PEW/INTERNET

PEW INTERNET & AMERICAN LIFE PROJECT

PEW INTERNET PROJECT DATA MEMO

BY: **Research Specialist Mary Madden (202-419-4500)**

RE: **Do-it-yourself information online**
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More than half of internet users seek do-it-yourself information online

Some 55% of adult internet users have looked for "how-to," "do-it-yourself" or repair information online and roughly 1 in 20 internet users – about 7 million people -- search for help on a typical day. The prevalence of this activity is yet another example of the many ways online Americans use the internet to gather practical information for their everyday lives.

More internet users seek do-it-yourself information online than participate in chat rooms (17% say they have done that) or online auctions (24% say they have done that). However, seeking do-it-yourself information online is a less common activity than getting news (72% of online Americans have done that) and doing research on products and services (78% have done that).

These new findings come from a national phone survey of 1,450 adult internet users by the Pew Internet & American Life Project conducted between February 21 and March 21, 2005. The margin of error for results based on internet users in the sample is plus or minus three points.

Using the internet as a go-to reference desk for "how-to" help naturally befits those who have "always-on" internet connections at their fingertips. More than two-thirds (69%) of internet users who have high-speed connections all around them (at both home and work) have sought "how-to" resources online. That compares to 61% of home broadband users and 55% of home dial-up users who seek do-it-yourself information.

Similarly, while 5% of all internet users will search online for do-it-yourself advice on a typical day, 11% of those who have high-speed connections all around them will seek some type of instructional information on an average day. That compares to 4% of home dial-up users and 7% of home broadband users.

Do-it-yourself research can take many forms and this survey did not attempt to break down the specific types of information people are seeking. The Alexa Traffic Rankings, which analyze website usage through a combination of visitor and page view measurement, list popular "Do-it-yourself" websites as a subcategory of the most-visited

home-related sites on the internet. However, the DIY information available to internet users extends well beyond home improvement and gardening tips. For example, the top Alexa-ranked site in the DIY category (www.ehow.com) features "how-to" information on an wide array of topics such as computer repair information, alternative health treatments, recipes and financial advice.[1]

Demographic trends

Male internet users are somewhat more likely to seek "how-to" information online; 60% of online men have sought "how-to" instructions or information, compared with 50% of online women.

And younger internet users, who tend to have high-speed internet connections, are more likely to turn to the internet for DIY information. Some 59% of users under the age of 50 seek "how-to" information, compared with 47% of those over age 50 who do so.

Those users who have higher levels of education look for instructional or repair information in greater numbers; 58% of those with at least some college education seek do-it-yourself information online compared with 50% of those with a high school degree or less. However, there are no substantial variations according to household income for this activity.

About The Pew Internet & American Life Project
The Pew Internet & American Life Project is a non-profit initiative, fully-funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts to explore the impact of the internet on children, families, communities, health care, schools, the work place, and civic/political life. The Project is non-partisan and does not advocate for any policy outcomes. For more information, please visit our website: http://www.pewinternet.org/.

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[1] Alexa Traffic Ratings cited here were gathered on June, 6, 2005 and reflect currently available data. For more information on the Alexa ranking and traffic measurement methodology, please refer to the website here: www.alexa.com.

February 2005 Daily Tracking Survey

Final Topline   3/24/05

Data for February 21 – March 21, 2005

Princeton Survey Research Associates International
for the Pew Internet & American Life Project

Sample: *n* = 2,201 adults 18 and older
Interviewing dates: 02.21.05 – 03.21.05
Margin of error is plus or minus 2 percentage points for results based on the full sample [n=2,201]
Margin of error is plus or minus 3 percentage points for results based on internet users [n=1,450]

WEB1 Please tell me if you ever use the internet to do any of the following things. Do you ever use the internet to…/Did you happen to do this yesterday, or not?[2]

Based on internet users [N=1,450]

	Total have EVER DONE THIS	DID YESTERDAY	Have not done this	Don't know/ Refused
Look for "how-to," "do-it-yourself" or repair information online				
Current	55	5	45	0

Methodology

      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 from February 21 to March 21, 2005, among a sample of 2,201 adults, 18 and older. 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 2.3 percentage points. For results based Internet users (n=1,450), the margin of sampling error is plus or minus 2.8 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 sample for this survey is a random digit sample of telephone numbers selected from telephone exchanges in the continental United States. The random digit aspect of the sample is used to avoid "listing" bias and provides representation of both

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[2] Prior to January 2005, question wording was "Please tell me if you ever do any of the following when you go online. Do you ever…?/Did you happen to do this yesterday, or not?" In February 2005 Tracking, half the sample was asked old WEB1 and half the sample was asked new WEB1. Current results are for both forms combined.

listed and unlisted numbers (including not-yet-listed numbers). The design of the sample achieves this representation by random generation of the last two digits of telephone numbers selected on the basis of their area code, telephone exchange, and bank number.

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 10 attempts were made to complete an interview at sampled households. 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 household received at least one daytime call in an attempt to find someone at home. In each contacted household, interviewers asked to speak with the youngest male currently at home. If no male was available, interviewers asked to speak with the oldest female at home. This systematic respondent selection technique has been shown to produce samples that closely mirror the population in terms of age and gender. 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 2003 Annual Social and Economic Supplement (March 2004). This analysis produces population parameters for the demographic characteristics of adults age 18 or older, living in households that contain a telephone. 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:

Sample Disposition

Total Numbers dialed	13,805	
Business	1,053	
Computer/Fax	915	
Other Not-Working	2,619	
Additional projected NW	961	
Working numbers	8,257	59.8%
No Answer	259	
Busy	61	
Answering Machine	1,586	
Callbacks	230	
Other Non-Contacts	167	
Contacted numbers	5,954	72.1%
Initial Refusals	2,619	
Second Refusals	652	
Cooperating numbers	2,683	45.1%
No Adult in HH	22	
Language Barrier	277	
Eligible numbers	2,384	88.9%
Interrupted	183	
Completes	2,201	92.3%
Response Rate		30.0%

PSRAI calculates a response rate as the product of three individual rates: the contact rate, the cooperation rate, and the completion rate. Of the residential numbers in the sample, 72 percent were contacted by an interviewer and 45 percent agreed to participate in the survey. Eighty-nine percent were found eligible for the interview. Furthermore, 92 percent of eligible respondents completed the interview. Therefore, the final response rate is 30 percent.