



JACK SHREVE
PUBLIC COUNSEL

STATE OF FLORIDA
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC COUNSEL

c/o The Florida Legislature
111 West Madison St.
Room 812
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1400
850-488-9330

September 7, 2001

Ms. Blanca Bayó
Florida Public Service Commission
Division of Records and Reporting
Capital Circle Office Center
2540 Shumard Oak Blvd.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0872


RE: Petition of the Citizens of the State of Florida to initiate rulemaking which will require telephone companies to give customers reasonable notice before customers incur higher charges or change in services, and allow them to evaluate competing alternative providers. Docket No. 010774-TP.

Dear Ms. Bayó:

Enclosed are sixteen (16) copies of (a) articles, press release and report of computer and Internet access in the U.S.A.; and (b) article of action by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection for alleged violations of consumer protection laws by various telephone companies. These documents are for inclusion in the Comments of Florida Citizens in the above referenced docket.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Questions should be directed to the undersigned.

Sincerely,


Stephen M. Presnell
Associate Public Counsel

Enclosures

cc w/enclosure:

Samantha Cibula
Norman H. Horton, Jr.
F. B. (Ben) Poag
Peter Dunbar/Karen Camechis
Carolyn Mason/Winston Pierce
Nancy B. White/James Meza III

Jim Lamoureux
Carolyn Marek
Donna C. McNulty
Joseph McGlothlin/Vicki Kaufman
Deborah (Debi) L. Nobles
Michelle A. Robinson/Linda Rossy

Angela Green
Andrew O. Isar
Jeffrey Wahlen
Bruce May
Michael A. Gross

DOCUMENT NUMBER-DATE

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FPSC-COMMISSION CLERK

By ALICIA CALDWELL
Times Staff Writer

You don't have to look at a clock at the North Greenwood public library to know when school has let out.

Just watch the kids line up to use the three computers with Internet access in this branch library, an anchor of Clearwater's African-American community. Most of the youngsters, said Clearwater library system director John Szabo, don't have a computer at home and need one for school work.

"When school's out, that library is absolutely shoulder to shoulder," Szabo said.

In what is the largest national survey of computer use, the U.S. Commerce Department today released statistics that show African-American and Hispanic children are far less likely to have a computer at home than white children. Consequently, computer access at schools and public libraries is particularly important to these youngsters as computers increasingly become life tools in the 21st century.



Sen. Les Miller, D-Tampa, says home access to computers is an economic issue.

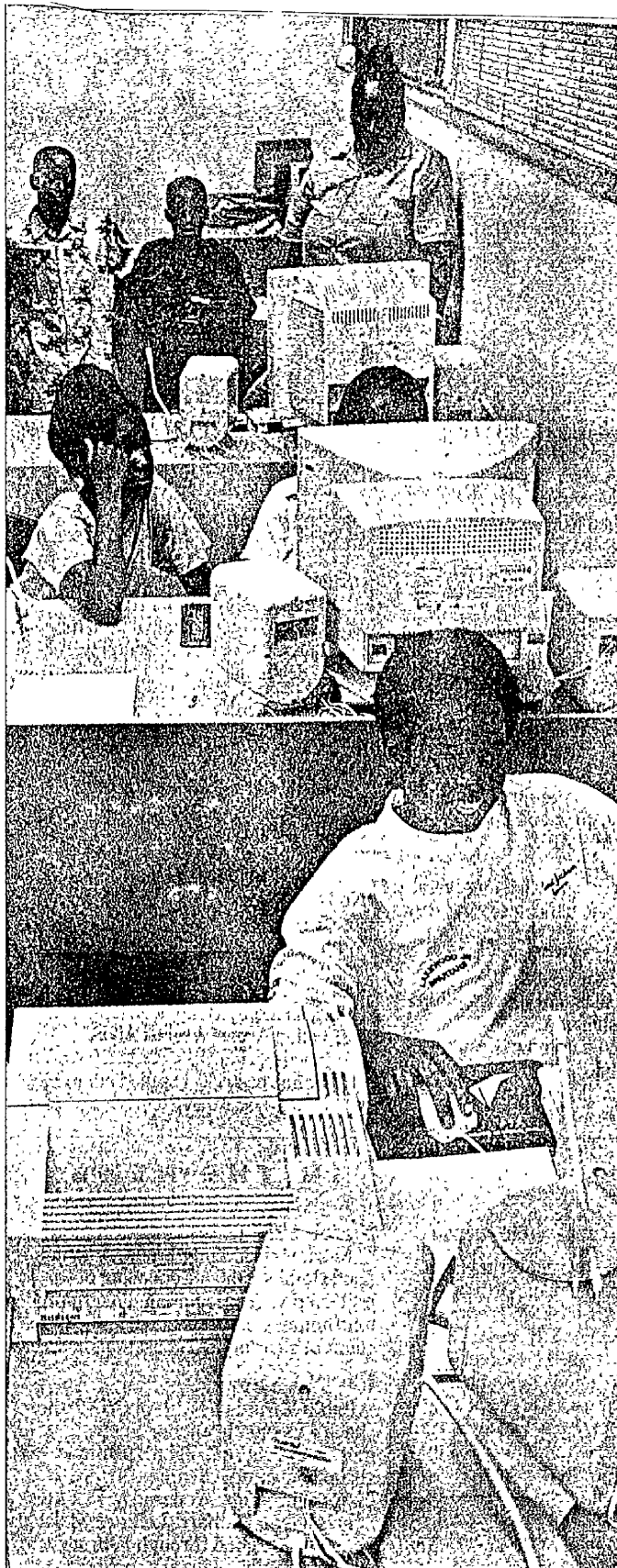
"Libraries are the on-ramp to the information highway for these children," Szabo said. "They depend on us."

The statistics show that about 77 percent of white children who are not Hispanic have a computer at home, as do 72 percent of Asian and Pacific Islander children. However, only 43 percent of African-American children and 37 percent of Hispanic children have a computer at home.

The statistics come from a survey of 50,000, which is weighted to reflect the nation's population. It has been conducted every few years by the Census Bureau but should not be confused with Census 2000, which does not ask questions about computer use.

The report, and others before it, underscore a nationwide trend of digital disparity, where computer use and Internet access is a privilege most often found in white and wealthy households.

"Although disadvantaged groups have substantially increased their home access to computers and the Internet, the gap between these groups and white



Times photo — FRED VICTORIN

Michael Jackson, 13, foreground, has a computer at home, but Britany Conyers, middle left, and Simone Durant, both 12, do not. They, along with Ernest Fuller, 13, and Brandon Green, 11, back row, use computers at the Enoch Davis Center in St. Petersburg. Wanda Mitchell, back right, runs the program.

The Color of Internet Access

Who does — and doesn't — log on at home often can be traced along racial lines, a national survey shows.

Computers

from 1B

Americans is growing," according to a National Science Foundation report issued last year.

The situation is disturbing to state Sen. Les Miller, D-Tampa, who during his 2000 senate campaign frequently pointed out how important it is for minority children to learn computer skills.

"If they go home and don't have access to computers they are going to be left behind," Miller said.

The issue, he said, is one of economics.

"To go out and spend \$800 to \$1,500 for a computer is very difficult for many families," Miller said.

The folks at the Redlands Christian Migrant Association, a non-profit service agency based in Immokalee, are trying to address that problem. They've gotten a \$400,000 state grant to buy computers and provide training for 135 migrant and farm worker families, who typically are Hispanic.

The group is starting the computer program for families at its Collier County charter school, with the hope of expanding it to the 80-student charter school it operates in Wimauma. The association will provide classes and home Internet access.

"This is not only for the children, but for the parents and the extended families so they can improve themselves," said Maria Jimenez, director of charter schools for Redlands.

At the North Greenwood library in Clearwater, officials are planning to buy about 15 computers as part of a new, 8,000-square-foot library. Szabo expects them to be heavily used.

"The public library plays a critical role in providing access to technology to those who are not able to afford it in their own homes," Szabo said.

And so do schools, according to the government report. Computer access at public schools was nearly equal across various income, race and ethnic groups.

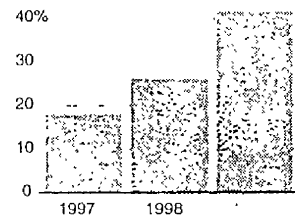
All told, nine in 10 children had access to a computer at home or at school, which suggests a basic proficiency, said Eric Newburger, the Commerce Department statisti-

You've got company

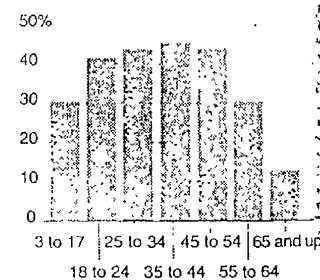
New figures from the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey show increasing numbers of people with Internet connections at home.

Home Internet connections

Percent of all households



Percent of each age group for 2000



* Internet usage was not included in the 1999 Current Population Survey.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau AP

cian who wrote the report.

"Most kids won't be left behind," Newburger said. "But that's not advanced education."

Wanda Mitchell, program director at St. Petersburg's Enoch Davis Center, said there is a big difference between having leisurely, virtually unlimited access and taking quick turns at a busy terminal.

The Enoch Davis Center — in the heart of St. Petersburg's black community — runs after-school programs and is next door to the James Weldon Johnson Branch Library, where children can use computers with Internet access.

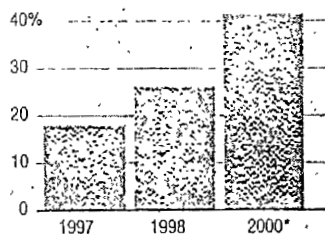
Mitchell said the staff frequently has to set a 30-minute limit per student so that more than a few can get a chance at the keyboard. Even with that restriction, the children find themselves having to do research together so everyone can get their homework done.

"They kind of work with each other," Mitchell said. "They have to."

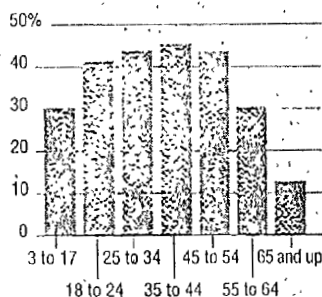
You've got company

New figures from the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey show increasing numbers of people with Internet connections at home.

Home Internet connections
Percent of all households



Percent of each age group for 2000



* Internet usage was not included in the 1999 Current Population Survey.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau

AP

More U.S. households are online

■ The latest census report shows a rise of 24 percent in Internet connections between 1998 and 2000.

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — More proof of the skyrocketing popularity of the Internet: 42 percent of U.S. households could log on to the Web in 2000, up from 18 percent three years earlier, the Census Bureau found.

More children than ever before are growing up in homes with computers, according to the census report released Thursday. Nearly two-thirds of all kids between ages 3 and 17 lived in homes with computers, and nearly one-third of kids in that age range have gone online.

The capability to e-mail and send instant messages has made Internet access a "must-have" item for many Americans, said Suzanna Fox, research director for the Pew Internet and American Life Project.

"E-mailing and instant messaging... have been woven into Americans' social lives," said Fox, whose nonprofit group tracks Internet usage and habits.

Nearly one-third of all adults 18 and older and one-fifth of all kids 3 to 17 use e-mail, the census survey found.

That need for instant communication, along with a decline in prices, contributed to the growing number of homes with computers, analysts said. More than half of the country's 105 million households had computers, the first time that percentage has been greater than 50 percent since the bureau started keeping track of such figures in 1984.

"Having a computer is no longer an oddity," bureau analyst Eric Newburger said.

Gaps still existed among different socioeconomic groups. Older Americans and families with smaller incomes were less likely to have computers.

Among those with Internet access at home, 73 percent of kids age 3 to 17, and 88 percent of adults 18 and older, used it for e-mail.

Among children, the next most popular use was for school research (68 percent), followed by more generic information searches (33 percent) and news, weather or sports (20 percent).

Among adults, 64 percent used the Internet for information searches, and 53 percent to get news, weather or sports updates. Forty percent used it to shop or pay bills.

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF
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WASHINGTON, DC 20230

**ECONOMICS
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EMBARGOED UNTIL: 12:01 A.M. EDT, SEPTEMBER 6, 2001 (THURSDAY)

Public Information Office
301-457-3030/301-457-3670 (fax)
301-457-1037 (TDD)
e-mail: pio@census.gov

CB01-147

Eric Newburger
301-457-2464

**9-in-10 School-Age Children Have Computer Access;
Internet Use Pervasive, Census Bureau Reports**

A ratio of 9-in-10 school-age children (6-to-17 years old) had access to a computer in 2000, with 4-in-5 using a computer at school and 2-in-3 with one at home, according to a report released today by the Commerce Department's Census Bureau.

The report showed that 54 million households, or 51 percent, had one or more computers in the home in August 2000, up from 42 percent in December 1998.

"Since 1984, the country has experienced more than a five-fold increase in the proportion of households with computers," said Census Bureau analyst Eric Newburger, author of

"In addition, Internet use is rapidly becoming synonymous with computer availability."

In 2000, more than 4-in-5 households with computers had at least one member using the Internet at home (44 million households). When the Census Bureau first collected data on Internet use in 1997, fewer than half of the households with computers had someone who was able to go online.

The report measured the influence of the Internet on how people access and use information. Of the total U.S. population, about 1-in-3 adults used e-mail from home in 2000, and nearly 1-in-4 used the Internet to search for information about topics such as business, health or government services. Nearly 1-in-5 used the Internet to check on news, weather or sports. And 1-in-8 adults performed job-related tasks using a home Internet connection.

Other highlights:

- Nearly 9-in-10 family households with annual incomes of \$75,000 or more had at least one computer and about 8-in-10 had at least one household member who used the Internet at home.
- Among family households with incomes below \$25,000, nearly 3-in-10 had a computer and about 2-in-10 had Internet access.

- Two-thirds of households with a school-age child had a computer, and 53 percent had Internet access.
- E-mail is the most common Internet application at home, used by 88 percent of adults and 73 percent of children who are online.
- Single-person households were the least likely to have a computer (30 percent) or Internet access (24 percent). In households with two to four persons, 58 percent had a computer and 47 percent had Internet access.
- Households in the West were the most likely to have computers (57 percent) and Internet access (47 percent). Those in the South were the least likely to have computers (47 percent) and Internet connections (38 percent).
- Ninety-four million people used the Internet at home in 2000, up from 57 million in 1998.
- Nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of all children 3-to-17 years old live in a household with a computer in 2000, up from 55 percent in 1998. About 3-in-10 children used the Internet at home, compared with about 2-in-10 in 1998.
- Schools have "leveled the playing field" by giving computer access to children who do not have one at home. Computer use at school was more nearly equal across various income, race or ethnic groups than was access at home.
- About 77 percent of White non-Hispanic and 72 percent of Asian and Pacific Islander children lived in households with computers, while only 43 percent of African American children and 37 percent of Hispanic children did.

The report uses Current Population Survey (CPS) data obtained from about 50,000 U.S. households. The data should not be confused with results from Census 2000, which did not include questions on computer access and Internet use. Statistics from sample surveys, such as CPS, are subject to sampling and nonsampling error.

-X-

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau
Public Information Office
301-457-3030*

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U S C E N S U S

U S C E N S U S

Home Computers and Internet Use in the United States: August 2000

Issued September 2001

Special Studies

P23-207

Defining computer and Internet access

All individuals living in a household in which the respondent answered "Yes" to the question, "Is there a personal computer or laptop in this household?" are considered to have "access" to that computer.

Households with 'Internet access' are those which have at least one member using the Internet at home.

The rapid adoption of computer and Internet technology by the U.S. population has raised many questions. Which households have computers, and which have Internet access? Do children have the access to computer technology that they need to prepare them for jobs in a human capital economy? Do some children have access while others do not? Who uses the Internet, among both children and adults? How might this use change society? This report uses Current Population Survey (CPS) data to address some of the primary

questions raised by the nation's changing technological base.

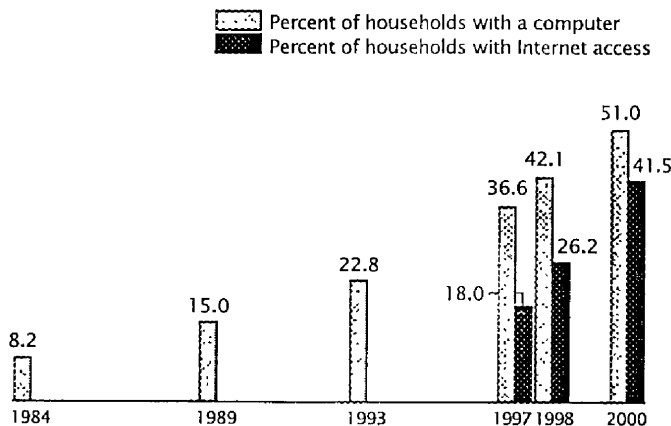
HOME COMPUTERS AND INTERNET USE

More than half of households have computers.

In August 2000, 54 million households, or 51 percent, had one or more computers, up from 42 percent in December 1998 (Figure 1).¹ Since 1984, the first year in

¹The estimates in this report are based on responses from a sample of the population. As with all surveys, estimates may vary from the actual values for the entire population because of sampling variation, or other factors. All statements made in this report have undergone statistical testing and meet Census Bureau standards for statistical accuracy.

Figure 1.
Computers and Internet Access in the Home: 1984 to 2000
(Civilian noninstitutional population)



Note: Data on Internet access were not collected before 1997.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, various years.

Current
Population
Reports

August 2000

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Economics and Statistics Administration
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which the Census Bureau collected data on computer ownership and use, the country has experienced more than a fivefold increase in the proportion of households with computers.

More than 2 in 5 households have Internet access.

Forty-four million households, or 42 percent, had at least one member who used the Internet at home in 2000. This proportion was up from 26 percent in 1998, and more than double the proportion of households with Internet access in 1997 (18 percent), the first year in which the Census Bureau collected data on Internet use.² In households which have computers, Internet use has rapidly become so common as to make computer availability and Internet access nearly synonymous. In 1997, less than half of households with computers had someone using the Internet. In 2000, more than 4 in 5 households with a computer had at least one member using the Internet at home.

High-income households are more likely to have computers or Internet access.

Among family households with incomes of \$75,000 or more during the 12 months prior to the survey, 88 percent had at least one computer, and 79 percent had at least one household member who used the Internet at home in 2000. Among family households with incomes below \$25,000, only 28 percent had a computer, and 19 percent had Internet access (Table A).

One-person households were the least likely to have a computer or Internet access. While 58 percent of households with two to four people had a computer, only 30 percent of

²Data for 1997 include only those accessing the Internet through a computer. Data for 1998 and 2000 include those accessing the Internet through all types of Internet devices.

one-person households had a computer. Forty-seven percent of two-to-four-person households had Internet access compared with 24 percent of one-person households.

Similarly, married-couple households were the most likely to have a computer or Internet access. Sixty-four percent of married-couple households had a computer, and 53 percent had Internet access. Fewer than half of all other households combined had a computer, and less than one-third had Internet access.

The presence of a child also influences whether a household has a computer or Internet access. Two-thirds of households with a school-age child (6 to 17 years) had a computer, and 53 percent had Internet access. In comparison, only 45 percent of households without a school-age child had a computer, and only 37 percent had Internet access.

Household computer presence and Internet access varied among the four regions of the country. For example, households in the West were the most likely to have computers or Internet access (57 percent and 47 percent, respectively). Those in the South were least likely (47 percent and 38 percent, respectively).

Households situated in metropolitan areas, but outside central cities, were most likely to have a computer (58 percent) or Internet access (48 percent). Only 46 percent of households in central cities had a computer, and just 38 percent had Internet access. Nonmetropolitan households were least likely to have a computer or Internet access (42 percent and 32 percent, respectively).

About 94 million people use the Internet at home.

Among people 3 years old or over, 36 percent used the Internet at home in 2000, including 18 million children 3 to 17 years, and

75 million adults 18 years old and over.³ In 1998, only 57 million people, or 22 percent of those 3 years and over, used the Internet.

CHILDREN'S ACCESS TO COMPUTERS AND THE INTERNET

More children have access to a computer or use the Internet at home than ever before.

Nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of all children 3 to 17 years lived in a household with a computer in 2000, up from 55 percent in 1998. Thirty percent of all children used the Internet at home in 2000 (Table B), compared with just 19 percent in 1998.

Although girls were as likely as boys to use the Internet at home, children's Internet use varied with age. Only 7 percent of the youngest children, those 3 to 5 years, used the Internet at home. Among children 6 to 11 years, 25 percent used the Internet at home, and 48 percent, nearly half, of children 12 to 17 years used the Internet at home.

White non-Hispanic children are more likely to have home computer access or use the Internet than are Black or Hispanic children.

Among children 3 to 17 years, 77 percent of White non-Hispanics and 72 percent of Asians and Pacific Islanders lived in households with computers, while only 43 percent of Black children and 37 percent of Hispanic children did so.⁴

³Some estimates may not add up to the total population because of rounding.

⁴Based on the August 2000 Current Population Survey sample, 3 percent of Black children 3 to 17 years and 3 percent of Asians and Pacific Islanders 3 to 17 years are also of Hispanic origin. Hispanics may be of any race.

Data for the American Indian and Alaska Native population are not shown in this report because of the small sample size in the August 2000 Current Population Survey.

Table A.
Households With Computers and Internet Access by Selected Characteristics:
August 2000

(Numbers in thousands. Civilian noninstitutional population)

Characteristic	Total households	Computer in household			Home Internet access		
	Number	Number	Percent	90 percent C.I. (+ -) ¹	Number	Percent	90 percent C.I. (+ -) ¹
TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	105,247	53,716	51.0	0.4	43,639	41.5	0.4
AGE OF HOUSEHOLDER							
Under 25 years	6,104	2,675	43.8	1.5	2,179	35.7	1.5
25 to 44 years	42,545	25,944	61.0	0.6	21,353	50.2	0.6
45 to 64 years	34,800	19,800	56.9	0.6	16,251	46.7	0.6
65 years and over	21,798	5,297	24.3	0.7	3,856	17.7	0.6
RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN OF HOUSEHOLDER							
White	87,746	46,846	53.4	0.4	38,380	43.7	0.4
White non-Hispanic	78,719	43,829	55.7	0.4	36,260	46.1	0.4
Black	13,171	4,317	32.8	0.9	3,111	23.6	0.8
Asian and Pacific Islander	3,457	2,250	65.1	1.8	1,944	56.2	1.9
Hispanic (of any race)	9,565	3,224	33.7	1.4	2,255	23.6	1.3
HOUSEHOLDER'S EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT							
Less than high school diploma	17,402	3,162	18.2	0.7	2,032	11.7	0.6
High school diploma/GED	32,278	12,783	39.6	0.6	9,666	29.9	0.6
Some college	27,883	16,807	60.3	0.7	13,661	49.0	0.7
Bachelors degree or more	27,684	20,963	75.7	0.6	18,279	66.0	0.7
SIZE OF HOUSEHOLD							
One person	27,167	8,165	30.1	0.7	6,533	24.0	0.6
Two to four people	67,461	38,853	57.6	0.5	31,829	47.2	0.5
Five or more people	10,619	6,697	63.1	1.1	5,277	49.7	1.1
HOUSEHOLD TYPE							
Family households	72,044	42,238	58.6	0.4	34,315	47.6	0.4
Married-couple household	54,830	34,875	63.6	0.5	28,872	52.7	0.5
Male householder	4,179	1,879	45.0	1.8	1,455	34.8	1.7
Female householder	13,035	5,484	42.1	1.0	3,988	30.6	1.0
Nonfamily household	33,203	11,478	34.6	0.6	9,323	28.1	0.6
PRESENCE OF SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN IN HOUSEHOLD							
Without children 6 to 17 years	76,558	34,537	45.1	0.4	28,360	37.0	0.4
With children 6 to 17 years	28,689	19,179	66.8	0.7	15,279	53.3	0.7
REGION							
Northeast	20,051	10,283	51.3	0.8	8,620	43.0	0.8
Midwest	24,276	12,442	51.3	0.8	9,929	40.9	0.8
South	38,009	17,891	47.1	0.6	14,404	37.9	0.6
West	22,912	13,099	57.2	0.8	10,685	46.6	0.8
METROPOLITAN STATUS							
Metropolitan	84,646	45,110	53.3	0.4	37,124	43.9	0.4
Inside central city	31,806	14,727	46.3	0.7	11,987	37.7	0.6
Outside central city	52,840	30,382	57.5	0.5	25,137	47.6	0.5
Nonmetropolitan	20,601	8,606	41.8	1.0	6,515	31.6	0.9
FAMILY INCOME							
TOTAL FAMILIES	72,044	42,238	58.6	0.5	34,315	47.6	0.5
Under \$15,000	7,458	1,747	23.4	1.2	1,068	14.3	1.0
15,000-19,999	3,298	1,021	30.9	2.0	674	20.4	1.7
20,000-24,999	4,173	1,437	34.4	1.8	1,040	24.9	1.6
25,000-34,999	8,553	4,031	47.1	1.3	2,982	34.9	1.3
35,000-49,999	9,918	6,131	61.8	1.2	4,766	48.1	1.2
50,000-74,999	12,555	9,424	75.1	1.0	7,825	62.3	1.1
75,000+	15,040	13,198	87.8	0.7	11,886	79.0	0.8
Not reported	11,050	5,249	47.5	1.2	4,074	36.9	1.1

¹This figure added to or subtracted from the estimate provides the 90-percent confidence interval

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, August 2000.

Table B.
Access to a Home Computer and Use of the Internet at Home by Children 3 to 17 Years:
August 2000

(Numbers in thousands. Civilian noninstitutional population)

Characteristic	Children 3 to 17 years old	Home computer access		Use Internet at home	
	Number	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
TOTAL	60,635	39,430	65.0	18,437	30.4
AGE					
3 to 5 years	11,915	6,905	58.0	864	7.3
6 to 11 years	24,837	15,924	64.1	6,135	24.7
12 to 17 years	23,884	16,600	69.5	11,439	47.9
SEX					
Male	31,055	20,273	65.3	9,392	30.2
Female	29,580	19,156	64.8	9,045	30.6
RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN					
White	47,433	33,062	69.7	15,940	33.6
White non-Hispanic	38,438	29,731	77.3	14,773	38.4
Black	9,779	4,161	42.5	1,441	14.7
Asian and Pacific Islander	2,581	1,855	71.9	909	35.2
Hispanic (of any race)	9,568	3,546	37.1	1,229	12.8
HOUSEHOLDER'S EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT					
Less than high school diploma	10,159	3,060	30.1	1,126	11.1
High school diploma/GED	18,915	10,559	55.8	4,600	24.3
Some college	16,994	12,712	74.8	5,926	34.9
Bachelors degree or more	14,567	13,098	89.9	6,786	46.6
HOUSEHOLD TYPE					
Family households	60,012	39,119	65.2	18,284	30.5
Married-couple household	42,936	31,593	73.6	15,050	35.1
Male householder	3,092	1,508	48.8	740	23.9
Female householder	13,984	6,017	43.0	2,493	17.8
Nonfamily household	620	310	50.0	154	24.8
REGION					
Northeast	10,794	7,576	70.2	3,832	35.5
Midwest	14,302	9,816	68.6	4,591	32.1
South	20,870	12,711	60.9	5,756	27.6
West	14,668	9,327	63.6	4,258	29.0
METROPOLITAN STATUS					
Metropolitan	49,316	32,513	65.9	15,187	30.8
Inside central city	17,478	9,341	53.4	4,149	23.7
Outside central city	31,839	23,171	72.8	11,038	34.7
Nonmetropolitan	11,319	6,917	61.1	3,250	28.7
FAMILY INCOME					
TOTAL 3 TO 17 YEARS IN FAMILIES	59,288	38,729	65.3	18,139	30.6
Under \$15,000	7,480	2,041	27.3	578	7.7
15,000-19,999	2,896	1,044	36.0	373	12.9
20,000-24,999	3,596	1,507	41.9	547	15.2
25,000-34,999	6,967	3,755	53.9	1,463	21.0
35,000-49,999	8,463	6,044	71.4	2,694	31.8
50,000-74,999	10,374	8,574	82.6	4,142	39.9
75,000+	12,115	11,294	93.2	6,263	51.7
Not reported	7,395	4,470	60.4	2,079	28.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, August 2000.

While 38 percent of White non-Hispanic children and 35 percent of Asian and Pacific Islander children used the Internet at home, just 15 percent of Black children and 13 percent of Hispanic children did.⁵

More school-age children use computers at school than have access to them at home.

School is a major influence on children's access to computers. Among children of school age (6 to 17 years), 2 in 3 had access to a computer at home in 2000. However, 4 in 5 actually used a computer at school.

More than half of school-age children had access to computers both in school and at home (57 percent). However, many children had access in only one location or the other. Of them, far more had access in school than had access at home. Twenty-three percent of school-age children had access to a computer only at school, compared with just 10 percent who had access only at home. Adding all three groups together, 9 in 10 school-age children had access to a computer somewhere, leaving just 10 percent of children who had no access to a computer in any locale (Figure 2).

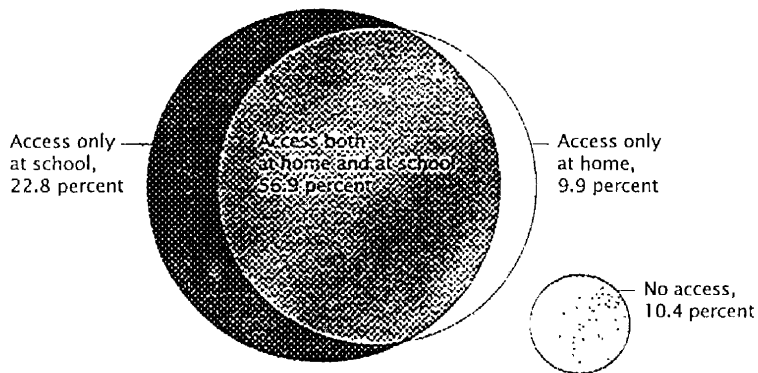
Schools level the playing field by giving computer access to children who have none at home.

For children 6 to 17 years old, computer use at school was more nearly equal across different income, race, or ethnic groups than computer access at home (Figure 3).

School-age children in family households with incomes of \$75,000 or more had the highest rates of home

⁵The proportions of home Internet users among Asian and Pacific Islander and White non-Hispanic children were not significantly different. The proportions of home Internet users among Black and Hispanic children were also not significantly different.

Figure 2.
Access to Computers Among School-Age Children: August 2000
(Civilian noninstitutional population)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, August 2000.

computer access, at 94 percent, compared with those with incomes below \$25,000, at 35 percent (a difference of about 60 percentage points). But at school, while 87 percent of those with the highest incomes used a computer, 72 percent of those with the lowest incomes did so, a difference of only 15 percentage points.

Figure 3 illustrates a similar equalizing effect observed among children of different racial or ethnic groups. At home, access varied from high to low by 41 percentage points. However, at school the range was much smaller, just 14 percentage points.

The net result of the effect schools have in giving computer access across income, racial, and ethnic groups is a leveling of the computer access that children of different groups have compared to what they would have had if home were the only place available for them to use computers. The absolute percentage-point gap in total computer access between children from family households with the highest and lowest incomes was only about one-third as large as the gap in

home access between these two groups. Similarly, the overall computer access gap between White non-Hispanic school-age children and Black or Hispanic school-age children was just over one-third the size of the gap between these groups in home computer access.⁶

ADULT ACCESS TO COMPUTERS AND THE INTERNET

More adults have computers and use the Internet at home than ever before.

More than half of all adults 18 years old and over, 55 percent, lived in a household with at least one computer in 2000, compared with only 46 percent in 1998. Thirty-seven percent of all adults used the Internet at home, compared with just 23 percent in 1998 (Table C).

The oldest adults had the lowest rates of home Internet use. Only 13 percent of those 65 years old or over used the Internet at home.

⁶The proportions of overall computer access among Black and Hispanic school-age children were not significantly different.

Among those 55 to 64 years, 31 percent used the Internet at home.

Interestingly, among adults less than 55 years old, the proportion using the Internet at home showed little variation by age group. Only about 4 percentage points separated the groups with the lowest and highest proportions of Internet users: 42 percent for 18 to 24 years and 46 percent for 35 to 44 years.

A small difference existed between the proportions of men and women who used the Internet at home (39 percent of men compared with 36 percent of women). However, this difference was due to the higher proportion of women 55 years old and over -- an age group with lower rates of Internet use regardless of sex.

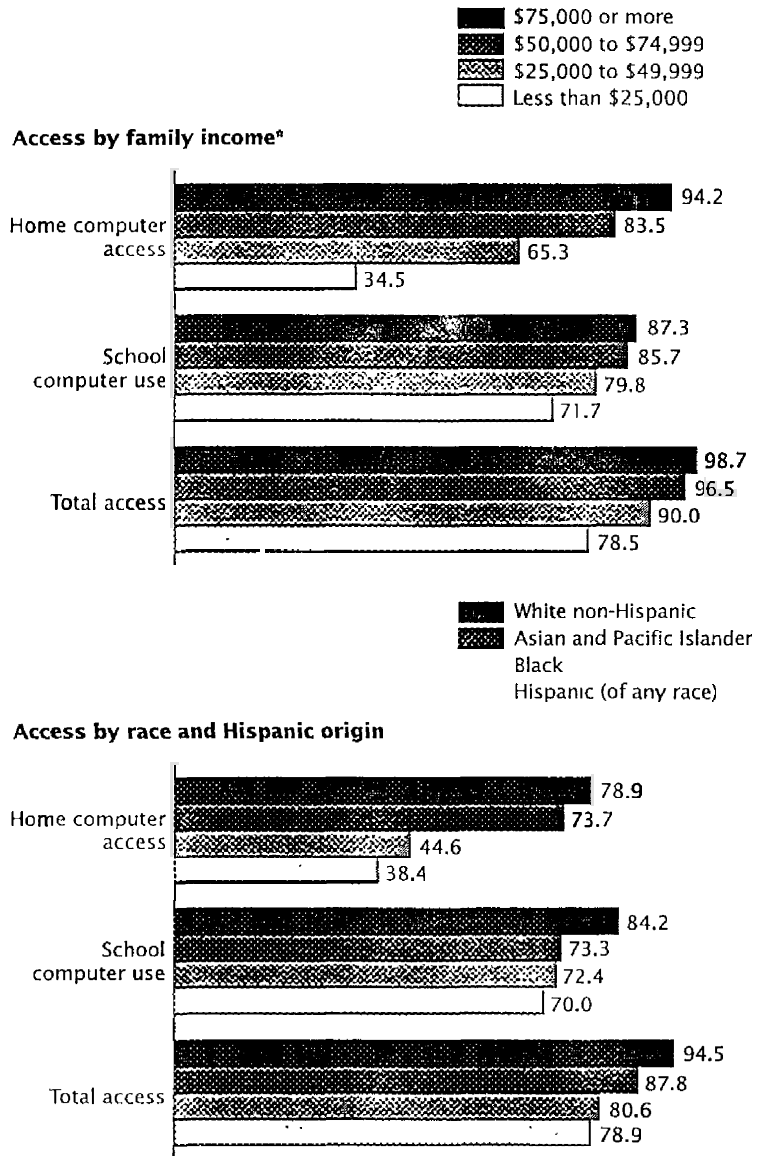
More affluent and more highly educated adults are more likely to have computers or use the Internet.

Eighty-seven percent of related adults living in family households with incomes of \$75,000 or more had a computer, compared with 28 percent of adults living in family households with incomes less than \$25,000. Two-thirds (67 percent) of related adults living in the wealthiest family households used the Internet at home, compared with 14 percent of those living in households with the lowest family incomes.

The most highly educated adults were the most likely to have a computer or use the Internet at home. Seventy-eight percent of adults with a bachelor's degree or more had access to a computer at home, compared with 46 percent of those holding only a high school diploma.

Figure 3.
Computer Access at Home and School Among Children 6 to 17 Years Old by Family Income, Race, and Hispanic Origin: August 2000

(Percent of civilian noninstitutional population)



*Among children in families.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, March 2000.

Table C.
Access to a Home Computer and Use of the Internet at Home by Adults 18 Years and Over: August 2000

(Numbers in thousands. Civilian noninstitutional population)

Characteristic	Total 18 years and over	Home computer access		Use Internet at home	
	Number	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
TOTAL	201,985	111,935	55.4	75,322	37.3
AGE					
18 to 24 years	26,458	15,256	57.7	10,984	41.5
25 to 34 years	37,394	22,004	58.8	16,406	43.9
35 to 44 years	44,665	29,294	65.6	20,306	45.5
45 to 54 years	37,007	24,003	64.9	16,196	43.8
55 to 64 years	23,710	12,062	50.9	7,240	30.5
65 years and over	32,751	9,316	28.4	4,190	12.8
SEX					
Men.....	96,789	55,023	56.8	37,243	38.5
Women.....	105,196	56,912	54.1	38,079	36.2
RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN					
White	168,293	97,094	57.7	66,488	39.5
White non-Hispanic.....	148,001	89,958	60.8	62,942	42.5
Black.....	23,998	8,890	37.0	4,927	20.5
Asian and Pacific Islander	7,993	5,277	66.0	3,491	43.7
Hispanic (of any race).....	21,350	7,530	35.3	3,740	17.5
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT					
Less than high school diploma	33,055	7,687	23.3	2,792	8.4
High school diploma/GED	66,401	30,635	46.1	17,182	25.9
Some college	54,376	35,876	66.0	25,284	46.5
Bachelor's degree or more.....	48,153	37,737	78.4	30,065	62.4
LABOR FORCE STATUS					
Employed.....	132,772	84,382	63.6	59,020	44.5
Unemployed	5,346	2,626	49.1	1,808	33.8
Not in labor force.....	63,866	24,928	39.0	14,494	22.7
SIZE OF HOUSEHOLD					
One person.....	27,237	8,195	30.1	6,354	23.3
Two to four people.....	143,968	84,757	58.9	57,596	40.0
Five or more people	30,779	18,983	61.7	11,373	37.0
REGION					
Northeast	38,771	22,043	56.9	14,833	38.3
Midwest	46,383	26,236	56.6	17,551	37.8
South	71,688	36,601	51.1	24,569	34.3
West.....	45,143	27,055	59.9	18,369	40.7
METROPOLITAN STATUS					
Metropolitan	163,441	93,773	57.4	64,066	39.2
Inside central city.....	58,521	29,042	49.6	19,721	33.7
Outside central city	104,920	64,731	61.7	44,344	42.3
Nonmetropolitan.....	38,544	18,162	47.1	11,256	29.2
FAMILY INCOME					
TOTAL ADULTS IN FAMILIES	157,897	94,911	60.1	62,671	39.7
Under \$15,000	13,604	3,237	23.8	1,531	11.3
15,000-19,999.....	6,470	1,982	30.6	954	14.7
20,000-24,999.....	8,390	2,866	34.2	1,515	18.1
25,000-34,999.....	18,102	8,392	46.4	4,700	26.0
35,000-49,999.....	21,738	13,309	61.2	8,136	37.4
50,000-74,999.....	28,526	21,242	74.5	14,529	50.9
75,000+	36,398	31,812	87.4	24,199	66.5
Not reported	24,668	12,071	48.9	7,107	28.8

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, August 2000.

Among adults with at least a bachelor's degree, 62 percent used the Internet at home, compared with only 26 percent of adults with only a high school diploma.

Asian and Pacific Islander adults are the most likely to have computers at home.

Among Asians and Pacific Islanders 18 years old and over, 66 percent lived in a household with a computer, the highest of any race or ethnic group. In turn, 61 percent of White non-Hispanic adults lived in households with a computer, significantly more than Black or Hispanic adults (37 and 35 percent, respectively).⁷

The proportion of Asian and Pacific Islander and White non-Hispanic adults using the Internet at home was more than double that of Black adults (44 percent, 43 percent, and 21 percent, respectively).⁸ Hispanic adults had the lowest home Internet use (18 percent).

USES OF THE INTERNET

E-mail is the most common use of the Internet at home.

More home Internet users, both adults and children, sent or received e-mail in 2000 than did any other online activity. Among children, 73 percent of those who used the Internet at home used e-mail, compared with 68 percent who used the Internet to do research for school or to take courses online, the next most common use (Table D). Eighty-eight percent of adult Internet users sent or

⁷The proportions of Black or Hispanic adults with a computer at home were not significantly different. Based on the August 2000 Current Population Survey sample, 2 percent of Black adults 18 years old or over and 2 percent of Asians and Pacific Islanders over 18 years are also of Hispanic origin. Hispanics may be of any race.

⁸The proportions of Asians and Pacific Islanders and White non-Hispanic adults who were home Internet users were not significantly different.

Table D.
Specific Uses of the Internet at Home by Adults and Children: August 2000

(Numbers in thousands. Civilian noninstitutional population)

Specific use	People using the Internet at home			
	Children 3 to 17 years		Adults 18 years and over	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Any Internet use	18,437	100.0	75,322	100.0
E-mail	13,438	72.9	66,046	87.7
School research or courses	12,560	68.1	18,080	24.0
Check news, weather, sports	3,658	19.8	39,528	52.5
Make phone calls	630	3.4	4,831	6.4
Information search	6,079	33.0	48,358	64.2
Job search	418	2.3	14,930	19.8
Job-related tasks	272	1.5	25,347	33.7
Shop or pay bills	1,467	8.0	30,014	39.8
Play games, entertainment, fun	1,981	10.7	3,655	4.9
Other	1,099	6.0	7,051	9.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, August 2000.

received e-mail, far more than performed information searches (64 percent), the next most common adult use.

Internet use is influencing how society manages information.

Although the online activities of Internet users show how people with the technology use it, the total proportion of people in the population performing certain tasks online demonstrates how the technology might impact society.

The Internet has become a major venue for the dissemination of news (Figure 4). Among adults, nearly 1 in 5 used the Internet at home to check on news, weather, or sports. Nearly 1 in 4 adults used the Internet for other sorts of information searches, such as information about businesses, health practices, or government services.

The Internet also affects interpersonal communication. About 1 in 3 adults used e-mail from home. More than 1 in 5 children (22 percent) used home e-mail.

Finally, the Internet acts as a venue for work and school to enter the

home. One adult in eight used the Internet to perform job-related tasks using a home Internet connection. Twenty-one percent of children used the Internet to perform school-related tasks, such as research for assignments or taking courses online.

SOURCE OF THE DATA

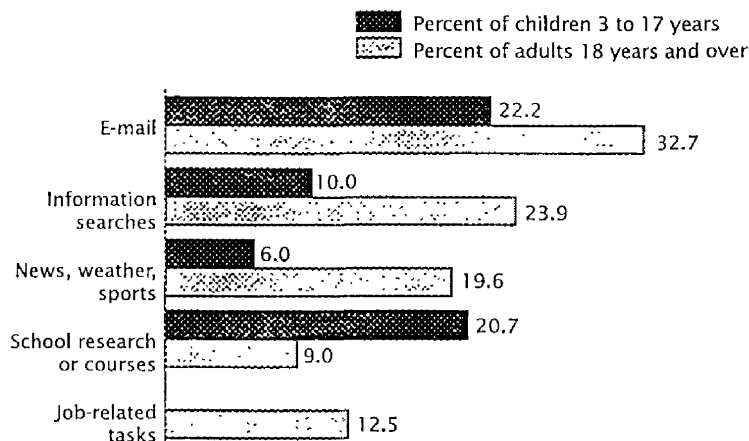
Most estimates in this report come from data obtained in August 2000 from the Current Population Survey (CPS). Some estimates are based on data obtained from the CPS in earlier years or other months. The U.S. Census Bureau conducts the Current Population Survey every month, although this report uses only data from months during which a Computer Use or Internet supplement were administered for its estimates.

ACCURACY AND RELIABILITY OF THE DATA

Statistics from sample surveys are subject to sampling and nonsampling error. All comparisons presented in this report have taken sampling error into account and meet the Census Bureau's standards for statistical significance. Nonsampling errors in surveys may be attributed

Figure 4.
**Adults and Children Using the Internet for
 a Specific Task: August 2000**

(Percent of civilian noninstitutional population)



Note: While some older children used the Internet to work at home, the proportion was too small to be shown.
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, August 2000.

to a variety of sources, such as how the survey was designed, how respondents interpret questions, how able and willing respondents are to provide correct answers, and how accurately answers are coded and classified. The Census Bureau employs quality control procedures throughout the production process — including the overall design of surveys, testing the wording of questions, review of the work of interviewers and coders, and statistical review of reports.

The CPS employs ratio estimation, whereby sample estimates are adjusted to independent estimates of the national population by age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin. This weighting partially corrects for bias due to undercoverage, but how it affects different variables in the survey is not precisely known. Moreover, biases may also be present when people who are missed in the survey differ from those interviewed in ways other than the categories used in weighting (age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin). All of these considerations affect

comparisons across different surveys or data sources. Please contact the Demographic Statistical Methods Division via Internet e-mail at dsmd_s&a@census.gov for information on the source of the data, the accuracy of the estimates, the use of standard errors, and the computation of standard errors.

MORE INFORMATION

The electronic version of this report is available on the Internet, at the Census Bureau's World Wide Web site (www.census.gov). Once on the site, click on "C" under the "Subjects A-Z" heading, and then "Computer Use and Ownership."

CONTACTS

For additional information on these topics, contact Eric C. Newburger, Education and Social Stratification Branch, on 301-457-2464 or via e-mail (eric.charles.newburger@census.gov).

USER COMMENTS

The Census Bureau welcomes the comments and advice of data and report users. If you have any suggestions or comments, please write to:

Chief, Population Division
 U.S. Census Bureau
 Washington, DC 20233

or send e-mail to: pop@census.gov

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SW Bell's Cable Modem Ads Are Deceptive, Charter Says

Charter Communications, Inc., has filed a complaint in federal court accusing Southwestern Bell Telephone Co. of making "intentionally false and misleading statements about cable modem Internet service" in its print, radio, and TV ads, and on its Internet site. But SBC Communications, Inc., SW Bell's parent, says "the lawsuit is another attempt by cable companies to control the information that consumers can get about broadband."

SW Bell's advertising and Internet statements "violate the federal Lanham Act, which governs truth in advertising and unfair competition, and Missouri common law, which prohibits injurious falsehoods," Charter said in the Aug. 28 complaint filed with U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri. Charter asked the court to order SW Bell to discontinue its "Cable Modem Slowdown" campaign, which promotes SW Bell's competing DSL (digital subscriber line) service. Charter offers cable modem broadband services in the St. Louis area, one of SW Bell's local exchange and DSL markets.

SW Bell "falsely asserts that DSL is faster than cable modem service at peak usage times," Charter said. Cable modem service is theoretically much faster than consumer-priced DSL service, but cable modem customers share their transmission capacity with nearby customers, creating the potential for slower service when many users in the same area are online at the same time.

One of SW Bell's print ads states, "Cable modems are great after 10 p.m. Hmmm, something else is really good then, too. Sleep." Peak usage times are from 3 p.m. until 10 p.m.

An SBC spokesman wouldn't discuss the merits of Charter's lawsuit but said its ads were designed to educate consumers about cable modem service's shared architecture. "There is enough anecdotal evidence to support those claims. But the bigger issue is cable's control of 70% of the broadband market nationwide. Some cable companies have gone so far as to refuse" to carry ads for DSL services on their video channels, he said.

"Slowdowns experienced by Internet users during peak usage hours are the result of increased Internet traffic and are largely unrelated to cable modem or DSL technology" used to connect to the Internet, according to Charter's complaint. "Charter's cable

modem Internet connection speeds in the St. Louis area aren't reduced during peak usage hours any more than connections for DSL subscribers."

Curt Shaw, senior vice president, general counsel, and secretary of Charter, said, "Southwestern Bell won't compete on a level playing field, so [it has] resorted to deceiving consumers by making false statements about cable modem Internet service."

The ads began appearing in August. Mr. Shaw said Charter sent a letter soon after the ads appeared to Edward E. Whitacre Jr., chairman and chief executive officer of SBC, asking the company to stop running the ads. "But SBC has never responded," he said.

Charter Communications, Inc. v. Southwestern Bell Telephone Co. (case 4:01CV1376) has been assigned to District Judge Catherine D. Perry. TR

Wisconsin Consumer Agency Asks AG To Act against IXC's

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection has asked a state assistant attorney general to take action against WorldCom, Inc., and AT&T Corp. for alleged violations of consumer protection laws. Materials the department submitted with its Aug. 27 request cite problems with customer service agreements relating to rate-change notifications and resolution of disputes.

The Aug. 27 letter also refers to similar concerns about Sprint Communications Co. L.P.'s customer service agreements. But an attorney at the consumer protection department told *TR* that the investigation was on hold until it received a response from Sprint. AT&T and WorldCom have already told the department that they believe that their service agreements are lawful. AT&T faces a class action lawsuit in California stemming from concerns about its service agreement (*TR*, Aug. 13, and separate story in this issue).

In the wake of FCC "detriffing" of interstate interexchange services (*TR*, Nov. 13, 2000), WorldCom, AT&T, and other IXC's had to find some other enforceable means of setting rates for those services. Most have chosen to adopt customer service agreements to govern their relationships with callers. The new agreements typically take effect if a customer requests, uses, or pays for the IXC's service, without the customer's having to sign an agreement. Obtaining signed agreements with each customer, especially for mass-market consumer services, would be too costly and difficult, they say.

Wisconsin law requires interexchange carriers (IXCs) to notify customers in writing 25 to 90 days before any planned rate changes, and it allows consumers to take the disputes with IXCs to the state courts. But AT&T and WorldCom are implementing rate changes on as little as 15 days' notice, the consumer protection department says.

The companies' service agreements also include a provision calling for customers to submit to binding arbitration if they have disputes that they have unsuccessfully attempted to resolve through customer account representatives. The IXCs contend that because the FCC has deregulated the services in question, Wisconsin's consumer laws governing rate changes and disputes shouldn't apply to them, said David Ghilardi, an attorney for the consumer protection department. But state officials dispute that contention. "The IXCs cannot propose a service agreement that would waive customer rights," he told *TR*. TR

Judge Nixes Injunction In AT&T Arbitration Case

A federal judge in California has refused to grant a preliminary injunction against AT&T Corp.'s imposition of a binding arbitration provision in its mass-market customer agreements (*TR*, Aug. 13). In a bench ruling Aug. 24, however, U.S. District Judge Bernard Zimmerman said he had grave concerns about the arbitration provision, an attorney for the parties that brought the lawsuit told *TR*.

The case stems from AT&T's efforts to deal with the FCC's decision to "detriff" domestic interstate interexchange services. In place of tariffs, the company adopted a customer service agreement that takes effect if callers enroll in, use, or pay for its services. One of the provisions of the agreement calls for customers to submit to binding arbitration by the American Arbitration Association if they have a dispute they couldn't resolve through AT&T's customer account representatives.

Karen Hindin, an attorney at the Sturdevant Law Firm in San Francisco, which represents the plaintiffs, said the judge set a Nov. 5 trial date. She added that the law firm planned to ask the federal court to remand the case to the California Superior Court in Alameda County, where it originally filed the lawsuit. AT&T had asked for the case (*Darcy Ting et al. v. AT&T Corp.*, case C-012-969BZ) to be heard in federal court. TR

Verizon Says Line-Loss Reports Are Accurate; WorldCom Demurs

Verizon Communications, Inc., is defending the accuracy of its reports on the number of lines it has lost to competitive local exchange carriers (CLECs). But WorldCom, Inc., says there is no way to verify those claims.

In response to an FCC staff request for information, Verizon said in an Aug. 29 letter, "The accuracy of these reports is very high—the percent of working telephone numbers reported as missing or incorrect...has averaged less than 1%" across Verizon's former Bell Atlantic (Delaware, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey) territories from January to June 2001. The FCC is reviewing the line-loss numbers as part of its consideration of Verizon's request to provide in-region, interLATA (local access and transport area) service in Pennsylvania.

Verizon also responded to WorldCom, Inc.'s claim that in June, Verizon didn't transmit notifications for a substantial number of lines in its line-loss report and didn't notify the industry of the problem. WorldCom had asked that Verizon resolve the issue for affected customers.

"WorldCom is wrong on all scores," Verizon said. Verizon blamed the error on a software problem that didn't allow the system to recognize the FID (field identifier code) placed on orders when an end user changed his or her local service from a CLEC to Verizon.

Verizon said it had fixed the problem, notified the industry of the problem Aug. 9, and completed the recovery for all line losses involving an end user's changing to Verizon's service from June 2 to July 31.

But a WorldCom spokeswoman said there was no way to verify Verizon's claims. "Recent OSS [operations support system] problems in August included a three-day lag where CLECs didn't receive reports and a suspiciously low number of 'reflowed' reports" in June and July, she said.

"Reliable OSS is a critical component of the [1996 Telecommunications Act's mandate for Bell companies to open their local exchange markets to competitors] and critical to CLECs to compete in the local market," she added. "These continuing problems show that Verizon's [Pennsylvania] application should be denied."

CLECs and the Communications Workers of America had complained that Verizon's wholesale billing process was inaccurate (*TR*, July 16) TR