Technology Adoption among Hispanics in Nevada

April 11, 2012

Broadband has been called the "great equalizer," granting access to tools, information, and job opportunities to Nevadans of every race, ethnicity, and income status.[1] However, simply expanding broadband availability does not necessarily mean that everyone is going to make use of these opportunities – not only do Nevadans need available broadband service, they also must be able to afford it and understand the value that home broadband service can provide for them.

These issues are important to one of Nevada's fastest-growing populations - Hispanic residents. As part of its 2011 Residential Technology Assessment, Connect Nevada examined the unique technology adoption trends and barriers to adoption by Hispanic residents across the state. Connect Nevada has found that despite near-ubiquitous broadband availability, many Nevadans of Hispanic or Latino descent do not subscribe to home broadband service, and they report a host of reasons for not subscribing. Hispanic Nevadans are using broadband as an engine for economic growth, but for the state to have a fully-connected population, the broadband gaps in the Hispanic population will need to close and the reasons for not subscribing will need to be addressed.

Technology Adoption and Usage

Residents of Hispanic or Latino descent represent more than one-quarter (26%) of Nevada's population, and that percentage is expected to grow – by 2030, the Nevada State Demographer's Office projects that more than 1.1 million Nevadans will be of Hispanic origin, constituting over one in three Nevadans.[2] This means that connecting the Hispanic community to broadband is not only an important issue for today, but also for Nevada's future.

Among the findings from this survey:

- Across the state of Nevada, only **58% of Hispanic Nevadans** subscribe to home broadband service, meaning that approximately **116,000 adults** of Hispanic origin do not have home broadband service.

- Hispanic adults in Nevada are **significantly more likely** to use the Internet to search for jobs.

- In Nevada, **55% of Hispanic adults** use a mobile device to access the Internet, nearly equal to the number who subscribe to home broadband service. Hispanic Nevadans are more likely to use mobile broadband than the state average.

- **Two out of five Hispanic adults** in Nevada say that cost is their largest hurdle to broadband adoption. Yet Hispanic Nevadans are significantly less likely to cite a perceived lack of relevance as a barrier to broadband adoption.

Despite representing such a large part of Nevada's population, Hispanic adults are significantly less likely to adopt broadband than non-Hispanic Nevadans. Only 58% of Nevada adults of Hispanic origin subscribe to broadband, compared to 70% of non-Hispanic adults (Table 1). In addition, only 78% of Hispanic Nevadans own a computer, compared to 85% of non-Hispanic adults. This equates to over 116,000 Hispanic adults who do not have home broadband service, approximately 63,000 of whom do not own a home computer.

Table 1.
Nevada Technology Adoption

	Computer Ownership	Broadband Adoption
Nevada Average	**83%**	**67%**
Hispanic Adults	78%	58%
Non-Hispanic Adults	85%	70%

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1 http://transition.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Business/2011/db0120/DOC-304191A1.pdf
2 http://nvdemography.org/data-and-publications/age-sex-race-and-hispanic-origin-estimates-and-projections/

Despite this lower broadband adoption rate, Hispanic Nevadans who use the Internet do so for important tasks (Table 2). More than four out of five Hispanic Internet users in Nevada (81%) go online to communicate via e-mail or similar ways of messaging; while this is the most popular application among Nevadans of Hispanic or Latino descent, they still lag behind the non-Hispanic population. Hispanic Nevadans are also significantly less likely to research and purchase goods and services and interact with government offices or elected officials online than non-Hispanic Internet users.

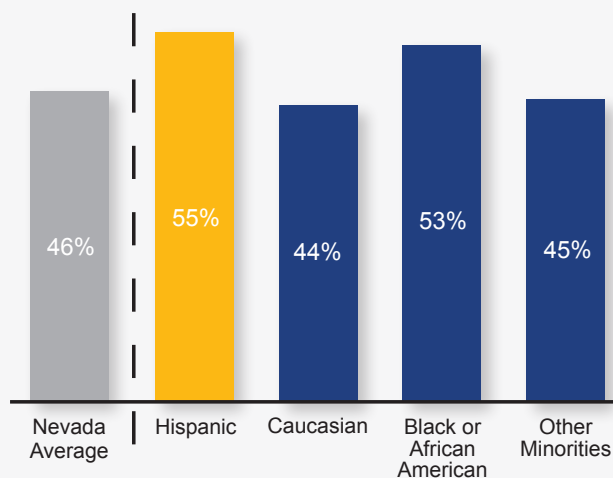**Table 2.**
Online Activities of Nevada Internet Users

Which of the following activities do you conduct using the Internet?	Nevada Average	Hispanic Adults	Non-Hispanic Adults
Communicating through e-mail or other ways of sending messages	89%	81%	92%
Researching or purchasing goods or services	77%	69%	80%
Exploring or participating in hobbies or personal interests	74%	71%	75%
Online banking or paying bills	72%	71%	73%
Reading online newspapers or other news sources	66%	64%	67%
Searching for medical information, or communicating with healthcare professionals like doctors or insurance offices	50%	48%	51%
Searching or applying for jobs	45%	57%	43%
Taking online classes or conducting research for schoolwork	44%	49%	44%
Interacting with government offices or elected officials	31%	22%	33%

In contrast, Hispanic Internet users in Nevada are significantly more likely to go online to find and apply for jobs than non-Hispanic Nevadans. Statewide, approximately 128,000 Hispanic adults go online to find new or better jobs. The Internet is also supporting entrepreneurship in the Hispanic community, as approximately 14,000 Hispanic Nevada adults (approximately 9% of the employed Hispanic population) use the Internet to operate a business from their home. In addition, nearly one in ten Hispanic broadband subscribers (9%, representing approximately 15,000 Hispanic Nevadans) say they began subscribing to broadband to conduct business online.

Mobile Broadband Usage

One area where Hispanic Nevadans pull ahead of the state average is in the use of mobile devices to access the Internet, a finding that is in line with national research by The Hispanic Institute.[3] Across Nevada, 55% of Hispanic adults use a mobile device to access the Internet, compared to the statewide average of 46% (Figure 1). This equates to approximately 154,000 Hispanic adults who use their mobile devices for various online activities, nearly the same number as those who subscribe to home broadband service. In fact, more than one in ten Hispanic adults in Nevada (12%) use mobile broadband instead of subscribing to home broadband service, a number significantly higher than the statewide average. This suggests that mobile broadband is being seen as an alternative to home broadband service for Hispanic adults in Nevada.

Figure 1.
Mobile Usage by Race/Ethnicity

Nevada Average	Hispanic	Caucasian	Black or African American	Other Minorities
46%	55%	44%	53%	45%

3 http://thehispanicinstitute.net/files/u2/Hispanics_and_Broadband_Access.pdf

Barriers to Broadband Adoption

The single largest barrier to broadband adoption among Nevadans of Hispanic origin is cost (Table 3). Two out of five Hispanic Nevadans cite cost as a barrier to adopting broadband. This equates to approximately 60,000 Hispanic adults who cite the monthly cost of broadband, activation and installation fees, or the cost of a computer itself to be the main reason why they do not subscribe to home broadband service.

Table 3.
Main Barriers to Home Broadband Adoption

	Nevada Average	Hispanic Adults	Non-Hispanic Adults
Cost	31%	40%	29%
The monthly cost of service is too expensive	19%	24%	17%
The cost of a computer is too expensive	8%	9%	8%
The activation and installation fees are too expensive	4%	7%	4%
Digital Literacy	19%	22%	18%
Broadband/Internet is too complicated	5%	8%	5%
Concerns about fraud or identity theft	5%	5%	5%
I don't know what broadband is or anything about it	4%	5%	3%
I don't feel comfortable using a computer	5%	4%	5%
Relevance	27%	17%	29%
Availability	3%	2%	4%
Other	11%	11%	12%
Don't Know/Refused	9%	8%	8%

Digital literacy is the next most-cited barrier among Hispanic adults of Nevada. Statewide, approximately 33,000 Hispanic adults do not feel comfortable enough with computers or broadband to subscribe. On the other hand, Hispanic Nevadans are significantly less likely to say that they do not see the relevance of broadband to their lives, suggesting that a large share of Hispanic adults in Nevada recognize that broadband can provide a world of opportunities.

Conclusion

Despite many Hispanic Nevadans recognizing the value and importance of broadband service, a large share of Nevada's Hispanic community still does not subscribe. Still, despite the lower broadband adoption rate in Nevada's Hispanic community, broadband is helping boost the economy of Nevada's Hispanic residents by providing opportunities to find and apply for jobs, as well as opportunities to start home-based businesses.

Yet the cost of broadband (or the hardware needed to access it) and a lack of digital literacy are preventing many Hispanic Nevadans from subscribing. Therefore, programs in both English and Spanish that focus on how to use broadband, combined with price incentives and lower-cost Internet service to underserved populations, can have a particularly strong impact on this growing population. As the Hispanic population is expected to grow in the upcoming years, understanding and adapting to these unique broadband adoption challenges can help Nevada fulfill its goal of making broadband available and accessible to all.

Methodology and Definitions

Between June 29 and August 16, 2011, Connect Nevada conducted random digital dial telephone surveys of 1,202 adults across the state. Connect Nevada also oversampled an additional 1,830 Nevada adults who were specifically selected because they did not subscribe to home broadband service. This oversample of non-adopters was conducted separately to further explore barriers to broadband adoption and their willingness to subscribe to home broadband service in the future.

Of the 1,202 respondents randomly contacted statewide, 202 were called on their cellular phones, and 1,000 were contacted via landline telephone. The results of this survey have been compared to similar surveys that Connected Nation conducted across ten states in 2011 (Alaska, Florida, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas). Altogether, Connected Nation surveyed 27,086 residents across these ten states in 2011 for this study.

"Technology Adoption" is defined as follows:
1. Broadband adopters are defined as respondents who answered "yes" when asked "Do you subscribe to the Internet at home?" and answered "broadband or high speed Internet service" when asked "Which of the following describe the type of Internet service you have at home?"
2. Computer owners are defined as respondents who answered "yes" when asked "Does your household have a computer?"
3. Mobile broadband users are defined as respondents who met any of the following criteria:
   - Responded that they use a cell phone to access the Internet while at home when asked "When you are at your home, which of the following devices do you use to access the Internet?" or
   - When asked "At what locations outside of your own home do you use the Internet?" responded "Through a cell phone or handheld device" or
   - Responded "yes" when asked "On your laptop or tablet computer, do you subscribe to a mobile wireless service that allows you to access the Internet through a cellular network?" or
   - Responded "yes" when asked "On your cell phone, do you subscribe to a plan that allows you to access the Internet?" and reported that they access the Internet via their cell phone when asked "How often, if ever, do you go online using your cell phone?"

When respondents were asked about their race and ethnicity, multiple responses were allowed, so the sum may not equal the total sample size.

Multiple attempts were made to each working telephone number on different days of the week and at different times of the day to increase the likelihood of contacting a potential respondent. To ensure a representative sample, quotas were set by age, gender, and county of residence (rural or non-rural), and the results were weighted to coincide with 2010 United States Census population figures. For the purpose of setting quotas and weighting, "rural" respondents are defined as living in a county that is not a part of a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), as designated by the United States Office of Management and Budget. Weighting and design consultation were provided by Lucidity Research.

Surveys were conducted by Thoroughbred Research Group and were offered in both English and Spanish. On average, the survey took approximately 12 minutes to complete after the respondent agreed to participate. Based on the effective sample size, the margin of error = ± 3.24% at a 95% level of confidence for the statewide survey and ± 2.78% at a 95% level of confidence for the oversample non-adopter survey. As with any survey, question wording and the practical challenges of data collection may introduce an element of error or bias that is not reflected in this margin of error.

These surveys were conducted as part of the State Broadband Initiative (SBI) grant program, funded by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). The SBI grant program was created by the Broadband Data Improvement Act (BDIA), unanimously passed by Congress in 2008 and funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) in 2009. To learn more about Connect Nevada and its programs please visit www.connectnv.org or e-mail us at info@connectnv.org.

	n All Respondents	*n* Internet users	*n* Mobile users	*n* Non-adopters
Total Respondents	1,202	984	496	1,830

Which of the following race (or races) do you consider yourself to be?
And are you, yourself, of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin or descent?

White	870	732	342	1,184
Black or African American	79	59	42	140
Hispanic	130	101	66	261
Other Race	90	71	38	121
All Non-Hispanic	997	828	403	1,406
Don't know/refused	75	55	27	163