

The Media Audit

NEWS RELEASE

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Research Shows Web Audience Diversifying; Minorities & Retirees Record Huge Increases

Houston - (May 21, 2001) - The web audience in the U.S. is still growing and diversifying with minorities and retirees clicking on in significant numbers, according to The Media Audit, a syndicated survey of both online and traditional media in more than 80 markets.

"What we're seeing in the latest research are the late arrivals," says Bob Jordan, co-chairman of the 30-year-old research firm that produces The Media Audit. "Initially the web audience was populated by the young, affluent and well educated. What we're seeing now is the arrival of the less affluent and less educated. We're also seeing minority participation rising sharply. Senior citizens and homemakers are also joining the web audience at an impressive rate."

The research is based on more than 350,000 phone interviews during 1998, 1999, and 2000. "The research was conducted in the 80+ markets in which we do business," says Jordan, "and although it is not based on a traditional national sample we're confident that the numbers do reflect accurately on what is happening on the web nationally." The Media Audit is accredited by the Media Rating Council.

Although men age 18+ increased by 26% during the past three years, the group declined by more than 5% as a percentage of the total web audience. Women increased their presence on the web by 44% since 1998 and now make up more than 48% of the total web audience.

Forty-four percent of African-American households are now on the web, an increase of 41% during the past three years. Among Hispanic households, 42% are now on the web, an increase of 45%. Asians were quick to embrace the web with over 63% logging on in 1998 and more than 70% in 2000. That figure, 70%, exceeds the comparable figure for white households visiting the web, which is just over 58%.

Almost 25% of retired households are on the web. That represents an increase of 84% since 1998. Households occupied by those age 50+, both retired and not retired, increased their presence on the web from almost 25% to more than 37%, an increase of more than 51% in three years.

More than 43% of homemakers are now on the web and that represents a three-year increase of 80%. Blue-collar workers increased from 29% in 1998 to 44% in 2000, an overall increase of 52%.

Working women increased their presence by 37%, moving up from 46% in 1998 to 63% in 2000. Working mothers recorded very similar increases, moving up from 44% in 1998 to 63% in 2000, an increase of 43%. Single parents increased from 35% to 49%, an increase of 40%.

The new arrivals versus late arrivals to the web are most clearly reflected in the age and affluence classifications.

The young were among the first to access the web and although their numbers are continuing to increase they are declining as a percent of the overall web audience. The same is true of the affluent.

According to Jordan, the numbers point up the ethnic, economic, education and lifestyle diversification that the web audience is experiencing. "The diversification is exciting," says Jordan. "No one knew for certain how the market was going to respond to the Internet. Now we're seeing an incredible democratization of the web audience. Even senior citizens and retirees who may have had no previous familiarity with the personal computer are now on the web. For marketers the new numbers offer exciting possibilities. We're witnessing the roll out of a direct response, interactive medium that will penetrate every segment of the market."

Jordan sees the web eventually being in 80% of the homes in the U.S. He expects Internet access to follow the same history as television. "Initially, TV was only in affluent homes. But as sets became less expensive the market expanded. The same scenario played out when TV went color," he says "and I expect to see a very similar market penetration with the Internet."

One approaching economic change, the introduction of broadband, "will probably create a two-tier market, at least temporarily," says Jordan. "We may have an affluent web audience with broadband and a less affluent audience with dial-up. But, I would expect that by the end of this decade technology and competition will give us one, very diverse and very democratic market."

"A PC with web access will eventually be able to provide more entertainment than television currently does and more data and information than the Library of Congress," says Jordan, "It will be as essential as the telephone is today."

The Media Audit provides both quantitative and qualitative data for media web sites as well as for traditional media. In addition to comprehensive audience profiles, TMA provides trend data on market penetration and market share.

Traditional media - print, broadcast and outdoor - have used TMA data in sales, marketing and management for 30 years. In 1998, the survey started providing data on local media web sites. The surveys now contain more than 400 fields of qualitative information in addition to quantitative measurements of local web audiences.

TMA has more than 1700 clients that include radio and television stations, cable television networks, cable television operators, daily newspapers, alternative weekly newspapers, city and regional magazines, shopper publications, outdoor billboard companies, and direct mail houses. In addition, TMA clients include local Internet web sites for daily newspapers, television and radio stations, alternative newspapers, shoppers and city guides. The client base also includes more than 500 advertising agencies, media buying services and advertisers.

TMA is a product of International Demographics, Inc., a 30-year-old Houston firm that is engaged exclusively in syndicated, multimedia surveys conducted at the local market level.

Note: If you would like to periodically receive market survey data from The Media Audit, please contact Bob Jordan by email (bjordan@thediaaudit.com) and leave your name, title, company affiliation and your mailing and/or email address.

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