

Networked families

**Parents and spouses are using
the internet and cell phones
to create a “new connectedness”
that builds on remote connections
and shared internet experiences**

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Summary of Findings

Technology now permeates American households and has become a central feature of families' day-to-day lives.

American families are using a wide range of communication media to keep in contact with each other. Married couples with minor children stand out because they have higher rates of internet and cell phone usage, computer ownership and broadband adoption than other household configurations.

Technology Ownership by Household Type				
	All adults (n=2,252)	Married with child/children (n=482)	Other household types (n=1770)	Other multi-member households (n=1189)
Cell phone(s) in household	84%	95%	80%	88%
Computer(s) in household	77	93	71	81
At least one household member goes online	77	94	71	83
Have a home broadband connection	52	66	47	55

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project Networked Family Survey, Dec. 13, 2007-Jan. 13, 2008. N=2,252. Margin of error is $\pm 2\%$ on the overall sample.

For today's married-with-children households, ownership of multiple gadgets and communication tools is a standard feature of family life:

- 58% of those living in married-with-children households own two or more *desktop or laptop computers*. Nearly two-thirds of those living in multiple-computer households (63%) link those computers in a home network.
- Both spouses use the *internet* in 76% of married-with-children households, as do 84% of their children aged 7-17. Indeed, 65% of married-with-children households with a child between the ages of 7-17 contain a husband, wife, and child who all use the internet.
- 89% of married-with-children households own multiple *cell phones*, and nearly half (47%) own three or more mobile devices. Children in these households are somewhat less likely to own a cell phone than they are to go online: 57% of these children (aged 7-17) have their own cell phone.

This Pew Internet & American Life Project report is based on the findings of a daily tracking survey conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates between December 13, 2007 and January 13, 2008, among a sample of 2,252 adults, aged 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 $\pm 2\%$. For results based Internet users (n=1,537), the margin of sampling error is $\pm 3\%$.

Technology is enabling new forms of family connectedness that revolve around remote cell phone interactions and communal internet experiences.

Although some commentators have expressed fears that technology pulls families apart, this survey finds that couples use their phones to connect and coordinate their lives, especially if they have children at home. American spouses often go their separate ways during the day, but remain connected by cell phones and to some extent by internet communications. When they return home, they often have shared moments of exploration and entertainment on the internet.

This new connectedness via cell phone and screen-sharing is correlated with some benefits for family life. For example, those with the most technology are more likely to share moments with family members while they are online and to exchange some kinds of family communications such as checking in with other family members and coordinating activities.

Busy and tech-using families are less likely to share meals and less likely to report satisfaction with their leisure time.

At the same time, this is a different kind of connectedness from the past because those who have the most technology are more likely to live in dual-income households and also more likely to report that they are working longer hours, in part because of their use of the internet. Those with multiple communication devices are somewhat less likely to eat dinner with other household members and somewhat less likely to report high levels of satisfaction with their family and leisure time than are families with lower levels of technology ownership.

The cell phone affords extra contact, especially for couples who want to touch base and need to coordinate their busy lives.

There has been a major swing to cell phone use among American couples; more use a cell phone to be in touch daily than a traditional landline phone. Some 47% of married couples contact each other once a day or more using a cell phone, and 35% do so using a landline phone. Couples use communication technologies such as the internet and cell phones primarily to say hello and chat and to coordinate schedules and daily routines when they are physically separated. Cell phones also seem to increase the frequency of certain kinds of communications between couples. Compared with less tech-heavy households, married couples in which both partners go online or use a cell phone contact each other more frequently than couples who have less technology.

- 70% of couples who both own a cell phone contact each other once a day or more to say hello or chat; 54% of couples who have one or no cell phones do this at least once a day.

Summary of Findings

- 64% of couples who both own a cell phone contact each other at least once a day to coordinate their schedules; 47% of couples who have one or no cell phones do this at least once a day.

Parent-child communications, particularly on a daily basis, are similarly dominated by the telephone: 42% of parents contact their child/children daily using a cell phone, and 35% do so using a landline telephone.

The internet enables shared “Hey, look at this!” experiences.

Although families often have the means to retreat to their technological “neutral corners” and engage in screen time in isolation, many go online with others. Some 52% of internet users who live with a spouse and one or more children go online with another person at least a few times a week. Another 34% of such families have shared screen moments at least occasionally.

Additionally, families that own large quantities of televisions and computers are no less likely to share screen time with other family members than those families that have lower levels of technology ownership.

A majority of adults say technology allows their family life today to be as close, or closer, than their families were when they grew up.

While new communication technologies have increased the amount of time some people spend at the office or working from home, few people see them as having a negative impact on family closeness.

Indeed, 25% of our survey respondents feel that their family today is now closer than their family when they were growing up thanks to the use of the internet and cell phones, while just 11% say their family today is not as close as families in the past. A majority of adults downplay the impact of technology at all: 60% feel that new technologies have not made their family any more or less close than families in the past.

People say that new communication tools help them stay connected with friends and family, although their use has blurred traditional lines between “work” and “home.”

Overall, respondents in this survey see much upside and little downside in the way new communication technologies, such as the internet and cell phones, have impacted the quality of their communications with others.

The Impact of Technology on Communications			
<i>Have new technologies increased or decreased the quality of your communication with these people?</i>			
	Increased	Decreased	No Difference
Family members who do not live with you	53%	2%	44%
Members of your household	47	4	47
Friends	47	2	49
Co-workers (among those who are employed full or part time)	40	2	56

Source: *Pew Internet & American Life Project Networked Family Survey, Dec. 13, 2007-Jan. 13, 2008. N=2,252. Margin of error is ±2% on the overall sample.*

Furthermore, 33% of internet users say that the internet has improved their connections to friends “a lot,” and 23% say it has increased the quality of their communication with family members by a similar amount. They say these improvements are particularly useful for keeping in touch with extended family members who may live many miles away. Young people in particular take advantage of the social side of the internet: 21% of wired 18-29 year olds say the internet has greatly improved their ability to meet new people, and 49% say it has improved their connections to friends a lot.

However, this increased connectivity seems to come at a cost for some adults; 11% of employed internet users say the internet has increased the amount of time they spend working from the office, and 19% say it has increased the amount of time they spend working from home.

Many people spend less time watching television thanks to the internet.

Most internet users say that the internet has not changed the amount of time they spend with friends, with family, and attending social events or activities. However, 25% of online adults say that the internet has decreased the amount of time they spend watching television. Television has diminished importance, and the internet has enhanced importance, especially among younger adults.

Young Adults: Less TV, More Internet		
	<i>Watch TV almost every day</i>	<i>Internet has decreased time spent watching TV</i>
All adults	74%	25%
18-29 year olds	58	29
30-49 year olds	72	27
50-64 year olds	80	22
Age 65+	89	12

Source: *Pew Internet & American Life Project Networked Family Survey, Dec. 13, 2007-Jan. 13, 2008. N=2,252. Margin of error is ±2% on the overall sample.*

As people spend more time working, they are less satisfied with the amount of time they can spend on their hobbies or relaxing.

When they spend more time working, people tend to give their remaining free time to their families. This often comes at the expense of time spent relaxing or engaging in hobbies or other activities. While half (49%) of employed adults are very satisfied with the amount of time they spend with their families, just one in three are very satisfied with the amount of time they have available for relaxing, for hobbies, or for clubs or other activities.

Networked Families: Summary of Findings at a Glance
Technology now permeates American households and has become a central feature of families' day-to-day lives.
Technology is enabling new forms of family connectedness that revolve around remote cell phone interactions and communal internet experiences.
Busy and tech-using families are less likely to share meals and less likely to report satisfaction with their leisure time.
The cell phone affords extra contact, especially for couples who want to touch base and need to coordinate their busy lives.
The internet enables shared "Hey, look at this!" experiences.
A majority of adults say technology allows their family life today to be as close, or closer, than their families were when they grew up.
People say that new communication tools help them stay connected with friends and family, although their use has blurred traditional lines between "work" and "home."
Many people spend less time watching television thanks to the internet.
As people spend more time working, they are less satisfied with the amount of time they can spend on their hobbies or relaxing.
Source: Kennedy, Tracy; Aaron Smith; Amy Tracy Wells; and Barry Wellman. <i>Networked families</i> . Washington, DC: Pew Internet & American Life Project, October 19, 2008.

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Acknowledgments

About the Pew 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. Pew Internet 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. The Project’s web site: <http://www.pewinternet.org>

About NetLab: NetLab is a research network at the University of Toronto that studies the intersection of computer, communication and communication networks. Its website is: <http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/~wellman/> at NetLab, Tracy Kennedy is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Sociology, at the University of Toronto. Her dissertation examines how Canadian households use ICTs to communicate with one another and organize their busy lives. She is also a research consultant in virtual and physical worlds, and teaches at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario. Barry Wellman is the S.D. Clark Professor of Sociology at the University of Toronto where he directs NetLab. A member of the Royal Society of Canada, Wellman is the (co-)author of more than 200 articles and the (co-)editor of three books.

About Princeton Survey Research Associates International: PSRAI conducted the survey that is covered in this report. It is an independent research company specializing in social and policy work. The firm designs, conducts, and analyzes surveys worldwide. Its expertise also includes qualitative research and content analysis. With offices in Princeton, NJ, and Washington, DC, PSRA serves the needs of clients around the nation and the world. The firm can be reached at 911 Commons Way, Princeton, NJ 08540, by telephone at 609-924-9204, by fax at 609-924-7499, or by email at ResearchDC@PSRA.com.

Part 1.

Introduction and previous research

Historically known as a cohesive unit (Burgess, Locke & Thomas 1971),¹ the American family has changed in recent decades. In the past two generations there has been a steady decline in the number of married-couple households with children – the family configuration traditionally called the “nuclear family” that has been the *Fun with Dick and Jane* norm of American life. Between 1980 and 2005, the overall proportion of such households fell from 31% to 23% of all families in the United States, and this decrease has been accompanied by a rise in the number of single-person households (from 23% in 1980 to 26% in 2005) and in the number of households classified as “Other” by the U.S. Census Bureau. The “Other” households include those where siblings or other relatives live and those made up of non-related roommates.

Distribution of Households: 1980–2005					
	1980	1990	1995	2000	2005
Married					
With minor children	31%	26%	26%	24%	23%
Without minor children	30	30	29	29	28
Non-married					
Single parent	8	8	9	9	9
One-person	23	25	25	26	26
Other	9	11	12	13	13

Source: 2008 US Statistical Abstract, Table 1304. Percent Distribution of Households by Type: 1980 to 2005.

These changes have been accompanied by substantial shifts in the resources available to families and striking alterations in parental roles inside the home. Much of the change is driven by the rise of women in American workplaces. In 1960, 38% of women were employed outside the home. That figure leapt to 59% in 2006 and compared with years past, both men and women now spend notably different amounts of time on childcare, housework and other activities.

Between 1965 and 2005, the amount of time mothers spend every day on housework (including cooking, cleaning, outdoor chores and repairs, and household paperwork) has decreased from an average of 4.6 hours to an average of 2.7 hours, while the amount of time spent by men rose from an average of 0.6 hours to 1.7 hours.

¹ A complete list of cited sources appears starting on page 34 in Part 8 of the report.

Part 1. Introduction and previous research

Similarly, while mothers continue to spend more time than fathers caring for children, men have more than doubled the amount of time they spend caring for their children (Sayer 2005).

These changes have altered family life and added stresses to it.

Numerous studies have highlighted the demands of employment on household life. Dual-income households grew from 39% of all households to 53% between 1970 and 2007 (Blau et al 2005; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics). As a result, wives and husbands must negotiate multiple work and school schedules in addition to domestic work (such as cooking, cleaning and maintenance), child care, family time, and social and leisure activities.

People are spending more hours per week on paid work than ever before (Robinson & Godbey 1997): the average number of hours husbands and wives combined spent on paid work increased from 52.5 hours per week in 1970 to 62.8 hours per week in 1997 (Jacobs & Gerson 2001). This often leaves families pressed for time and requires them to continually multitask throughout the day. Some have shown how this also leaves spouses with less time for each other and/or their children (Turcotte 2007; Milkie et al 2004; Mattingly & Sayer 2006). For instance, political scientist Robert Putnam (2000) documented that families have dinner together less often than they did thirty years earlier. Others have suggested that families have coped with these time pressures by watching less TV (Moscovitch 1998; Turcotte 2007), cutting back on their volunteer work (Putnam 2000; Rotolo 1999), or socializing less with neighbors and friends (McPherson et al 2006; Paxton 1999; Wang & Wellman 2008). All of these trends have implications for how satisfied people are with the amount of time they have to spend with family, friends and on leisure activities.

What role does technology play in family life?

Now the question arises: How do new communication technologies -- the internet and cell phones in particular -- fit into this picture? Some have argued that internet use in the home is an asocial activity (Nie & Hillygus 2002). Others have pushed back, arguing that the internet sustains social activities (Wellman & Haythornthwaite 2002).

This report is designed to provide a fuller picture of the role of information and communication technologies in everyday household life to address basic questions that have not received systematic attention:

- How do spouses and partners use the internet and their cell phones with each other?
- How do they employ these tools with their tech-using children? (To address this question, we focus on families with children ages 7-17 on the assumption that few children under age 7 have cell phones or use the internet.)

Part 1. Introduction and previous research

- How do they fit the role of these new technologies in the larger context of overall family communication?
- Do these new technologies encourage household members to act more as individual agents rather than as members of a solidary unit? In other words, when people have their own cell phones and computers, do they remove themselves from, transform or enhance family activities?
- How do parents feel these technologies affect family communication, specifically the quality and amount of time household members spend together?

These questions were probed in a nationally-representative phone survey of 2,252 adults between December 13, 2007 and January 13, 2008. There are many different kinds of households and family arrangements in America, and we decided to concentrate our research on two kinds of households:

First, we focused on married couples and those living with a partner in a relationship similar to marriage.² There were 1,267 respondents in this sample who fit that description. Our purpose in doing so was to focus on households around which there is some of the most intense and policy-related interest. Scholars and other analysts have pondered for decades whether new technologies are rearranging traditional family relations, encouraging new roles for family members, and changing communications patterns inside families. Therefore, one key interest for us was on the communication patterns and relations of those inside married households.

Second, we paid particular analytical attention to families with minor children because there is continued ferment among policy makers in assessing the ways in which technology is changing how children engage with the world and interact with those around them. In this category, there are two subgroups that most interested us. The first subgroup was households where married/living as married couples had children. This sample contained 482 respondents who live in such households.

The second subgroup was households where minor children lived with a single parent. There were 83 respondents in that group. Unfortunately, that is not a big-enough subpopulation to do much meaningful statistical analysis.

These choices necessarily limited the scope of this research, as we did not interview in depth those who live in group households, those who live in homes where the main occupants are not in romantic or formal relationships, and we did not ask about the communication patterns of extended families, such as families with adult children, or families where members live outside a single household.

Although there are fascinating and important questions about how the internet and cell phones might be affecting relations in those types of family and household situations,

² Married” throughout this report includes those who are not legally married but are partners; i.e., living “common law”.

Part 1. Introduction and previous research

investigating them in this study would have taken this work in more directions than we could possibly have been able to address.

Part 2.

Household types and technology ownership

American households vary in the relationship of household members to each other and in their ownership of technology. While households can be separated into numerous categorizations, our survey identified six major categories that are discussed here in further detail. The apportionment of family types in our sample was quite close to the groupings measured by the U.S. Census Bureau and a comparison appears on page 32.

Married-with-children households have more education and higher incomes.

Married couples with minor children

Couples with one or more minor children living at home make up 25% of respondents to our survey.³ Within this household type, 89% are formally married, while 11% are living with a partner as if they are married. In comparison to other family types, married-with-children families stand out as both highly educated and high-income. One in three of the married/partnered adults in these families (35%) have a college degree (among the highest rates of any household) and just 6% have not graduated from high school (by far the lowest of any household type). Nearly 40% of those married with children have an annual household income of \$75,000 or more.

For men and women, marriage and childrearing are associated with high levels of employment. Across all family types, men are more likely to be employed than women. While this trend holds true for married couples with children, rates of employment for both men and women are higher in these households than in the population as a whole.

Married couples without minor children

One in three adults (29%) live in households with a spouse or partner but without minor children. Of these, 90% are adults who are formally married while 10% are living as married (partnered). Compared with couples who have minor children at home, married couples without children tend to be older: 54% of these individuals are 55 years of age or older. They are the second highest income group, behind those who live in married with children households, but substantially ahead of adults who live in other types of households. They are more likely than others in our sample to be white and to be relatively well educated: 33% hold a college degree.

³ These households include those with and without other relatives (such as a grandparent or adult child) in addition to parents and children.

Part 2. Household types and technology ownership

Employment in Married-with-Children Households				
	All men (n=1019)	Married men with children (n=242)	All women (n=1233)	Married women with children (n=240)
Employed full-time	57%	85%	40%	47%
Employed part-time	7	3	13	20
Not employed for pay	37	13	47	33

Pew Internet & American Life Project Networked Family Survey, Dec. 13, 2007-Jan. 13, 2008. N=2,252. Margin of error is ±2% on the overall sample.

Multiple non-married adults in household, plus minor children

This household type, which comprises 9% of the households in our survey, is by far the youngest group. Fully 53% of individuals in such households are ages 18-24 and two-thirds are under age 35. They might be comprised of a grandmother, mother and child, or a mother and a housemate with a child/children. Befitting their youth, the members of this group are among the most likely of the household types we studied to have not completed college: 69% are high school graduates or did not complete high school and just 7% have college degrees. This group has the lowest proportion of whites and the highest proportion of minorities (21% are black and 19% are English-speaking Hispanics).

Multiple non-married adults in household, no minor children

This household type comprises 12% of households in our survey, and is similar to the group listed above. Those living in households with a group of other adults and no children are somewhat younger than other household types – more than half (54%) are under age 35. It is a group split evenly among those who ended their education with a high school diploma or less (50%) and those who at least started to go to college (30% have some college education and 20% more have graduated). It is ethnically diverse: 63% are white and 26% are visible minorities. They are predominantly middle income.

Single parents

This group comprises a relatively small number of respondents to our survey, so robust statistical analysis is not possible. Generally speaking, these households tend to be headed by single mothers, lower-income, concentrated in Gen X and Gen Y (up to age 44) and racially diverse.

Part 2. Household types and technology ownership

The Demographics of Household Types							
	All adults (n=2,252)	Married couple, with child (n=482)	Married couple, no child (n=785)	Multiple non- married adults plus child (n=150)	Multiple non- married adults, no child (n=218)	Single Parent (n=83)	Singles (n=565)
Respondent age							
18-24	11%	3%	2%	53%	34%	10%	2%
25-34	17	30	10	14	20	30	9
35-44	19	40	9	18	8	32	11
45-54	19	22	23	8	14	18	17
55-64	15	3	28	2	11	6	20
65+	17	2	26	4	11	<1	37
Respondent educational attainment							
Less than high school	12%	6%	10%	18%	11%	11%	19%
High school graduate	36	33	34	51	39	31	35
Some college	24	26	22	24	30	37	19
College degree+	28	35	33	7	20	21	26
Race/Ethnicity							
White (not Hispanic)	72%	73%	81%	52%	63%	61%	72%
Black (not Hispanic)	11	9	5	21	13	15	15
Hispanic, English speaking	10	11	7	19	13	16	8
Other	6	6	5	8	9	8	3
Respondent employment status							
Employed full-time	48%	67%	44%	39%	38%	62%	38%
Employed part-time	11	11	7	24	20	12	5
Not employed	41	22	49	37	42	25	58
Household income							
Under \$30k	22%	9%	16%	34%	25%	37%	33%
\$30k-\$50k	17	19	16	19	18	24	15
\$50k-\$75k	15	21	15	8	13	16	11
\$75k+	24	39	29	9	18	15	12
Don't know/ Refused	22	11	24	29	26	9	29

Pew Internet & American Life Project Networked Family Survey, Dec. 13, 2007-Jan. 13, 2008. N=2,252. Margin of error is $\pm 2\%$ on the overall sample.

Part 2. Household types and technology ownership

Single-person households

This group comprises 22% of all households in our survey, and is by far the oldest group: 37% are 65 or older and only 11% are under age 35. It is relatively less well-off cohort: 48% make less than \$50,000 per year.

Married couples with children are most likely to own key technologies.

Married couples with children stand out for their technology and gadget ownership, including cell phones and computers. Some of the reason is household size. These are the largest households, and the more people in their households, the more coordination and communication they need. For example, where a two-person household (married couple or single mom with child) has only two relationships to coordinate (one in each direction), a four-person household (mother, father, and two children) has twelve relationships to coordinate. Other factors at play include the relatively higher socioeconomic standing of this cohort.

More than nine in ten married with children families (93%) have a desktop or laptop computer and nearly six in ten (58%) own two or more. In addition, 37% of such families (and 63% of those with multiple computers) have a wired or wireless home computer network. These home computer networks frequently go hand in hand with a high-speed home internet connection: two-thirds of such families (66%) have a home broadband connection.

Within the context of families that are married with children, both spouses and children are likely to be internet users. Fully 93% of such families contain at least one parent who uses the internet. Indeed, both spouses go online in three-quarters (76%) of these families; and 84% of their children ages 7-17 go online. In total, two-thirds (65%) of the married-with-children households in America with a child age 7-17 contain a husband, wife and child/children who all use the internet.

Families that are married with children are also very likely to be cell phone owners. Fully 89% of such families own more than one cell phone, 47% have three or more, and one in five (22%) have four or more mobile devices. For parents, the patterns of cell phone use are similar to those for internet use—both parents own a cell phone in 78% of such families. However, children are less likely to own a cell phone than they are to go online. Where 84% of children age 7-17 in such families go online, a lower 57% have a cell phone of their own. In total, 44% of the married-with-children households in America contain a husband, wife, and child age 7-17 who all use cell phones. .

Older children in married-couple families are more likely than younger ones to have a cell phone. This is consistent with previous Pew Internet research showing that older teens are much more likely to use a cell phone than younger teens.⁴

⁴ See http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP_Teens_Social_Media_Final.pdf.

Part 2. Household types and technology ownership

Household Types and Technology Ownership							
	All adults (n=2,252)	Married couple, with child (n=482)	Married couple, no child (n=785)	Multiple non-married adults plus child (n=150)	Multiple non-married adults, no child (n=218)	Single Parent (n=83)	Singles (n=565)
2+ televisions	83%	88%	86%	94%	91%	82%	65%
Internet household	77	94	79	90	82	87	44
Broadband at home	52	66	52	55	59	54	27
2+ home computers	39	58	39	54	55	32	n/a
Computer network in home	22	37	22	33	27	14	n/a
2+ cell phones in home	59	89	69	80	65	58	n/a
Have an social network site profile	19	18	9	48	37	31	7
Send text messages	40	53	28	59	49	61	22

Pew Internet & American Life Project Networked Family Survey, Dec. 13, 2007-Jan. 13, 2008. N=2,252. Margin of error is ±2% on the overall sample.

Married couples without children living at home tend to be older and own less personal technology than married couples with children

Compared with married couples who have children at home, married couples without children at home have technology ownership rates closer to the overall average for all families. At least one family member uses the internet in 79% of married-without-children households, significantly lower than the rate for married families that have children at home.

Just over half of married-without-children couples (52%) have a high-speed home internet connection, the same as the overall average for all Americans. Also, while rates of cell phone ownership among married couples without children are lower than for couples with children, seven in ten couples without children (69%) own more than one cell phone.

Single-person households, the oldest of the family types in our survey, are the least likely to have adopted new technologies.

Singles are the oldest group. They also have by far the lowest rates of technology adoption of any of the family types in our survey. Among the family groupings discussed here, singles have the lowest rates of cell phone ownership (61%), home computer ownership (48%), overall internet usage (44%) and home broadband adoption (27%).

Part 2. Household types and technology ownership

“Non-traditional” family arrangements such as single-parent households tend to be young, tech-savvy, and ethnically diverse.

Although single adults and married households with and without children comprise the most prevalent family arrangements in our survey, several other family types are appreciably represented in the study: single parents and multi-adult families not living as married who are with or without children under the age of 18.

These households are notable for their embrace of social networking and text messaging, a phenomenon that is likely influenced by the relative youth of many members of these groups. Use of social networking sites is particularly high within these household structures—31% of single parents, 37% of those in multi-adult households, and nearly half (48%) of those in mixed multi-adult/child households have a profile on a social networking site. Additionally, 49% of those in multi-adult households, 59% of multi-adult/child households and 61% of single parents send text messages.

Part 3.

Family social activities and togetherness

Americans focus on family time and work time, often limiting the time they have available for leisure and other activities.

Our survey found that Americans try to balance work, family and leisure activities: for most, family time has the highest priority. A majority (55%) of all Americans reported that they are “very satisfied” with the amount of time they spend with their immediate families. Only 14% are not satisfied.

However, some Americans might have “bought” that family time by cutting back on other leisure activities. For example, only 35% are very satisfied with the amount of time they spend on hobbies or clubs, while 25% are not satisfied with their time spent on these activities.

Satisfaction with Time Spent at Various Activities			
<i>% of adults who are satisfied with the amount of time they spend...</i>			
	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Not very / not at all satisfied
With family	55%	29%	14%
With friends and relatives	44	39	16
Watching TV	44	37	14
Just relaxing	41	36	22
On hobbies, clubs or other activities	35	36	25

Source: *Pew Internet & American Life Project Networked Family Survey, Dec. 13, 2007-Jan. 13, 2008. N=2,252. Margin of error is ±2% on the overall sample.*

Married couples are generally satisfied with the amount of time they are able to spend with family members, despite the growth in dual-income households and corresponding increase in time spent working. In all, 89% of married couples (which includes those with and without children) are “very” or “somewhat” satisfied with the amount of time they spend with family, compared with 79% of adults in non-married households.

A big part of this story is that despite multiple jobs and community opportunities, many families continue to spend much of their free time as a unit. Almost half (47%) of adults who live with a child or partner (everyone except for singles and non-married adults without children) say they spend most of their free time with household members. An additional 21% spend all of their free time with household members.

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Being employed (whether full- or part-time) is highly associated with the level of a person's satisfaction with his or her leisure pursuits. Those who are employed are less satisfied with the time they have available to spend with family, friends/relatives, engaging in hobbies or other activities, or just relaxing.

Satisfaction with Time Use and Employment Status			
	All adults (n=2252)	Employed (n=1199)	Not Employed (n=1053)
Time spent with family			
Very satisfied	55%	49%	63%*
Somewhat satisfied	29	34*	23
Not too/not at all satisfied	14	16*	10
Time spent with friends and relatives			
Very satisfied	44%	39%	50%*
Somewhat satisfied	39	42*	34
Not too/not at all satisfied	16	19*	14
Time spent on hobbies, clubs, and other activities			
Very satisfied	35%	31%	41%*
Somewhat satisfied	36	40*	32
Not too/not at all satisfied	25	28*	21
Time spent just relaxing			
Very satisfied	41%	32%	54%*
Somewhat satisfied	36	40*	30
Not too/not at all satisfied	22	27*	14

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project Networked Family Survey, Dec. 13, 2007-Jan. 13, 2008. N=2,252. Margin of error is $\pm 2\%$ on the overall sample. Numbers marked with an asterisk (*) are significantly larger than number in the opposite column.

Most spouses and parents/children frequently eat dinner together.

Despite the demands of work, childcare, school and other activities, almost all (93%) of those adults who live with a partner or child have dinner with members of their household at least a few times per week, and more than half (56%) have dinner with members of their household every day. Just 7% of those who live with a partner or child have dinner with a family member a few times a month or less often.

Not surprisingly, individuals who must navigate the scheduling demands of employment are less able to have dinner with family members on a regular basis. Nevertheless, half of employed adults (51%) find time to have dinner every day with other household members, and 28% do so almost every day. Women have dinner slightly more frequently with family members than do men: 60% of women and 52% of men do so every day. Seniors are much more likely to have dinner with a family member every day than those in younger age groups: 72% of those aged 65+ who live with a spouse or child have dinner with a family member every day compared with 50% of 18-29 year olds, 53% of 30-49 year olds and 57% of 50-64 year olds. Employment likely plays an important role

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in each of these trends: seniors and women are relatively likely to be retired or not employed for pay, respectively.

Dinner as a Family			
<i>% of adults in each group who have dinner with members of household...(among those who are married or live with a child under 18)</i>			
	Every day	Almost every day	A few times a week
Total, married/LWP*or have child under 18	56%	24%	13%
Parental status			
Parent	58	26	11
Not a parent	54	22	16
Gender			
Male	52	27	15
Female	60	22	12
Employment status			
Employed	51	28	16
Not employed	65	18	10
Age			
18-29	50	28	16
30-49	53	28	14
50-64	57	23	15
65+	72	11	7

*LWP=Living with partner as married

Source: *Pew Internet & American Life Project Networked Family Survey, Dec. 13, 2007-Jan. 13, 2008. N=1,491. Margin of error is ±2.8% on the overall sample of those who are married/living with a partner or having a child under 18 living at home.*

Among married couples, technology ownership is highly correlated with employment (whether full or part time) by both spouses. Among married households where both spouses are employed, fully 90% own multiple cell phones (compared with 66% in married households where one or neither spouse is employed) and 58% have multiple computers (compared with 38% of other married couples). As a result, families with high levels of technology ownership have relatively lower levels of satisfaction with their time spent with family members. They are somewhat less likely to eat dinner daily with family members than those with lower levels of technology ownership—although this trend is more strongly linked with employment than with technology ownership per se. Moreover, the great majority of technology owners are like non-technology owners in eating dinner with family members at least several times per week.

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Technology Ownership and Family Togetherness				
	Multiple cell phone owners (n=1,108)	Own one or fewer cell phones (n=383)	Multiple computer owners (n=708)	Own one or fewer computers (n=783)
Frequency of dinner with family members				
Every day	53%	66%*	51%	61%*
Almost every day	27*	17	30*	19
A few times a week	15*	9	14	13
Satisfaction with time with family members				
Very satisfied	56%	66%*	53%	63%*
Somewhat satisfied	32*	24	36*	24
Not too / not at all satisfied	12	9	11	11

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project Networked Family Survey, Dec. 13, 2007-Jan. 13, 2008. N=1,491. Margin of error is $\pm 2.8\%$ on the overall sample of those who are married/living with a partner or having a child under 18 living at home. Numbers marked with an asterisk (*) are significantly larger than number in the opposite column.

Television watching, though still a common household activity, has a greatly reduced importance among young adults.

Television remains a regular activity for most Americans: three-quarters (74%) of the adults we surveyed watch TV almost every day. Roughly six in ten young adults ages 18-29 (58%) say they watch TV almost every day, a notably lower percentage than the 72% to 89% of other age groups who watch TV on a near-daily basis. The older the age group, the higher the percentage that watches TV almost every day.

While the relatively small number of 18-29 year olds in our survey (and the extremely high rates of internet usage within this group) prevents a robust comparison of TV watching by young internet users and non-users, it is likely that internet use is a big part of the explanation of why young adults are the least likely to watch TV. Fully 85% of 18-29 year olds go online, 39% of young internet users go online from home multiple times throughout the day, and 29% say that they watch less TV as a result of the internet.

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Age and TV Watching				
<i>Young adults are notably less likely than their elders to watch TV on a daily basis</i>				
	Almost every day	A few times a week	Less often	Never
All adults	74%	15%	7%	3%
18-29	58	23	12	6
30-49	72	19	7	2
50-64	80	11	5	3
65+	89	6	4	2

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project Networked Family Survey, Dec. 13, 2007-Jan. 13, 2008. N=2,252.
Margin of error is ±2% on the overall sample.

The act of watching TV is a social one for many viewers.

Among those who watch TV, more than half (52%) usually do so socially—with other people. This is particularly true for those living in multi-person households, 63% of whom usually watch TV with others. Not surprisingly, solitary TV viewing is especially prevalent in the context of single-person households: 86% of those who live alone and watch TV usually do so by themselves.

Notably, there is little relationship between the number of TVs in the household and whether or not individuals usually watch TV alone or with others. Two-thirds (65%) of adults from multi-person households with 1-2 TVs say they usually watch television with other people; this differs little from households with 3-4 TVs (61%) or those with five or more TVs (64%). Even in households where individuals have the ability to watch television alone, family members often choose to gather around the TV with family members.

Men and women watch TV with different family members.

Men and women are equally likely to watch TV and equally likely to say they watch it with others. However, they tend to watch with slightly different people: Men are more likely to watch TV with just a spouse or partner, while women are more likely to watch with just a child or children. Among those who watch TV with other people, 43% of men and 33% of women usually watch with a spouse or partner, while 4% of men and 12% of women usually watch with a child or children. Men (25%) and women (24%) are equally likely to watch TV with both a spouse *and* child/children and equally likely to watch television with other adults, whether inside or outside their immediate household: 23% of women and 20% of men do this.

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Many families go online together.

People lean back in their easy chairs to passively watch a TV screen that is several yards away. It is easy for others to watch with them. By contrast, people lean forward in their desk chairs to actively interact with a computer screen that is only a foot or two away. The common mode of engagement is one person at one computer. Hence, the internet has more of a potential than TV to be a solitary activity, isolating household members from one another.

Nevertheless, many internet-using adults spend appreciable time at the computer with household members. Among home internet users who live with a spouse and child/children, 13% go online with another person on a daily basis, 9% do so almost every day, and 30% do so a few times a week. Another one-third (34%) do so less often. Thus, nearly nine in ten (87%) home internet users in married with children households go online with another person in the home at least occasionally.

As with TV, the presence of multiple computers in the household does not necessarily lead family members to be in their own isolated technological corners. Indeed, married with children households with multiple computers have as much (if not more) shared time online with others than single-computer households. We surmise that household members often look over each other's shoulders to see what interesting things are on the other's screen.

Families Going Online Together					
<i>Those with multiple computers are more likely to go online with others.</i>					
	Every day	Almost every day	A few times a week	Less often	Never
All home internet users who live with a spouse/child	13%	9%	30%	34%	13%
One computer in household	10	8	30	35	17
Two computers in household	15	6	36	31	11
Three or more computers in household	15	14	25	35	12

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project Networked Family Survey, Dec. 13, 2007-Jan. 13, 2008. N=399. Margin of error is ±3% based on home internet users who live with a spouse and child/children.

Many parents go online with their children. More than half of the parents (54%) who use the internet go online with another person a few times a week or more, compared with 36% of non-parents who go online and live in multi-person households. Additionally, 47% of the parents who go online with others say that they often go online with their child or children, and an additional 35% say they sometimes do so.

Part 3. Family social activities and togetherness

Men and women go online with different family members.

Men and women are equally likely to go online with others. However, just as with television viewing they tend to go online with different household members. Specifically, women are relatively more likely to go online with just their children, while men are more likely to go online with a spouse/partner *and* their children.

Who Group Internet Users Go Online With			
<i>Internet usage with different individuals; all percentages based on those who go online from home with others</i>			
	<i>Total</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Just a spouse or partner (among married couples, n=401)			
Often	38%	42%	34%
Sometimes	41	43	39
Just a child or children (among parents, n=256)			
Often	47	38	54*
Sometimes	35	41	30
Both spouse <i>and</i> child or children (among married parents, n=203)			
Often	14	15	13
Sometimes	33	49*	18

Source: *Pew Internet & American Life Project Networked Family Survey, Dec. 13, 2007-Jan. 13, 2008. Numbers marked with an asterisk (*) indicate statistically significant differences between men and women. Margin of error is ±5.4% based on married couples, ±6.7% based on parents, ±7.6% based on married parents.*

Socializing with others is a common activity, particularly among young adults.

One-quarter (26%) of all adults socialize or have gatherings at home with family or friends a few times a week, and 6% do so almost every day. Socializing away from home is also popular: One-third (32%) of adults socialize with family and friends away from home a few times a week, and 4% do so almost every day.

Young adults tend to socialize more frequently than older adults, both inside and outside of the home. Nearly half (47%) of 18-29 year olds socialize at home a few times a week or more, and a similar number (49%) socialize away from home at least a few times a week.

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Socializing with Friends and Family by Age				
	Almost every day	A few times a week	Less often	Never
Socialize or have gatherings at home				
All adults	6%	26%	59%	9%
18-29	13	34	44	8
30-49	4	23	66	6
50-64	5	23	62	10
65+	4	26	54	14
Socialize away from home				
All adults	4%	32%	57%	6%
18-29	8	41	45	5
30-49	3	30	63	4
50-64	2	30	62	6
65+	4	30	52	11

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project Networked Family Survey, Dec. 13, 2007-Jan. 13, 2008. N=2,252. Margin of error is ±2% on the overall sample.

Men are more likely to socialize with their wives present.

Men and women are equally likely to socialize at home, although men are relatively more likely to socialize with their partners present than women are. Among partners or married couples who socialize at home, 62% of males say their spouse or partner is present all the time, compared with 54% of females. However, 29% of females do say that their spouse/partner is present most of the time when they socialize in the home. In total, 83% of both married men and married women who socialize at home say their partner is with them all or most of the time when they have in-home events.

Despite the binding ties and time constraints of domestic labor and childcare, women are no less likely than men to socialize away from home. However, men are more apt to involve their partner or spouse when they socialize outside the home. Among couples who socialize outside the home, 49% of males do so with their spouse or partner all the time, compared with 33% of female respondents. Women do socialize with their husbands outside the home, although with less frequency: 38% of women socialize with their spouse or partner most of the time (compared with 31% of men) and 13% involve their partner or spouse about half the time (compared with 8% of men).

Internet users socialize as often as non-internet users.

There have been continuing debates about whether internet use keeps people away from socializing or helps them to socialize. This debate will remain unanswered for the moment, as our survey shows little difference in the amount of socializing engaged in by either internet users or non-users: About one-third (31%) of internet users and 35% of non-users socialize with others at home a few times a week or more. Furthermore, more

Part 3. Family social activities and togetherness

than one-third (37%) of internet users and 36% of non-users socialize with others away from home a few times a week or more. Indeed, even heavy home internet users—those who go online from home several times a day—are just as likely to socialize with other people (whether at home or elsewhere) as are less intense home internet users or those who do not go online at all.

Socializing by Heavy Internet Users			
<i>% within each group who...</i>			
	Go online from home several times a day (n=465)	Go online from home less frequently (n=983)	Do not go online (n=715)
Socialize or have gatherings at home			
Almost every day	7%	5%	6%
A few times a week	26	25	29
Less often	61	64	50
Never	6	6	14
Socialize or have gatherings away from home			
Almost every day	4%	3%	5
A few times a week	36	30	31
Less often	57	63	50
Never	3	3	13

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project Networked Family Survey, Dec. 13, 2007-Jan. 13, 2008. N=2,252. Margin of error is ±2% based on the overall sample.

Part 4.

Spouses and children staying connected

Married couples use a variety of tools to manage their schedules and stay connected.

Today's married couples use a variety of tools—landline phones, cell phones, instant messaging, and email—to manage their schedules and stay connected with each other throughout the day. The adoption of cell phones is a particularly important component of the way today's families stay in touch and coordinate their lives together.

Couples communicate frequently just to say hello and chat (28% of couples do this several times a day, and an additional 36% do so at least once a day) and also to coordinate daily schedules (20% do this several times a day, and 39% do so at least once a day). However, many also communicate regularly for weightier reasons: discussing important matters and planning future events.

Communication between Spouses					
<i>When you are not with your spouse/partner, how often do you communicate because you want to...</i>					
	Several times a day	At least once a day	A few times a week	Less often	Never
Just say hello and chat	28%	36%	19%	11%	5%
Coordinate daily schedules	20	39	22	11	6
Discuss important matters	14	23	27	25	9
Plan future events	7	12	32	40	9

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project Networked Family Survey, Dec. 13, 2007-Jan. 13, 2008. N=1,267. Margin of error is ±3% based on those who are married/living with a partner.

Given the time and scheduling demands of raising a child, it is not surprising that parents communicate more frequently throughout the day than non-parents. Three-quarters of parents (74%) contact their spouse or partner once a day or more to say hello and chat (compared with 58% of non-parents), 70% do so to coordinate daily schedules (compared with 51% of non-parents) and 42% do so to discuss important matters (compared with 34% of non-parents). Parents (20%) and non-parents (17%) are equally likely to contact their spouse daily to plan future events with friends and relatives.

Part 4. Spouses and children staying connected

The telephone – and the cell phone in particular – is the tool of choice for communication between spouses. Couples use the internet and cell phones to facilitate the personal interactions and routines of daily life.

Married couples use a wide range of technologies to communicate. Most of all, the telephone—especially the cell phone—is the tool of choice for couples to keep connected. One in five married adults (21%) say they contact their spouse several times a day using a cell phone, and an additional 26% do so at least once a day. In other words, 47% of married adults contact their spouse daily by cell phone, as compared with 35% who communicate daily by landline telephone.

Married couples use new communication technologies such as the internet and cell phones primarily to facilitate scheduling and to simply stay connected throughout the day. Compared with less tech-heavy couples, couples in which both spouses go online or own cell phones are significantly more likely to contact each other daily to say hello and chat, as well as to coordinate schedules and routines.

However, new communication technologies do not seem to play an especially important role in planning future events or discussing important matters. Couples using cell phones or the internet are no more likely to discuss these matters daily than those who do not use these technologies. These discussions are most likely taking place in-person or using traditional landline phones.

New Technologies and Spousal Communications				
<i>% of those who are married/living with a partner who contact their spouse once a day or more when they are not with their spouse/partner...</i>				
	Both own cell phones (n=860)	One or neither own cell phones (n=407)	Both go online (n=804)	One or neither go online (n=463)
To just say hello and chat	70%*	54%	68%*	59%
To coordinate schedules and routines	64*	47	65*	47
To plan future events	19	17	17	20
To discuss important matters	38	36	39	34

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project Networked Family Survey, Dec. 13, 2007-Jan. 13, 2008. N=1,267. Margin of error is ±3% based on those who are married/living with a partner. Numbers marked with an asterisk () are significantly larger than number in the opposite column.*

While married couples rely heavily on cell phones to stay in touch, they are much more likely to communicate by voice calls than by text messaging. Although nearly half of married adults call their spouse once a day or more on a cell phone, just 8% send text messages to their spouse with a similar frequency. This preference for voice communication is not simply a matter of technology adoption. Even for those married

Part 4. Spouses and children staying connected

adults who own a cell phone and use text messaging, 78% call their spouse on a cell phone at least once a day while just 22% send daily text messages to their spouse.

Compared with voice communication using cell and landline phones, internet communication tools such as email, instant messaging and messages through social networking sites make up a relatively small component of how couples communicate. Fewer than one in ten couples (8%) send daily email to each other, just 3% send instant messages daily, and just 1% communicate daily by sending messages on social networking sites such as Facebook or MySpace.

Common Communications Tools among Married Couples		
<i>% of married couples who do the following...</i>		
	Ever	Once a day or more
Call your spouse/partner from a landline phone	79%	35%
Call your spouse/partner from your cell phone	77	47
Send email to your spouse/partner	37	8
Send text messages to your spouse/partner	21	8
Send instant messages to your spouse/partner	8	3
Send messages to your spouse/partner through a social networking site	5	1

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project Networked Family Survey, Dec. 13, 2007-Jan. 13, 2008. N=1,267. Margin of error is ±3% based on those who are married/living with a partner.

Parents rely on the telephone to keep in touch with children as well as spouses.

In addition to staying connected with one another throughout the day, couples also use communication technologies to stay connected with their children. As with adult-to-adult communications, cell phones and landline telephones are the primary technologies parents use to keep in touch with their children over the course of the day. Two in five parents (42%) with a child aged 7-17 call their child from a cell phone once a day or more, and 35% do so from a landline telephone. By contrast, only 7% send daily text messages to their child, and just 1% send instant messages or messages on social networking sites on a daily basis.

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Parent/Child Communications		
<i>% of parents with a child aged 7-17 who do the following...</i>		
	Ever	Once a day or more
Call your child/children from a landline phone	75%	35%
Call your child/children from your cell phone	73	42
Send email to your child/children	25	3
Send text messages to your child/children	21	7
Send instant messages to your child/children	9	1
Send messages to your child/children through a social networking site	4	1

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project Networked Family Survey, Dec. 13, 2007-Jan. 13, 2008. N=425. Margin of error is ±5.2% based on parents with a child age 7-17 in the household.

Most women and men share the job of staying in touch with friends and family, but in some families women are still the primary kin-keepers.

Past research has indicated that women often take a leading role in managing household communications, using the internet and other communications technologies to reinforce existing personal relationships and to cultivate relationships with their family and friends (Wellman 1985).

Our survey finds some evidence of this: Women are primarily responsible for staying in touch with friends and family in 28% of married households, while men are the primary connector in just 4% of cases. However, we find an even greater amount of egalitarianism in the way couples communicate. In the remaining two-thirds of married households, the job of staying in touch with friends and family is divided equally—46% of married couples keep in touch jointly with friends and family, while 22% assign some contacts to one partner and some to another.

As with communication with friends and family, married couples generally share the job of communicating with children—among married parents with children under 18 years old, 57% share the job of communicating with their child or children equally between spouses. In the remaining married households, women tend to play a leading role in child communication: 36% say that the wife is the primary child communicator and just 6% say that the husband is the primary person responsible for communicating with the child/children. With respect to their use of different communications technologies, women are more likely than men to contact their child or children daily using a landline phone or cell phone text messages.

Part 4. Spouses and children staying connected

Parent/Child Communications		
<i>% of parents within each group who communicate once a day or more with their child age 7-17 via...</i>		
	<i>Male (n=193)</i>	<i>Female (n=232)</i>
Landline phone	27%	42%*
Cell phone	46	54
Email	4	6
Text messages	12	28*
Instant messages	5	3
Social networking sites	3	5

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project Networked Family Survey, Dec. 13, 2007-Jan. 13, 2008. N=425. Margin of error is ±5.2% based on parents with a child age 7-17 in the household.

Part 5.

The internet, cell phones, and family communication

The internet plays an important role in keeping in touch with loved ones both near and far.

One-third (33%) of online adults say that the internet has improved their connections with friends “a lot,” and nearly one-quarter (23%) say that it has greatly improved their connections with members of their family. By contrast, far fewer say their internet use has improved their capacity to make new friends: only 12% of internet users feel that the internet has greatly improved their ability to meet new people, and nearly two thirds (64%) say that it has not improved their ability to meet new people at all.

The Internet as a Communication Tool				
<i>% of internet users who say the internet has improved...</i>				
	A lot	Some	Only a little	Not at all
Connections to friends	33%	25%	21%	20%
Connections family members	23	27	22	27
Ability to meet new people	12	9	14	64

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project Networked Family Survey, Dec. 13, 2007-Jan. 13, 2008. N=1,537. Margin of error is ±2.8% based on internet users.

Adults of all ages see the internet as an important tool for maintaining connections with family members, but young people are far more likely than older adults to go online in order to keep in touch with existing friends and make new contacts.⁵

As early and avid adopters of social networking, instant messaging and other social media applications, the internet is a key tool for young people to communicate, meet new friends and keep in touch with old ones:

⁵ This is consistent with other research (see Wang & Wellman 2008; Kennedy & Wellman 2007; Wellman et al 2006; Boneva & Kraut 2002; Horrigan & Rainie 2002).

Part 5. The internet, cell phones, and family communication

The Internet and Connections Among Young People				
<i>% of internet users in each age group who say the internet has improved their connections to others "a lot"</i>				
	18-29 (n=239)	30-49 (n=565)	50-64 (n=465)	65+ (n=224)
Connections to friends	49%*	28%	25%	32%
Connections to family members	23	22	25	26
Ability to meet new people	21*	9	8	8

Source: *Pew Internet & American Life Project Networked Family Survey, Dec. 13, 2007-Jan. 13, 2008. N=1,537. Margin of error is ±2.8% based on internet users. Values marked with an asterisk (*) denote a statistically significant difference compared with values in all other age groups.*

The internet has led to more time working from both the home and office.

Most people view the internet as having a relatively minor influence on the amount of time that they spend on various activities. The primary exceptions are working and watching TV. For many internet users, new communication tools have led to an increase in the time they spend working, whether that work is done at the office or at home. One in five employed internet users (19%) say that using the internet has increased the amount of time they spend working from home, and one in ten (11%) say that it has increased the amount of time they spend working from the office.

Despite the large number of people who now work from home, the blurring of work and family life has surprisingly few quantifiable effects with respect to the ways workers spend their private time. Individuals who work at home at least occasionally and those who are employed but do not work from home are similar in terms of their satisfaction with their time for family, friends and hobbies; the amount of time they spend with other household members; their tendency to socialize with others; and the perceived closeness of their family.

Where employment plays a role (such as in less satisfaction with the amount of time spent on hobbies or relaxation), the key difference is between those who are employed and those who are not—there is little difference between those who work from home and those who do not do so. One notable exception is the difference in time spent having dinner with family members. Among those who are employed and live with a spouse or child, 63% of those who do some work from home every day say they also have dinner with family members daily. By contrast, 48% of those who are employed but do not work from home every day have dinner with family members daily.

Roughly nine in ten internet users say that the time they spend online has had no impact on the amount of time they spend with friends, family, or at social events. These responses are almost unchanged since the last time we asked these questions in early 2001, despite the wide array of new online applications developed since then (and with the caveat that the online population is now much larger than in 2001).

Part 5. The internet, cell phones, and family communication

Internet Usage and Time Use Patterns			
<i>% of online adults who say the internet has changed the amount of time they spend...</i>			
	Increased	Decreased	No change
Working at the office	11%	7%	79%
Working at home	19	4	76
Watching TV	5	25	70
With family	4	9	87
With friends	6	4	90
Attending social events	6	3	91

Source: *Pew Internet & American Life Project Networked Family Survey, Dec. 13, 2007-Jan. 13, 2008. N=1,537. Margin of error is ±3% on internet users.*

Cell phones and the internet are seen as positive tools for improving the quality of communications with family members, particularly those who live elsewhere.

Most respondents see the internet and cell phones as a positive (or, at worst, negligible) influence on the quality of communications with friends, family and co-workers.⁶ The internet and cell phones have the greatest positive impact on the quality of communications with family members living elsewhere, and the smallest positive impact on work-related communications. Notably, about half of the respondents in our survey feel that new communication technologies have not had an impact on their communications with household members, family members elsewhere, friends and coworkers. However, only a small percentage of adults feel that these technologies actually decrease the quality of their communications.

The Impact of Technology on Communications			
<i>Impact of new communication technologies such as the internet and cell phones on the quality of communications with...</i>			
	Increased	Decreased	No difference
Family members who do not live with you	53%	2%	44%
Members of your household	47	4	47
Friends	47	2	49
Co-workers (among those who are employed full or part time)	40	2	56

Source: *Pew Internet & American Life Project Networked Family Survey, Dec. 13, 2007-Jan. 13, 2008. N=2,252. Margin of error is ±2% on the overall sample.*

⁶ This is consistent with a good deal of other research on this subject, such as Wang & Wellman, 2008; Quan-Haase & Wellman 2004; Boase & Wellman 2006; Kennedy & Wellman 2007; Wellman et al 2005; Boneva & Kraut 2002; Horrigan & Rainie 2002; Haythornthwaite 2005; Mok & Wellman 2007; Hampton & Wellman 2003; Boase et al 2003; Copher, Kanfer & Walker 2002.

Part 5. The internet, cell phones, and family communication

Most adults consider their family today to be as close, or closer, than the family they grew up in as children thanks to the internet and cell phones

One-quarter of adults (25%) feel that the internet and cell phones have brought their family closer together than their own family was when they were growing up. Six in ten (60%) feel that these technologies haven't made much difference in this regard, and only one-tenth (11%) feel that their family today is not as close as their childhood family because of new technologies. Families with the most technology – at least one cell phone and an internet connection – are relatively more likely to say their family is closer because of these technologies than are families with low levels of technology use.

Family Closeness by Technology Ownership				
<i>% within each group who say that the internet and cell phones have made their family...</i>				
	HH has both cell phone and internet (n=1548)	HH has cell but no internet (n=319)	HH has internet but no cell (n=135)	HH does not have either (n=250)
Closer	28%	23%	18%	17%
Not as close	11	11	9	12
Not much difference	59	62	69	63
Don't know / Refuse	3	4	5	9

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project Networked Family Survey, Dec. 13, 2007-Jan. 13, 2008. N=2,252. Margin of error is ±2% on the overall sample.

Younger Americans, having spent much of their teens and early adulthood in a world of cell phones and internet access, tend to see little difference in the closeness of their current and childhood families. Two-thirds of 18-29 year olds and 62% of 30-49 year olds say that the internet and cell phones have not made much difference in how close their family is now compared with the one they grew up in. This drops to 55% for individuals age 65 or older.

Part 6.

Conclusions: the networked household

New technologies foster new connectivity.

Most households have the internet and cell phones and use them actively. These are family technologies, as almost all married families with children are now internet and cell phone users. Their proportion of use is much higher than that of singles, single-person households and even married couples without children. Despite fears that technology use might pull families apart, American families still lead connected lives, and the more people in their households, the more coordination *and* communication they need. Where a two-person household (married couple or single mom with child) has only two relationships to coordinate (one in each direction), a four-person household (mother, father, and two children) has twelve relationships to coordinate. Contrary to the impression that internet use is a yuppie activity—singles and married couples without children—the married families with children are the most active internet users.

Spouses in the United States talk to each other through phones—cell phones and landlines— which are more intimate media than text-oriented computers. Rather than being isolated in their two-job work lives and their frequent child minding, spouses use old-fashioned landline phones and new cell phone and internet media to keep in frequent touch. About half of the respondents recognize the role that new media have played in increasing family communication, while about half haven't noticed much difference; only a small percentage think that the internet and cell phones have actually decreased family contact.

To the extent that they have an opinion about new media tools, Americans tend to be optimistic about their impact: one-quarter say their family is closer because of the internet and cell phones, more than twice as many who say they have grown apart.

People go their separate ways, but they are networked together.

American families in 2008 continue to function as units. Although they often go their separate ways during the day, they are connected by the internet and, even more so, by cell phones. Although both members of married couples usually go out during the day to work, they keep together through their personal communication media. They communicate socially—just to say: “Hello, how are you? What are you doing?” and also to coordinate activities—“Will you pick up Tyler at school, if I bring take-out dinner

Part 6. Conclusions: the networked household

home?” The family phone wired into the household is being supplemented –and sometimes supplanted –by personally carried phones.

Few household members feel that the internet separates them. Rather, many report that the internet (like television) brings people together within households: We have found many instances where two or more family members go online together, or one calls another over to “look at this!” If anything, having several computers in a household can promote family interaction, as each member is more likely to be using the internet and have a “look at this” moment.

Despite fears that many Americans are isolated from family members, because of separate agendas and immersive personal internet and cell phones, most families are together at night. Their heavy home internet use suggests that many households are hubs of personal communication networks, as people log on individually to email, IM, post on social networking sites and chat. They are both together with their families and connecting outward to friends and relatives elsewhere. They are neither isolated individuals nor Dick and Jane’s traditional family. Rather, their households are active sites of the interplay of individual activity and family togetherness.

Part 7.

Methodology

The results in this report are based on data from telephone interviews conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates International between December 13, 2007 to January 13, 2008, among a sample of 2,252 adults, 18 and older. For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling is plus or minus 2.3 percentage points. For results based internet users (n=1,537), 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 following table outlines the family type composition of our survey in comparison to the most recent US census data:

Sample Composition vs. Census		
<i>Comparison of Networked Family survey respondents to US Census data</i>		
	Pew Internet Survey	Census
Married without minor children	27%	28%
Married with minor children	25	23
One person	22	26
Other (includes multiple non-married adults, with and without children)	21	13
Single parent	5	9

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project Networked Family Survey, Dec. 13, 2007-Jan. 13, 2008. N=2,252. Margin of error is $\pm 2\%$ on the overall sample.

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 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.

Sample was released for interviewing in replicates, which are representative subsamples of the larger sample. Using replicates to control the release of sample ensures that complete call procedures are followed for the entire sample. At least 10 attempts were made to complete an interview at sampled households. Calls were staggered over times of day and days of the week to maximize the chance of making contact with potential respondents. 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 youngest 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.

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 Census Bureau's March 2006 Annual Social and Economic Supplement Survey. 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.

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, 87 percent were contacted by an interviewer and 27 percent agreed to participate in the survey. Eighty-five percent were found eligible for the interview. Furthermore, 93 percent of eligible respondents completed the interview. Therefore, the final response rate is 22 percent.

Following is the full disposition of all sampled telephone numbers:

Table 1: Sample Disposition

26,994	Total Numbers Dialed
1,688	Business/Government/Non-Residential
1,449	Fax/Modem
57	Cell phone
9,995	Other Not-Working
1,774	Additional projected NW
12,031	Working numbers
44.6%	Working Rate
521	No Answer
71	Busy
883	Answering Machine
116	Other Non-Contacts
10,441	Contacted numbers
86.8%	Contact Rate
357	Callbacks
7,230	Refusal before eligibility status known
2,854	Cooperating numbers
27.3%	Cooperation Rate
441	Language Barrier
2,413	Eligible numbers
84.5%	Eligibility Rate
161	Refusal after case determined eligible
2,252	Completes
93.3%	Completion Rate
22.1%	Response Rate

Part 8.

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