

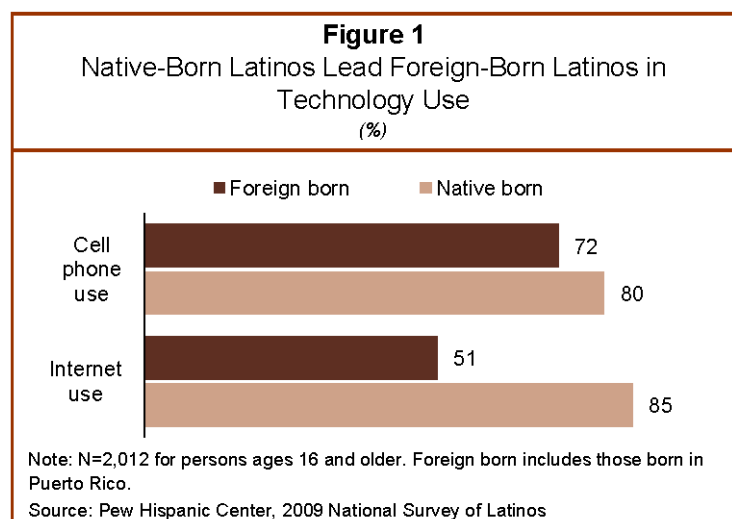
The Latino Digital Divide: The Native Born versus The Foreign Born

Gretchen Livingston
Senior Researcher, Pew Hispanic Center

Technology use among foreign-born Latinos continues to lag significantly behind that of their U.S.-born counterparts, according to a new analysis of survey data from the Pew Hispanic Center. The nativity differences are especially pronounced when it comes to internet use. While 85% of native-born Latinos ages 16 and older go online, only about half (51%) of foreign-born Latinos do so.¹ When it comes to cell phones, 80% of native-born Latinos use one, compared with 72% of the foreign born.

Latinos are the largest minority group and largest immigrant group in the United States. Overall, they comprise 15.4% of the total U.S. population. Among Latinos ages 16 and older, 56% are foreign born and 44% were born in the U.S.²

While rates of technology use among native-born Hispanics are relatively high, technology use for the full population of Hispanics continues to lag behind the use rates of the non-Hispanic



¹ The results shown here are based on telephone surveys of both landlines and cell phones, so they are not directly comparable to findings in earlier Pew Hispanic Center reports on technology use, which were based on landline-only samples ([Fox and Livingston 2007](#), [Livingston, Parker and Fox 2009](#)).

² 'Foreign-born' Latinos are those born outside of the U.S., including those born in Puerto Rico.

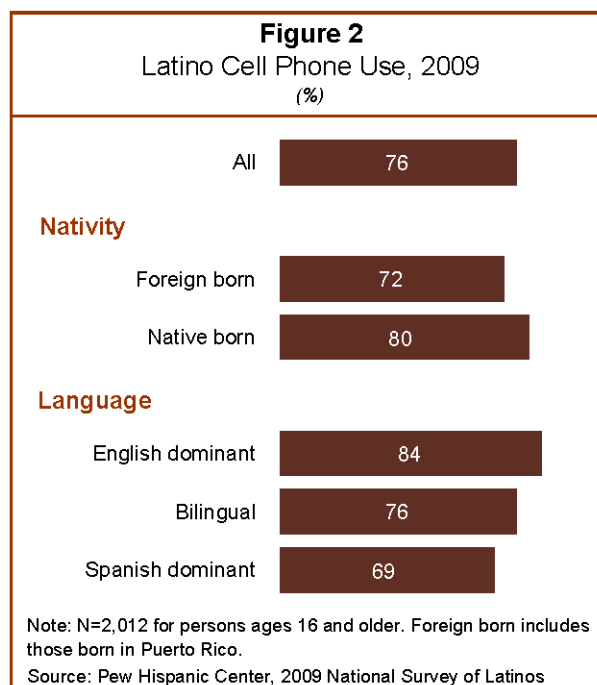
population. When it comes to internet use, some 64% of Latinos ages 18 and older go online,³ compared with 78% of non-Latinos. More than three-fourths (76%) of Latinos use a cell phone, compared with 86% of non-Latinos.⁴

Among youths ages 16 to 25, non-Hispanics are approaching near-universal internet use, but the rate is markedly lower for Hispanics.⁵ Some 95% of non-Hispanics ages 16 and 17 go online, as do 96% of those ages 18 to 25; for Hispanics ages 16 to 25, the internet use rate is 77%. The ethnic gap in cell phone use is less pronounced, though still significant. Some 82% of non-Hispanics ages 16 to 17 use a cell phone, compared with 72% of Hispanics. Among those ages 18 to 25, 94% of non-Hispanics use a cell phone, compared with eight-in-ten (80%) Hispanics.

Differences in Cell Phone Use among Latinos

Just over three-fourths (76%) of Latinos ages 16 and older report using a cell phone. Cell phone use is most common among Latinos ages 25 and younger. Some 78% of Latinos 16 to 19 use a cell, as do 80% of those 20 to 25. Older Latinos are significantly less likely to use a cell—only 74% do so.

Both nativity and generation are important predictors of cell phone use for Latinos. While 72% of Latinos born outside of the U.S. use a cell phone, this share rises to 80% for the native born. And among the native born, the second generation, who have at least one parent born outside of the U.S., are less likely to use cell phones (78%) than third-generation Latinos



³ While data are available for non-Hispanic respondents ages 16 and 17, they cannot easily be combined with the data for ages 18 and older. As such, for aggregate comparisons of Hispanics and non-Hispanics, only ages 18 and older are included, but for age-group analyses, 16- and 17-year olds are included.

⁴ Results for non-Hispanics ages 18 and older are based on the Pew Internet and American Life Project's (PIAL) [2009 Reputation Management Survey](#), which was conducted on cellular as well as landline telephones from August 18 through September 14, 2009 among a nationally representative sample of 2,253 adults.

⁵ Results for non-Hispanics ages 16 and 17 are based on the PIAL [2009 Parent-Teen Cell Phone Survey](#), which was conducted on cellular as well as landline telephones from June 26 through September 24, 2009 among a nationally representative sample of 800 teens ages 12 to 17 and their parents. Race/ethnicity for the teens in this survey is based on the race/ethnicity of the parent respondent.

(84%), who are the native-born children of native-born parents.

Among Latino teens ages 16 to 19, the native-born are more likely to use a cell phone than the foreign born (81% versus 67%), and the third generation is more likely to do so than the second generation (90% vs. 78%). For Latinos ages 20 to 25, the native born are more likely to use cell phones than the foreign born (90% versus 70%), but there is no difference between the second and third generation. There are no significant nativity or generational differences in cell phone use for Latinos ages 26 and older.

Another indicator of assimilation, English proficiency, is also linked to cell phone use among Latinos ages 16 and older.⁶ Some 84% of those who are English dominant use cell phones, compared with 76% of those who are bilingual and 69% of those who use primarily Spanish. The increased likelihood of cell phone use among the English dominant is also evident among Latinos ages 20 to 25 and those ages 26 and older.⁷

Hispanic males ages 16 and older are more likely than their female counterparts to report using a cell phone. While 80% of males use a cell phone, just 72% of females do so. But among Hispanic teens ages 16 to 19, the reverse is true—females are more likely to use a cell phone than their male counterparts (82% versus 73%). There is no significant gender difference in cell use for Hispanics ages 20 to 25, but among Hispanic adults ages 26 and older, males are the dominant cell phone users--80% versus 69%.

⁶ The language proficiency measure aggregates both English and Spanish speaking and reading ability into a three-category variable. See [Between Two Worlds: How Young Latinos Come of Age in America](#) for more details.

⁷ Small cell sizes prevent meaningful analysis of language differences in cell phone use for Latinos ages 16 to 19.

	Ages 16+	Ages 16-19	Ages 20-25	Ages 26+
All	76	78	80	74
Nativity and Generation				
Foreign born	72	67	70	73
Native born	80	81	90	77
Second generation	78	78	88	74
Third generation and higher	84	90	91	81
Primary Language				
English dominant	84	85	90	82
Bilingual	76	77	78	75
Spanish dominant	69	***	72	70
Reads English...				
Very well or well	81	80	86	79
Not well, or doesn't read English at all	67	***	68	68
Reads Spanish...				
Very well or well	75	77	77	75
Not well, or doesn't read Spanish at all	77	79	87	75
Speaks English...				
Very well or well	79	79	85	78
Not well, or doesn't speak English at all	69	***	69	70
Speaks Spanish...				
Very well or well	75	71	78	75
Not well, or doesn't speak Spanish at all	80	93	88	74
Gender				
Male	80	73	83	80
Female	72	82	77	69
High School Graduate				
Yes, or currently enrolled in school	---	80	84	---
No, and not currently enrolled in school	---	***	71	---
Educational Attainment				
Less than high school	---	---	65	64
High school graduate	---	---	81	71
Some college or more	---	---	***	92

Note: N=2,012 for persons ages 16 and older. Foreign born includes those born in Puerto Rico. The symbol *** indicates insufficient number of observations to provide a reliable estimate. The symbol --- indicates data unavailable.
Source: Pew Hispanic Center, 2009 National Survey of Latinos

Differences in Internet Use among Latinos

When it comes to internet use, almost two-thirds (65%) of all Latinos ages 16 and older go online, at least occasionally. Internet use rates differ markedly between teen Latinos, those in their early 20s, and older Latinos. Fully 84% of Latinos ages 16 to 19 report that they email or use the internet. This number drops to just under three-fourths (74%) for Latinos ages 20 to 25. Only six-in-ten (61%) Latinos ages 26 and older use the internet at all.

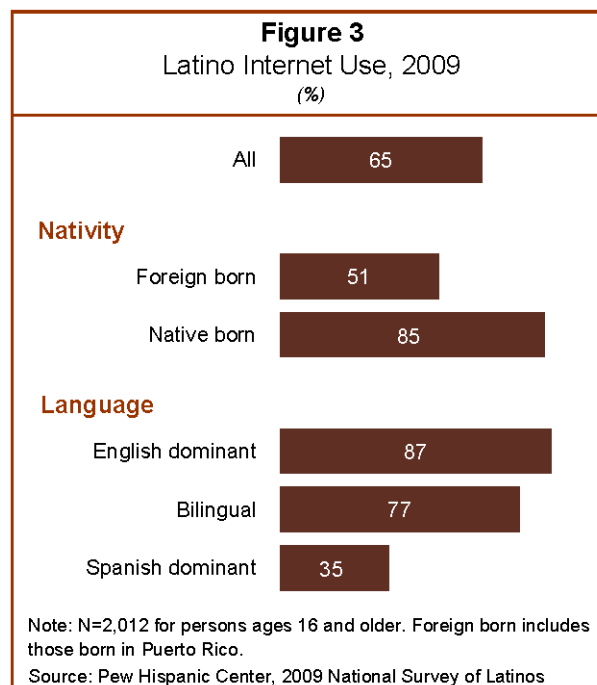
Nativity is closely associated with internet use. Half (51%) of foreign-born Latinos go online, while 85% of Latinos born in the U.S. do so. This internet gap is due in part to the fact that the native born are younger on average than their

foreign-born counterparts. However, this nativity difference in internet use persists within each of the three age groups examined—16- to 19-year olds, 20- to 25-year olds, and those ages 26 years and older--suggesting that there are other explanatory factors as well.

As is the case with cell phone use, there is a significant difference in internet use between second- and third-generation Latino teens. Some 90% of second-generation Latinos ages 16 to 19 use the internet, while almost all (97%) third-generation Latinos ages 16 to 19 go online. Internet use does not vary by generations for older Latinos.

English proficiency is also closely linked with internet use. Some 87% of English-dominant Latinos ages 16 and older go online, compared with 77% of Latinos who are bilingual. This share drops to only 35% for Spanish-dominant Latinos. Within age groups, Spanish-dominant Latinos are much less likely to go online than their English-dominant counterparts ages 20 to 25, or 26 and older.⁸

No gender differences in internet use exist among the full population of Latinos ages 16 and older. However, a closer analysis reveals gender differences within each age group. For the younger age groups, females are more likely than their male counterparts to use the internet—88% versus 80% for Latinos ages 16 to 19; and 79% versus 70% for Latinos ages 20 to 25. However, among Latinos ages 26 and older, men are more likely to report that they use the internet. Almost two-thirds (65%) say as much, compared with 57% of women.



⁸ Small cell sizes prevent meaningful analysis of language differences in cell phone use for Latinos ages 16-19.

	Ages 16+	Ages 16-19	Ages 20-25	Ages 26+
All	65	84	74	61
Nativity and Generation				
Foreign born	51	59	58	50
Native born	85	92	90	81
Second generation	84	90	92	78
Third generation and higher	87	97	88	85
Primary Language				
English dominant	87	94	88	86
Bilingual	77	87	83	74
Spanish dominant	35	***	48	34
Reads English...				
Very well or well	85	91	88	83
Not well, or doesn't read English at all	32	***	46	30
Reads Spanish...				
Very well or well	62	81	74	58
Not well, or doesn't read Spanish at all	75	90	74	73
Speaks English...				
Very well or well	83	89	88	81
Not well, or doesn't speak English at all	34	***	43	33
Speaks Spanish...				
Very well or well	63	81	73	59
Not well, or doesn't speak Spanish at all	74	91	79	68
Gender				
Male	67	80	70	65
Female	63	88	79	57
High School Graduate				
Yes, or currently enrolled in school	---	89	88	---
No, and not currently enrolled in school	---	***	43	---
Educational Attainment				
Less than high school	---	---	47	33
High school graduate	---	---	83	61
Some college or more	---	---	***	94

Note: N=2,012 for persons ages 16 and older. Foreign born includes those born in Puerto Rico. The symbol *** indicates insufficient number of observations to provide a reliable estimate. The symbol --- indicates data unavailable.
Source: Pew Hispanic Center, 2009 National Survey of Latinos

Technology Use among Latinos and Non-Latinos

Latinos continue to lag behind non-Latinos in cell phone use. Just over three-fourths (76%) of Latinos ages 18 and older use cell phones; this number is 86% among non-Latinos.⁹ The same is true with regard to internet use, despite marked gains by Latinos in recent years ([Livingston, Parker and Fox 2009](#)). Some 64% of

⁹ According to the Pew Internet and American Life Project, rates of cell phone use among English-speaking Hispanics are as high as the rates among non-Hispanics ([PIAL 2010](#)). The analysis here, however, focuses on a nationally representative sample of all Hispanics, both English-speaking and Spanish-speaking.

Latinos use the internet, compared with 78% of non-Latinos—a 14 percentage point difference.

In general, age is inversely related to cell phone and internet use, so the relatively youthful profile of Hispanics is a demographic fact that in and of itself buoys the statistics for overall Hispanic technology use. Controlling for age shows a more precise portrait of the ethnic differentials in technology use.

Among those ages 16 and 17, about seven-in-ten (72%) Latinos use a cell phone, compared with eight-in-ten (82%) non-Latinos. Eighty percent of Latinos ages 18 to 25 use a cell phone, and 94% of their non-Hispanic counterparts do the same. The ethnic differential in cell phone use is particularly notable for the oldest ages—non-Latinos ages 55 and older are 25% more likely than their Latino counterparts to use the technology, with 75% of non-Latinos, and 60% of Latinos reporting that they use cell phones.

When it comes to internet use, almost all young non-Hispanics (ages 16 to 25) go online, while just over three-fourths (77%) of their Hispanic counterparts do the same. For people ages 55 and older, 42% of Latinos use the internet, compared with 57% of non-Latinos.

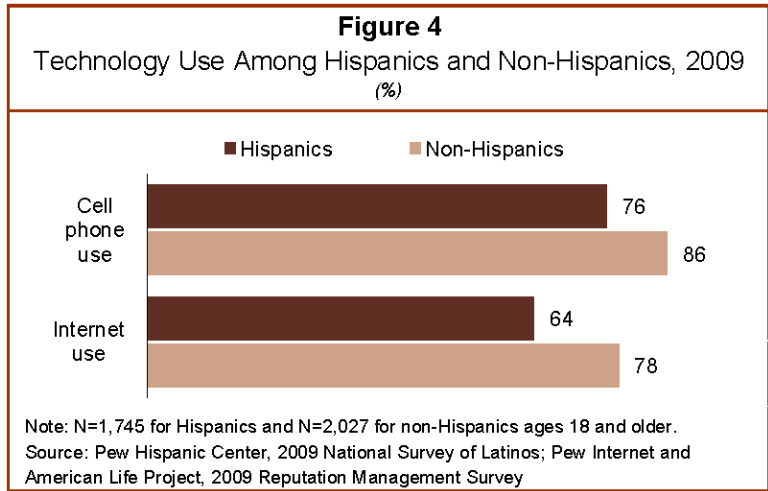


Table 3
Technology Use by Age, Among Hispanics and Non-Hispanics, 2009 (%)

Age	Cell Phone Use		Internet Use	
	Hispanics	Non-Hispanics	Hispanics	Non-Hispanics
16-17	72	82	77	95
18-25	80	94	77	96
26-39	80	92	74	89
40-54	78	89	58	85
55+	60	75	42	57

Note: N=2,012 for Hispanics and N=2,310 for non-Hispanics.
Source: Pew Hispanic Center, 2009 National Survey of Latinos; Pew Internet and American Life Project, 2009 Parent-Teen Cell Phone Survey and 2009 Reputation Management Survey

Methodology

Results for Hispanics are based on the 2009 National Survey of Latinos, which was conducted from August 5 through September 16, 2009 among a randomly selected, nationally representative sample of 2,012 Hispanics ages 16 and older. The survey was conducted in both English and Spanish, on cellular as well as landline telephones. For the total sample, the margin of error is plus or minus 3.7 percentage points. The margin of error for respondents ages 16 to 25 is plus or minus 4.6 percentage points, and the margin of error for respondents ages 26 and older is plus or minus 4.8 percentage points. See [Between Two Worlds: How Young Latinos Come of Age in America](#) for more details.

Results for non-Hispanics ages 16 to 17 are based on the Pew Internet and American Life Project (PIAL) [2009 Parent-Teen Cell Phone Survey](#), which was conducted on cellular as well as landline telephones from June 26 through September 24, 2009 among a nationally representative sample of 800 teens ages 12 to 17 and their parents. The margin of error for the full sample of teens is plus or minus 3.8 percentage points.

Race/ethnicity for the teens in this survey is based on the race/ethnicity of the parent respondent.

Results for non-Hispanics ages 18 and older are based on the PIAL [2009 Reputation Management Survey](#), which was conducted on cellular as well as landline telephones from August 18 through September 14, 2009 among a nationally representative sample of 2,253 adults. The margin of error for the full sample is plus or minus 2.3 percentage points.