

New poll finds 8% of California households dependent on smartphones for Internet access

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A large majority of California households have high-speed Internet service, but only 8 percent use a smartphone to get online, according to a new statewide survey that showed a narrowing of the digital divide.

Overall, nearly four in five households there, or 79 percent, have a broadband connection at home – including DSL, cable, satellite, fiber optic to a desktop, laptop or tablet computer and through a smartphone – which is up from 75 percent last year, according to the survey ([pdf](#)) released June 16 by The Field Poll on behalf of the nonprofit California Emerging Technology Fund, which promotes broadband deployment and adoption.

California households that only had Internet access through a smartphone in 2014 was also 8 percent.

The survey found that connectivity varied significantly across so-called subgroups. For instance, the groups most likely to have broadband service only through a smartphone are: Spanish-speaking Latinos (21 percent), unmarried parents with under age 18 (19 percent), adults who haven't graduated from high school (18 percent), non-citizens (16 percent) and households with a total annual income of less than \$20,000 (16 percent).

In comparison, nearly all households in the state with annual incomes of \$60,000 or more, or include college graduates, non-Hispanic adults or those under age 40 have high-speed service.

"The problem with access only through a smartphone is there are all sorts things you can't do, including productivity tasks, or kids doing school work," Tim Bjarin, principal analyst with Creative Strategies, which tracks technology trends, [said](#) in an interview with the *San Jose Mercury-News*.

A Pew Research Center study released in April also found that minorities – 13 percent of Hispanics and 12 percent of blacks – are more dependent on smartphones for Internet access.

In The Field Poll survey, of the 21 percent of respondents who said they didn't have broadband service, 77 percent cited the cost of the service, computer or smartphone, according to the survey.

The survey of 1,664 California adults was conducted between April 23 and May 16 and in six languages and dialects, including English, Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, Vietnamese and Korean. Respondents were contacted by landline or a cell phone.

For more:

- [read](#) the new survey regarding California's digital divide (pdf)

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