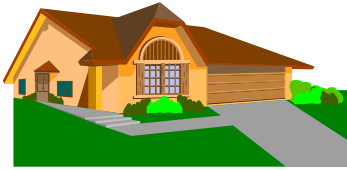


Lit Scan

Facts & Figures from the Colorado Literacy Research Initiative

Volume 3 ♦ Number 9

October 19, 1999



At Risk Children in the "Digital Divide"

Success in both school and work in the new millennium will depend more than ever on "computer literacy"—marketable computing skills, familiarity with Internet resources on the World Wide Web and how to locate them when needed—as well as the abilities to read and write proficiently. While households with school age children (ages 6 to 17) are more likely to have a computer at home, the absence of a computer in the home is associated with several well known at risk factors.

Presence of School Age Children

Households with school age children are more likely to have computers. According to October 1997 data just released by the Census Bureau, 51 percent of households with school age children but only 31 percent of households without such children have a computer.

Family Income

Higher income households are more likely to have computers. More than three out of four households with incomes over \$75,000 but less than one-third of households with incomes between \$25,000 and \$35,000 report having computers.

Highlights

Children are less likely to have access to computers at home if ...

- they are poor, Hispanic, or Black;
- their parents are young, single mothers, or under-educated themselves; or
- they are from large families.



Age of Parents

Children of younger parents are less likely to live in computer-owning households. Half of households headed by adults ages 35 to 54 but only about a quarter of households headed by younger adults –those ages 18 to

Female-Headed Households

Children of single mothers are less likely to live in computer-owning households. Over forty percent of male-headed households but less than 30 percent of female-headed households report having a computer.

Adult Educational Attainment

Children whose parents did not graduate from high school or college are less likely to live in computer-owning households. Almost two-thirds of households headed by college graduates and over a quarter of those headed by high school graduates report having a computer. Less than 11 percent of households headed by high school dropouts report having a computer.

Race/Ethnicity

Hispanic and Black children are less likely to live in computer-owning households. More than two out of five White households, but fewer than one in five Hispanic and Black households report having computers. (Notably, almost half of “Other” racial and ethnic households reported having computers. The largest group subsumed in this “other” category is Asians/Pacific Islanders.

Large Families

Children with more than one or two siblings are less likely to live in computer-owning households. Over half of four to five person households but only a third of households with eight or more people report having a computer.

In short, the same at risk conditions that threaten the ability of some children to learn “the basics” also put them at risk of not keeping up with the rapid technological changes that are revolutionizing the way we live, learn, and work.

SOURCE

U.S. Bureau of the Census, Computer Use and Ownership, Computer Use in the United States: October 1997, Detailed Tables. Table 1: Households With Computers and year of Purchase, by Presence of Children, Family Income, Education, and Age of Householder: October 1997. Available at: <http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/computer/97tabs.html>

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information about this study or other projects of the Colorado Literacy Research Initiative, contact: Keith Curry Lance, Colorado Department of Education, 201 E. Colfax Ave., Suite 309, Denver, CO 80203-1799, (303) 866-6737, fax (303) 866-6940, e-mail klance@sni.net

Table 1. Households With Computers by Presence of Children and Selected At Risk Conditions, October 1997

United States	Computer at home				
	Total Households	Yes		No	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
ALL HOUSEHOLDERS	102,158	37,410	36.6	64,748	63.4
FAMILY INCOME					
Under \$5,000	4,417	729	16.5	3,689	83.5
5,000-9,999	8,369	830	9.9	7,538	90.1
10,000-14,999	8,921	1,149	12.9	7,772	87.1
15,000-19,999	6,414	1,113	17.4	5,300	82.6
20,000-24,999	7,658	1,760	23.0	5,898	77.0
25,000-34,999	13,557	4,295	31.7	9,262	68.3
35,000-49,999	14,305	6,527	45.6	7,778	54.4
50,000-74,999	14,375	8,714	60.6	5,661	39.4
75,000+	11,959	9,072	75.9	2,886	24.1
Not reported	12,184	3,221	26.4	8,963	73.6
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT					
Elementary: 0-8 years	7,740	526	6.8	7,214	93.2
Some H.S.: no diploma	10,251	1,113	10.9	9,138	89.1
H.S. Diploma/GED	32,488	8,360	25.7	24,128	74.3
Some College	26,461	11,482	43.4	14,979	56.6
Bachelors degree or more	25,217	15,928	63.2	9,289	36.8
CHILDREN IN HOUSEHOLD					
With children 6-17 years	28,595	14,573	51.0	14,021	49.0
Without children 6-17 years	73,563	22,836	31.0	50,727	69.0
AGE OF HOUSEHOLDER					
18-24 years	5,599	1,565	28.0	4,034	72.0
25-34 years	19,178	7,677	40.0	11,501	60.0
35-44 years	23,855	11,700	49.0	12,155	51.0
45-54 years	19,391	9,313	48.0	10,078	52.0
55+ years	34,136	7,155	21.0	26,981	79.0
GENDER OF HOUSEHOLDER					
Male	60,467	25,439	42.1	35,028	57.9
Female	41,691	11,970	28.7	29,721	71.3
RACE OF HOUSEHOLDER					
White Not Hispanic	77,455	31,614	40.8	45,842	59.2
Black Not Hispanic	12,240	2,367	19.3	9,873	80.7
Other Not Hispanic	3,658	1,719	47.0	1,939	53.0
Hispanic	8,804	1,710	19.4	7,094	80.6
HOUSEHOLD SIZE					
1 person	26,375	5,271	20.0	21,104	80.0
2-3 people	50,273	18,836	37.5	31,437	62.5
4-5 people	22,066	11,859	53.7	10,207	46.3
6-7 people	2,894	1,259	43.5	1,635	56.5
8 or more people	551	185	33.6	366	66.4

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (Available at:
<http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/computer/report97/tab01.txt>)