

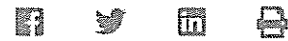


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Racial and ethnic differences in how people use mobile technology

BY MONICA ANDERSON ([HTTP://WWW.PEWRESEARCH.ORG/STAFF/MONICA-ANDERSON](http://www.pewresearch.org/staff/monica-anderson))

For many years, researchers have studied the “digital divide” by examining the gap between those who have access to digital technology and those who don’t. But as these gaps have narrowed over time, another set of contrasts has emerged when it comes to the ways different demographic groups use technology.

(http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/04/30/racial-and-ethnic-differences-in-how-people-use-mobile-technology/ft_15-04-30_smartphonerace/) Although whites, blacks and Hispanics have similar rates of smartphone ownership, minorities tend to rely more heavily on their phone for internet access, according to Pew Research Center’s recent report on smartphone adoption (<http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/04/01/us-smartphone-use-in-2015/>). Some 13% of Hispanics and 12% of blacks are smartphone-dependent, meaning they don’t have a broadband connection at home and have few options for going online other than their cellphone. In comparison, only 4% of white smartphone owners rely heavily on their cellphone for online access.

Blacks and Hispanics reach for their phones more often than whites when it comes to looking up information about health conditions, jobs or educational content. However, there is little difference between these groups in using phones for online banking or getting information about real estate or government services.

Nearly three-quarters (73%) of Hispanic smartphone owners have used their phone in the past year to research a health condition, which is similar to the share for blacks. But whites are less likely to say they’ve used a phone to seek out health information.

Black and Hispanic smartphone owners are especially likely to use their phone for job-related activities – more than half (55%) used their phone in the past year to find job information, compared with about a third (37%) of whites. Many smartphone owners are also turning to mobile for applying for jobs, and again, blacks and Hispanics are more than twice as likely as white smartphone owners to use their phone to submit a job application.

Mobile education is a bigger part of the smartphone experience for Hispanics – 45% of Hispanic smartphone owners have used their mobile device to take an online class or look up educational content in the past year. That share is 32% for blacks and only 26% for whites.

Although smartphone owners were not asked *why* they reach for their phone to access certain information,

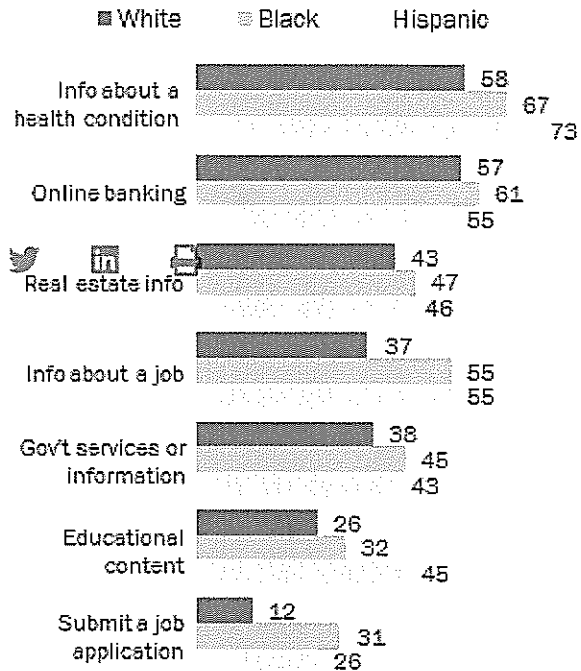
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services, some advocacy groups suggest that mobile technology may help reduce minority health disparities (<http://jointcenter.org/research/minorities-mobile-broadband-and-management-chronic-diseases>) by enabling access to information that would not necessarily be readily available to them, while additional research points to how important digital technology is in the job search process for blacks (<http://jointcenter.org/research/broadband-and-jobs-african-americans-rely-heavily-mobile-access-and-social-networking-job>).

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African Americans and Latinos Rely Heavily on Smartphones for Health Info, Educational Content, Job Seeking

% of U.S. adult smartphone owners in each group who have used their phone in the past year to do/seek ...



Pew Research Center American Trends Panel survey, Oct. 3-27, 2014. Blacks and whites include only non-Hispanics.

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Monica Anderson (<http://www.pewresearch.org/staff/monica-anderson>) is a research associate focusing on internet and technology at Pew Research Center.

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