This report analyzes data from an April 2002 survey of Colorado adult and young adult (high school age or older) public library patrons. Findings indicated that: technology in public libraries spans all demographics and fulfills a highly demanded patron need; technology have-nots are not limited to the poor or under-educated; and library patrons are teaching themselves new technology skills, communicating on a global level, and accessing online information on a wide variety of topics. A question-by-question analysis presents results related to: (1) how many years the respondent has been using the Internet; (2) how often the Internet is used at each location; (3) whether the availability of computers is one of the reasons the respondent visited the library; (4) technology skills acquired through the library; (5) how technology skills are acquired at the library; (6) how often public library computers are used for Internet access; (7) outcomes for recent library computer use; and (8) whether needed information was found through the Internet. Cross tabulations by race/ethnicity, age, education, and income are provided. Appendices contain graphs of results, a list of libraries surveyed, and a copy of the questionnaire. (MES)
Colorado
Public Libraries & the
"Digital Divide"
2002

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Keith Curry Lance

Library Research Service
Colorado State Library
Colorado Department of
Education

October 2002
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Public libraries in Colorado are bridging the technology gap that is symptomatic of the “digital divide.” The availability of technology in public libraries fulfills a highly demanded patron need spanning all demographic groups. “The rate of growth of Internet use in the United States is currently two million new Internet users per month.... Internet use is increasing for people regardless of income, education, age, races, ethnicity or gender.”1 The technology have-nots are not just the poor and under-educated. People from all walks-of-life rely on the Internet access provided by public libraries. This survey shows that library patrons are teaching themselves new technology skills, communicating on a global level, and accessing online information regarding education, health, employment and volunteer opportunities. As a result, they are able to improve their personal quality of life and that of their communities.

Technology in public libraries spans all demographics and fulfills a highly demanded patron need.

Of all respondents:

- **82 %** indicated that the availability of computers in the library was one of the reasons for visiting the library that day.
- **67 %** have no other access to the Internet except through public Internet computers.
- **60%** of those under age 18 use public Internet computers to work on school assignments.
- **44%** use the public Internet computers for Internet access more than once a week.
- **23 %** of the people indicating the use of the public Internet computers more than once a week were below poverty level.
- **44%** of those who use library computers more than once a week, have a bachelor's degree or higher.

Technology have-nots are not limited to the poor or under-educated.

Of all respondents:

- **Men (52%)** only slightly outnumber women (47%) in their use of public library Internet access.
- **67%** indicated college level course work and higher.
- **48%** of those who rely on Internet access through the public library were between 30 and 54 years of age.
- **71%** of the survey participants indicated no minor children living at home.

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Library patrons are teaching themselves new technology skills, communicating on a global level, and accessing online information on a wide variety of topics. With access to online information about education, health, employment and volunteer opportunities, they are improving their quality of life and that of their communities.

Of all respondents:

- 70% identified searching for topic-specific information as their primary activity at public Internet computers.
- 36% have used public Internet computers to look for a job.
- Patrons who improved their income via public Internet computers were twice as likely to be young adults between the ages of 18 and 29, the majority of whom made below $18,000 annually and were predominantly male.
- 38% of those working on college assignments were minorities; of those people, 21% were Hispanic.
- 54% of those seeking educational opportunities using public Internet computers were female.
- Colorado's youth were twice as likely as any other age group to use public Internet access to find volunteer opportunities. Example: 13% of those people under 18 versus 6% of patrons ages 30 - 54 and 4% of patrons 55 and older.
- 19% of respondents spent time seeking health related information on public Internet computers.
- 61% seeking health-related information were female.
Introduction

This report provides insights into how Coloradans are aided by public libraries in using information technology and how their lives are changed by access to online information. The findings are based on a sample survey of over 1,900 patrons of public libraries throughout the state. The data in this study provide a broad view of public library Internet use in Colorado both overall and for selected demographic groups.

Data on this topic is a valuable tool for public policy-makers. The Internet is becoming a primary—in some cases, the only—access point to a wide variety of government services, educational materials, health resources, communication tools and commercial activities. As more and more information becomes available only online, public Internet access becomes ever more important to ensure equal access to information for all segments of society. Outcome data helps to determine who relies on such access and how it impacts the lives of individual Coloradans as well as their communities.

This information should be useful to a wide variety of policymakers and service providers acting in the public interest. These data show that the state’s public libraries have an impact on the community and provide a needed service. This service ensures equal access for all Coloradans to the advantages and opportunities available via the Internet.

Methodology

This report analyzes data from an April 2002 survey of public library patrons conducted by the Library Research Service, a unit of the Colorado State Library and the Colorado Department of Education operated in partnership with the Library and Information Services Program of the University of Denver’s College of Education. Due to extra responses beyond targeted figures, the survey’s response rate exceeded 100 percent. The results were weighted to take this into account.

The survey design included outcome-based questions in order to understand the impact of Internet access provided by public libraries. Questions addressed: patron’s Internet experience, points of access, newly acquired skills, styles of learning, frequency of use, online activities and overall effectiveness.

Each public library received a number of survey forms based on the size of its legal service area population. Libraries serving 10,000 or more people were sent 75 surveys with a target of 25 returns. Libraries serving populations less than 10,000 were sent 30 surveys with a target of 10 returns. The following table reports the number of completed surveys returned by libraries serving different size populations as well as the sub-totals of the state’s legal service area population those returns were weighted to represent:
Public Library Universe and Survey Sample by Population of Legal Service Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Libraries by population of legal service area</th>
<th>Sample Return</th>
<th>Sub-total of population of legal service areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100,000 or more</td>
<td>555</td>
<td>3,073,146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25,000-99,999</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>547,084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000-24,999</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>335,229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000-9,999</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>86,637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,500-4,999</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>81,724</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000-2,499</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>31,062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1,000</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>7,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,916</td>
<td>4,162,282</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The survey was handed out by library staff to adults and young adults (high school age or older.) The participating libraries were instructed to distribute the survey throughout the library covering all service areas. The surveys were to be handed out on two different days divided evenly between morning, afternoon and evening patrons. Survey responses were cross-tabulated by income, sex, age, race, and education level.

Overview

Social factors such as income, education and race/ethnicity foster the “digital divide.” The relationship between Internet access and these factors has been documented in *Falling Through the Net* a series of studies from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration. The people most likely to be excluded from electronic access are people making less than $20,000 per year, Blacks and Hispanics, the unemployed, the elderly, people with disabilities and people in rural communities.

Surveys done since 1998 conclude that libraries have been able to increase online access to multimedia information through discounted telecommunications rates (i.e., E-rates), Library Services and Technology Act grants, Gates Library Foundation awards, and local resources. Libraries have been able to upgrade their infrastructures and expand their network services throughout urban and rural areas. Public Internet access expands the types of services and collections available from libraries in smaller, poorer, and more isolated areas. It also encourages partnerships between those libraries and other cultural institutions and technology organizations. All of these forces working together bridge the digital divide.

Findings of this survey are consistent with those of previous federal studies. The Colorado study shows that the digital divide affects all income, education, age and racial/ethnic groups. The first part of this report examines the responses to each question and highlights the significant findings. The second section looks at the cross tabulation of race / ethnicity, age, education, and Internet use for respondents below poverty level. The survey questionnaire is appended along with a list of all participating libraries.

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3 Census Bureau Poverty Guidelines. Family of 2 - $11,940; Family of 4 – 18,100 [http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/02poverty.htm](http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/02poverty.htm)
1) How many years have you been using the Internet?

**Figure 1.1 - Years of Internet Use - Overall**

- **34.8%** of library patrons indicated **3–5 years** of Internet use. (See Figure 1.1)

Significant demographic factors found in response to years of Internet use were...

**Age:**
- Patrons indicating **more than 5 years** of Internet use were predominantly **between 18 and 29 years old**.

**Race/Ethnicity:**
- Out of all respondents, Black and Hispanic had less experience with the Internet. **20%** of Black people indicated less than one year of use and **44%** of Hispanic people, less than two years.

**Education:**
- Patrons with **more than five years of Internet experience** were more likely to be college graduates. **47%** of all respondents using the Internet more than five years **had a Bachelors degree** compared to **19%** of those people **without high school diplomas**.

**Income** and **gender** were not found to significantly affect years of Internet use.
2) Please rank the following locations based on how often you use the Internet at each location.

Figure 1.2
Access to the Internet
Overall

- 67.5% of the survey respondents indicated that the library was the only place used to access the Internet. (See Figure 1.2)

Significant demographic factors found in response to Internet access through public libraries compared to other possible locations were...

Age:
- Public libraries provide the only access to the Internet for a substantial portion of every age group. 48% of those under 18, 66% of those between 18 - 54, and 85.2% of those over 55 rely on public library for Internet access.

Education:
- 25% of library patrons relying on public libraries for access to the Internet have a Bachelors degree or higher.

Race, income and gender were not found to significantly affect the dependency on library access to the Internet.
3) Is the availability of computers in the library one of the reasons you visited the library today?

- 82% of all respondents said yes.

Income level was the only demographic that influenced this response, 25% of people who said yes were below poverty level.

There were no significant demographic factors found to influence reasons for visiting the library in age, race, education or gender.
4) Which of the following technology skills have you acquired via the library?

Figure 1.3 - Developing New Technology Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>Web development</th>
<th>10.5%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Word-processing</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Email</td>
<td>43.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Online search strategies</td>
<td>58.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 59% of all respondents **improved their search strategies.** (See Figure 1.3)
- 43% of all respondents **improved their email skills.** (See Figure 1.3)

Significant demographic factors found to influence types of technology skills learned through public libraries were...

**Age:**
- 26% of respondents **under the age of 18** were improving **word processing skills** via the library.
- 22% of respondents **under the age of 18** used public Internet computers to **work on web development skills**, twice as much as any other age group.

**Race:**
- Two-thirds of all minority respondents **improved search strategies.**
- 51% of Hispanic respondents **improved email skills.**
- 33% of Black respondents **improved word processing skills**, twice the amount of white respondents.
- 21% of Black respondents used public access computers to **improve web development skills**, nearly three-times more than white respondents.

**Education:**
- People with a **Bachelors degree or higher** were the **least likely** to improve or acquire new search, email, word processing, or web-development skills through the library.
Income:

- **48%** of those people **improving email skills** were **below poverty level**.
- **27%** of respondents **below poverty level** improved **word processing** skills at the library compared to **13%** of those respondents making **over $50,000**.

**Gender** had no significant impact on the types of new technology skills learned at public library computers.
5) How did you acquire the skills marked in the previous question?

Figure 1.4 - How Library Patrons Learn New Skills

- Overall, **68%** of the library patrons acquire **new technology skills** through **self-teaching** at public access computers. (See Figure 1.4)
- **Staff assistance** is used to learn new skills nearly **20%** of the time. (See Figure 1.4)

Significant demographic factors found to influence how people learn new technology skills at the library were...

**Age:**
- People age **55 and older** are **3 times as likely** as younger patrons to **learn new technology skills through a library course**.
- People **over 55** are **twice as likely** to learn new technology skills with **staff assistance than any other age group**.

**Race:**
- **17%** of **Asian Pacific Islanders** utilized **library courses** to acquire new skills **2 – 3 times more** often than any other group.

**Education:**
- Across all education levels, patrons are **3 to 4 times more likely to teach themselves** how to use the Internet than to ask library staff for help or sign up for a library course.

**Income:**
- **20%** of respondents **learning new skills through a library course** are **below poverty level**.

**Gender** had no significant impact on how new technology skills were learned at public libraries.
6) How often do you use public Internet computers for Internet access?

Figure 1.5 - Frequency of Library Computer Use Overall

- **Over half** of all respondents use public Internet computers **more than once a week**. (See Figure 1.5)

Significant demographic factors found to influence how people learn new technology skills at the library were...

**Age:**
- As age increases frequency of use increases. 47% of those respondents **over 30** use public library computers **more than once a week**, 41% of people **18–29** and 35% for people **18 and under**.

**Education:**
- 44% of the respondents using the public Internet computers more than once a week, have a **bachelor's degree or higher**.

**Income:**
- 40% of the respondents **below poverty level** use public terminals to access the Internet **more than once a week**.

**Race** and **gender** had no significant impact on how often public library terminals were used.
7) As a result of my recent use of the library I was able to... 
- 69% - Look for information on a specific topic
- 56% - E-mail
- 46% - Surf the web
- 38% - Stay in touch with someone
- 36% - Look for a job
- 20% - Seek educational opportunities
- 19% - Find health related information for self, friend, or relative

Figure 1.6 - General Information Survey Results

- Searching for topic-specific information was the most common activity at public Internet computers. (See Figure 1.6)

- Posting to newsgroups, bulletin boards and electronic lists was the least common general information activity. Only 14% of overall respondents reported it. (See Figure 1.6)

8) Were you able to locate the information you were seeking online?

82% of all respondents indicated that they were successful in locating needed information online.
Race / Ethnicity

Race / ethnicity, age, education and income are inter-related factors that influence how the Internet is used in public libraries. Gender differences are minimal and will be excluded from this report since they add little to the overall picture. A single demographic factor cannot account for variations in the activities addressed here. Each factor changes the user need, the level of use, and the impact this service has on Colorado communities. Examining Internet use according to race and ethnic background helps to portray the needs and uses of different cultural communities. This report will look at the three largest respondent communities, White, Hispanic, and Black.

Internet activities for White respondents (66.7% of overall participants)

Figure 2.1 - White Respondents - Internet Activities

Of White respondents:

- 69% search the web for specific information
- 47% surf the web for fun
- 35% look for employment
- 18% look for educational programs
- 11% look for services in the community
- 11% work on or complete a school assignment
- 8% work on or complete a college assignment
- 7% find volunteer opportunities
- 7% locate information about candidates and issues for voting
- 6% look for information on social programs
- 5% participate in distance learning
83% of White respondents indicated that the computers were one of the reasons for visiting the library that day. 58% were able to learn or improve Internet search strategies at public computers. 19% learned new technology skill through staff assistance.

**Figure 2.2 - White Respondents Internet Access**

Over two-thirds of White respondents indicated the public library was their only source for Internet access, more than any other racial / ethnic group. (See Figure 2.2)
Internet activities for Hispanic respondents (14.5% of all respondents)

Figure 2.3 - Hispanic Respondents - Internet Activities

Of Hispanic respondents:

- 68% search the web for specific information
- 59% surf the web for fun
- 46% looking for employment
- 26% work on or complete a school assignment
- 23% look for educational programs
- 16% look for services in the community
- 14% work on or complete a college assignment
- 13% look for information on social programs
- 12% participate in distance learning
- 11% locate information about candidates and issues for voting
- 11% find volunteer opportunities
80% of Hispanic respondents indicated that the computers were one of the reasons for visiting the library that day. 65% improved search strategies, 51% improved or learned email skills, and 26% worked on word processing skills, at public library computers. Only 13% learned new skills through staff assistance and 5% through library courses. This might indicate a patron need for bi-lingual assistance in technology areas.

**Figure 2.4 - Hispanic Respondents Internet Access**

![Pie chart showing internet access usage]

- **Library only**: 65.5%
- **Home only**: 7.9%
- **Home & school**: 7.5%
- **Home & work**: 2.5%
- **School only**: 0.2%
- **School & work**: 10.7%
- **Work only**: 2.8%
- **Home, school & work**: 2.8%

Nearly two-thirds of Hispanic respondents indicated the public library was their only source for Internet access. (See Figure 2.4)
Internet activities for Black respondents (4.3% of all respondents)

Figure 2.5 - Black Respondents - Internet Activities

Of Black respondents:

- 75% search the web for specific information
- 50% look for employment
- 44% surf the web for fun
- 33% look for educational programs
- 29% work on or complete a school assignment
- 17% work on or complete a college assignment
- 14% look for information on social programs
- 12% look for services in the community
- 8% participate in distance learning
- 8% find volunteer opportunities
- 8% locating information about candidates and issues for voting
75% of Black respondents indicated that the computers were one of the reasons for visiting the library that day. 67% were able to improve search strategies. 33% improved word processing skills. 29% worked on email. 21% improved or learned web development at public library computers. 19% learned these new technology skills through staff assistance.

**Figure 2.6 - Black Respondents Internet access**

![Pie chart showing Internet access by location: Library only 63.7%, Home only 8.2%, Home & school 3.5%, Home & work 3.5%, Home, school & work 10.4%, Work only 3.5%, School only 3.7%, School & work 3.5%.]

Nearly two-thirds of Black respondents indicated the public library was their only source for Internet access. (See Figure 2.6)
38% of all respondents working on college assignments were minorities.

17% of Black respondents use public Internet computers to complete college assignments, twice as much as white respondents. (See Figure 2.7)

For charts of all Internet activities by activity type and race / ethnicity refer to Appendix A.
Age affects how long you have been using the Internet, how often and for what purpose.

- 42% of patrons **18 to 29** years old indicated **more than 5 years of Internet use**. Only 22% of those **under 18** and 27% of those **55 and older** indicated the same level of experience.

- As age increases frequency of use increases. 47% of respondents **over the age of 30** use public library computers **more than once a week** compared with 42% of respondents **18 – 29**, and 36% of those **under 18**.

**Figure 3.1 - How New Skills are Learned by Age**

- People **over 55** are **3 times more likely** to learn new skills through library courses and **twice as likely** to use staff assistance than any other age group. (See Figure 3.1)

- 60% of respondents **under the age of 18** use public Internet computers to work on school assignments.

- 10% of respondents **over 55** used the Internet to improve their health compared with 4% of people ages **18 to 29** and 5% for those **under 18**.

- Respondents **under the age of eighteen** are **twice as likely to listen to music** online. Example: 22% of people **under 18** listen to music at library terminal versus 10% of people between **18 and 29**.
As mentioned earlier public libraries provide the only Internet access for a substantial portion of every age group. (See Figure 3.2) Older patrons with less computer experience rely on Internet access through public libraries, staff assistance and library courses more than any other group. This might suggest that people over 55, use public library technology more than any other age group because of the help available.
Education

Educational level impacts how long people have been using the Internet and the activities that they engage in at public library terminals.

**Figure 4.1 - Educational Levels Overall**

- Bachelors Degree or Higher: 41.3%
- High School Graduate: 17.3%
- Technical School: 4.0%
- Some College: 25.9%
- Less than High School: 11.5%

Of overall respondents:

- **41%** have a **bachelors degree or higher**
- **26%** indicate **some college**
- **4%** have **attended a tech school**
- **17%** are **high school graduates**
- **11%** have **less than high school education**

- **47%** of all respondents with a **bachelors degree or higher** have been using the Internet **more than 5 years**. **19%** of people **without a high school diploma**, **25%** of **high school graduates**, and **33%** of **respondents indicating some college had comparable levels of experience**.
Figure 4.2 - How New Skills are Learned by Education

- As educational attainment increases, patrons are more likely to ask staff for help or sign up for a library course. (See Figure 4.2)
- 76% of people without high school diplomas are self-taught new technology skills compared to 58% of those with bachelors degree or higher. (See Figure 4.2)
Higher education affects what library patrons do with Internet time. 68% of people without high school diplomas surf for fun, while only 41% of people with bachelor's degree or higher do so. Online chat at public Internet computers is three times more likely for people who didn't go to college. Interactive gaming and streaming music also declines when education increases. (See Figure 4.3)

- 41% of those looking for a job via public Internet computers have a bachelor's degree or higher.
- 46% of people using public Internet computers to locate services within the community had a bachelor's degree or higher.

Indicating that increased education can lead to more focused use of the Internet at public library computers.
Descriptive statistics do not suffice to explain completely why one group of individuals has higher or lower rates of computer use and Internet use. Two things that appear to influence Internet activity are income and level of education. A Nation Online: How Americans Are Expanding Their Use of the Internet, reports that education and income have independent effects on Internet use. "People who have lower education but live in households with high family incomes are less likely to be Internet users than those who have high levels of education and live in households with low family income."⁴ One out of four Colorado respondents was below poverty level. Costs of hardware, software licensing, and network capabilities are still very high and one of the obvious elements of digital exclusion. Responding to this need is one of the most important aspects of digital inclusion.

- 53% of respondents making less than $12,000 annually improved e-mail skills through library access.

- Most recreational Internet use at public Internet computers is directly affected by income and education. Once income exceeds $25,000, most recreational uses of the Internet decline markedly. (See Figure 5.1)

Poor respondents use the Internet for recreation more than any other group. 52% surf the web for fun, 16% participate in online chat, 15% play interactive games, and 10% listen to music. (See Figure 5.1)

- 33% of respondents using public Internet computers to stay in touch with someone was below poverty level.
- 65% of poor respondents use public Internet computers to send and receive e-mail, more than any other income group. This would indicate that e-mail is a growing form of communication for people with lower incomes.
- 22% of poor respondents used the public Internet computers to complete a school assignment.
- 44% of respondents looking for educational programs on public library computers have annual incomes less than $19,000.
- 29% of respondents using public library terminals for distance education were below poverty level.
- 35% of people looking for a job were below poverty level.
- 19% people looking for community services were below poverty level.
- 27% people looking for volunteer opportunities were below poverty level.
- 28% of those seeking information on social programs were below poverty level.

Poor people in Colorado are taking advantage of the resources offered online however, like most people using public Internet access they are unlikely to ask for staff assistance or enroll in a library course. The majority of poor respondents use the Internet to look for information, surf for fun, as a means of communication, and to look for employment. (See Figure 5.2) Well-trained and knowledgeable library staff regarding current online resources for, economic, and social improvement will help to maximize the usefulness of public Internet computers.

Figure 5.2 - Internet use for respondents below poverty level

Although the figure is not directly transcribed, it shows various activities related to Internet use, such as purchasing, selling homes, completing certifications, finding health information, and more.
Conclusion

Computers and the Internet are vital parts of everyday life. They provide a doorway to information on a global level and expand the reach of every community. Ensuring each community member access to electronic resources and developing the technical skills to participate in the global economy are important contributions of public libraries to their communities and to the state.

Colorado public libraries provide 2,297 computers for public use, of which 1,492 provide Internet access, costing $2,576,885 annually. Internet access through public libraries is an active step in bridging the “Digital Divide.” Community members who would otherwise continue to lag behind are taking advantage of this public resource. More than two-thirds of the library patrons polled have no other access to the Internet except through public Internet computers. Coloradans from all demographics rely on Internet access at public libraries. They are learning new technology skills from library staff members and library courses as well as teaching themselves and learning from friends and family.

As education and income rise, use of the Internet also rises, leading to increased access to global information. Properly trained library staff will increase awareness to valuable online resources and help the technologically disadvantaged form new skills that can be used daily in an information age. By providing public access to the Internet, Colorado public libraries are fulfilling a mission to “Give instruction unto those who cannot procure it for themselves.” (Confucius)
Figure 6.1 - Recreational activities

Stay-n-touch
Music
Interactive games
Online chat
Surf for fun

Percentage within race / ethnicity

American Indian □ Asian/Pacific Islander □ Black □ Hispanic □ White

Figure 6.2 - General Information

Read and post to news groups or electronic lists
Send and receive personal email
Look for specific information

Percentage within race / ethnicity

American Indian □ Asian/Pacific Islander □ Black □ Hispanic □ White
Figure 6.3 - Education

- Participate in distance learning
- Work on or complete a college assignment
- Work on or complete a school assignment
- Look for educational program

Figure 6.4 - Business / Career

- Obtain legal documents for business
- Look for a job

Percentage within race / ethnicity

- American Indian
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Black
- Hispanic
- White
Figure 6.5 - Consumer / Personal Finance

- Trade and monitor stocks and investments
- Locate a doctor or dentist
- Improve my or a family members health
- Find health related information
- Buy or sell personal items
- Purchase or sell a home

Percentage within race

American Indian  Asian/Pacific Islander  Black  Hispanic  White

Figure 6.6 - Community

- Find candidate and voting information
- Find community organizations
- Find volunteer opportunities
- Information on social programs
- Find a service in my community

Percentage within race / ethnicity

American Indian  Asian/Pacific Islander  Black  Hispanic  White
### Public Libraries Surveyed

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A Survey of Users of Public Access Internet Computers in Colorado Public Libraries

Please take a minute or two to help us learn how often you utilize public access Internet computers at the library, how the library has helped you to improve your Internet skills, and how use of these computers makes a difference in your life.

1) How many years have you been using the Internet? (Mark one.)
   - Less than 1 year
   - 1 – 2 years
   - 3 – 5 years
   - More than 5 years

2) Please rank the following locations based on how often you use the Internet at each location: (1 = the location at which you most frequently use the Internet. Enter 0 for a rarely or never used location.)
   - Home
   - Work
   - School
   - Library
   - Cyber café
   - Laptop/notebook (no specific location)
   - Other—Please specify location:

3) Is the availability of computers in the library one of the reasons you visited the library today?
   - Yes
   - No

4) Which of the following new technology skills have you acquired via the library? (Mark all that apply.)
   - Online search strategies
   - E-mail correspondence
   - Web development
   - Word-processing

5) How did you acquire the skills marked in the previous question? (Mark all that apply.)
   - On your own
   - with individual staff assistance
   - Through a library course
   - other – Please specify:

6) How often do you use public Internet computers for Internet access? (Mark one.)
   - More than once a week
   - Monthly
   - Other – Please specify:
   - Weekly
   - Quarterly
   - 2 – 3 times per month
   - Annually

7) As a result of my recent use of the Internet at this library I was able to...
   (Check all that apply.)
Recreation
- Surf the Internet for fun.
- Participate in online chatting.
- Play interactive games.
- Listen to music.
- Stay in touch with someone that otherwise wouldn't be possible.

General Information
- Surf the web for information on a specific topic.
- Send and receive personal e-mail.
- Read and post to newsgroups, bulletin boards, or electronic lists.

Education
- Look for an educational program.
- Work on or complete a school assignment.
- Work on or complete a college level assignment.
- Participate in a distance learning activity.

Business/Career
- Look for a job.
- Increase my income/get a promotion.
- Complete a certification.
- Obtain legal documents needed for business purposes.
- Conduct research for current employer.

Consumer/Personal Finance
- Purchase or sell a home or rental property.
- Buy or sell personal items.
- Find health related information for a friend, a relative, or myself.
- Improve my or a family member's health.
- Locate a doctor or dentist.
- Trade and monitor stocks and investments.

Community
- Find a service in my community such as child/elder care facility, public transportation, Meals on Wheels, etc.
- Locate information concerning social programs; such as applying for Medicaid, food stamps, Kids in Need of Dentistry, or section 8 housing.
- Find volunteer opportunities.
- Locate community center, church, club, or other community-based organization.
- Locate information about candidates and issues before voting.
8) Were you able to locate the information you were seeking online?
   □ Yes    □ No

9) Were you able to find information on the Internet that was unavailable from traditional library sources? (Example of traditional sources might include: Books, magazines, newspapers, reference books, etc.)
   □ Yes    □ No

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>About You</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Mark one in each box.)</td>
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</table>

| Age Group: | □ Under 18  □ 18–29  □ 30-54  □ 55 and older |
| Education: | □ Less than high school  □ High school graduate  □ Some college  □ Technical school  □ Bachelor's degree or higher |
| Gender: | □ Male  □ Female |
| Number of minor children (under age 18) in your home (enter number): | |
| Income Level: | □ Under $12,000 □ $12,000–17,999 □ $18,000–24,999 □ $25,000–49,999 □ $50,000 or over |
| Race/Ethnicity: | □ American Indian/Alaskan Native □ Asian/Pacific Islander □ Black □ Hispanic □ White |
Web Address: http://www.digitaldividenetwork.org/content/stories/index.cfm?key=233

National Telecommunications and Information Administration. (1997) Falling Through
the Net II: New data on the digital divide. Washington, D.C.
Web Address: http://www.ntia.doc.gov/ntiahome/nt2/falling.html

"Have Nots" in Rural and Urban America

United States Department of Commerce. (2000) Falling Through the Net: Toward
Digital Inclusion Washington, D.C.
Web Addresses: http://www.esa.doc.gov/fttnoo.html
http://www.ntia.doc.gov/ntiahome/fttnoo/chartscontents.html
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