

Logged in BY ROBERT DAVID SULLIVAN

THE CENSUS BUREAU reported in June that the number of Americans over the age of 3 living in households with Internet access inched past the two-thirds mark, to 67.1 percent, as of November 2007. But as the map below shows, regional differences persisted: In New Hampshire, having access to the Web was almost as common as having a car, but in Mississippi barely half the population could log online in their own homes. (Massachusetts ranked third overall, behind New Hampshire and Alaska.)

In general, Internet access tracks closely with educational attainment, as measured by the number of residents in a state with college degrees (Massachusetts is first in that category, at 37.9 percent), but there are a few exceptions. Alaska, Maine, and Wisconsin have above-average Internet access despite lower-than-average shares of college grads. New York, which ranks 9th in education attainment, is a middling 28th in Internet access.

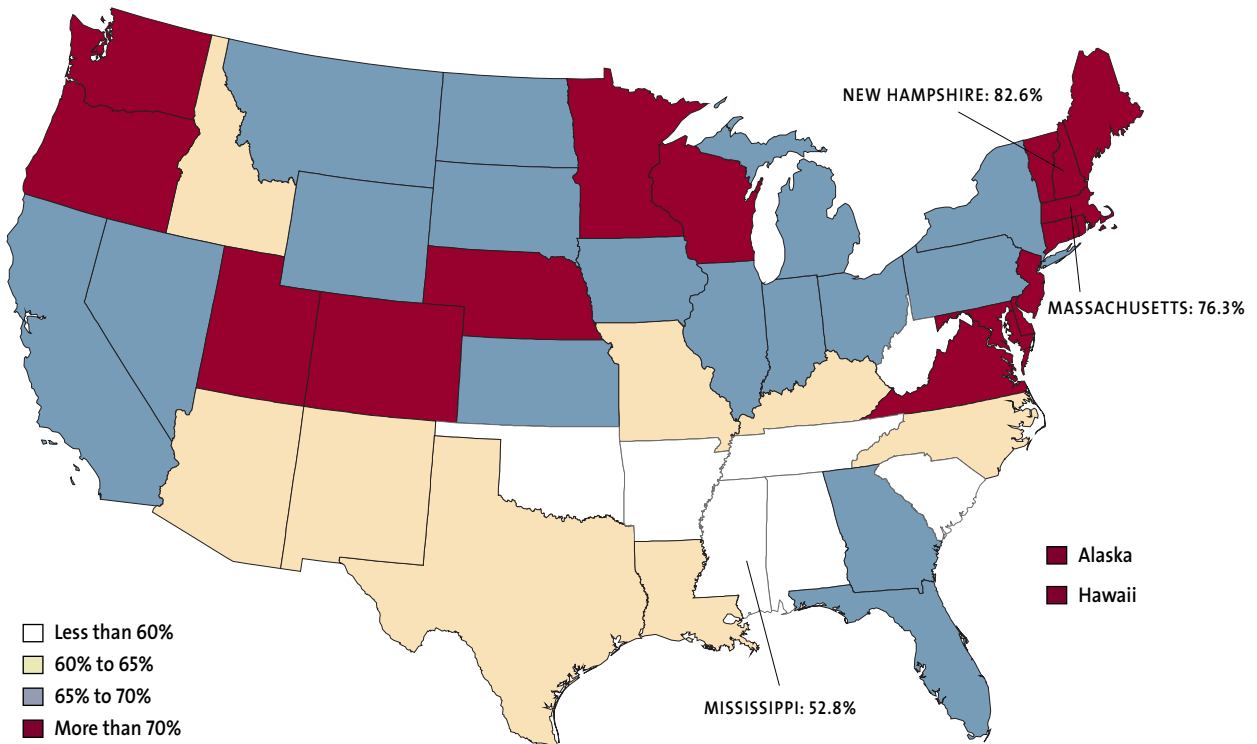
Though its data is not broken down by state, the Pew Research Center's Internet and American Life Project has

more recent information on who's online. Its December 2008 survey found that Internet use ranged from 41 percent among adults over 65 to a near-universal 87 percent among those aged 18 to 29. Adults from households making more than \$75,000 a year had a 94 percent net participation rate, far above the 57 percent in households making less than \$30,000.

There was no discernible gender gap (75 percent of women and 73 percent of men were Internet users), but racial differences persist: 77 percent of non-Hispanic whites were online, versus 64 percent of African-Americans and 58 percent of Hispanics. And despite the Internet's potential to eliminate geographic isolation, it is used by only 63 percent of rural residents, compared with 71 percent of city dwellers and 74 percent of suburbanites.

The Pew Center delivered more news about the Internet in May, and it wasn't good for newspapers. It found that on any given day, 9 percent of people online visited classified ad sites, up from only 4 percent in 2005. **CW**

PERCENTAGE OF CITIZENS LIVING IN HOMES WITH INTERNET ACCESS, 2007



Source: US Census Bureau (www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/computer/2007.html).

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