

Poll finds many Californians lack internet access



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An unidentified person uses an iPad to read Yahoo/ABC News on the internet in Los Angeles on Tuesday, April 28, 2015. Richard Vogel/AP

By Jeremy B. White

Whether you can go online at home depends in part on your income, age and the language you speak, according to a new Field Poll conducted for the California Emerging Technology Fund.

An increasing share of Californians enjoy home internet access, the poll found, up to 84

percent from 75 percent just two years ago. Much of that increase comes thanks to the prevalence of connected smart phones.

But lower-income Californians remain less likely to have access. Just 68 percent of people who make less than \$22,000 reported being able to get online at home, compared to the near-universal capability (97 percent) of those who make at least \$100,000 or those who make between \$40,000 and \$100,000 (93 percent).

Spanish-speaking Latinos lagged behind the rest of the population, with 69 percent boasting home internet access compared to 90 percent of non-Hispanic whites or English-speaking Latinos. Elderly Californians are also outliers, with nearly half (44 percent) lacking broadband internet at home, though unlike in 2014 a majority now does have access.

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The cost of getting online – the price of either internet service or of a smartphone or computer – was the main deterrent for those who reported an inability to surf the web where they live.

Those discrepancies persist even as the poll found getting online to be an increasingly crucial aspect of peoples' lives. Majorities of Californians said they were using the internet not just to stay connected with loved ones, follow the news or entertain themselves but also to manage their money, obtain healthcare information and look for jobs.

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