



Pew Internet
Pew Internet & American Life Project

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Video calling and video chat

19% of Americans have tried video calls or video chat or teleconferencing online and on cell phones

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Overview

Almost a fifth of American adults – 19% – have tried video calling either online or via their cell phones. That figure comes from adding up the number of adults who said they either had made a video or teleconferencing call online (17% of adults have done that) *or* made video calls on their cell phones (6% of adults have done that). In many cases people have placed video calls on both the internet and their cell phone. Those who answered yes to both questions were only counted once in the overall tally of video callers.

These figures translate into 23% of internet users and 7% of cell phone owners who have participated in video calls, chats, or teleconferences.

These figures were gathered in a survey of 3,001 American adults (age 18 and older) between August 9 and September 13, 2010. The margin of error is +/- 3 percentage points.

This is the first survey of the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project that has covered both online and cell-phone video calls, so there are no prior comparable data to show how much the activity is increasing. In the internet realm, the video-calling has risen modestly from 20% of internet users in April 2009 to 23% of internet users in the summer 2010 survey. On any given day, 4% of internet users are participating in video calls, video chat, or teleconferencing, up from 2% in April 2009.

Some of the key findings in the most recent survey related to online video calls, which are conducted by 23% of the adults who are internet users:

- Video calling online is especially appealing to upscale users. A third of internet users (34%) living in households earning \$75,000 or above have participated in such calls or chats, compared with 18% of those earning less than \$75,000.
- Younger internet users are considerably more likely to conduct video calls. Some 29% of the internet users ages 18-29 have participated in video calls or chats or teleconferences, compared with 15% of internet users age 65 or older.
- Online men are more likely than online women to participate in online video calls (26% vs. 20%).
- Urban internet users (27%) and suburban users (23%) are significantly more likely than rural users (12%) to have participated in video calls, chats, or teleconferences.
- On a typical day, 4% of internet users participate in video calls, chats, or teleconferences. That is a uptick from the Project's April 2009 survey, when 2% of internet users reported participating in online video exchanges.

Some of the key findings in the most recent survey related to video calls on cell phones, which are conducted by 7% of the adults who cell phone owners:

- Cell-owning blacks are more likely than whites to participate in video calls, chats, or teleconferences (10% vs. 5%).
- Those in upper-income households are more likely than others to participate in video calls (10% of cell owners in households earning over \$75,000 participate in such calls, compared to 6% who live in households earning less than \$75,000).

- Cell owners under age 50 are more likely than those over age 50 to have participated in such video calls (8% vs. 4%).

Background

Video calling has become increasingly available as camcorders have spread through the online environment, cameras have been built into smart phones, and as video-chat services like Skype, Google Talk, and Apple iChat have become a feature of the online and smart phone environment. Teleconferencing is also becoming more embedded in the business environment.

This summer, in a nationally-representative telephone survey using landlines and cell phones, the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Project asked for the first time about the prevalence of video calling both online and on cell phones.

The survey of 3,001 adults found that 74% of American adults are internet users and, among those internet users, 23% have participated in video calls, chats, or teleconferences. The survey also found that 85% of American adults have cell phones and, among those cell owners, 7% have used their phones for video calls, chats, or teleconferences. Overall, that means that 19% of Americans have either used the internet or their cell phone to participate in video calls – and in many cases, people have used both technologies for video chats.

Internet-based video calls, chats, teleconferences

In April 2009, the Pew Internet Project asked internet users about video calls and found at the time that 20% of them had participated in such calls. So, there has been a slight uptick in the number of Americans who use the internet for video calling – from 20% in April 2009 to 23% in the summer 2010 survey. The Project's survey also asked people if they had participated in such calls "yesterday" and the surveys show that the percentage of video callers online on any given day rose from 2% in April 2009 to 4% in the summer of 2010.

The following table gives a breakdown of the demographic differences among internet users when it comes to video calling, chatting, or teleconferencing.

Online video calls, chats, and teleconferences

74% of American adults use the internet. This table shows the percentage of internet users in each group who have participated in video calls, chats, or teleconferences on their cell phone.

Total internet users	23%
Gender	
Male	26
Female	20
Race	
White	21
Black	21
Hispanic	28
Age (at time of survey)	
18-29	29
30-49	25
50-64	16
65+	15
Education	
Some high school	12
High school graduate	16
Some college	24
College graduate or more	30
Household income	
< \$30,000	15
\$30,000 - \$49,999	18
\$50,000 - \$74,999	23
\$75,000+	34
Language	
English	23
Spanish	28
Community type	
Rural	12
Suburban	23
Urban	27
Home connection	
Broadband	26
No Broadband	8

Source: Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, August 9 – September 13, 2010 Tracking Survey. N=3,001 adults 18 and older and margin of error is +/- 3 percentage points; n= 2,065 based on internet users and margin of error is +/- 3 percentage points.

Cell phone use for video calls, chats, teleconferences

For the first time, Pew Internet asked cell phone owners about video calls, chats, and teleconferences and found that 7% of cell owners have taken advantage of that feature. Video activities are far less common than other cell features. For instance, in the same survey, Pew Internet found that 74% of cell owners use text messaging features, 39% use their phones to access the internet, 34% use them for email, and 30% use them for instant messaging.

The following table gives a breakdown of the demographic differences among cell owners when it comes to video calling, chatting, or teleconferencing.

Cell phone video calls, chats, and teleconferences

85% of American adults own cell phones. This table shows the percentage of cell phone owners in each group who have participated in video calls, chats, or teleconferences on their cell phone.

Total cell phone owners	7%
Gender	
Male	8
Female	6
Race	
White	5
Black	10
Hispanic	9
Age (at time of survey)	
18-29	9
30-49	8
50-64	4
65+	3
Education	
Some high school	2
High school graduate	4
Some college	6
College graduate or more	11
Household income	
< \$30,000	4
\$30,000 - \$49,999	7
\$50,000 - \$74,999	9
\$75,000+	10
Language	
English	7
Spanish	5
Community type	
Rural	4
Suburban	7
Urban	8
Home connection	
Broadband	8
No Broadband	2

Source: Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, August 9 – September 13, 2010 Tracking Survey. N=3,001 adults 18 and older and margin of error is +/- 3 percentage points; n=2,485 based on cell phone users and margin of error is +/- 3 percentage points.

Methodology

This report is based on the findings of a daily tracking survey on Americans' use of the Internet. The results in this report are based on data from telephone interviews conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates International between August 9 and September 13, 2010, among a sample of 3,001 adults, age 18 and older. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling is plus or minus 2.5 percentage points. For results based Internet users (n=2,065), the margin of sampling error is plus or minus 2.9 percentage points. In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting telephone surveys may introduce some error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

A combination of landline and cellular random digit dial (RDD) samples was used to represent all adults in the continental United States who have access to either a landline or cellular telephone. Both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International, LLC (SSI) according to PSRAI specifications. The landline sample for this survey was designed to generalize to the U.S. adult population and to oversample African-Americans and Hispanics. To achieve these objectives in a cost effective manner, the design uses standard *list-assisted random digit dialing* (RDD) methodology, but telephone numbers are drawn disproportionately from telephone exchanges with higher than average density of African-American and/or Hispanic households. The cellular sample was not list-assisted, but was drawn through a systematic sampling from dedicated wireless 100-blocks and shared service 100-blocks with no directory-listed landline numbers.

New sample was released daily and was kept in the field for at least five days. The sample was released in replicates, which are representative subsamples of the larger population. This ensures that complete call procedures were followed for the entire sample. At least 7 attempts were made to complete an interview at a sampled telephone number. The calls were staggered over times of day and days of the week to maximize the chances of making contact with a potential respondent. Each number received at least one daytime call in an attempt to find someone available. For the landline sample, half of the time interviewers first asked to speak with the youngest adult male currently at home. If no male was at home at the time of the call, interviewers asked to speak with the youngest adult female. For the other half of the contacts interviewers first asked to speak with the youngest adult female currently at home. If no female was available, interviewers asked to speak with the youngest adult male at home. For the cellular sample, interviews were conducted with the person who answered the phone. Interviewers verified that the person was an adult and in a safe place before administering the survey. Cellular sample respondents were offered a post-paid cash incentive for their participation. All interviews completed on any given day were considered to be the final sample for that day.

Disproportionate sampling and non-response in telephone interviews can produce biases in survey-derived estimates. The dataset was weighted in two stages. The first stage of weighting corrected for the disproportionate landline sample design and also accounted for the overlapping landline and cellular sample frames as well as different probabilities of selection associated with the number of adults in the household. The second stage of weighting matched overall sample demographics to population parameters. The demographic weighting parameters are derived from a special analysis of the most recently available Census Bureau's March 2009 Annual Social and Economic Supplement. This analysis produces population parameters for the demographic characteristics of adults age 18 or older. These parameters are then compared with the sample characteristics to construct sample weights. The weights are derived using an iterative technique that simultaneously balances the distribution of all weighting parameters.

Following is the full disposition of all sampled telephone numbers:

Table 1: Sample Disposition

Landline	Cell	
53,160	17,075	Total Numbers Dialed
2,613	441	Non-residential
2,430	32	Computer/Fax
21	---	Cell phone
27,936	6,428	Other not working
4,308	311	Additional projected not working
15,852	9,863	Working numbers
29.8%	57.8%	Working Rate
1,436	104	No Answer / Busy
2,734	2,370	Voice Mail
84	17	Other Non-Contact
11,598	7,372	Contacted numbers
73.2%	74.7%	Contact Rate
1,020	1,027	Callback
8,303	4,597	Refusal
2,275	1,748	Cooperating numbers
19.6%	23.7%	Cooperation Rate
158	60	Language Barrier
---	646	Child's cell phone
2,117	1,042	Eligible numbers
93.1%	59.6%	Eligibility Rate
116	42	Break-off
2,001	1,000	Completes
94.5%	96.0%	Completion Rate
13.6%	17.0%	Response Rate

The disposition reports all of the sampled telephone numbers ever dialed from the original telephone number samples. The response rate estimates the fraction of all eligible respondents in the sample that were ultimately interviewed. At PSRAI it is calculated by taking the product of three component rates:

- **Contact rate** – the proportion of working numbers where a request for interview was made
- **Cooperation rate** – the proportion of contacted numbers where a consent for interview was at least initially obtained, versus those refused
- **Completion rate** – the proportion of initially cooperating and eligible interviews that were completed

Thus the response rate for the landline sample was 13.6 percent. The response rate for the cellular sample was 17.0 percent.

August Health Tracking Survey 2010

Final Topline

9/17/10

Data for August 9 – September 13, 2010

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

Sample: n= 3,001 national adults, age 18 and older, including 1,000 cell phone interviews
Interviewing dates: 08.09.10 – 09.13.10

Margin of error is plus or minus 3 percentage points for results based on Total [n=3,001]

Margin of error is plus or minus 3 percentage points for results based on internet users [n=2,065]

Margin of error is plus or minus 3 percentage points for results based on cell phone users [n=2,485]

Margin of error is plus or minus 3 percentage points for results based on online health seekers [n=1,655]

Q6a Do you use the internet, at least occasionally?

Q6b Do you send or receive email, at least occasionally?¹

	USES INTERNET	DOES NOT USE INTERNET
Current	74	26
May 2010	79	21
January 2010 ⁱ	75	25
December 2009 ⁱⁱ	74	26
September 2009	77	23
April 2009	79	21
December 2008	74	26
November 2008 ⁱⁱⁱ	74	26
August 2008 ^{iv}	75	25
July 2008 ^v	77	23
May 2008 ^{vi}	73	27
April 2008 ^{vii}	73	27
January 2008 ^{viii}	70	30
December 2007 ^{ix}	75	25
September 2007 ^x	73	27
February 2007 ^{xi}	71	29
December 2006 ^{xii}	70	30
November 2006 ^{xiii}	68	32
August 2006 ^{xiv}	70	30
April 2006 ^{xv}	73	27
February 2006 ^{xvi}	73	27
December 2005 ^{xvii}	66	34
September 2005 ^{xviii}	72	28
June 2005 ^{xix}	68	32
February 2005 ^{xx}	67	33
January 2005 ^{xxi}	66	34
Nov 23-30, 2004 ^{xxii}	59	41

¹ Prior to January 2005, question wording was "Do you ever go online to access the Internet or World Wide Web or to send and receive email?"

Q10 As I read the following list of items, please tell me if you happen to have each one, or not. Do you have...
[INSERT ITEMS IN ORDER]?

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
a. A cell phone or a Blackberry or iPhone or other device that is also a cell phone ²				
Current	85	15	*	*
May 2010	82	18	*	0
January 2010 ³	80	20	0	*
December 2009	83	17	0	*
September 2009	84	15	*	*
April 2009	85	15	*	*
April 2008	78	22	*	--
Dec 2007	75	25	*	--
Sept 2007	78	22	*	--
April 2006	73	27	*	--
January 2005 ⁴	66	34	*	--
November 23-30, 2004	65	35	*	--

Q13 Thinking now just about your cell phone... Please tell me if you ever use your cell phone to do any of the following things. Do you ever use your cell phone to [INSERT ITEMS; ALWAYS ASK a-b FIRST in order; RANDOMIZE c-e]?⁵

Based on cell phone users

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
e. Participate in a video call, video chat or teleconference				
Current	7	93	*	*

² Prior to April 2009, item wording was "A cell phone." From April 2009 thru December 2009, item wording was "A cell phone or a Blackberry or iPhone or other device that is also a cell phone." Beginning December 2007, this item was not asked of the cell phone sample, but results shown here reflect Total combined Landline and cell phone sample.

³ In January 2010, item wording was "A cell phone or a Blackberry or iPhone or other handheld device that is also a cell phone."

⁴ Through January 2005, question was not asked as part of a series. Question wording as follows: "Do you happen to have a cell phone, or not?"

⁵ Prior to January 2010, question wording was "Please tell me if you ever use your cell phone or Blackberry or other device to do any of the following things. Do you ever use it to [INSERT ITEM]?" In January 2010, question wording was "Please tell me if you ever use your cell phone or Blackberry or other handheld device to do any of the following things. Do you ever use it to [INSERT ITEMS]?" For January 2010, December 2009, and September 2009, an answer category "Cell phone can't do this" was available as a volunteered option; "No" percentages for those trends reflect combined "No" and "Cell phone can't do this" results.

WEB1 Next... Please tell me if you ever use the internet to do any of the following things. Do you ever use the internet to...? / Did you happen to do this **yesterday**, or not?⁶

Based on all internet users [N=2,065]

	TOTAL HAVE EVER DONE THIS	----- DID YESTERDAY	HAVE NOT DONE THIS	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
Participate in a video call, video chat or teleconference ⁷					
Current	23	4	77	*	0
April 2009	20	2	80	*	0

⁶ Prior to January 2005, question wording was "Please tell me if you ever do any of the following when you go online. Do you ever...?/Did you happen to do this yesterday, or not?" Unless otherwise noted, trends are based on all internet users for that survey.

⁷ In April 2009, item wording was "Participate in a video call or teleconference."

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- ⁱ January 2010 trends based on the Online News survey, conducted December 28, 2009 – January 19, 2010 [N=2,259, including 562 cell phone interviews].
- ⁱⁱ December 2009 trends based on the Fall Tracking “E-Government” survey, conducted November 30 – December 27, 2009 [N=2,258, including 565 cell phone interviews].
- ⁱⁱⁱ November 2008 trends based on the Post-Election 2008 Tracking survey, conducted November 20-December 4, 2008 [N=2,254].
- ^{iv} August 2008 trends based on the August Tracking 2008 survey, conducted August 12-31, 2008 [N=2,251].
- ^v July 2008 trends based on the Personal Networks and Community survey, conducted July 9-August 10, 2008 [N=2,512, including 505 cell phone interviews].
- ^{vi} May 2008 trends based on the Spring Tracking 2008 survey, conducted April 8-May 11, 2008 [N=2,251].
- ^{vii} April 2008 trends based on the Networked Workers survey, conducted March 27-April 14, 2008. Most questions were asked only of full- or part-time workers [N=1,000], but trend results shown here reflect the total sample [N=2,134].
- ^{viii} January 2008 trends based on the Networked Families survey, conducted December 13, 2007-January 13, 2008 [N=2,252].
- ^{ix} December 2007 trends based on the Annual Gadgets survey, conducted October 24-December 2, 2007 [N=2,054, including 500 cell phone interviews].
- ^x September 2007 trends based on the Consumer Choice survey, conducted August 3-September 5, 2007 [N=2,400, oversample of 129 cell phone interviews].
- ^{xi} February 2007 trends based on daily tracking survey conducted February 15-March 7, 2007 [N=2,200].
- ^{xii} December 2006 trends based on daily tracking survey, conducted November 30 - December 30, 2006 [N=2,373].
- ^{xiii} November 2006 trends based on Post-Election tracking survey, conducted Nov. 8-Dec. 4, 2006 [N=2,562]. This includes an RDD sample [N=2,362] and a cell phone only sample [N=200]. Results reflect combined samples, where applicable.
- ^{xiv} August 2006 trends based on daily tracking survey, conducted August 1-31, 2006 [N=2,928].
- ^{xv} April 2006 trends based on the Annual Gadgets survey, conducted Feb. 15-Apr. 6, 2006 [N=4,001].
- ^{xvi} February 2006 trends based on the Exploratorium Survey, conducted Jan. 9-Feb. 6, 2006 [N=2,000].
- ^{xvii} December 2005 trends based on daily tracking survey conducted Nov. 29-Dec. 31, 2005 [N=3,011].
- ^{xviii} September 2005 trends based on daily tracking survey conducted Sept. 14-Oct.13, 2005 [N=2,251].
- ^{xix} June 2005 trends based on the Spyware Survey, conducted May 4-June 7, 2005 [N=2,001].
- ^{xx} February 2005 trends based on daily tracking survey conducted Feb. 21-March 21, 2005 [N=2,201].
- ^{xxi} January 2005 trends based on daily tracking survey conducted Jan. 13-Feb.9, 2005 [N=2,201].
- ^{xxii} November 23-30, 2004 trends based on the November 2004 Activity Tracking Survey, conducted November 23-30, 2004 [N=914].