



**Pew Internet**  
Pew Internet & American Life Project

a project of the  
**PewResearchCenter**

# Generations 2010

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12/16/2010

<http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Generations-2010.aspx>

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## Overview

There are still notable differences by generation in online activities, but **the dominance of the Millennial generation that we documented in our first “Generations” report in 2009<sup>1</sup> has slipped in many activities.**

Millennials, those ages 18-33, remain more likely to access the internet wirelessly with a laptop or mobile phone. In addition, they still clearly surpass their elders online when it comes to:

- Use of social networking sites
- Use of instant messaging
- Using online classifieds
- Listening to music
- Playing online games
- Reading blogs
- Participating in virtual worlds

However, internet users in Gen X (those ages 34-45) and older cohorts are **more likely** than Millennials to engage in several online activities, including visiting government websites and getting financial information online.

Finally, the biggest online trend: While the youngest and oldest cohorts may differ, certain key internet activities are becoming more uniformly popular across all age groups. These include:

- Email
- Search engine use
- Seeking health information
- Getting news
- Buying products
- Making travel reservations or purchases
- Doing online banking
- Looking for religious information
- Rating products, services, or people
- Making online charitable donations
- Downloading podcasts

Even in areas that are still dominated by Millennials, older generations are making notable gains. Some of the areas that have seen the fastest rate of growth in recent years include older adults’ participation in communication and entertainment activities online, especially in using social network sites such as Facebook. Among the major trends in online activities:

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<sup>1</sup> “Generations 2009” (2009), <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2009/Generations-Online-in-2009.aspx>

- While the youngest generations are still significantly more likely to use **social network sites**, the fastest growth has come from internet users 74 and older: social network site usage for this oldest cohort has quadrupled since 2008, from 4% to 16%.
- The percentage of all adult internet users who **watch video online** jumped 14 points in the past two years, from 52% in May 2008 to 66% in May 2010.
- 51% of all online adults **listen to music online**, compared with 34% the last time this question was asked, in June 2004. While Millennials used to be by far the most avid listeners, Gen Xers and Younger Boomers are catching up.
- As of May 2010, 53% of online adults have used a **classified ads website** such as Craigslist, up from 32% in September 2007.

Additionally, **searching for health information**, an activity that was once the primary domain of older adults, is now the third most popular online activity for all internet users 18 and older.

Few of the activities covered in this report have decreased in popularity for any age group, with the notable exception of **blogging**. Only half as many online teens work on their own blog as did in 2006, and Millennial generation adults ages 18-33 have also seen a modest decline—a development that may be related to the quickly-growing popularity of social network sites. At the same time, however, blogging’s popularity increased among most older generations, and as a result the rate of blogging for all online adults rose slightly overall from 11% in late 2008 to 14% in 2010. Yet while the act formally known as blogging seems to have peaked, internet users are doing blog-like things in other online spaces as they post updates about their lives, musings about the world, jokes, and links on social networking sites and micro-blogging sites such as Twitter.

# Introduction

## Defining generations

This is the second report by the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project exploring how different generations use the internet.<sup>2</sup> All the generation labels used in these reports, with the exceptions of "Younger Boomers" and "Older Boomers," are the names conventionalized by William Strauss and Neil Howe in their book, *Generations: The History of America's Future, 1584 to 2069* (Perennial, 1992). The Pew Internet Project's "Generations" reports make the distinction between Younger Boomers and Older Boomers because enough research has been done to suggest that the two decades of Baby Boomers are different enough to merit being divided into distinct generational groups.

Generation name	Birth years, Ages in 2010	% of total adult population*	% of internet-using population*
Millennials	Born 1977-1992, Ages 18-33	30	35
Gen X	Born 1965-1976, Ages 34-45	19	21
Younger Boomers	Born 1955-1964, Ages 46-55	20	20
Older Boomers	Born 1946-1954, Ages 56-64	14	13
Silent Generation	Born 1937-1945, Ages 65-73	7	5
G.I. Generation	Born -1936, Age 74+	9	3

\* Source: Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, April 29-May 30, 2010 Tracking Survey. N=2,252 adults 18 and older.

This year, the Pew Research Center published a series of reports that more closely examined the values, attitudes and experiences of the Millennial generation,<sup>3</sup> which generally encompasses teens and Millennials. These reports are available in full at [pewresearch.org/millennials](http://pewresearch.org/millennials). Many of these reports also compare this younger generation to older cohorts.

The primary adult data in this report come from a Pew Internet Project survey conducted from April 29 to May 30, 2010. The most current teen data in this study is from a separate Pew Internet survey of teens and their parents conducted from June 26 to September 24, 2009. For more information on these and other surveys cited in this report, including survey dates of all activities cited, please see the **Methodology** section at the end of this report.

<sup>2</sup> "Generations 2009" (2009), <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2009/Generations-Online-in-2009.aspx>

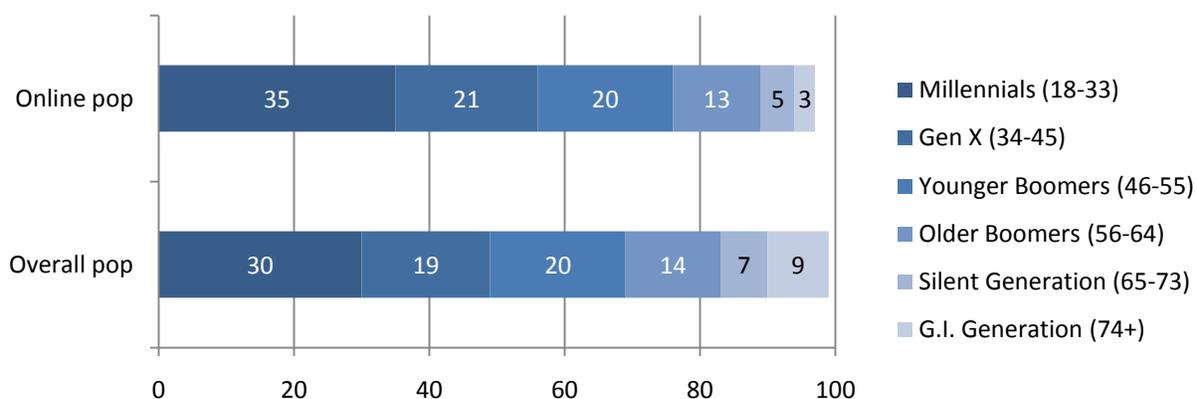
<sup>3</sup> See: <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1437/millennials-profile>

## Generations online

	Millennials Ages 18-33	Gen X Ages 34-45	Younger Boomers Ages 46-55	Older Boomers Ages 56-64	Silent Generation Ages 65-73	G.I. Generation Age 74+	All online adults Age 18+
% who go online	95	86	81	76	58	30	79

Seventy-nine percent of all American adults go online, a number that has remained relatively steady since early 2006.<sup>4</sup> While most generations have internet adoption rates of at least 70%, internet use drops off significantly for adults over age 65: only 58% of adults ages 65-73 (the Silent Generation) and 30% of adults age 74 and older (the G.I. Generation) go online. As a result, younger generations continue<sup>5</sup> to be over-represented in the online population, with adults ages 45 and younger constituting about 56% of the online population, despite making up only 49% of the total adult population. The Millennial generation is particularly prominent online: though they make up 30% of the total adult population, they account for 35% of internet users. (Note: all data regarding generations within the context of the general U.S. population are from the May 2010 Pew Internet tracking survey of 2,252 adults 18 and older.)

### Generations online vs. generations offline (% of U.S. adult population)



**Source:** Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, April 29-May 30, 2010 Tracking Survey. N=2,252 adults 18 and older.

A plurality (31%) of non-internet users say that the main reason they do not go online is that they are simply not interested in doing so. Roughly one in nine (12%) cite not having a computer, and a similar proportion (10%) say that it would be too expensive. A full list of reasons is shown in the table below.

<sup>4</sup> See: <http://pewinternet.org/Trend-Data/Internet-Adoption.aspx>

<sup>5</sup> For our previous report, see: <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2009/Generations-Online-in-2009/Generational-Differences-in-Online-Activities/2-Internet-use-and-email.aspx>

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## Main reasons for not using the internet

21% of adult Americans do not use the internet. When asked the main reason they do not go online (in their own words), these are the factors they cite.

All offline adults Age 18+	
% who do not use the internet	21%
<b>What is the MAIN reason you don't use the internet or email?</b>	
Just not interested	31
Don't have a computer	12
Too expensive	10
Too difficult	9
It's a waste of time	7
Don't have a access	6
Don't have time to learn	6
Too old to learn	4
Don't want/need it	4
Just don't know how	2
Physically unable	2
Worried about viruses/spyware/spam	1
Other	5

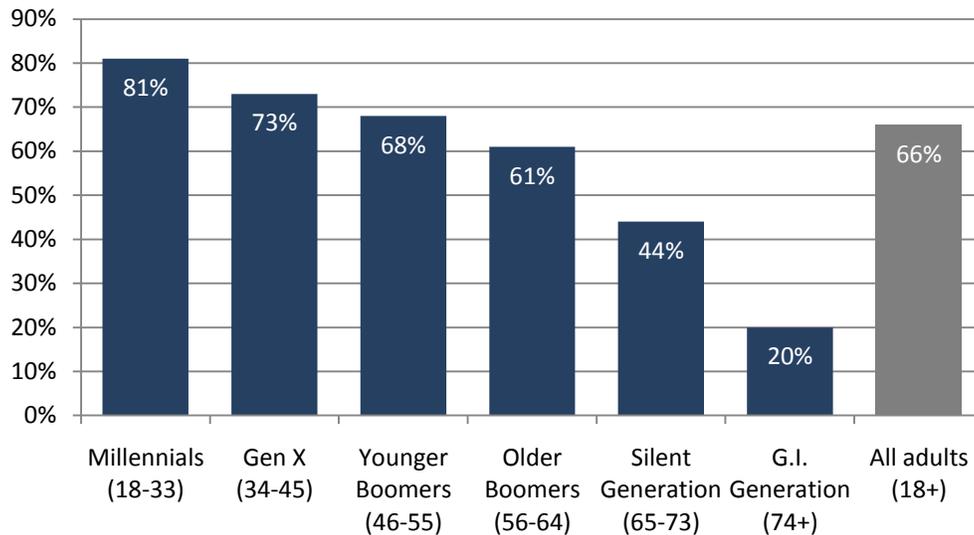
**Source:** Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, April 29-May 30, 2010 Tracking Survey. N=2,252 adults 18 and older (n=496 for non-internet users).

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## Home broadband adoption

Two-thirds of American adults (66%) currently have a broadband internet connection at home. This leaves 5% of adults who go online using a dial-up connection, 26% who do not go online from home and 3% who go online from home but are unsure what type of connection they have.<sup>6</sup>

### Percentage of adults with home broadband, by generation



**Source:** Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, April 29-May 30, 2010 Tracking Survey. N=2,252 adults 18 and older.

Roughly eight in ten (81%) of Millennials have broadband at home, as well as 73% of Gen X. The Silent Generation and the G.I. Generation are by far the least likely groups to have high-speed internet access, as only 44% of adults ages 65-73 and 20% of adults over the age of 74 have broadband at home. Of all the age groups, this cohort of adults over 65 are also the least likely to see the lack of home broadband as a major disadvantage, as detailed in our recent report, "Home Broadband 2010."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> For more information about home broadband adoption trends and attitudes, see "Home Broadband 2010" (2010), <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Home-Broadband-2010.aspx>

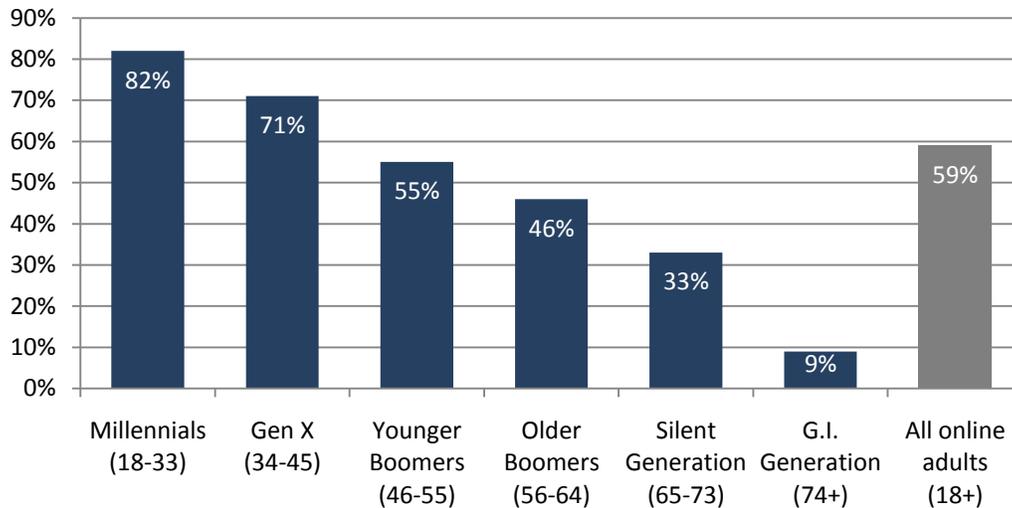
<sup>7</sup> See: <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Home-Broadband-2010/Part-2/Minority-Americans-see-a-lack-of-broadband-access-as-a-major-hindrance.aspx>

## Wireless use

About six in ten American adults (59%) go online wirelessly, either through their smartphones or through a wireless card in their laptop.<sup>8</sup> Adults age 45 and younger are the most likely to connect to the internet with a laptop, cell phone, or other internet-connected mobile device, as 82% of Millennials and 71% of Gen X connect that way. Only 9% of the G.I. Generation go online wirelessly.

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### Percentage of adults who go online wirelessly, by generation



**Source:** Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, April 29-May 30, 2010 Tracking Survey. N=2,252 adults 18 and older.

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<sup>8</sup> For more information about wireless internet trends, see <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Mobile-Access-2010/Part-1/The-current-state-of-wireless-internet-use.aspx> in "Mobile Access" (2010).

## Generations online: Activities

### Activities that are most popular with teens and/or Millennials

Activity	Teens Ages 12-17	Millennials Ages 18-33	Gen X Ages 34-45	Younger Boomers Ages 46-55	Older Boomers Ages 56-64	Silent Generation Ages 65-73	G.I. Generation Age 74+	All online adults Age 18+
<b>Go online</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>79%</b>
<b>Teens and/or Millennials are more likely to engage in the following activities compared with older users:</b>								
Watch a video	57	80	66	62	55	44	20	<b>66</b>
Use social network sites	73	83	62	50	43	34	16	<b>61</b>
Send instant messages	67	66	52	35	30	29	4	<b>47</b>
Play online games	78	50 <sup>^</sup>	38 <sup>^</sup>	26 <sup>^</sup>	28 <sup>^</sup>	25 <sup>^</sup>	18 <sup>^</sup>	<b>35<sup>^</sup></b>
Read blogs	49 <sup>^</sup>	43	34	27	25	23	15	<b>32</b>
Visit a virtual world	8	4	4	4	3	3	1	<b>4</b>

**Note:** ^ indicates data from 2006.

**Source:** Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project surveys, 2008-2010. All teens data are from different surveys than adult data, and may have slight differences in question wording. Findings for individual activities are based on internet users. For survey dates of all activities cited, please see the Methodology section at the end of this report.

Younger internet users ages 12-33 remain the most active participants in the web's social services. Seventy-three percent of teens and 83% of Millennials use social network sites, significantly more than older generations, especially adults over 55: While half of Younger Boomers use social network sites, only 16% of adults 74 and older have done so. Internet users under 30 are also significantly more likely to communicate via instant message, with roughly two-thirds of teens and Millennials sending and receiving instant messages. Internet users under age 34 are also significantly more likely to read blogs—49% of teens and 43% of Millennials do this.

Teens, meanwhile, are by far the most likely to play online games: 78% play games online, the most popular activity for that age group. Teens are also the most likely group to visit a virtual world such as Second Life—8% of online teens, compared with 4% of internet users 18 and older.

## Activities where Gen X users or older generations dominate

Activity	Teens Ages 12-17	Millennials Ages 18-33	Gen X Ages 34-45	Younger Boomers Ages 46-55	Older Boomers Ages 56-64	Silent Generation Ages 65-73	G.I. Generation Age 74+	All online adults Age 18+
<b>Go online</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>79%</b>
<b>Activities where Gen X users or older generations dominate:</b>								
Visit govt website	*	61	75	73	69	56	41	<b>67</b>
Get financial info	*	33	38	41	41	44	30	<b>38</b>

**Source:** Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, April 29-May 30, 2010 Tracking Survey. N=2,252 adults 18 and older. Findings for individual activities are based on internet users.

Older internet users are still more likely than younger generations to search for certain types of information online. Online adults ages 34-64 lead in visiting government websites—roughly seven in ten have done so—but younger internet users are catching up: 61% of Millennials have visited a government website, up from 55% in November 2008. Older generations are still more likely to go online for financial information, although here the Silent Generation leads with 44% of users ages 65-73 turning to the internet for financial information such as stock quotes or mortgage interest rates.

A growing number of activities are becoming increasingly common across generations, though in many cases there are still large differences between the youngest and oldest cohorts.

Activity	Teens Ages 12-17	Millennials Ages 18-33	Gen X Ages 34- 45	Younger Boomers Ages 46-55	Older Boomers Ages 56-64	Silent Generation Ages 65-73	G.I. Generation Age 74+	All online adults Age 18+
<b>Go online</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>79%</b>
<b>For some activities, the youngest and oldest cohorts may differ, but there is less variation overall:</b>								
Email	73	96	94	91	93	90	88	<b>94</b>
Use search engine	*	92	87	86	87	82	72	<b>87</b>
Look for health info	31~	85	84	84	85	76	59	<b>83</b>
Get news	62~	76	79	76	76	67	54	<b>75</b>
Buy a product	48	68	66	64	69	59	57	<b>66</b>
Make travel reservations	*	64	67	70	67	61	53	<b>66</b>
Bank online	*	62	62	58	56	44	35	<b>58</b>
Use classifieds	*	64	58	49	42	30	17	<b>53</b>
Listen to music	*	65	58	48	38	25	12	<b>51</b>
Look for religious info	*	31	35	34	33	26	28	<b>32</b>
Rate a product, service or person	*	32	32	29	40	38	16	<b>32</b>
Participate in an auction	*	28	31	25	25	13	7	<b>26</b>
Donate to charity	*	21	24	24	23	20	13	<b>22</b>
Download podcasts	*	26	20	20	16	12	10	<b>21</b>
Work on own blog	14	18	16	11	11	8	5	<b>14</b>

**Note:** ~ indicates significant differences in question wording between teen data and adult data.

**Source:** Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project surveys, 2008-2010. All teens data are from different surveys than adult data. Findings for individual activities are based on internet users. For survey dates of all activities cited, please see the Methodology section at the end of this report.

Email and search engine use remain the backbone of online activities, with 88% of the oldest generation using email. Communicating by email is not as popular with teens, however; only 73% of teens use email, making them the generation least likely to do so. When teens do use email, they tend to use it more in formal situations or when communicating with adults than to communicate with friends.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to email and search, a strong majority (83%) of internet users have used the internet to search for health information, making this activity the third most popular for all online adults. Even among the oldest generation of internet users, the G.I. Generation, a majority purchase products, get news, and search for health information online. Internet users ages 56-73 are slightly more likely than younger adults to have rated a product, service, or person online, and are just as likely to have donated to charity online.

Internet users ages 34-64 have lost their lead over Millennials in certain activities, such as buying products or banking online, as well as in searching for health or religious information. Other areas, such as blogging, were once the domain of teens and Millennials, but are now relatively common throughout most age groups.

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<sup>9</sup> See “Teens and Mobile Phones” (2010) for more information about teens’ communication patterns: <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Teens-and-Mobile-Phones/Chapter-2/Other-methods.aspx>

## Summary of activities

**Key:** % of internet users in each generation who engage in this online activity

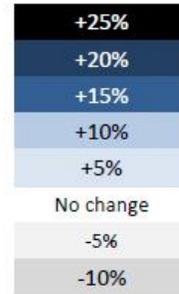
90-100%	40-49%
80-89%	30-39%
70-79%	20-29%
60-69%	10-19%
50-59%	0-9%

Millennials Ages 18-33	Gen X Ages 34-45	Younger Boomers Ages 46-55	Older Boomers Ages 56-64	Silent Generation Ages 65-73	G.I. Generation Age 74+
Email	Email	Email	Email	Email	Email
Search	Search	Search	Search	Search	Search
Health info	Health info	Health info	Health info	Health info	Health info
Social network sites	Get news	Get news	Get news	Get news	Buy a product
Watch video	Govt website	Govt website	Govt website	Travel reservations	Get news
Get news	Travel reservations	Travel reservations	Buy a product	Buy a product	Travel reservations
Buy a product	Watch video	Buy a product	Travel reservations	Govt website	Govt website
IM	Buy a product	Watch video	Bank online	Watch video	Bank online
Listen to music	Social network sites	Bank online	Watch video	Financial info	Financial info
Travel reservations	Bank online	Social network sites	Social network sites	Bank online	Religious info
Online classifieds	Online classifieds	Online classifieds	Online classifieds	Rate things	Watch video
Bank online	Listen to music	Listen to music	Financial info	Social network sites	Play games
Govt website	IM	Financial info	Rate things	Online classifieds	Online classifieds
Play games	Play games	IM	Listen to music	IM	Social network sites
Read blogs	Financial info	Religious info	Religious info	Religious info	Rate things
Financial info	Religious info	Rate things	IM	Play games	Read blogs
Rate things	Read blogs	Read blogs	Play games	Listen to music	Donate to charity
Religious info	Rate things	Play games	Read blogs	Read blogs	Listen to music
Online auction	Online auction	Online auction	Online auction	Donate to charity	Podcasts
Podcasts	Donate to charity	Donate to charity	Donate to charity	Online auction	Online auction
Donate to charity	Podcasts	Podcasts	Podcasts	Podcasts	Blog
Blog	Blog	Blog	Blog	Blog	IM
Virtual worlds	Virtual worlds	Virtual worlds	Virtual worlds	Virtual worlds	Virtual worlds

## Heat map: Change in activity over time, by generation

The following chart shows the percentage point change between surveys for certain online activities. Darker areas indicate strongest growth; white areas indicate no change; gray areas indicate negative growth.

Survey dates vary—for details, see the **Methodology** section at the end of the report.



Key: Percentage-point change

	Millennials Ages 18-33	Gen X Ages 34-45	Younger Boomers Ages 46-55	Older Boomers Ages 56-64	Silent Generation Ages 65-73	G.I. Generation Age 74+
Email	Email	Email	Email	Email	Email	Email
Search	Search	Search	Search	Search	Search	Search
Use social network sites	Get news	Get news	Get news	Get news	Get news	Buy a product
Watch video	Govt website	Govt website	Govt website	Govt website	Travel reservations	Get news
Get news	Travel reservations	Travel reservations	Buy a product	Buy a product	Buy a product	Travel reservations
Buy a product	Watch video	Buy a product	Travel reservations	Govt website	Govt website	Govt website
IM	Buy a product	Watch video	Bank online	Watch video	Bank online	Bank online
Listen to music	Use social network sites	Bank online	Watch video	Financial info	Financial info	Financial info
Travel reservations	Bank online	Use social network sites	Use social network sites	Bank online	Religious info	Religious info
Online classifieds	Online classifieds	Online classifieds	Online classifieds	Rate things	Rate things	Watch video
Bank online	Listen to music	Listen to music	Financial info	Use social network sites	Online classifieds	Online classifieds
Govt website	IM	Financial info	Rate things	Online classifieds	Use social network sites	Use social network sites
Financial info	Financial info	IM	Listen to music	IM	Rate things	Rate things
Rate things	Religious info	Religious info	Religious info	Religious info	Religious info	Donate to charity
Religious info	Rate things	Rate things	IM	Listen to music	Listen to music	Listen to music
Online auction	Online auction	Online auction	Online auction	Donate to charity	Podcasts	Podcasts
Podcasts	Donate to charity	Donate to charity	Donate to charity	Online auction	Online auction	Online auction
Donate to charity	Podcasts	Podcasts	Podcasts	Podcasts	Podcasts	Blog
Blog	Blog	Blog	Blog	Blog	IM	IM
Virtual worlds	Virtual worlds	Virtual worlds	Virtual worlds	Virtual worlds	Virtual worlds	Virtual worlds

Above the line: more than 50% do this activity

Below the line: less than 50% do this activity

Source: Pew Internet surveys.

[pewinternet.org](http://pewinternet.org)

Activity	Teens Ages 12-17	Millennials Ages 18-33	Gen X Ages 34-45	Younger Boomers Ages 46-55	Older Boomers Ages 56-64	Silent Gen. Ages 65-73	G.I. Gen. Age 74+	All adults Age 18+
<b>Go online</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>79%</b>
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Use social network sites	73	83	62	50	43	34	16	<b>61</b>
Send IMs	67	66	52	35	30	29	4	<b>47</b>
Play online games	78	50^	38^	26^	28^	25^	18^	<b>35^</b>
Read blogs	49^	43	34	27	25	23	15	<b>32</b>
Visit a virtual world	8	4	4	4	3	3	1	<b>4</b>
<b>Activities where Gen X users or older generations dominate:</b>								
Visit a government website	*	61	75	73	69	56	41	<b>67</b>
Get financial info	*	33	38	41	41	44	30	<b>38</b>
<b>For some activities, the youngest and oldest cohorts may differ, but there is less variation overall:</b>								
Send or read e-mail	73	96	94	91	93	90	88	<b>94</b>
Use a search engine	*	92	87	86	87	82	72	<b>87</b>
Look for health info	31~	85	84	84	85	76	59	<b>83</b>
Get news	62~	76	79	76	76	67	54	<b>75</b>
Buy a product	48	68	66	64	69	59	57	<b>66</b>
Make travel reservations	*	64	67	70	67	61	53	<b>66</b>
Bank online	*	62	62	58	56	44	35	<b>58</b>
Use online classifieds	*	64	58	49	42	30	17	<b>53</b>
Listen to music online	*	65	58	48	38	25	12	<b>51</b>
Look for religious info	*	31	35	34	33	26	28	<b>32</b>
Rate a product, service or person	*	32	32	29	40	38	16	<b>32</b>
Participate in an auction	*	28	31	25	25	13	7	<b>26</b>
Make a charitable donation	*	21	24	24	23	20	13	<b>22</b>
Download podcasts	*	26	20	20	16	12	10	<b>21</b>
Work on own blog	14	18	16	11	11	8	5	<b>14</b>

**Note:** ^ indicates data from 2006. ~ indicates significant differences in question wording between teen data and adult data.

**Source:** Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project surveys, 2008-2010. All teens data are from different surveys than adult data. Findings for individual activities are based on internet users. For survey dates of all activities cited, please see the Methodology section at the end of this report.

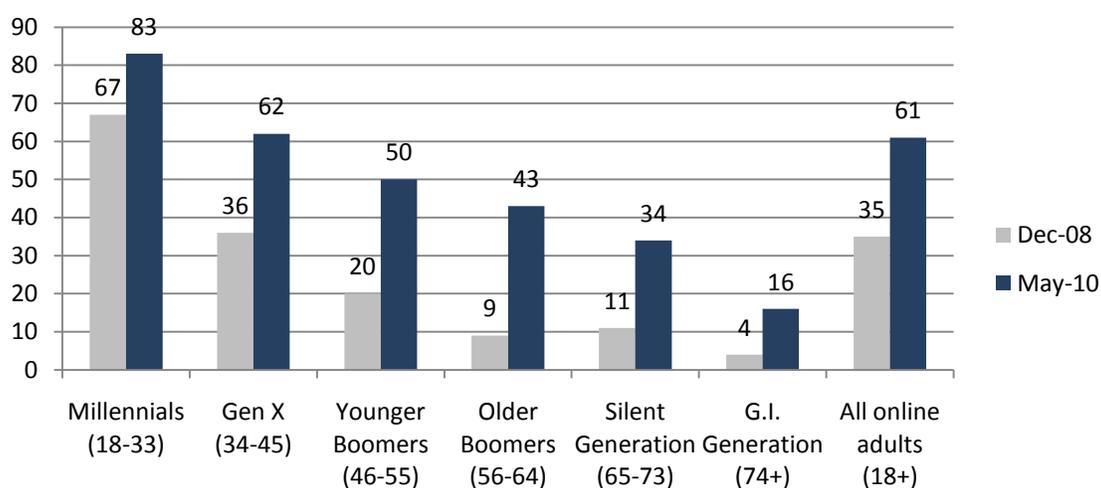
## Major trends in online activities, by generation

### Social network sites

Younger adults are by far the most likely group to use social network sites such as Facebook, MySpace, or LinkedIn—83% of adults 33 and younger currently use them. However, older generations have seen the most dramatic growth over the past two years. Social network site use by Younger Boomers (ages 46-55) increased 30 percentage points over the past two years, from 20% in December 2008 to 50% in May 2010, and Older Boomers (ages 56-64) jumped 34 percentage points, from 9% in 2008 to 43% in 2010. The fastest rate of growth was seen among the oldest generation of internet users, as the percentage of adults age 74 and older who use social network sites quadrupled from 4% in December 2008 to 16% in May 2010. Use of these services for all online adults in this time period increased from 35% to 61% over that same time period.

### Changes in social network site use, 2008-2010, by generation

*% of internet users who use social network sites, over time*



**Source:** Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, April 29-May 30, 2010 Tracking Survey. N=2,252 adults 18 and older.

There are several possible reasons for online social networking's increased popularity among older adults. While seniors still rely on email as their main form of online communication, social network sites allow users to reconnect with people from the past, find supporting communities to deal with a chronic disease,<sup>10</sup> or connect with younger generations—all of which may drive social network site use among older generations.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> "Chronic Disease and the Internet" (2010), <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Chronic-Disease.aspx>

<sup>11</sup> For more information, see "Older Adults and Social Media" (2010).

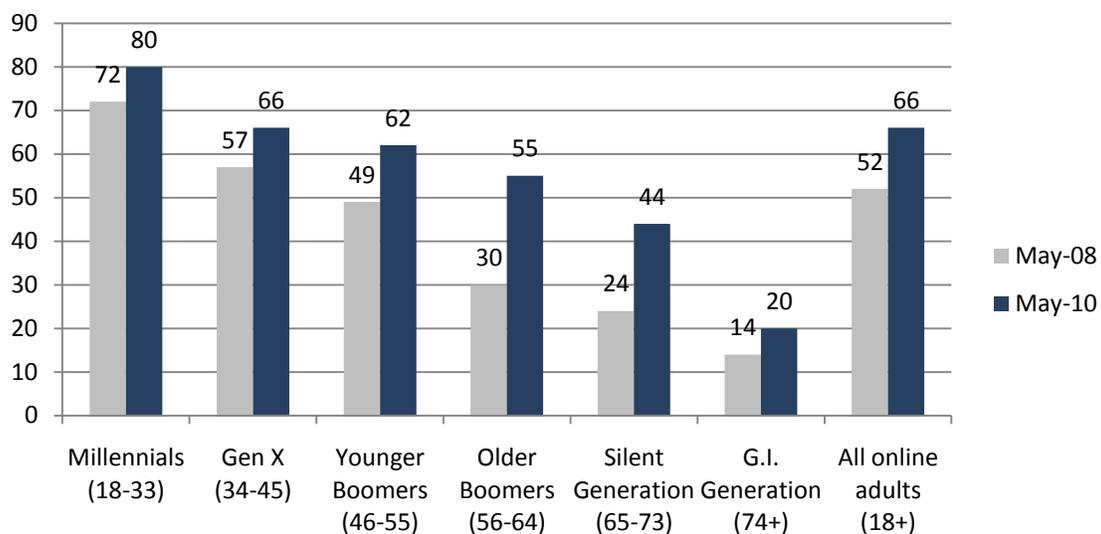
<http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Older-Adults-and-Social-Media/Report/Implications.aspx>

## Online video

The percentage of all adults who watch video online jumped 14 points in the past two years, from 52% of all online adults in May 2008 to 66% in May 2010. While Millennials are still the most likely generation to watch online video, as 80% have done so, other generations have seen significant growth—55% of Older Boomers have watched video, up from 30% in 2008, and one in five members of the G.I. Generation have watched videos online as well. Over the past few years, comedy video viewership has grown more than any other type of video asked about in our surveys: in 2009 half of all online adults (50%) had watched a comedy video online.<sup>12</sup>

### Changes in watching video online, 2008-2010, by generation

*% of internet users who watch video online, over time*



**Source:** Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, April 29-May 30, 2010 Tracking Survey. N=2,252 adults 18 and older.

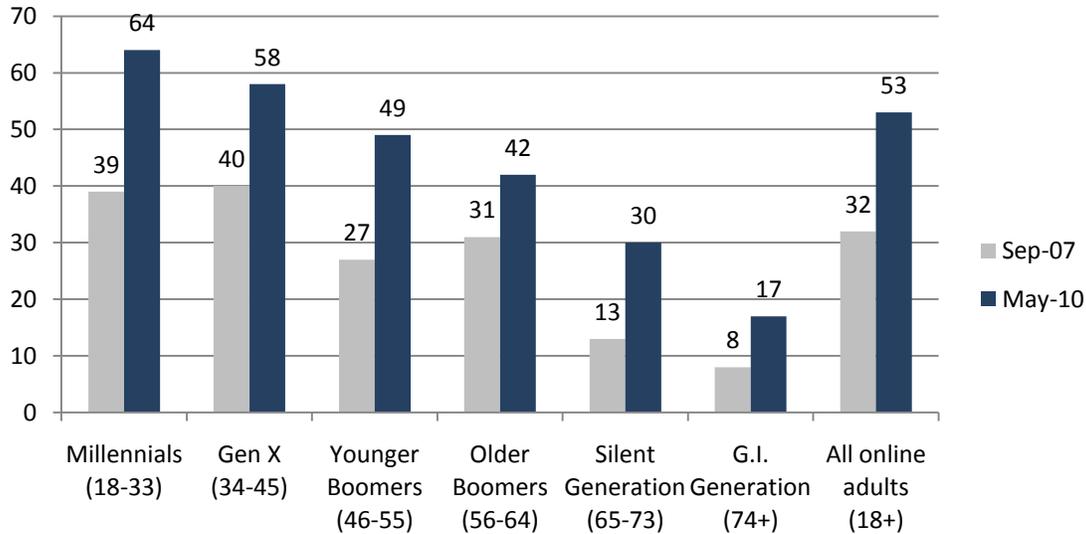
<sup>12</sup> "The State of Online Video" (2010), <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/State-of-Online-Video.aspx>

## Craigslist and online classifieds

In September 2007, only 32% of online adults had used a classified ads website such as Craigslist; by April 2009, this number jumped to almost half (49%).<sup>13</sup> Now, as of May 2010, 53% of all online adults use online classifieds.

### Changes in using online classifieds, 2007-2010, by generation

*% of internet users who use online classifieds such as Craigslist, over time*



**Source:** Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, April 29-May 30, 2010 Tracking Survey. N=2,252 adults 18 and older.

While roughly four in ten internet users in the Millennials cohort and Gen X had used these sites in 2007, by 2010 Millennials had pulled ahead: 64% of internet users 18-33 have used a classifieds site, versus 58% of those ages 34-45 having done so. Younger Boomers have also seen drastic growth, with 49% currently using these sites, up from 27% in 2007. Even 17% of the online G.I. Generation has used a site like Craigslist, up from only 8% three years ago.

<sup>13</sup> "Online Classifieds" (2009), <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2009/7--Online-Classifieds.aspx>

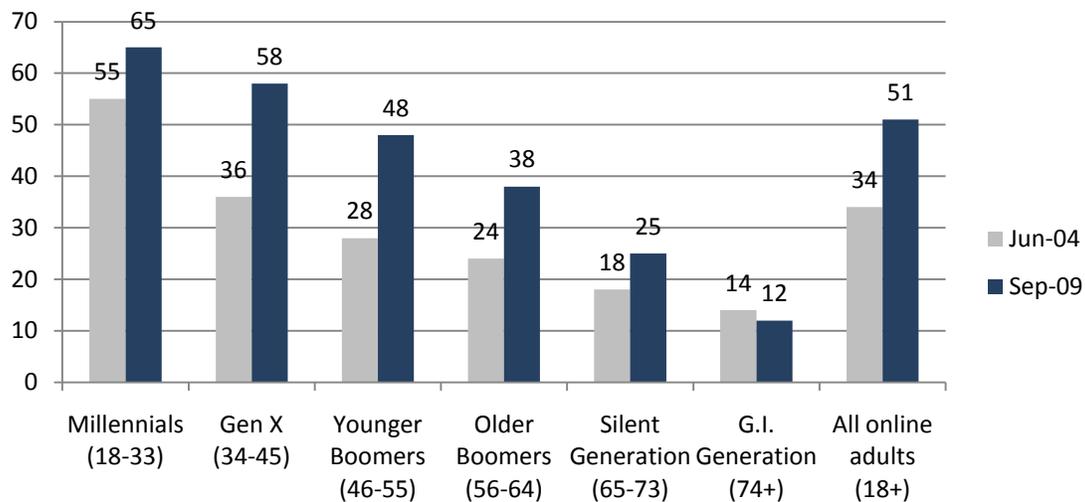
## Music

In June 2004, the last time the Pew Internet Project asked about listening to music online, Millennials were by far the most avid listeners: 55% of Millennials had streamed music online, compared to 36% of Gen Xers and 34% of all adults. As of September 2009, Millennials still lead in this activity—65% have done so—but their lead is more modest, with Gen X and Younger Boomers not too far behind. The oldest generations, however, have seen the least growth. One in four members of the Silent Generation streaming music, and the G.I. Generation still listens at roughly the same rate: 12% in September 2009 versus 14% in June 2004.

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### Changes in streaming music online 2004-2009, by generation

*% of internet users who listen to music online, over time*



**Source:** Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project Survey, August 18-September 14, 2009. N=2,253 adults 18 and older.

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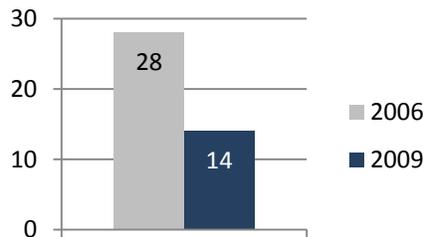
## Blogging

Only 14% of teens ages 12-17 worked on their own blog as of 2009, a drastic decrease since 2006, when twice as many (28%) said they had done so. Millennials have also seen a decline in blogging over the past couple years, from 20% in December 2008 to 18% in May 2010. As previous Pew Internet research has noted, it is possible that status updates and other functions that are incorporated into increasingly-popular social network sites may be replacing stand-alone blogs for young people.<sup>14</sup>

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### The decline of teen blogging, 2006-2009

*% of teen internet users who work on their own blog, over time*



**Source:** Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project surveys. Results are based on teen internet users ages 12-17.

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Yet while blogging is less common for internet users under 34, it has increased in popularity among most older generations. Blogging among members of Gen X increased from 10% in December 2008 to 16% in May 2010, and 11% of Younger and Older Boomers currently blog as well. The result is a slight increase in blogging for adults overall, from 11% in late 2008 to 14% in 2010.

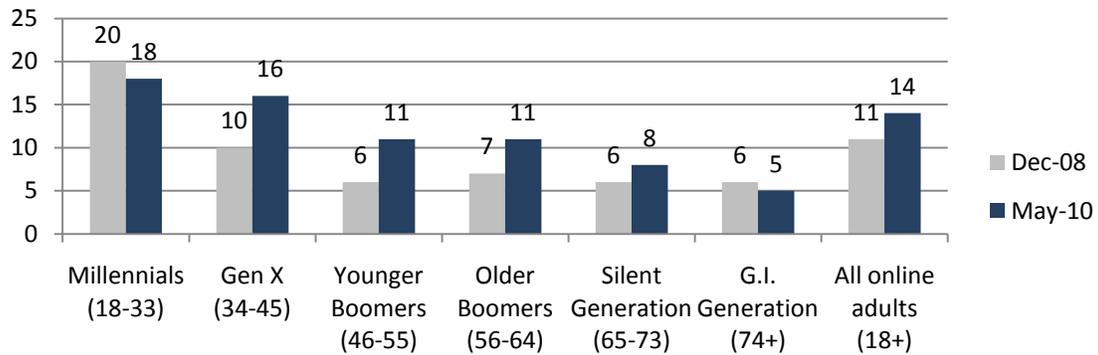
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<sup>14</sup> "Social Media and Young Adults" (2010), <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Social-Media-and-Young-Adults/Part-3/6-Content-Creation.aspx>

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## Changes in blogging, 2008-2010, by generation

*% of internet users who work on their own blog, over time*



**Source:** Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, April 29-May 30, 2010 Tracking Survey. N=2,252 adults 18 and older.

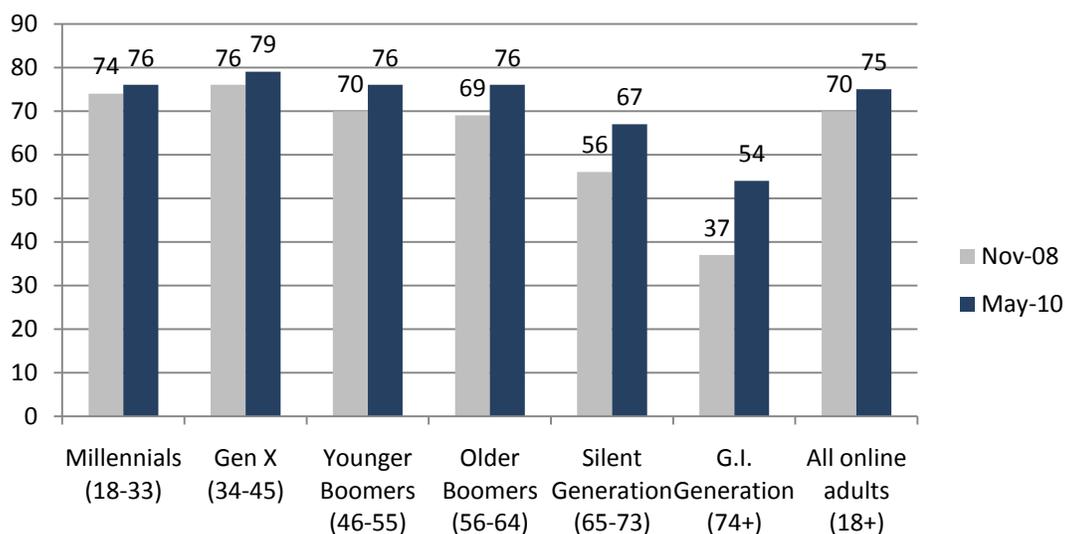
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## Online news

Though the percentage of all internet users who get news online<sup>15</sup> has not changed dramatically since the first “Generations” report, the oldest generations have experienced notable increases. In November 2008, 37% of internet users 74 and older said they had gotten news online, but by May 2010 that number had jumped to 54%. Similarly, 67% of internet users ages 65-73 now get news online, compared to 56% in November 2008.

### Changes in getting news online, 2008-2010, by generation

*% of internet users who get news online, over time*



**Source:** Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, April 29-May 30, 2010 Tracking Survey. N=2,252 adults 18 and older.

Despite the modest growth in the overall percentage of adults who get news online, the ways in which people find and share their news are very different than they were when the Pew Internet Project first started asking about online news consumption earlier in the decade. As previous reports have noted, information is now portable, personalized, and participatory; people access news on-the-go and discuss it online with friends and family.<sup>16</sup>

In terms of where people get news in a typical day, the internet has surpassed newspapers and radio in popularity and now ranks just behind TV. Looking closer at the data, some clear patterns emerge between the age groups. For instance, Millennials overwhelmingly go online for news (82% do this in a

<sup>15</sup> In Pew Internet surveys, adults are generally asked two separate items about getting news online and going online for news or information about politics. <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Social-Media-and-Young-Adults/Part-4/3-Getting-news-online.aspx>

<sup>16</sup> “Understanding the Participatory News Consumer” (2010), <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Online-News.aspx>

typical day, compared to 61% of all adults), but are less likely than older generations to get their news from a local television station (78% of all adults do this, including 90% of adults age 74 and older).

## Where adults get their news on a typical day, by generation

*The percentage of each age group who get their news from the following platforms on a typical day*

	Millennials Ages 18-33	Gen X Ages 34-45	Younger Boomers Ages 46-55	Older Boomers Ages 56-64	Silent Generation Ages 65-73	G.I. Generation Age 74+	All adults Age 18+
Local TV news	66	78	84	86	86	90	<b>78</b>
National TV news	65	71	76	81	85	78	<b>73</b>
Online	82	75	56	51	39	14	<b>61</b>
Radio	50	61	57	59	51	38	<b>54</b>
Local paper	39	43	50	57	66	70	<b>50</b>
National paper	14	16	17	19	23	18	<b>17</b>

**Source:** Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, December 28, 2009-January 19, 2010 Survey. N=2,259 adults 18 and older.

## About the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project

The Pew Internet Project is an initiative of the Pew Research Center, a nonprofit “fact tank” that provides information on the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world. The Pew Internet Project explores the impact of the internet on children, families, communities, the work place, schools, health care and civic/political life. The Project is nonpartisan and takes no position on policy issues. Support for the project is provided by The Pew Charitable Trusts.

- Frequently-updated information about trends in internet activities is available at <http://pewinternet.org/Trend-Data.aspx>
- A list of all Pew Internet research topics and reports is available at <http://pewinternet.org/Topics.aspx>

## Methodology

### Note on survey dates

The primary adult data in this report come from a Pew Internet Project survey conducted from April 29 to May 30, 2010. The most current teen data reported here is from a separate Pew Internet survey of teens and their parents conducted from June 26 to September 24, 2009. Data points for some activities, however, come from earlier surveys, as shown by the following table.

#### Survey dates for online activities charts

Activity	Online teens	Teen Survey Date	Online adults	Adult Survey Date
Go online	93%	Sep-09	79%	May-10
<b>% of internet users who do the following activities:</b>				
Send or read e-mail	73	Sep-09	94	May-10
Use a search engine	*	*	87	May-10
Get news	62~	Sep-09	75	May-10
Visit a government website	*	*	67	May-10
Buy a product	48	Sep-09	66	May-10
Make travel reservations	*	*	66	May-10
Watch a video	57	Nov-06	66	May-10
Use social networking sites	73	Sep-09	61	May-10
Bank online	*	*	58	May-10
Use online classifieds	*	*	53	May-10
Send instant messages	67	Sep-09	47	May-10
Get financial info	*	*	38	May-10
Look for religious/spiritual info	*	*	32	May-10
Rate a product, service or person	*	*	32	May-10
Participate in an auction	*	*	26	May-10
Make a charitable donation	*	*	22	May-10
Download podcasts	*	*	21	May-10
Work on own blog	14	Sep-09	14	Jan-10
Listen to music online	*	*	51	Sept-09
Visit a virtual world	8	Sep-09	4	Sept-09
Look for health info	31~	Sep-09	83	Dec-08
Read blogs	49	Nov-06	32	Dec-08
Play online games	78	Feb-08	35^	Aug-06

**Note:** ~ indicates significant differences in question wording between teen data and adult data.

## Differences in question wording

Surveys of teens ages 12-17 and adults age 18 and older are conducted in separate surveys, as outlined in the following sections. In general, activities listed for both teens and adults have only minor differences between the question wording between the different surveys. However, for the following questions, differences in question wording may make it more difficult to directly compare the results:

- **Getting news online:** For adults, this question was “Do you ever use the internet to get news online?” (January 2010). For teens, this question was “Do you ever go online to get news or information about current events or politics?” (September 2009).
- **Looking for health information:** For adults, this number indicates the percentage of internet users who said they had looked online for information about one of the health topics we asked about, ranging from information about a specific disease, a certain treatment, alternative medicine, health insurance, doctors, hospitals, and ways to stay healthy (December 2008). More information is available in our 2009 report, “The Social Life of Health Information.”<sup>17</sup> For teens, the question was, “Do you ever look online for health, dieting, or physical fitness information?” (September 2009).

For more information about all of the questions on both teen and adult surveys, as well as other details about wording and methodology, please see the individual toplines for each survey. The relevant portions of these surveys may be downloaded at <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Generations-2010.aspx>.

## Teens data

The most current teens data in this study is based on the 2009 Parent-Teen Cell Phone Survey which obtained telephone interviews with a nationally representative sample of 800 teens age 12-to-17 years-old and their parents living in the continental United States and on 9 focus groups conducted in 4 U.S. cities in June and October 2009 with teens between the ages of 12 and 18. The survey was conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates International. The interviews were done in English by Princeton Data Source, LLC from June 26 to September 24, 2009. Statistical results are weighted to correct known demographic discrepancies. For more information about the sample of 12-17-year-olds, please see the Methodology section of the “Teens and Mobile Phones” report (2010), available at <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Teens-and-Mobile-Phones.aspx>. The full data set is available at <http://pewinternet.org/Shared-Content/Data-Sets/2009/September-2009-Teens-and-Mobile.aspx>.

The Parent and Teen Survey on Gaming and Civic Engagement was conducted from November 1, 2007, to February 5, 2008. The margin of sampling error for results based on teen internet users is  $\pm 3\%$ . The full data set is available at <http://pewinternet.org/Shared-Content/Data-Sets/2008/February-2008--Teen-Gaming-and-Civic-Engagement.aspx>.

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<sup>17</sup> See “The Social Life of Health Information” (2009), <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2009/8-The-Social-Life-of-Health-Information/02-A-Shifting-Landscape/2-61-of-adults-in-the-US-gather-health-information-online.aspx>

The Parent & Teen Survey on Writing was conducted from September 19 to November 16, 2007. The margin of sampling error for results based on teen internet users is  $\pm 5\%$ . The full data set is available at <http://pewinternet.org/Shared-Content/Data-Sets/2007/November-2007--Teens-and-Writing.aspx> .

The Parents & Teens 2006 Survey was conducted from October 23 to November 19, 2006. The margin of sampling error for results based on teen internet users is  $\pm 4\%$ . The full data set is available at <http://pewinternet.org/Shared-Content/Data-Sets/2006/November-2006--Parents-and-Teens.aspx> .

The Parents & Teens 2004 was conducted from October 26 to November 28, 2004. The margin of sampling error for results based on teen internet users is  $\pm 4\%$ . The full data set is available at <http://pewinternet.org/Shared-Content/Data-Sets/2004/Teens--Parents-2004.aspx> .

### Adults data: May 2010

This report is based on the findings of a daily tracking survey on Americans' use of the Internet. The results in this report are based on data from telephone interviews conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates International between April 29 and May 30, 2010, among a sample of 2,252 adults, age 18 and older. Interviews were conducted in English. For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects is plus or minus 2.4 percentage points. For results based Internet users (n=1,756), the margin of sampling error is plus or minus 2.7 percentage points. In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting telephone surveys may introduce some error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

The margin of error for each generational subgroup, however, can be considerably higher than that for the sample of all internet users. Below is a list of the average margins of error for each age group:

Generation name	MOE for % of internet users
Millennials (ages 18-33)	$\pm 5.4\%$
Gen X (ages 34-45)	$\pm 6.4\%$
Younger Boomers (ages 46-55)	$\pm 5.5\%$
Older Boomers (ages 56-64)	$\pm 5.8\%$
Silent Generation (ages 65-73)	$\pm 7.7\%$
G.I. Generation (age 74+)	$\pm 7.0\%$

A combination of landline and cellular random digit dial (RDD) samples was used to represent all adults in the continental United States who have access to either a landline or cellular telephone. Both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International, LLC (SSI) according to PSRAI specifications. Numbers for the landline sample were selected with probabilities in proportion to their share of listed telephone households from active blocks (area code + exchange + two-digit block number) that contained three or more residential directory listings. The cellular sample was not list-assisted, but was drawn through a systematic sampling from dedicated wireless 100-blocks and shared service 100-blocks with no directory-listed landline numbers.

New sample was released daily and was kept in the field for at least five days. The sample was released in replicates, which are representative subsamples of the larger population. This ensures that complete call procedures were followed for the entire sample. At least 7 attempts were made to complete an interview at a sampled telephone number. The calls were staggered over times of day and days of the week to maximize the chances of making contact with a potential respondent. Each number received at least one daytime call in an attempt to find someone available. For the landline sample, half of the time interviewers first asked to speak with the youngest adult male currently at home. If no male was at home at the time of the call, interviewers asked to speak with the youngest adult female. For the other half of the contacts interviewers first asked to speak with the youngest adult female currently at home. If no female was available, interviewers asked to speak with the youngest adult male at home. For the cellular sample, interviews were conducted with the person who answered the phone. Interviewers verified that the person was an adult and in a safe place before administering the survey. Cellular sample respondents were offered a post-paid cash incentive for their participation. All interviews completed on any given day were considered to be the final sample for that day.

Non-response in telephone interviews produces some known biases in survey-derived estimates because participation tends to vary for different subgroups of the population, and these subgroups are likely to vary also on questions of substantive interest. In order to compensate for these known biases, the sample data are weighted in analysis. The demographic weighting parameters are derived from a special analysis of the most recently available Census Bureau’s March 2009 Annual Social and Economic Supplement. This analysis produces population parameters for the demographic characteristics of adults age 18 or older. These parameters are then compared with the sample characteristics to construct sample weights. The weights are derived using an iterative technique that simultaneously balances the distribution of all weighting parameters.

Following is the full disposition of all sampled telephone numbers:

Table 1: Sample Disposition		
Landline	Cell	
20,895	12,699	Total Numbers Dialed
1,160	251	Non-residential
982	18	Computer/Fax
12	---	Cell phone
8,886	4,906	Other not working
1,675	176	Additional projected not working
8,180	7,348	Working numbers
39.1%	57.9%	Working Rate
558	59	No Answer / Busy
870	2,054	Voice Mail
68	13	Other Non-Contact
6,684	5,222	Contacted numbers
81.7%	71.1%	Contact Rate

521	740	Callback
4,305	3016	Refusal
1,858	1,466	Cooperating numbers
27.8%	28.1%	Cooperation Rate
284	235	Language Barrier
---	460	Child's cell phone
1,574	771	Eligible numbers
84.7%	52.6%	Eligibility Rate
66	27	Break-off
1,508	744	Completes
95.8%	96.5%	Completion Rate
21.8%	19.3%	Response Rate

The disposition reports all of the sampled telephone numbers ever dialed from the original telephone number samples. The response rate estimates the fraction of all eligible respondents in the sample that were ultimately interviewed. At PSRAI it is calculated by taking the product of three component rates:

- **Contact rate** – the proportion of working numbers where a request for interview was made
- **Cooperation rate** – the proportion of contacted numbers where a consent for interview was at least initially obtained, versus those refused
- **Completion rate** – the proportion of initially cooperating and eligible interviews that were completed

Thus the response rate for the landline sample was 21.8 percent. The response rate for the cellular sample was 19.3 percent.

The full data set is available at <http://pewinternet.org/Shared-Content/Data-Sets/2010/May-2010--Cell-Phones.aspx> .