

UCLA study highlights web's importance in education www.eschoolnews.com/news/showStory.cfm?ArticleID=4215

February 3, 2003

- Americans who use the internet consider it at least as important as newspapers and books-and more important than television, radio, and magazines.
- Though internet use spans every age range, 12- to 18-year-olds lead all categories: fully 97 percent of them use the internet, compared with 83 percent of 25- to 35-year-olds and 73 percent of 36- to 55-year-olds.
- "There is a message for educators here about how we need to adapt what we do to ... our customers-students especially," said Marc Liebman, superintendent of the Marysville Joint Unified School District in California. "We should be looking closely at these data and responding with instructional strategies that take advantage of the fact that almost all of our students use the internet in one capacity or another, and I don't believe that we are."
- About 61 percent of users find the internet "very" or "extremely" important as an information source. That compares with 60 percent for books and 58 percent for newspapers, within the survey's margin for error of 3 percentage points.
- Only 53 percent of users believe most or all of what they read online, down from 58 percent a year earlier.
- Kathy Schrock, technology administrator for the Nauset Public Schools in Massachusetts, said the report's findings "continue to support the schools' efforts to teach students to be critical information consumers, giving students the skills to recognize inaccurate, biased, or bogus information-and also the skills necessary to judge [high-] quality information-are the mainstay of information literacy in this information-rich world."
- Internet users on average watch about 5.4 hours less of TV per week than non-users, and almost one-third of children now watch less TV than before they started using the internet-up from 23 percent in 2001.
- Nearly 40 percent of internet users say they've used eMail to communicate with teachers, a higher percentage than those who have used eMail to contact a government employee or health care professional.
- Most children who use the internet still do so at home. About 85 percent of children who use the internet say they go online at home, compared with 73 percent who say they go online at school. But the number of children who use the internet at school is rising, up from 64 percent in 2001.
- The internet is not perceived by most users as having an effect on school grades; nearly three-quarters of adults in 2002 said the grades of children in their household has stayed the same since they acquired the internet. Schrock chose to view this last statistic in a different light. "I think the compelling figure is not the fact that approximately 74 percent [of respondents] reported no change in their child's grades, but the fact that almost 23 percent did," she said. "To me, this demonstrates that having access to the internet and its rich resources ... and having access to experts via eMail-whether they be the classroom teacher or the chemist at the university-is having an positive impact on student achievement."

UCLA Internet Report: Year Three <<http://ccp.ucla.edu>>

The Digital Disconnect (Pew Internet and American Life) <http://www.pewinternet.org/reports/index.asp>

- Internet-savvy students rely on the Internet to help them do their schoolwork—and for good reason. Students told us they complete their schoolwork more quickly; they are less likely to get stymied by material they don't understand; their papers and projects are more likely to draw upon up-to-date sources and state-of-the-art knowledge; and, they are better at juggling their school assignments and extracurricular activities when they use the Internet.
- Internet-savvy students describe dozens of different education-related uses of the Internet. Virtually all use the Internet to do research to help them write papers or complete class work or homework assignments. Most students also correspond with other online classmates about school projects and upcoming tests and quizzes. Most share tips about favorite Web sites and pass along information about homework shortcuts and sites that are especially rich in content that fit their assignments. They also frequent Web sites pointed out to them by teachers—some of which had even been set up specifically for a particular school or class. They communicate with online teachers or tutors. They participate in online study groups. They even take online classes and develop Web sites or online educational experiences for use by others.
- ...students employ five different metaphors to explain how they use the Internet for school: 1) The Internet as virtual textbook and reference library, 2) The Internet as virtual tutor and study shortcut. 3) The Internet as virtual study group. 4) The Internet as virtual guidance counselor. 5) The Internet as virtual locker, backpack, and notebook.
- The single greatest barrier to Internet use at school is the quality of access to the Internet. Students urge schools to increase significantly the quality of access to the Internet in schools.
- Students believe that professional development and technical assistance for teachers are crucial for effective integration of the Internet into curricula.
- Students urge that there should be continued effort to ensure that high-quality online information to complete school assignments be freely available, easily accessible, and age-appropriate—without undue limitation on students' freedoms.
- Students insist that policy makers take the "digital divide" seriously and that they begin to understand the more subtle inequities among teenagers that manifest themselves in differences in the quality of student Internet access and use.
- Students are frustrated and increasingly dissatisfied by the digital disconnect they are experiencing at school. They cannot conceive of doing schoolwork without Internet access and yet they are not being given many opportunities in school to take advantage of the Internet.

"The fates guide those who go willingly; those who do not, they drag." – Seneca