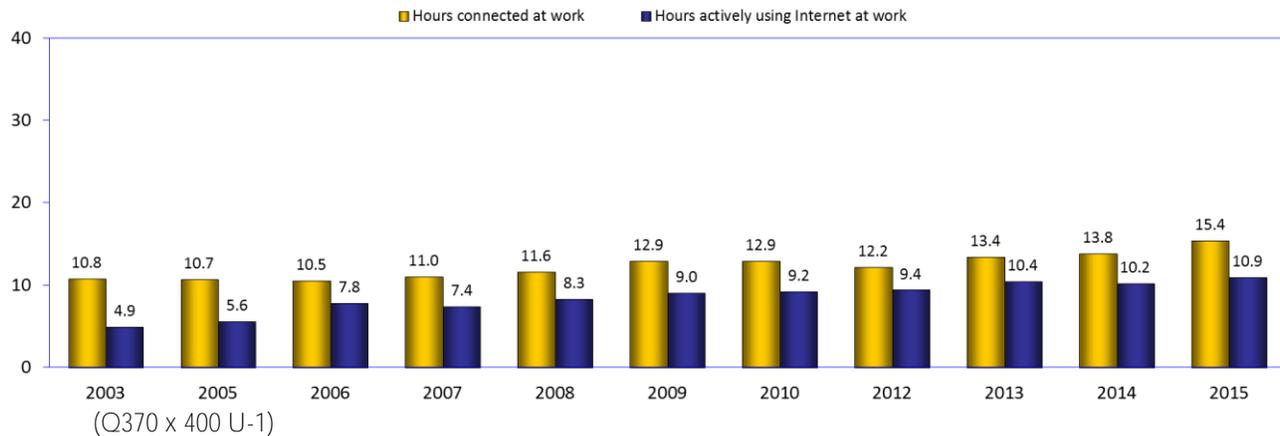
How many hours per week do you use the Internet at work, not in the home?  
(All Internet users who are employed)



15. The Internet at work: active use

Nearly every Digital Future study found that the amount of time that Internet users go online while at work has either remained stable or increased compared to the previous year. In the current study, the amount of time that users said they are actively using the Internet at work has increased slightly to 10.9 hours per week – a new high.

Internet use at work: average hours per week of active online use  
(Internet users who access the Internet at work)

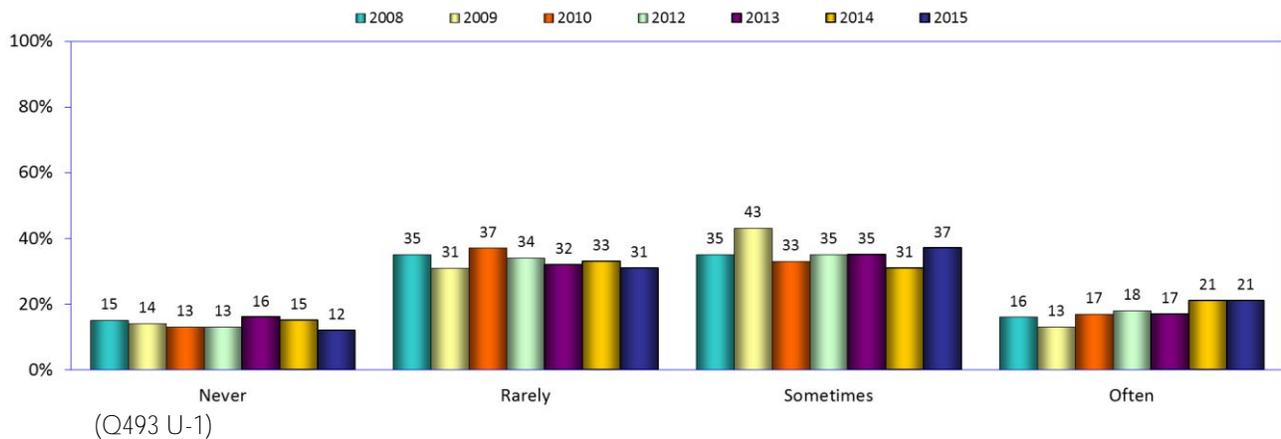


## 16. The Internet at work: non-work activities

Compared to 2014, a slightly larger percentage of users in the current study who go online at work said they use the Internet for non-work related reasons, such as chatting, web surfing, instant messaging, and reading and writing personal emails.

The highest percentage of users thus far in the Digital Future study said they sometimes or often go online at work for non-work activities – now 58 percent, up from 52 percent in 2014.

Do you go online at work for non-work activities?  
(Internet users age 16 and older who use the Internet at work)



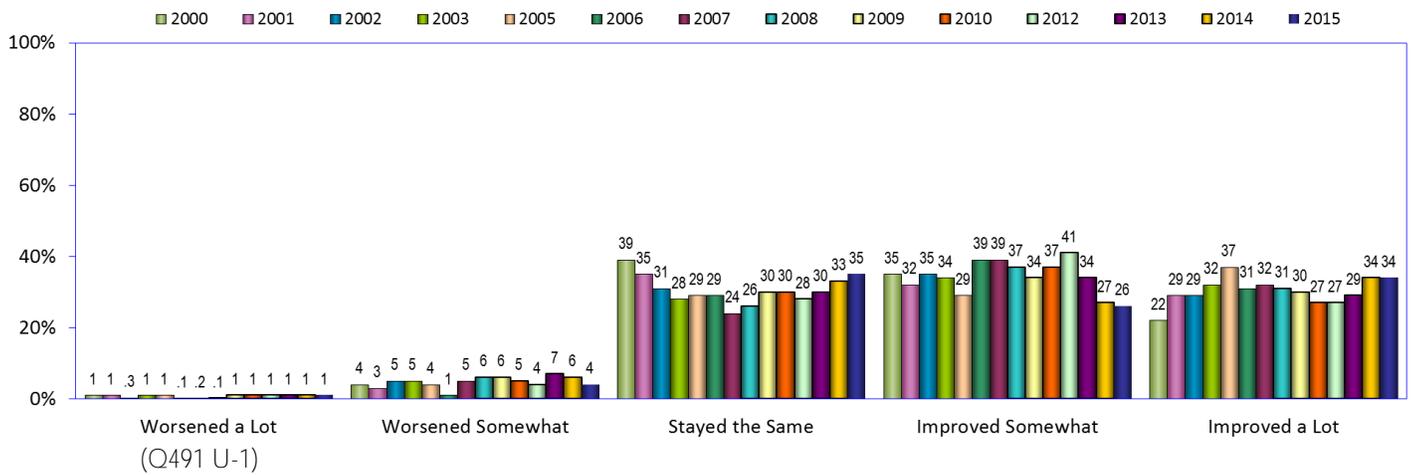
### 17. Productivity and the Internet at work

Does the Internet make users more productive at work? In the current Digital Future study, the number who said yes has continued to decline.

Sixty percent of users said their productivity has improved somewhat or a lot because of the Internet, down from 61 percent in 2014, and well below the peak of 71 percent in 2007.

The small percentage of users who said that Internet access at work has worsened their productivity somewhat or a lot decreased to five percent – down marginally from seven percent in 2014.

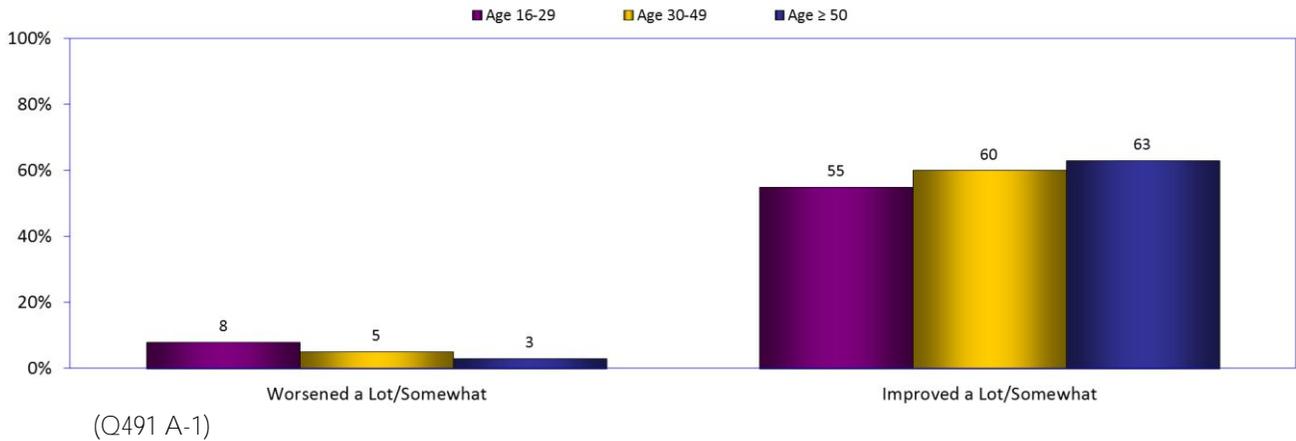
Internet access at work: views about performance and productivity  
(Internet users age 16 and older who use the Internet at work)



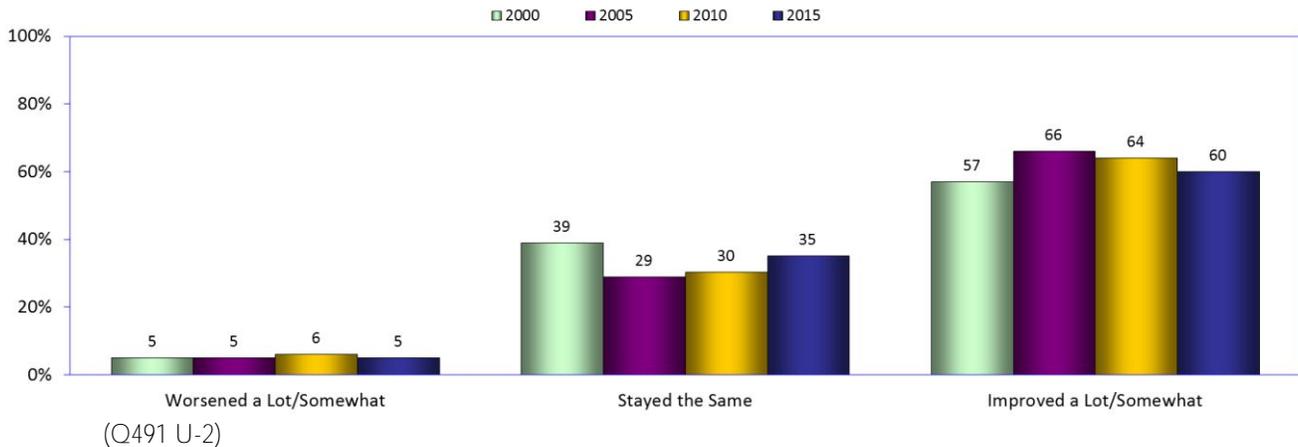
18. Productivity and the Internet at work (by age)

The percentages of users who say that their productivity has improved because of the Internet increases as age increases – perhaps as a result of younger respondents not having the experience of working without digital technology, and thus having no basis for comparison.

Internet access at work: views about performance and productivity  
(Internet users age 16 and older who use the Internet at work)



Internet access at work: views about performance and productivity  
(Internet users age 16 and older who use the Internet at work)



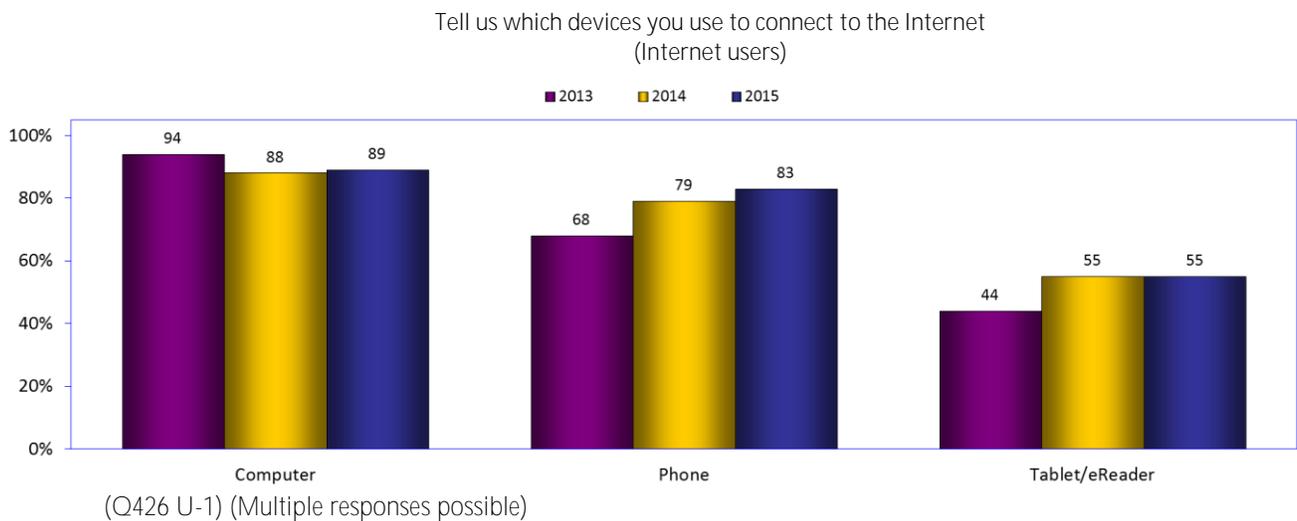
## 19. Connecting to the Internet: types of devices

While large percentages of Internet users go online with different types of devices, the percentage who use a phone to do so continues to increase.

Nearly the same number – 89 percent, up marginally from 88 percent in 2014 – of users connect to the Internet with a computer compared to the year before. Notably, however, that response has declined from 94 percent in 2013.

Tablet use has not changed in the current study compared to 2014 (55 percent).

Only the percentages who go online through a mobile phone (83 percent) continue to grow, now approaching the same percent as computers.

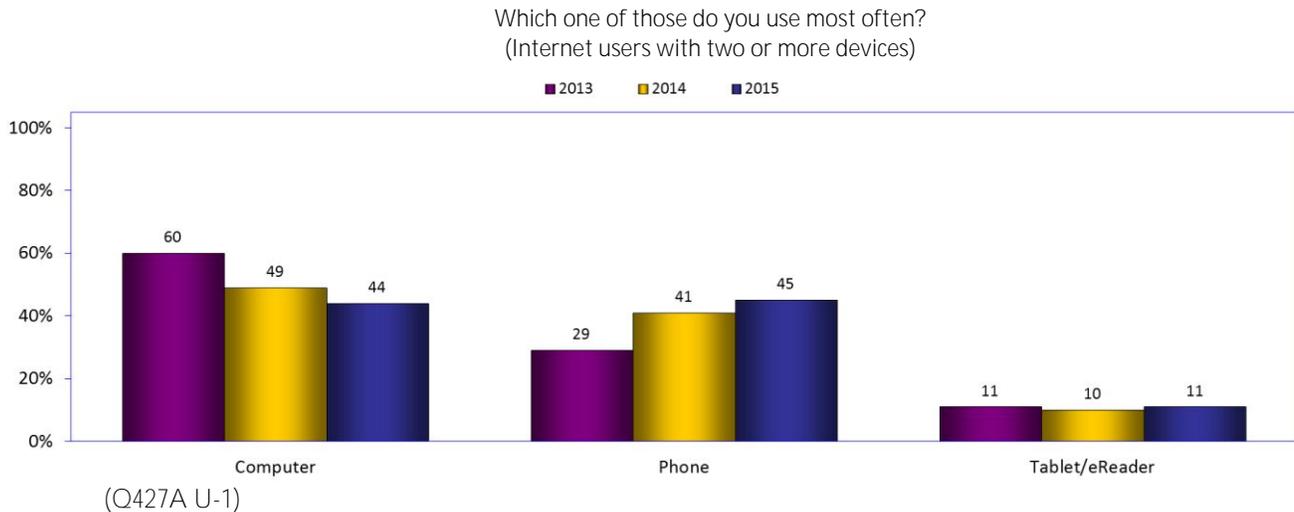


## 20. Connecting to the Internet: favorite connection devices (two or more devices)

Which device do Internet users with two or more devices use most often? Most frequent use of computers continues to decline, while use of mobile phones is rising.

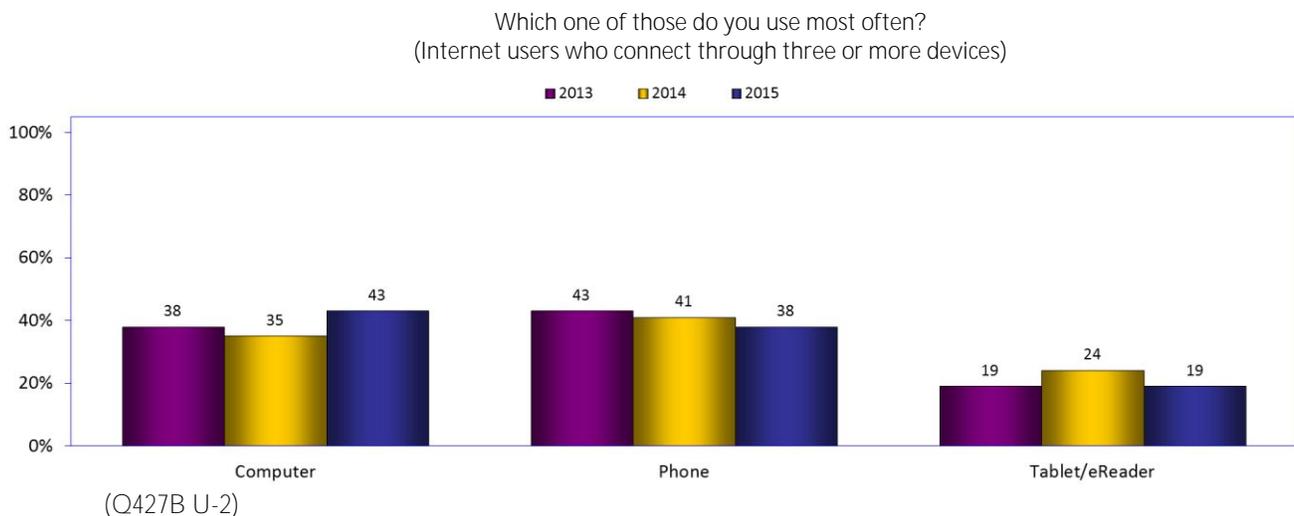
The percentage of those with two or more devices who use a computer most often has declined for the second year in a row; now 44 percent of those with two or more devices use a computer, down from 49 percent in 2014 and 60 percent in 2013.

The percentage of these respondents who use a phone most frequently continues to increase -- now 45 percent, compared to 41 percent in 2014 and 29 percent in 2013.



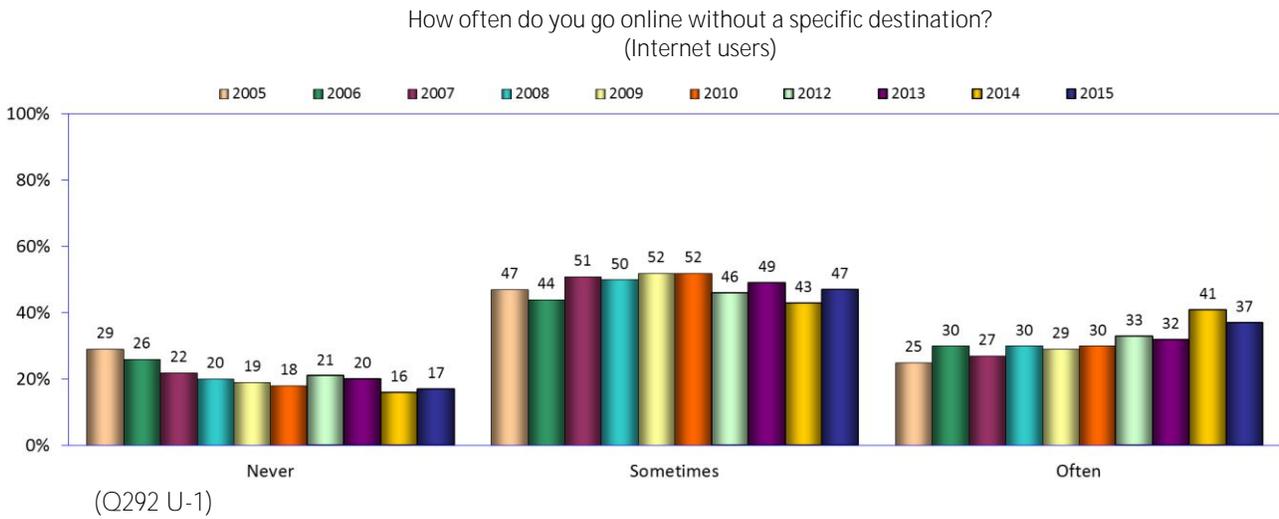
## 21. Connecting to the Internet (three or more devices)

For Internet users with three or more devices, the percentage of those who use their computers most often has increased – now 43 percent, up from 35 percent in 2014. Those who use phones most often decreased modestly to 38 percent, down from 41 percent in 2014 and 43 percent in 2013.



## 22. Surfing the web

The Digital Future study continues to find that going online without a specific destination is reported as one of the most popular Internet activities. Eighty-four percent of respondents report they often or sometimes go online without a specific destination, the same level as in 2014.

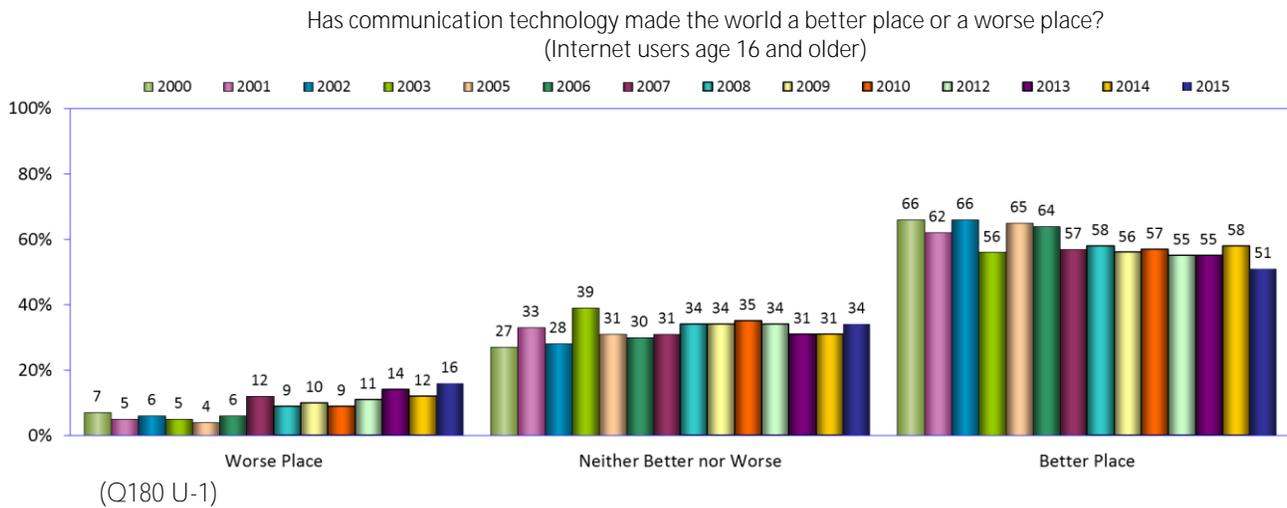


## Communication technology: impact on the world

### 23. Communication technology: how does it affect the world? (Internet users)

Does communication technology make the world a better or worse place? After the percentage of Internet users who said communication technology makes the world a better place increased slightly in 2014, it again declined to 51 percent – its lowest level thus far in the Digital Future study.

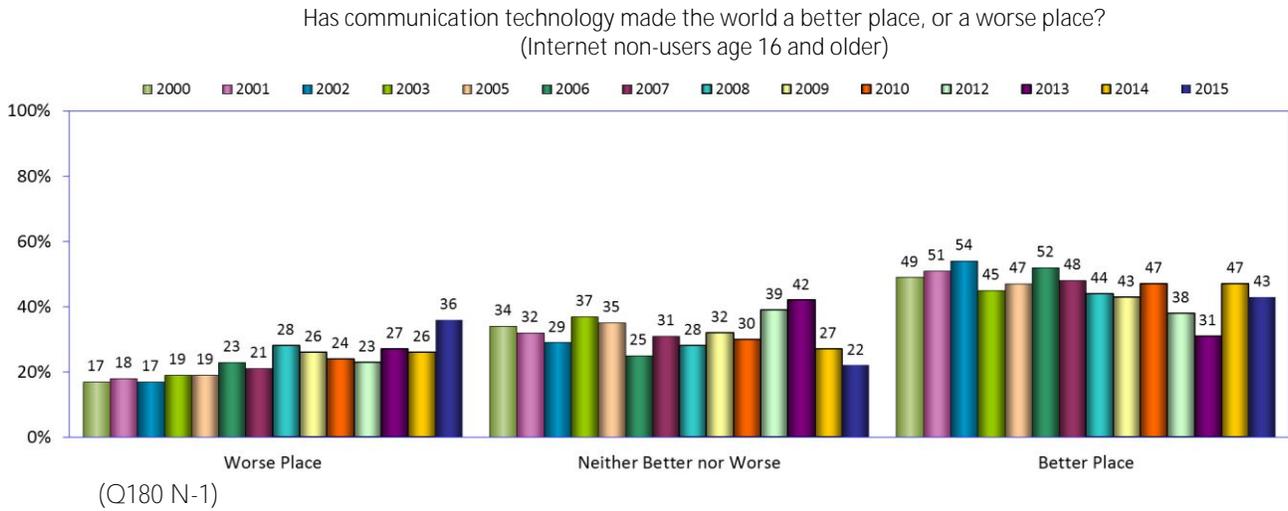
Similarly, the percentage of users who said that communication technology makes the world a worse place reached a new high of 16 percent.



24. Communication technology: how does it affect the world? (Internet non-users)

The percentage of non-users age 16 and older who said that communication technology made the world a better place decreased in the current study to 43 percent, down from 47 percent in 2014.

The percentage of non-users who said communication technology made the world a worse place, which had reached 26 percent in 2014, increased sharply to 36 percent – over twice as much as reported in 2000. At the same time, neutral answers dropped to only 22 percent, the lowest figure to date. The numbers for 2014 were similarly low, possibly indicating that views among the remaining non-users are starting to become polarized.

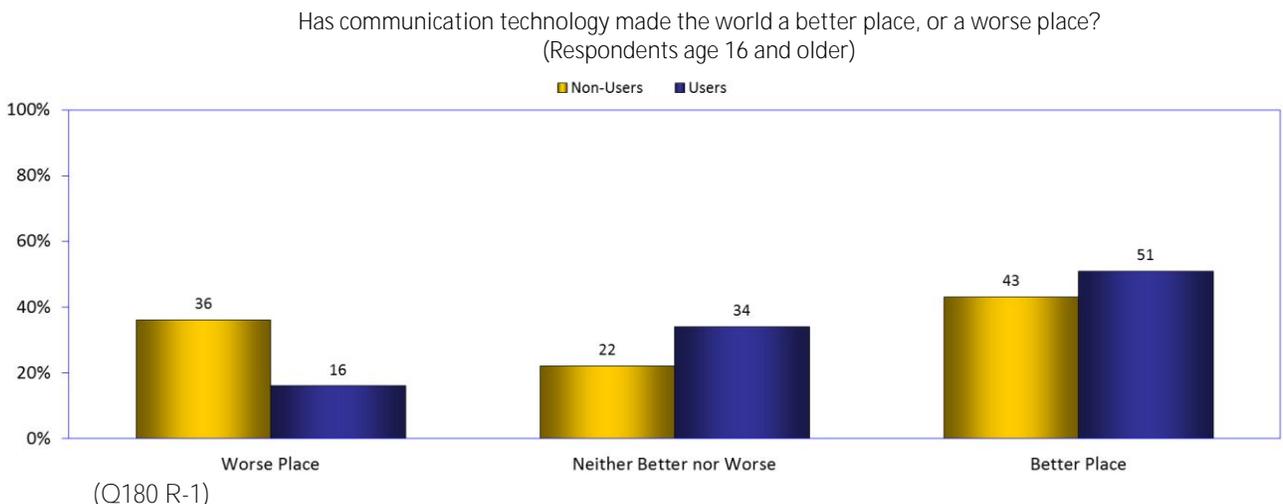


25. Communication technology: how does it affect the world? (Internet users vs. non-users)

As in other years of the survey, Internet users and non-users age 16 and older continued to express divergent views about how communication technology (the Internet, mobile phones, tablets, and other devices) affects the world.

Comparing users to non-users, 51 percent of Internet users age 16 and older said that communication technology makes the world a better place, while 43 percent of non-users express the same view.

More than twice the percentage of non-users (36 percent) compared to users (16 percent) said communication technology makes the world a worse place.



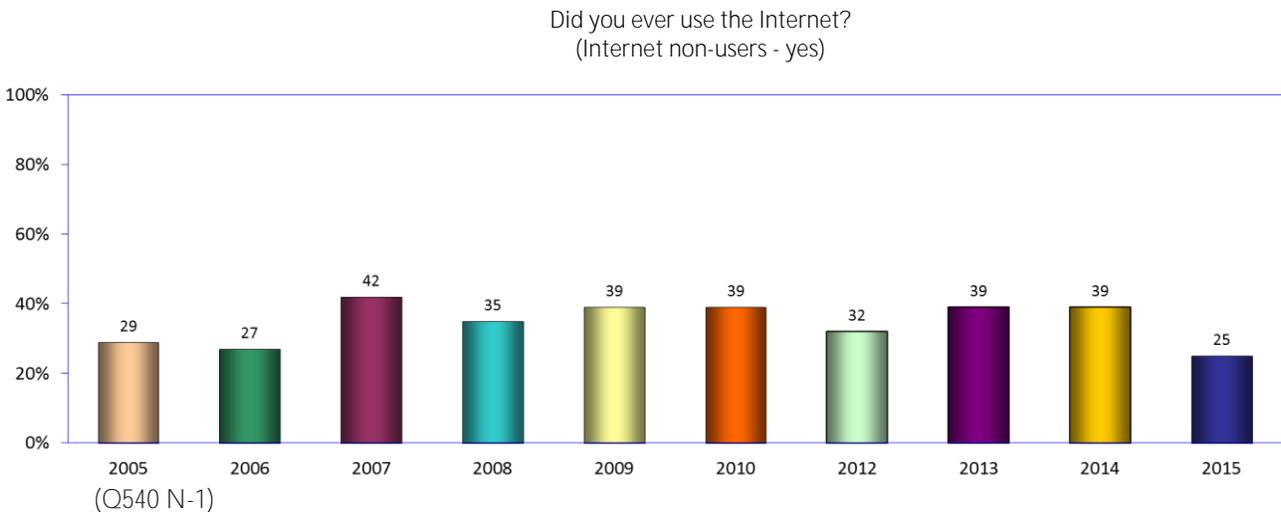
## Internet non-users

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| <b>Internet “dropouts”</b><br>(percentage of non-users who<br>previously went online) | 25% |
| How many years<br>on average did dropouts<br>use the Internet<br>before they stopped? | 2.6 |
| Will non-users go online<br>in the next year?<br>(not likely at all)                  | 47% |
| Will Internet dropouts<br>go back online? (answered yes)                              | 38% |

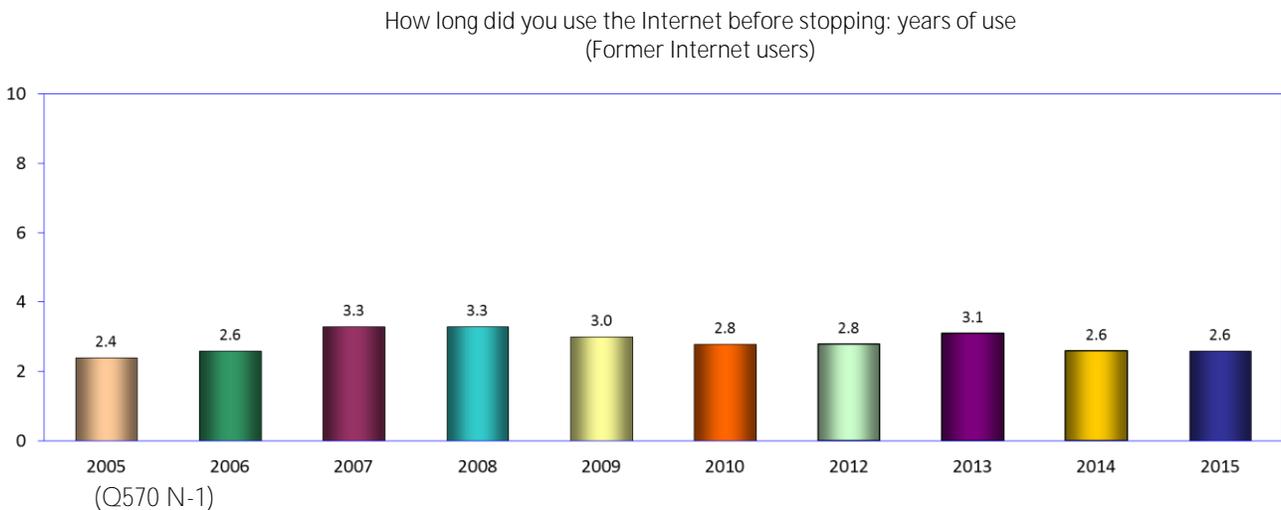
## Internet non-users: views about not going online

### 26. Internet non-users: were they ever online?

Have non-users ever gone online? Of respondents in the current study who are not currently using the Internet, only 25 percent had previously gone online – 14 percentage points below 2014 and a new low for the study.



Past users in the current study reported being online for an average of 2.6 years before stopping – the same as in 2014.

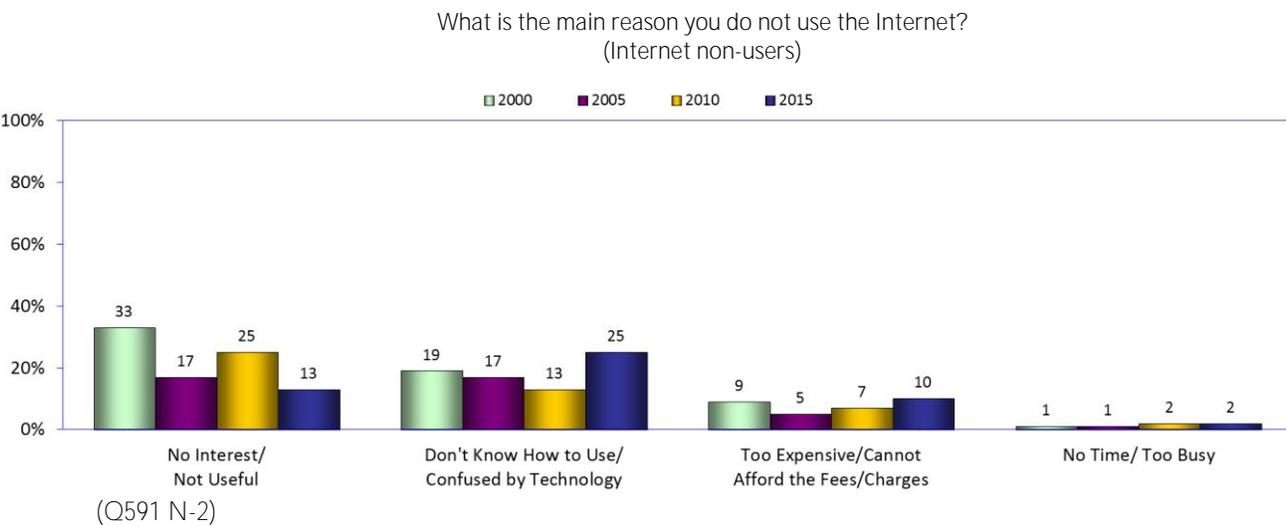
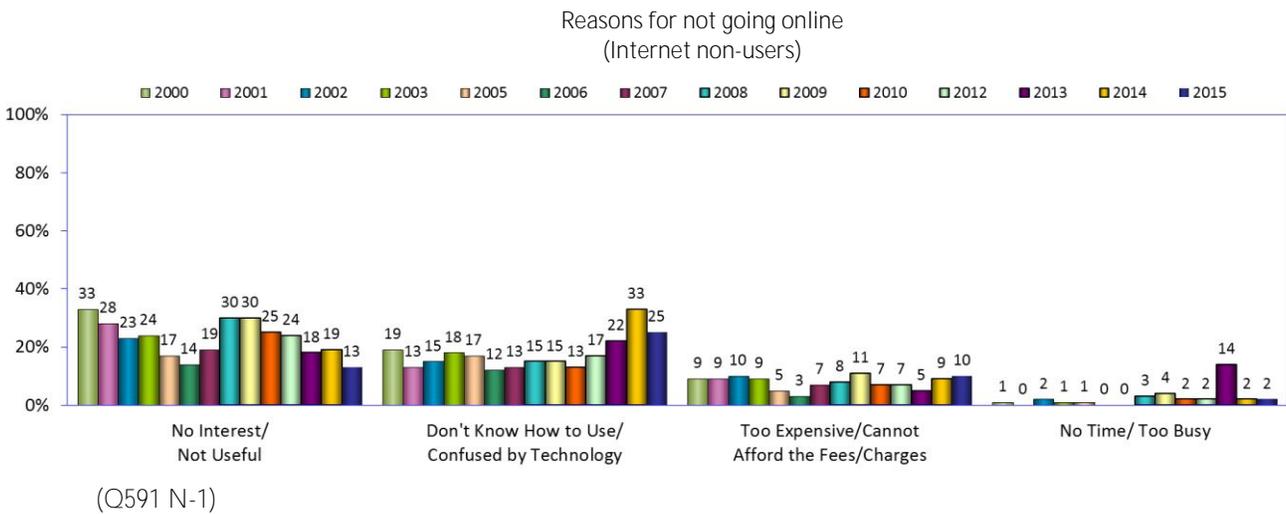


27. Internet non-users: reasons for not being online

Why are Internet non-users not online? In the current study, the most-cited reason for not using the Internet was again lack of knowledge, reported by 25 percent of non-users. This is a substantial decrease from the 33 percent reported in 2014.

The second most-cited reason for not being online was that the Internet was of no interest or not useful, reported by 13 percent of non-users – a decrease from 19 percent reported in 2014.

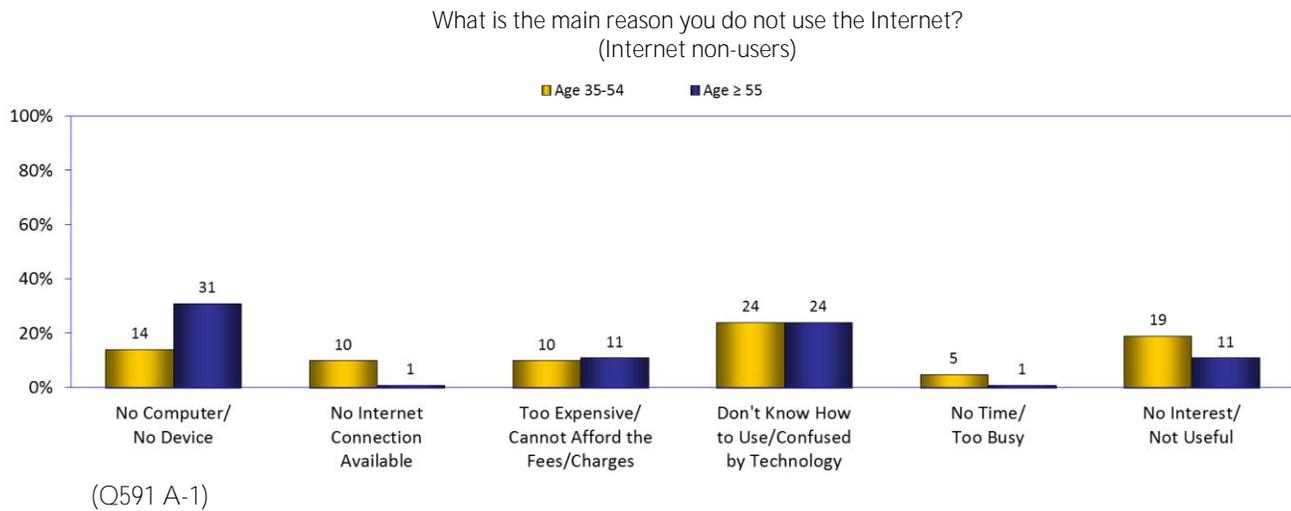
The percentage of non-users who believe the Internet was “too expensive” or said they cannot afford the fees increased to ten percent in the current study, up from nine percent in 2014.



## 28. Why do you not use the Internet? (non-users 35 and older)

Comparing Internet non-users ages 35 to 54 and those 55 and older shows two findings of particular significance: the largest percentage of non-users age 55 or older said they are not online because they do not have a computer (31 percent). However, a much lower percentage said they have no interest in being online (11 percent).

Among non-users age 35-54, the largest percentage – 24 percent -- said they were not online because they **don't know** how to use the Internet or are confused by technology. Equal percentages of non-users age 35-54 and age 55 or older said they were not online because of lack of knowledge or confusion with technology.

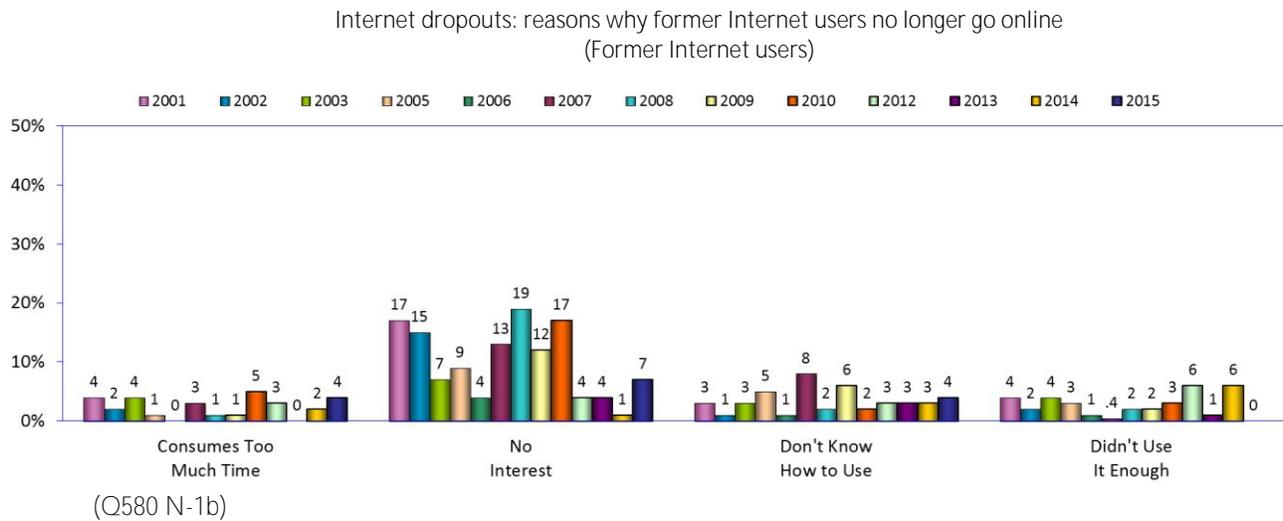
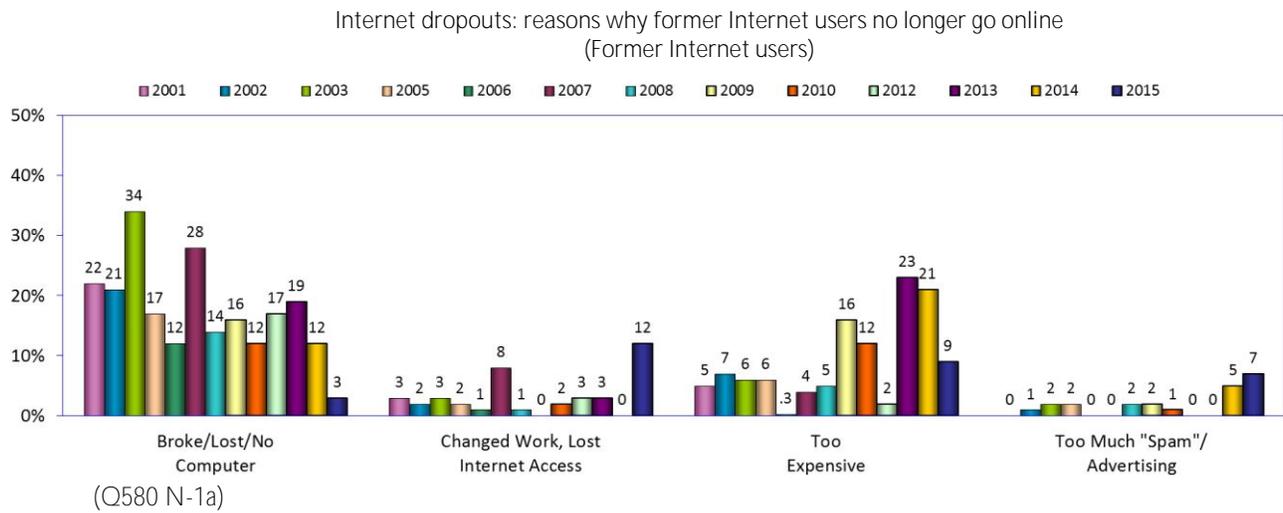


29. **“Internet dropouts”: why** are former users no longer online?

Only a small percentage of Internet non-users said that the expense of technology kept them from going online (see page 36), and a similar small percentage of non-users who previously went online feel strongly about the cost of Internet access.

Nine percent of Internet dropouts said that they are not online because of the expense, down from 21 percent in the previous study. Twelve percent said they are not online because they changed work or lost their Internet access.

Seven percent of Internet dropouts no longer go online because they are not interested, up from one percent in the previous study.

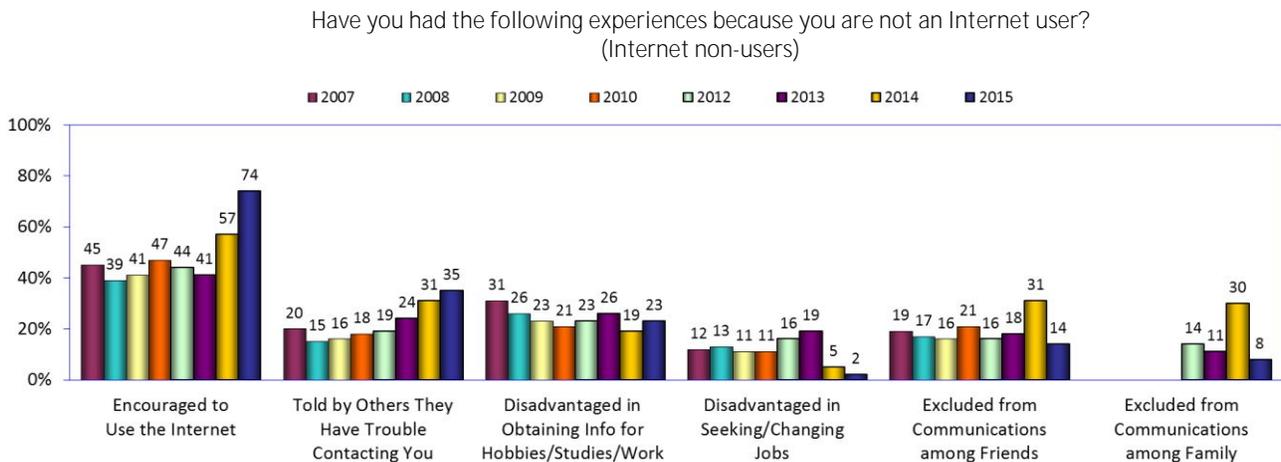


### 30. Internet non-users: problems and views about not being online

Compared to previous years, smaller percentages of Internet non-users in the current study report that by not being online they are excluded from communications among family and friends. However, a steadily growing percentage of non-users said they have been told that others have had trouble contacting them.

In the current study, 35 percent of non-users said they have been told about others having trouble contacting them, an increase for the sixth year in a row.

A substantially larger number of non-users said they were being encouraged to use the Internet – now 74 percent, up from 57 percent reported in 2014, and now by far the largest number reported in the Digital Future studies.



(Q600 N-1) (Multiple responses possible; questions about jobs asked only of respondents age 16 and older)

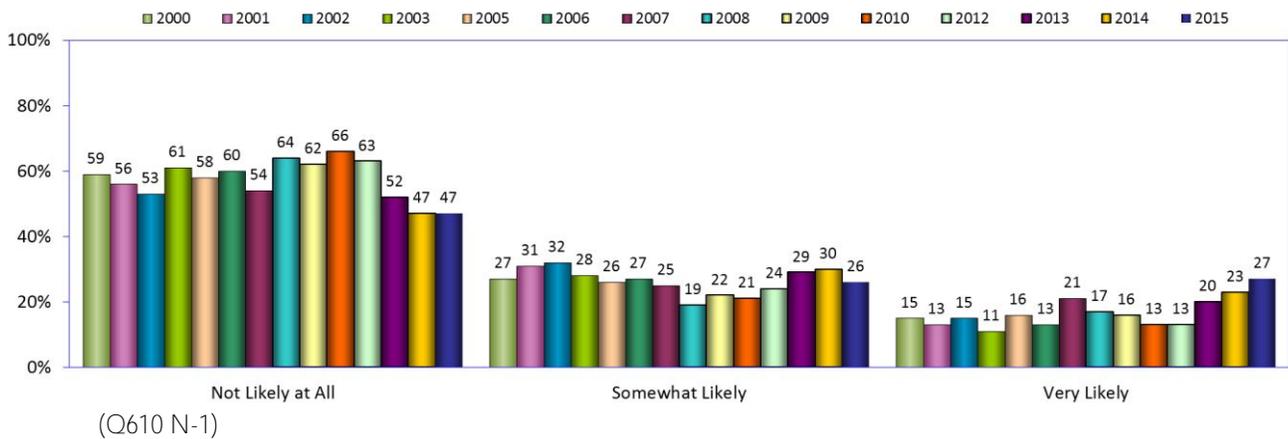
31. Internet non-users: will they go online?

More than half of Internet non-users in the current survey said they are likely to go online in the next year.

Fifty-three percent of non-users said they are somewhat likely or very likely to go online in the next year, the same number as in 2014.

For the first time, the number of non-users who say they are “very likely” to go online exceeded those that say they are “somewhat likely” to go online.

How likely will you be to use the Internet within the next year?  
(Internet non-users)

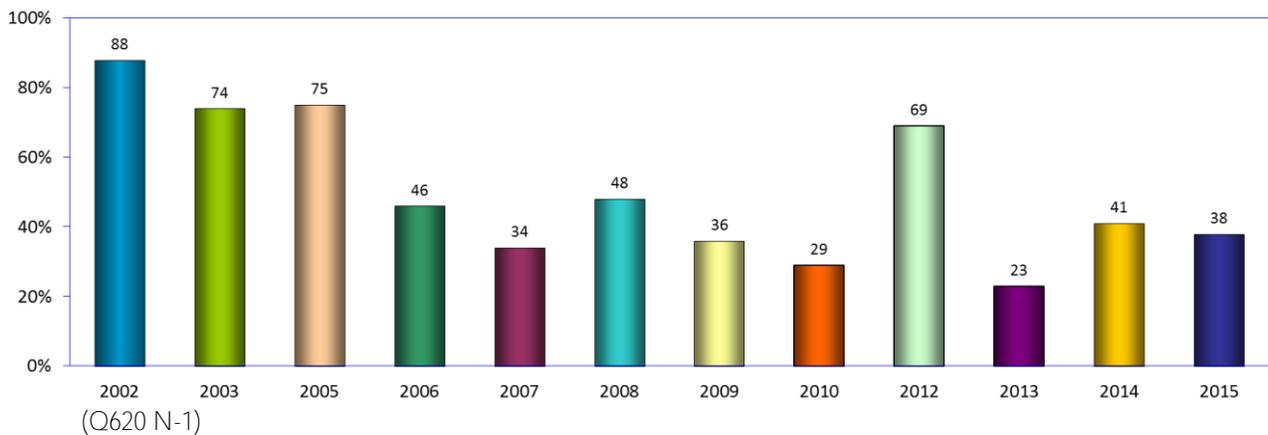


32. Internet dropouts: will they go back online?

While the percentage of non-users overall who are likely to go online in the next year is 53 percent (see the previous question), the percentage of Internet dropouts who say they are likely to go online again is notably lower.

Among non-users who have been online before, 38 percent said they were likely to go back online – down from 41 percent in 2014.

Do you think you will ever go back online?  
(Former Internet users – yes)

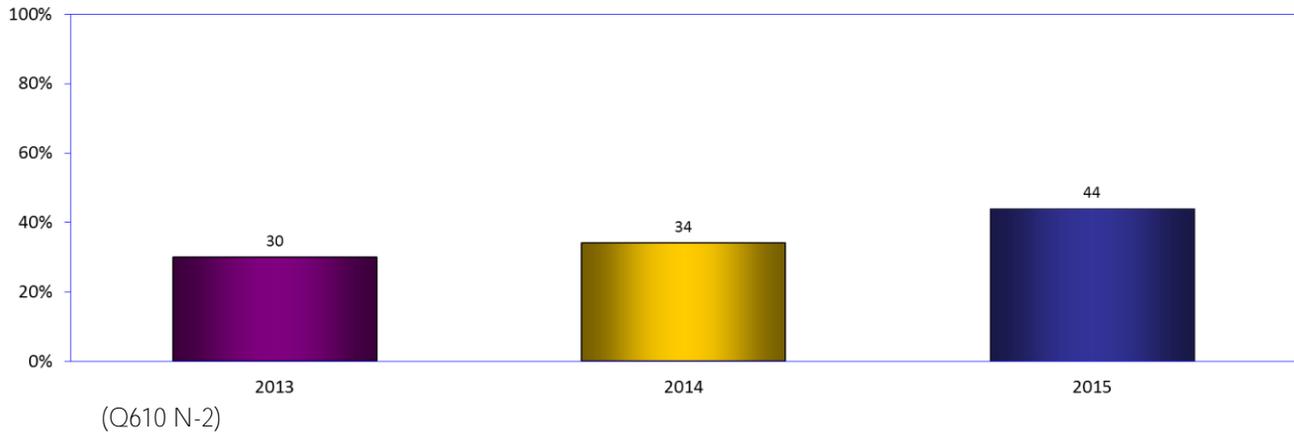


### 33. Internet non-users: will they go online in the next year?

Many Internet non-users who have never gone online are likely to remain offline in the next year.

Forty-four percent of Internet non-users who have never been online said they are not likely at all to use the Internet in the next year – an increase from 34 percent in 2014, and 30 percent in 2013.

How likely will you be to use the Internet in the next year?  
(Internet non-users who have never been online)



## Media use and trust

Users who said the Internet is an important or very important source of information 85%

Internet users who said most or all information online is reliable 40%

Internet users who would not miss their printed newspaper if the offline version was no longer available 25%

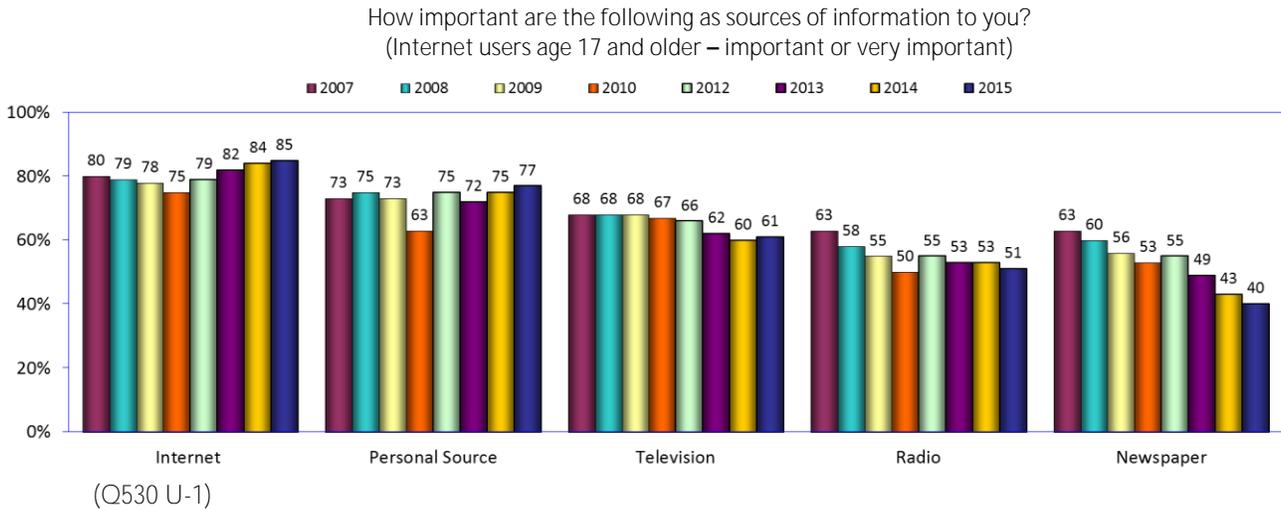
Internet users who read print newspapers who would read the online edition of their paper if the print edition ceased publication 54%

# Views about sources of information and entertainment

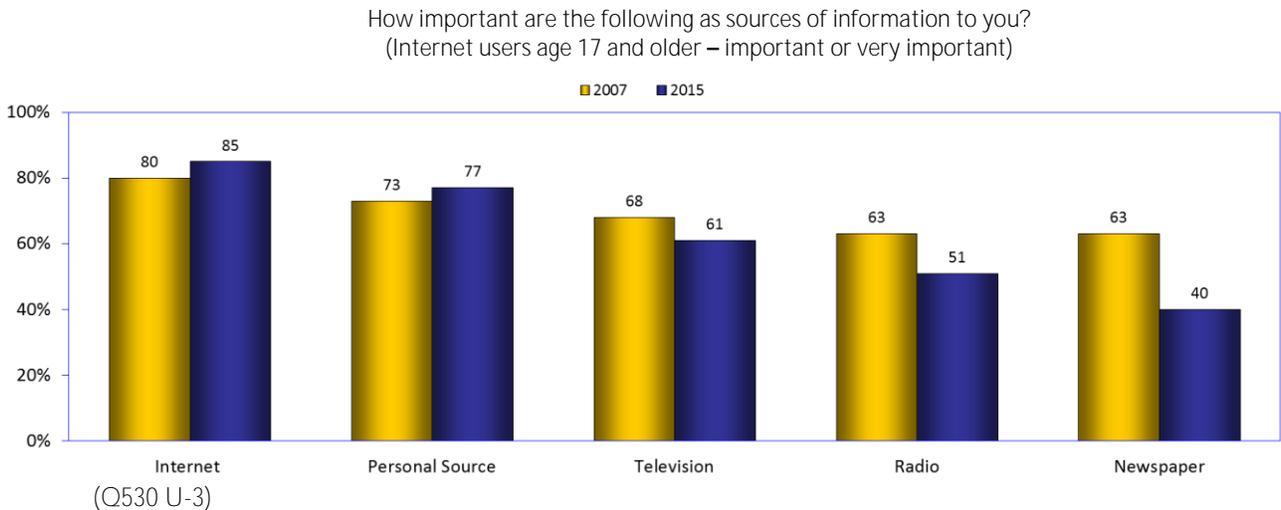
## 34. Views about sources of information

The percentage of users who said that the Internet was an important or very important source of information for them continues to be significantly higher than the percentages reported for television, newspapers, or radio.

Eighty-five percent of Internet users age 17 and older said that the Internet was an important or very important source of information to them, higher than for television (61 percent), radio (51 percent), and newspapers (40 percent).

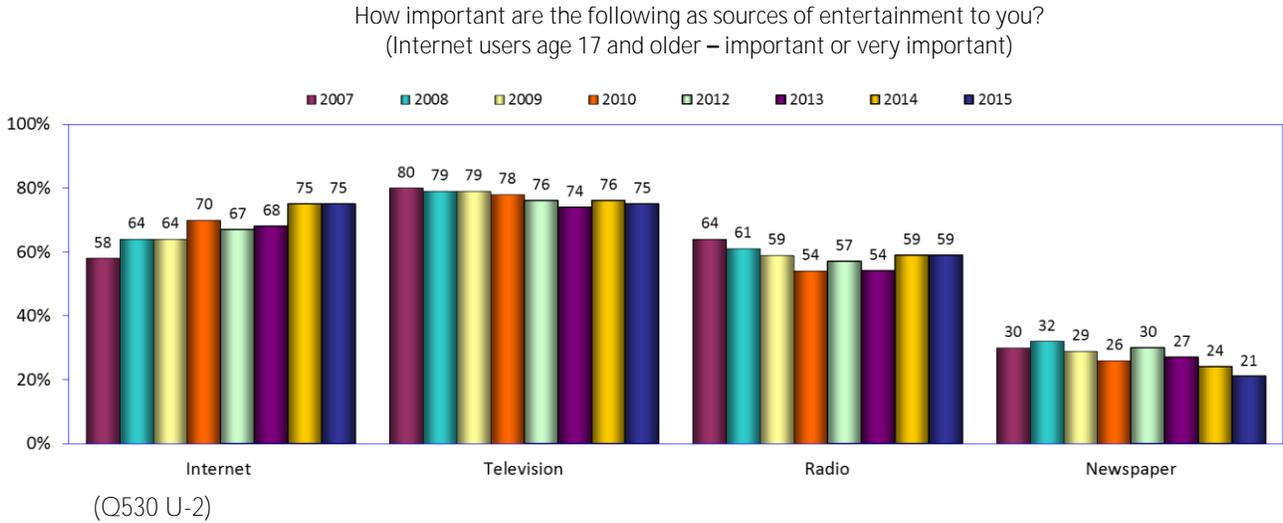


Most notably, the percentages of Internet users age 17 and older who said that television and newspapers are important or very important sources of information have declined to their lowest levels in the Digital Future studies. In particular, since 2007 the percentage of users who said that newspapers are important or very important sources of information for them has declined by 23 percentage points (63 percent in 2007 compared to 40 percent in the current study).

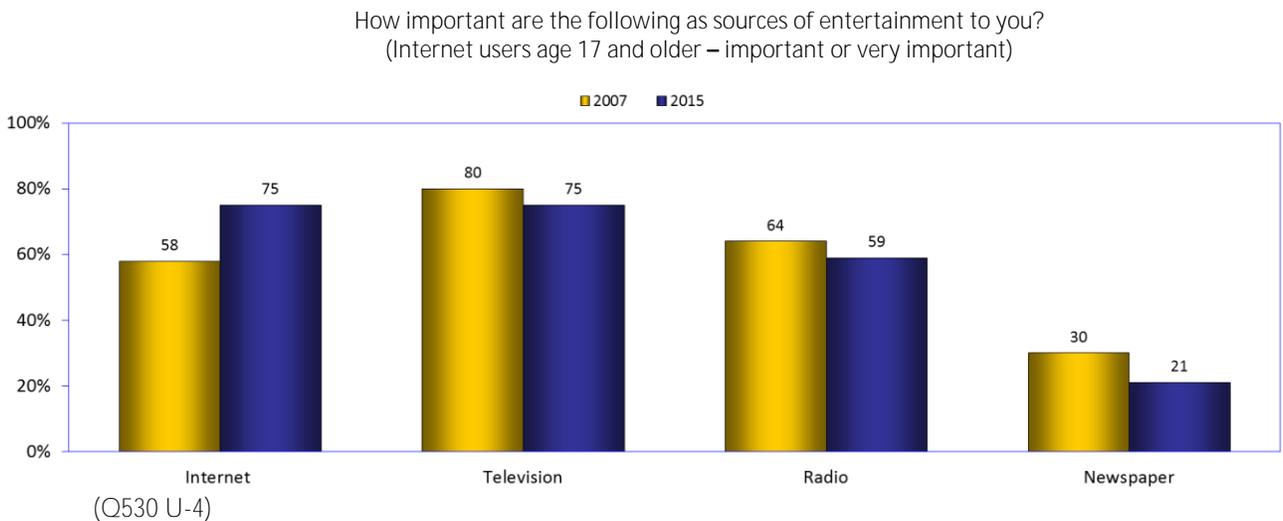


35. Views about sources of entertainment

For the first time in the Digital Future studies, the Internet has equaled television as an important source of entertainment (both at 75 percent).



Comparing responses from 2007 to the current findings by Internet users age 17 and older shows declining percentages reporting that all sources of entertainment except the Internet are important or very important.



## Information on the Internet: reliability and accuracy

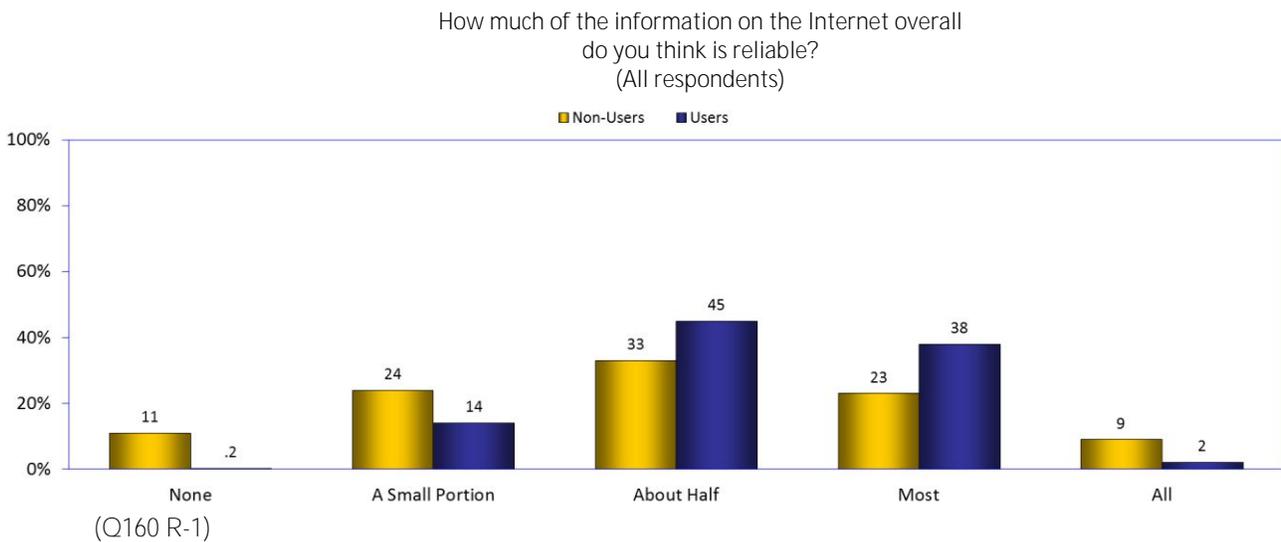
### 36. Information online: is it reliable?

Internet users and non-users alike believe that much of the information on the online overall is unreliable, and users have much more faith than non-users in online information.

Forty percent of users said that most or all of the information online is reliable, compared to 32 percent of non-users who responded to the same question.

Conversely, 59.2 percent of users said that half or less of the information on the Internet is reliable, compared to 68 percent of non-users.

Of particular note is that significant percentages of both non-users (35 percent) and users (14.2 percent) said that only a small portion or none of the information found online is reliable.



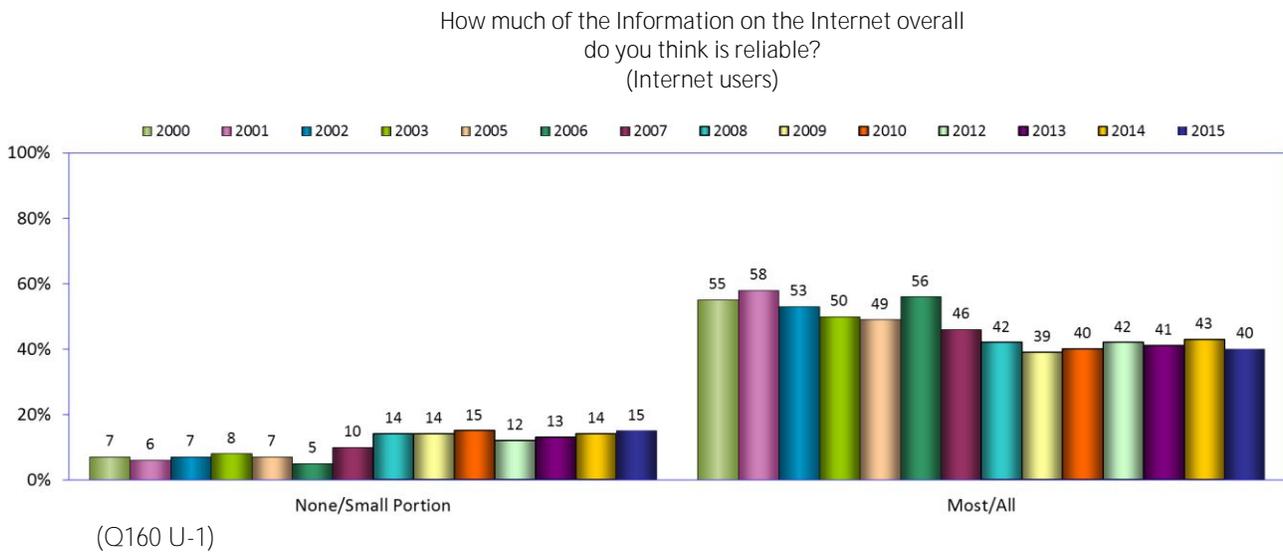
37. Reliability of information online (Internet users)

Views among Internet users about the perceived reliability of the information found online have been generally stable since 2008, with between 39 and 42 percent saying that most or all of the information on the Internet is reliable.

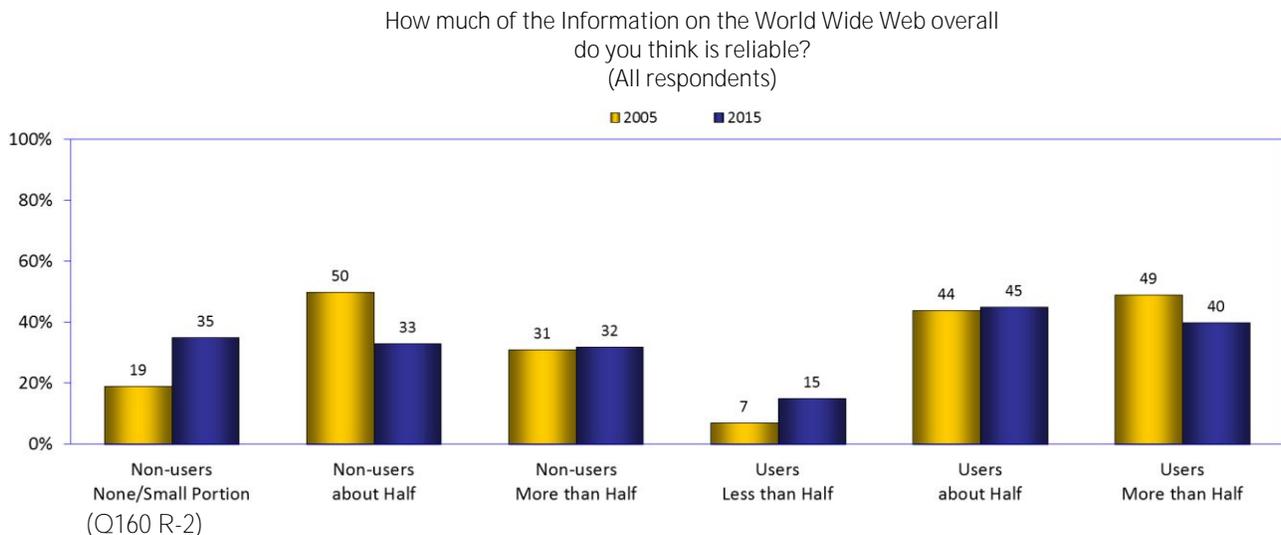
By comparison, 55 percent of users in 2000 said most or all of the information online is reliable.

In the current study, however, the percentage of users who reported that only a small portion or none of the information found online is reliable increased marginally for the third year in a row – now 15 percent of users and again a peak (along with 2010) in the Digital Future studies.

The percentage of users who said only about half of the information online is reliable has remained steady since 2008 between 45 and 47 percent.



Comparing findings from 2005 to 2015 shows that in 10 years, users and non-users alike have become somewhat more critical of the reliability of information found online.



38. Online information: reliability and accuracy of information on frequently-visited websites

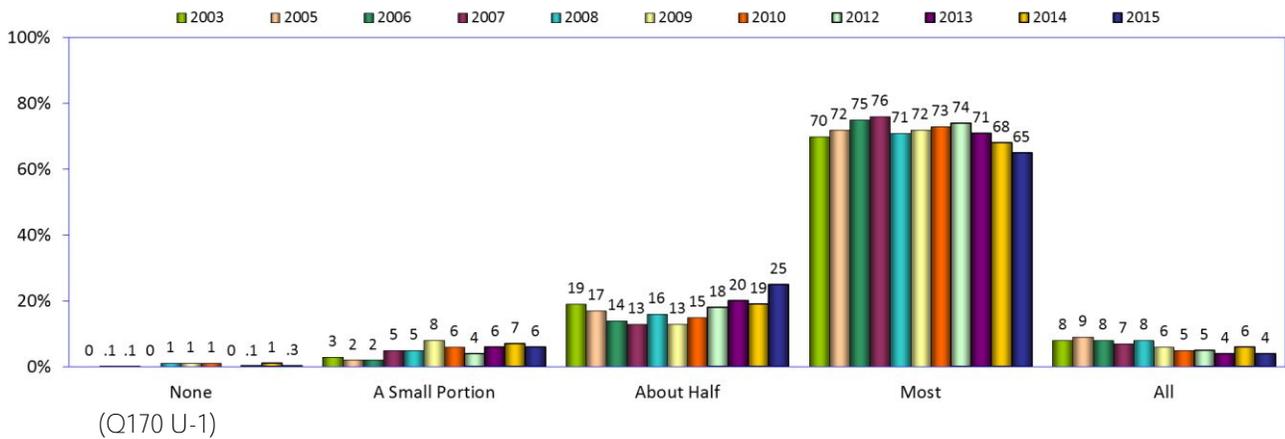
Compared to their views about online information overall, Internet users continued to report much more confidence in the reliability and accuracy of information on the websites they visit regularly.

However, the percentage of users who report that most or all of the information on websites they visit regularly is reliable and accurate has reached the lowest level thus far in the Digital Future studies.

Sixty-nine percent of users in the current study said that most or all of the information on the websites they visit regularly is reliable and accurate, down from the 74 percent reported in 2014 (the previous low). The percentage in the current study is a decline for the third year in a row, and substantially below the peak of 83 percent in 2007 and 2006.

The percentage of users who said that about half of the information on the sites they visit regularly is reliable and accurate increased to 25 percent – the highest number to date.

How much of the information on the websites that you visit regularly do you think is reliable and accurate?  
(Internet users who regularly visit websites)



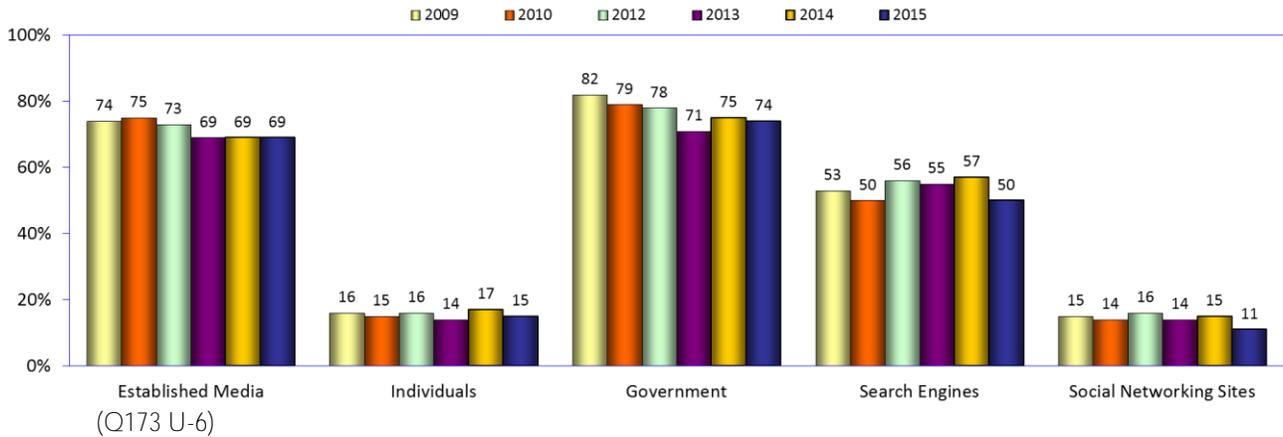
39. Information posted by media, government, individuals, and search engines: reliability and accuracy

Is the information posted by established media, the government, individualism, or retrieved by search engines perceived by Internet users as being generally reliable and accurate?

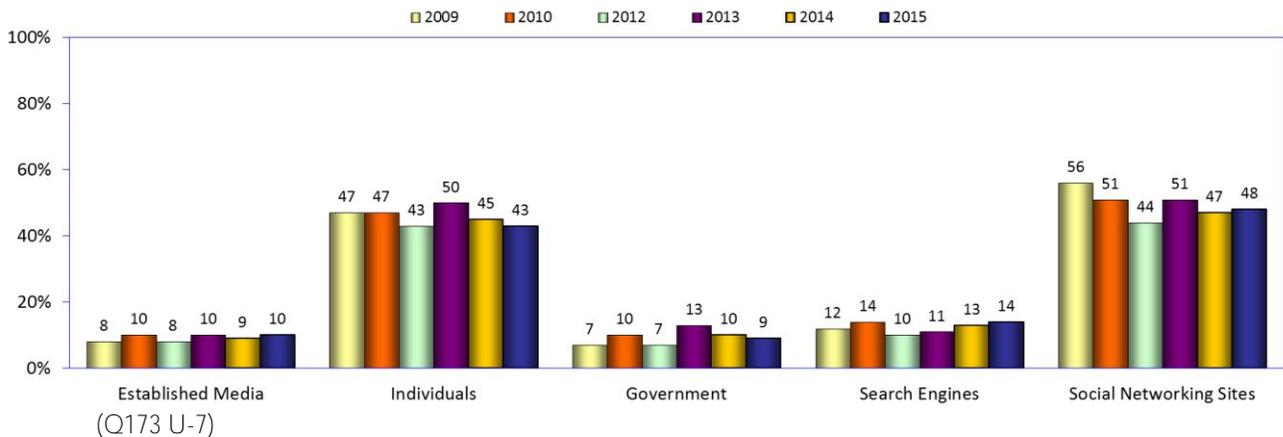
The percentages of Internet users who said that most or all of the information posted by established media or government is generally reliable remained generally stable in the current study, but at or near their lowest levels.

Sixty-nine percent of users said most or all of the information posted by established media is generally reliable and accurate – the same as in 2014 and 2013, and still the lowest percentage reported thus far. Seventy-four percent of users said information posted by the government is reliable and accurate – down marginally from 75 percent in the previous study.

How much information posted by these organizations and individuals do you think is generally reliable and accurate?  
(Internet users who regularly visit websites – most or all)



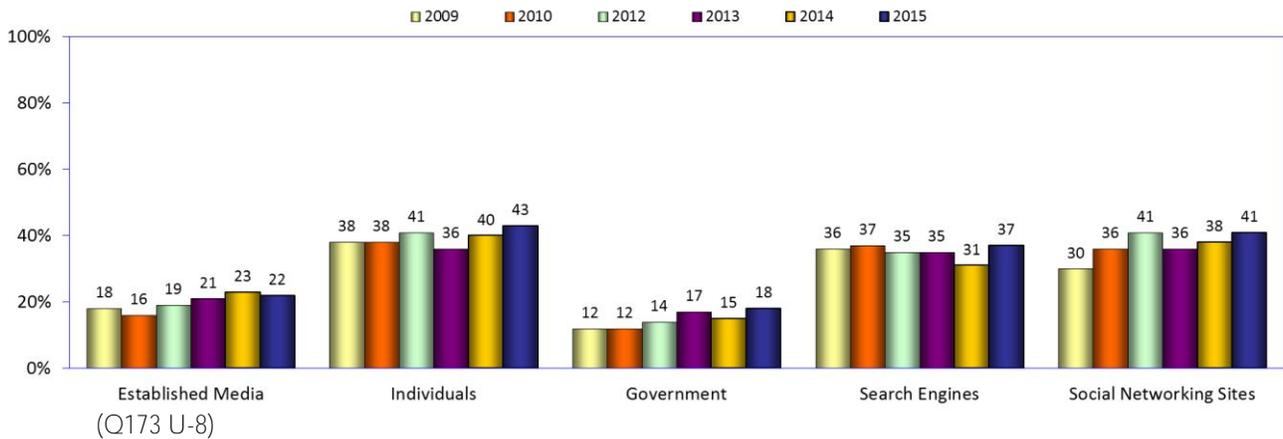
How much information posted by these organizations and individuals do you think is generally reliable and accurate?  
(Internet users who regularly visit websites – none/a small portion)



### 39. Information posted by media, government, individuals, and search engines: reliability and accuracy (continued)

In all but one category, the levels of those who report that about half of the information is reliable and accurate are at the highest level; only trust in established media declined.

How much information posted by these organizations and individuals do you think is generally reliable and accurate?  
(Internet users who regularly visit websites – about half)



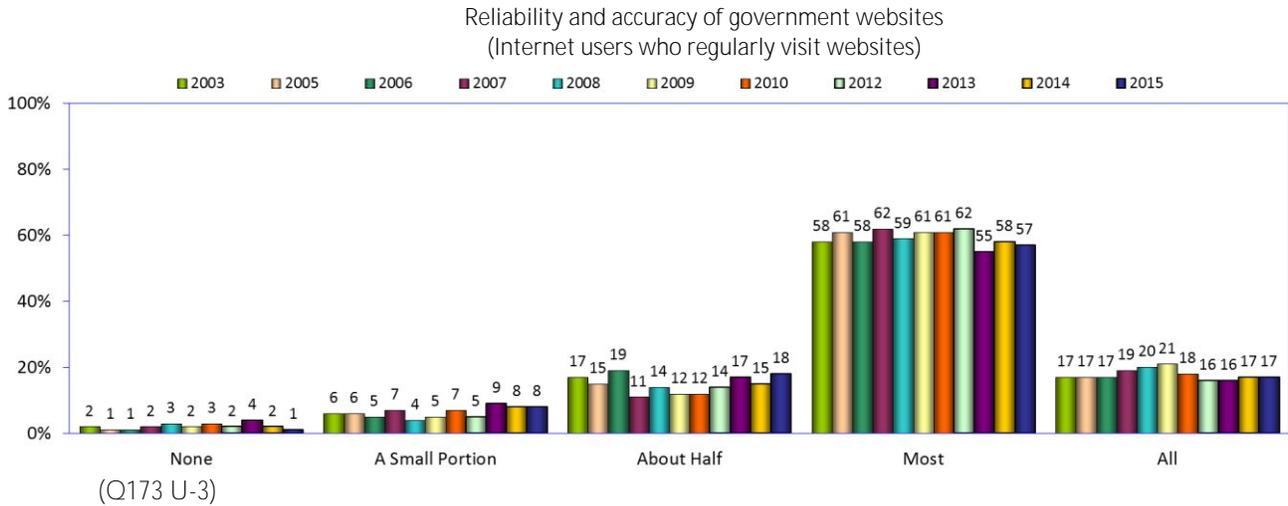
For specific findings on users' views about reliability and accuracy of information posted by the government, media, individuals, and search engines, see the next four pages.

40. Government websites: reliability and accuracy

Seventy-four percent of users reported that most or all information on government websites is reliable and accurate – only the second time in 11 years that the number has dropped below 75 percent.

In the current study, nine percent of Internet users who regularly visit websites said that a small portion or none of the information on government websites is reliable and accurate, down from ten percent in 2014.

The number who said that about half of the information is reliable and accurate has increased to 18 percent which is the second highest number in 11 years.

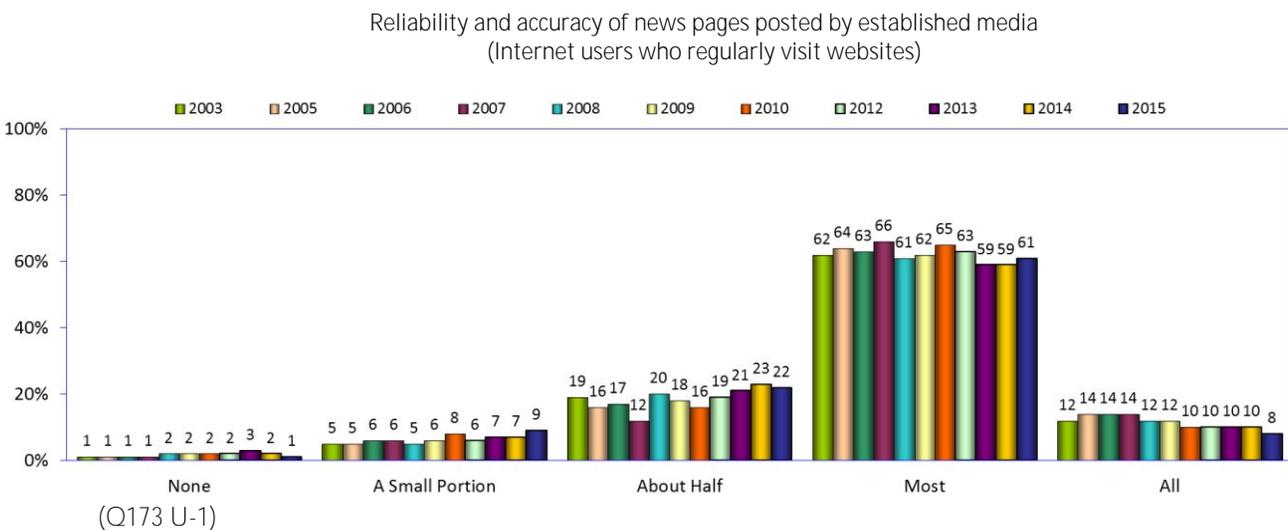


41. Media web pages: reliability and accuracy

Until 2012, more than 70 percent of users said that most or all of the information they find on websites hosted by established media is reliable and accurate.

In the current study, however, that percentage has dropped below 70 percent for the third year in a row. Sixty-nine percent of users said that most or all of the information posted by established media is reliable and accurate, the same as in 2014 and 2013. In these three years, the number of users who said that none or a small portion was reliable remained steady at either nine or ten percent.

The number of users who said that half or less of information posted by established media is reliable and accurate had increased from 27 percent in 2012 to 31 percent in 2013, but has remained constant at 32 percent for 2014 and 2015.



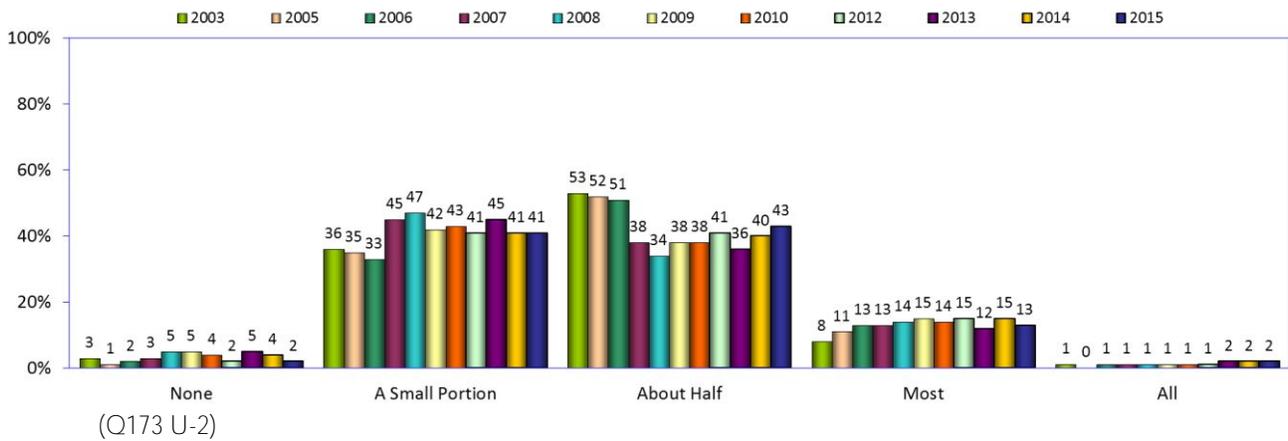
42. Information posted by individuals: reliability and accuracy

A very small and declining percentage of Internet users believe that information posted by individuals is reliable and accurate; in the current study 15 percent responded that most or all of the information is reliable (down from 17 percent in 2014). Since 2006 between 14 and 17 percent of users believe that most or all of the information posted by individuals is accurate.

However, at the other extreme, the percentage who said that only a small portion or none of the information on web pages posted by individuals is reliable and accurate decreased to 43 percent of Internet users – down from 45 percent in 2014 and 50 percent in 2013.

The percentage of users who said that half or less of the information on web pages posted by individuals is reliable and accurate increased to 86 percent. This is consistent with findings from most years of the study; since 2006, 84 percent to 86 percent of users responded that half or less of the information is reliable.

Reliability and accuracy of information web pages posted by individuals  
(Internet users who regularly visit websites)



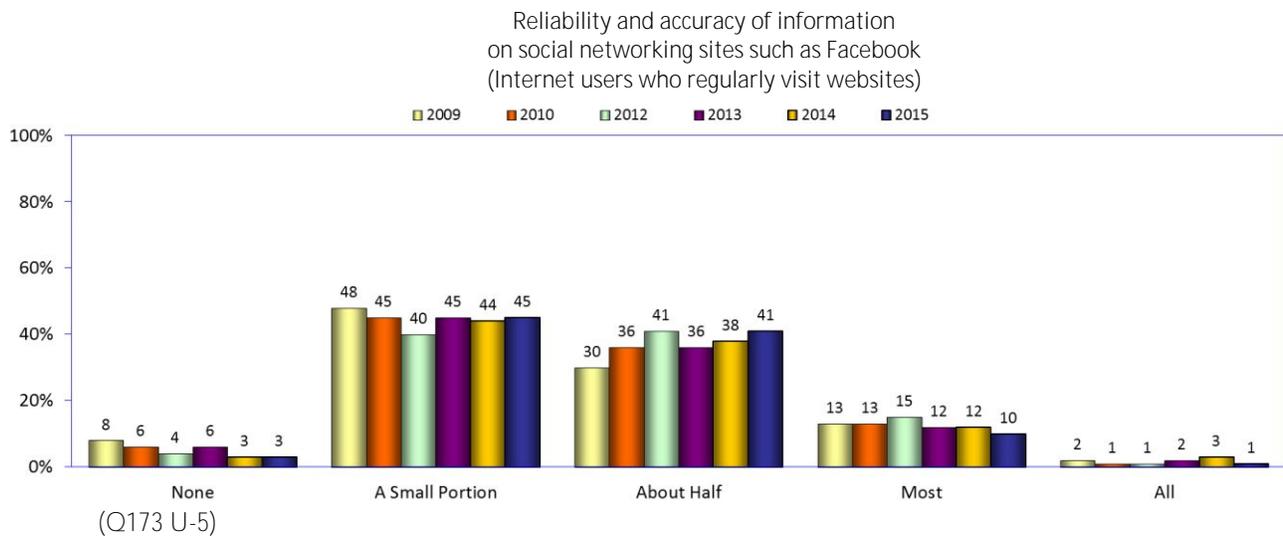
### 43. Information on social networking sites: reliability and accuracy

Reinforcing the views about the reliability and accuracy of information posted by individuals (see the previous page), Internet users report similar low levels of faith that the information they find on social networking sites such as Facebook is reliable and accurate.

Only 11 percent of Internet users said that most or all of the information on social networking sites is reliable and accurate, down from 15 percent in 2014 and the lowest level to date.

At the same time, the percentage who said that none or a small portion of information on social networking sites is reliable and accurate increased to 48 percent, up marginally from 47 percent in 2014.

Those reporting that about half is reliable and accurate increased by three percentage points, equal to the highest level in the study.

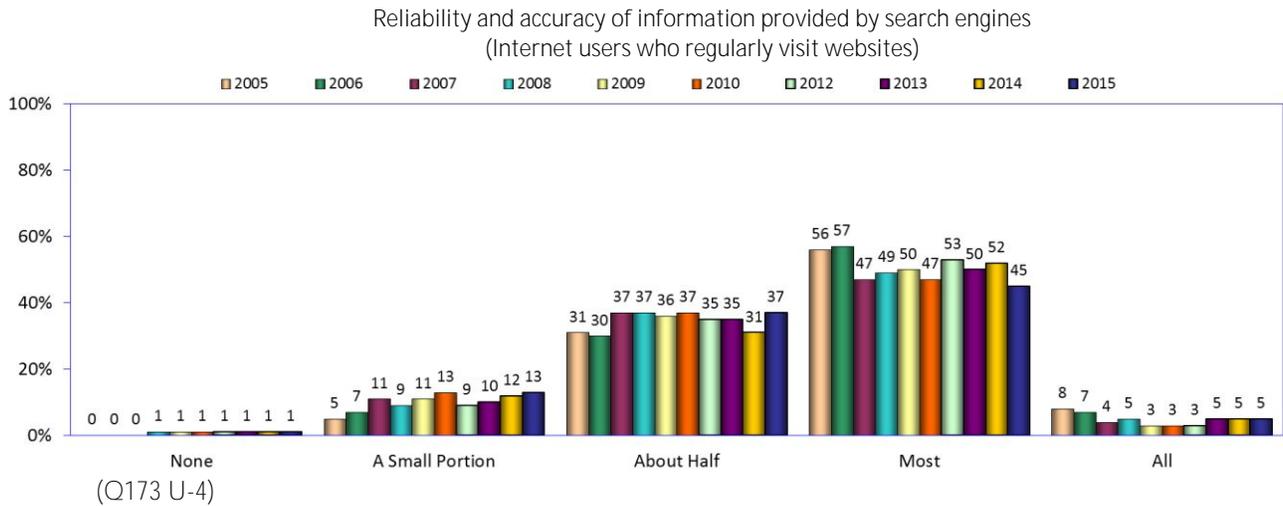


44. Information provided by search engines: reliability and accuracy

The percentage of Internet users who said that most or all of the information provided by search engines such as Google is reliable and accurate has dropped to 50 percent of users, down from 57 percent in 2014 and matching the lowest level in the ten years.

Those who said that a small portion or none of the information provided by search engines is reliable and accurate increased marginally to 14 percent of users, up from 13 percent in 2014.

Those reporting that about half of the information is reliable increased to 37 percent, matching the highest reported in the 10 surveys this question has been asked.



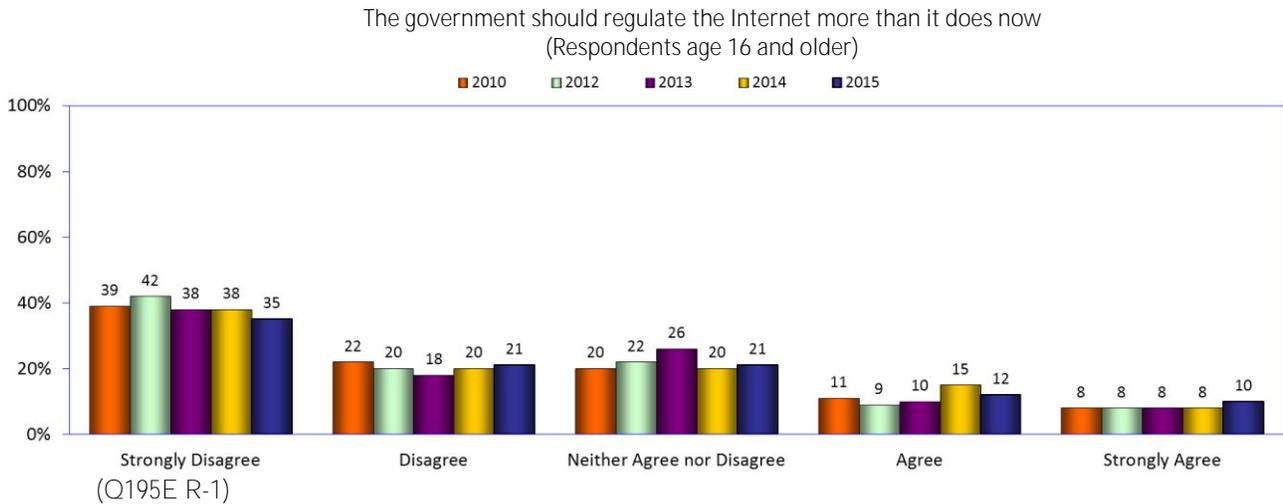
# Views about regulation and the Internet

## 45. The Internet and government regulation

A consistently small percentage of respondents said that the government should regulate the Internet more than it does now, and that percentage declined in the current study.

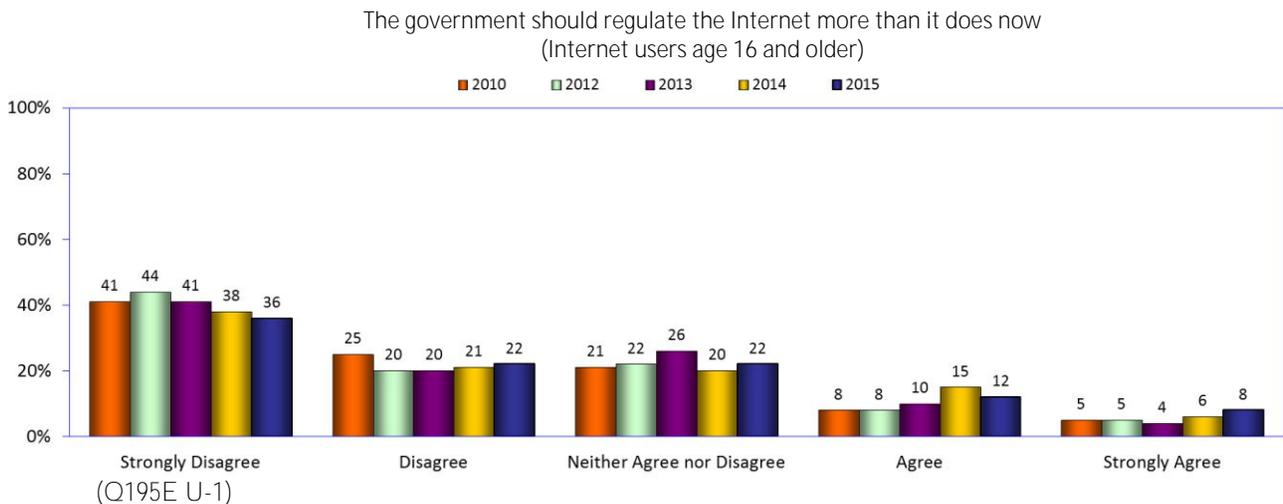
Twenty percent of all respondents agree or strongly agree that the government should regulate the Internet more, down from 23 percent reported in 2014.

The percentage of those who disagree with more government regulation of the Internet also decreased – now 56 percent of respondents, down from 58 percent in 2014.



Looking specifically at Internet users shows slightly higher levels of disagreement with the idea of government regulation of the Internet. Fifty-eight percent of users age 16 and older disagree or strongly disagree with more government regulation of the Internet (below), compared to 56 percent of all respondents (above).

Twenty percent of users agree or strongly agree with more government regulation of the Internet, compared to 23 percent reported by all respondents.

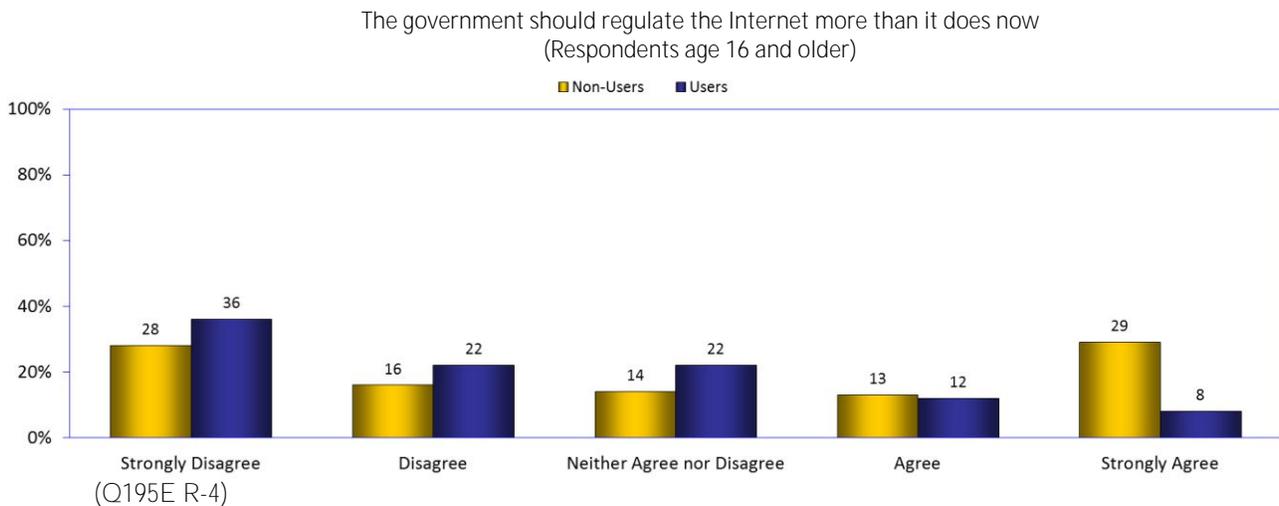


#### 46. The Internet and government regulation (Internet users vs. non-users)

As in previous studies, users and non-users report notable differences in views about the Internet and government regulation.

Twenty percent of users agree or strongly agree that the government should regulate the Internet more than it does now, compared to much higher levels of non-users (42 percent) answering the same question.

Conversely, 58 percent of users disagree or strongly disagree with increasing government regulation of the Internet, compared to 44 percent of non-users.

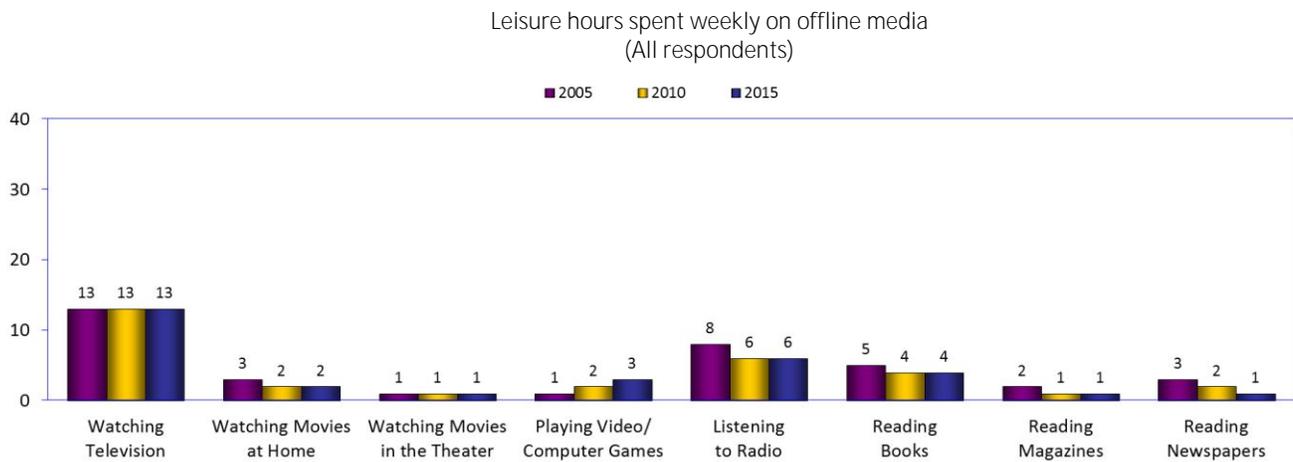


## Using offline media

### 47. Offline media

Respondents spent more time watching offline television or movies at home than any other offline media activity.

Respondents in the current study spent an average of 15 hours per week watching television or movies at home, the same as reported in 2014. In contrast, respondents spent a combined total of six hours reading offline publications (books, magazines, and newspapers), slightly lower than the seven hours reported in 2014.



(Q690 R-1)

## Going online for media content – free or paid

### 48. Online television and movies – paid and free sources

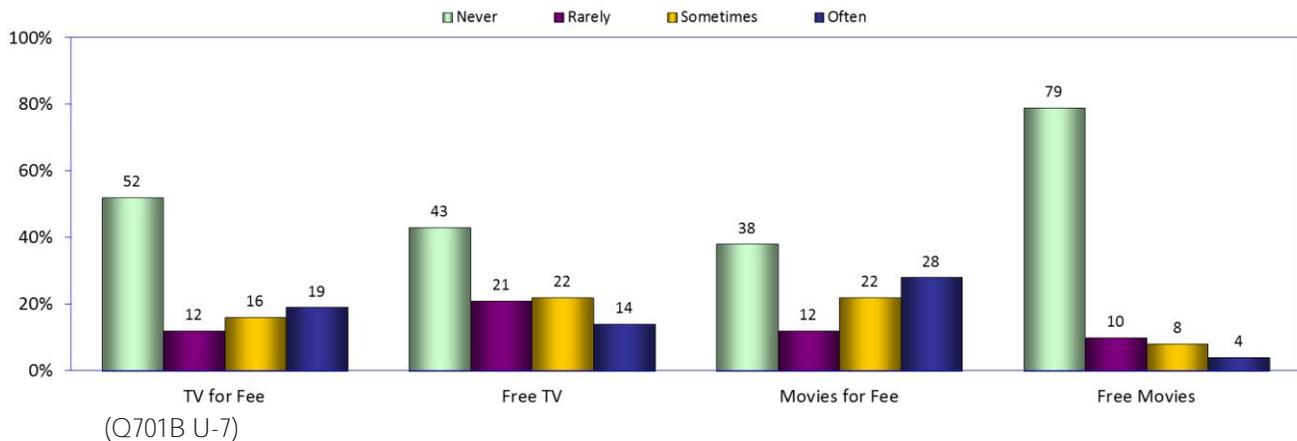
How does the availability of television and movie programming online through either paid or free sources affect what Internet users watch?

Large percentages of Internet users never go online to watch television programs or movies for a subscription or fee, such as the programming available through Netflix, Hulu Plus, or Amazon. For example, 52 percent never watch television programs online for a subscription or fee, and 38 percent do not pay for web-based services to watch movies.

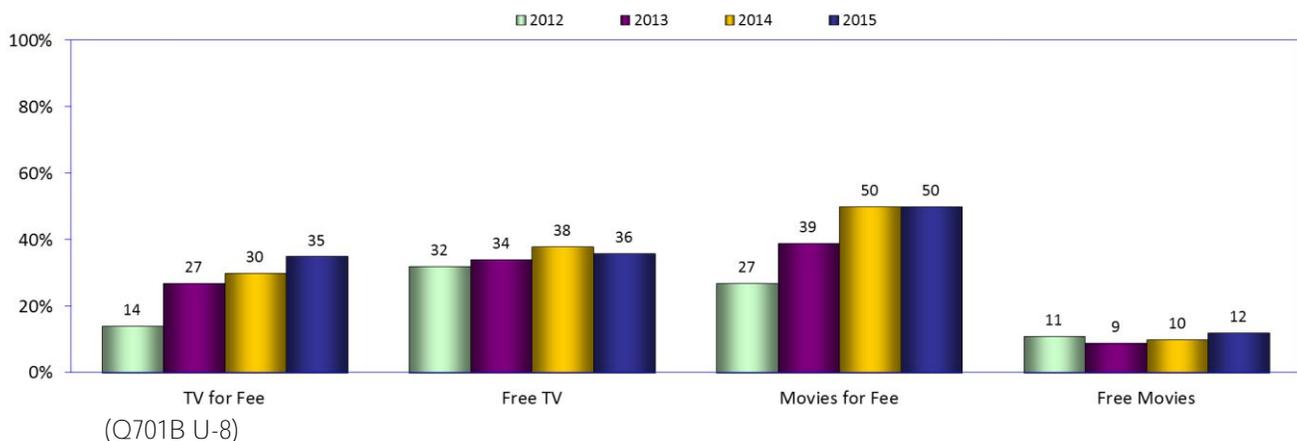
A much larger percentage (79 percent) never goes online to watch movies acquired through a peer-to-peer file sharing service, such as Bit Torrent or Pirate Bay. Fifty percent of users sometimes or often watch movies online for which they have paid a subscription or fee, while a lower percentage pays to watch television programs online (35 percent). Thirty-six percent of users go online sometimes or often to watch television programs through free streaming services, such as the videos offered by television networks.

For more year-to-year comparisons, see the next five pages.

Watching television and movies online through paid or free sources  
(Internet users)



Watching television and movies online through paid or free sources  
(Internet users answering sometimes or often)

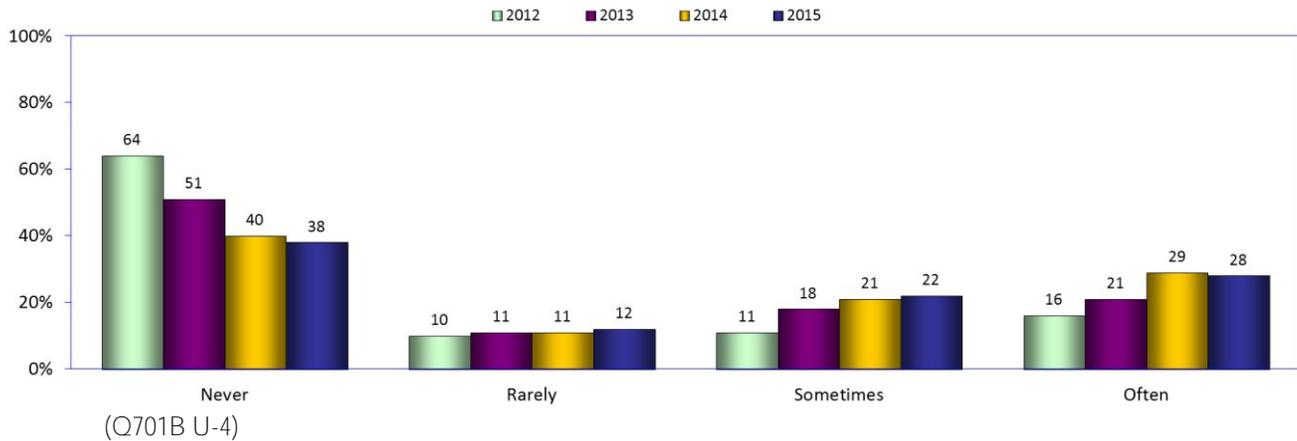


#### 49. Subscription or fee-based movies

Half of Internet users in the current Digital Future study sometimes or often pay to watch movies on the Internet, the same as in 2014 and up from 39 percent in 2013.

Notably, only 38 percent of Internet users said they never watch online movies for a fee, a slight decrease from 40 percent in 2014 and the lowest response thus far in the Digital Future studies.

Watch movies online for which you have paid a subscription or fee  
(Internet users)

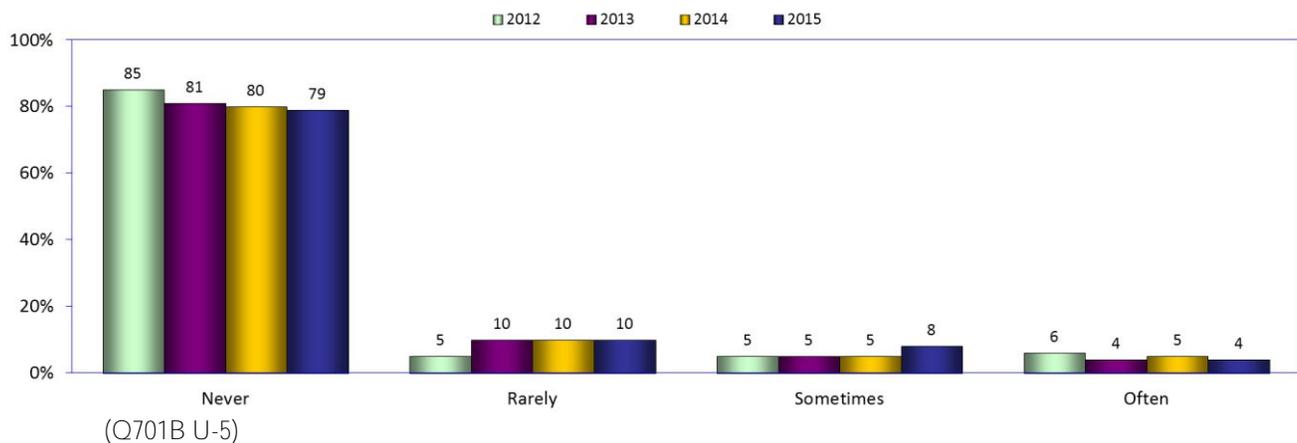


#### 50. Watching movies from peer-to-peer file sharing services

While large percentages of Internet users pay for online movies, only a small number of users watch movies online that were acquired from a peer-to-peer file sharing service such as Bit Torrent or Pirate Bay.

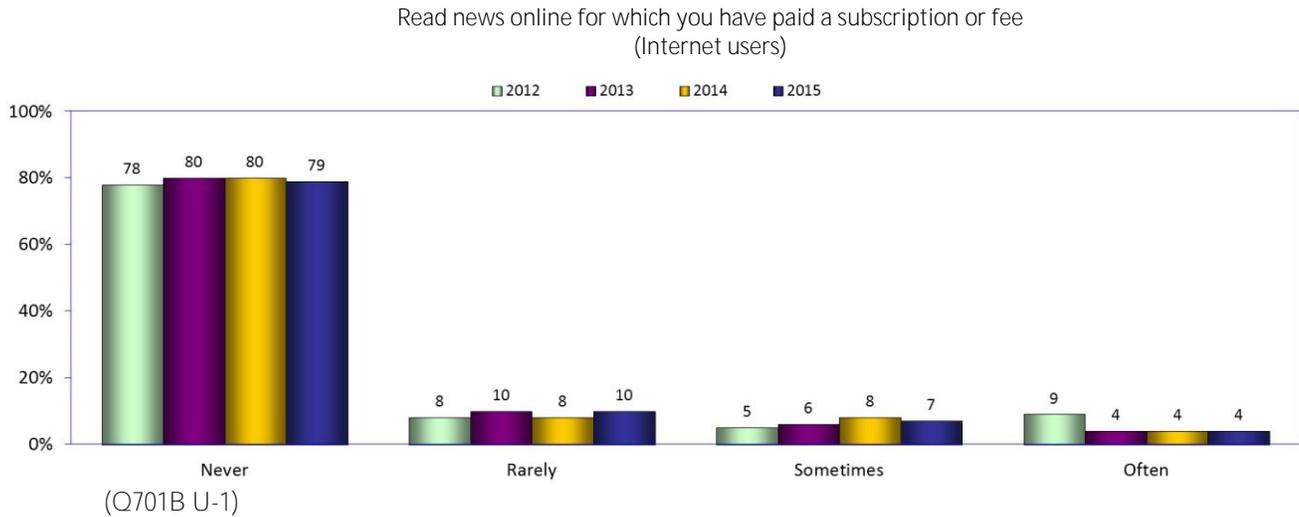
Twelve percent of users sometimes or often watch movies online from a peer-to-peer file sharing service, up slightly from ten percent in 2014.

Watch movies online acquired from a peer-to-peer file sharing service  
(Internet users)



## 51. Subscription or fee-based online news

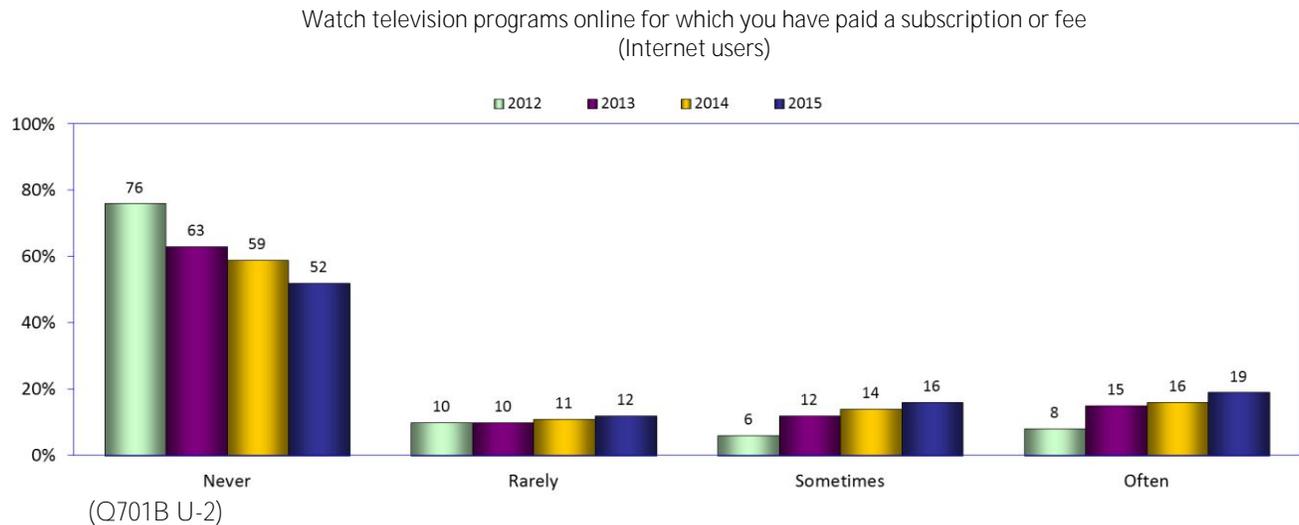
Very small percentages of Internet users report that they sometimes or often read subscription news online for a fee – now 11 percent, down marginally from 12 percent in 2014. Seventy-nine percent never pay for online news, down one percentage point from 2013 and 2014.



## 52. Subscription or fee-based television programs

A small but growing percentage of Internet users pay a subscription fee to watch television programs online on platforms such as Netflix or Hulu Plus.

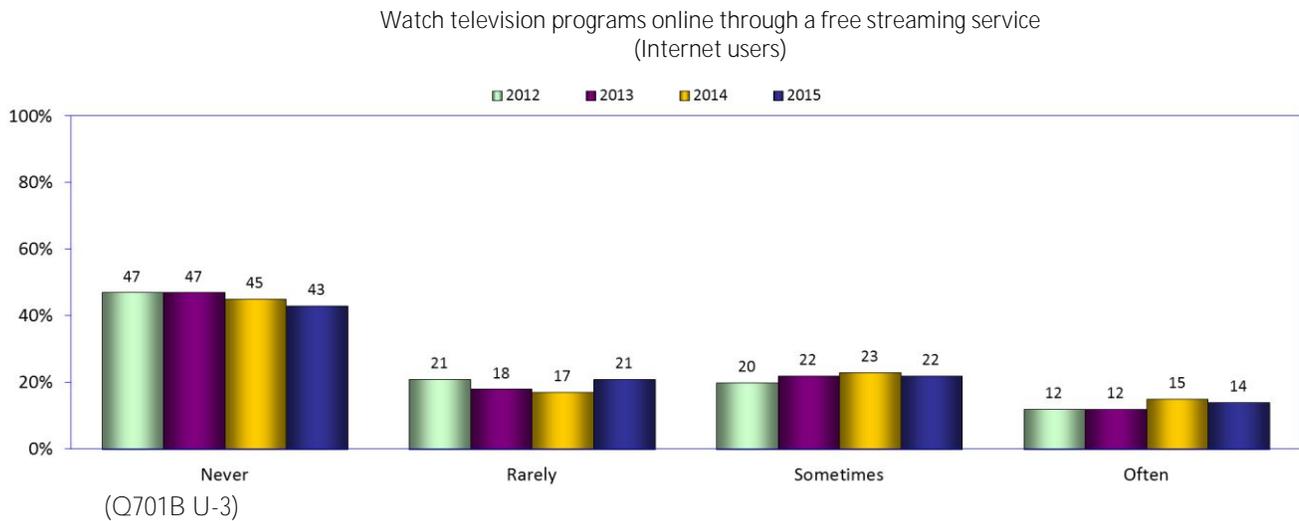
Thirty-five percent of users said they sometimes or often watch paid television programs online, up from 30 percent reported in 2014.



### 53. Watching television through a free streaming service

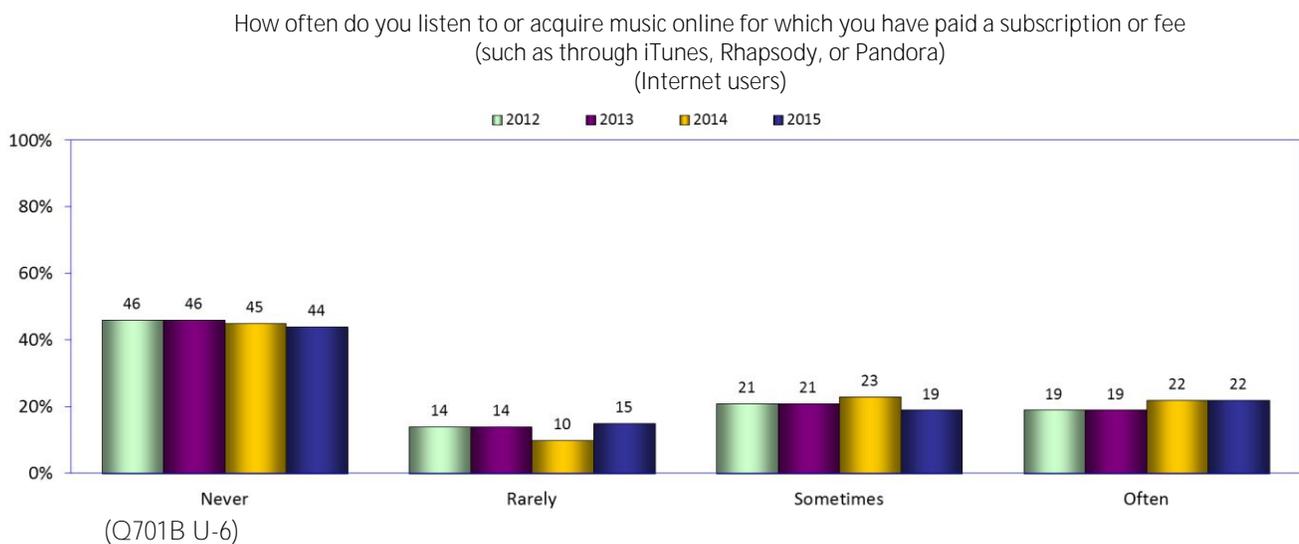
Thirty-six percent of Internet users sometimes or often watch television programs online through a free streaming service, down slightly from 38 percent in 2014.

Forty-three percent of users in the current study never watch free online television programs, down from the 45 percent reported in 2014.



### 54. Online music programming

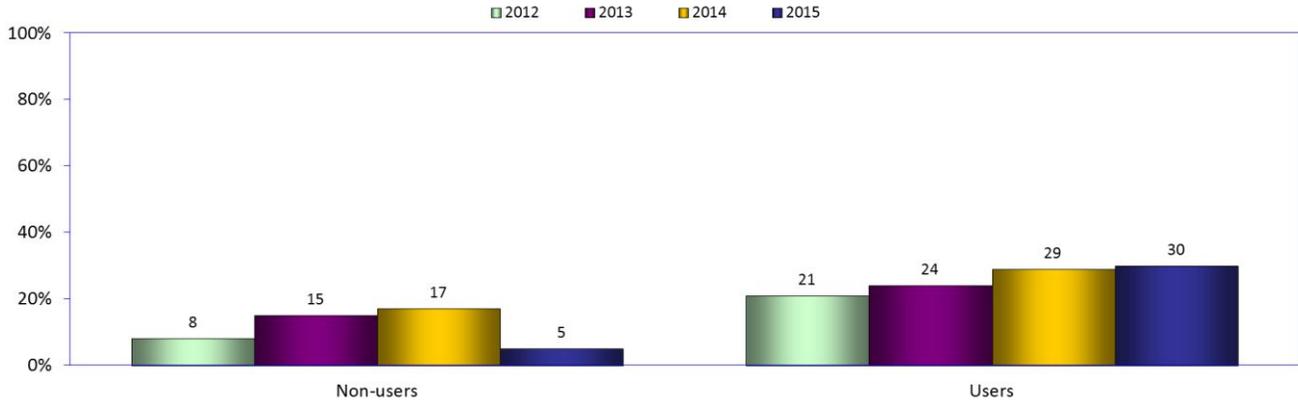
A significant percentage of Internet users – 41 percent – sometimes or often paid for music online from a source such as iTunes, compared to 45 percent in 2014.



55. Will viewers give up cable television and watch online programming instead?

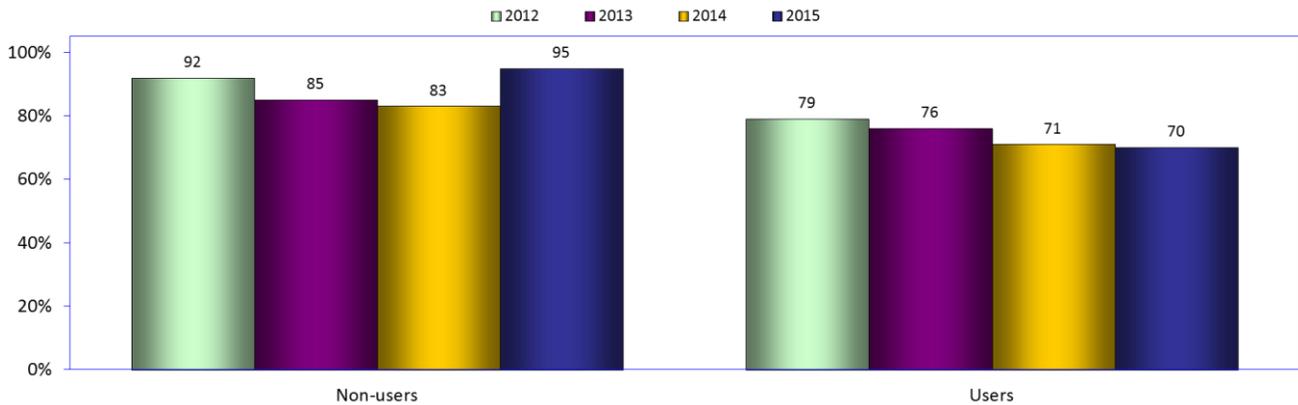
The percentage of Internet users who said they are likely or very likely to cut back or give up their cable or satellite service and watch online television instead continued to increase in the current study – now 30 percent, up marginally from 29 percent in 2014.

How likely are you to cut back on or even give up your cable or satellite service and watch television only online?  
(Respondents who have cable or satellite service – likely or very likely)



(Q706A R-1)

How likely are you to cut back on or even give up your cable or satellite service and watch television only online?  
(Respondents who have cable or satellite service – unlikely or very unlikely)



(Q706A R-2)

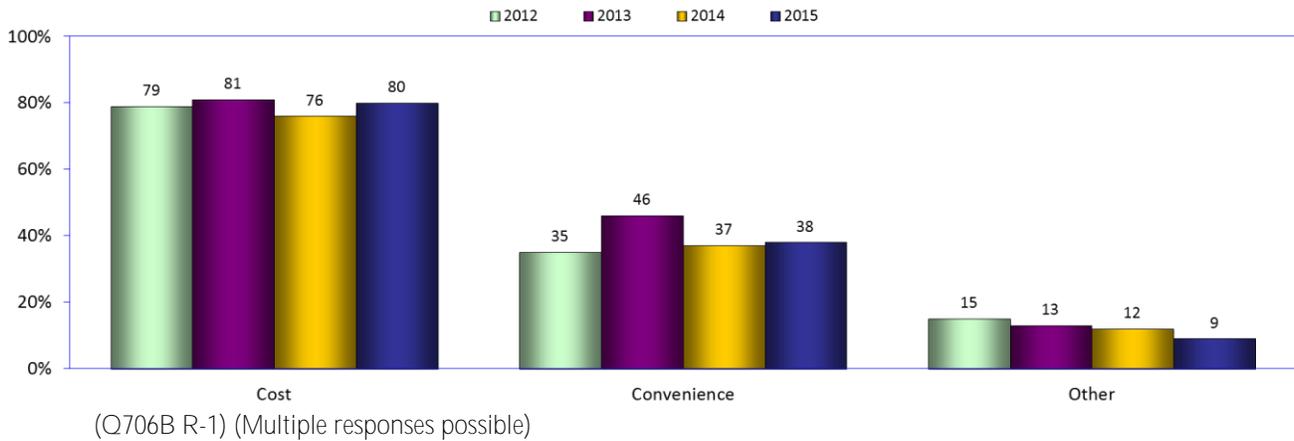
## 56. Will viewers give up cable television and watch online programming instead? (reasons)

Why would viewers consider giving up cable or satellite television to watch television online instead?

Cost continues to be the primary reason why respondents would switch to online programming, increasing to 80 percent, up from 76 percent reported in 2014.

The convenience of watching television online was reported by a much smaller group – 38 percent, up from 37 percent in 2014.

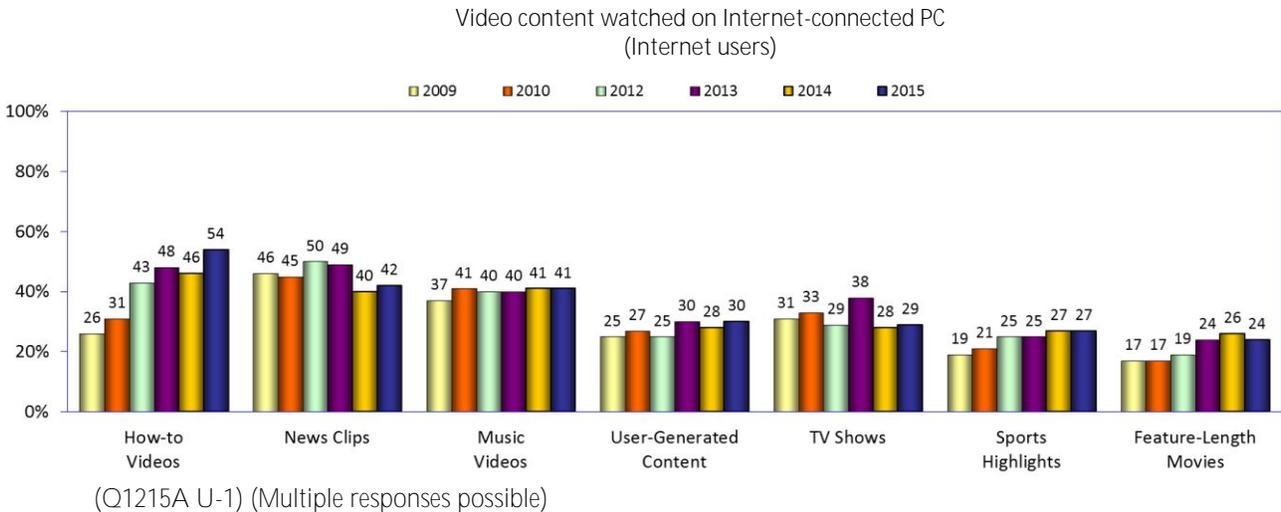
Why would you be likely to give up (or why have you already given up)  
your cable or satellite service and watch television only online?  
(All respondents – who have given up or are likely/very likely to give up)



## Watching video content on PCs and smartphones

### 57. Watching video content on PCs

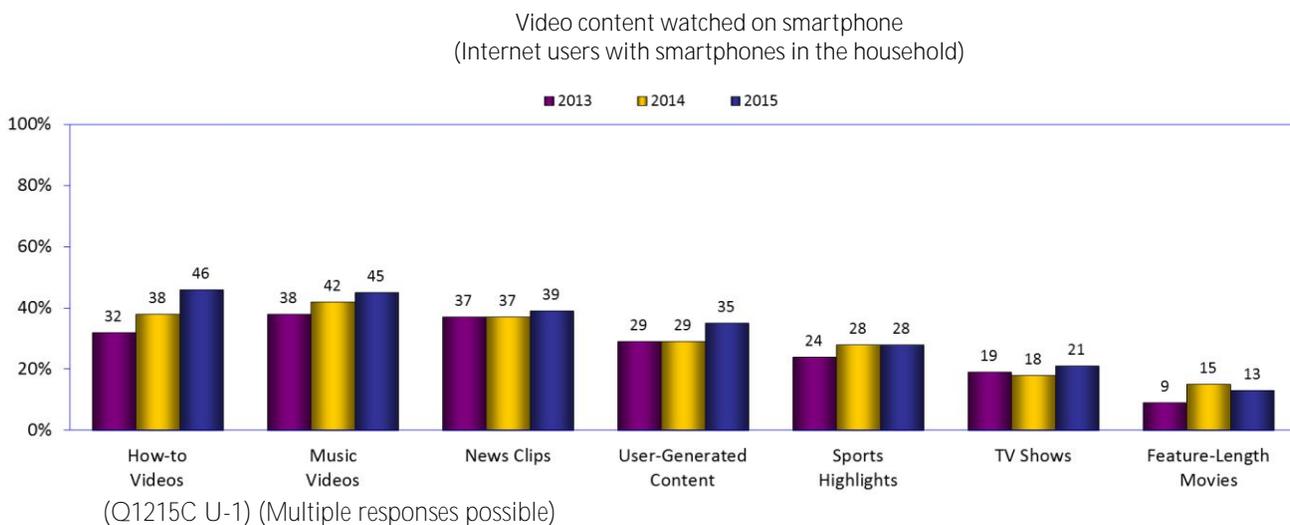
Large percentages of Internet users who watch video content on PCs report watching a wide range of programming, the most popular being how-to videos (54 percent), news clips (42 percent), and music videos (41 percent).



### 58. Watching video content on smartphones

Mirroring the results for PCs, more users watch how-to videos on their smartphones (46 percent) than any other category. News clips and music videos are the next most popular categories with 45 percent watching videos and 39 percent watching news clips.

Percentages in 2015 were up from 2014 in all categories except two: percentages held steady at 28 percent in sports highlights and decreased slightly for feature-length movies (13 percent down from 15 percent).



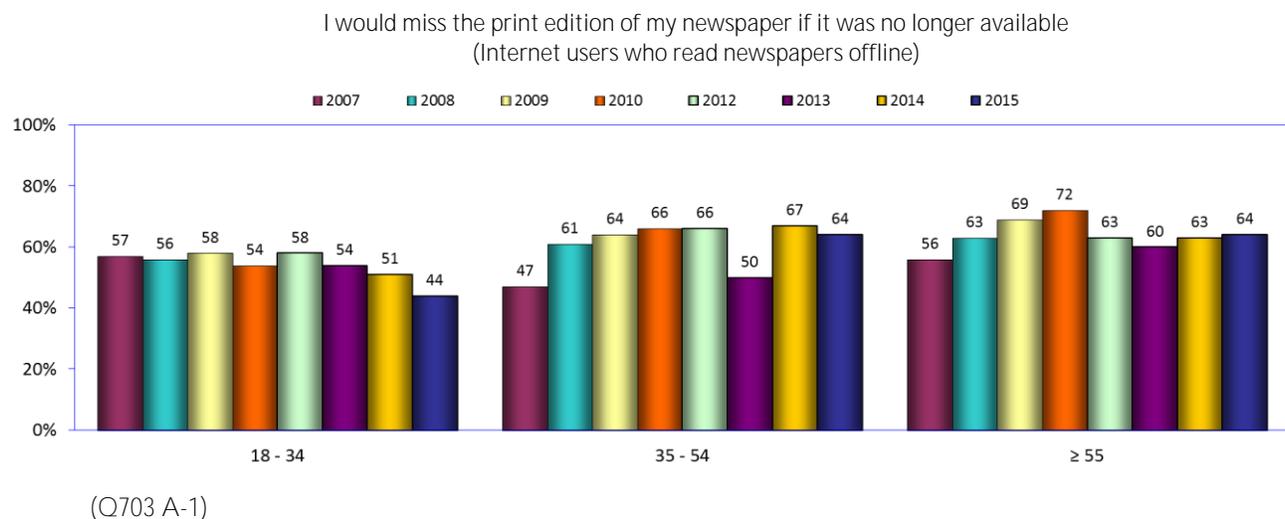
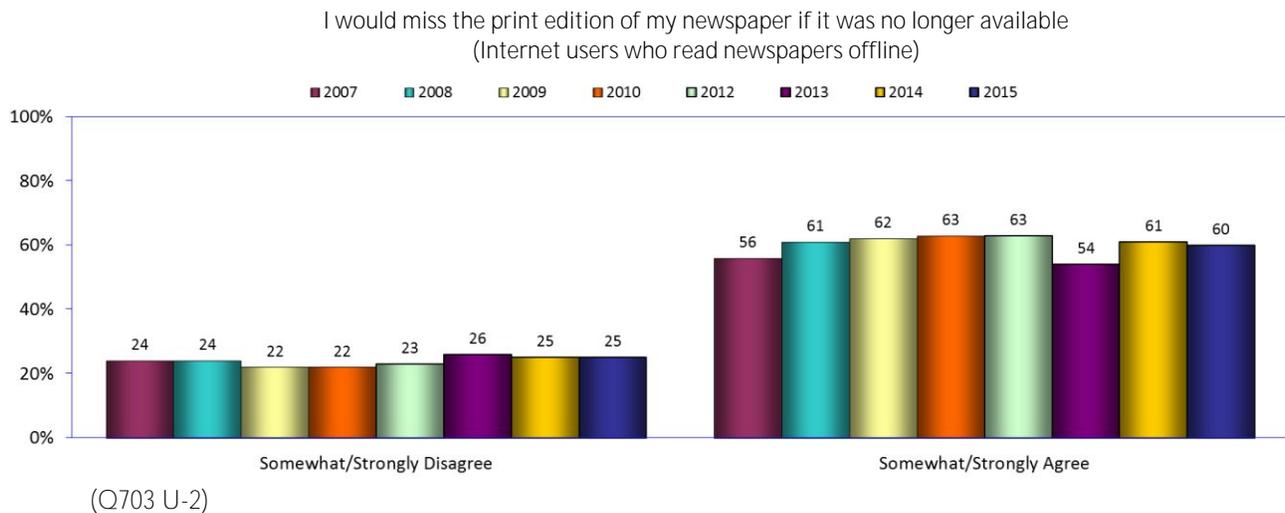
## Newspapers: print and online

### 59. Would you miss the print edition of your newspaper?

Large percentages of Internet users who continued to read print newspapers remain loyal to their publications. The percentage of those who would miss the print edition of their paper decreased only marginally in the current study – possibly because the remaining print readership has declined to the point where loyalty is the strongest.

Sixty percent of Internet users who read a print newspaper reported that they would miss the paper if it ceased to exist, down marginally from 61 percent in 2014.

At the other extreme, the percentage who would not miss their print paper is generally stable – now 25 percent, the same as in 2014.



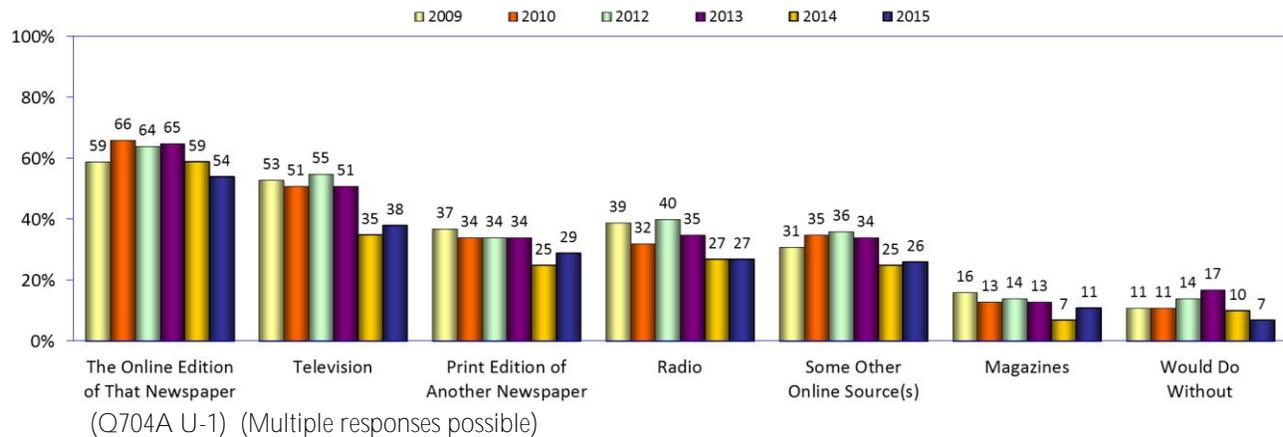
## 60. Alternatives to print newspapers

Will readers of print newspapers turn to their publication's online edition if the print edition was no longer published? A majority of respondents – 54 percent – said they would; however this response is down from 59 percent in 2014, and is the lowest thus far in the Digital Future studies.

Nevertheless, more respondents said they would use the online edition of their newspaper than any other source. The next highest percentage was the 38 percent who would turn to television for information if their print newspaper ceased publication, up from the 35 percent reported in 2014.

With multiple responses possible, 27 percent said they would use radio as an alternative to their print newspaper, well below the 40 percent reported in 2012. Those who would do without an alternative news source decreased to seven percent of print newspaper readers, down from 10 percent in 2014 and less than half of the 17 percent reported in 2013.

If your newspaper were to stop publishing its print edition, where would you go to get that information?  
(Users who read newspapers offline)

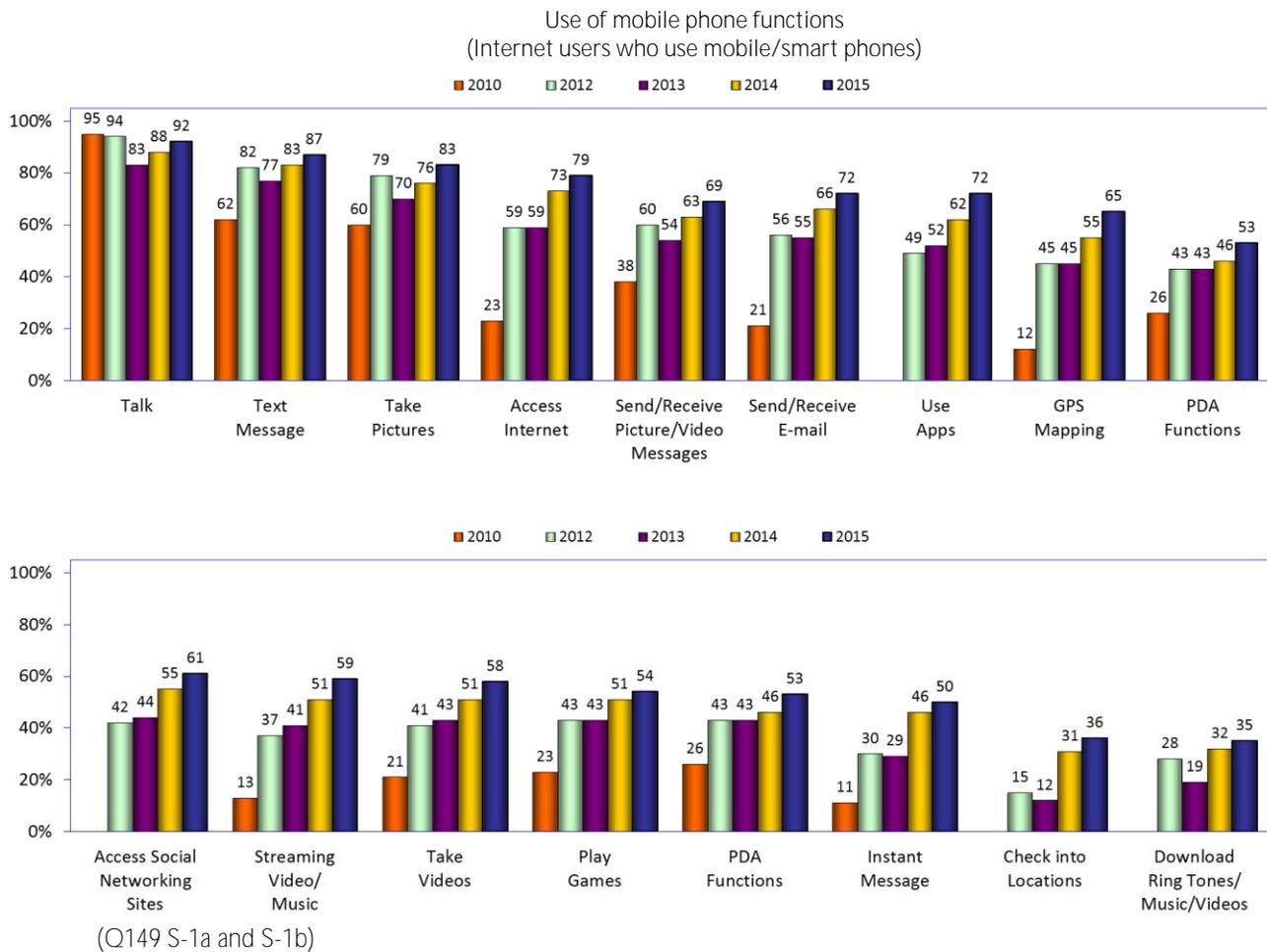


# Mobile phone functions

## 61. Use of mobile phone functions

Using mobile phones for functions other than talking has increased for every major category.

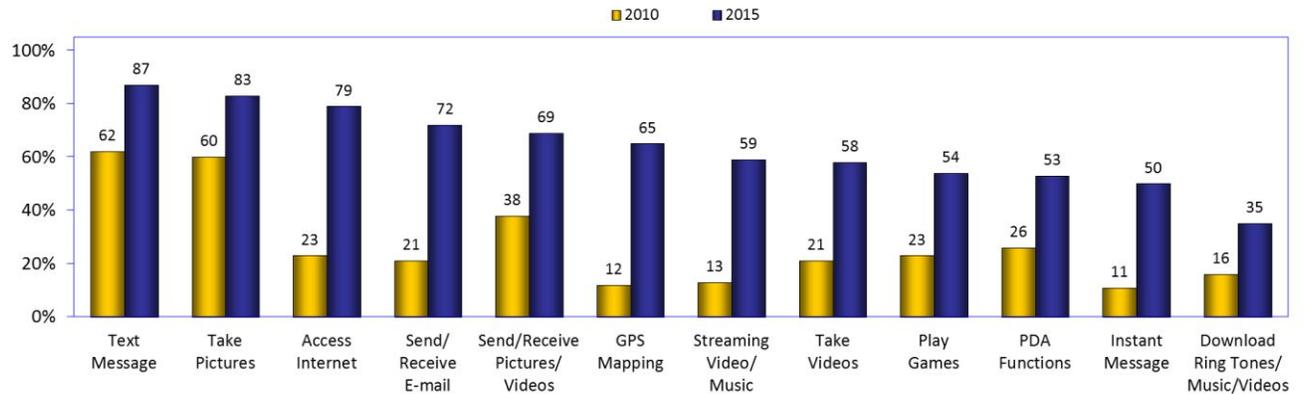
Although more mobile phone users report using their phones for conversations than any other function (over 90 percent for the first time since 2012), for the first time every category ranks over 50 percent. The greatest growth was in using apps (10 percentage points increase) and using GPS mapping services (10 percentage points increase).



## 62. Use of mobile phone functions: five-year trends

Looking at use of mobile phone numbers in 2010 compared to 2015 shows large increases in use in every category in the study, with the largest increases for: going online with a mobile phone (up 56 percentage points, GPS mapping (up by 53 percentage points), and sending and receiving emails (up 51 percentage points).

Use of mobile phone functions – Five-year trend  
(Internet users who use mobile/smart phones)

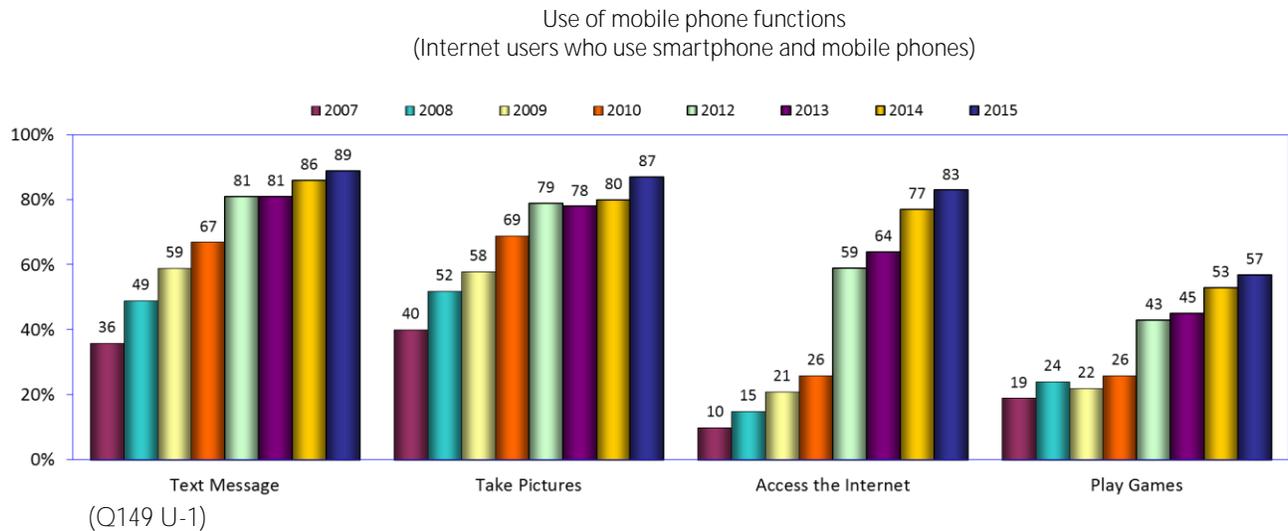


(Q149 S-2)

### 63. Use of mobile phone functions: 2007-2015

Looking at mobile phone use since 2007 shows continuing large increases in the use of functions other than talking.

Since 2007, the percentage of users who send and receive texts has increased from 36 percent in 2007 to 89 percent in the current study; taking pictures from 40 percent to 87 percent; going online from 10 percent to 83 percent; and playing games from 19 percent to 57 percent.

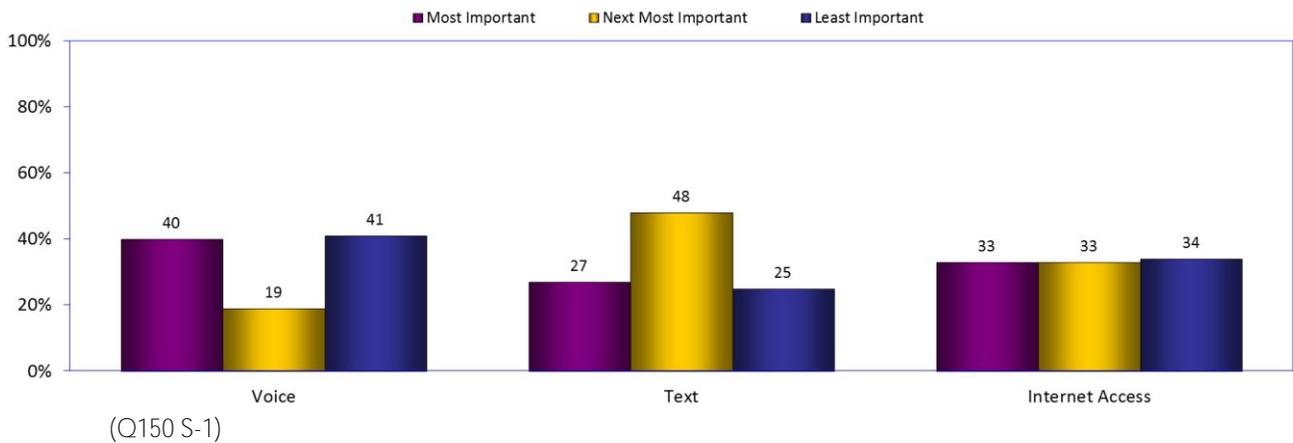


#### 64. Views about smartphone features

What do smartphone owners consider to be the most important functions of their mobile devices?

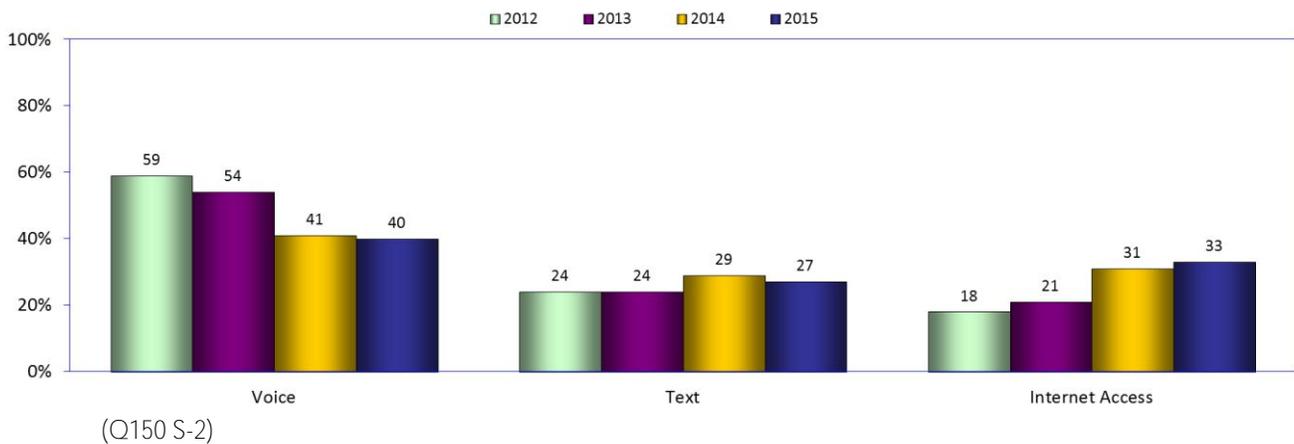
Even though texting by smartphone continues to increase (see the previous question), a large but declining percentage of smartphone owners (40 percent) still consider voice communication as the most important function of their device, compared to 33 percent who said Internet access was most important, and 27 percent who said texting was most important.

For your smartphone, please rank the importance of each of the following functions  
(Smartphone users)



Since 2012, a declining percentage of smartphone users said the voice function of their mobile device was the most important feature – now 40 percent, down from 59 percent in 2012. Conversely, a steadily growing percentage of smartphone users said that Internet access on their device was the most important feature – now 33 percent, up from 18 percent in 2012.

For your smartphone, please rank the importance of each of the following functions  
(Smartphone users – most important)



## Sending and receiving messages online

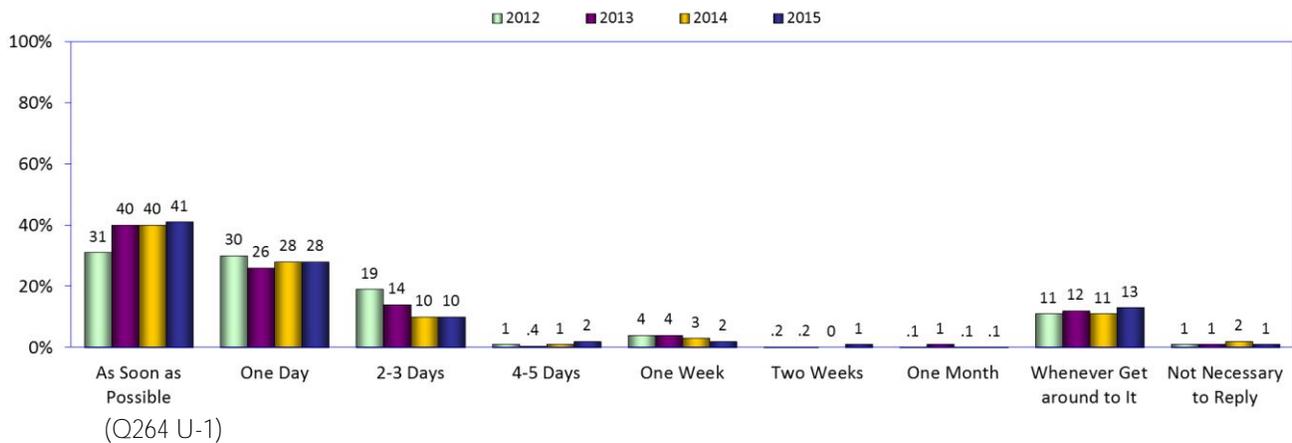
### 65. Online messages: how quickly should one reply?

Large and growing percentages of Internet users believe that a quick response to personal messages received online is appropriate.

Sixty-nine percent of users said that one should reply in one day or as soon as possible, up marginally from 68 percent in 2014 and the highest response thus far in the Digital Future studies.

At the other extreme, 14 percent said a reply should be sent “whenever one can get around to it” or that replying is not necessary, one percent higher than 2014.

How quickly should one reply to a personal message received online?  
What do you feel is the appropriate length of time?  
(Internet users)



## Consumer behavior

Adult Internet users who buy online 80%

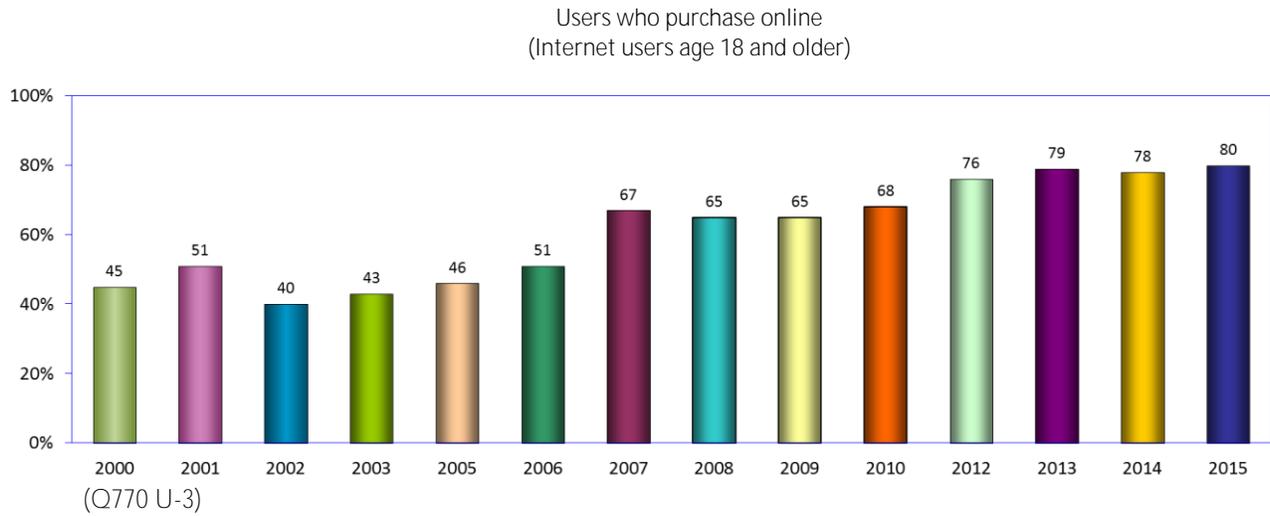
Internet users who are very concerned  
or extremely concerned about the  
privacy of personal information  
when or if buying online (2001) 66%  
(2015) 54%

Internet users who are very concerned  
or extremely concerned about the  
security of credit card information  
when or if buying online (2001) 71%  
(2015) 51%

Internet users who said that online  
purchasing has reduced their buying  
in traditional retail stores 62%

## 66. How many Americans are buying online?

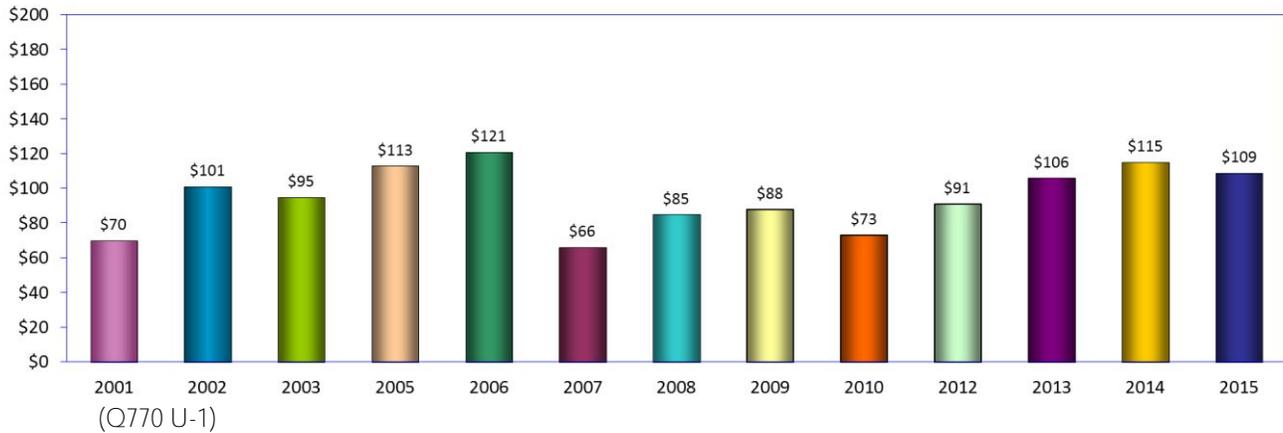
In the current study, 80 percent of Internet users age 18 and older said they buy online, up marginally from 78 percent in 2014 and a new peak for the Digital Future studies.



## 67. Online spending

Internet purchasers in the current study report a modest decrease in monthly spending online – now \$109 per month, down from \$115 in 2014.

In an average month, how much do you personally spend on products or services purchased over the Internet?  
(Internet purchasers age 18 and older)

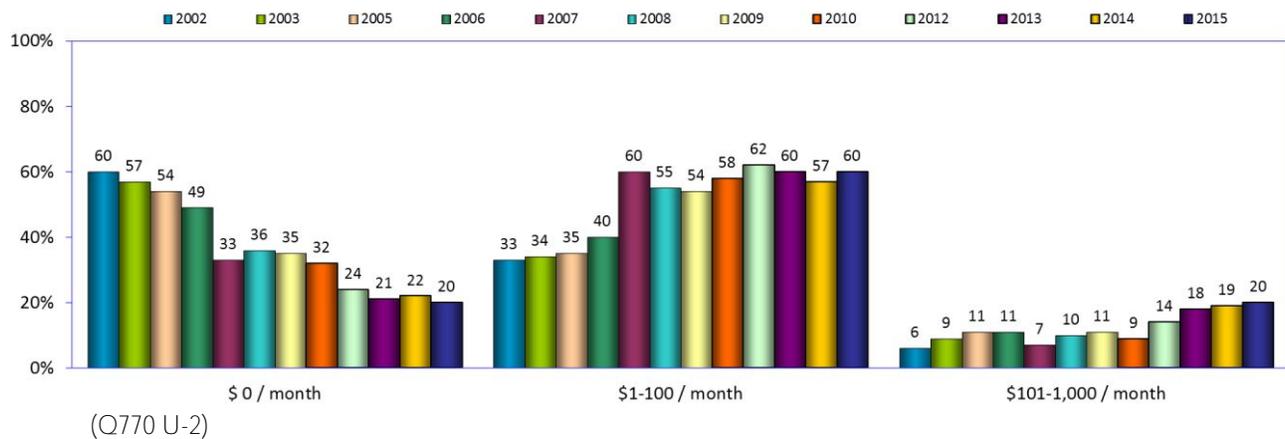


## 68. How much are online purchasers spending?

Although the average amount spent online decreased in the current study (see the previous question), more online purchasers in the current study reported monthly online spending of \$1-100 and \$101 to \$1,000.

Eighty percent of users spent \$1 to \$1,000 per month, up slightly from 76 percent in 2014.

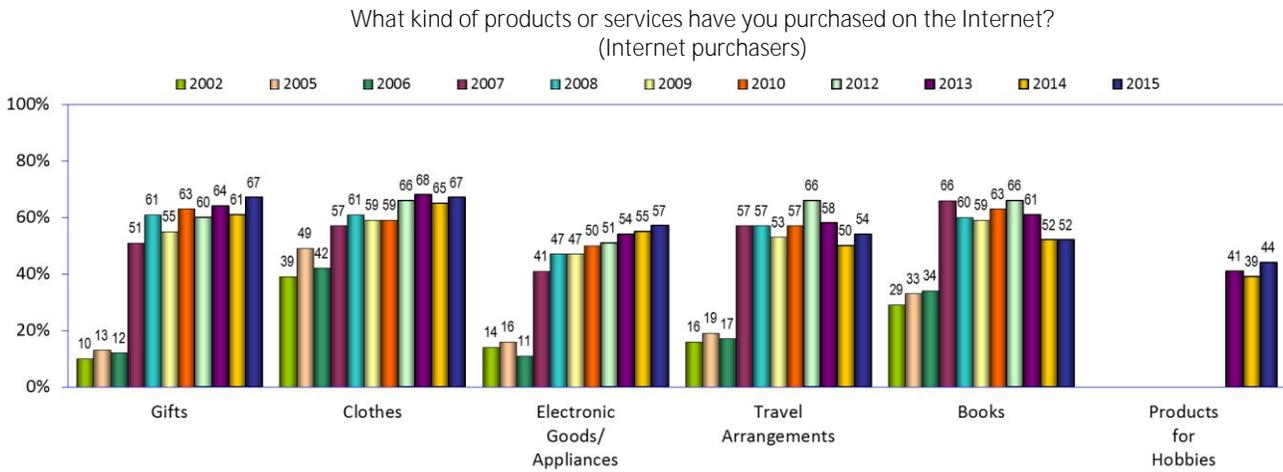
In an average month, how much do you personally spend on products or services purchased over the Internet?  
(Internet purchasers age 18 and older)



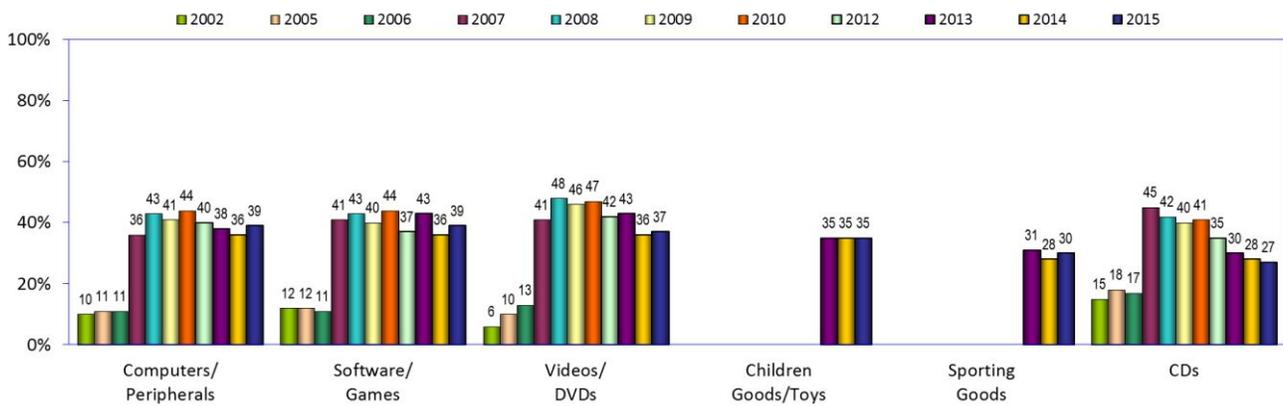
69. Types of online purchases: 2007-2015

Compared to earlier studies, small percentages of Internet buyers reported increases in buying in every category used in the Digital Future study except **books and children's goods** (which have the same percentages as in 2014) and CDs, the only category to decrease in the current study.

A new high was set for gifts (67 percent), electronic goods (57 percent), and products for hobbies (44 percent).



(Q810 U-1a)



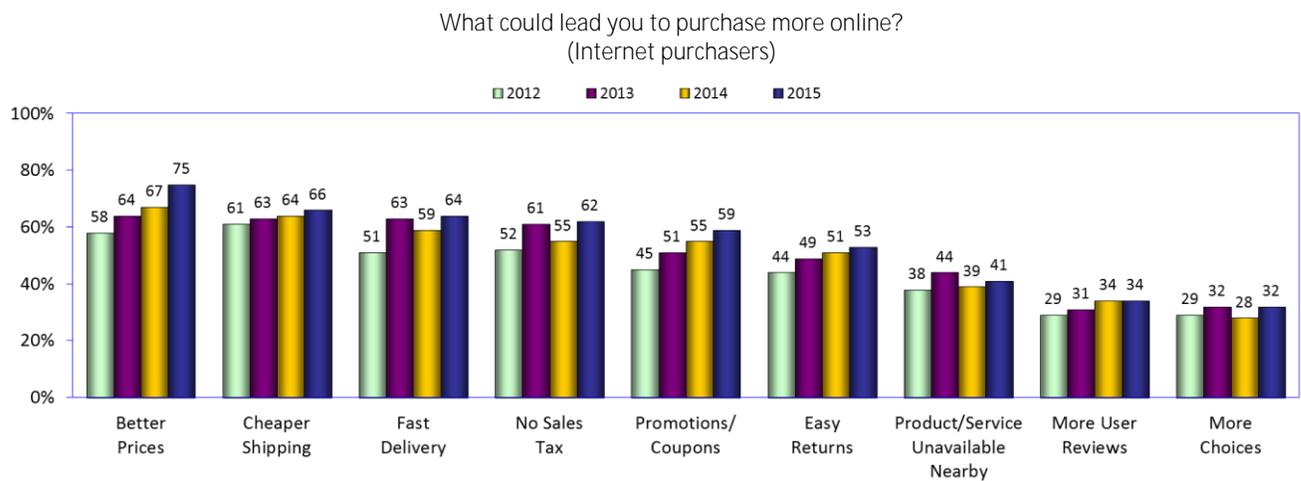
(Q810 U-1b)

## 70. What would lead buyers to make more online purchases?

Better prices, cheaper shipping, and fast delivery have been the most important features that could lead Internet purchasers to buy more online for the last three years of the study. (In 2012, fast delivery was surpassed by no sales tax.)

Three-quarters of Internet purchasers said that better prices would lead them to purchase more online, up from 67 percent and an increase for the third year in a row. Those citing cheaper shipping also increased – now 66 percent, up marginally from 64 percent in 2014 and also the third year of increases. And 64 percent of Internet purchasers said that faster delivery could lead to more online buying, up from 59 percent in the previous study and the highest level to date.

The categories that have seen the greatest increase in responses are: better prices (17 percentage points higher in 2015 than in 2012); fast delivery (13 percentage points higher); promotions/coupons (14 percentage points higher), and no sales tax (10 percentage points higher).

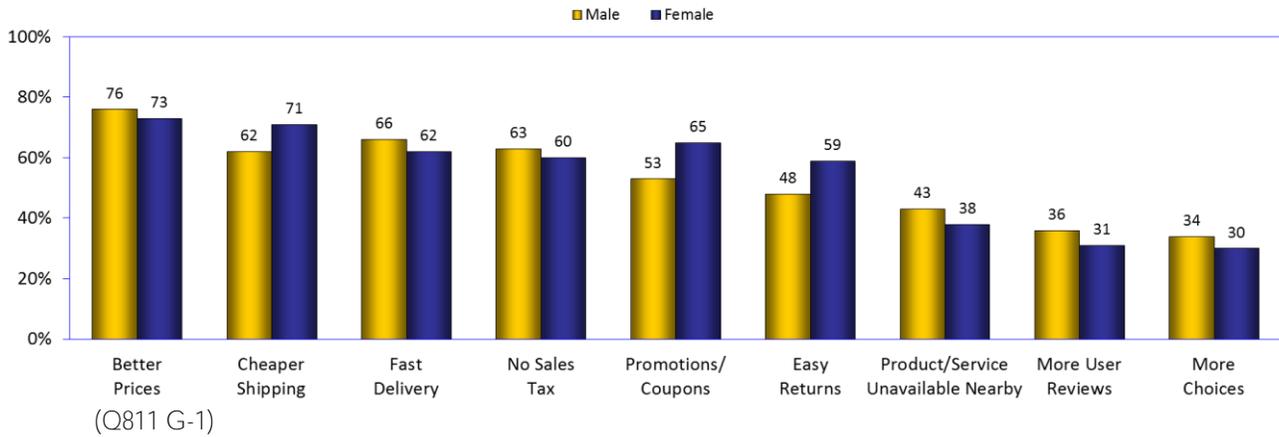


(Q811 U-1)

### 71. What would lead buyers to make more online purchases: men vs. women

Looking at the views among men and women about factors that lead to more online purchasing, more than half of women cited better prices, cheaper shipping, fast delivery, no sales tax, promotions or coupons, and easy returns. More than half of men reported better prices, cheaper shipping, faster delivery, no sales tax, and promotions/coupons as factors that could lead them to purchase more online.

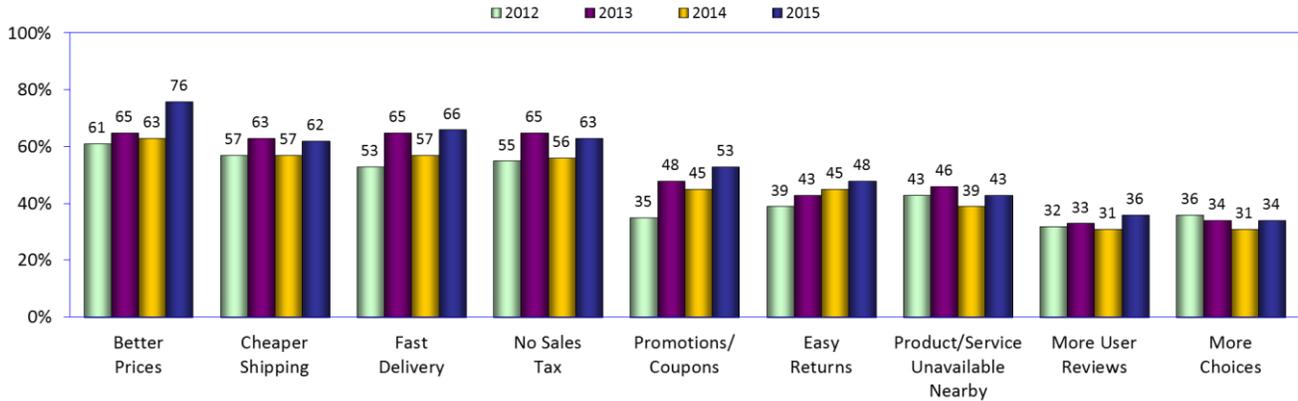
What could lead you to purchase more online?  
(Internet purchasers)



71. What would lead buyers to make more online purchases: men vs. women (continued)

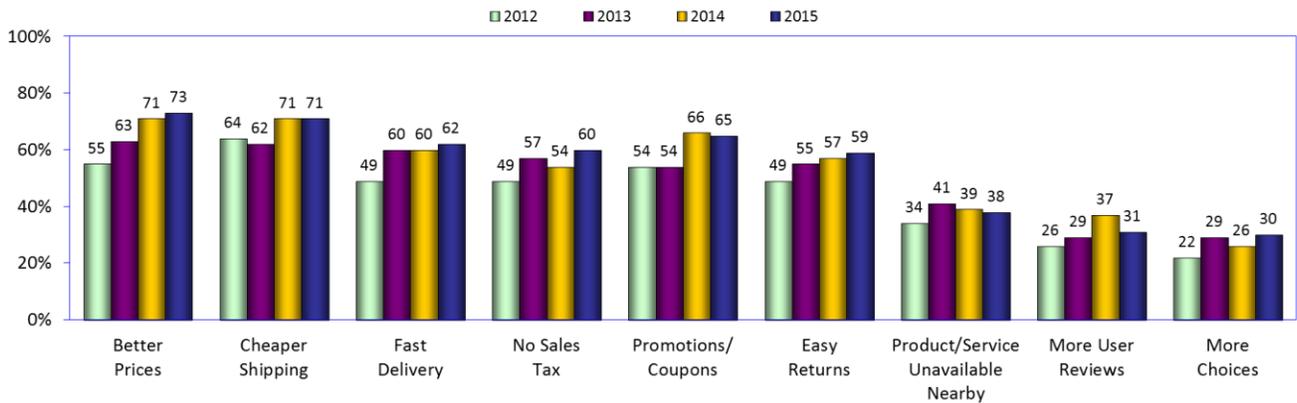
While the views of men about the factors that would lead to more online purchases have remained generally consistent since 2012 (although with some modest increases and decreases in alternate years), generally increasing percentages of women have reported better prices, faster delivery, no sales tax, and easy returns as factors that would increase their online purchases.

What could lead you to purchase more online?  
(Internet purchasers - Male)



(Q811 G-2)

What could lead you to purchase more online?  
(Internet purchasers - Female)

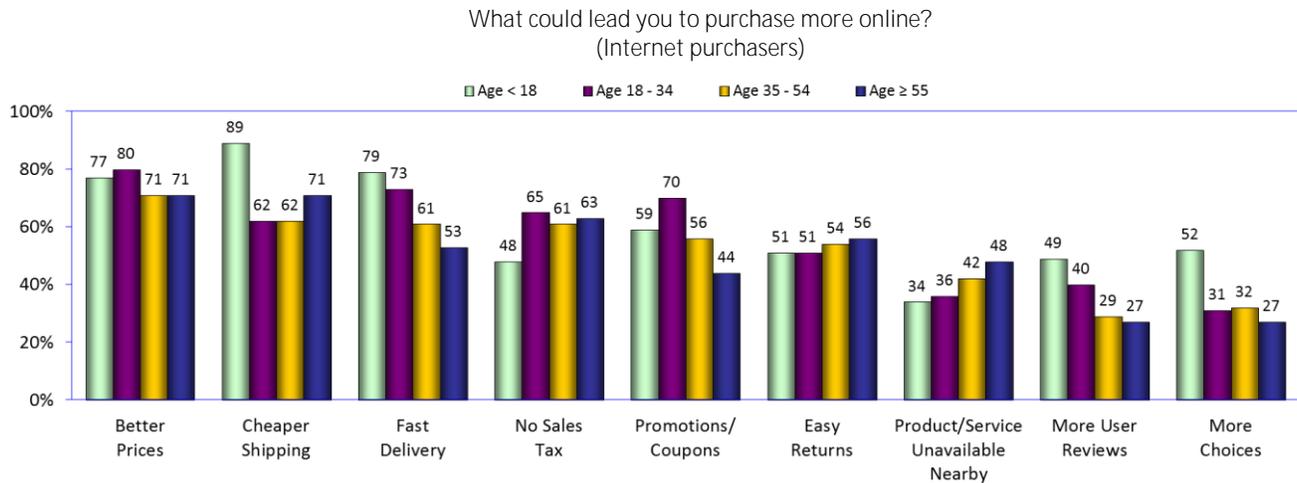


(Q811 G-3)

## 72. What would lead buyers to make more online purchases: by age

Across different age groups, responses in the current study show that with most features, there are generally similar percentages of purchasers reporting reasons that could lead to more purchasing.

However, higher percentages of Internet purchasers under 18 compared to other age ranges cited cheaper shipping, fast delivery, more user reviews, and more choices as reasons that could lead to increased online buying.



(Q811 A-1)

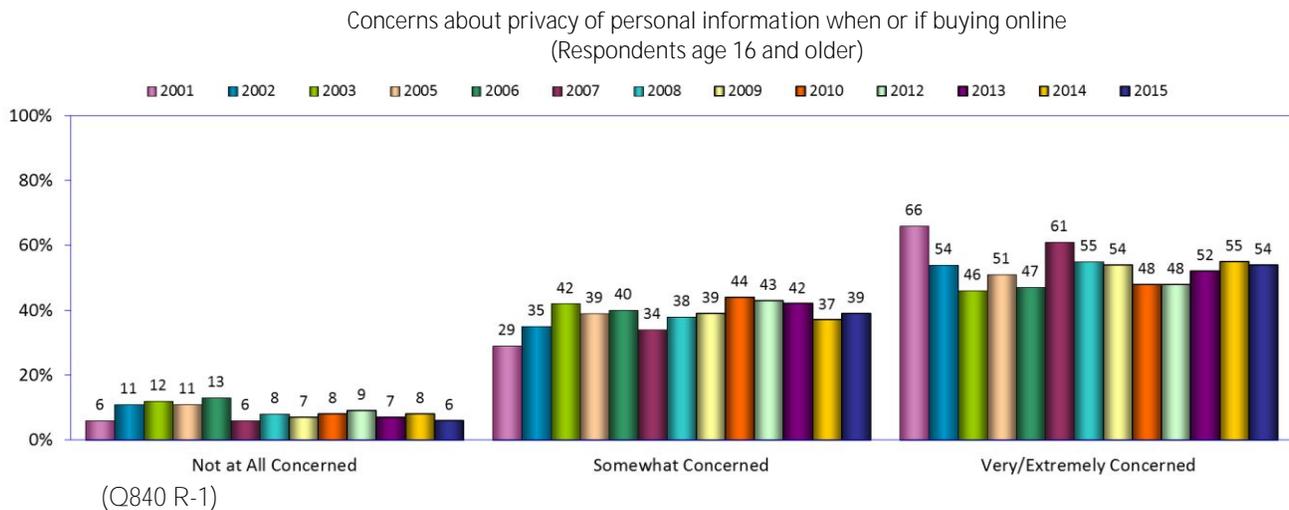
## Buying online: privacy concerns and credit card security

### 73. Privacy concerns when buying online

The percentage of Americans who reported some level of concern about the privacy of personal information when or if they buy online has risen marginally in the current Digital Future study.

Ninety-three percent of respondents age 16 and older expressed some level of concern (somewhat concerned, very concerned, or extremely concerned) about the privacy of their personal information when or if buying online, up from 92 percent in 2014.

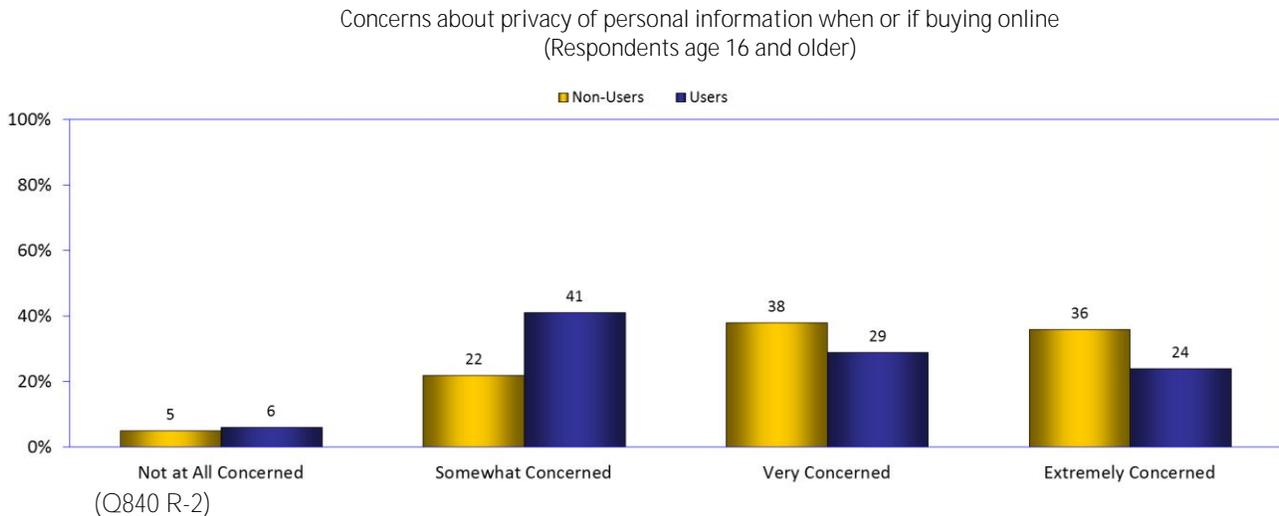
However, respondents reporting the highest levels of concern (very or extremely concerned) decreased marginally to 54 percent, down from 55 percent. Those reporting no concerns dropped again to the previous low mark in the study (six percent).



#### 74. Privacy: comparing concerns among Internet users vs. non-users

Comparing the concerns of users and non-users about the privacy of personal information when or if buying online shows that much larger percentages of non-users express the highest levels of concern.

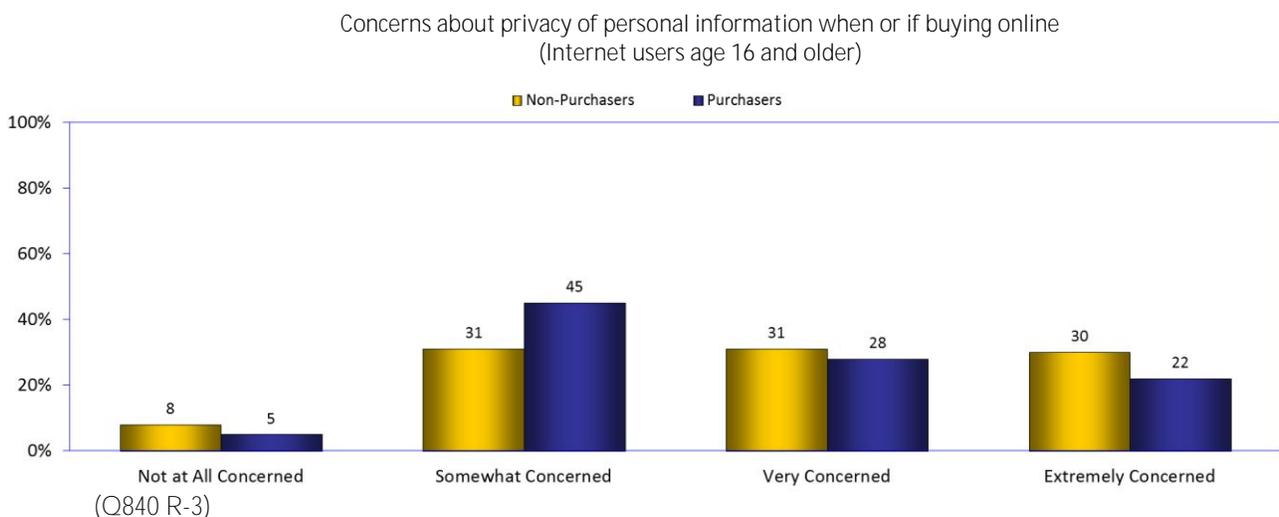
Seventy-four percent of Internet non-users report the highest levels of concern (very concerned or extremely concerned), compared to 53 percent of users. And 41 percent of users are only somewhat concerned, compared to 22 percent of non-users.



#### 75. Privacy concerns (Internet non-purchasers vs. purchasers)

Are Internet users who buy online less concerned about the privacy of personal information than users who do not buy online?

Although almost all Internet users express some level of concern about the privacy of personal information when or if buying online, the current study found lower percentages of purchasers who are very or extremely concerned (50 percent) compared to non-purchasers (61 percent).



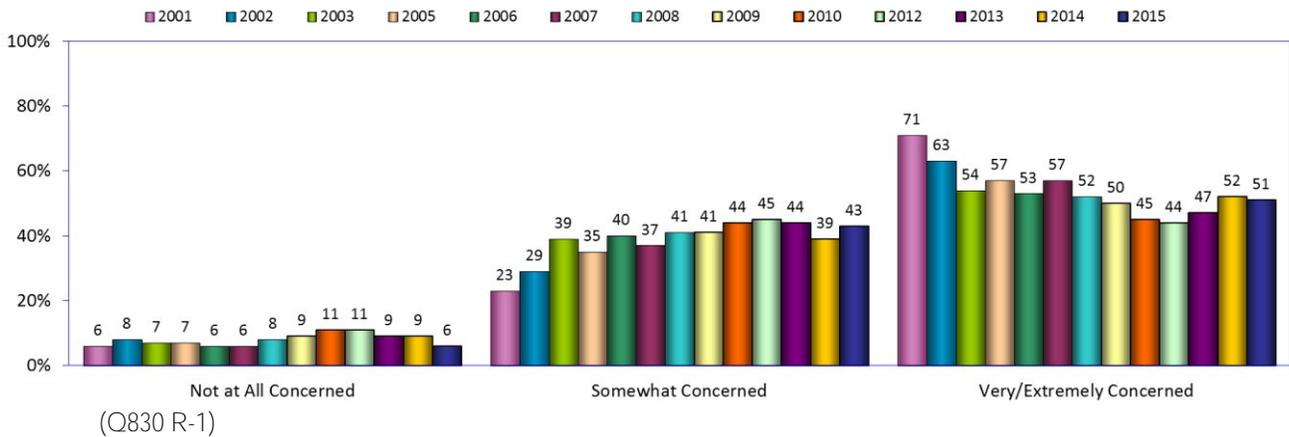
76. Credit card information: concerns about security

Almost all respondents continued to report some concerns about credit card security when or if they buy online, and the current Digital Future study found that the percentage of respondents expressing the highest levels of concern has decreased slightly.

The current study found that 51 percent of respondents age 18 and older who have a credit card are very concerned or extremely concerned about credit card security when or if buying online, down from 52 percent in 2014.

However, the total respondents who express some level of concern has remained generally stable – varying between 89 percent and 94 percent in every year of the study.

How concerned would you be about the security of your credit card or bank card information when or if you ever bought something online? Would you be...?  
(Respondents age 18 and older who have a credit card)

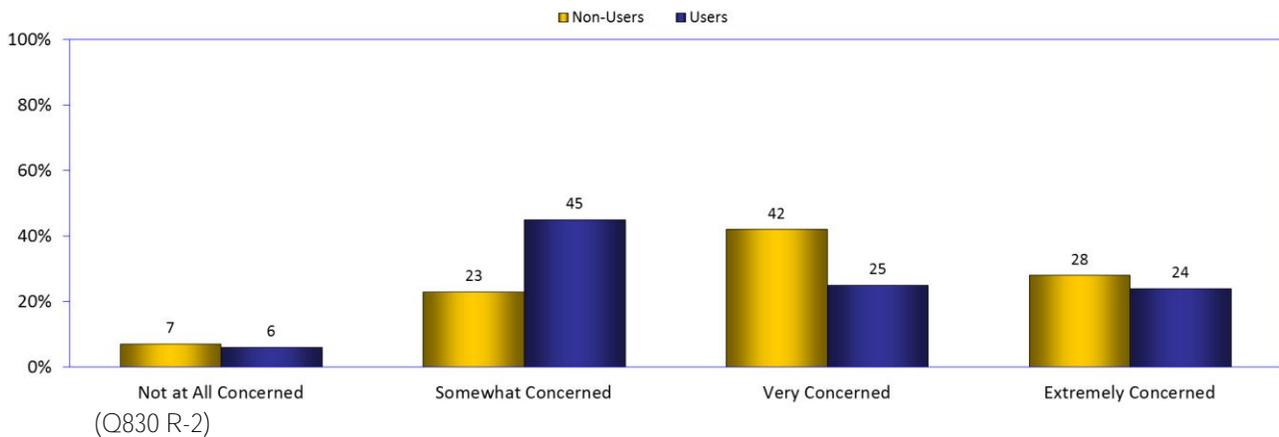


### 77. Credit card security concerns (Internet users vs. non-users)

Non-users express much more concern than users about the security of their credit card information when or if they would ever buy online.

Forty-nine percent of users with a credit card compared to 70 percent of non-users said they would be very concerned or extremely concerned about their card security when or if buying online.

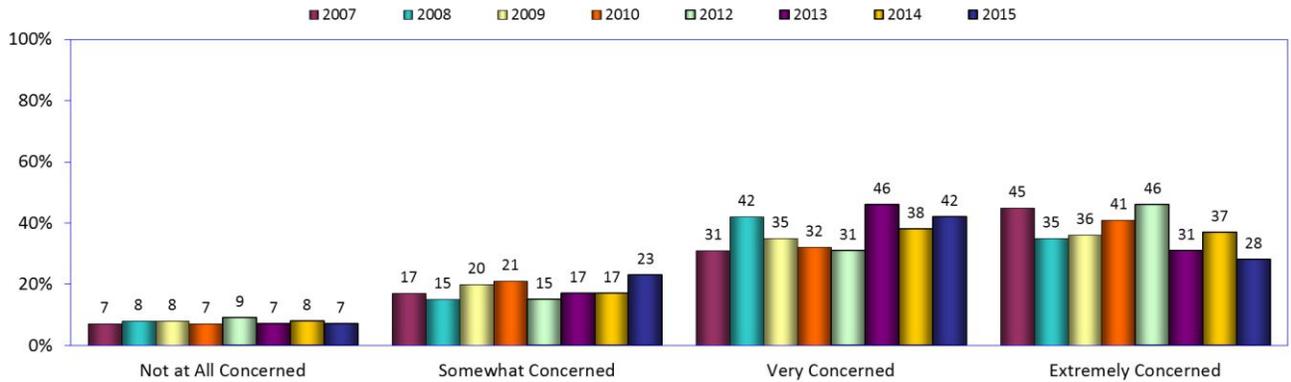
How concerned would you be about the security of your credit card or bank card information when or if you ever bought something online? Would you be...?  
(Respondents age 18 and older who have a credit card)



77. Credit card security concerns (Internet users vs. non-users) (continued)

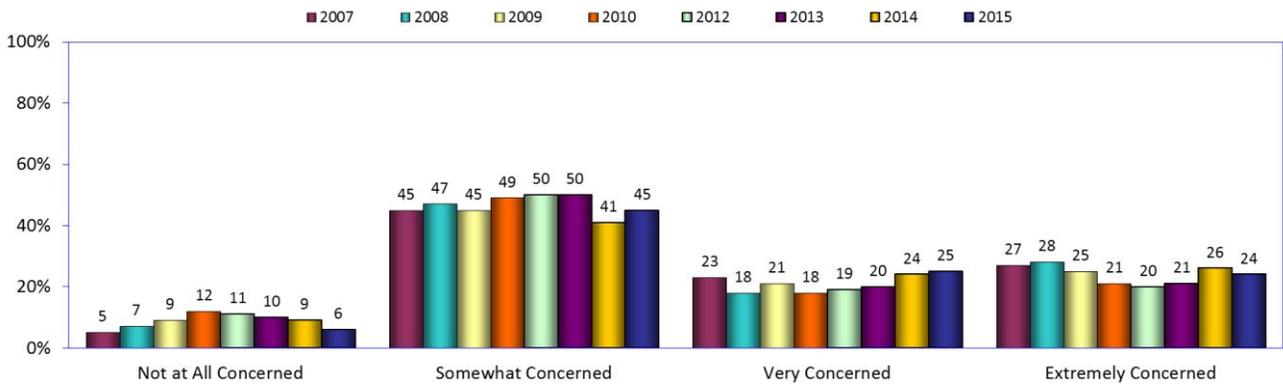
With the exception of a few modest peaks, concerns about credit card security have remained high and generally consistent since these questions were asked in 2007.

How concerned would you be about the security of your credit card or bank card information when or if you ever bought something online? Would you be...?  
(Internet non-users age 18 and older who have a credit card)



(Q830 (N-1))

How concerned would you be about the security of your credit card or bank card information when or if you ever bought something online? Would you be...?  
(Internet users age 18 and older who have a credit card)



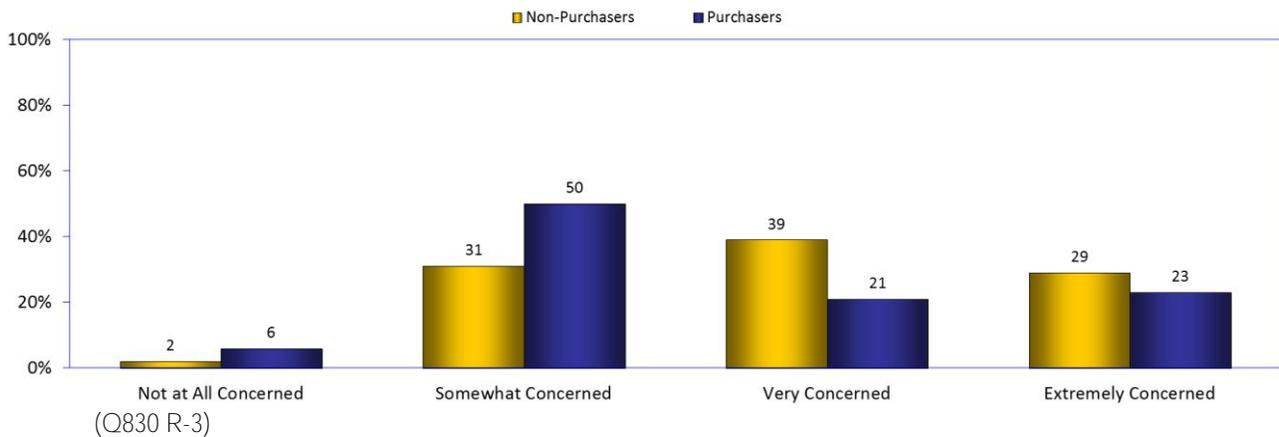
(Q830 (U-1))

### 78. Credit card information concerns (Internet non-purchasers vs. purchasers)

Internet purchasers and non-purchasers report broad differences in the highest levels of concern about their credit card security, with non-purchasers still more concerned.

Forty-four percent of purchasers compared to 68 percent of non-purchasers age 18 and older who have a credit card said they would be very concerned or extremely concerned about credit card security when or if buying online.

How concerned would you be about the security of your credit card or bank card information when or if you ever bought something online? Would you be...?  
(Internet users age 18 and older who have a credit card)



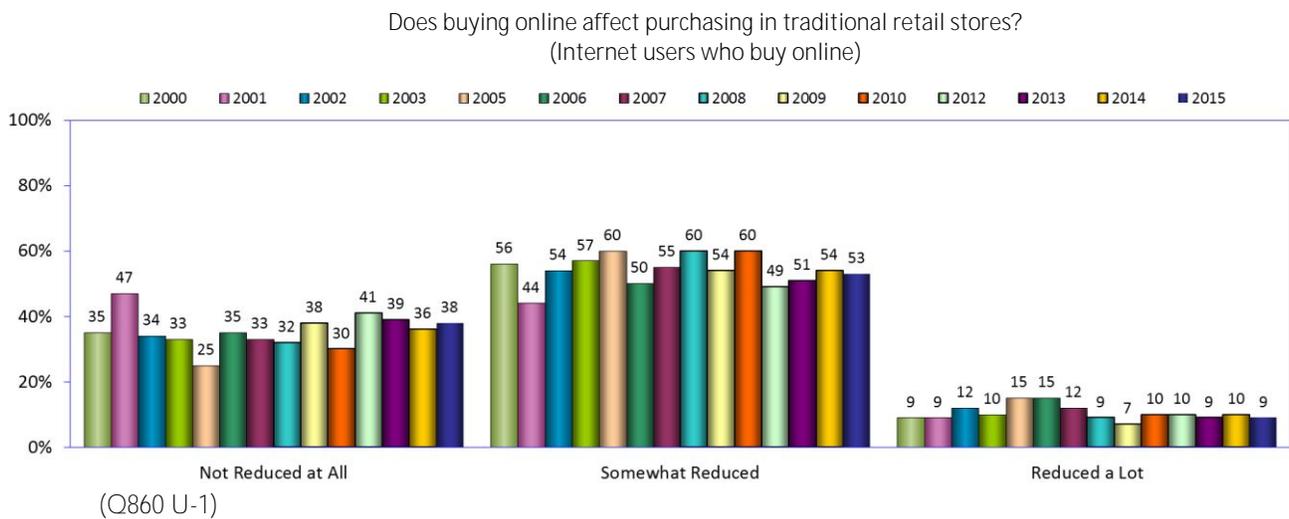
## Buying: online vs. traditional retail stores

### 79. Buying online: effects on traditional retail purchasing

How does buying online affect buying in retail stores?

Sixty-two percent of Internet users who buy online said that their Internet purchasing reduces their retail purchasing somewhat or a lot, down marginally from 64 percent in 2014.

Thirty-eight percent of Internet buyers said their online buying has had no effect on their traditional in-store retail purchasing, a slight increase from 2014.

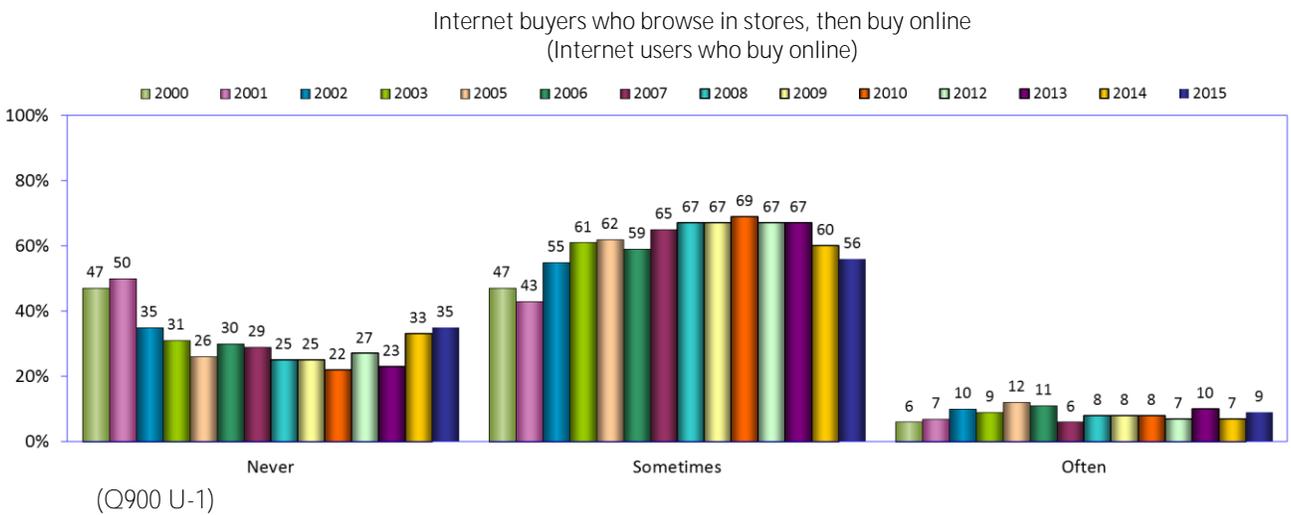
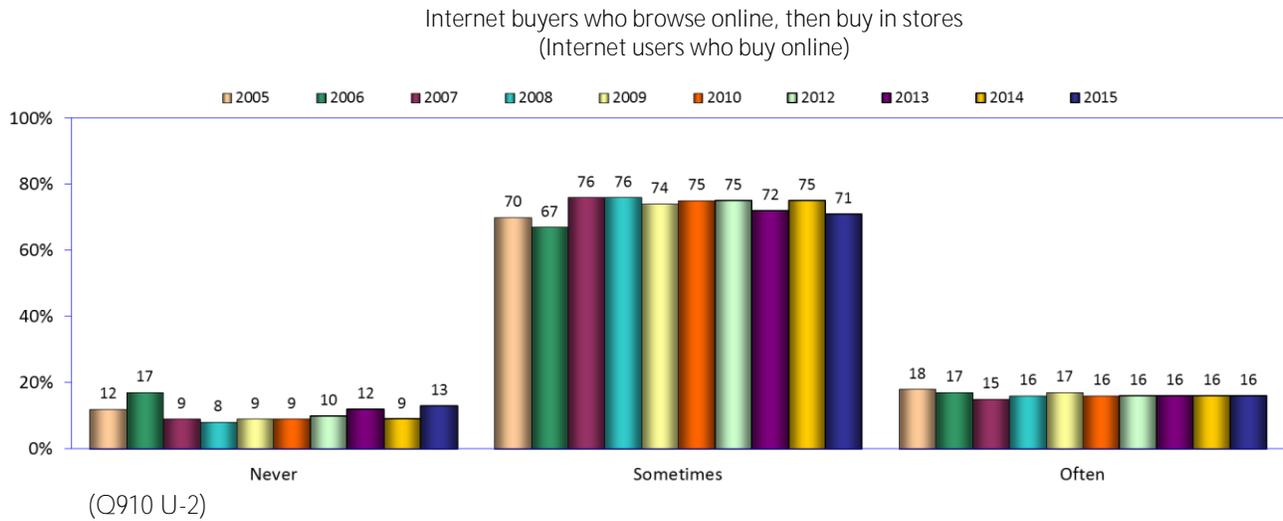


80. Browsing and buying products: retail stores vs. the Internet

Large percentages of users who buy online will sometimes or often browse on the Internet and then buy in stores, while smaller percentages browse in stores then buy online.

Eighty-seven percent of those who purchase on the Internet said that they sometimes or often browse online and then buy in traditional retail stores, down from 91 percent who reported that response in 2014.

Sixty-five percent of users said they browse in stores and then buy online, down from the 67 percent reported in 2014 and 77 percent reported in 2013.

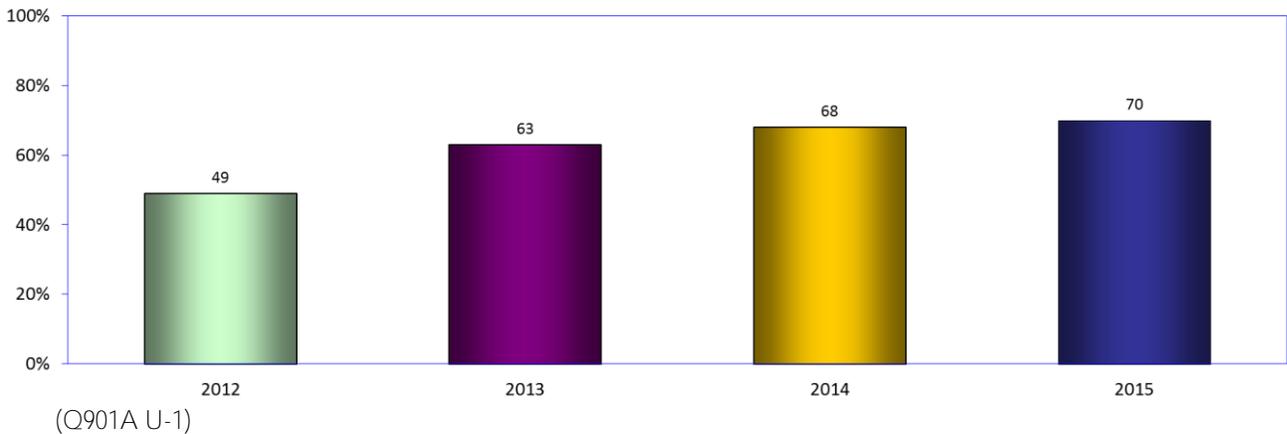


### 81. Browsing and price-comparing in stores and online with a mobile device

Growing numbers of respondents are going online with a mobile device while in a store to conduct on-the-spot price comparisons.

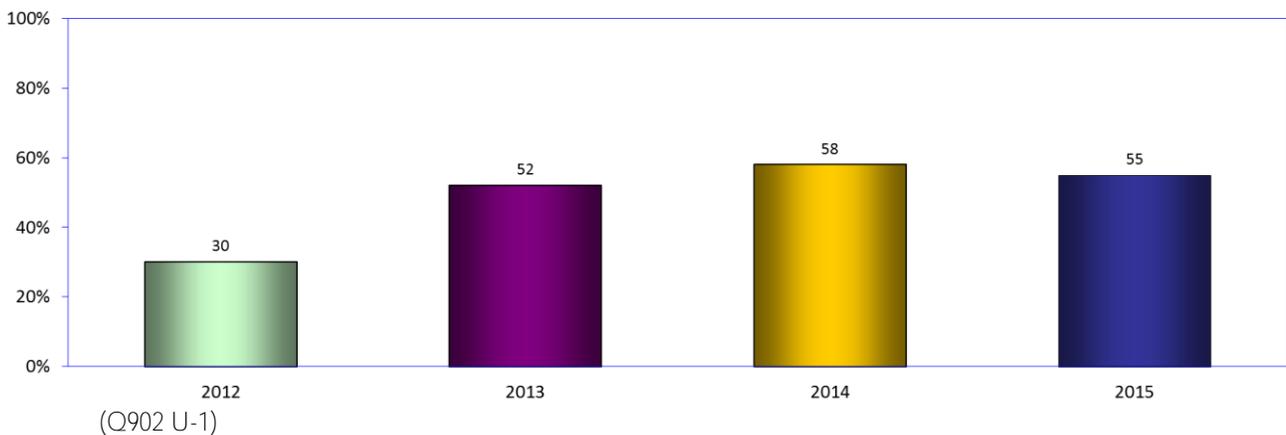
In the current study, 70 percent of online purchasers who browse locally but buy online said they have compared prices on a mobile device while in a store to see if there is a better deal available on the Internet, up from 68 percent in 2014, and 21 percentage points higher than in 2012.

Have you ever done a price comparison on your mobile device while in the store to find if there is a better deal available online?  
(Online purchasers who browse for products in local stores but purchase online)



Fifty-five percent of users said they have used a mobile device while in a store to determine if a better deal was available at another store nearby – down from 58 percent in 2014 but 25 percentage points higher than when this question was first asked in 2012.

Have you ever done a price comparison on your mobile device while in the store to find if there is a better deal available at some store nearby?  
(Internet users)

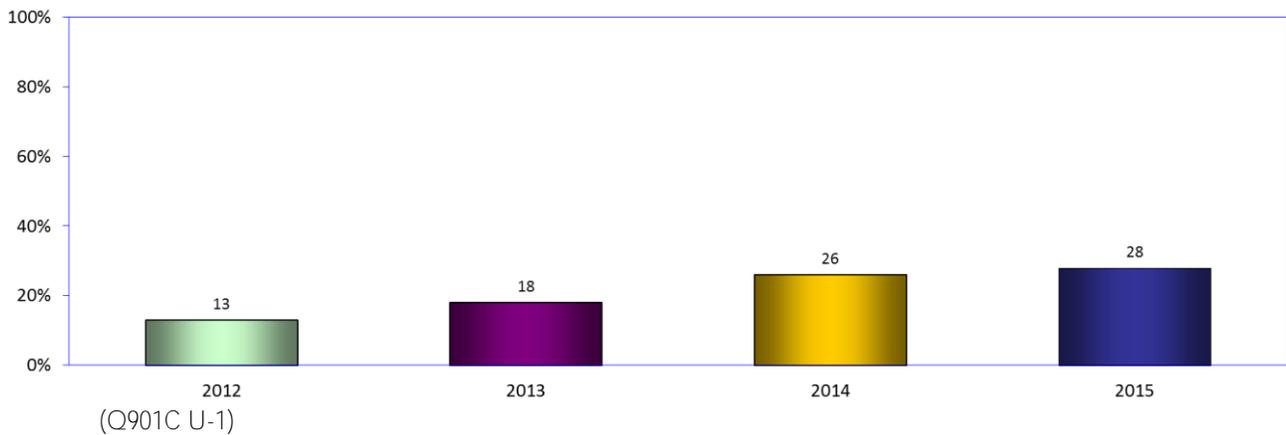


## 82. Browsing in stores and buying online on-the-spot with a mobile device

Do online purchasers who browse in local stores buy products online while in a traditional retail store?

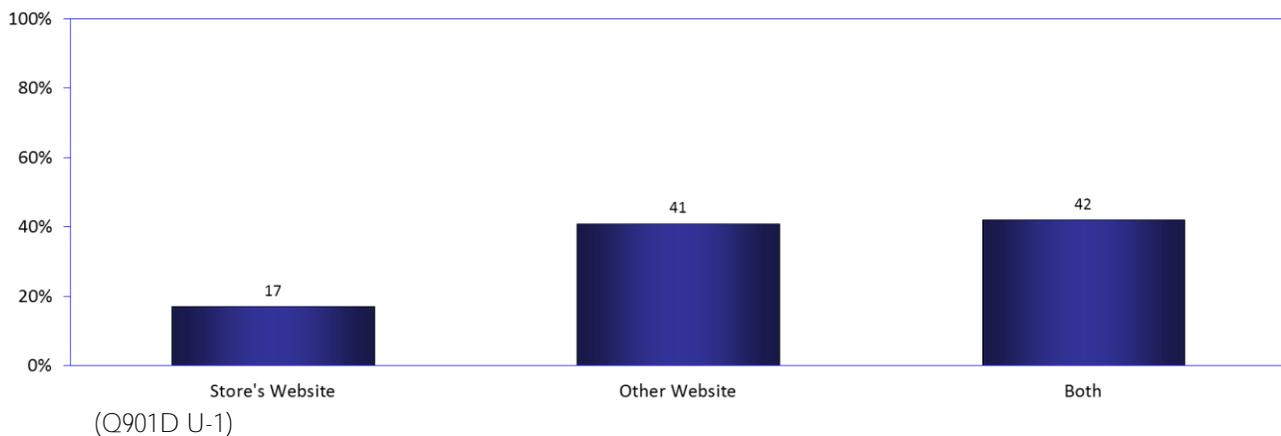
Twenty-eight percent of online purchasers who browse locally but purchase online said they have purchased a product online with a mobile device while in a store – up from 26 percent in 2014 and more than double the response reported in 2012.

Have you ever purchased a product online on your mobile device while in the store?  
(Online purchasers who browse for products in local stores but purchase online)



For forty-one percent of these purchases, the buyers have used **another retailer's website**, while 42 percent have ordered from both the store and another retailer's website.

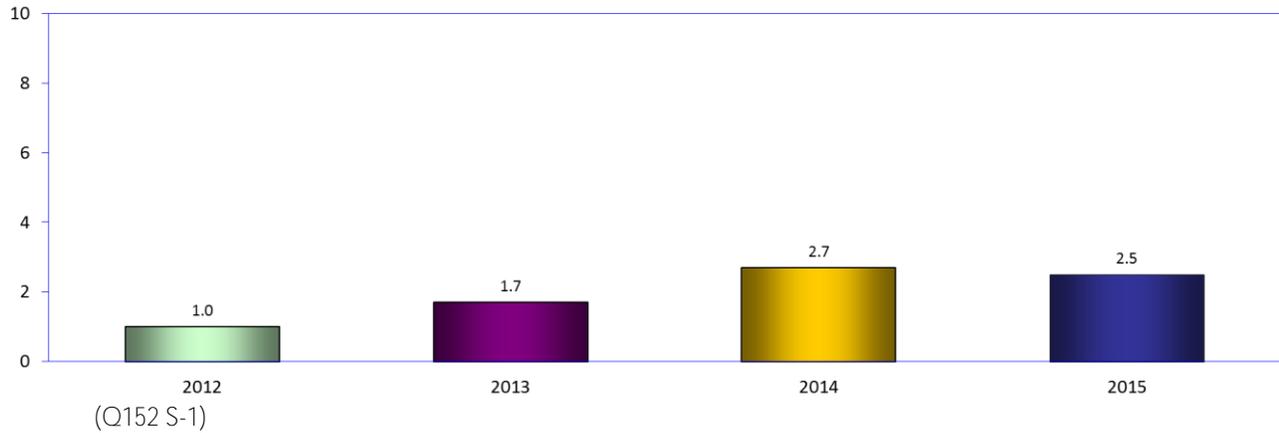
Was the purchase from the store's web site or from another online retailer?  
(Online purchasers who have purchased a product online on a mobile device while in the store)



### 83. Using smartphones to buy products

How often do smartphone owners use their phone for purchasing? In the current study, smartphone users buy products with their phones slightly less frequently (2.5 times a month) than in 2014 (2.7 times a month).

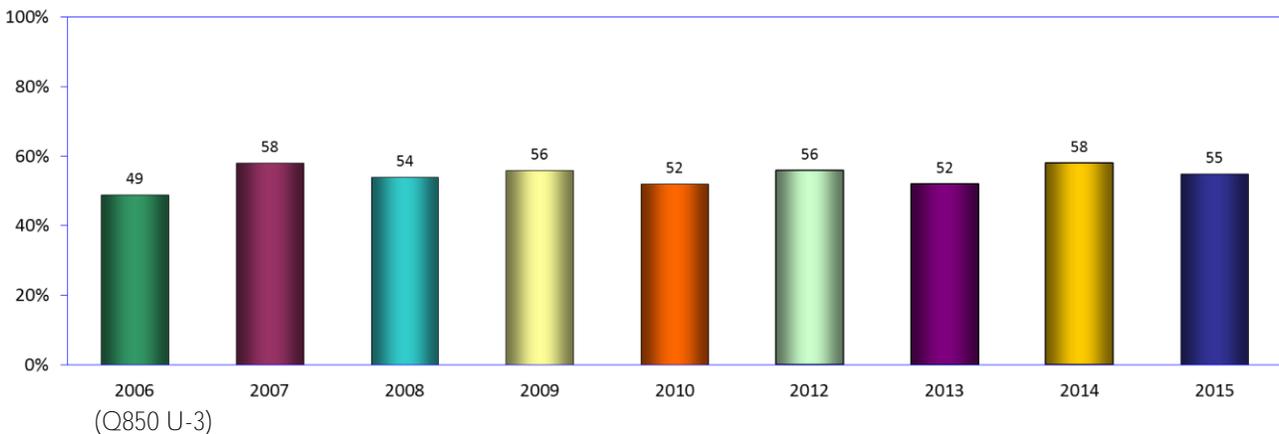
How many times per month on average do you use your smartphone to buy products?  
(Smartphone users)



### 84. Views about shopping online (product quality)

More than half of Internet users continue to agree that judging product quality or the product descriptions is difficult when shopping online – currently 55 percent, down from 58 percent in 2014.

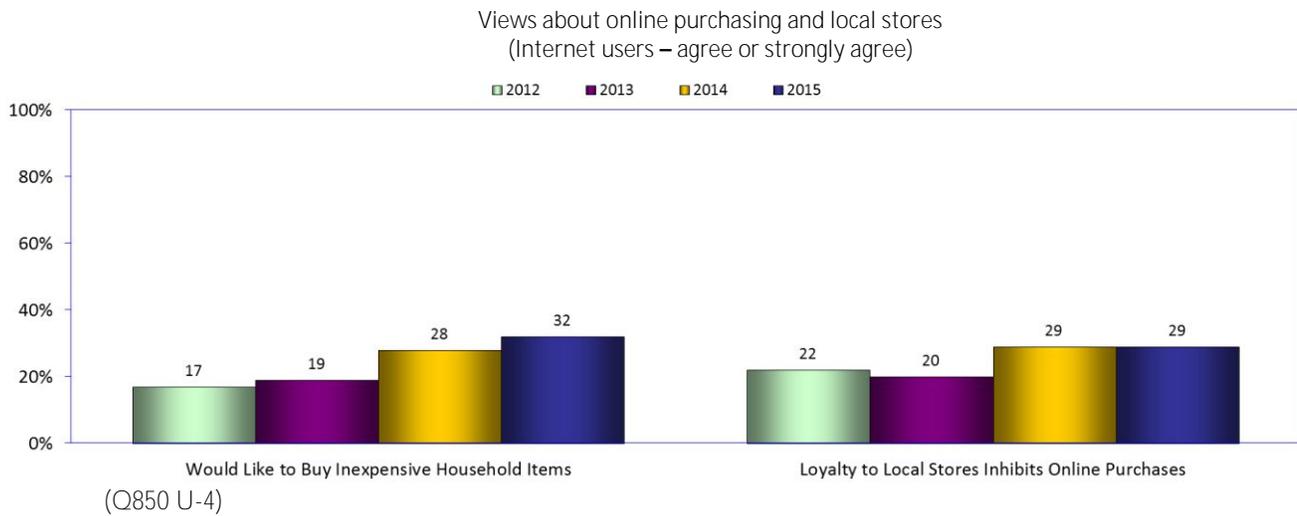
It is difficult to assess product quality or accuracy of product descriptions when shopping online  
(Internet users – agree or strongly agree)



### 85. Views about shopping online

A growing percentage of Internet users said they would like to buy inexpensive household items online – now 32 percent, an increase for the third straight year.

On the other hand, a steady percentage of Internet users – 29 percent – also agree or strongly agree that loyalty to local stores inhibits their online purchases.



## Communication patterns

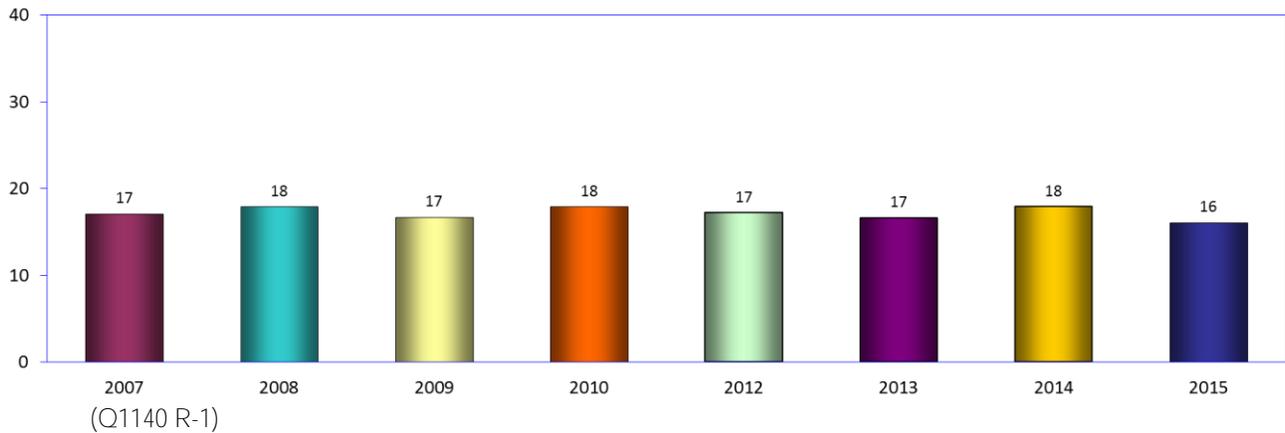
|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Users who said the Internet is important or very important for maintaining social relationships         | 60% |
| Mobile phone users who said texting is important or very important for maintaining social relationships | 65% |
| Average number of friends met in person whom they originally met online                                 | 3.7 |
| Internet users who have been bullied or harassed online   | 15% |
| Users who have received unwanted sexual attention online  | 23% |

86. Time spent socializing face-to-face with family

The amount of time that respondents spend socializing face-to-face with their families has remained generally stable since 2005, averaging about 17 hours per week.

In the current Digital Future study, respondents report a smaller amount of time socializing face-to-face with their family – now 16.1 hours per week, down from 17.9 hours in 2014, and the lowest amount reported thus far in the studies.

During a typical week, how many hours do you spend socializing face-to-face with your family?  
(All respondents)

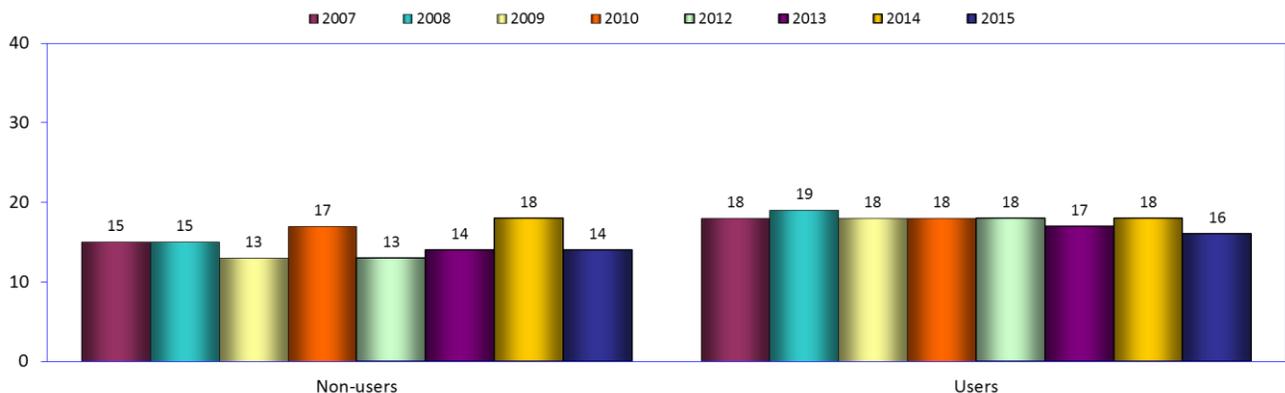


87. Time spent socializing with family: comparing Internet users vs. non-users

Internet users in the Digital Future studies generally report spending more time than non-users socializing face-to-face with their families. In the current study, Internet users reported spending two hours more per week socializing face-to-face with their families compared to non-users (however, the 16 hours per week that users reported socializing face-to-face with family each week represents the lowest number reported so far in the studies).

In 2015, both users and non-users reported spending less time face-to-face with their families compared to the year before.

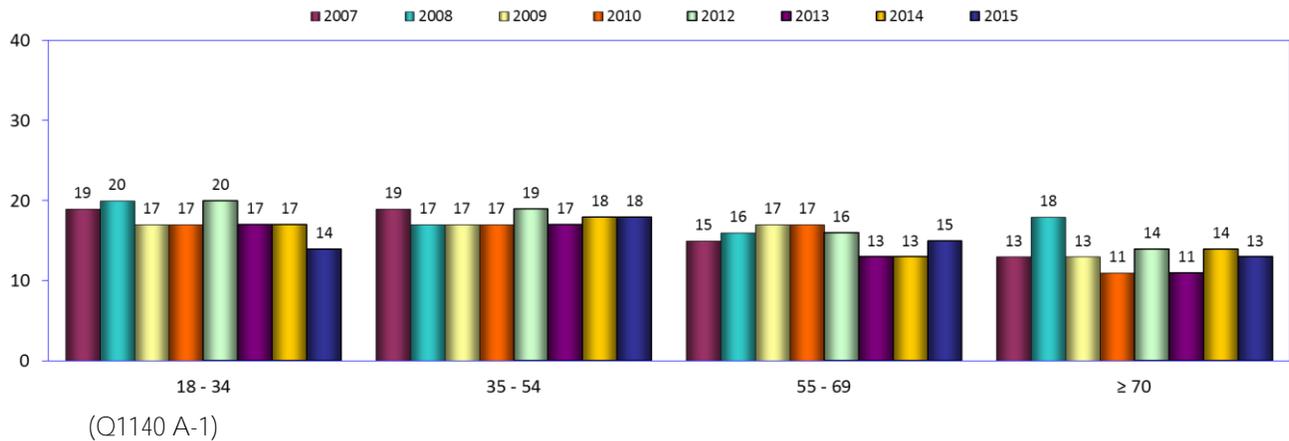
During a typical week, how many hours do you spend socializing face-to-face with your family?  
(All respondents)



88. Time spent socializing with family: Internet users by age

Internet users of all ages in the Digital Future said they spend about the same amount of time socializing face-to-face with their families as in previous years. For the third year in a row, users 35-54 spent the most time face-to-face with their family (18 hours per week). The lowest figure was reported by users age 70 or older (13 hours per week).

During a typical week, how many hours do you spend socializing face-to-face with your family?  
(Internet users age 18 and over)

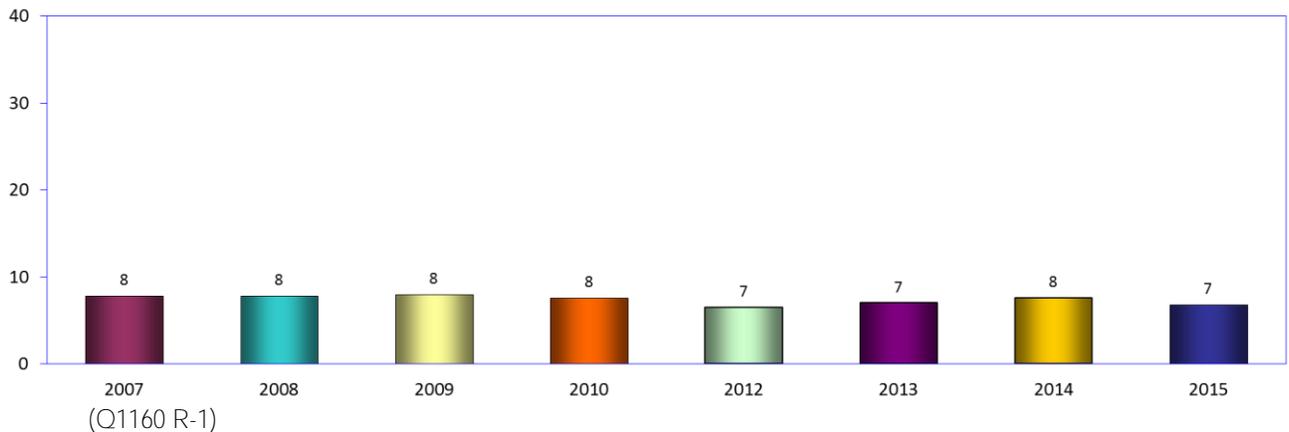


89. Time spent socializing face-to-face with friends

As with time spent socializing with family (see page 92), respondents have reported generally consistent amounts of time spent socializing face-to-face with friends outside of school or the office in most years in the Digital Future studies.

In the current study, respondents said they spend an average of seven hours each week socializing face-to-face with friends, down from eight hours reported in 2014.

During a typical week, how many hours do you spend socializing face-to-face with your friends  
(outside school/outside office hours)?  
(All respondents)

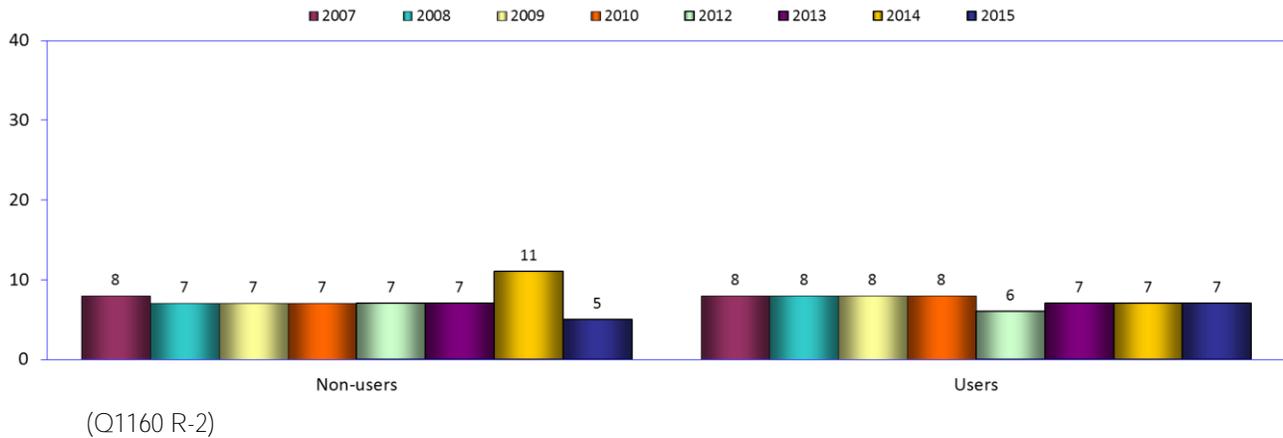


90. Time spent socializing face-to-face with friends: Internet users vs. non-users

Users and non-users in most years of the Digital Future studies report socializing face-to-face about the same amount of time with friends.

In the current study, non-users report socializing face-to-face with friends an average of five hours weekly, down from 11 hours in 2014. Users have reported seven hours per week, the same number of hours since 2013.

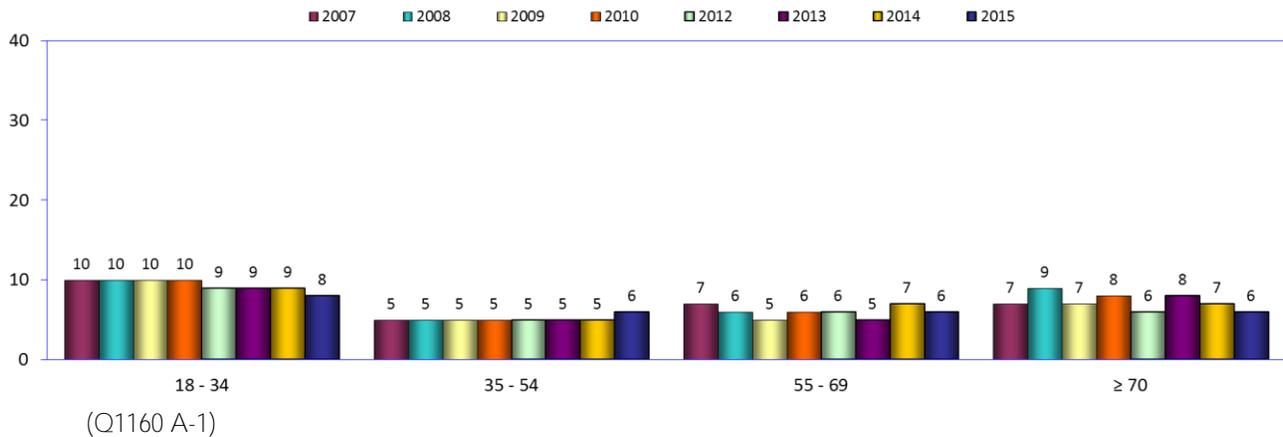
During a typical week, how many hours do you spend socializing face-to-face with your friends (outside school/outside office hours)? (All respondents)



91. Time spent socializing face-to-face with friends: Internet users by age

Internet users of all ages in the Digital Future studies spend about the same amount of time socializing face-to-face with friends. In every year, users 18-34 spend the most amount of time face-to-face with their friends (8 hours per week in the current study). For the first time, the remaining age groups all report spending the same amount of time face-to-face with friends (six hours per week).

During a typical week, how many hours do you spend socializing face-to-face with your friends (outside school/outside office hours)? (Internet users age 18 and over)

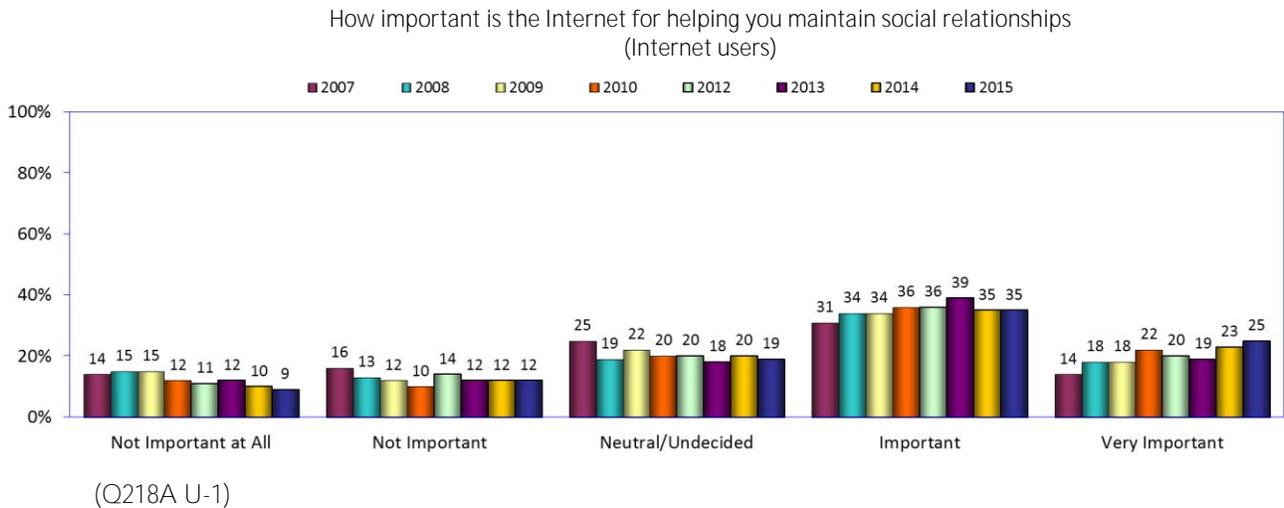


92. The Internet and social relationships

A large percentage of Internet users said that going online helps them maintain social relationships.

That number – 60 percent in the current study – is up from 58 percent in 2014 and the highest level reported in the studies.

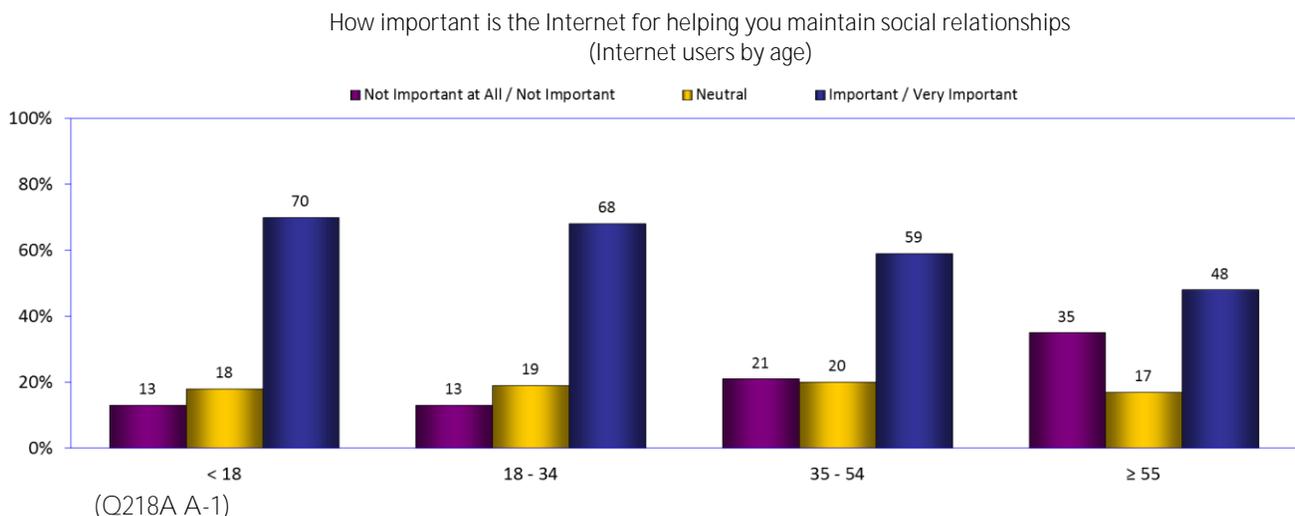
Twenty-one percent said that the Internet has no importance in maintaining their social relationships – down from 22 percent in 2014 and the lowest level so far in the Digital Future studies.



93. The Internet and social relationships (by age)

The Internet is considered important for maintaining social relationships by users of all ages, but that view becomes less pronounced as age increases.

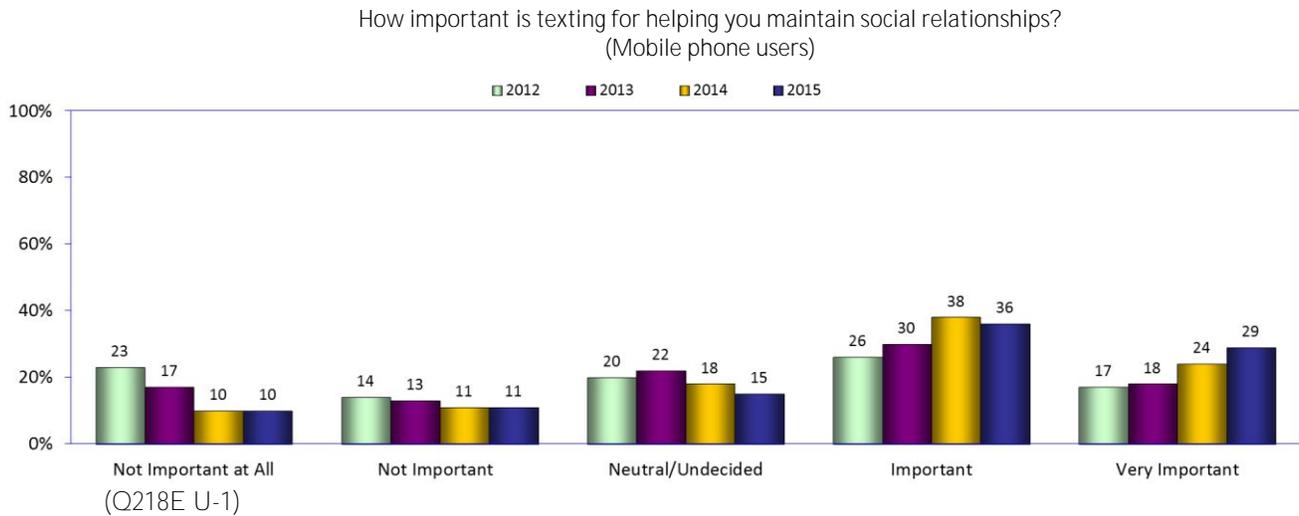
The percentage of those who consider the Internet important or very important for social relationships is highest among users who are less than 18 (70 percent), followed by those age 18-34 (68 percent). Somewhat smaller percentages of users ages 35-54 (59 percent) and age 55 and older (48 percent) said the Internet was important or very important for social relationships.



## 95. Texting and social relationships

A large and growing percentage of mobile phone users – 65 percent in the current study – said that texting is important or very important for them in maintaining social relationships, an increase from 62 percent in 2014.

Only 21 percent of mobile phone users said texting is not important for maintaining their social relationships – the same as in 2014.

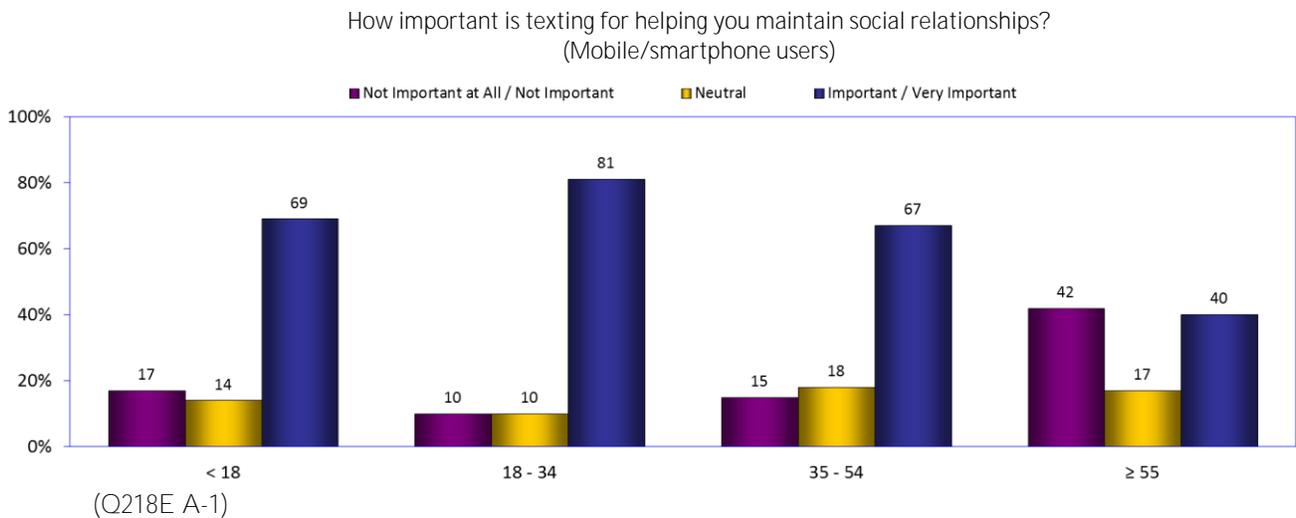


95. Importance of texting to maintain social relationships (by age)

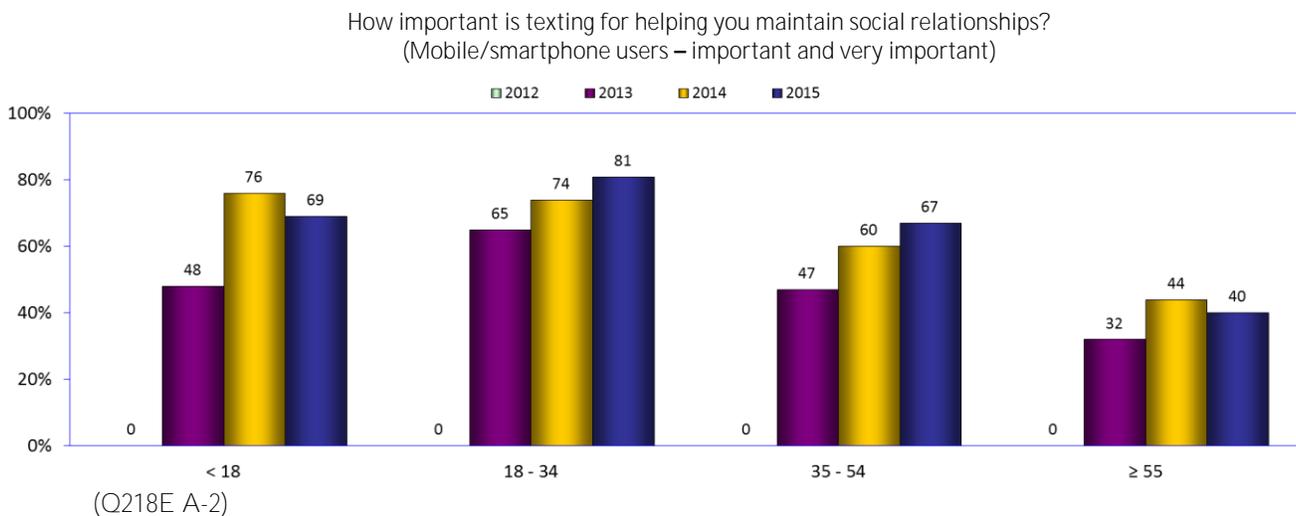
As with views about the importance of the Internet for maintaining social relationships (see page 95), larger percentages of younger users compared to older users consider texting important to maintaining social relationships.

Eighty-one percent of users age 18-34 said that texting is important or very important in maintaining social relationships, up appreciably from the 74 percent reported in 2014. And more than two-thirds of smartphone users under 18 (69 percent) said that texting is important or very important in maintaining social relationships – down from 76 percent in 2014.

Many older smartphone users also said that texting is important for their social relationships: 67 percent of smartphone users age 35-54, up from 60 percent in 2014; and 40 percent of smartphone users age 55 and older, down from 44 percent in 2014).



Since 2012, steadily growing percentages of smartphone users age 18-34 and 35-54 said that texting helps maintain social relationships.

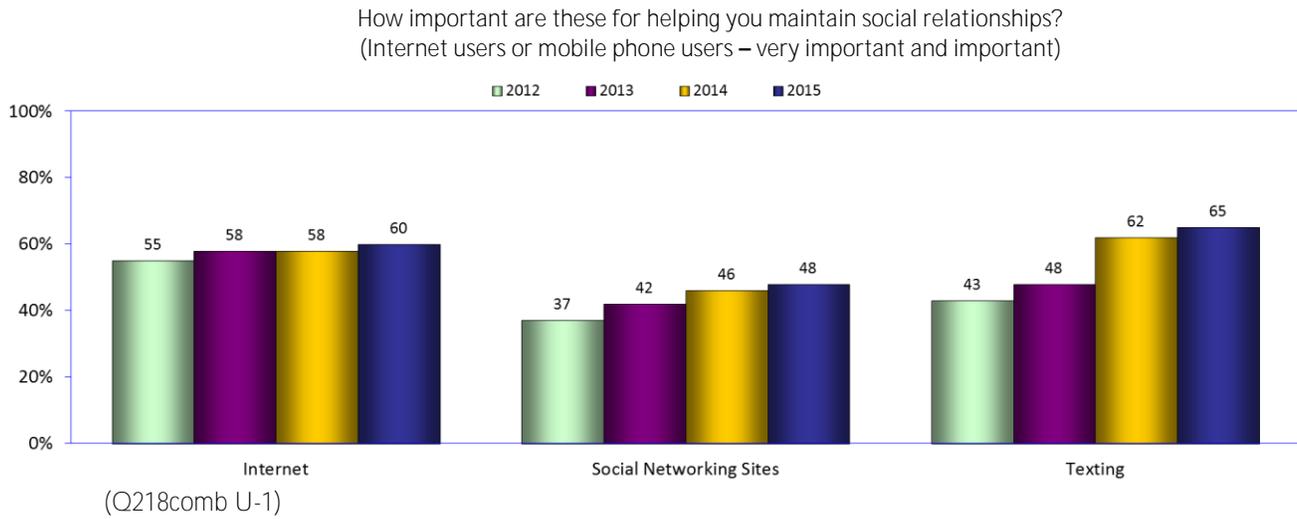


## 96. The Internet, social networking sites, and texting in maintaining social relationships (at-a-glance)

Comparing responses in the four most recent years of Digital Future studies shows substantial and growing percentages of users who consider texting important or very important for maintaining social relationships.

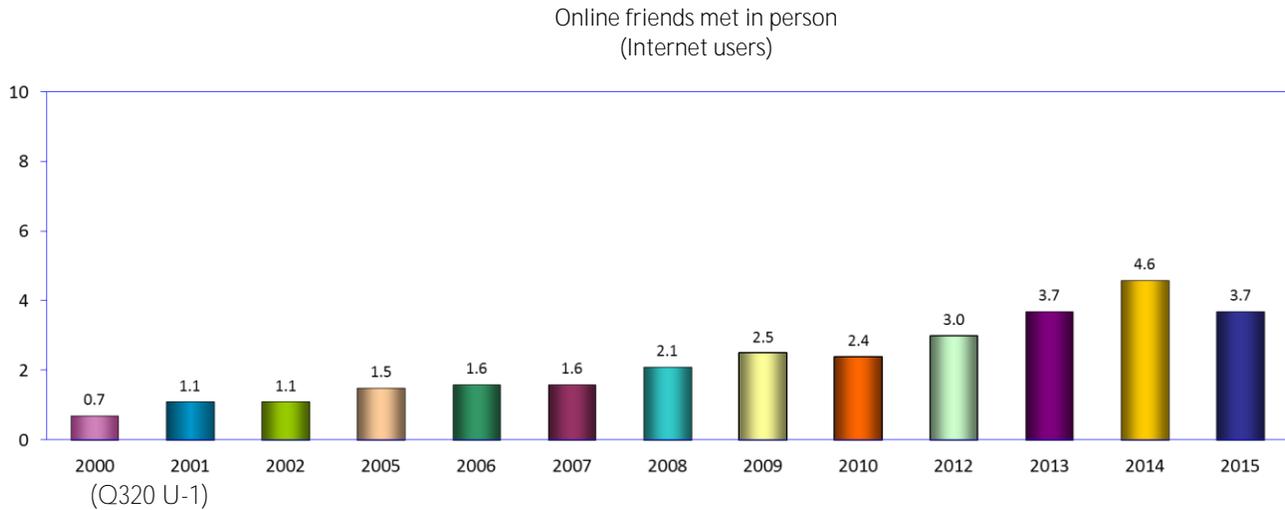
Using the Internet is important to a large and generally steady percentage of users for maintaining social relationships – now 60 percent – while lower but growing percentages of users said social networking sites are important for maintaining social relationships (48 percent in the current study).

For the third year in a row, a growing percentage of Internet users said that texting is important or very important – now 65 percent, up from 43 percent in 2012.



97. Friends met online, then met in person

The average number of online friends met in person dropped from the peak of 4.6 in 2014. In the current study, users reported having met in person 3.7 of their online friends, matching the level in 2013.

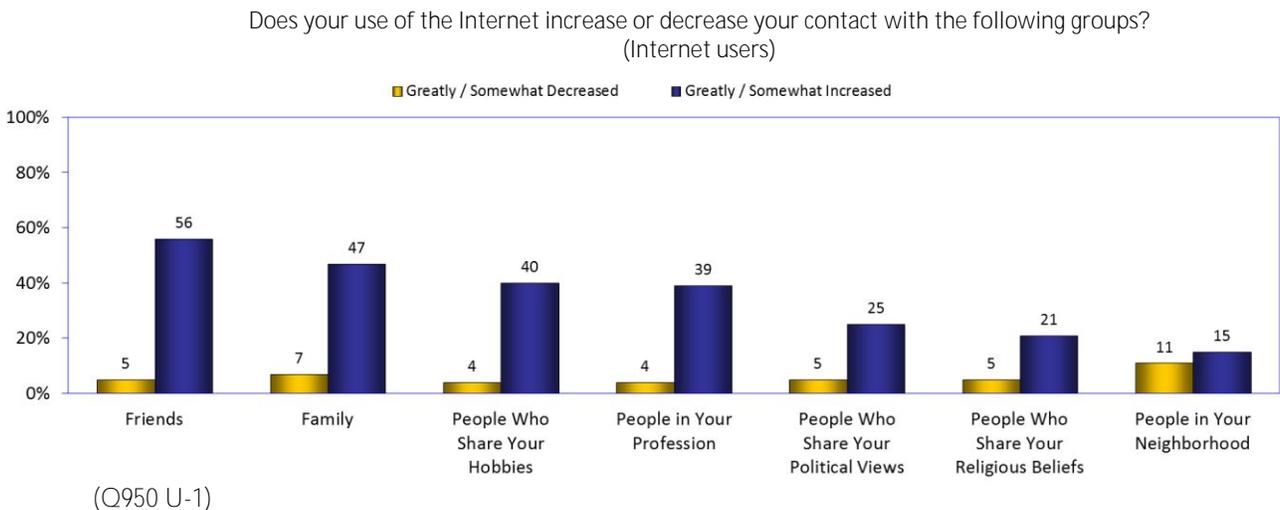


98. The Internet’s effects on social contact

In most instances, much higher percentages of Internet users said that going online has increased their contact with family, friends, and key social groups, compared to those who said that contact decreased.

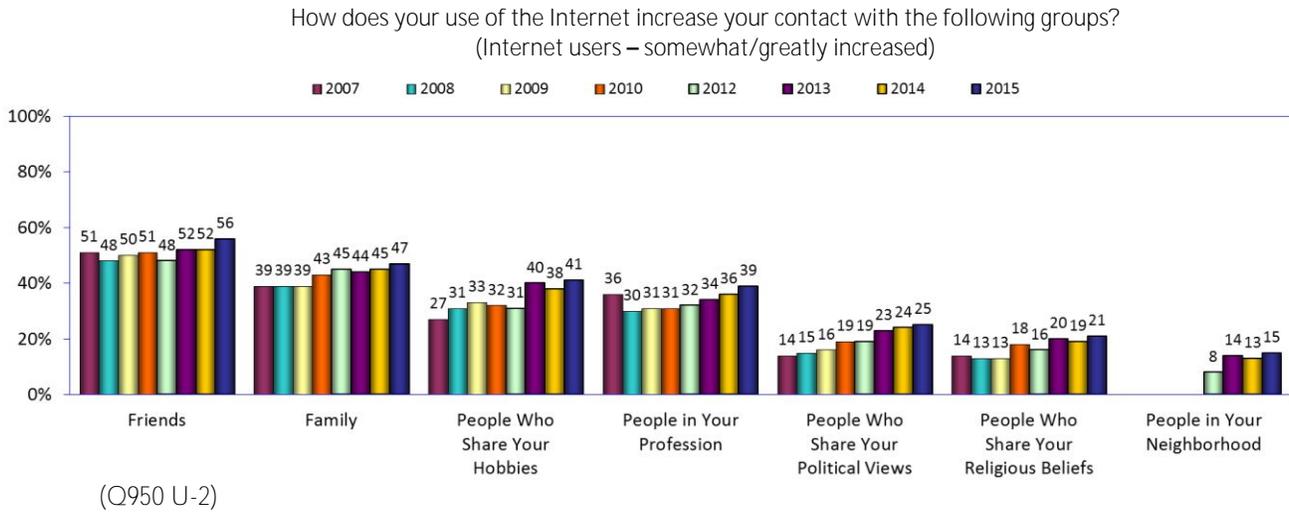
The largest percentages of increased contact were reported by users who said the Internet somewhat or greatly increased their contact with friends (56 percent) and family (47 percent). Other large percentages were reported by users who said the Internet increased their contact with people who share their hobbies (40 percent), and people in their profession (39 percent).

Less than 10 percent of users in six of the seven categories said that the Internet decreased their contact with family, friends, and key social groups; the only exception was decreased contact with people in the users’ neighborhoods – reported by 11 percent.



99. **The Internet's effects on social contact:** 2007-2015

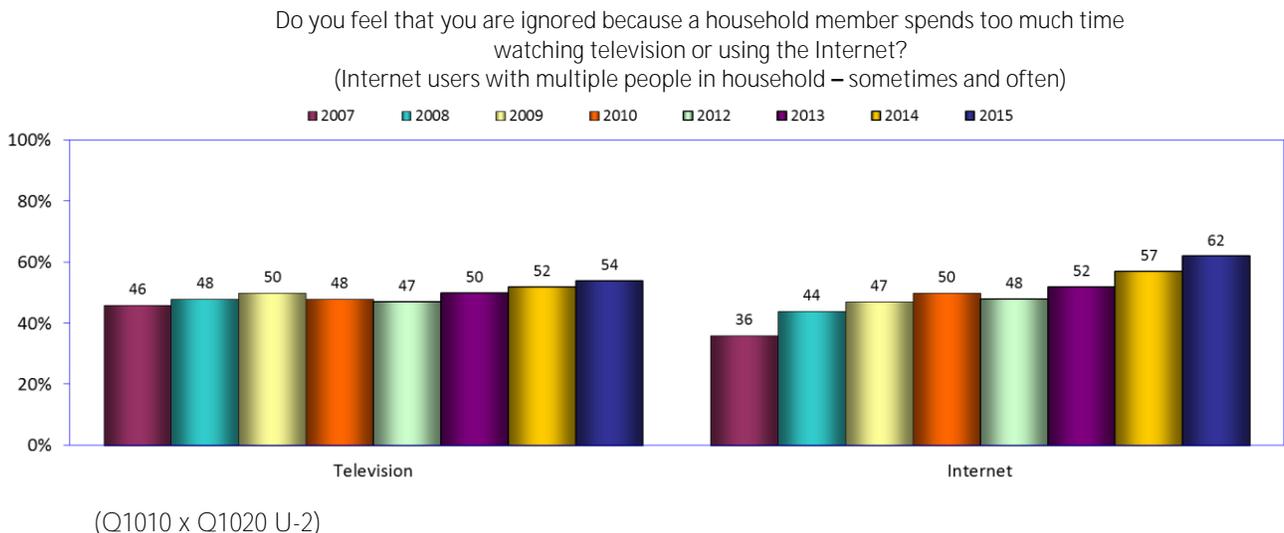
Comparing the effects of Internet use on social contact since 2007 shows upward trends in contact with all groups across the board.



100. Are you ignored because of television or the Internet?

Sixty-two percent of Internet users said they are sometimes or often ignored because another member of the household spends too much time online – up from 57 percent in 2014, and now the peak level in the Digital Future studies (five percentage points above the previous high mark).

The percentage of users who said they were ignored by a household member who spends too much time watching television increased to 54 percent, up from 52 percent in 2014 and also a high level for the studies.

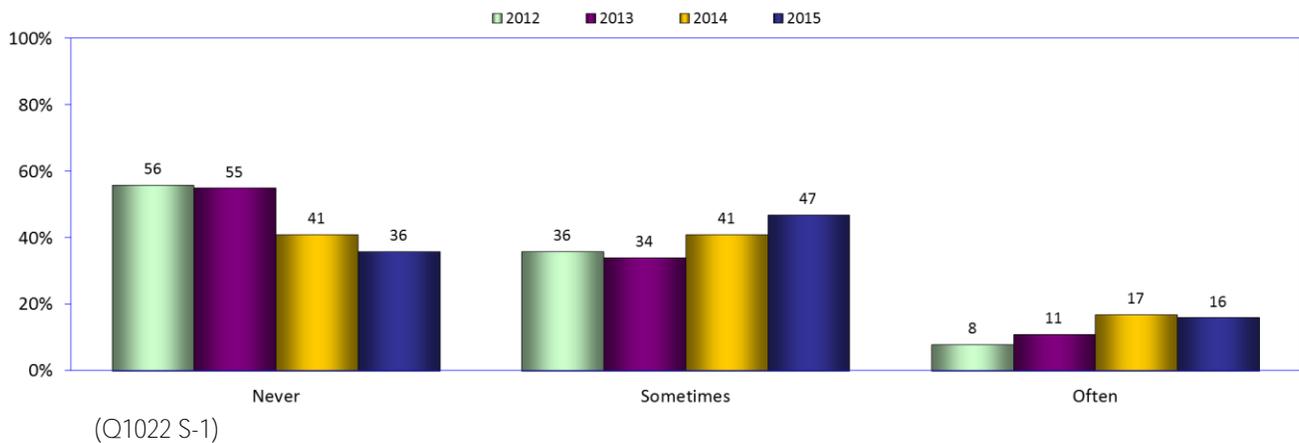


### 101. Are you ignored because of mobile devices?

Compared to respondents who said they are ignored because a member of the household spends too much time online or watching television (see the previous question), for the third year in a row a growing percentage of mobile phone users (63 percent) said they were ignored because a household member spends too much time on a mobile device – either talking, texting, or web browsing.

This percentage is higher than the 58 percent reported in 2014, 45 percent in 2013, and 44 percent in 2012 who reported being ignored because a household member spends too much time on a mobile device.

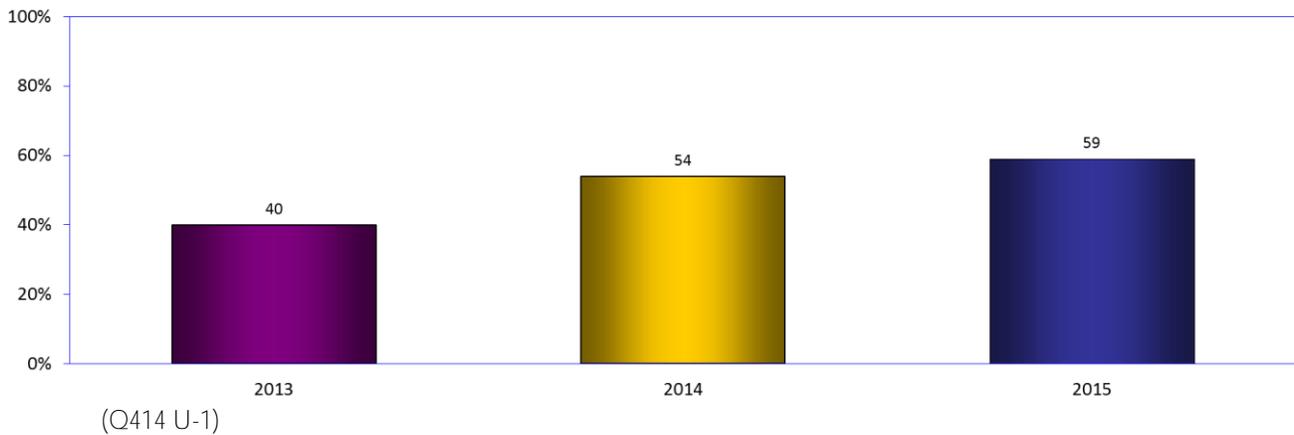
Do you feel that you are ignored because a household member spends too much time on a mobile device (talking, texting, web browsing, etc.)?  
(Mobile phone users with multiple people in household)



## 102. Using the Internet on the move

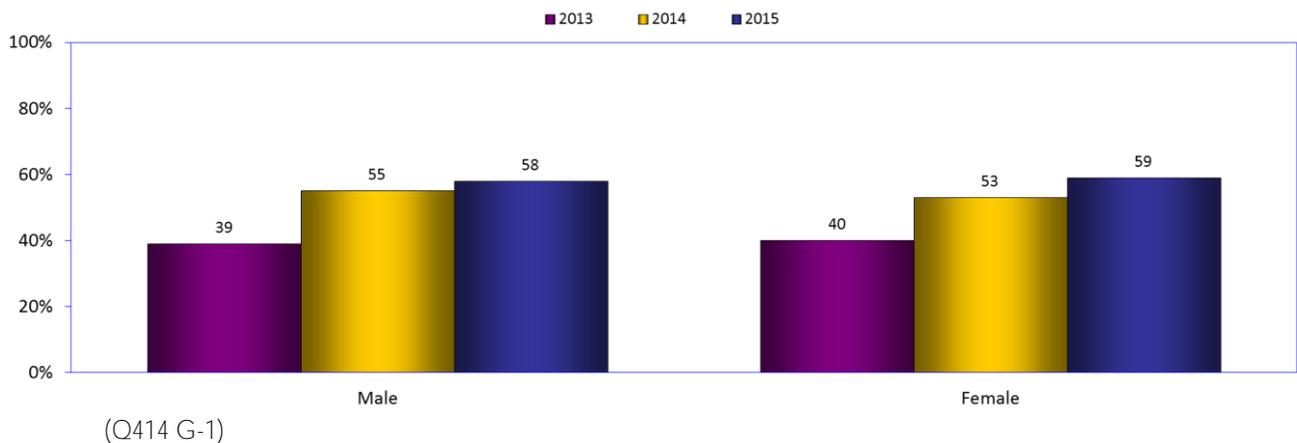
More than half of Internet users – now 59 percent – said they go online while on the move, such as through a mobile device while walking or in transportation, up from 54 percent in 2014.

On an average day, do you use the Internet on the move, in such places as cars, buses, and on the street?  
(Internet users)



About the same percentage of women and men use the Internet on the move: 58 percent of men, and 59 percent of women.

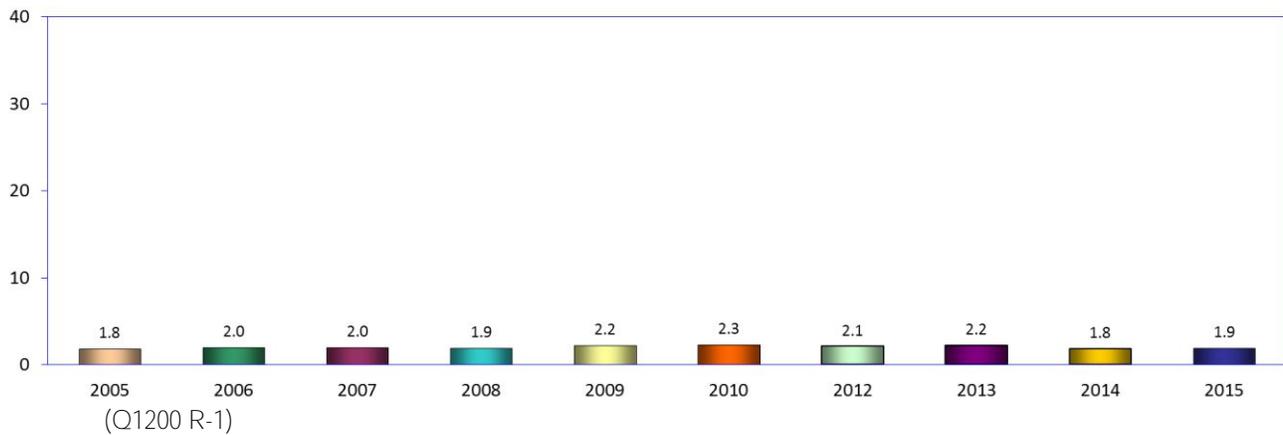
On an average day, do you use the Internet on the move, in such places as cars, buses, and on the street?  
(Internet users)



### 103. Time spent with clubs and volunteer organizations

Respondents in the current study said they spend an average of 1.9 hours per week participating in clubs or voluntary organizations, up very slightly from 1.8 hours in 2014

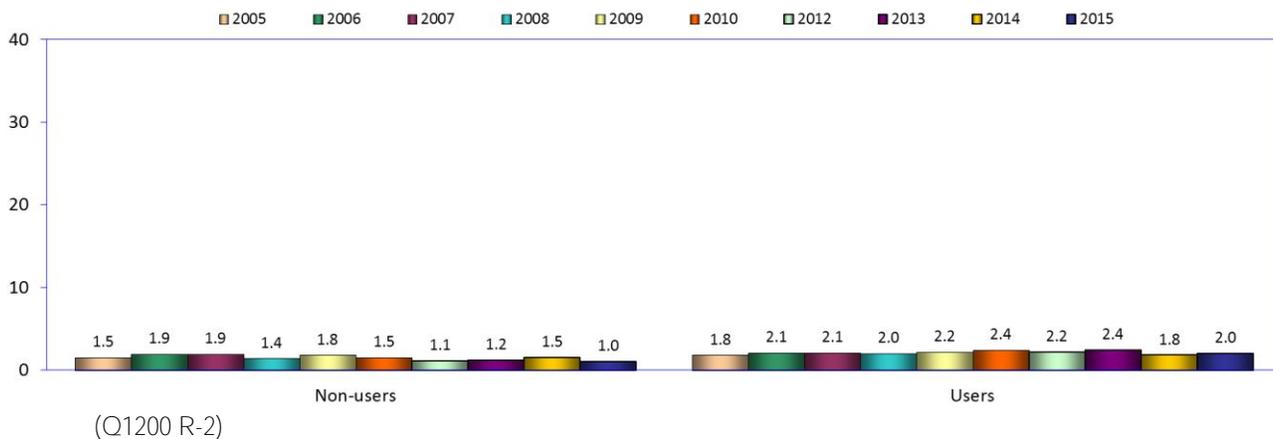
How many hours per week do you spend participating in clubs or voluntary organizations?  
(All respondents)



### 104. Time spent with clubs and volunteer organizations: users vs. non-users

Internet users in every Digital Future study since 2005 have reported spending more time than non-users participating in clubs or voluntary organizations. In the current study, users report spending twice the time per week participating with clubs and volunteer organizations.

How many hours per week do you spend participating in clubs or voluntary organizations?  
(All respondents)



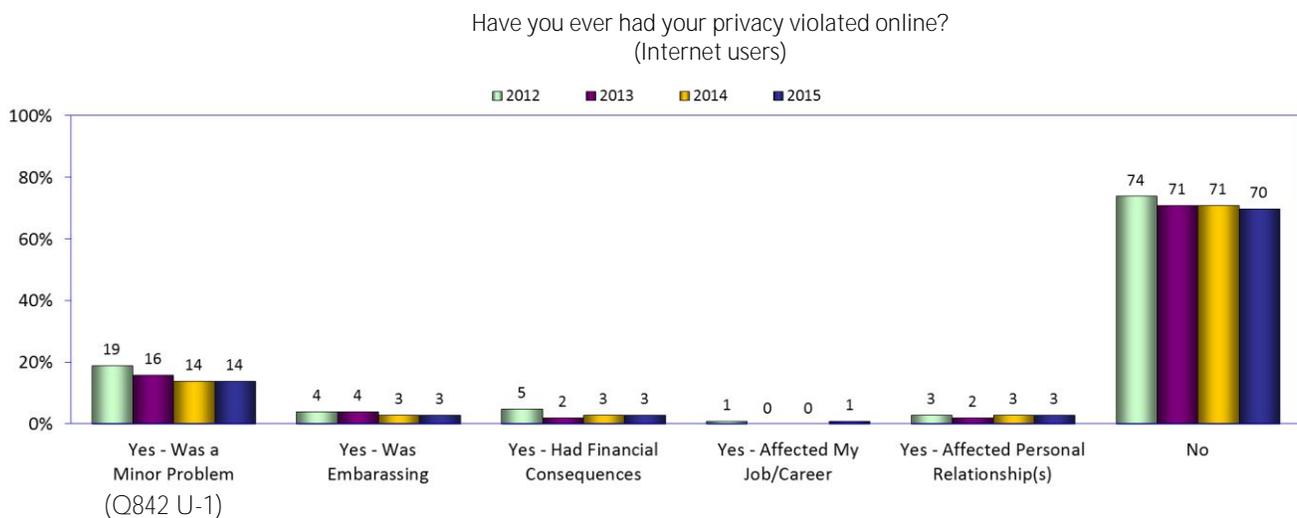
## Views about privacy while online

### 105. Online violation of privacy

Have Internet users ever had their privacy violated online? Seventy percent of Internet users said no – marginally lower than in 2013 and 2014.

Of the 30 percent of Internet users who have had their privacy violated, the largest percentage (14 percent) said it resulted in a minor problem – the same as 2014. Ten percent said the privacy violation resulted in embarrassment, or financial consequences, or effects on personal relationships or other results.

Only one percent said that having their privacy violated affected their job or career.



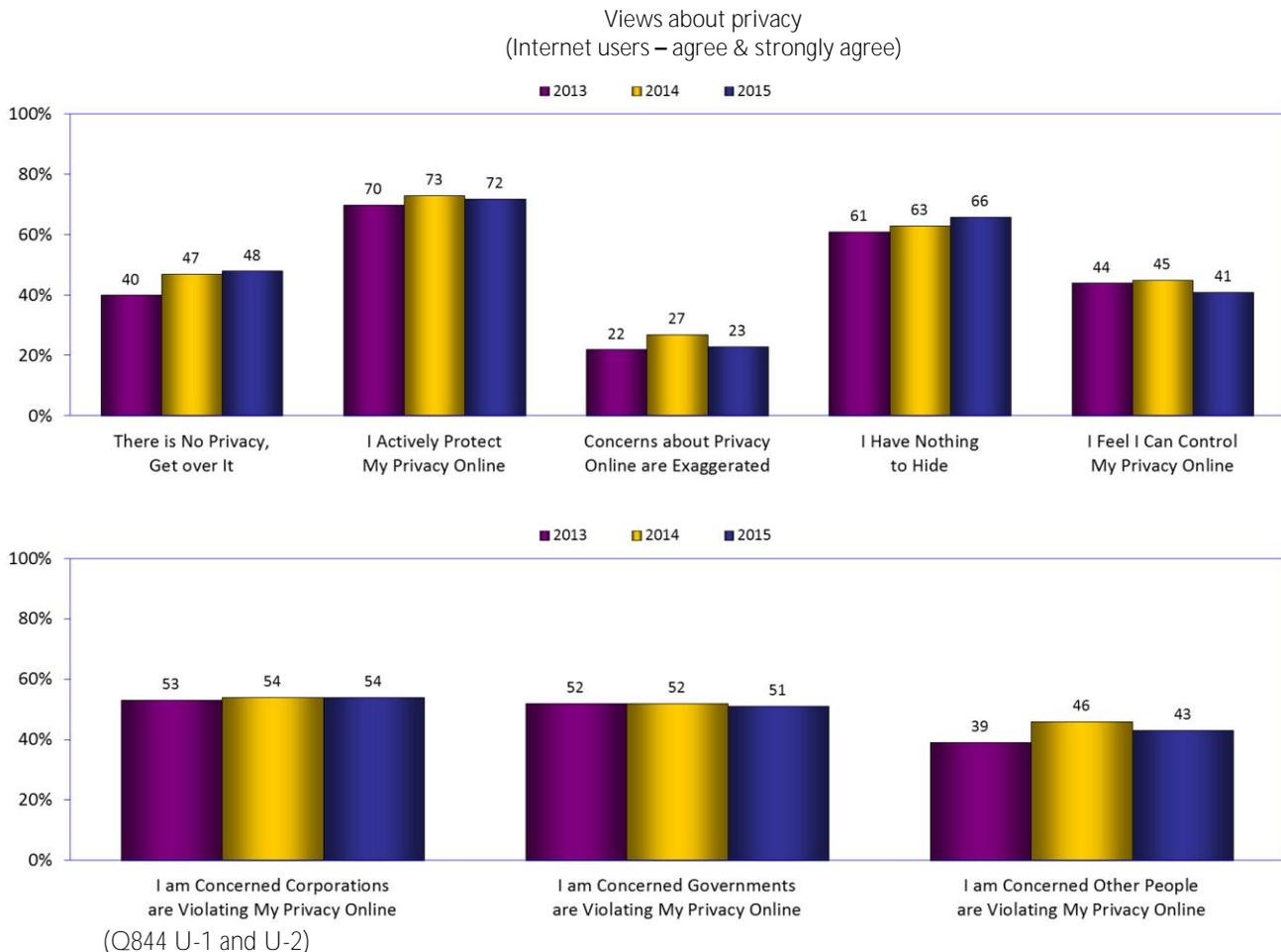
## 106. Views about privacy

The Digital Future Project asks respondents about several statements concerning privacy.

1. “I actively protect my privacy online.”
2. “I have nothing to hide.”
3. “I feel I can control my privacy online.”
4. “There is no privacy – get over it.”
5. “Concerns about privacy online are exaggerated.”
6. “I am concerned corporations are violating my privacy online.”
7. “I am concerned governments are violating my privacy online.”
8. “I am concerned other people are violating my privacy online.”

The survey found increased or stable levels of agreement with all eight statements. For the first five statements, the largest percentage of users agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “I actively protect my privacy online,” reported by 72 percent of respondents. Two statements have increased percentages every year: “I have nothing to hide” (66 percent) and “There is no privacy, get over it” (48 percent).

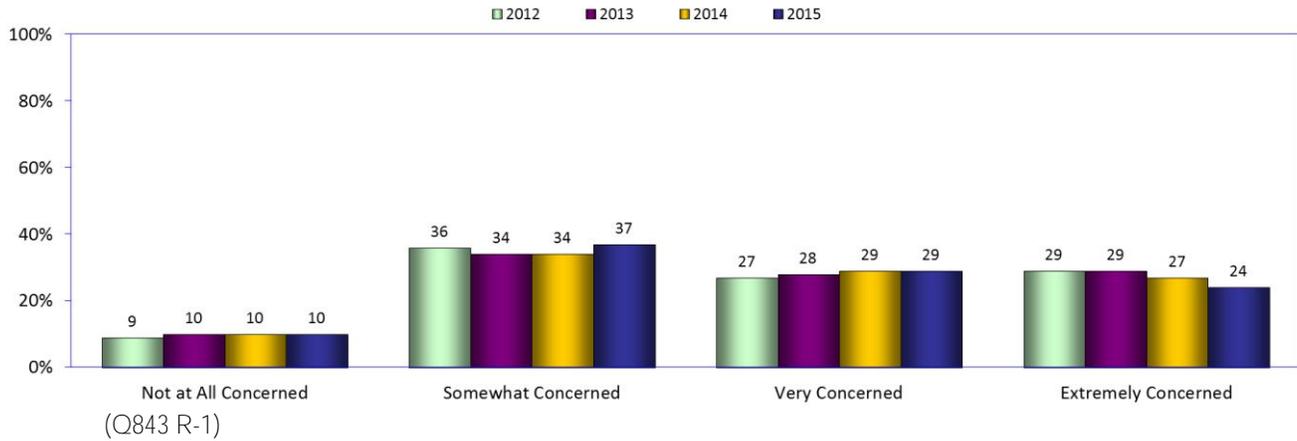
Of respondents asked about concerns over who might be violating their personal privacy (see lower chart), the largest percentage (54 percent) was concerned about corporations, followed closely by governments (51 percent). A smaller percentage (43 percent) was concerned that “other people are violating my privacy online.”



### 107. Privacy of personal information and companies tracking online behavior

The vast majority of respondents age 16 and older – 90 percent – express some level of concern about their privacy because companies can track their online behavior, the same as in 2014.

How concerned would you be about the privacy of your personal information because of the ability of companies to track your online behavior?  
(Respondents age 16 and older)



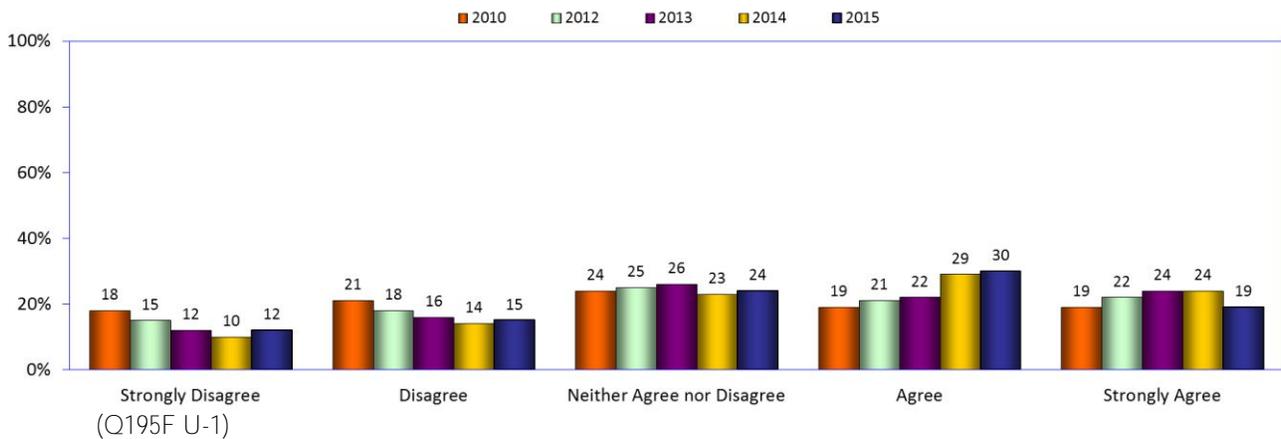
### 108. The Internet and personal privacy: government and companies

Internet users continue to be more worried about companies checking what they do online than about the government checking what they do online.

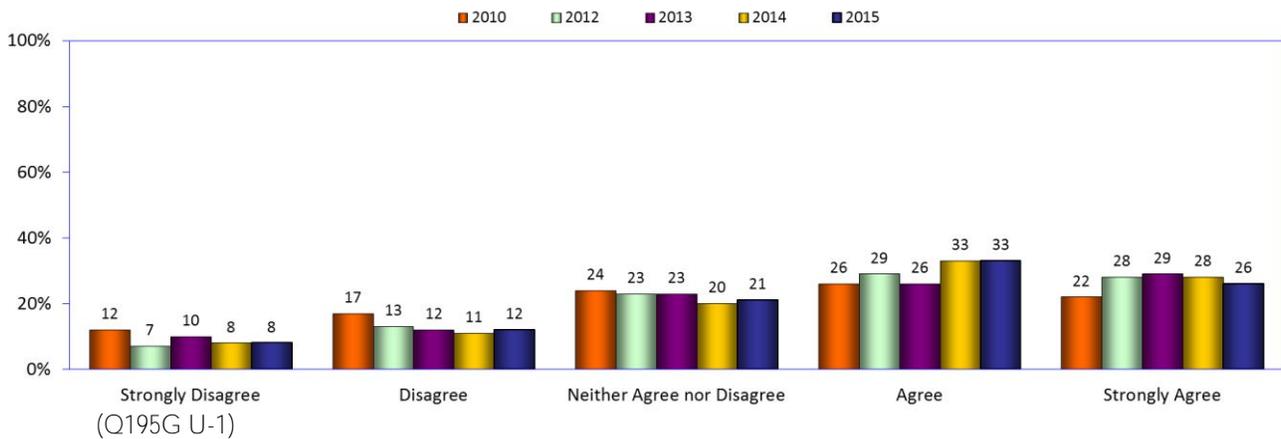
Forty-nine percent of users age 16 and older said they are worried about the government checking what they do on the Internet, an decrease from 53 percent in 2014.

However, 59 percent of users worry about companies checking what they do online, down marginally from 61 percent in 2014.

I am worried about the government checking what I do online  
(Internet users age 16 and older)



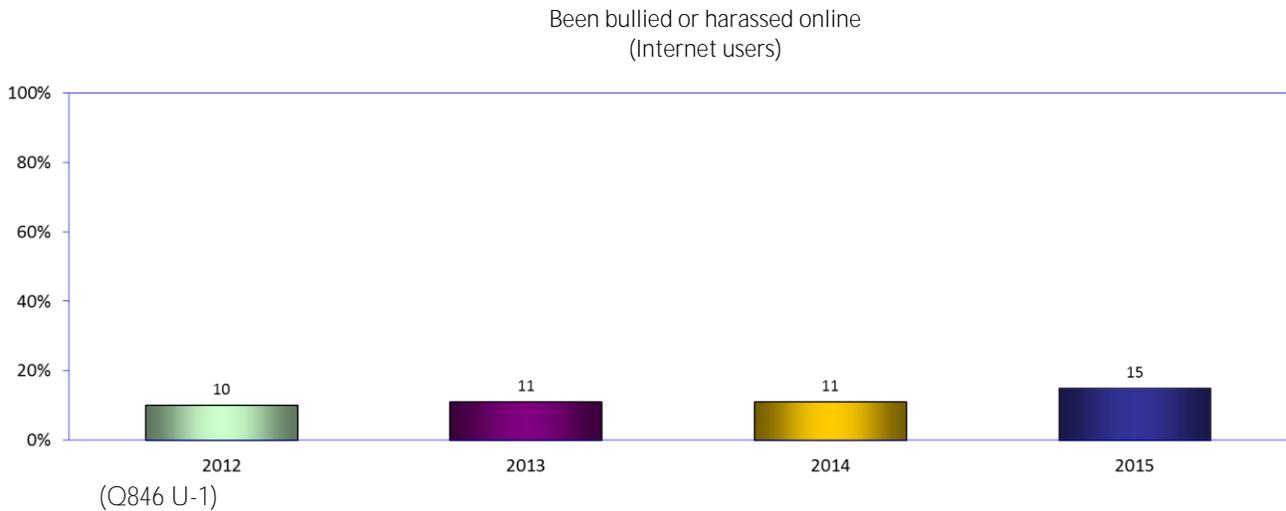
I am worried about companies checking what I do online  
(Internet users age 16 and older)



## Online bullying and harassment

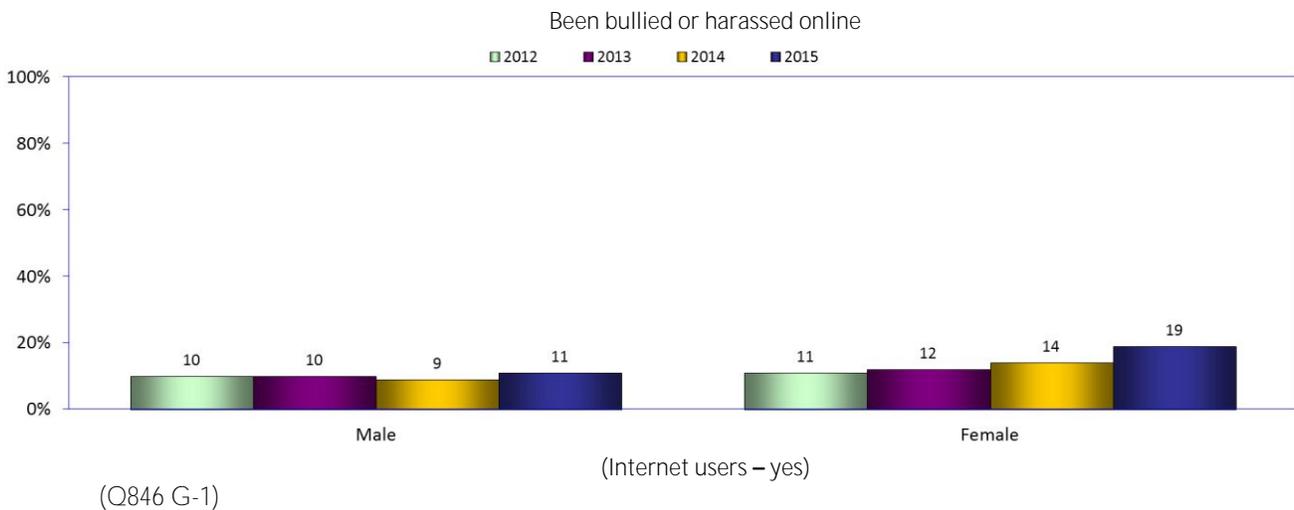
### 109. Have you been bullied or harassed online?

When all Internet users were asked if they had ever been bullied or harassed online, 15 percent responded yes – the highest number so far.



### 110. Online bullying and harassment (men vs. women)

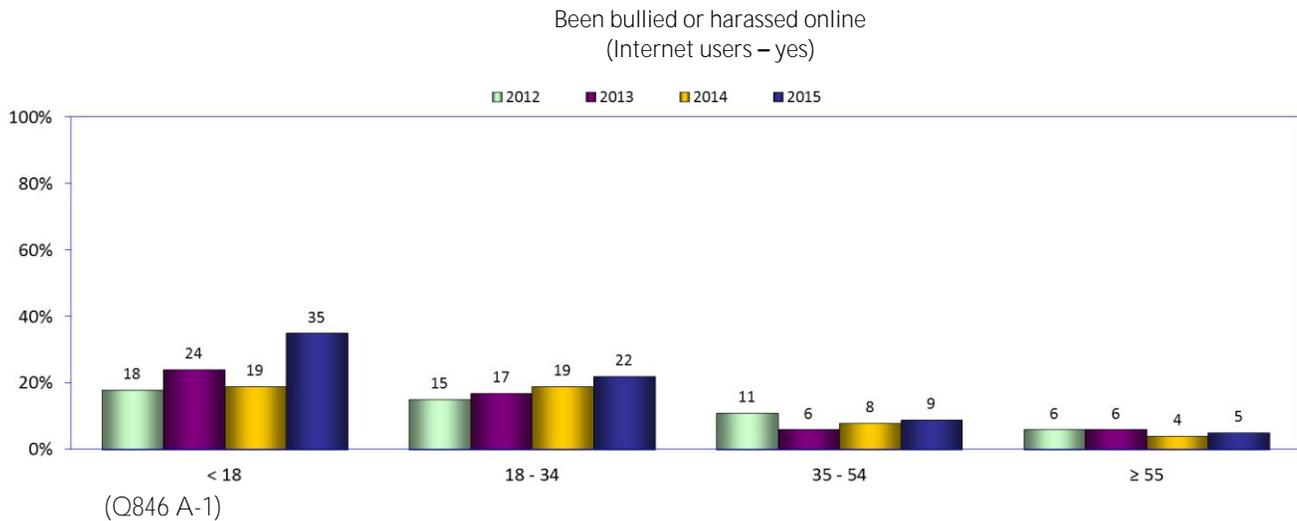
More women than men in the current study reported being bullied or harassed – 19 percent vs. 11 percent.



### 111. Online bullying and harassment (by age)

Although larger percentages of online bullying and harassment are reported by young users, these problems continued to be reported by users of all ages.

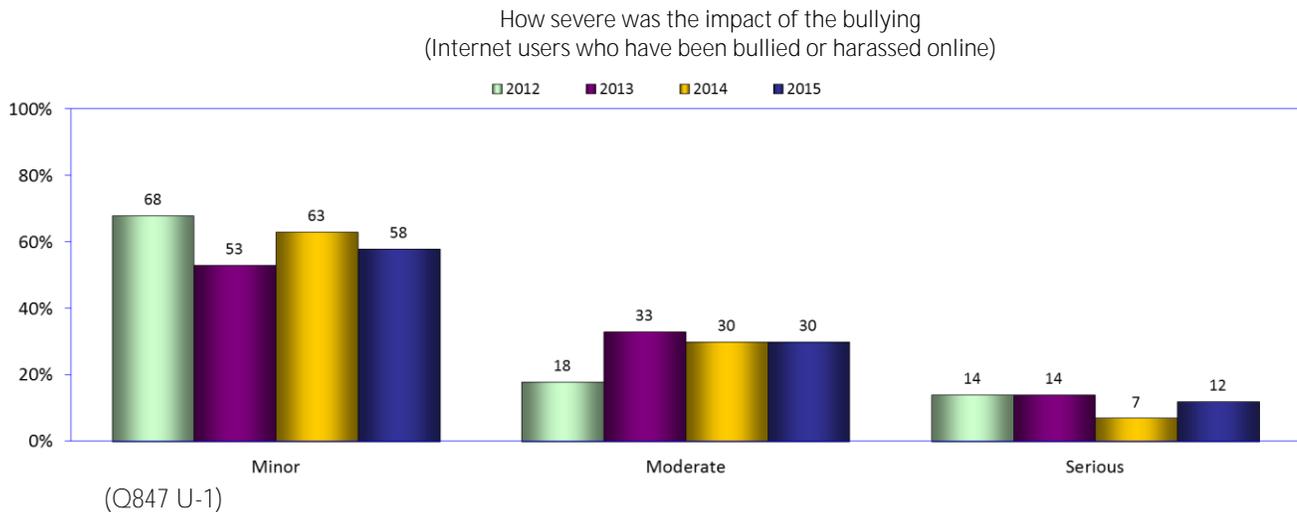
The largest percentages by far were reported by users under 18 (35 percent) and 18-34 (22 percent).



### 112. Online bullying and harassment: impact

Of those who have been bullied or harassed, 58 percent report that the impact was minor, down from 63 percent in 2014.

Twelve percent said that the impact of the bullying was serious, up from 2014 but still less than the 14 percent reported in 2013 and 2012.

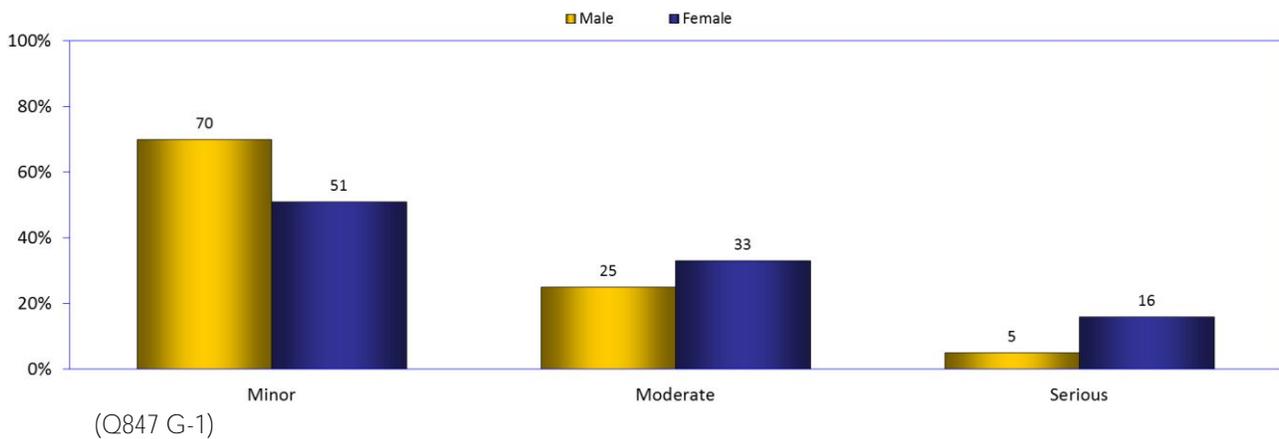


### 113. Online bullying and harassment: impact (men vs. women)

A much higher percentage of women than men reported that the impact of the bullying was moderate or serious: 49 percent of women compared to 30 percent of men.

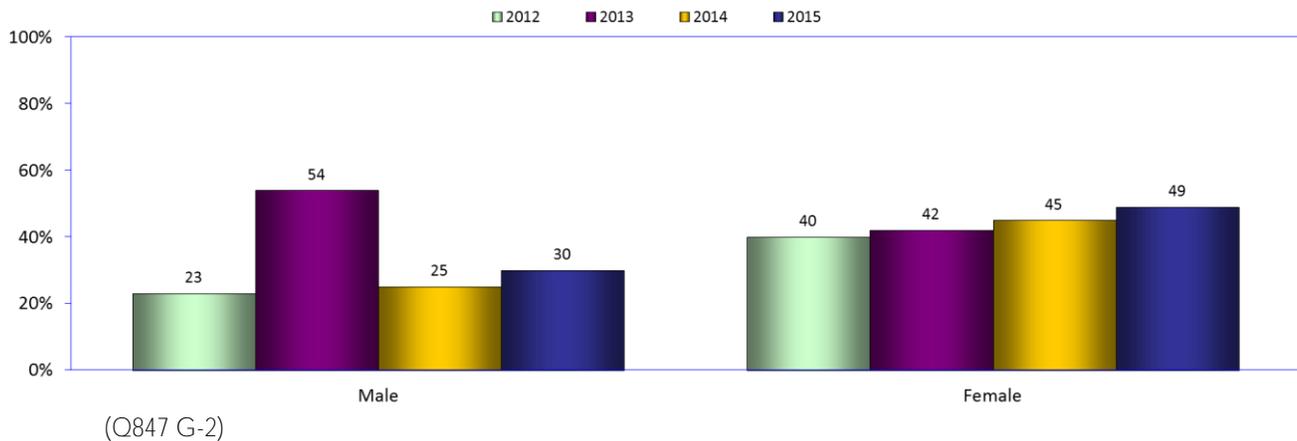
Sixteen percent of women reported that the impact of the bullying was serious, more than three times the percentage of men with the same response.

How severe was the impact of the bullying?  
(Internet users who have been bullied or harassed online)



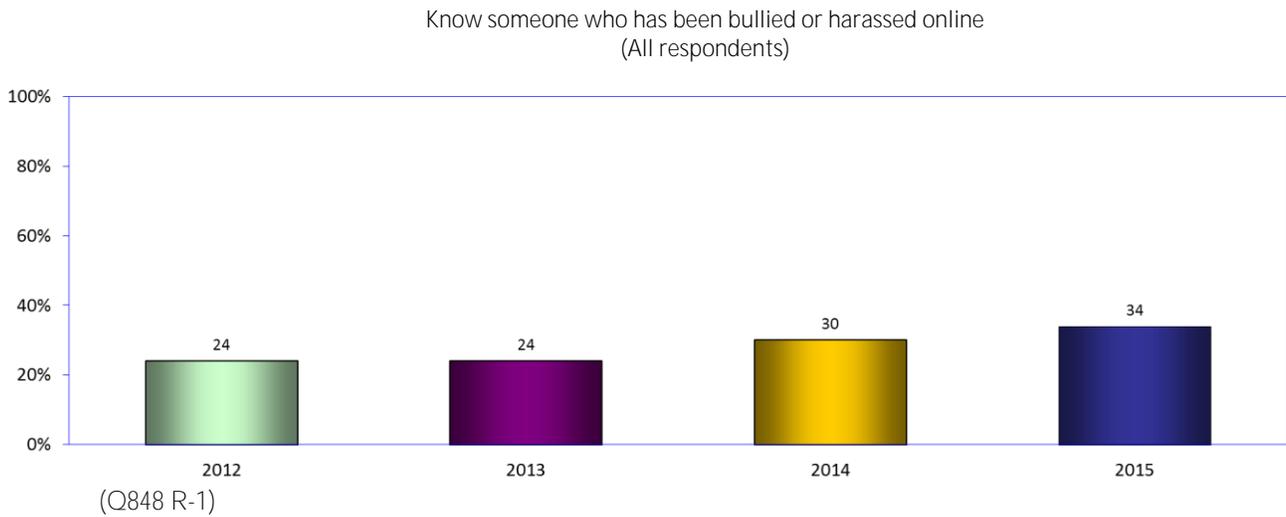
Looking at the severity of bullying shows a steady increase in the percentage of women who said the impact of the bullying was moderate or serious.

How severe was the impact of the bullying?  
(Internet users who have been bullied or harassed online – serious & moderate)



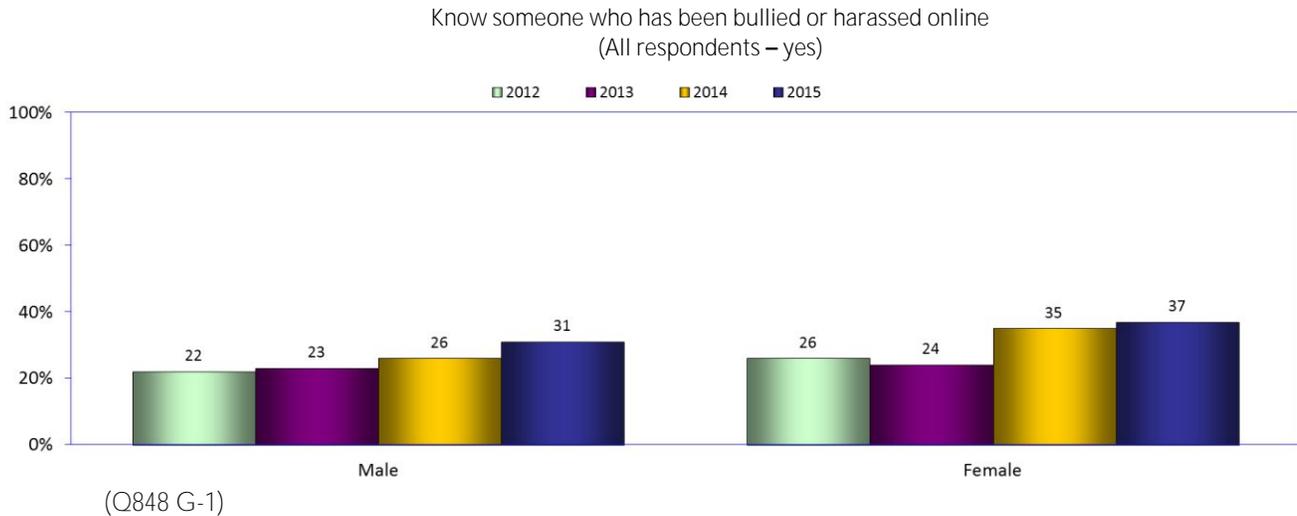
114. Do you know someone who has been bullied or harassed online?

Although 15 percent of users said they have been bullied or harassed on the Internet, over twice the percentage of all respondents said they know someone else subjected to bullying or harassment online – now 34 percent, up from 30 percent in 2014.



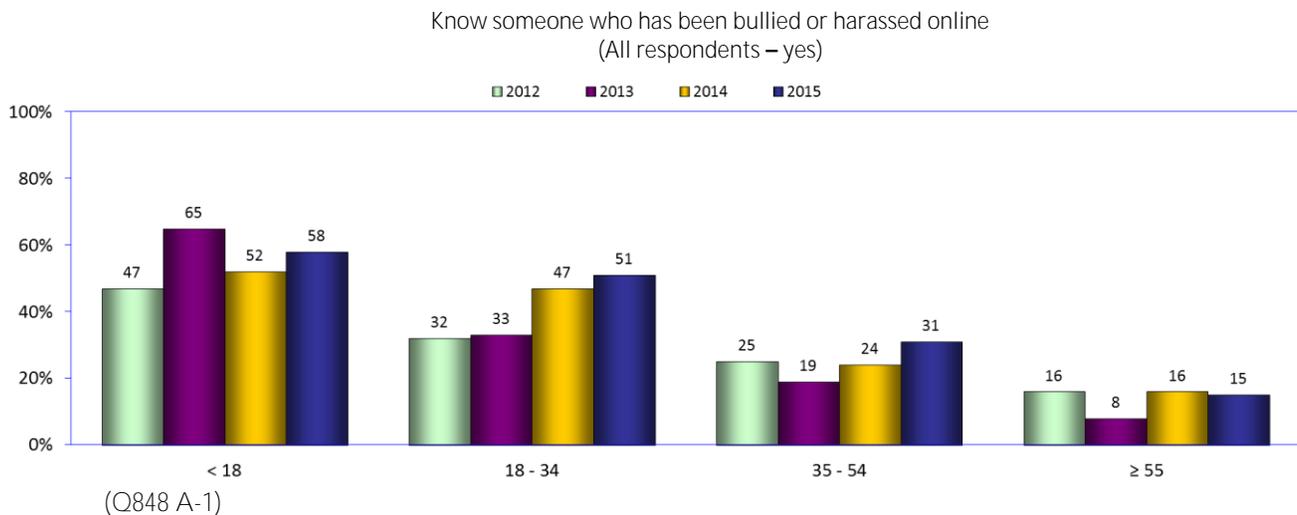
## 115. Do you know someone who has been bullied or harassed online? (men vs. women)

More than one-third of women (37 percent) and almost one-third of men (31 percent) said they know someone who has been bullied or harassed online.



## 116. Do you know someone who has been bullied or harassed online? (by age)

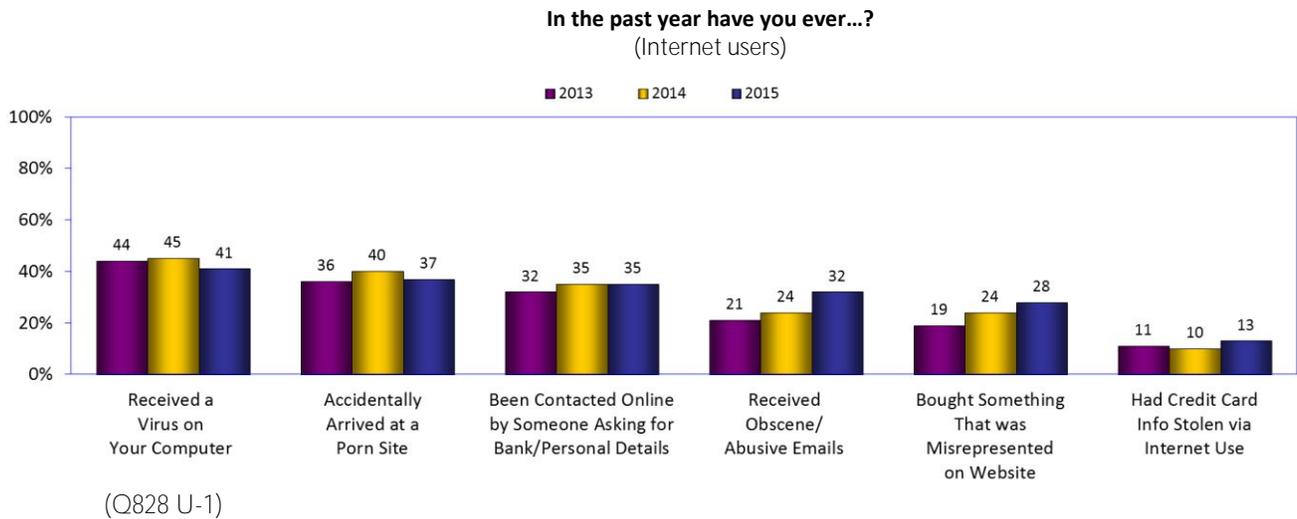
Knowledge of online bullying is related to age; more than half of respondents under 18 (58 percent) and 51 percent of those ages 18-34 said they know someone who has been bullied or harassed online, compared to much lower percentages of respondents age 35 and older.



## 117. Negative online experience

Significant and consistent percentages of users continued to report having a negative online experience.

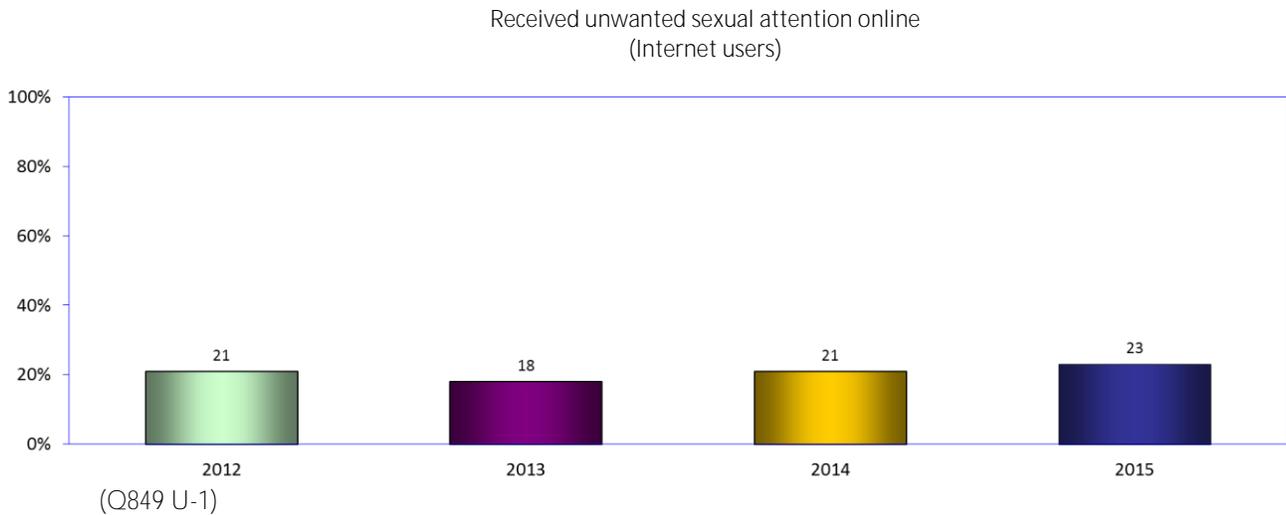
Receiving obscene and abusing emails has grown substantially – now 32 percent report having this experiences, up 11 percentage points since 2013. Likewise, purchasing something that was misrepresented online has increased to 28 percent, up from 19 percent in 2013.



## Unwanted sexual attention online

### 118. Have you received unwanted sexual attention online?

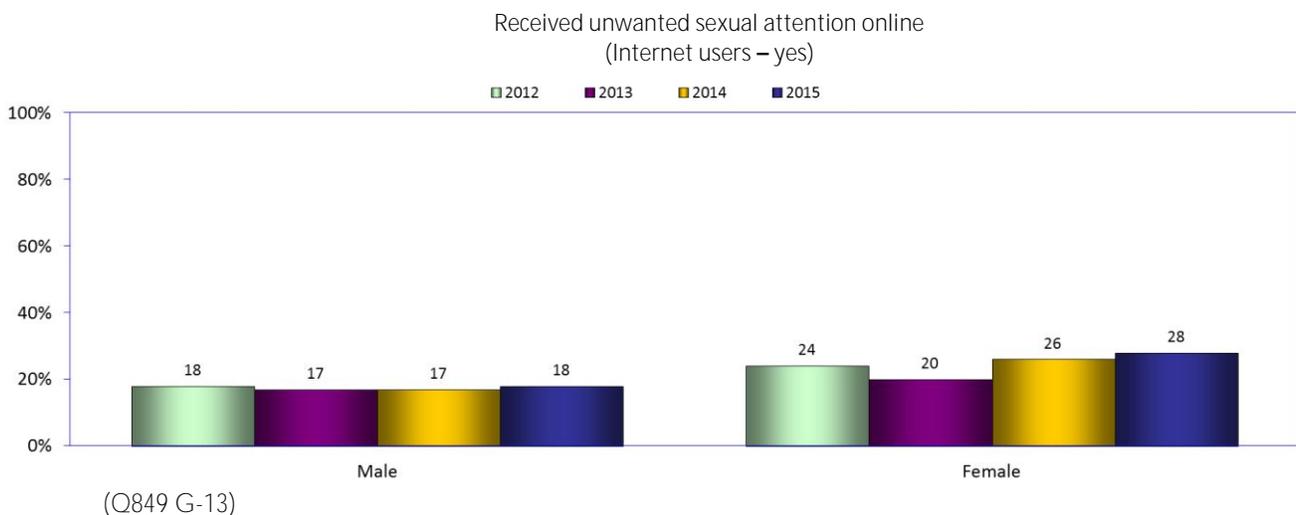
Unwanted sexual attention online continues to be a problem reported by a notable percentage of users in the current Digital Future study – now 23 percent, a new high for the report.



### 119. Unwanted sexual attention online (men vs. women)

A growing percentage of women reported unwanted sexual attention – 28 percent, up from 26 percent in 2014 and now at the highest level in the Digital Future studies.

Eighteen percent of men reported receiving unwanted sexual attention online, the same as in 2012 and up marginally from 17 percent in 2014.

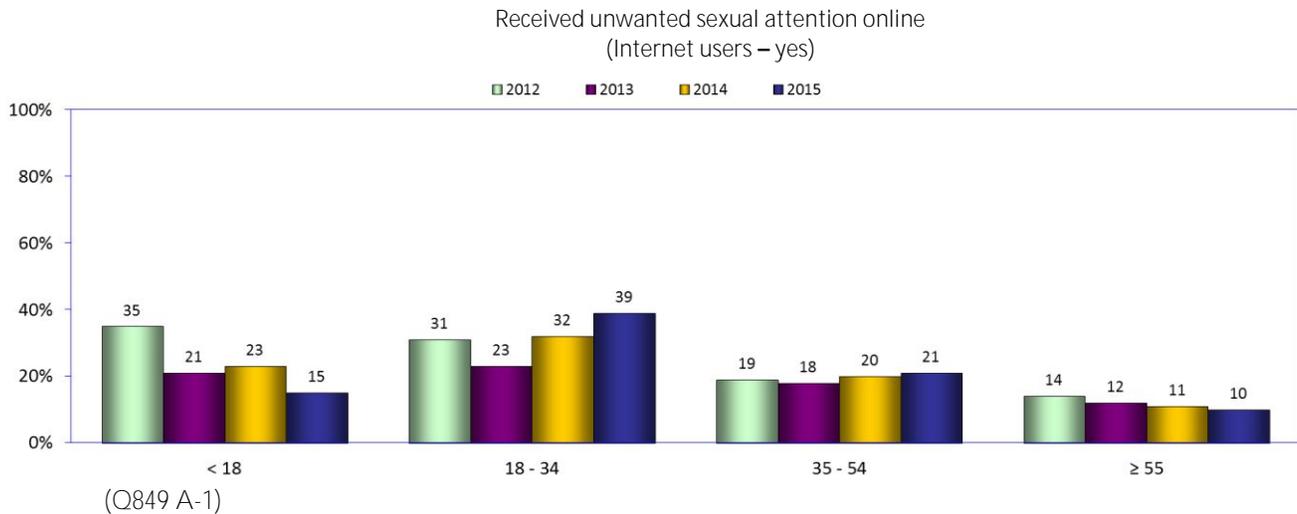


## 120. Unwanted sexual attention online (by age)

Internet users of all ages experience unwanted sexual attention online, and users in three of the four age ranges in the current study report higher percentages of online sexual attention compared to previous years.

The largest percentage of users reporting unwanted sexual attention was among users ages 18 to 34 (39 percent), an increase over the 32 percent reported in 2014. Fifteen percent of Internet users under 18 reported unwanted sexual attention online (down from 23 percent in 2014 and less than half of what was reported in 2012).

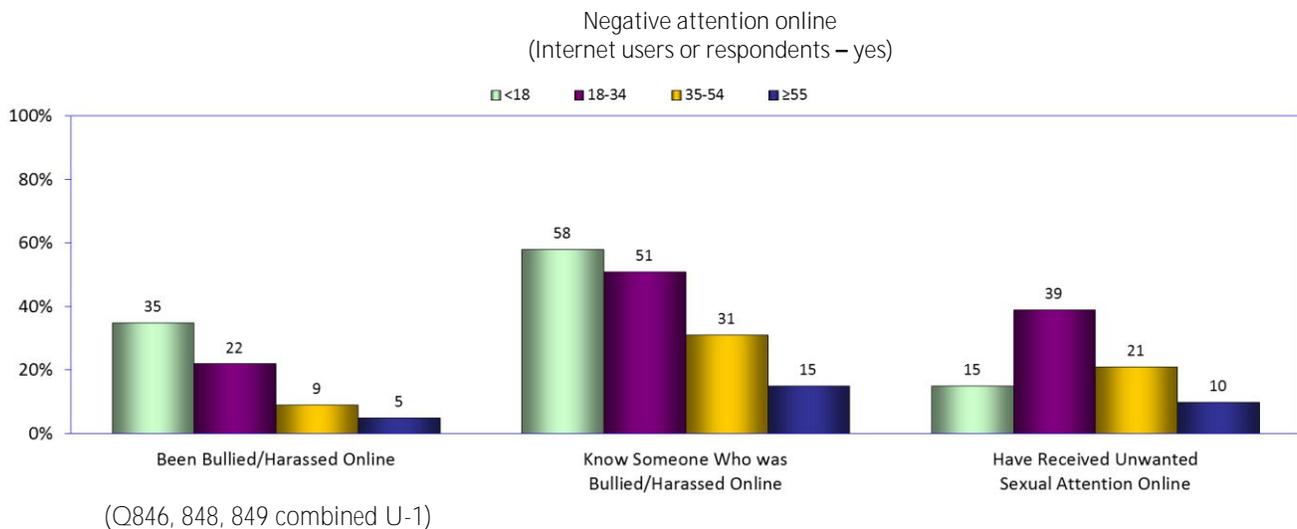
Twenty-one percent of users age 35-54 reported unwanted sexual attention online, a slight increase from 20 percent in 2014. Ten percent of Internet users age 55 and older reported unwanted sexual attention online, a decrease for the third year in a row.



### 121. Receiving negative attention online: at a glance by age

Comparing responses by age in the current study for three questions about negative attention – reporting being bullied or harassed online, knowledge of someone else being bullied or harassed online, and receiving unwanted sexual attention online – shows that online bullying is most prevalent for users under age 18 with 35 percent reporting they have been bullied or harassed and a majority (58 percent) knowing someone who was a victim of bullying or harassment.

However, the problems are not limited to young users; for example, nine percent of users age 35-54 and 5 percent of those age 55 and older report being the victim of harassment or bullying. Much larger percentages of users age 35-54 (31 percent) and those age 55 and older (15 percent) said they knew someone who has been bullied or harassed (46 percent), while 21 percent of users age 35-54 and 10 percent of users age 55 and older said they have received unwanted sexual attention online.



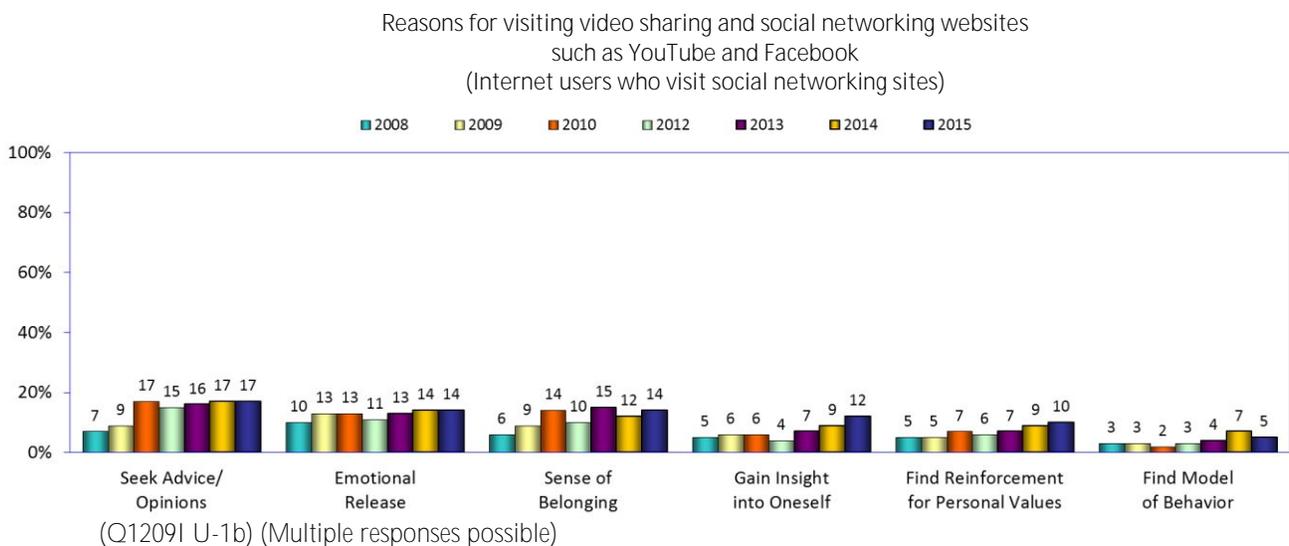
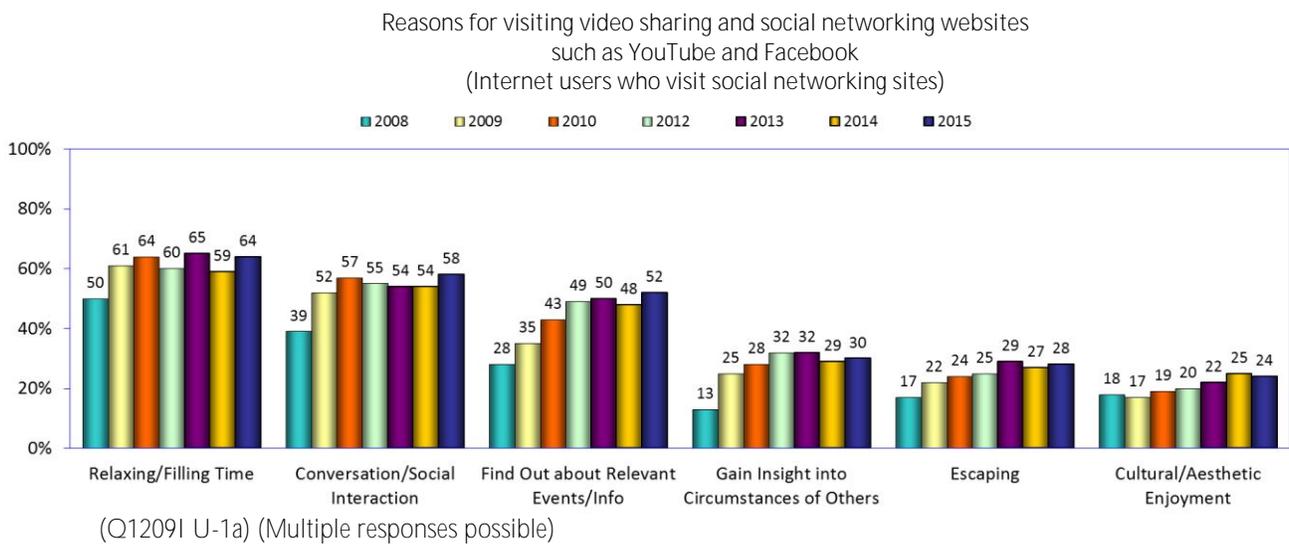
# Social networking and video sharing sites

## 122. Why do users visit websites for video sharing and social networking?

Users who visit social networking or video sharing sites report a variety of reasons for using these sites, and the most frequently-cited continues to be relaxation or to fill time – now 64 percent, up from 59 percent in 2014 and also the category with the greatest increase.

Other common responses include being involved in conversation or social interaction (58 percent), or to find events and information (52 percent).

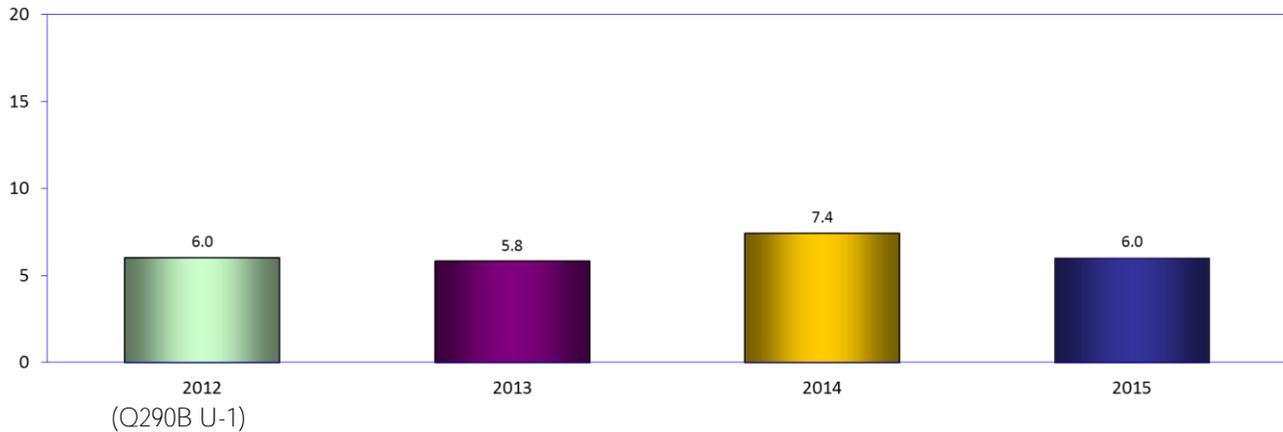
Only two categories reported lower figures in 2015: cultural/aesthetic enjoyment dropped to 24 percent, down from 25 percent; and to find models of behavior dropped to five percent, down from seven percent in 2014.



### 123. Regular personal contact through Facebook, Twitter, or Google Plus

Internet users in the current Digital Future study reported a lower average number of people with whom they maintain regular personal contact at least weekly through personal messages on sites such as Facebook, Twitter, or Google Plus – now an average of 6.0 people, down from 7.4 in 2014.

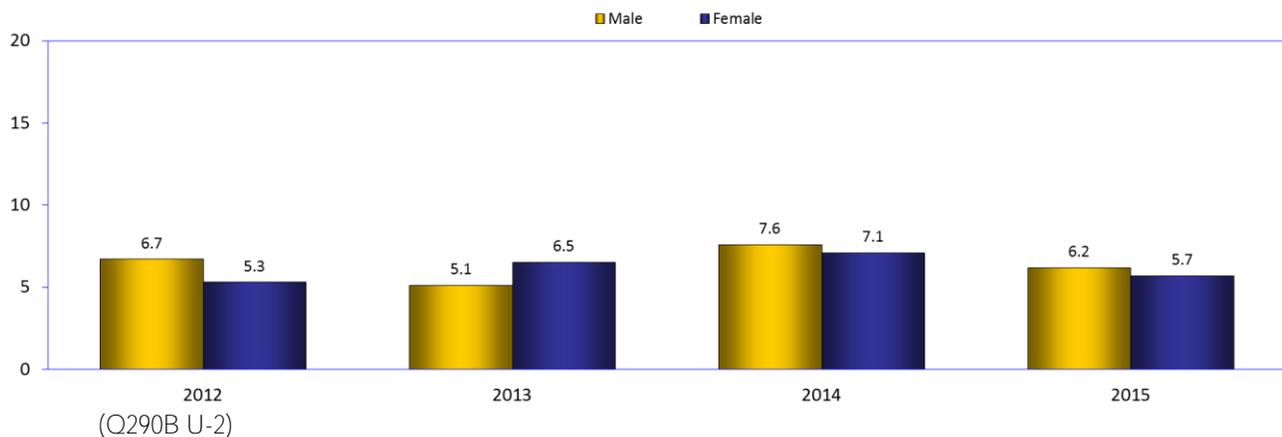
How many people do you maintain regular personal contact with on a weekly basis through individual messages (not posting on your entire network) on Facebook, Twitter, or Google Plus?  
(Internet users)



### 124. Maintaining contact with messages on social networking sites (men vs. women)

Men report maintaining more weekly contact than women through individual messages on social networking sites such as Facebook – an average of 6.2 people on a weekly basis, compared to 5.7 people reported by women.

How many people do you maintain regular personal contact with on a weekly basis through individual messages (not posting on your entire network) on Facebook, Twitter, or Google Plus?  
(Internet users)



## 125. Importance of social networking websites for maintaining relationships

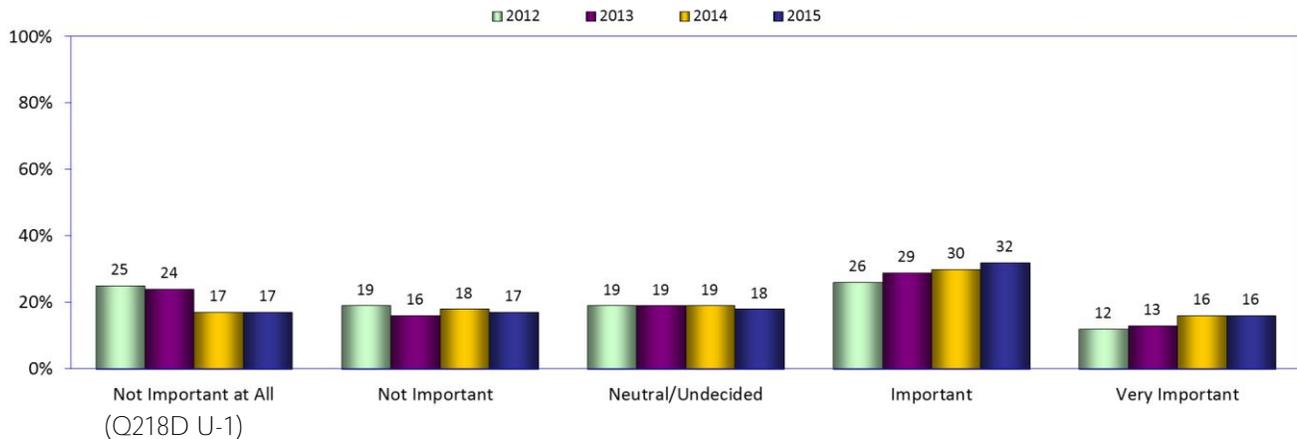
In spite of the study's findings that a large percentage of Internet users visit social networking or video sharing sites (see page 23), a smaller percentage of users say these social networking sites are important for helping them to maintain social relationships.

Forty-eight percent of users in the current study said that social networking sites are important or very important to maintain social relationships, an increase from 46 percent in 2014 and now the highest level in the studies.

Correspondingly, 34 percent of users said social networking sites are not important, down from 35 percent in 2014 and 44 percent in 2012.

These views change considerably when explored by age; see the next page.

How important are social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, and Google Plus) for helping you maintain social relationships?  
(Internet users)



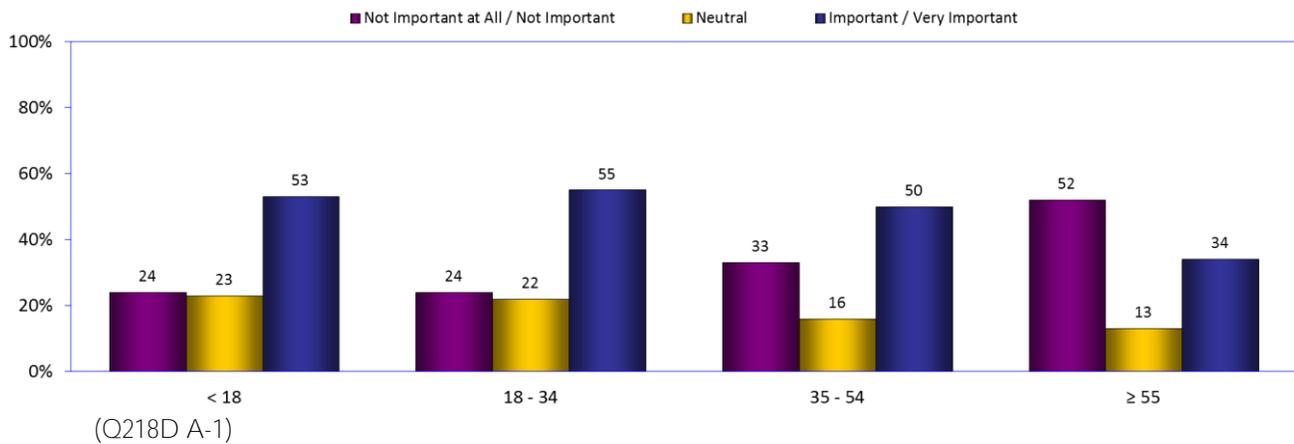
## 126. Importance of social networking sites for maintaining relationships (by age)

Compared to Internet users overall, large percentages of young users consider social networking to be important for maintaining their social relationships.

More than half of users age 34 and under said that social networking sites are important or very important for maintaining social relationships: 53 percent of users under 18, and 55 percent of users age 18 to 34. Modestly lower numbers of users age 35-54 said social networking sites are important for maintaining social relationships (50 percent), while 34 percent of users age 55 or older report the same response.

Perhaps more revealing are the numbers of Internet users who think social networking sites are not important for maintaining social relationships; only 24 percent of users 34 or under said social networking sites are not important for helping maintain their social relationships – this compared to 33 percent of those age 35-54, and 52 percent of those 55 and older.

How important are social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, and Google Plus) for helping you maintain social relationships?  
(Internet users)

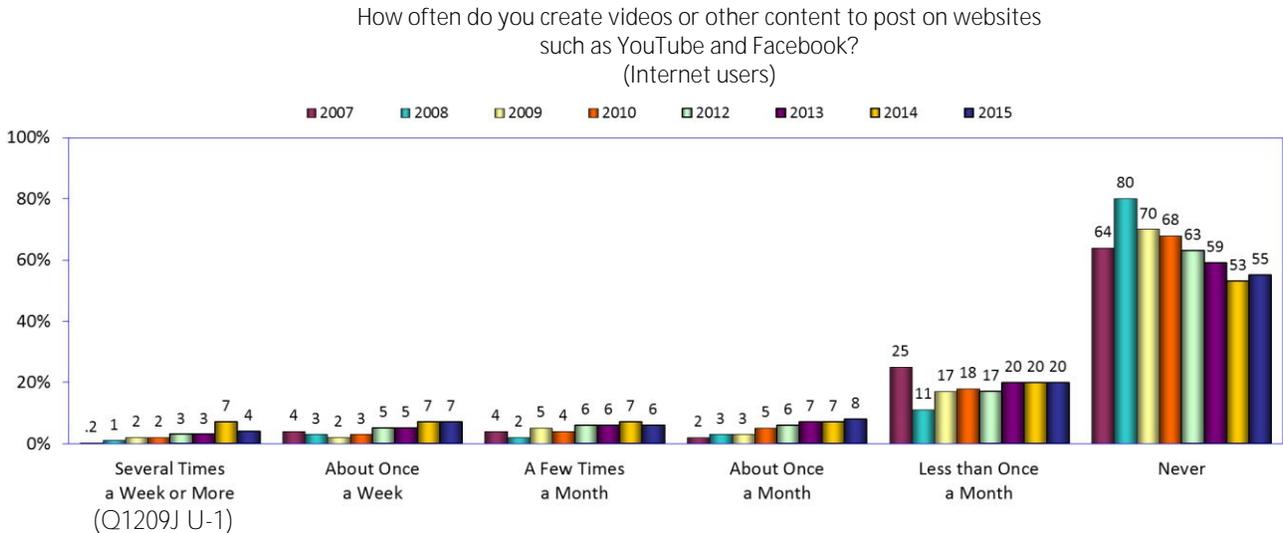


127. Creating content for video sharing or social networking sites

The number of Internet users who create content for video sharing or social networking sites continues at about the same rate as in 2014 – now 45 percent, down slightly from 48 percent in 2014.

The number of users who create content one or more times a week remained relatively stable – now 11 percent, down from 14 percent in 2014.

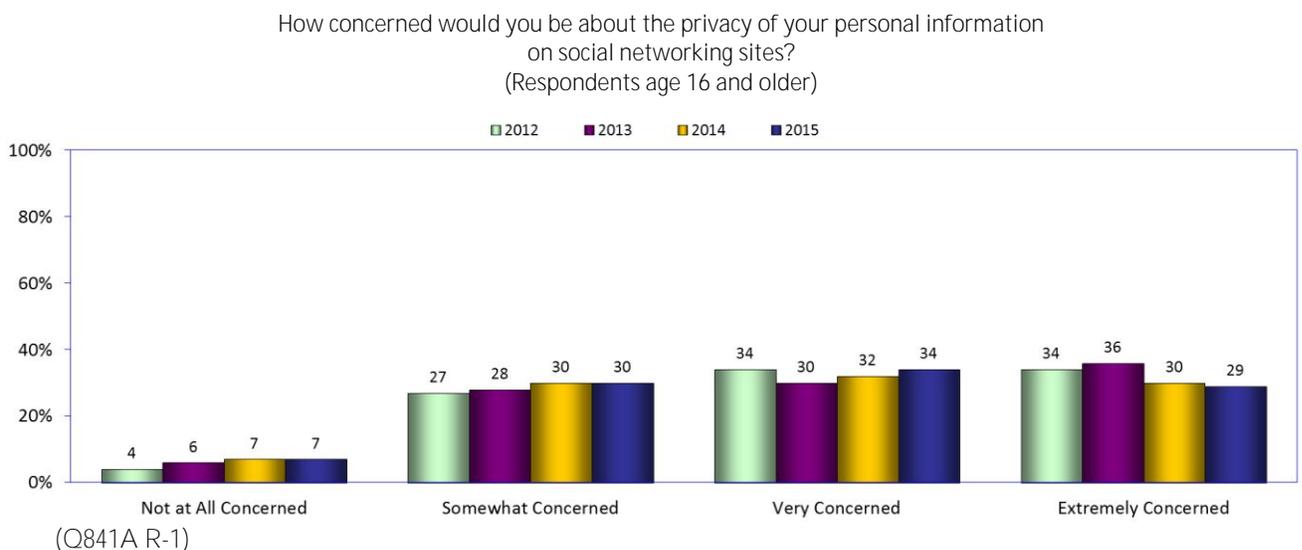
Twenty-five percent of users create content once a month or more often – down slightly from the 28 percent reported in 2014, the highest level in the study.



128. Social networking websites and concerns about privacy

Almost all respondents – 93 percent – express some concern about the privacy of their personal information on social networking sites. However, the percentage who said they were extremely concerned declined for the third year in a row – now 29 percent, down from the peak of 36 percent in 2013.

Sixty-three percent of respondents in the current study said they were either very concerned or extremely concerned about the privacy of their personal information on social networking sites, up from 62 percent in 2014.

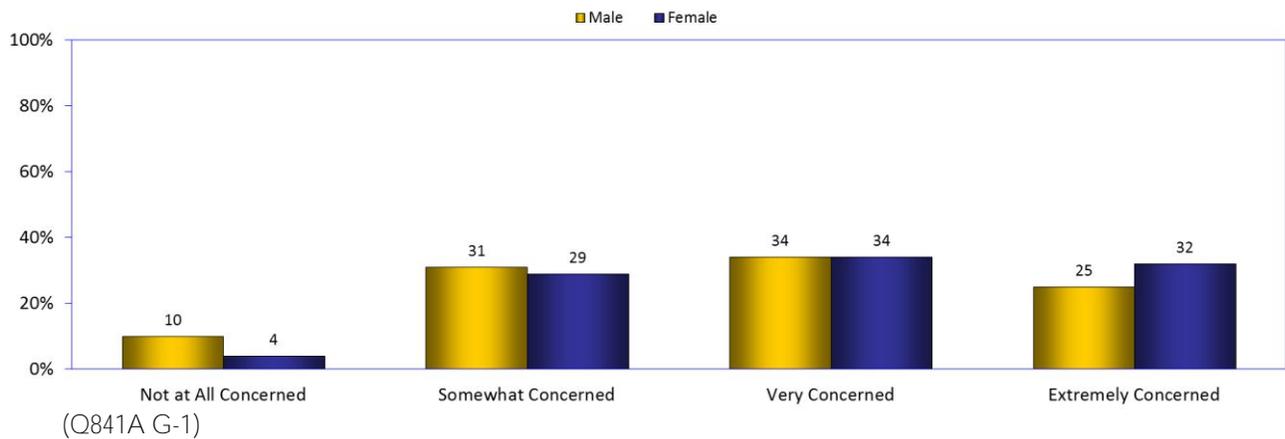


### 129. Concerns about the privacy of personal information on social networking sites: men vs. women

Large percentages of male and female respondents report high levels of concern about the privacy of their personal information on social networking sites, with women reporting higher percentages than men.

Sixty-six percent of women and 59 percent of men said they were very concerned or extremely concerned about the privacy of their personal information on social networking sites.

How concerned would you be about the privacy of your personal information on social networking sites?  
(Respondents age 16 and older)

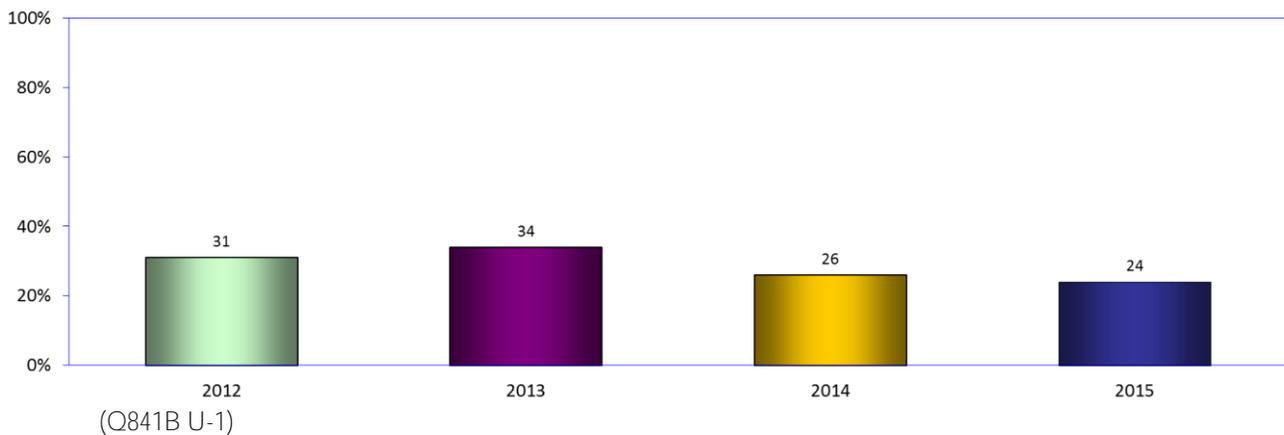


### 130. Altering a Facebook profile to avoid embarrassment

A notable – but declining – percentage of Internet users who have an online profile on a social networking site such as Facebook said they have altered their profile because of concern over potential embarrassment.

In the current study, 24 percent of respondents who use social networking sites said they have altered their online profile to avoid embarrassment, down from the peak of 34 percent reported in 2013 and 26 percent in 2014.

Have you ever altered your Facebook/social network profile  
because of concern over potential embarrassment?  
(Internet users who said yes)



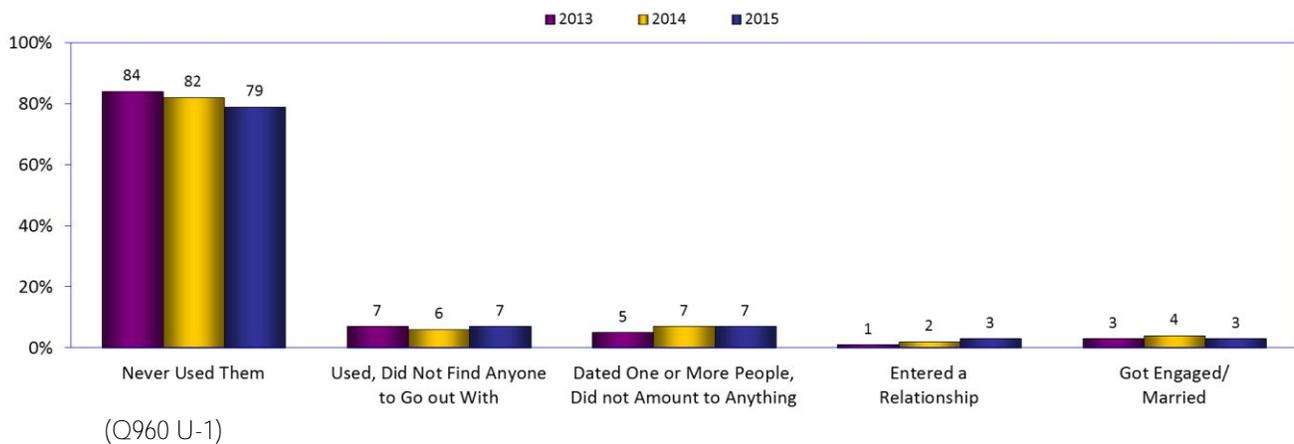
## Online dating

### 131. Online dating sites

Most Internet users have never been on an online dating site such as Match.com or eHarmony – 79 percent in the current study. For the second year in a row, 13 percent of Internet users have casually dated one or more people through an online dating site, or entered a relationship, became engaged, or got married through such a site.

However, some said they did not find anyone to go out with on a dating site -- seven percent in the current study and generally consistent with previous responses in 2014 and 2013.

If you have ever used online dating sites like Match.com or eHarmony to meet someone, how did you find the experience?  
(Internet users age 18 and older)

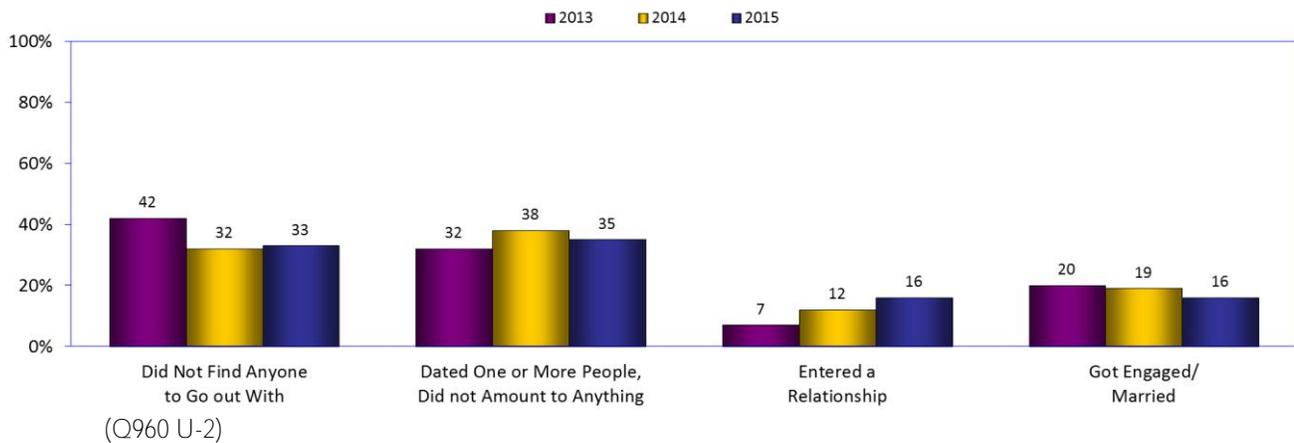


### 132. Online dating sites: reaction to the experience

Looking specifically at Internet users who have used online dating sites shows that 33 percent who used the site did not find anyone to go out with, up slightly from 32 percent in 2014.

While the number of those casually dating through online sites has fluctuated from year to year, the percentages reported for those entering relationships has increased every year – from seven percent in 2013 to 16 percent in 2015. Conversely, the rate of those getting engaged or married has dropped every year – from 20 percent in 2013 to 16 percent in the current study.

If you have ever used online dating sites like Match.com or eHarmony to meet someone,  
how did you find the experience?  
(Internet users age 18 and older who have used online dating sites)

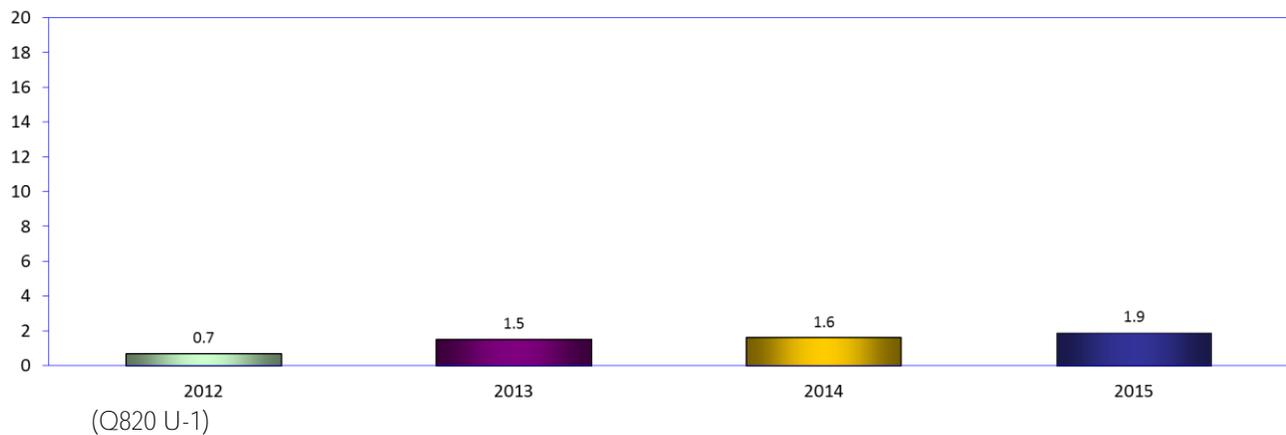


## Online connection to companies: Twitter, Facebook, and group coupons

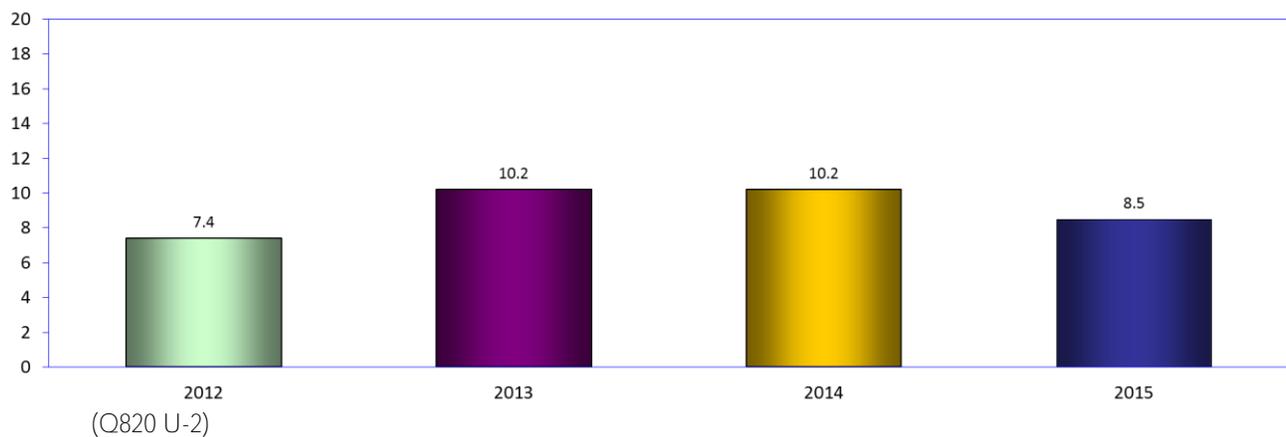
### 133. Companies followed on Twitter

Internet users continued to follow only a small and stable number of companies on Twitter – an average of 1.9 in the current Digital Future study, up marginally from 1.6 companies in 2014.

How many companies or brands have you followed on Twitter?  
(Internet users)



How many companies or brands have you followed on Twitter?  
(Internet users who have followed companies/brands on Twitter)

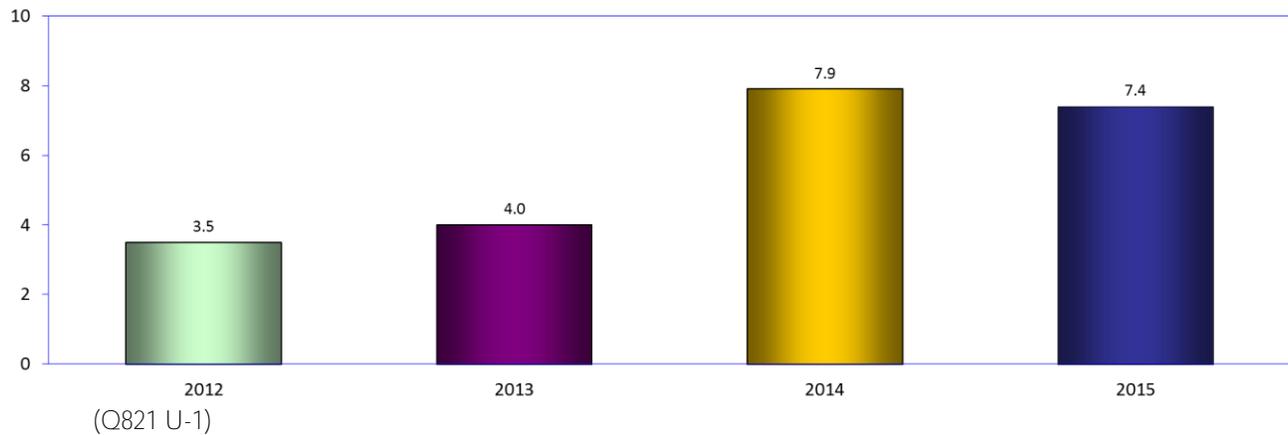


### 134. Companies friended on Facebook

Compared to the number of companies followed on Twitter (see the previous question), Internet users report a slight decrease in the number of companies or brands they friend on social networking sites such as Facebook.

In the current study, users report friending an average of 7.4 companies or brands on social networking sites, down from 7.9 in 2014.

How many companies or brands have you friended on social networking sites such as Facebook?  
(Internet users)

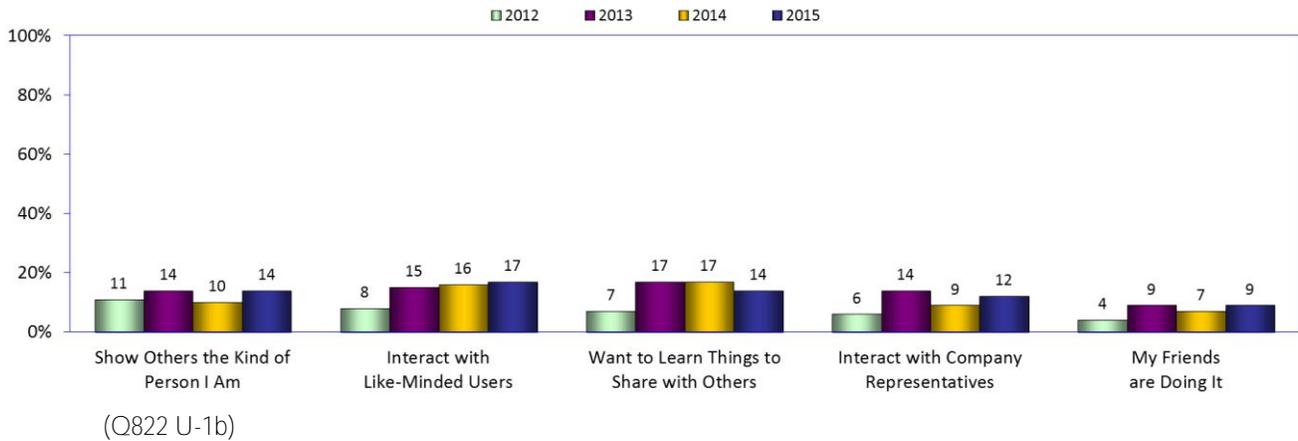
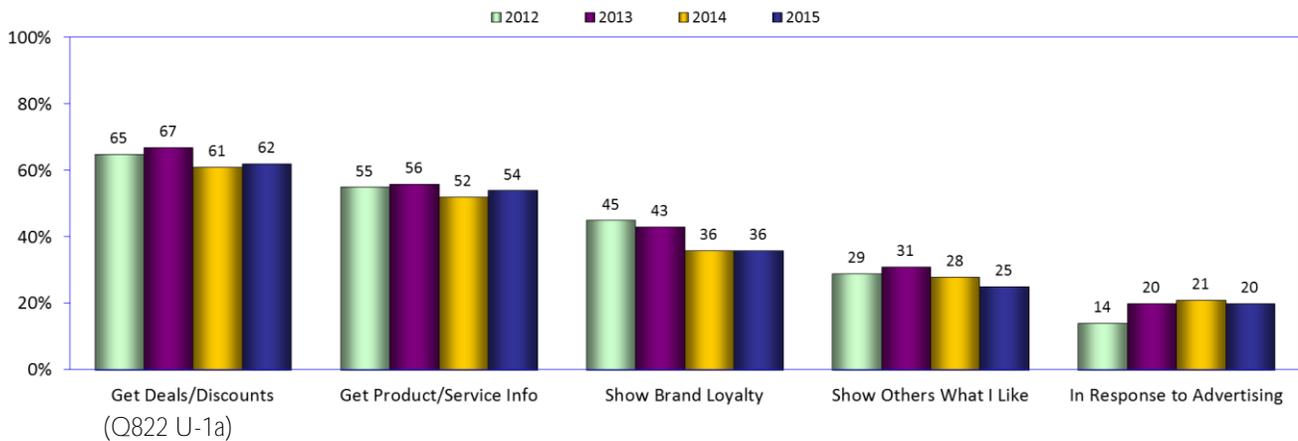


135. Following companies or brands on Facebook or Twitter: reasons why

Why do Internet users follow or friend companies or brands on Twitter or Facebook? For the third year in a row, the reason reported by the largest percentage of users is the opportunity to obtain deals or discounts – now 62 percent, down from the peak of 67 percent in 2013.

Other large percentages of users who friend companies or brands on social networking sites reported obtaining product or service information (54 percent, up from 52 percent in 2014), showing brand loyalty (now 36 percent for the second year, and a decrease from the peak of 45 percent in 2012).

What would you say are the main reasons you have friended companies or brands on Twitter or Facebook?  
(Internet users who friend companies/brands on social networking sites)



## Children and the Internet

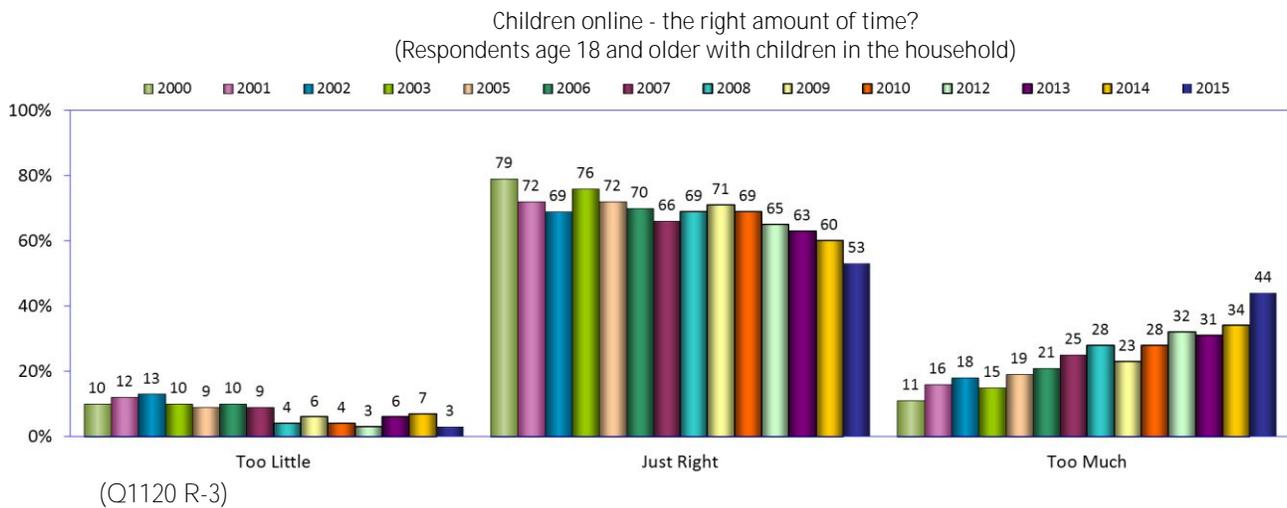
|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Adults who said the children in their households spend too much time. . .   |     |
| . . .online   | 44% |
| . . .watching television  | 39% |
| . . .playing video games  | 36% |
| Children who said that going online is very important or extremely important to their schoolwork                    | 86% |
| Adults who said that using the Internet has had a positive impact on the grades of the children in their households | 54% |
| Adults who deny Internet use as a punishment tool   | 48% |

## Children and the Internet

### 136. Internet use: the right amount of time for children?

A majority of adults in all of the Digital Future studies have said that the amount of time the children in their households spend online is just right. However, the percentage with that view is generally declining, and has reached a new low level in the studies: 53 percent, down for the fifth year in a row and significantly below the 79 percent reported in 2000.

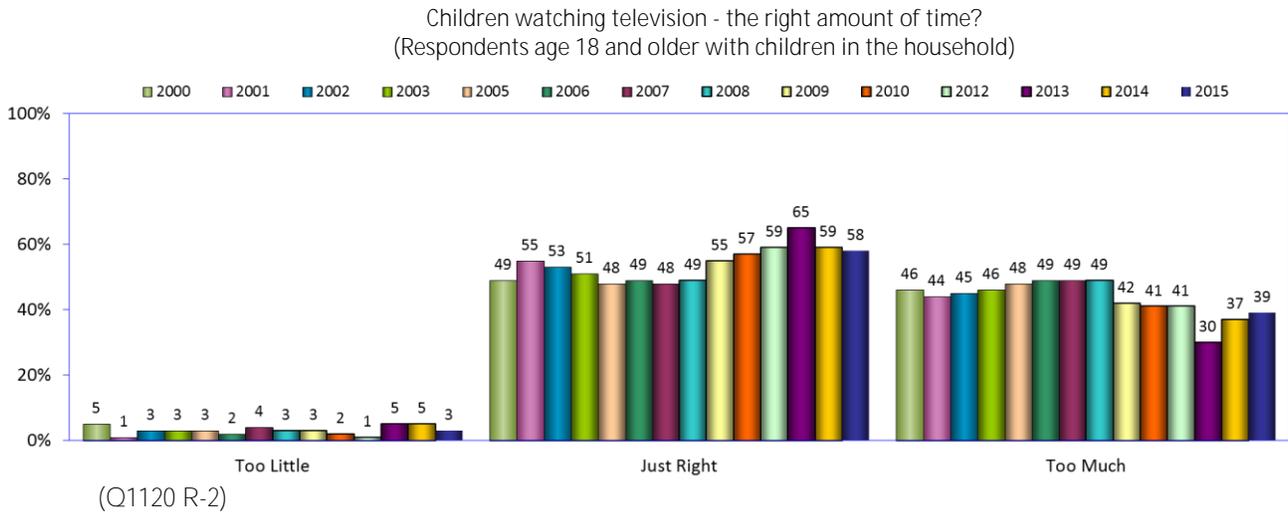
The percentage of adults who said the children in their household spend too much time online increased to 44 percent – a new high for the studies.



137. Television viewing: the right amount of time for children?

Fifty-eight percent of adults said that the amount of time children in their households watch television is just right, down slightly from 59 percent in 2014.

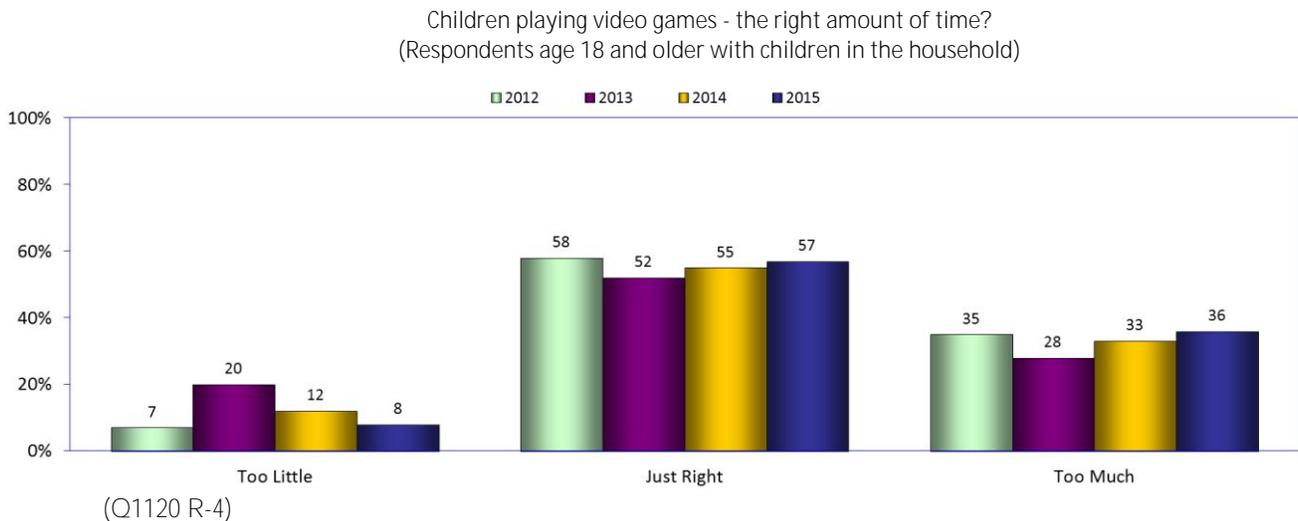
The percentage of adults who said the children in their households spend too much time watching television increased to 39 percent – up from 37 percent in 2014.



138. Video games: the right amount of time for children?

Fifty-seven percent of adults said that the amount of time children in their households playing video games is just right, up from 55 percent in 2014.

The percentage of adults who said the children in their households spend too much time gaming increased to 36 percent – up from 33 percent in 2014 and nearly equaling the responses for watching television.

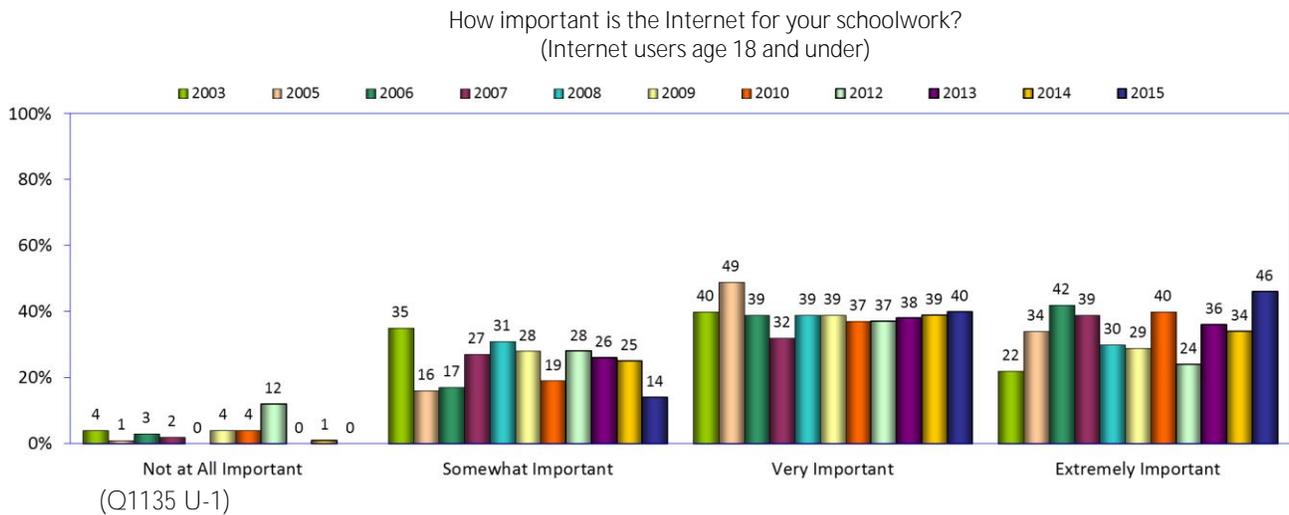


**139. The Internet and schoolwork: children’s views**

As in all of the previous Digital Future studies, children and adults continued to report widely different views about the value of the Internet for schoolwork (also see page 132).

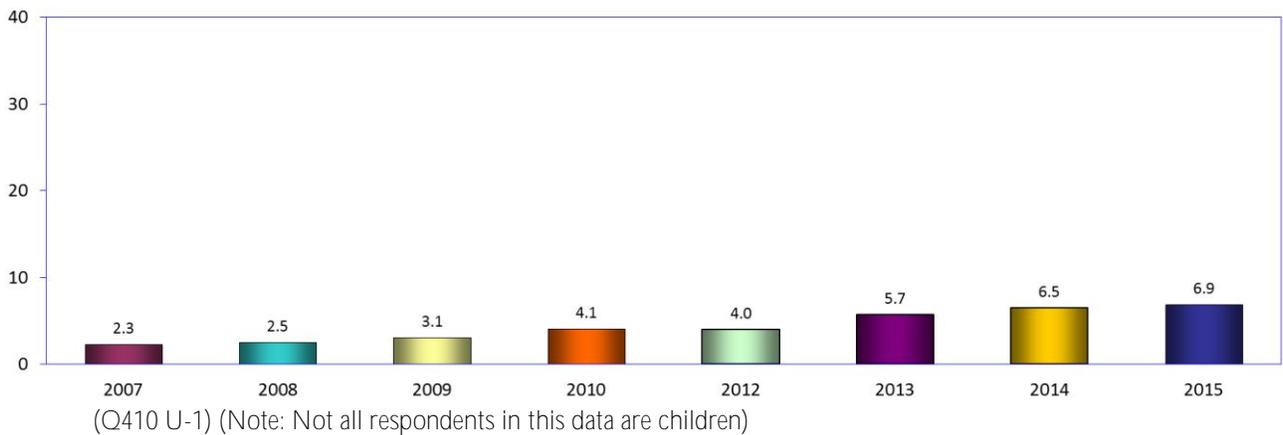
In the current study, 86 percent of Internet users age 18 and younger said that going online was very important or extremely important for their schoolwork, up from 73 percent in 2014, but still below the peak of 83 percent reported in 2005.

The percentage of Internet users age 18 and younger who said the Internet is not at all important for schoolwork, after generally ranging between one and four percent for all of the studies, dropped again to zero.



Additionally, the current study found that Internet users who are students continue to report increased time going online at school outside the home – now 6.9 hours, up from 6.5 hours in 2014 and a new high level for the Digital Future studies.

Internet access at school, outside the home, hours per week  
(Internet users who are students)

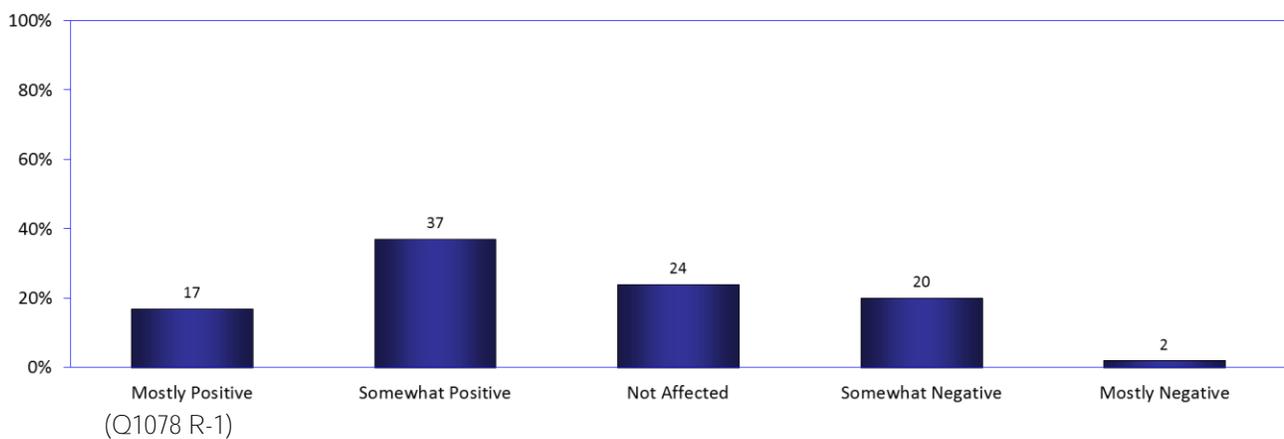


#### 140. Internet use and school grades: the adults' view

While very large percentages of children said that the Internet is important or very important for their studies (see page 131), adults continued to report much different views about the effect of the Internet on grades.

Fifty-four percent of adults said the Internet has had a positive impact on the grades of the children in their households. Twenty-two percent of adults reported that the Internet has had a negative effect on grades.

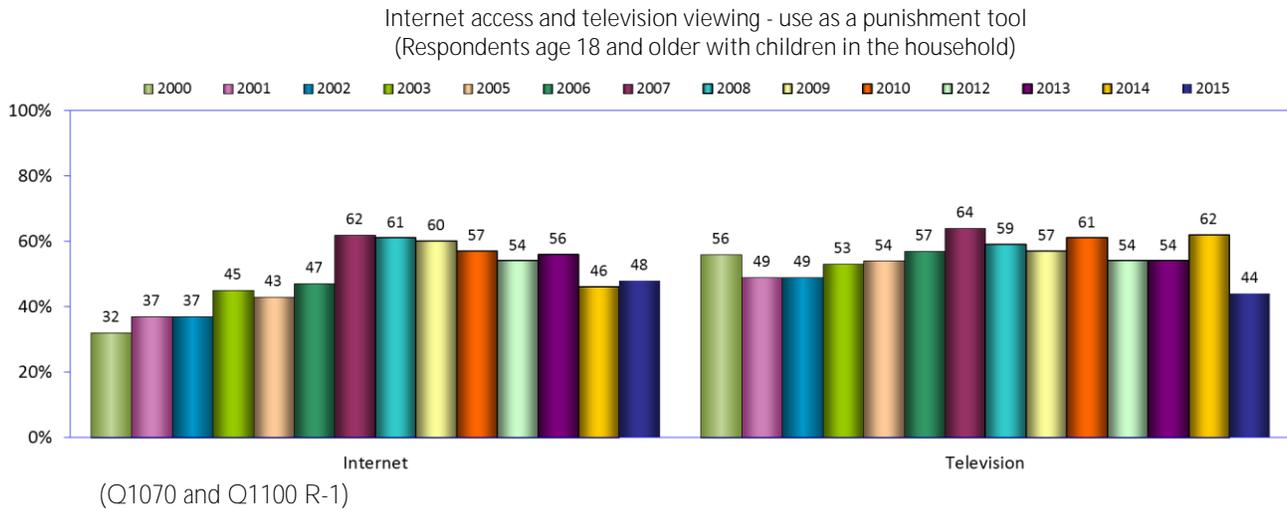
Do you think that the Internet has improved, hurt, or not affected the grades of the children in your household?  
(Respondents age 18 and older with children in the household)



#### 141. Internet use and television viewing: use as a punishment tool

In the current study, nearly even numbers of household use television (44 percent) or Internet (48 percent) as a punishment tool.

At the same time, use of television as a punishment tool has dropped to the lowest level yet in the study, down from the previous low of 49 percent.

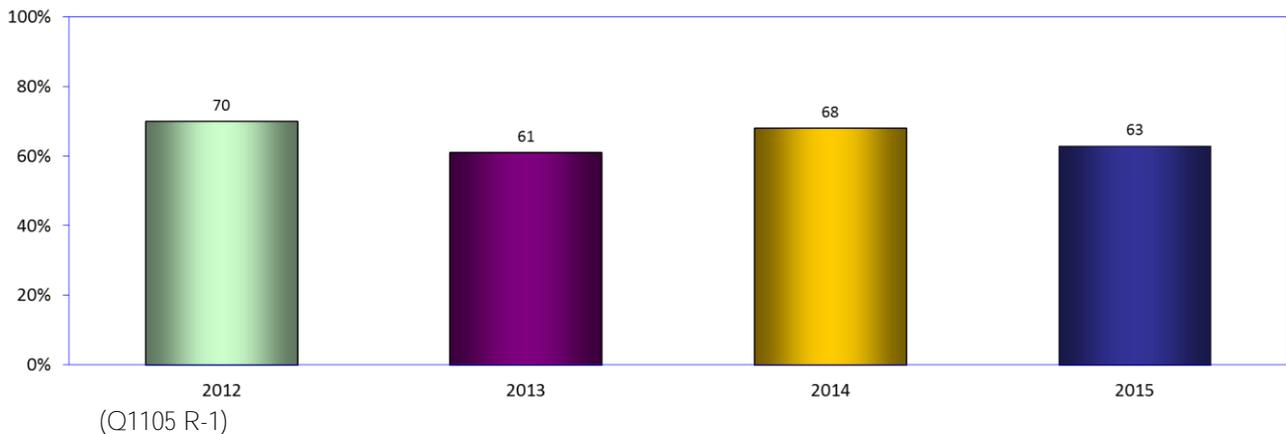


## Children, parents, and social networking

### 142. Do adults **monitor children's behavior on social networking sites?**

The percentage of adults who said they monitor the activity of the children in their households when on social networking sites such as Facebook decreased in the current study – now 63 percent, down from the 68 percent reported in 2014.

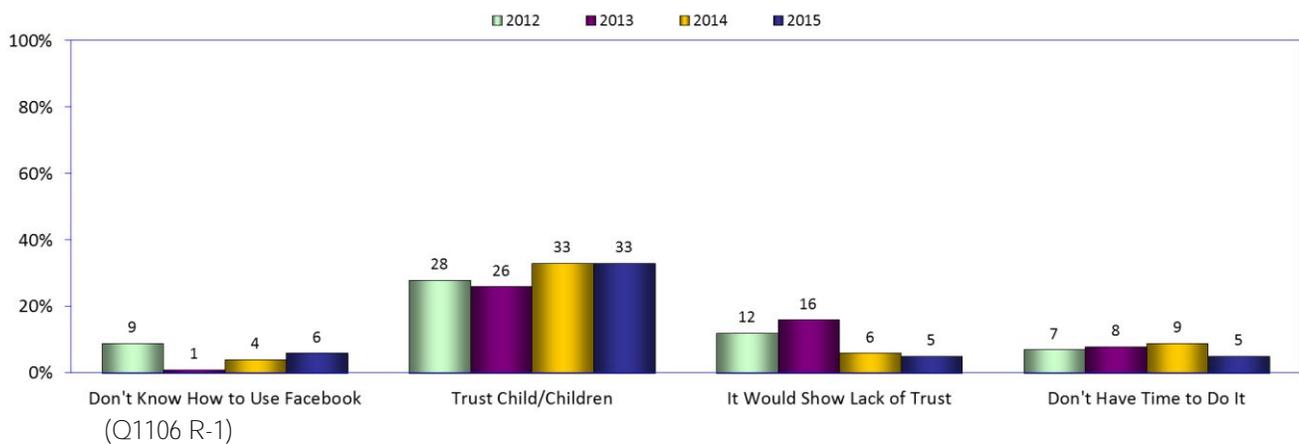
Do you monitor what your children do on social networking sites such as Facebook?  
(Respondents age 18 and older with children in the household)



### 143. Do adults monitor their **children's behavior on social networking sites?** (reasons why not)

Why do adults not monitor the social networking activity of the children in their households? Thirty-eight percent cite trust as the explanation: either they trust their children or they believe that monitoring online behavior would show lack of trust – down from the 39 percent reported in 2014.

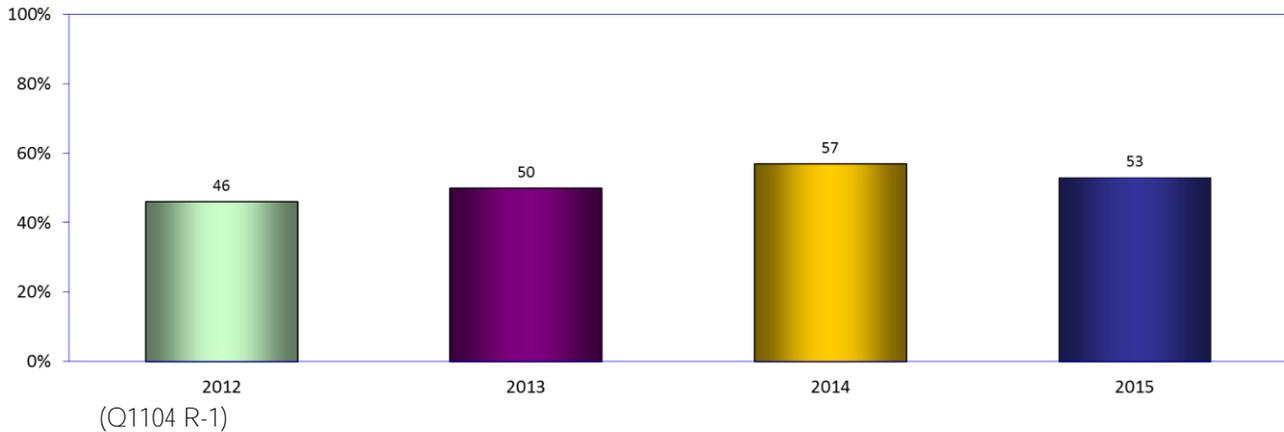
Why do you not monitor what your children do on social networking sites such as Facebook?  
(Respondents age 18 and older with children in the household who do not monitor what the children do on social networking sites)



#### 144. Do you have your children's passwords for social networking sites?

Even though 63 percent of adults said they monitor the activity of the children in their households while on Facebook or social networking sites (see the previous page), a smaller number – 53 percent – said they have password access to the children's accounts.

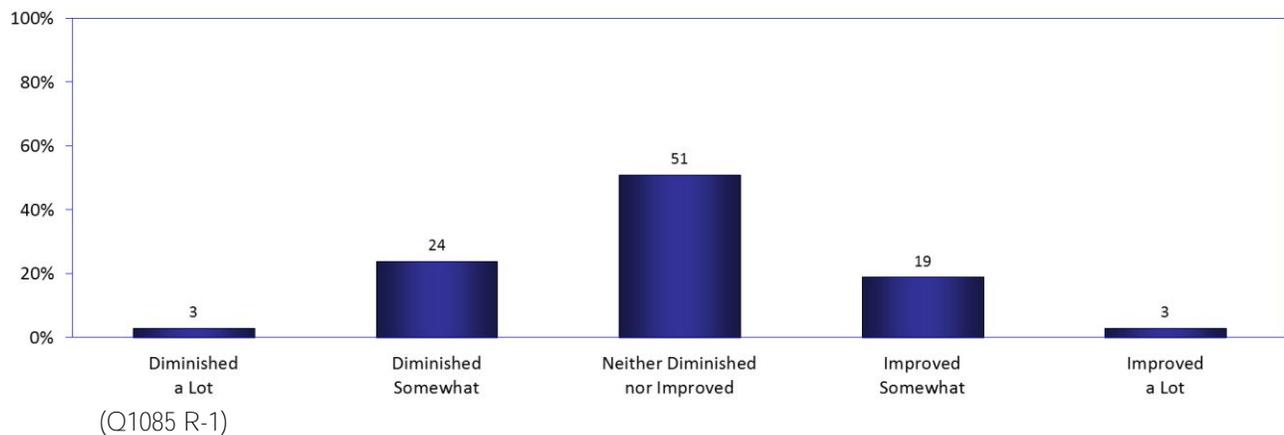
Do you **have password access to one or more of your children's accounts** on social networking sites, such as Facebook?  
(Respondents age 18 and older with children in the household)



#### 145. Instantaneous online communication impact on the **quality of children's** lives?

The majority of adults report that social networking or instantaneous communication has had no impact on their children's lives. Of the 49 percent who report that social networking has had an impact, 27 percent said the impact has been negative while a smaller number (22 percent) report a positive impact.

Has social networking or other instantaneous online communication **improved or diminished the quality of your children's** lives?  
(Respondents age 18 and older with children in the household)

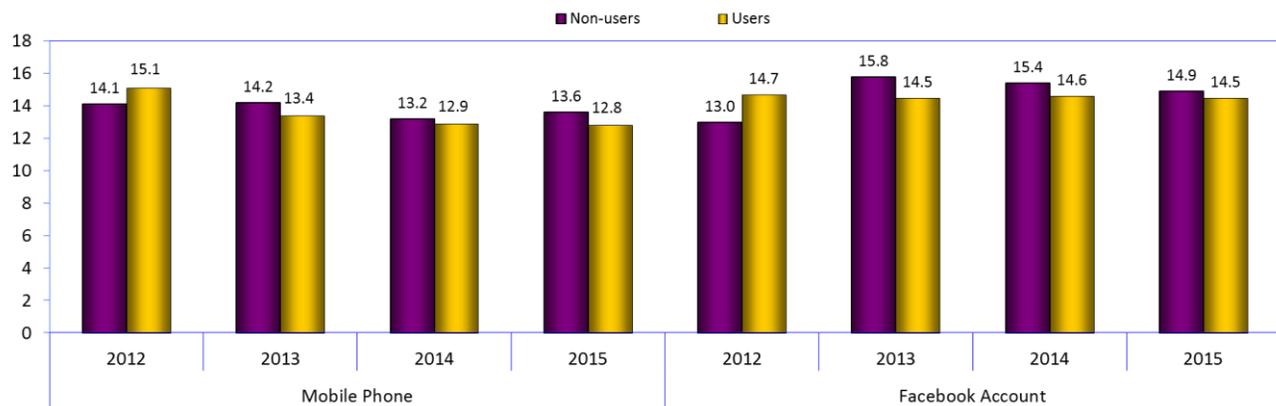


146. Mobile phones and Facebook: what age is appropriate for children? (Internet users vs. non-users)

When should children be allowed to have their own mobile phone or Facebook account? In the last three years, non-users reported a higher average age than users for mobile phones and Facebook accounts.

When considering Facebook accounts, the average age given by users has remained nearly flat (ranging between 14.7 and 14.5 in the last four years). However, the average age given by non-users has been dropping steadily since 2013 and is now nearing the same level as that given by users (14.9 for non-users and 14.5 for users in 2015).

At what age is it appropriate for a child to have a mobile phone or a Facebook account?  
(All respondents)



(Q1136 R-1)

## Political power and influence

Users who said. . .

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| . . . the Internet has become important for political campaigns                     | 80% |
| . . . by using the Internet public officials will care more about what people think | 41% |
| . . . the Internet helps people to better understand politics                       | 69% |
| . . . the Internet can give people more say in what government does                 | 41% |
| . . . by using the Internet people like you can have more political power           | 45% |

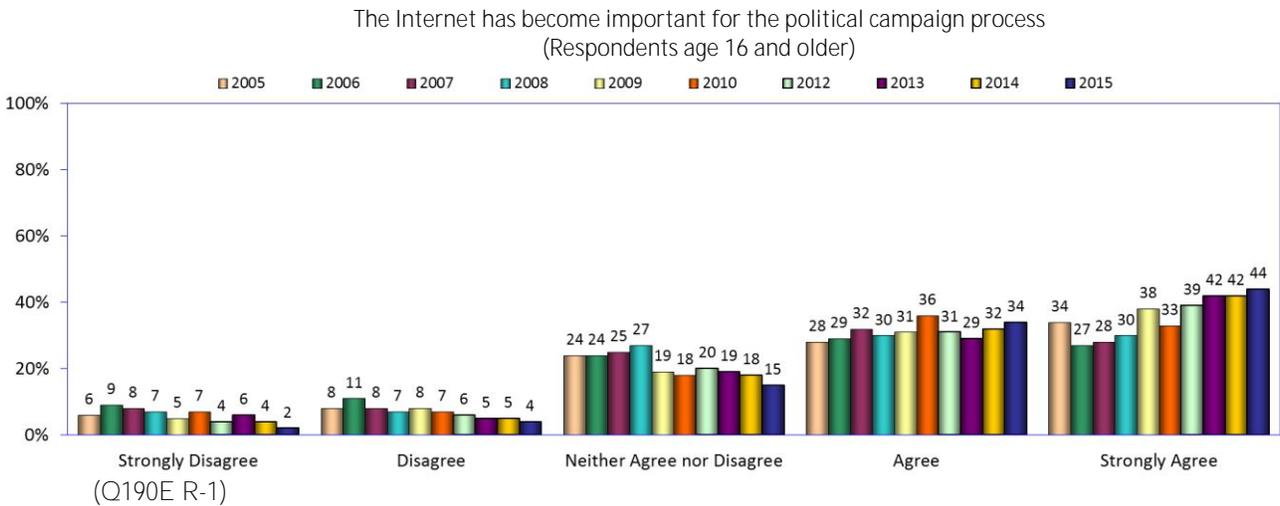
# The Internet and the political process

## 147. The Internet’s importance in political campaigns

The percentage of respondents age 16 and older in the study who agree that the Internet has become important for political campaigns continues to increase in the current Digital Future study.

Seventy-eight percent of respondents age 16 and older agree or strongly agree that the Internet has become important for political campaigns, up from the 74 percent reported in 2014 and a new high for the studies.

The percentage of those who do not think that the Internet is important in political campaigns decreased to six percent of respondents, down from nine percent in 2014 and a low for the study.

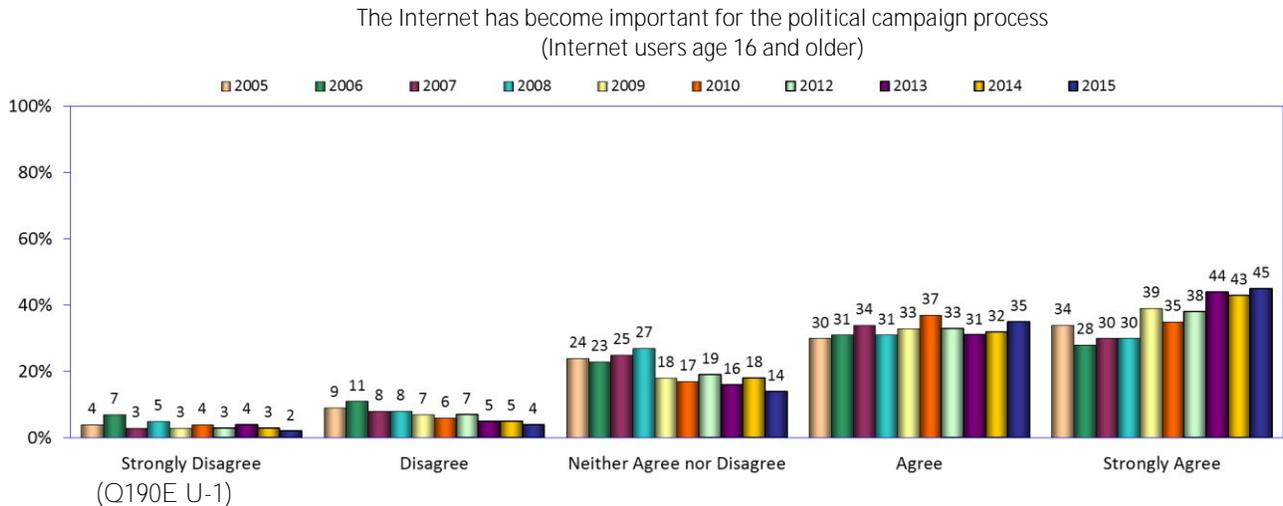


**148. The Internet’s importance in political campaigns (Internet users)**

The percentage of users who believe that the Internet is important for the political campaign process remains at its peak level thus far in the Digital Future studies.

Eighty percent of users agree or strongly agree that the Internet has become important for political campaigns, up from 75 percent in 2014 and a new high.

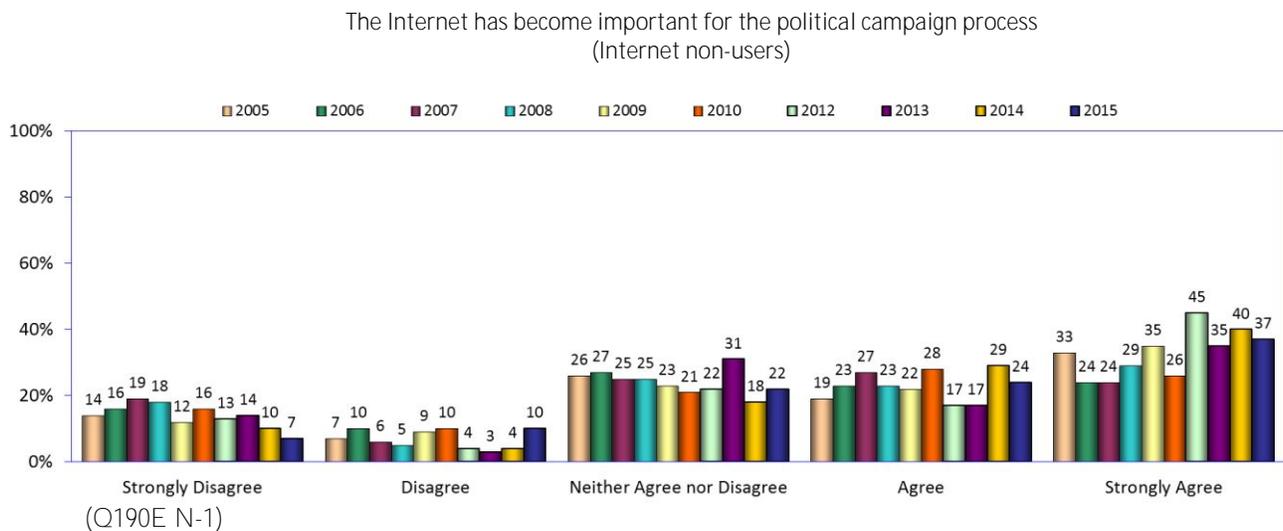
The percentage of Internet users who do not think the Internet is important in political campaigns has dropped to six percent, down from the previous low of eight percent in 2014.



**149. The Internet’s importance in political campaigns (Internet non-users)**

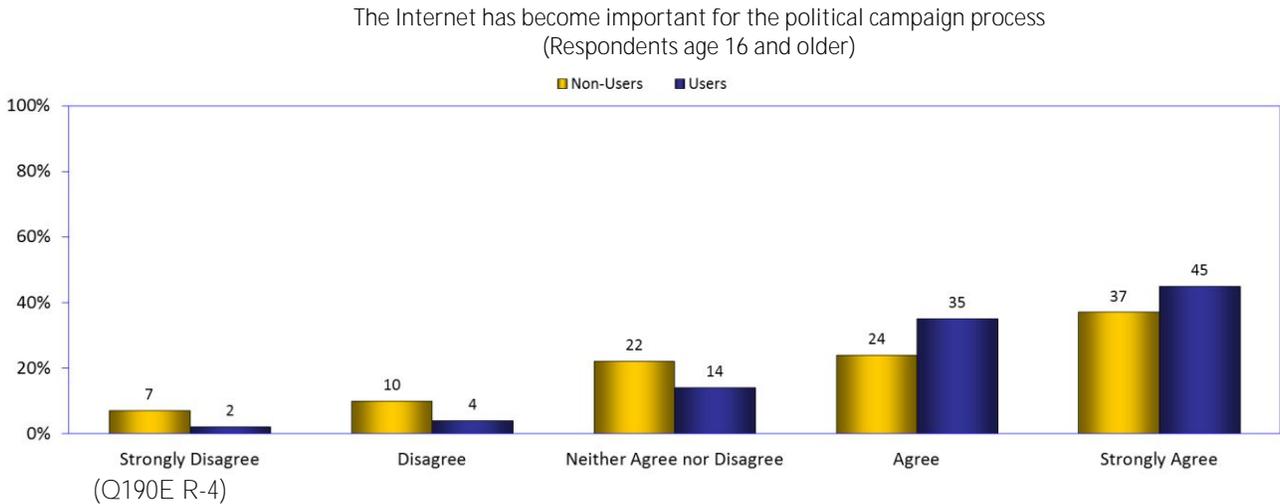
A large majority of Internet non-users also agree that the Internet is important in political campaigns, however that percentage has declined.

Sixty-one percent of non-users in the current study said that the Internet is important in political campaigns, down from 69 percent in 2014. However, only 17 percent do not think the Internet is important in political campaigns.



150. **The Internet’s importance in political campaigns (Internet users vs. non-users)**

In the current study, Internet users and non-users age 16 and older report moderately different views about the importance of the Internet in political campaigns. While 80 percent of users agree or strongly agree that the Internet has become important for political campaigns, 61 percent of non-users report the same view.

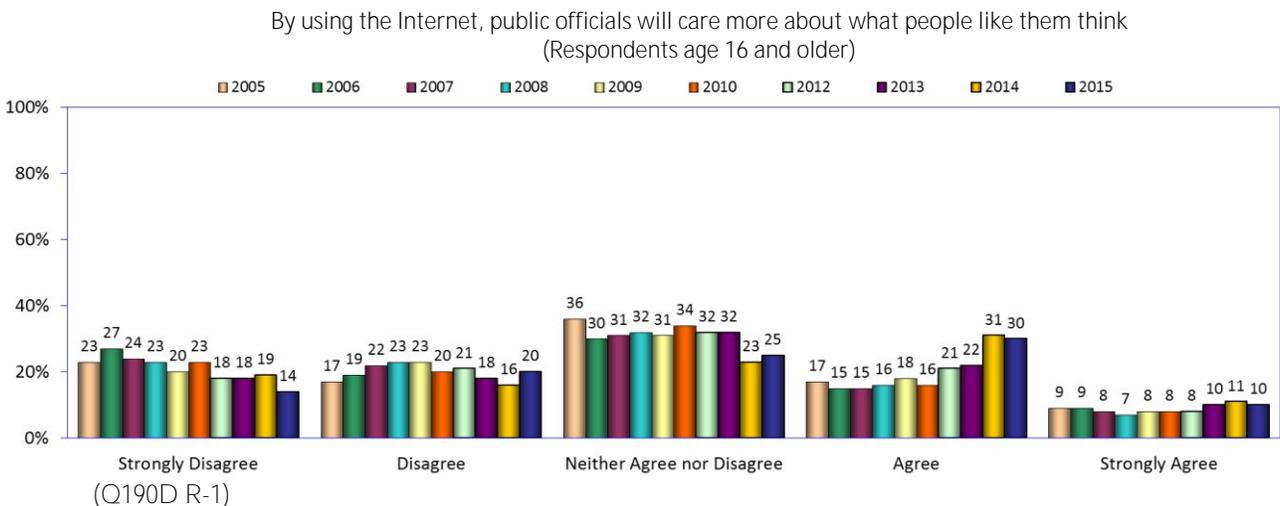


151. Is the Internet a tool for political influence?

How do Internet users feel about the ability of online technology to create influence with public officials?

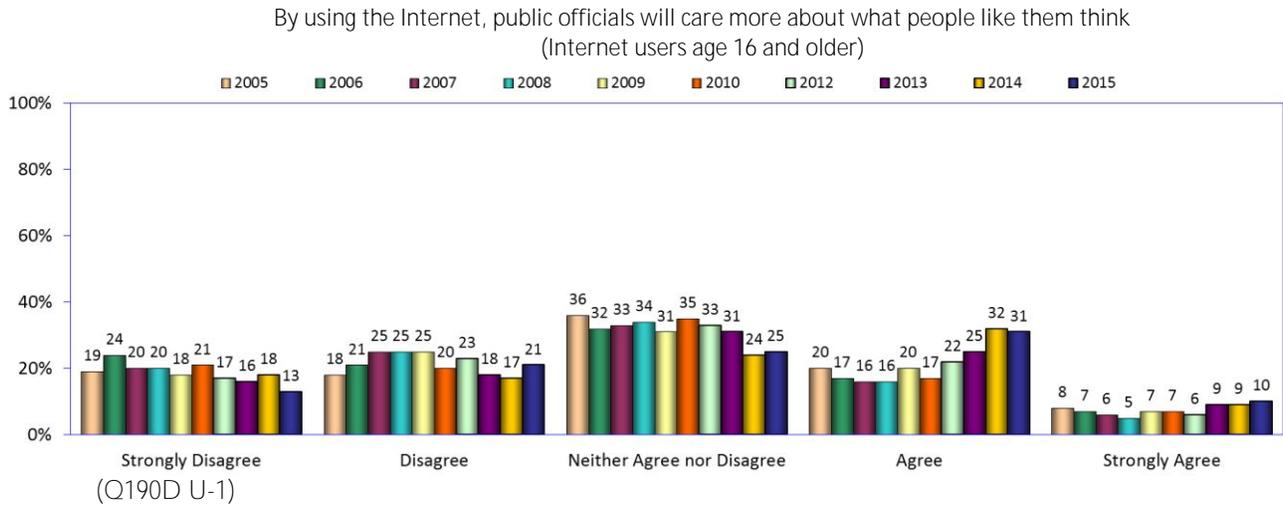
In the current study, 40 percent of respondents believe that by using the Internet, public officials will care more about what people like them think, an decrease from 42 percent in 2014.

The percentage that disagrees or strongly disagrees with the statement remained almost at the level of 2014 – now 34 percent, down only one percentage point from the previous study. Nonetheless, the current percentage of disagreement is the lowest thus far in the studies.



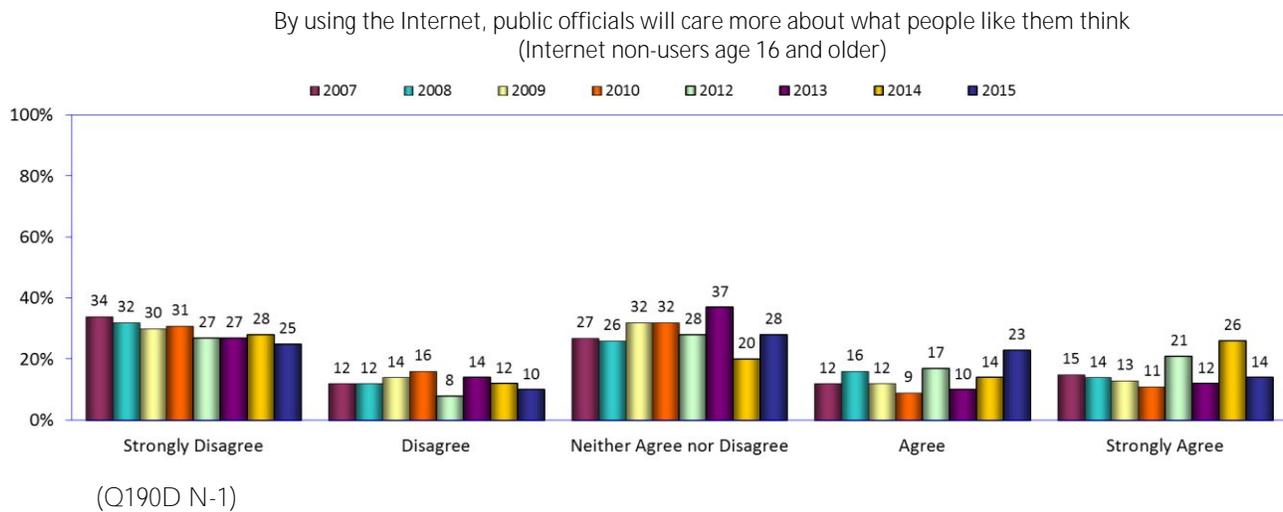
152. The Internet as a tool for political influence (Internet users)

Among Internet users age 16 and older, 41 percent agree that the Internet can make public officials care more about what people like them think, the same as in the previous study.



153. The Internet as a tool for political influence (Internet non-users)

Compared to Internet users (see above), a smaller percentage of non-users (37 percent) agree that using the Internet can make public officials care more about what people like them think, a decline from 40 percent in the previous study.

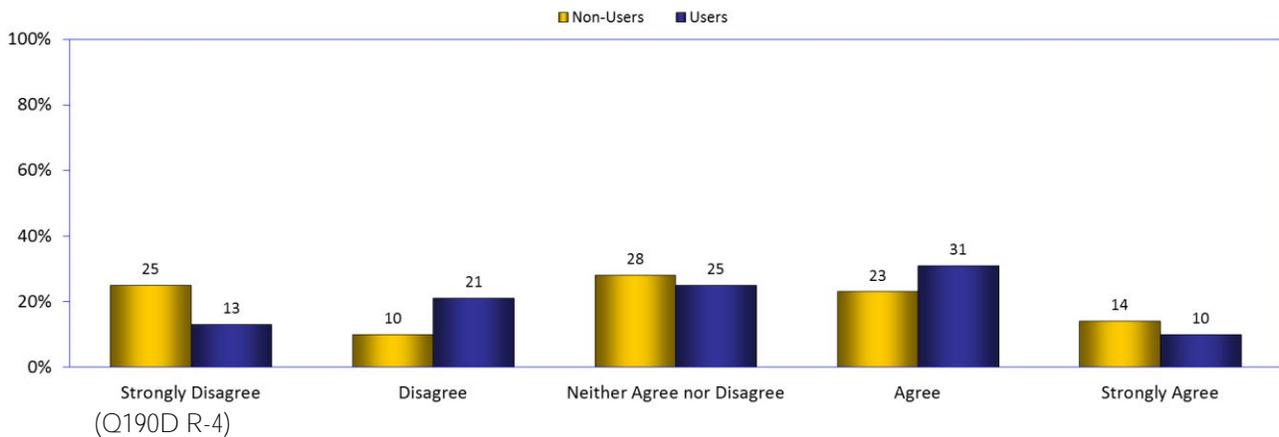


154. The Internet as a tool for political influence (Internet users vs. non-users)

Moderate percentages of Internet users and non-users agree that the Internet can be a tool for political influence: 41 percent of users vs. 37 of non-users.

Numbers are closer between non-users (35 percent) and users (34 percent) who disagree or strongly disagree that the Internet will cause public officials to care more about what people like them think, although almost twice as many non-users strongly disagree than users.

By using the Internet, public officials will care more about what people like them think  
(Respondents age 16 and older)

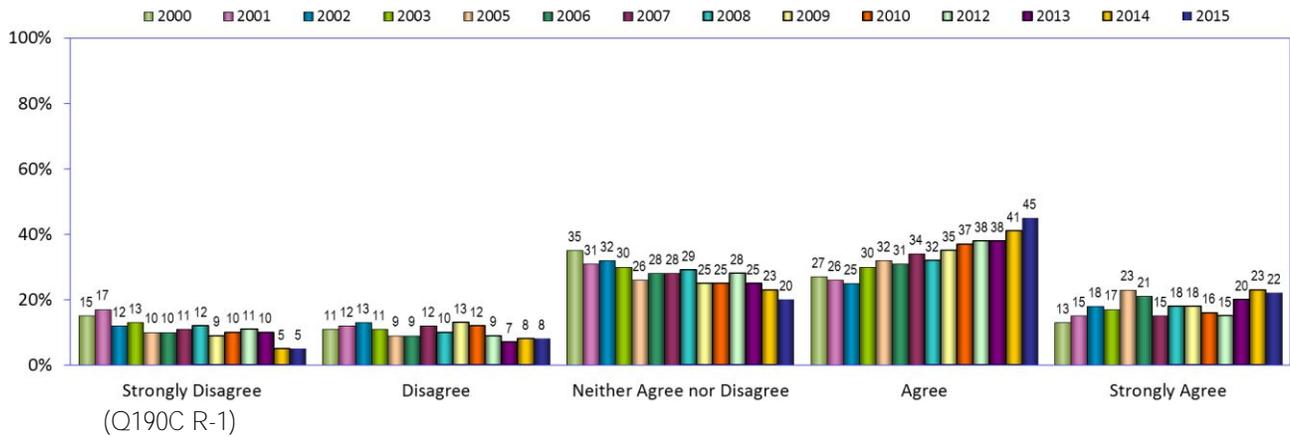


155. The Internet: a tool for better understanding politics

The percentage of respondents agreeing that the Internet can help people better understand politics continues its general upward trend in the current study, and has now reached 67 percent of respondents age 16 and older, an increase from 64 percent in 2014 and a new high level for the Digital Future project.

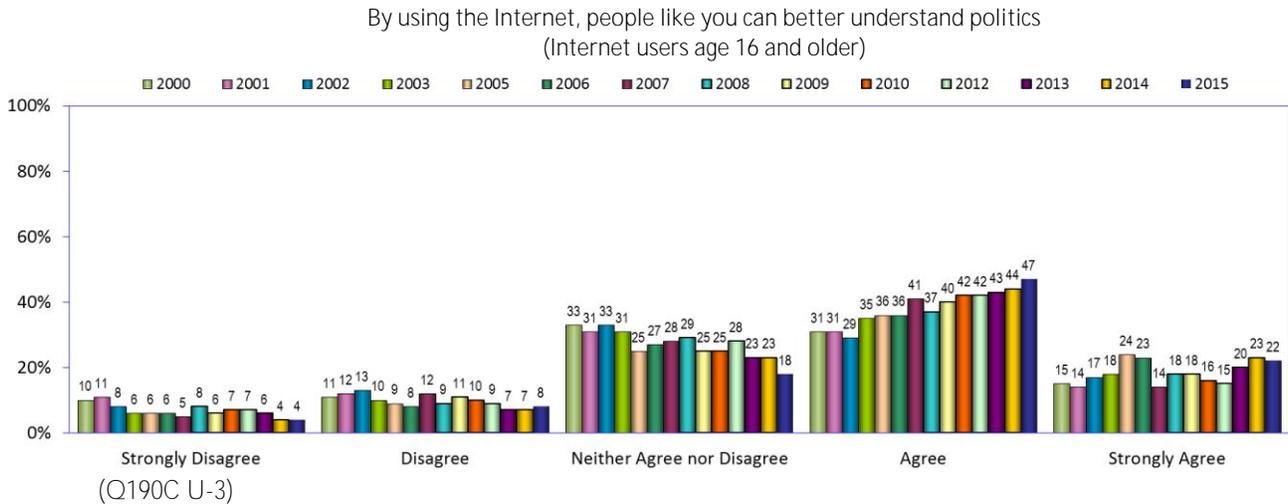
The percentage who disagree or strongly disagree that using the Internet allows people to better understand politics remains at 13 percent, matching 2014.

Using the Internet allows people to better understand politics  
(Respondents age 16 and older)



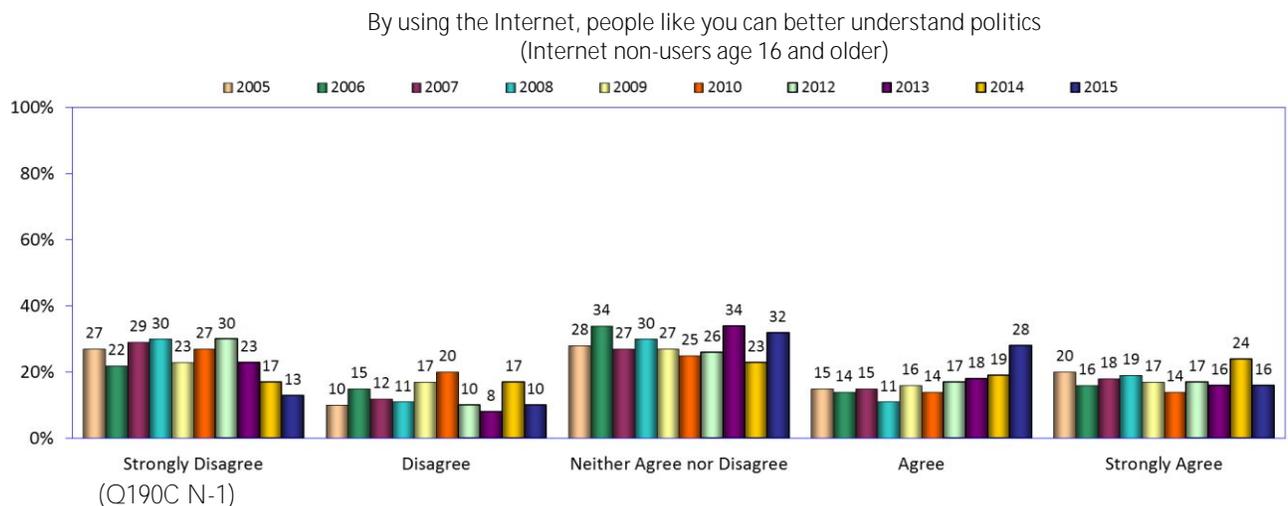
156. The Internet: a tool for better understanding politics (Internet users)

Sixty-nine percent of users agree or strongly agree that going online can help people better understand politics, up from 67 percent in 2014.



157. The Internet: a tool for better understanding politics (Internet non-users)

Forty-four percent of Internet non-users in the current study agreed or strongly agreed that going online can help people better understand politics – the highest response thus far in the Digital Future studies.

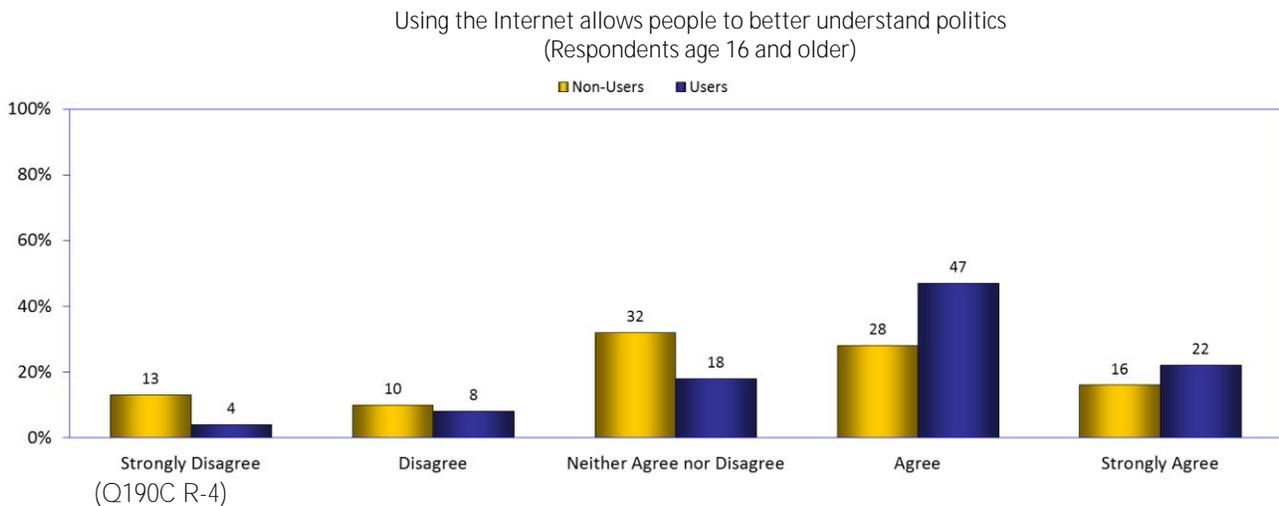


158. The Internet: a tool for better understanding politics (Internet users vs. non-users)

Compared to other questions about the Internet and politics, much higher percentages of users compared to non-users agree that the Internet allows people to better understand politics.

Sixty-nine percent of users age 16 and older in the current study said that using the Internet allows people to better understand politics, compared to 44 percent of non-users.

At the other extreme, nearly twice the percentage of non-users compared to users disagree or strongly disagree with this statement: 23 percent for non-users and 12 percent for users.



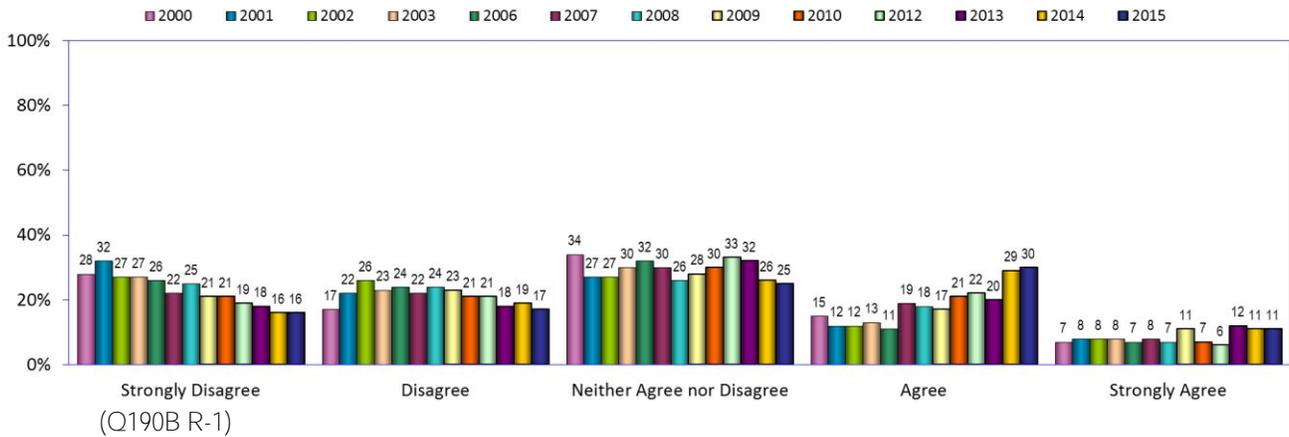
159. Does the Internet give people more say in what the government does?

Compared with responses to questions about the Internet’s political influence and helping people to better understand politics, a lower percentage – but another new peak for the Digital Future studies – said that by going online, people like them can have more say in what the government does.

Forty-one percent of respondents agree or strongly agree that the Internet can give people more of a say in what the government does – up marginally from 40 percent in 2014.

At the other extreme, 33 percent of respondents disagree or strongly disagree that the Internet gives people more say in what the government does, down from 35 percent in 2014 and a new low for the studies.

By using the Internet, people like you can have more say in what the government does  
(Respondents age 16 and older)

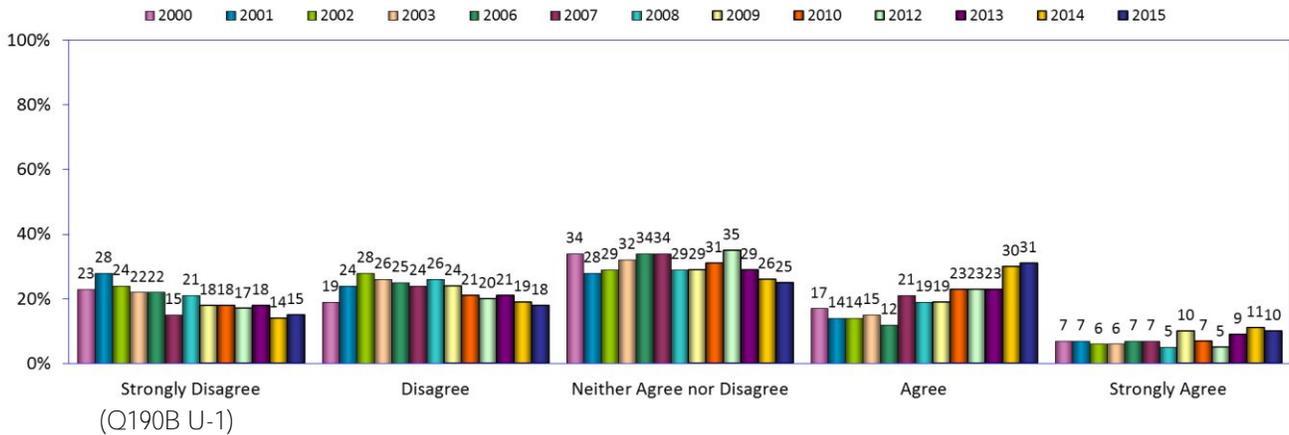


160. Does the Internet give people more say in what the government does? (Internet users)

Forty-one percent of users age 16 and older agree or strongly agree that using the Internet can give people more say in what the government does, the same percentage as in 2014.

The percentage of users who disagree with this statement, which had remained generally stable in the 37 to 39 percent range from 2010 to 2012, declined to 33 percent in 2014 and is the same in the current study.

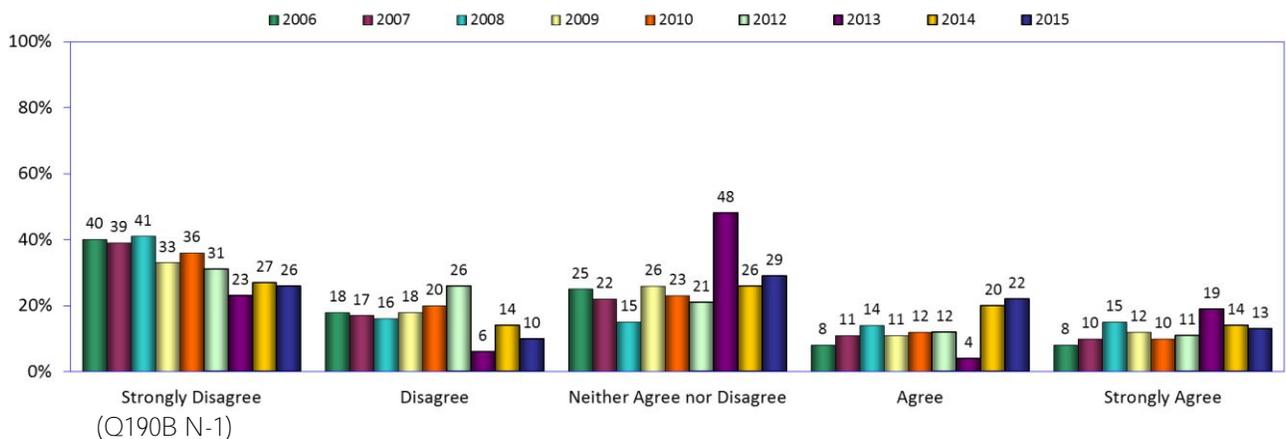
By using the Internet, people like you can have more say in what the government does  
(Internet users age 16 and older)



161. Does the Internet give people more say in what the government does? (Internet non-users)

Thirty-five percent of non-users age 16 and older agree or strongly agree that using the Internet can give people more say in what the government does, slightly higher than the 34 percent reported in 2014.

By using the Internet, people like you can have more say in what the government does  
(Internet non-users age 16 and older)

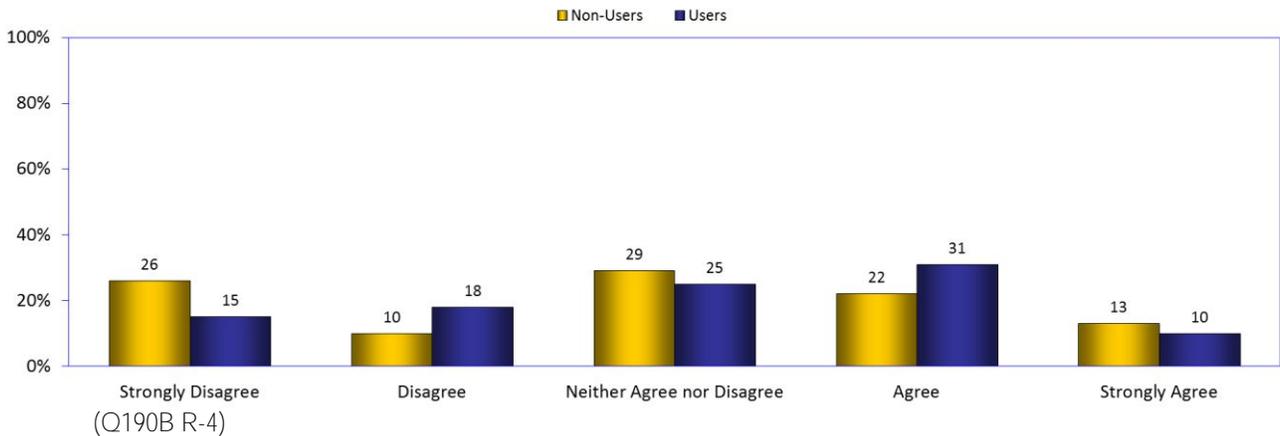


162. Does the Internet give people more say in what the government does? (Internet users vs. non-users)

More users (41 percent) compared to non-users (35 percent) age 16 and older agree or strongly agree that the Internet gives people more say in what the government does.

A larger percentage of non-users (36 percent) compared to users (33 percent) disagree or strongly disagree with the idea that the Internet can help people like them have more say in what the government does.

By using the Internet, people like you can have more say in what the government does  
(Respondents age 16 and older)



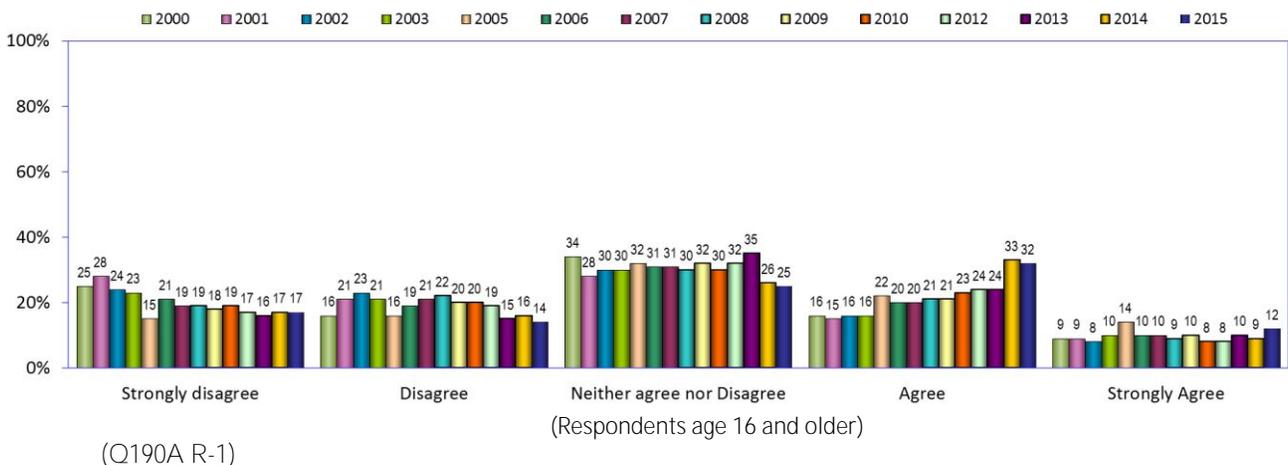
163. The Internet as a tool to help gain political power

The percentage of respondents age 16 and older who said that the Internet is a tool to help them gain political power increased marginally in the current study.

Forty-four percent of respondents agree or strongly agree that people like them can use the Internet to gain more political power, up from 42 percent in 2014 and an increase for the fourth year in a row.

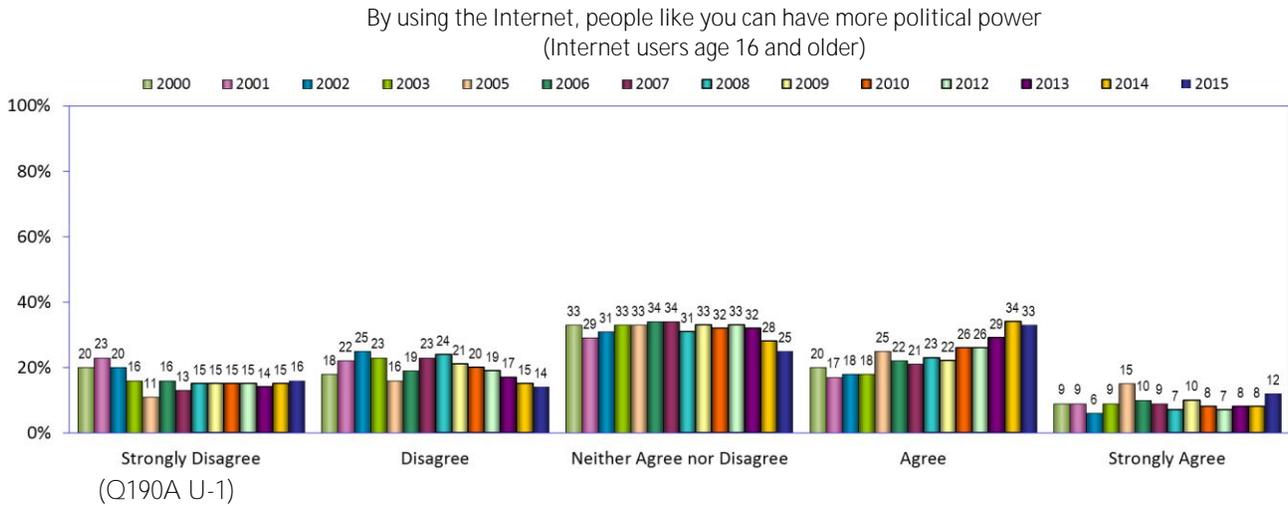
However, 31 percent of respondents disagree or strongly disagree with this statement, a slight decrease from 2014 and a return to the previous low reported in 2013 and 2005.

By using the Internet, people like you can have more political power



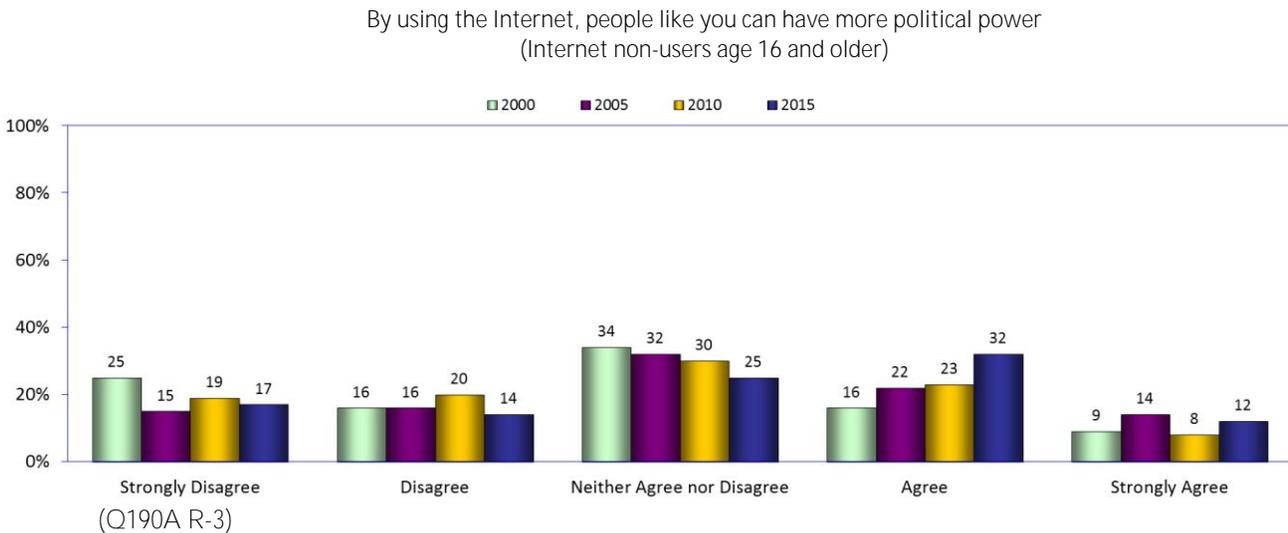
164. The Internet as a tool to help gain political power (Internet users)

Forty-five percent of users agree or strongly agree that by using the Internet, people like them can have more political power, up from 42 percent in 2014 and the highest number so far.



165. The Internet as a tool to help gain political power (Internet non-users)

Thirty-seven percent of non-users agree or strongly agree that by using the Internet, people like them can have more political power – the highest level reported in the studies.



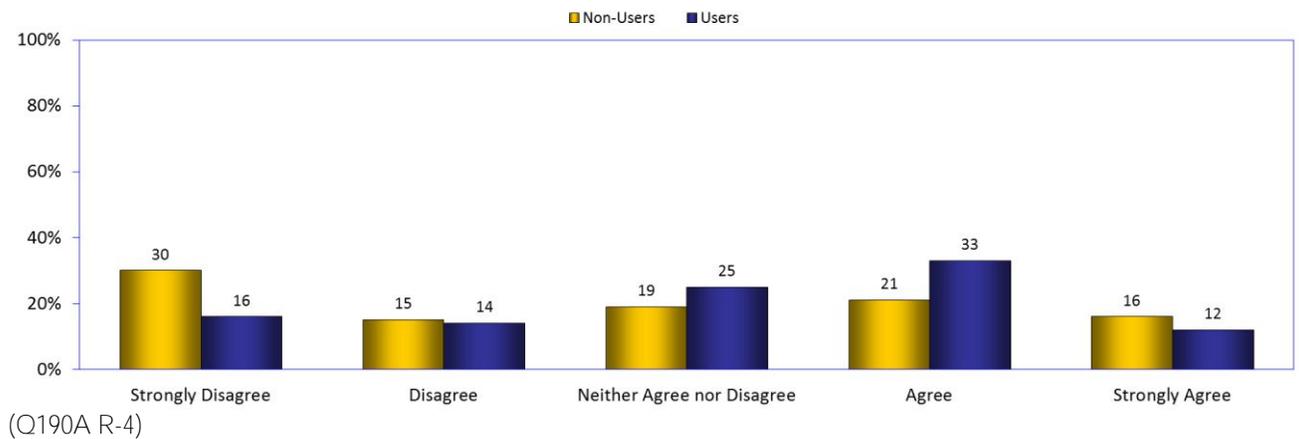
### 166. The Internet as a tool to help gain political power (Internet users vs. non-users)

Users and non-users report modest differences in their views about the Internet's role as a tool to gain political power.

Forty-five percent of users and 37 percent of non-users agree or strongly agree that by using the Internet people like them can have more political power.

The study found a larger difference in disagreement about using the Internet as a tool to help gain political power. Forty-five percent of non-users compared to 30 percent of users disagree or strongly disagree that the Internet can be a tool to help gain political power.

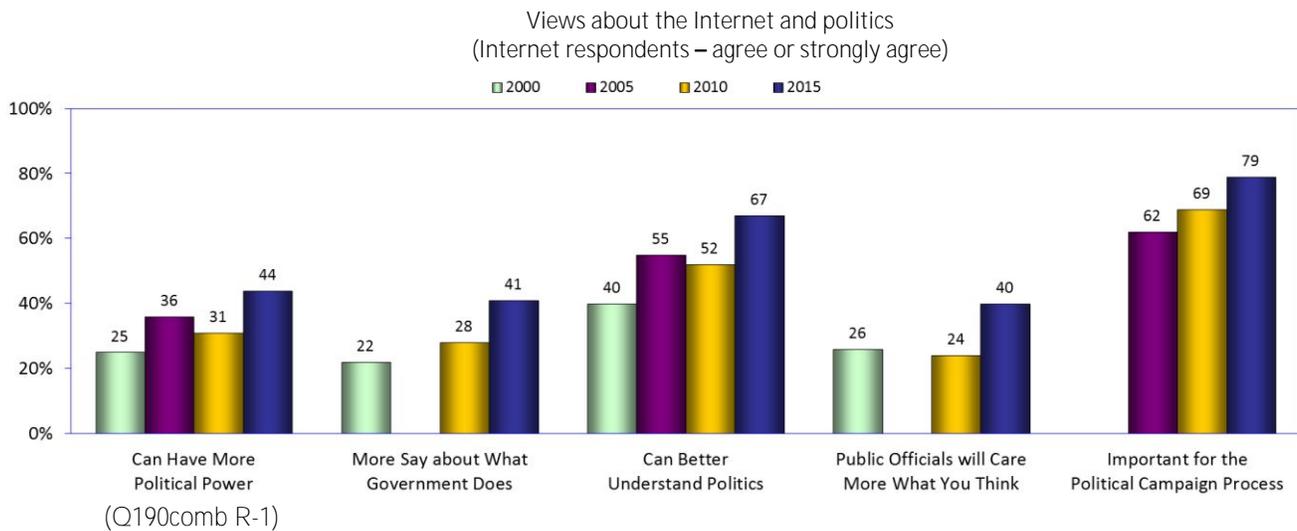
By using the Internet people like you can have more political power  
(Respondents age 16 and older)



### 167. At a glance: views about the Internet and politics

Comparing the findings from every five years about the Internet and politics shows dramatically changing views about the role of going online in the political process.

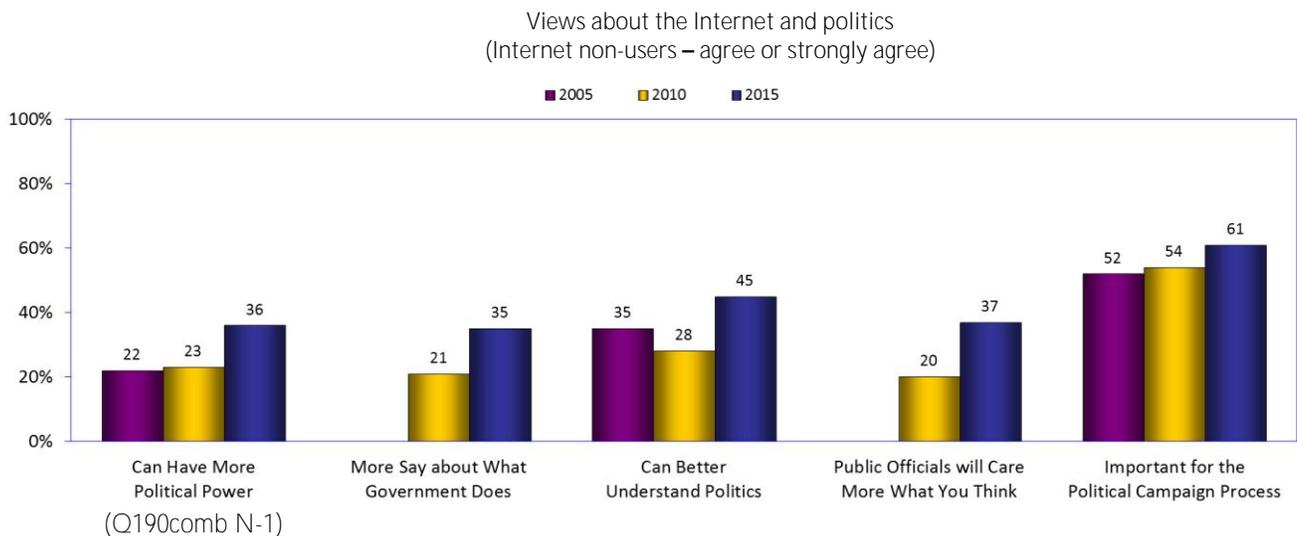
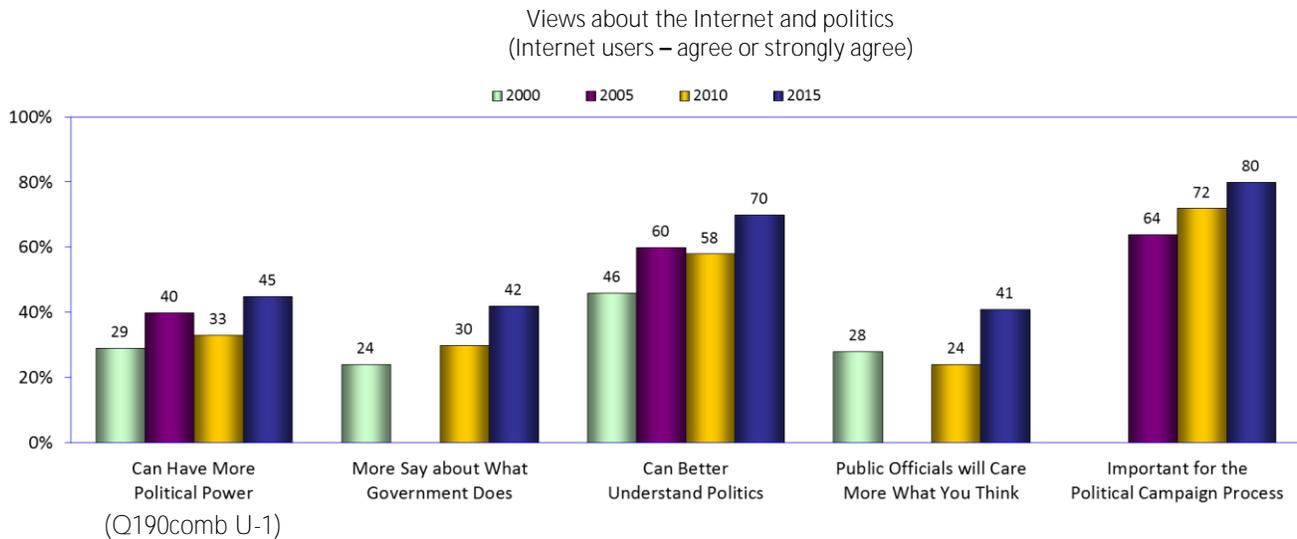
Larger and growing percentages of all respondents – both users and non-users – said that by using the Internet, people like them can have more political power, more say in what the government does, encourage a better understanding of politics, and encourage public officials to care more about what people think. And for the second year in a row, a growing percentage of all respondents said that the Internet is important for the political campaign process – now 79 percent of all respondents.



### 167. At a glance: views about the Internet and politics (continued)

Compared to all respondents (see the previous page), the levels of agreement about the importance of the Internet in the political process in all five categories are even higher for Internet users.

Growing Internet non-users also agree or strongly agree about the importance of the Internet in politics, with the highest level of agreement thus far in the studies for all five categories (see the second chart below)



## The Internet and free speech about politics & government

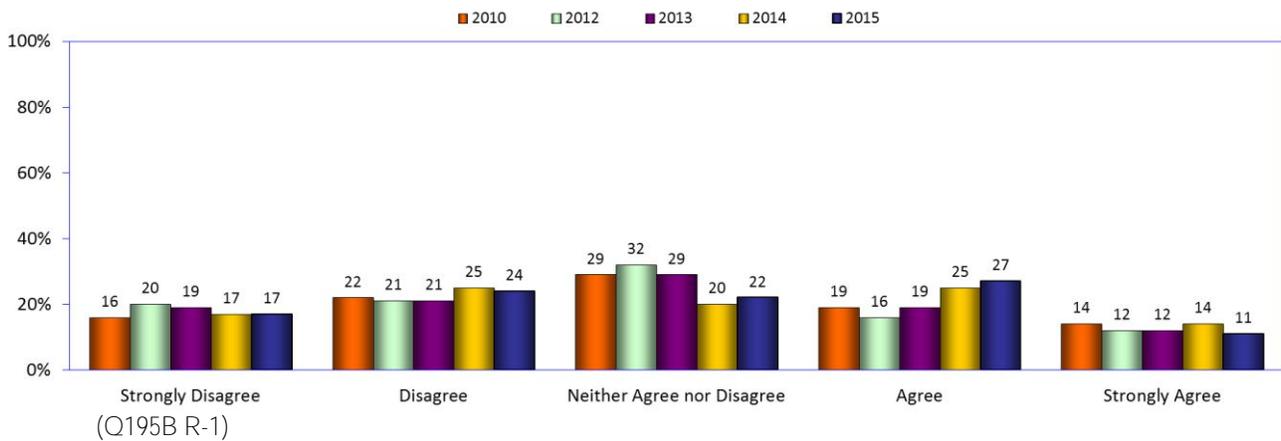
168. Personal political expression on the Internet: is it safe to say whatever you think while online?

The number of respondents age 16 and older who believe that it is safe to voice their views about politics while online has remained largely unchanged in the current Digital Future study.

Thirty-eight percent agreed it is safe to voice their views about politics while online – down slightly from 39 percent in 2014.

Similarly, the percentage of respondents who disagree or strongly disagree with this statement decreased one percentage point – now 41 percent, down from 42 percent in 2014.

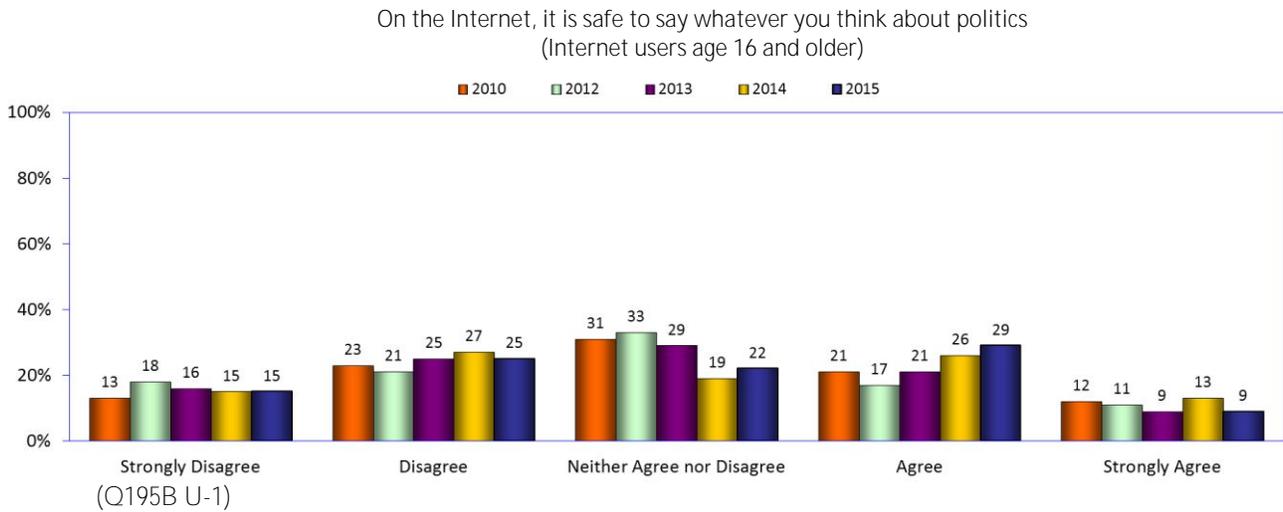
On the Internet, it is safe to say whatever you think about politics  
(Respondents age 16 and older)



169. On the Internet, it is safe to say whatever you think about politics (Internet users)

As with overall responses to this question, the percentage of Internet users age 16 and older who said it is safe to say online whatever they think about politics has remained generally stable – now 38 percent, down one point from 2014.

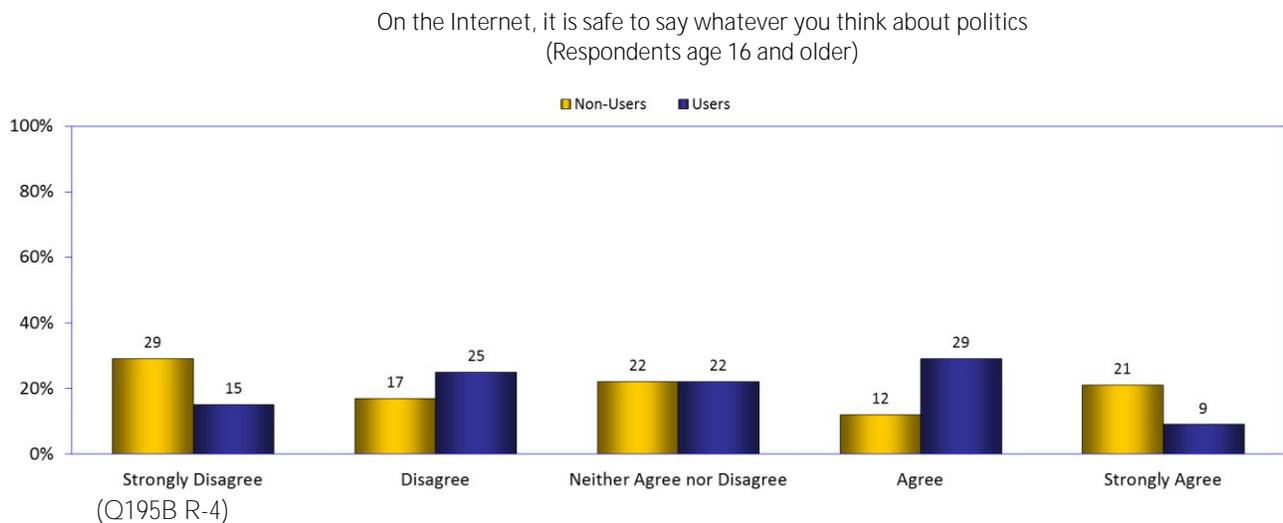
The percentage of those who disagree with this statement had decreased slightly, now down to 40 percent, a marginal decrease from 42 percent in 2014.



170. On the Internet, it is safe to say whatever you think about politics (users vs. non-users)

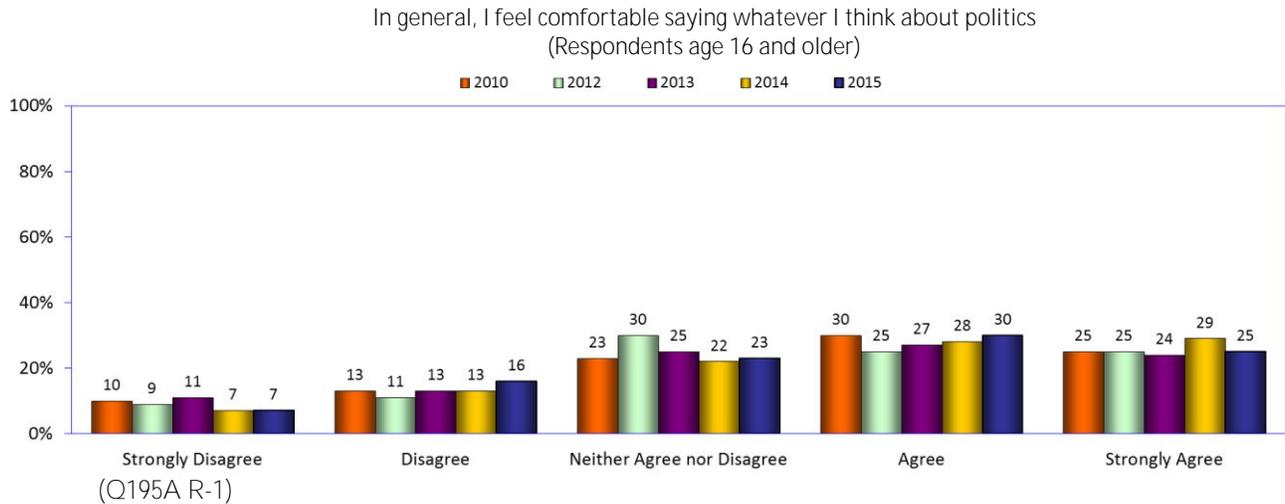
Users and non-users continue to report differences in views about the safety of personal expression while online. Thirty-eight percent of users compared to 33 percent of non-users agree or strongly agree that on the Internet, it is safe to say whatever they think about politics.

Conversely, 46 percent of non-users compared to 40 percent of users disagree with this statement.



### 171. I feel comfortable saying whatever I think about politics

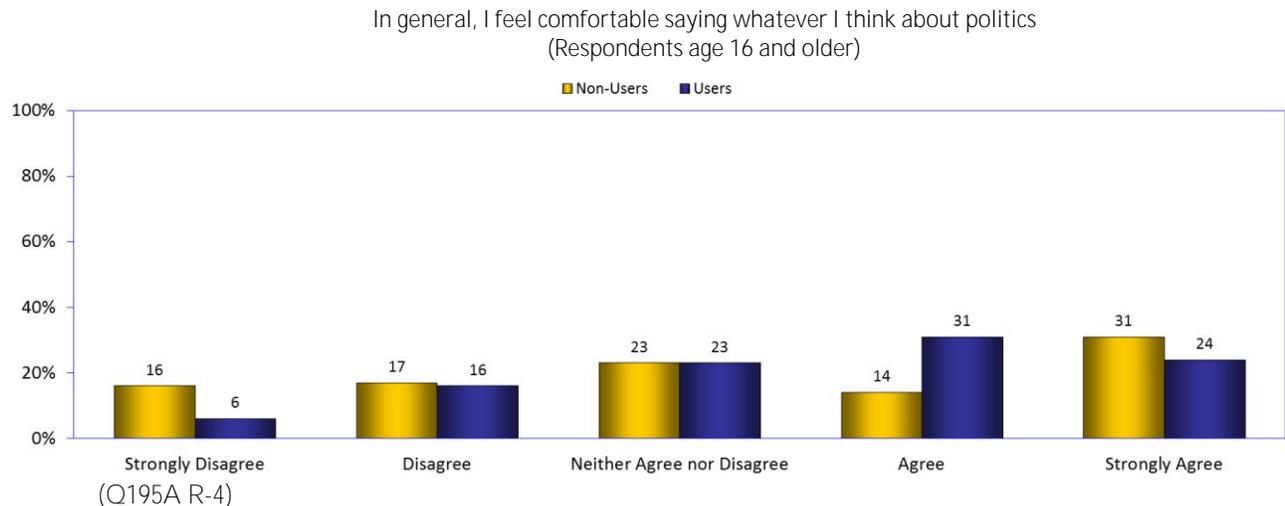
Compared to those who said it is safe to say whatever you think about politics while online (see the previous question), a much larger percentage of respondents said that they feel comfortable saying whatever they think about politics: now 55 percent, down marginally from 57 percent in 2014.



### 172. I feel comfortable saying whatever I think about politics (Internet users vs. non-users)

Compared to responses about the safety of free expression about politics while online (see the previous question), much larger percentages of users and non-users feel comfortable saying whatever they think about politics: 55 percent of users and 45 percent of non-users agree or strongly agree.

Twenty-two percent of users and 33 percent of non-users disagree that they feel comfortable saying whatever they think about politics.

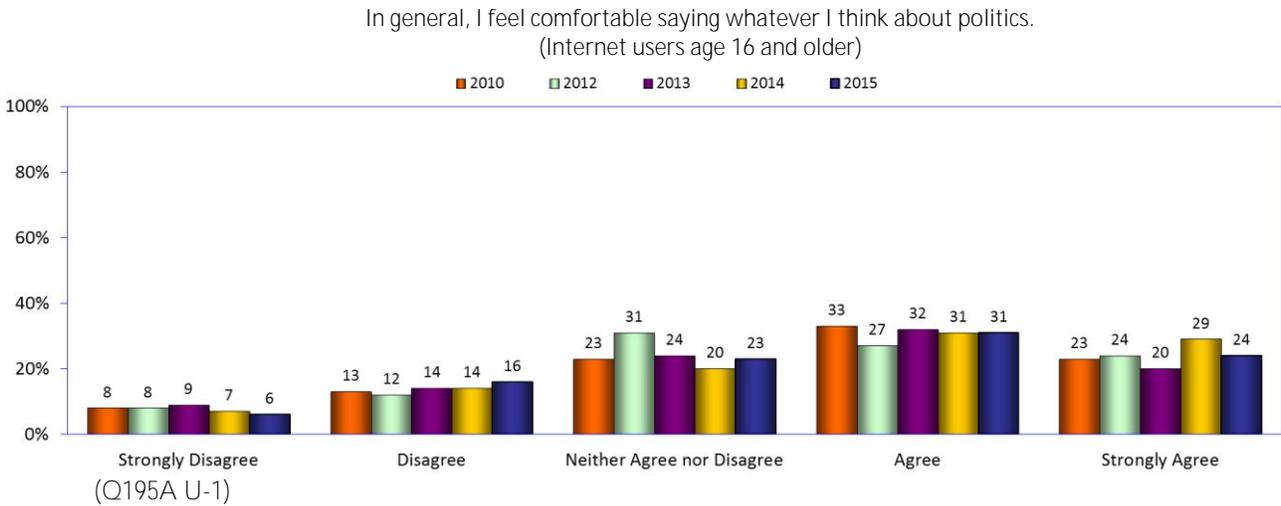


### 173. Personal political expression

A majority of Internet users age 16 and older are comfortable speaking out about politics.

Fifty-five percent of Internet users age 16 and older agree or strongly agree that they feel comfortable saying whatever they think about politics, down from 60 percent in 2014.

The percentage of users who do not feel comfortable saying whatever they think about politics increased to 22 percent, up slightly from 21 percent in 2014.

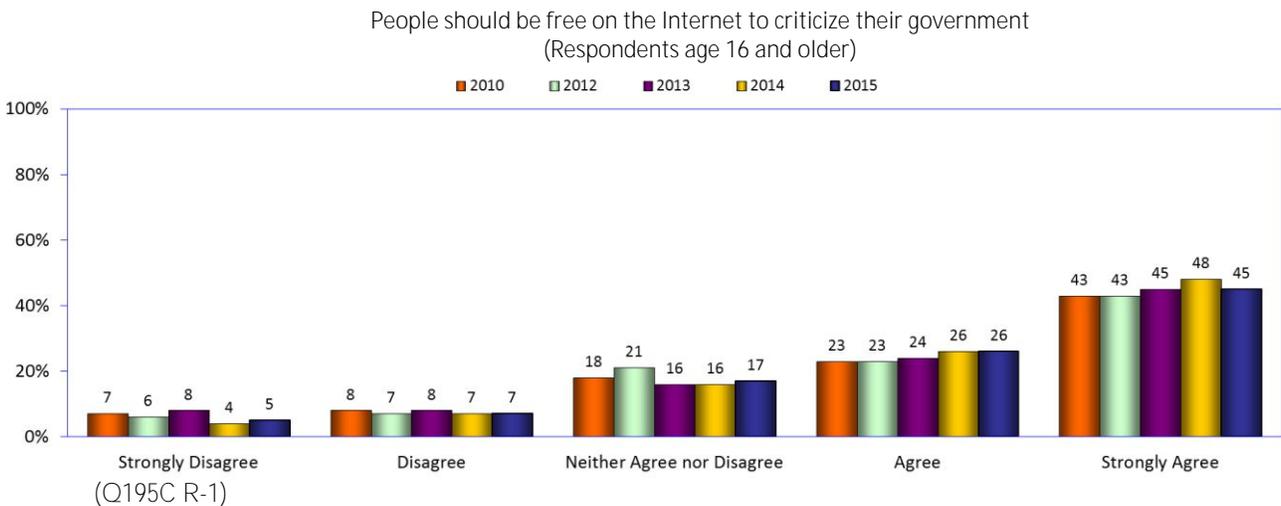


### 174. Criticizing the government while online

Even though 38 percent of respondents age 16 and older believe it is safe to express their political beliefs on the Internet (see page 153), a much larger percentage believes that people should be free to criticize their government while online.

Seventy-one percent of respondents agree or strongly agree that people should be free to criticize the government while online, a decrease from 74 percent in 2014.

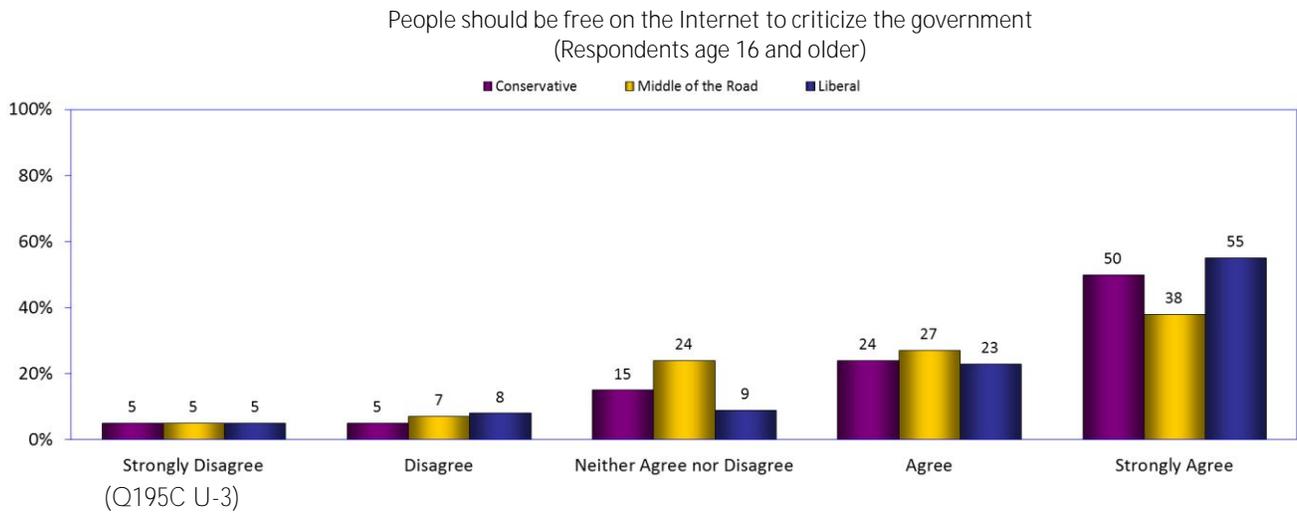
The percentage of respondents who do not think people should be free to criticize the government increased slightly in the current study – now 12 percent of respondents, up from 11 percent in 2014.



### 175. Criticizing the government while online (by political views)

Very large percentages of users age 16 and older at all points in the political spectrum agree or strongly agree that people should be free on the Internet to criticize their government, with the largest percentage reported by those identifying themselves as liberals.

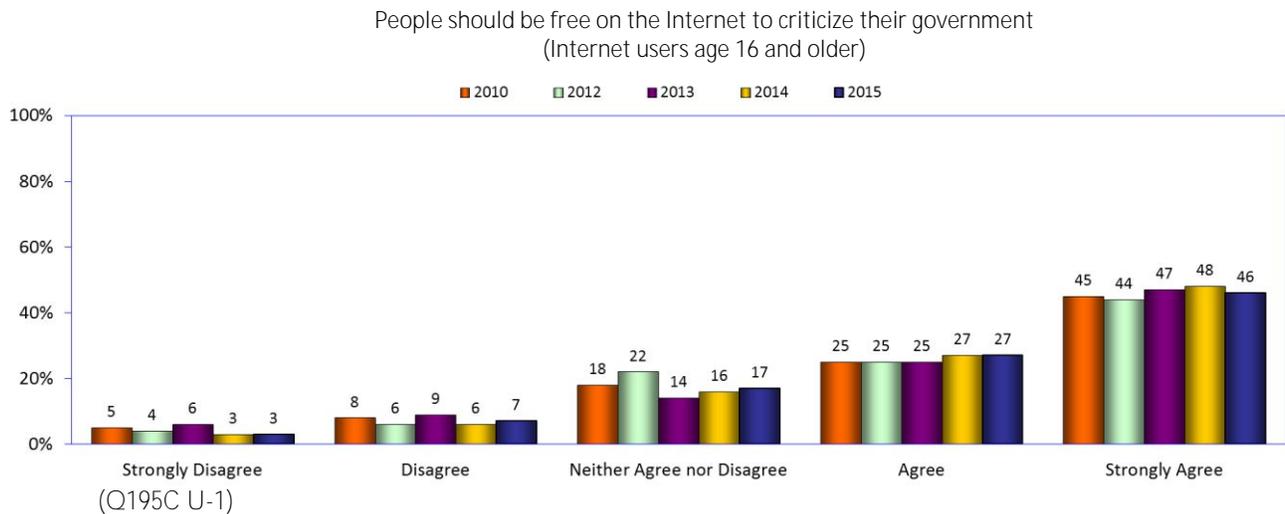
Agreeing with this issue were 74 percent of respondents age 16 and older who consider themselves conservative, 65 percent of those who describe themselves as middle of the road, and 78 percent of respondents who consider themselves liberals.



### 176. Criticizing the government while online (Internet users)

The large percentage of users age 16 and older who believe that people should be free on the Internet to criticize their government decreased to 73 percent in the current study, down from 75 percent in 2014.

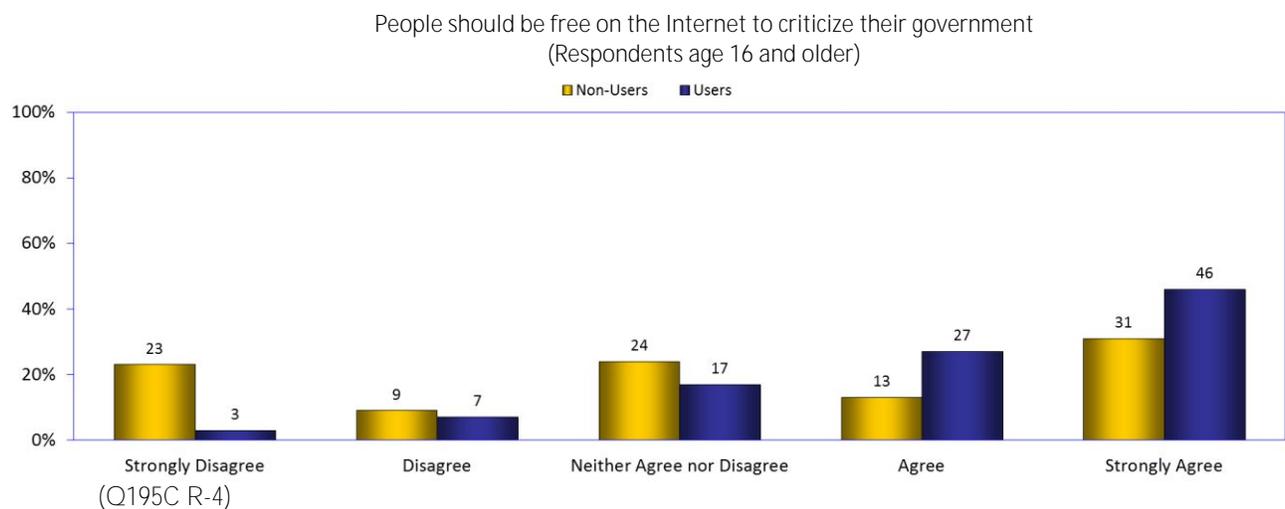
The percentage of users who disagree that people should be free to criticize the government while online increased marginally – now ten percent, up from nine percent in 2014.



### 177. Criticizing the government while online (Internet users vs. non-users)

Users and non-users age 16 and older report notable differences in views about criticizing the government while online. Seventy-three percent of users agree that people should be free on the Internet to criticize their government, compared to 44 percent of non-users with the same view.

At the other extreme, the difference in views is even greater: 32 percent of non-users compared to ten percent of users do not agree that people should be free on the Internet to criticize their government.

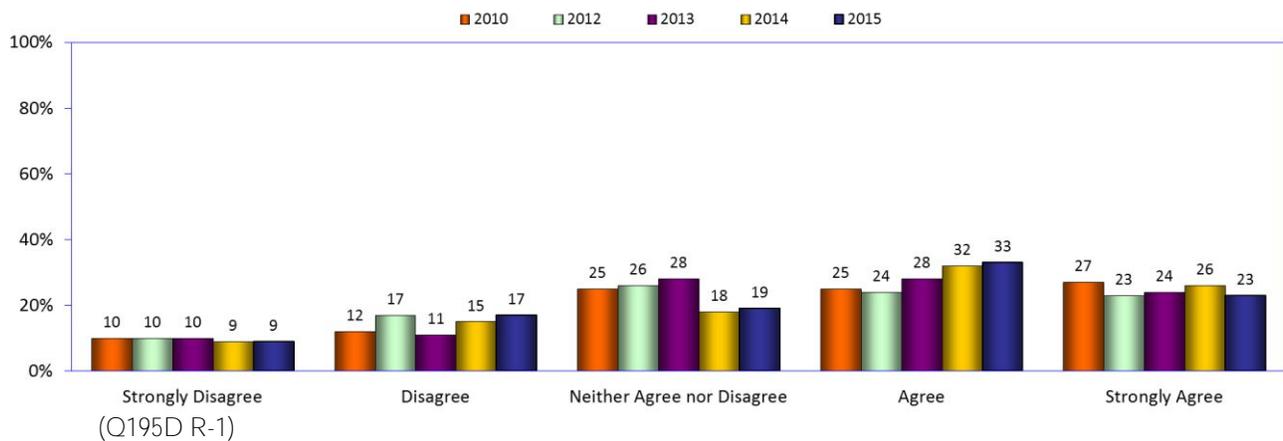


### 178. Free speech and extreme ideas while online

Compared to the responses about using the Internet as a platform to criticize the government (see the previous question), a higher percentage of respondents age 16 and older (56 percent) said it is OK for people to express their ideas online, even if they are extreme -- down from 58 percent in 2014.

The percentage of respondents age 16 and older who disagree or strongly disagree that expressing extreme ideas online is OK increased to 26 percent in the current study, up from 24 percent in 2014.

It is OK for people to express their ideas on the Internet, even if they are extreme  
(Respondents age 16 and older)

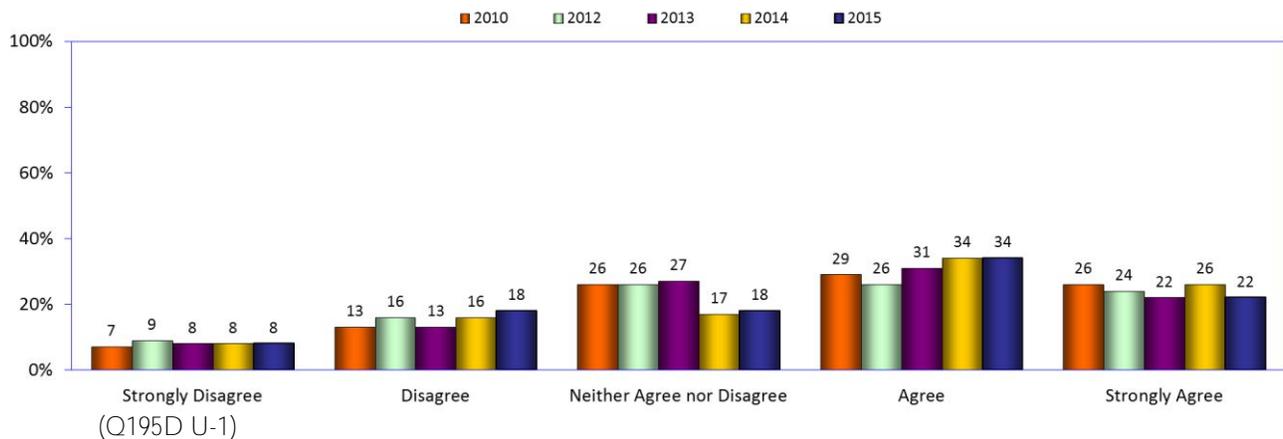


### 179. Free speech and extreme ideas while online (Internet users)

Fifty-six percent of users age 16 and older overall agree or strongly agree that it is OK for people to express their extreme ideas on the Internet – down from 60 percent in 2014.

The percentage of users who disagree with free expression of extreme ideas on the Internet also increased – now 26 percent, up from 24 percent in 2014.

It is OK for people to express their ideas on the Internet, even if they are extreme  
(Internet users age 16 and older)

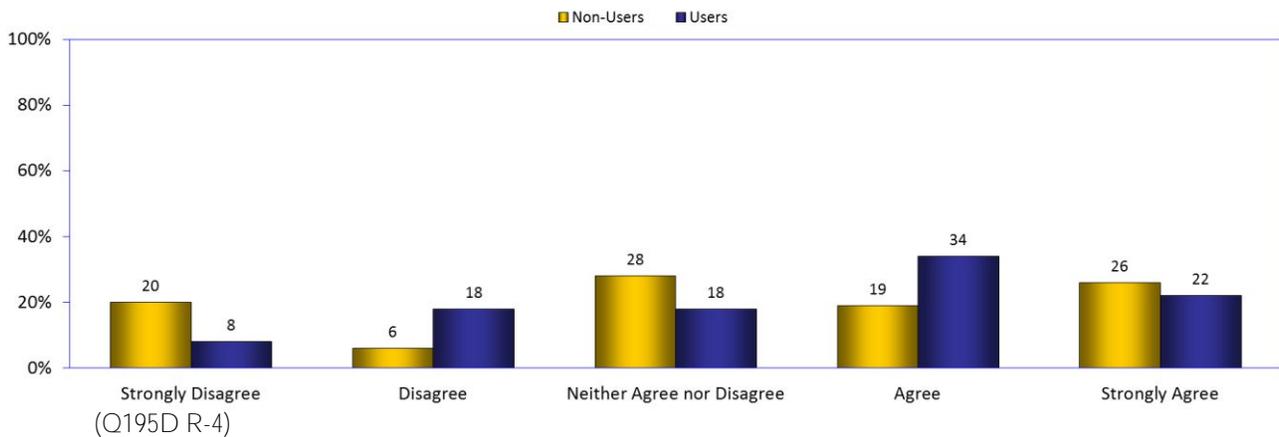


### 180. Free speech and extreme ideas while online (Internet users vs. non-users)

Internet users and non-users reported divergent opinions about expressing extreme views online.

Fifty-six percent of users compared to 45 percent of non-users agree or strongly agree that it is OK for people to express their extreme ideas on the Internet. However, the same percentage of non-users and users (26 percent) disagree or strongly disagree that expressing extreme ideas online is OK, although non-users are more likely to strongly disagree.

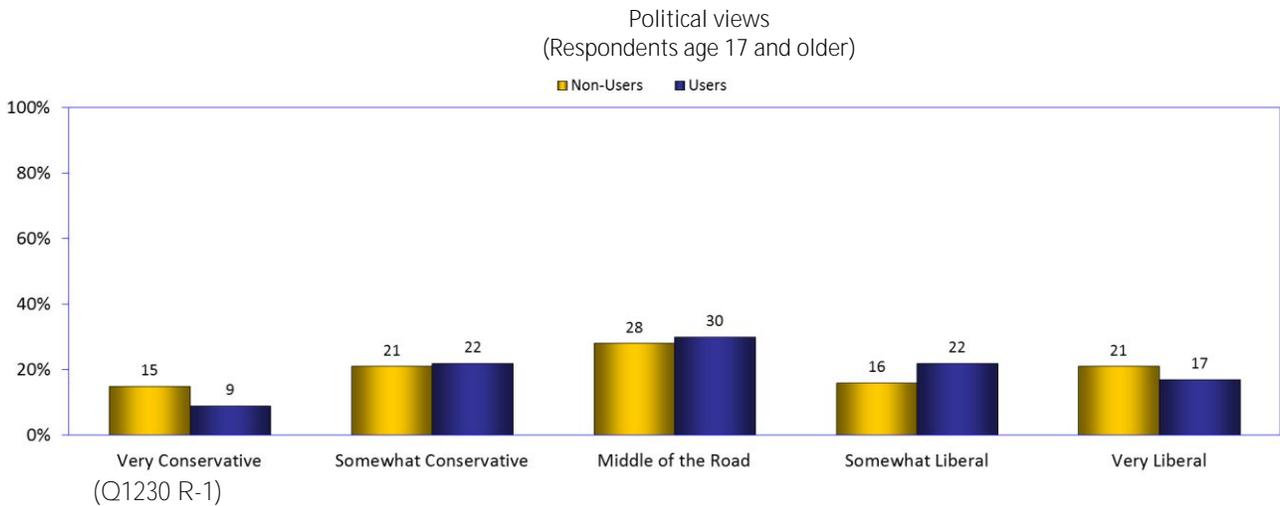
It is OK for people to express their ideas on the Internet, even if they are extreme  
(Respondents age 16 and older)



181. Political affiliation: users vs. non-users

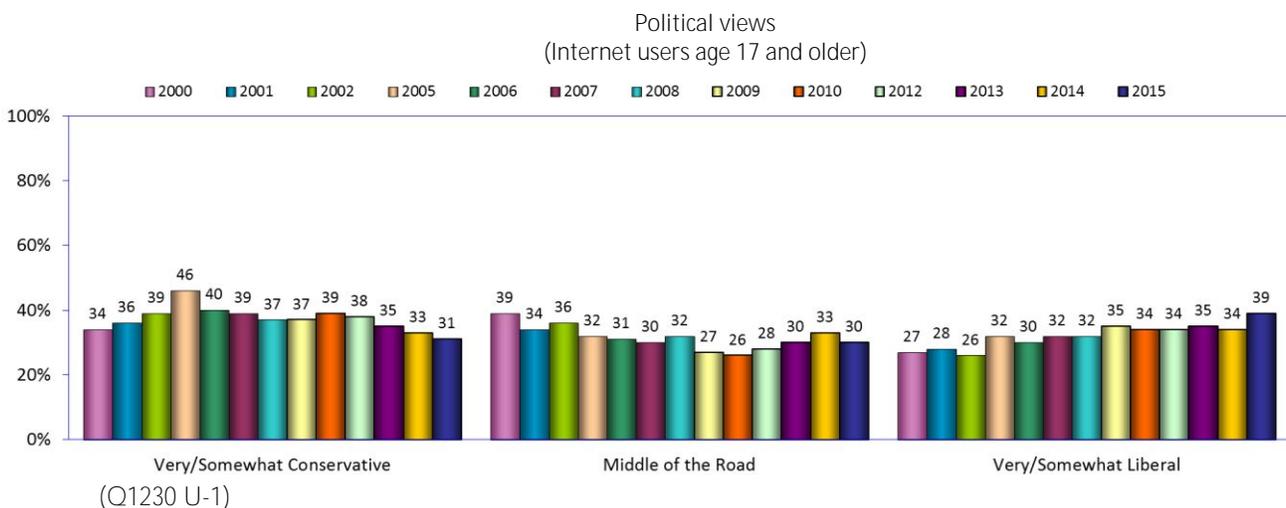
A marginally higher percentage of Internet users (39 percent) compared to non-users (37 percent) identify themselves politically as somewhat liberal or very liberal. The same gap was reported by those who identify themselves as middle of the road (30 percent of users compared to 28 percent of non-users).

Conversely, higher percentages of non-users identify themselves as somewhat conservative or very conservative: 36 percent of non-users compared to 31 percent of users.



182. Political affiliation: users since 2000

Comparing political affiliation of Internet users in the Digital Future studies since 2000 shows an increase in the percentage reporting that they are liberal (now 39 percent), and a modest but steady drop in those identifying as conservative -- now 31 percent, the lowest percentage reported thus far in the Digital Future studies.



## The 2016 Digital Future Project Trends and Issues

### The growing importance of the Internet in the political process

In the year before the 2016 presidential election, the role and value of the Internet within the American political process continued to increase.

The Digital Future Study found new high levels or near-high levels of agreement about the importance of the Internet for both knowledge and empowerment about the American political process.

In sum, 69 percent of users agree or strongly agree that the Internet helps people to better understand politics (page 144), while 41 percent said that by using the Internet, public officials will care more about what people think (page 147). Forty-five percent said that by using the Internet people like them can have more political power (page 149), and 41 percent said the Internet gives them more say in what government does (page 147).

And in perhaps the strongest endorsement of the role of digital technology in American politics, 80 percent of users said that the Internet has become important for political campaigns – up from 64 percent 10 years ago and a new high for the studies (page 139).

As the circulation of print newspapers and viewership of network television continue to decline, the Internet is likely to take an increasingly important role in political communication – especially in how candidates communicate with voters for fundraising and consensus-building. This issue will continue to be a priority subject of exploration for the Digital Future studies.

### Reliability of information online (Internet users)

Even as the role of the Internet and social media becomes ever more pervasive in our society, users' trust in information they find online continues to decline. In 2000, 55 percent of users said that most or all of the information they find online is reliable. In the most current study, that number had declined to 40 percent (page 46). At the same time, the percentage of users who said that none or only a small portion of information found online is reliable has ticked up slowly from seven percent in 2000 to 15 percent in the current study (page 46).

Where are the flaws in information found online? The primary culprit is social networking sites, reported by only 11 percent of users as having most or all of their information as reliable and accurate – a new low for the studies. However, even established and generally-trusted websites and search engines are cited by declining percentages of users as being reliable and accurate (page 48).

### Internet non-users: were they ever online?

The Digital Future Study continues to explore issues involving Internet non-users. Among the issues in the current study:

The Digital Future studies are finding that respondents who currently do not go online appear to be die-hard non-users; of the respondents who are currently non-users, only 25 percent had previously gone online – a new low for the studies (page 35).

The studies are also identifying notable age-related trends in the reasons why non-users do not go online. For instance, a surprisingly large percentage of non-users age 35-54 (19 percent) said they do not use the Internet because they are not interested in going online – almost twice the 11 percent of non-users age 55 or older who reported a lack of interest (page 37). And for non-users age 55 or older, the lack of access – and not limited knowledge or no interest – is the primary reason for not being online, with almost one-third of non-users in that age category not using the Internet because they do not have the equipment to do so (page 37).

### The Internet and personal freedom

The Digital Future study has found that views continue to evolve about personal freedom while online, and government involvement in online technology.

A consistently small percentage of respondents said that the government should regulate the Internet more than it does now, and that percentage declined in the current study (page 54). Thirty-eight percent agreed it is safe to voice their views about politics while online – down slightly from 39 percent in 2014. A much larger percentage -- 71 percent -- believes that people should be free to criticize their government while online – also down slightly (page 156).

Compared to the responses about using the Internet as a platform to criticize the government, a higher percentage of respondents age 16 and older (56 percent) said it is OK for people to express their ideas online, even if they are extreme -- down from 58 percent in 2014 (page 159). However, the percentage of respondents age 16 and older who disagree that expressing extreme ideas online is OK increased to 26 percent in the current study, up from 24 percent in 2014 (page 159).

### The conflicting nature of the Internet and social contact

The Digital Future studies continue to identify contrasts in behavior and views about communication through the Internet and social media.

The studies show substantial and growing percentages of users who say that digital technology has an important role in their social contact: 65 percent of mobile phone users consider texting important or very important for maintaining social relationships (page 96). Using the Internet is important to a large and generally steady percentage of users for maintaining social relationships – now 60 percent (page 98), while 48 percent said that social networking sites are important for maintaining social relationships.

And large percentages of Internet users said that going online has increased their contact with family, friends, and key social groups, while less than 10 percent of users said that the Internet decreased their contact with family, friends, and key social groups (page 99).

But is there a cost for online communication and social media? The Digital Future Study continues to find concerns: the current study found that users report a smaller amount of time socializing face-to-face with their family – now 16 hours per week, the lowest amount reported in the studies (page 92). For the third year in a row a growing percentage of mobile phone users (now 63 percent) said they were ignored because a household member spends too much time on a mobile device (page 101).

Perhaps not surprisingly, young Internet users report large and continuing declines in face-to-face socializing with their families – for those age 18-34, now 14 hours per week, compared to 20 hours in 2009 and 2012 (page 93).

Users also report moderately lower amounts of time spent socializing face-to-face with friends – now seven hours each week. However, again the youngest users pay the biggest price in lost face-to-face contact with friends; while users in other age groups report generally stable levels of face-to-face contact with friends, users age 18-34 report the lowest level thus far in the studies (page 94).

\* \* \* \* \*

## Supplement 1

## The USC Annenberg School Center for the Digital Future

The USC Annenberg School Center for the Digital Future is a forum for the discussion and development of policy alternatives addressing the leading issues in media and communication.

The Center conducts and facilitates research, courses, seminars, working groups, and conferences designed to have a major impact on policy at the local, national, and international levels. It also provides a base for visiting scholars who are engaged in efforts to examine and shape communication policy. **The Center's** goals include using the vast intellectual resources of USC to deal with some of the most important concerns of the day and to have a transforming effect on the issues.

The Center is based in the Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism at the University of Southern California. Until July 2004, it was housed at UCLA in the Anderson Graduate School of Management.

In October 2000, the Center released its first report on the Internet, the beginning of an international, long-term exploration of the impact of the Internet on society. This work is part of the World Internet Project, which is organized and coordinated by the Center; included in the World Internet Project are the **Center's work and partner studies in countries in North America, Europe, South America, Asia, the Middle East, Australasia, and Africa.** The first comparative results from the World Internet Project were released in January 2004. The first comprehensive International Report of the World Internet Project was released at the end of 2008, and the sixth in 2015.

**Since the Center's creation in September 1993,** it has been awarded multi-million-dollar research grants from the National Science Foundation and the U.S. Department of Defense, held numerous national and local conferences, conducted three nationwide surveys with one of America's leading news magazines, and established a strong national and international identity in media and communication technology issues.

The Center for the Digital Future has become an internationally regarded policy studies center. The Center is committed to studying, through a variety of prisms, the important communication issues that transform our lives.

For more information about the Center, visit [www.digitalcenter.org](http://www.digitalcenter.org).

## Supplement 2

## The World Internet Project – International Contacts

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| United States<br>(Organizer) | Center for the Digital Future<br>USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism<br><a href="http://www.digitalcenter.org">www.digitalcenter.org</a>   |
| Africa                       | Contact: Indra de Lanerolle, <a href="mailto:indra.de.lanerolle@gmail.com">indra.de.lanerolle@gmail.com</a><br>(Botswana, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda)                  |
| Australia                    | ARC Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation (CCi)<br>Institute for Social Research, Swinburne University of Technology<br><a href="http://www.cci.edu.au/projects/digital-futures">www.cci.edu.au/projects/digital-futures</a> |
| Belgium                      | University of Antwerp<br><a href="http://www.uantwerpen.be/en/rg/mios/mission-and-members">www.uantwerpen.be/en/rg/mios/mission-and-members</a>  |
| Canada                       | Canadian Internet Project (CIP)/Recherche Internet Canada (RIC)<br><a href="http://www.cipiconline.ca">www.cipiconline.ca</a>  |
| Chile                        | Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Chile: Schools of Communications (head),<br>Sociology, and Engineering/ Santiago Chamber of Commerce (CCS)<br><a href="http://www.wipchile.cl">www.wipchile.cl</a>  |
| China                        | China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC)<br><a href="http://www1.cnnic.cn/">www1.cnnic.cn/</a>  |
| Colombia                     | CINTEL – Centro de Investigación de las Telecomunicaciones<br><a href="http://www.cintel.org.co">www.cintel.org.co</a>   |
| Cyprus                       | Cyprus University of Technology/Department of Communication and Internet<br>Studies<br><a href="http://www.cut.ac.cy/">www.cut.ac.cy/</a>  |
| Czech Republic               | Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University Brno<br><a href="http://www.fss.muni.cz/ivdmr">www.fss.muni.cz/ivdmr</a>   |
| Ecuador                      | Universidad de los Hemisferios<br><a href="http://www.uhemisferios.edu.ec">www.uhemisferios.edu.ec</a>   |
| France                       | M@souin Network<br><a href="http://www.marsouin.org">www.marsouin.org</a>  |
| Greece                       | EKKE: The National Center for Social Research<br><a href="http://www.ekke.gr">www.ekke.gr</a>  |
| Israel                       | The Research Center for Internet Psychology (CIP)<br>Sammy Ofer School of Communications, The Interdisciplinary Center<br><a href="http://www.idc.ac.il/communications/cip/en">www.idc.ac.il/communications/cip/en</a>                             |
| Italy                        | SDA Bocconi, Bocconi University<br><a href="http://www.sdabocconi.it/home/it/">www.sdabocconi.it/home/it/</a>  |
| Japan                        | Toyo University  |

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
|              | <a href="http://www.soc.toyo.ac.jp/~mikami/wip/en/index.html">www.soc.toyo.ac.jp/~mikami/wip/en/index.html</a>  |
| Macao        | University of Macau, ERS E-Research (Lab)<br>Macao Internet Project (MIP)<br><a href="http://www.macaointernetproject.net">www.macaointernetproject.net</a>   |
| Mexico       | Tecnológico de Monterrey, Proyecto Internet<br><a href="http://www.wip.mx">www.wip.mx</a>   |
| Middle East  | Contact: Robb Barton Wood, <a href="mailto:rwood@northwestern.edu">rwood@northwestern.edu</a><br>(Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates)                                      |
| New Zealand  | Institute of Culture, Discourse and Communication (ICDC), AUT University of Technology<br><a href="http://www.wipnz.aut.ac.nz">www.wipnz.aut.ac.nz</a>  |
| Portugal     | Lisbon Internet and Networks International Research Programme (LINI)<br><a href="http://www.lini-research.org">http://www.lini-research.org</a>   |
| Qatar        | Northwestern University in Qatar (NU-Q)<br><a href="http://www.qatar.northwestern.edu">www.qatar.northwestern.edu</a>   |
| Russia       | Sholokhov Moscow State University for the Humanities<br><a href="http://mggu-sh.ru/en">http://mggu-sh.ru/en</a>   |
| Singapore    | Singapore Internet Research Centre (SiRC)<br>Nanyang Technological University<br><a href="http://www.ntu.edu.sg/sci/sirc">www.ntu.edu.sg/sci/sirc</a>   |
| South Africa | University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg<br>The Media Observatory Wits Journalism,<br><a href="http://www.journalism.co.za">www.journalism.co.za</a>   |
| Sweden       | World Internet Institute<br>.SE (The Internet Infrastructure Foundation)<br><a href="http://www.iis.se">www.iis.se</a><br><a href="http://www.wii.se">www.wii.se</a>  |
| Switzerland  | University of Zurich, Switzerland<br>Media Change & Innovation Division<br>IPMZ – Institute of Mass Communication and Media Research<br><a href="http://www.mediachange.ch">www.mediachange.ch</a>                          |
| Taiwan       | Taiwan e-Governance Research Center<br>Department of Public Administration, National Chengchi University<br><a href="http://www.teg.org.tw">www.teg.org.tw</a><br><a href="http://pa.nccu.edu.tw">http://pa.nccu.edu.tw</a> |
| Uruguay      | Universidad Catolica del Uruguay<br><a href="http://www.ucu.edu.uy">www.ucu.edu.uy</a>  |

## Supplement 3

### Research methods and demographic data

#### Sample Procurement

For both the original sample drawn in 2000, and the replacement samples selected in subsequent years until 2013, a national Random Digit Dial (RDD) telephone sample was used. This method gives every telephone number in the 50 states and the District of Columbia a close to equal chance of being selected.

Due to the increased difficulty in finding hard-to-reach respondents (namely teens/young adults, African-Americans, and Hispanics) using traditional RDD recruitment, a condition attributed to the rapid shift of households to mobile phones and growing lack of response to unsolicited phone calls, a new sampling method was introduced in 2014. As an alternate probability-based sampling method, letter mailers sent using address-based sampling (ABS) replaced RDD telephone recruitment as the primary source of replacement recruits.

The address-based sample was comprised of a random set of mailing addresses drawn from the entire universe of non-business residences maintained and provided by the United States Postal Service.

Mailers sent to address-based samples allowed for inbound respondents who could either go online to a new dedicated website to sign-up for an email or SMS (text message) invitation link and/or start the web survey immediately, or call a toll free number to request a callback to complete the survey on the phone. Outbound calls were also made to hard-to-reach households within the address-based samples that were matched to phone numbers to boost participation among these groups. Name recognition due to receiving the mailer ahead of time assisted cooperation rates for these calls.

Prior to 2014, in the initial recruitment call, an interviewer spoke to a person in the household 18 years of age or older to obtain a roster of all household members. At this point, a computer system (“CFMC Survent” CATI) randomly selected one individual from among those 12 years of age and over in the household to be the interviewee from that household. If the randomly selected individual was between 12 and 17 years of age, the interviewer asked a parent or guardian for permission to interview the child.

In years 2000 to 2007, once the selection of a household member was made, only that individual was eligible to complete the interview.

In years 2008 to 2013, if the household member who was originally selected to complete the interview was not available, up to two other individuals could be randomly selected from the roster to represent the household in the survey. If both of the randomly selected individuals were not available, the individual on the phone was interviewed.

Beginning in 2014, this random selection method within the household was abandoned due to its detrimental effects on actually achieving an interview with the household. Instead, attempts were made to interview the initial household member contacted, whether that contact was made offline via the letter mailers or through a phone call. Near the end of field, quotas were implemented to cap the representation of certain demographic groups and continue collection of only the most needed groups. Additionally, teens were augmented after adult quotas were met by specifically requesting their participation through adults in the household and receiving the consent of parents as needed.

From 2010 to 2013, up to three call attempts were made to complete an interview. If a household refused once, it was not contacted again.

In 2014 and 2015, RDD recruitment continued as a secondary source of replacement recruits with a focus on mobile phone numbers only. As in previous years, up to three call attempts were made to reach a respondent at each randomly generated phone number.

The data were collected through a combination of telephone and web surveys. In 2014, the web survey was re-optimized to be usable on mobile devices as well as desktop and laptop computers. Parallel testing was conducted to measure any effect the changes in survey format might have on study results and no effects were found.

In 2015, the mobile-optimized survey was utilized as the sole survey platform for data collection.

Starting in 2010, those repeat respondents and new random respondents who indicated by phone that they had Internet access were directed to complete the interview via the Web. A URL was provided verbally and a web link was emailed to the potential respondent to allow that respondent to complete the survey via the Web. Beginning in 2014, sending the web link via SMS (text message) was added as an additional option for all respondents.

Prior to 2014, a small number of respondents who indicated that they had Internet access but preferred to complete the survey over the phone were allowed to do so.

Starting in 2014, all respondents contacted by phone were first asked to complete the survey immediately over the phone in addition to being given/sent the web link to complete the survey at a later time. Both options were used. Additional discretion was given to the phone interviewers to use all options to best achieve a completed interview in the interest of the study goals.

Starting in 2010, when contacting panel members from the original sample, up to ten call attempts were made to reach them. If the person interviewed in the prior year was no longer a member of the household, no substitution of a different household member was made.

Starting in 2010, all respondents were paid a \$10 incentive. Starting in 2013, respondents in hard-to-reach groups were paid a \$20 incentive to increase participation rates.

## Data Collection and Weighting

Interviews were conducted in English. Interviewing took place between November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015 and January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

To correct for discrepancies between the sample data and Census data, the sample data was weighted. However, unlike in 2013 where a complicated and nuanced weighting scheme was necessary to correct for extreme skews to gender, age, income, education and ethnicity, the adjustments made during sample procurement meant that a much simpler weighting scheme was possible in 2014 and 2015.

Weighting was created based on the 2010 census for gender, age, income, education, and ethnicity. These demographics were used in a computer-generated sample-balancing (rim weighting) approach to ensure the weighted result ended with all subgroups matching the census.

In 2013, weights were capped at 3.7 to account for extreme weighting values for some respondents. However, in 2014 and 2015, very few respondents had weighting values above 3.7 (n=31 in total in 2015), so no caps were put into place as this would have had little/no impact on the results.

## Demographic Data

|  | 2010 Census | 2012 with Weighting | 2013 with Weighting | 2014 with Weighting | 2015 with Weighting |
|--|-------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Income                                   |             |                     |                     |                     |                     |
| Less than or equal to 29,999             | 31%         | 27%                 | 31%                 | 31%                 | 30%                 |
| 30,000 to 49,999                         | 20%         | 18%                 | 19%                 | 19%                 | 20%                 |
| 50,000 to 99,999                         | 30%         | 33%                 | 29%                 | 30%                 | 30%                 |
| 100,000 or more                          | 20%         | 22%                 | 20%                 | 20%                 | 20%                 |
| Age/Gender                               |             |                     |                     |                     |                     |
| Males :12-17                             | 5%          | 3%                  | 5%                  | 5%                  | 5%                  |
| Males :18-24                             | 6%          | 5%                  | 6%                  | 6%                  | 6%                  |
| Males :25-34                             | 8%          | 5%                  | 8%                  | 8%                  | 8%                  |
| Males :35-44                             | 8%          | 8%                  | 8%                  | 8%                  | 8%                  |
| Males :45-54                             | 9%          | 9%                  | 9%                  | 9%                  | 9%                  |
| Males :55-64                             | 7%          | 8%                  | 7%                  | 7%                  | 7%                  |
| Males :65-74                             | 4%          | 5%                  | 4%                  | 4%                  | 4%                  |
| Males :75-84                             | 2%          | 3%                  | 2%                  | 2%                  | 2%                  |
| Males :85 & Above                        | 1%          | 1%                  | 1%                  | 1%                  | 1%                  |
| Females :12-17                           | 5%          | 3%                  | 5%                  | 5%                  | 5%                  |
| Females :18-24                           | 6%          | 4%                  | 6%                  | 6%                  | 6%                  |
| Females :25-34                           | 8%          | 6%                  | 8%                  | 8%                  | 8%                  |
| Females :35-44                           | 8%          | 9%                  | 8%                  | 8%                  | 8%                  |
| Females :45-54                           | 9%          | 10%                 | 9%                  | 9%                  | 9%                  |
| Females :55-64                           | 7%          | 9%                  | 7%                  | 7%                  | 7%                  |
| Females :65-74                           | 4%          | 6%                  | 5%                  | 4%                  | 4%                  |
| Females :75-84                           | 3%          | 4%                  | 4%                  | 3%                  | 3%                  |
| Females :85 & Above                      | 1%          | 1%                  | 1%                  | 1%                  | 1%                  |
| Education                                |             |                     |                     |                     |                     |
| Less than HS Grad                        | 22%         | 12%                 | 21%                 | 21%                 | 21%                 |
| HS Grad no college                       | 27%         | 25%                 | 27%                 | 27%                 | 27%                 |
| Some college/associates degree           | 26%         | 30%                 | 25%                 | 26%                 | 25%                 |
| <b>Bachelor's degree or higher</b>       | 25%         | 34%                 | 27%                 | 26%                 | 26%                 |
| Ethnicity                                |             |                     |                     |                     |                     |
| Hispanic                                 | 17%         | 11%                 | 16%                 | 16%                 | 16%                 |
| White/Anglo/Caucasian/<br>Middle-eastern | 75%         | 81%                 | 77%                 | 73%                 | 73%                 |
| Black/African American                   | 14%         | 10%                 | 14%                 | 13%                 | 13%                 |
| Asian/ Pacific Islander                  | 6%          | 6%                  | 6%                  | 6%                  | 6%                  |