



Social Research Laboratory, PO Box 15301, Flagstaff, AZ 86011 (520) 523-1515

Embargoed Until:
Friday, March 23, 2000

For More Information:
Fred Solop, Director
Social Research Laboratory
(520) 523-3135 / (520) 606-5120

Phoebe Morgan
Department of Criminal Justice
(520) 523-8245

**INTERNET USAGE RATES SOAR;
INTERNET VOTING SUPPORTED IN ARIZONA;
FACE-TO-FACE INTERACTIONS STILL PREFERRED**

Most Arizonans regularly use the Internet, according to a recent *Grand Canyon State Poll* telephone survey. In fact, Internet usage rates have increased significantly over the last year. The number of people who support using the Internet to cast a vote in elections has also increased in the last year. Most people, however, still think face-to-face interactions are more satisfying than electronic interactions, including e-mail and chat group conversations.

The *Grand Canyon State Poll* was conducted by the Social Research Laboratory at Northern Arizona University, from February 23 to March 9, 2001. A random sample of 505 Arizona residents were asked questions about computer and internet use. A sample of this size is associated with a margin of error of +/- 4.5 percent at a 95 percent confidence level.

INTERNET USE INCREASES IN ARIZONA

Computers and the Internet are part of the lives of most Arizonans. Three quarters of Arizonans say they use a computer in their every day lives, with 57 percent reporting they use a computer frequently.

Two-thirds of all Arizonans are using the Internet today. Ten percent more people in Arizona are using the Internet today compared to last year, as recorded in a February 2000 *Grand Canyon State Poll*. Fifty-nine percent of Arizonans said they were using the Internet in the 2000 survey compared to 68 percent of Arizonans using the Internet today.

SUPPORT FOR INTERNET VOTING

An indication of how important the Internet has become in everyday life is the strong support for allowing people the option of voting in public elections using the Internet. Fifty-nine percent of Arizonans either strongly support or somewhat support allowing people this option. One quarter of Arizonans (25%) say they would be more likely to vote in elections if Internet voting was an available option.

Arizona hosted the first binding Internet election in the world when Arizona Democrats allowed people to vote in their 2000 primary using the Internet. Fred Solop, director of the *Grand Canyon State Poll* and an organizing committee member of the National Science Foundation's recent Internet Voting Task Force, noted, "Following the Florida vote count, attention has focused on how to increase participation in elections while making elections more accountable. Internet voting has surfaced as a popular option. While the technology does not currently allow for a large-scale Internet election to take place, our nation is rapidly moving

toward the day when we will be able to vote in any election from the comfort of our homes.”

PEOPLE STILL MORE COMFORTABLE FACE-TO-FACE

Although computers and the Internet are popular among most Arizonans, survey findings suggest that the public is not embracing all the possibilities of living in the digital world. One quarter of Arizonans do not use computers at all. Regardless of whether or not they have a computer, or how often they access the Internet, three quarters of the state population (77%) believe electronic interactions can lead to less-social behavior. Of those that access the Internet, eighty-seven percent find face-to-face interactions are more satisfying than communicating with people electronically using e-mail or Internet chat lines. Two-out-of-three people (67%) prefer resolving disagreements face-to-face rather than using electronic interactions.

Dr. Phoebe Morgan is an NAU professor of criminal justice and researcher of digital culture. Looking at the results of this study, Dr. Morgan commented: “Clearly the Internet is no longer the province of a few scientists and computer geeks; it is an integral part of the Arizonan lifestyle. While the role of electronic communications in social interaction is increasing, when given the choice, Arizonans prefer to connect the ‘old fashioned’ way.”



March 23, 2001

**GRAND CANYON STATE POLL
BACKGROUND MEMO**

3-NAU015/Spring 2001

The *Grand Canyon State Poll* was conducted between February 23 and March 9, 2001. A random sample of 505 Arizona residents were asked questions regarding computer and internet use. Survey questions addressed to Arizona residents are subject to a sampling error of +/-4.5 percent at a 95 percent confidence level. Sampling error is the probable difference in results between interviewing everyone in the population versus a scientific sample taken from the population. Sampling error does not take into account additional sources of error inherent in any study of public opinion. The data referred to in this release are presented below.

First, I'd like to ask you some questions about electronic interactions. By electronic interactions, I mean using the World Wide Web, email, or Internet chat lines to interact with other people. Please tell me if you agree or disagree with each statement. [Is that strongly (agree/disagree) or somewhat (agree/disagree)?]

Face-to-face interactions are more satisfying than electronic interactions.

| | Total | Internet Users |
|---------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly agree | 58% | 60% |
| Somewhat agree | 25% | 27% |
| Somewhat disagree | 9% | 10% |
| Strongly disagree | 1% | 1% |
| Don't know/not sure | 6% | 3% |

N=502 N=342

Disagreements are easier to resolve with electronic interactions than with face-to-face interactions.

| | % |
|---------------------|----------|
| Strongly agree | 9% |
| Somewhat agree | 15% |
| Somewhat disagree | 35% |
| Strongly disagree | 32% |
| Don't know/not sure | 9% |

N=501

Too much electronic interaction leads to less-social behavior.

| | % |
|----------------|----------|
| Strongly agree | 44% |

| | | |
|---------------------|-----|-------|
| Somewhat agree | 33% | N=500 |
| Somewhat disagree | 14% | |
| Strongly disagree | 3% | |
| Don't know/not sure | 6% | |

Do you support or oppose giving people the option to vote using the Internet? [Is that strongly (support/oppose) or somewhat (support/oppose)]?

| | | |
|---------------------|----------|-------|
| | % | N=503 |
| Strongly support | 37% | |
| Somewhat support | 22% | |
| Somewhat oppose | 15% | |
| Strongly oppose | 20% | |
| Don't know/not sure | 6% | |

If Internet voting was available in the next statewide election, would you be more likely to vote, less likely to vote, or would it not make a difference?

| | | |
|----------------------------|----------|-------|
| | % | N=501 |
| More likely to vote | 25% | |
| Less likely to vote | 7% | |
| Wouldn't make a difference | 67% | |
| Don't know/not sure | 1% | |

In an average week, do you use a computer frequently, sometimes, or not at all?

| | | |
|---------------------|----------|-------|
| | % | N=501 |
| Frequently | 57% | |
| Sometimes | 18% | |
| Not at all | 25% | |
| Don't know/not sure | -- | |

In an average week, do you use the Internet (for web browsing, email, or chat groups) frequently, sometimes, or not at all?

| | % | |
|-------------------------------|-----|-------|
| Frequently | 44% | N=341 |
| Sometimes | 24% | |
| Not at all/Don't use Internet | 32% | |

In an average week, do you use an ATM or Automatic Bank Machine frequently, sometimes, or not at all?

| | % | |
|---------------------|-----|-------|
| Frequently | 29% | N=501 |
| Sometimes | 41% | |
| Not at all | 30% | |
| Don't know/not sure | -- | |