



Young Adults, Mobile Phones and Social Media: Technology and the Transition to adulthood

Health, Safety & Well-Being of Young Adults
Symposium
National Academies
May 7, 2013

Amanda Lenhart, Senior Researcher, Director of
Teens & Technology
Pew Research Center

About Pew Internet / Pew Research

- Part of the Pew Research Center, a non-partisan “fact tank” in Washington, DC
- Studies how people use digital technologies
- Does not promote specific technologies or make policy recommendations
- Data for this talk is from nationally representative telephone surveys of U.S. adults and teens (on landlines and cell phones)

12-minute presentation version: We're the public opinion, “just the facts”, non-advocacy, non-policy part of the Pew universe

Technology inflects multiple aspects of late adolescence

- Moved from a stationary slow connectivity marked by one way information flows to mobile, social just-in-time access to people and places
- Mobile connectivity changes access (and expectations of access) to people and information
- Social media is the seamless addition to young adults' social lives
- Mobile and Social = Geo-location
- More opportunities to have voice be heard, but also public visibility and persistence of missteps

Internet Use in the U.S. in 2000

46% of US adults used the internet

5% had home broadband connections

53% owned a cell phone

0% connected to internet wirelessly

0% used social network sites

Information flowed mainly one way

Information consumption was a stationary activity

**Slow, stationary connections
built around a desktop
computer**



The Internet in 2012

82% of US adults use the internet

2/3 have broadband at home

88% have a cell phone; 46% are smartphone users

19% have a tablet computer

19% have an e-reader

2/3 are wireless internet users

65% of online adults use SNS

Mobile devices have fundamentally changed the relationship between information, time and space



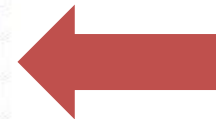
Technology inflects multiple aspects of late adolescence

- Moved from a stationary slow connectivity marked by one way information flows to mobile, social just-in-time access to people and places
- Mobile connectivity changes access (and expectations of access) to people and information
- Social media is the seamless addition to young adults' social lives
- Mobile + Social + Geo-location =
- More opportunities to have voice be heard, but also public visibility and persistence of missteps

Cell Phone and Smartphone Ownership

% of American adults within each group who own a cell phone and the % who own a smartphone

		Cell Phone	Smartphone
All adults (n=2,261)		87%	45%
a	Men (n=1,054)	87	48 ^b
b	Women (n=1,207)	86	42
Race/ethnicity			
a	White, Non-Hispanic (n=1,632)	87	43
b	Black, Non-Hispanic (n=249)	86	48
c	Hispanic (n=211)	83	44
Age			
a	18-29 (n=335)	93 ^{cd}	65 ^{cd}
b	30-49 (n=585)	93 ^{cd}	59 ^{cd}
c	50-64 (n=689)	85 ^d	32 ^d
d	65+ (n=610)	68	12
Education attainment			
a	No high school diploma (n=209)	71	22
b	High school grad (n=662)	86 ^a	38 ^a
c	Some College (n=598)	89 ^a	49 ^{ab}
d	College + (n=770)	92 ^{ab}	61 ^{abc}
Household income			
a	Less than \$30,000/yr (n=645)	82	31
b	\$30,000-\$49,999 (n=396)	88 ^a	46 ^a
c	\$50,000-\$74,999 (n=316)	91 ^a	56 ^{ab}
d	\$75,000+ (n=515)	94 ^{ab}	68 ^{abc}
Urbanity			
a	Urban (n=695)	87	49 ^c
b	Suburban (n=1,115)	85	46 ^c
c	Rural (n=451)	88	36



Source: Pew Internet Post-Election Survey, November 14 – December 09, 2012. N=2,261 adults ages 18+. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish and on landline and cell phones. Margin of error is +/- 2.3 percentage points for results based on all adults.

Note: Columns marked with a superscript letter (^a) or another letter indicate a statistically significant difference between that row and the row designated by that superscript letter. Statistical significance is determined inside the specific section covering each demographic trait.

Texting

% of cell phone owners who use their phone to send or receive text messages

All cell phone owners (n=2,581)	80%
Men (n=1,163)	81
Women (n=1,418)	80
Age	
18-29 (n=451)	97***
30-49 (n=770)	92**
50-64 (n=710)	72*
65+ (n=599)	34
Race/ethnicity	
White, Non-Hispanic (n=1,586)	79
Black, Non-Hispanic (n=434)	80
Hispanic (n=351)	85
Annual household income	
Less than \$30,000/yr (n=690)	78
\$30,000-\$49,999 (n=456)	78
\$50,000-\$74,999 (n=345)	89**
\$75,000+ (n=646)	90**
Education level	
No high school diploma (n=187)	65
High school grad (n=681)	75
Some College (n=670)	85**
College + (n=1,020)	90**



Source: Pew Research Center Survey, August 7-September 1, 2011. Interviews were conducted with cell phone owners (1,206 cell calls and 1,375 landline calls). * indicates statistically significant difference from the overall population.

41.5 messages exchanged by median adults each day.

Texting remains much more popular among young adults.

109.5 messages exchanged each day by young adults aged 18-24.

Accessing the internet

% of cell phone owners who use their phone to access the internet

All cell phone owners (n=2,581)	56%
Men (n=1,163)	57
Women (n=1,418)	56
Age	
18-29 (n=451)	77***
30-49 (n=770)	69**
50-64 (n=710)	40*
65+ (n=599)	13
Race/ethnicity	
White, Non-Hispanic (n=1,586)	52
Black, Non-Hispanic (n=434)	60*
Hispanic (n=351)	66*
Annual household income	
Less than \$30,000/yr (n=690)	52
\$30,000-\$49,999 (n=456)	51
\$50,000-\$74,999 (n=345)	60**
\$75,000+ (n=646)	71***
Education level	
No high school diploma (n=187)	38
High school grad (n=681)	47
Some College (n=679)	62**
College + (n=1,020)	66**



Source: Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, Summer Tracking Survey, August 7-September 6, 2012. N=2,581 cell phone owning adults ages 18 and older. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish and on landline and cell phones (1,206 cell calls were completed). Margin of error is +/- 2.2 percentage points.

* indicates statistically significant difference compared with others in same grouping

Managing & recording life on the go

- 94% of cell owners 18-29 take photos with their phones
- 68% of 18-29 record videos with their phones
- 65% of 18-29 do email on their phones
- 45% do banking on their mobile phones
- Much more likely to engage in “just-in-time” information seeking activities on phone than older adults
- Substantially more likely to do all these (and more) on mobiles than older adults

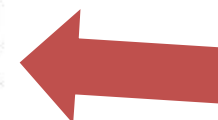
Technology inflects multiple aspects of late adolescence

- Moved from a stationary slow connectivity marked by one way information flows to mobile, social just-in-time access to people and places
- Mobile connectivity changes access (and expectations of access) to people and information
- Social media is the seamless addition to young adults' social lives
- Mobile + Social + Geo-location =
- More opportunities to have voice be heard, but also public visibility and persistence of missteps

Social Networking Sites

% of internet users who use social networking sites

		Use Social Networking Sites
All internet users (n=1,802)		67%
a	Men (n=846)	62
b	Women (n=956)	71 ^a
Race/ethnicity		
a	White, Non-Hispanic (n=1,332)	65
b	Black, Non-Hispanic (n=178)	68
c	Hispanic (n=154)	72
Age		
a	18-29 (n=318)	83 ^{bcd}
b	30-49 (n=532)	77 ^{cd}
c	50-64 (n=551)	52 ^d
d	65+ (n=368)	32
Education attainment		
a	Less than high school/high school grad (n=549)	66
b	Some College (n=519)	69
c	College + (n=721)	65
Household income		
a	Less than \$30,000/yr (n=409)	72
b	\$30,000-\$49,999 (n=330)	65
c	\$50,000-\$74,999 (n=283)	66
d	\$75,000+ (n=504)	66
Urbanity		
a	Urban (n=561)	70 ^c
b	Suburban (n=905)	67
c	Rural (n=336)	61



Source: Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project Post-Election Survey, November 14 – December 09, 2012. N=1,802 internet users. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish and on landline and cell phones. Margin of error is +/- 2.6 percentage points for results based on internet users.

Note: Percentages marked with a superscript letter (e.g., ^a) indicate a statistically significant difference between that row and the row designated by that superscript letter, among categories of each demographic characteristic (e.g. age).

The Landscape of Social Media Users

	% of internet users who....	The service is especially appealing to ...
Use Any Social Networking Site	67%	Adults ages 18-29, women
Use Facebook	67	Women, adults ages 18-29
Use Twitter	16	Adults ages 18-29, African-Americans, urban residents
Use Pinterest	15	Women, adults under 50, whites, those with some college education
Use Instagram	13	Adults ages 18-29, African-Americans, Latinos, women, urban residents
Use Tumblr	6	Adults ages 18-29

Source: Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project Post-Election Survey, November 14 – December 09, 2012. N=1,802 internet users. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish and on landline and cell phones. Margin of error is +/- 2.6 percentage points for results based on internet users. Facebook figures are based on Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project Omnibus Survey, December 13-16, 2012. Margin of error for Facebook data is +/- 2.9 percentage points for results based on internet users (n=860).

Technology inflects multiple aspects of late adolescence

- Moved from a stationary slow connectivity marked by one way information flows to mobile, social just-in-time access to people and places
- Mobile connectivity changes access (and expectations of access) to people and information
- Social media is the seamless addition to young adults' social lives
- Mobile + Social + Geo-location =
- More opportunities to have voice be heard, but also public visibility and persistence of missteps

• T

Find great places near you.

Try 'park,' 'dog park,' 'dog'

Washington, DC

Search

Or try: Best Nearby, Food, Coffee, Nightlife, Arts, Shopping, or Sights.

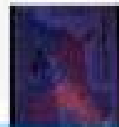
Foursquare – 2009

Today, 5% of cell owners
“check-in” with their location

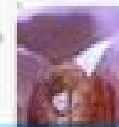
Oyamel Cocina Mexicana
401 7th St NW (at D St NW)
Mexican



Southside B15
815 S Washington St
Southern / Soul



Bethesda Bagels
1710 Connecticut Ave NW (near
S & R Sts NW)
Bagels



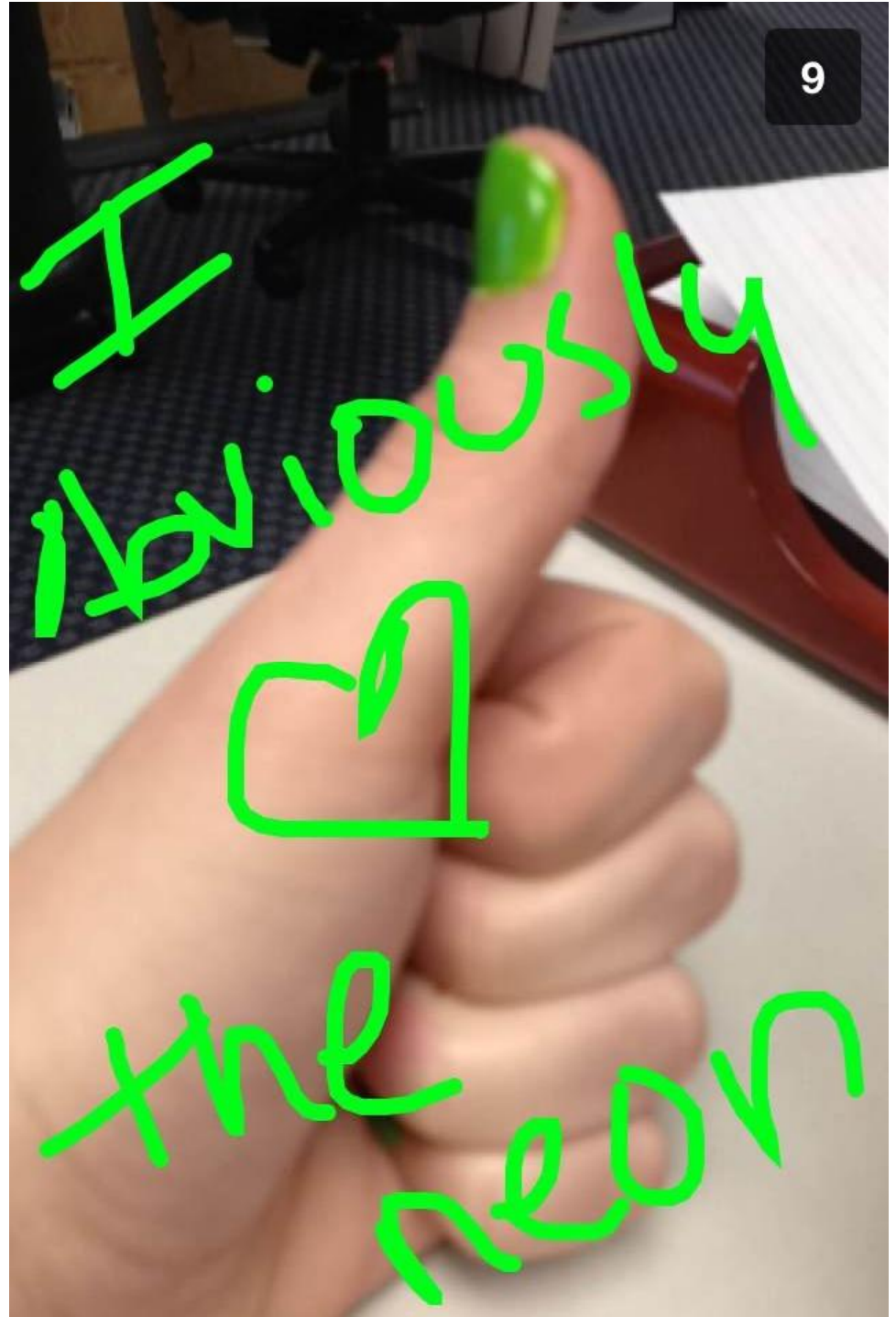
Daily Grill - DC
1500 16th St NW (at M St NW)
American





Technology inflects multiple aspects of late adolescence

- Moved from a stationary slow connectivity marked by one way information flows to mobile, social just-in-time access to people and places
- Mobile connectivity changes access (and expectations of access) to people and information
- Social media is the seamless addition to young adults' social lives
- Mobile + Social + Geo-location =
- More opportunities to have voice be heard, but also public visibility and persistence of missteps



5/17/2013

Technology inflects multiple aspects of late adolescence

- Moved from a stationary slow connectivity marked by one way information flows to mobile, social just-in-time access to people and places
- Mobile connectivity changes access (and expectations of access) to people and information
- Social media is the seamless addition to young adults' social lives
- Mobile + Social + Geo-location =
- More opportunities to have voice be heard, but also public visibility and persistence of missteps
- Health

Amanda Lenhart

Senior Researcher, Director of Teens &
Technology

Pew Research Center's Internet Project

alenhart@pewresearch.org

[@amanda_lenhart](#)

[@pewinternet](#)

[@pewresearch](#)