



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

a project of the  
**PewResearchCenter**

# Wikipedia, past and present

**42% of all Americans turn to the popular collaborative encyclopedia for information online**

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**<http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2011/Wikipedia.aspx>**

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## A snapshot of current Wikipedia users

As of May 2010, 53% of American internet users look for information on Wikipedia, up from 36% of internet users the first time we asked about Wikipedia usage in February 2007.<sup>1</sup>

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### Demographics of Wikipedia users

*The percentage of adult internet users in each group who look for information on Wikipedia. Internet users account for 79% of the American adult population.*

<b>Total</b>	<b>53%</b>
Men	56
Women	50
<b>Age</b>	
18-29	62
30-49	52
50-64	49
65+	33
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	
White, non-Hispanic	55
Black, non-Hispanic (n=85)	43
Hispanic (n=61)	40
<b>Household Income</b>	
Less than \$30,000	44
\$30,000-\$49,999	49
\$50,000-\$74,999	63
\$75,000+	61
<b>Education level</b>	
Less than High School (n=46)	30
High School Diploma	41
Some College	52
College+	69
<b>Home internet connection type</b>	
Dial-up (n=76)	26
Broadband	59

**Source:** Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, April 29-May 30, 2010 Spring Change Assessment Survey. N=852 internet users age 18 and older.

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<sup>1</sup> Lee Rainie and Bill Tancer, "Wikipedia users " (2007): <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2007/Wikipedia-users.aspx>

Education level continues to be the strongest predictor of Wikipedia use. The collaborative encyclopedia is most popular among internet users with at least a college degree, 69% of whom use the site. Broadband use remains another predictor, as 59% of those with home broadband use the service, compared with 26% of those who connect to the internet through dial-up. Additionally, Wikipedia is generally more popular among those with annual household incomes of at least \$50,000, as well as with young adults: 62% of internet users under the age of 30 using the service, compared with only 33% of internet users age 65 and older.

In the scope of general online activities, using Wikipedia is more popular than sending instant messages (done by 47% of internet users) or rating a product, service, or person (32%), but is less popular than using social network sites (61%) or watching videos on sites like YouTube (66%).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> A full list of online activities is available at <http://pewinternet.org/Trend-Data/Online-Activites-Total.aspx>

## Wikipedia use over time

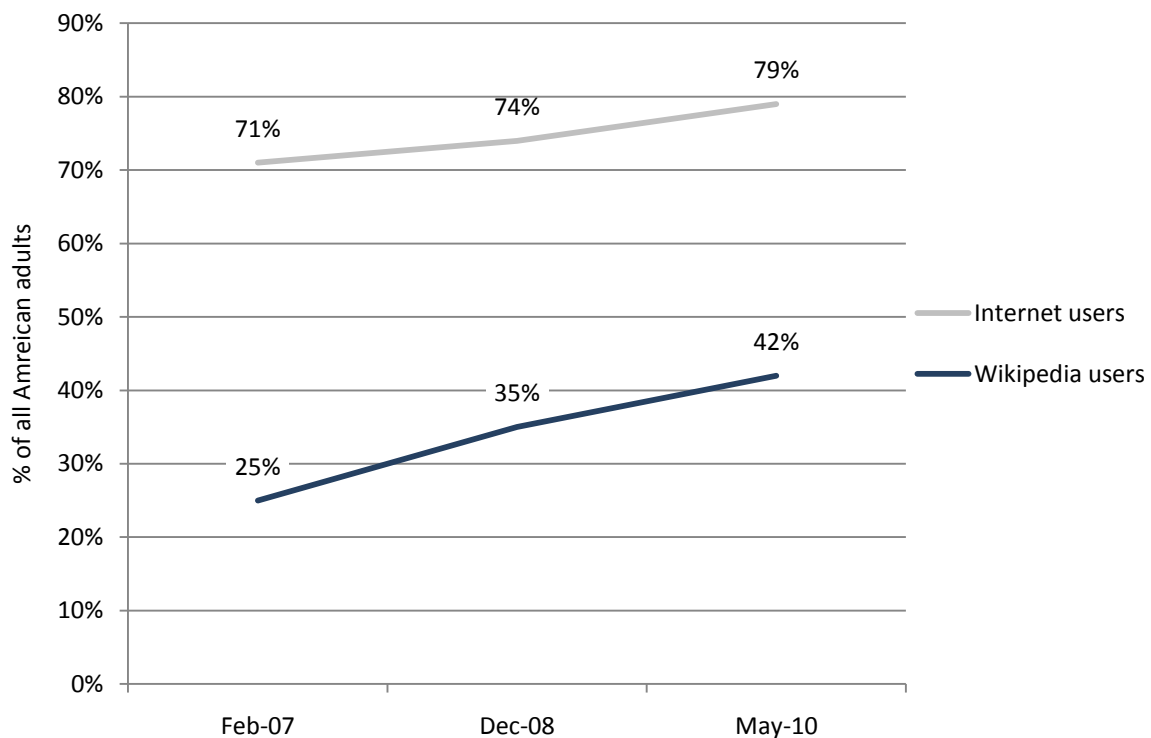
Wikipedia, the “multilingual, web-based, free-content encyclopedia project,” was created in 2001 and celebrates its tenth anniversary on January 15, 2011.<sup>3</sup>

The percentage of all American adults who use Wikipedia to look for information has increased from 25% in February 2007 to 42% in May 2010, a 17 percentage point increase. The proportion of adults who use the internet over that same time period grew at a more modest rate, from 71% to 79% of all adults.

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### Wikipedia users, 2007 - 2010

Percentages are based on all American adults age 18 and older.



**Source:** Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project surveys.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:About>

## 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 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.

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> .

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# Spring Change Assessment Survey 2010

Final Topline

6/4/10

Data for April 29 – May 30, 2010

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

Sample: n= 2,252 national adults, age 18 and older, including 744 cell phone interviews  
Interviewing dates: 04.29.10 – 05.30.10

Margin of error is plus or minus 2 percentage points for results based on Total [n=2,252]

Margin of error is plus or minus 3 percentage points for results based on internet users [n=1,756]

Margin of error is plus or minus 3 percentage points for results based on cell phone users [n=1,917]

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**Q6a** Do you use the internet, at least occasionally?

**Q6b** Do you send or receive email, at least occasionally?<sup>4</sup>

	USES INTERNET	DOES NOT USE INTERNET
Current	79	21
January 2010 <sup>5</sup>	75	25
December 2009 <sup>6</sup>	74	26
September 2009	77	23
April 2009	79	21
December 2008	74	26
November 2008	74	26
August 2008	75	25
July 2008 <sup>7</sup>	77	23
May 2008	73	27
April 2008 <sup>8</sup>	73	27
January 2008 <sup>9</sup>	70	30
December 2007	75	25
September 2007	73	27
February 2007	71	29

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<sup>4</sup> Prior to January 2005, question wording was "Do you ever go online to access the Internet or World Wide Web or to send and receive email?"

<sup>5</sup> January 2010 trends based on the Online News survey, conducted December 28, 2009 – January 19, 2010 [N=2,259, including 562 cell phone interviews].

<sup>6</sup> December 2009 trends based on the Fall Tracking "E-Government" survey, conducted November 30 – December 27, 2009 [N=2,258, including 565 cell phone interviews].

<sup>7</sup> July 2008 trends based on the Personal Networks and Community survey, conducted July 9-August 10, 2008 [N=2,512, including 505 cell phone interviews]

<sup>8</sup> April 2008 trends based on the Networked Workers survey, conducted March 27-April 14, 2008. Most questions were asked only of full- or part-time workers [N=1,000], but trend results shown here reflect the total sample [N=2,134].

<sup>9</sup> January 2008 trends based on the Networked Families survey, conducted December 13, 2007-January 13, 2008 [N=2,252].



**WEB2-1** Thinking about your internet use overall... 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?

Based on Form A internet users [N=852]

	TOTAL HAVE EVER DONE THIS	----- DID YESTERDAY	HAVE NOT DONE THIS	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
Look for information on Wikipedia					
Current	53	17	47	1	0
December 2008	47	12	52	1	--
February 2007	36	8	62	2	--