# THE FUTURE OF TECHNOLOGY & THE INTERNET IN DAILY LIFE:

## A WARM WELCOME FROM NJ*: THE FUTURE IS NOW*

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With but a few days to a new year, decade, century, and according to some, millennium, it is easy to get lost in the hype of numbers. But here is one number that, we believe, is real, will endure and is important: the last Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll conducted at the turn of the century finds a majority (53%) of New Jerseyans connect to the Internet on a weekly basis.

Remarkable. And for most unthinkable but a few short years ago.

But true, and clearly a harbinger of things to come. The majority of New Jerseyans are comfortable with and empowered by the Internet, and if their expectations are borne out, much of life and commerce will be quite different in the very near future, including shopping, travelling, banking, and continuing education.

For the most part, New Jerseyans embrace the advance of computers and technology with open arms--63 percent say they like it, just five percent say they dislike it and the remainder have mixed feelings. About one-in-three, however, echo the warnings given in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and George Orwell's *1984* that Big Brother lives-- computers and technology will be used to invade individuals' privacy. Thirty percent worry about this "a lot"; another 34 percent worry about this "some."

Despite these reservations, the technological revolution is clearly alive and well in the Garden State. When presented with adjectives to describe the World Wide Web and Internet, 64 percent say the word "comfortable" fits them well. About half of the state's population say this technological advance makes them feel "excited" (53%), "powerful" (50%), and "in control" (47%).

On the downside of these sweeping changes, one-third of New Jerseyans say they feel "frustrated" in trying to cope, and one-quarter feel they are being "left behind." Age clearly plays a role in attitudes toward technology--a greater number of older New Jersey residents feel they have missed the technological boat.

These are some of the results of the latest Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll, conducted by telephone between November 16 and 24 with a random sample of 802 New Jersey adults. The poll has a sampling error of $\pm$ 3.5 percentage points overall, and of $\pm$ 4.5 percentage points with the 472 New Jerseyans who reported that they go on-line either from work or home on a weekly basis.

Let's look at some of the things that those now on-line are doing and expect to do:

- 48% now say they plan travel and vacations through the Internet, with another 38 percent saying they expect to do so within the next couple of years. If so, by the end of 2001 three-quarters of on-line New Jerseyans, representing 40 percent of all New Jersey adults, will be using the Internet to book travel destinations and accommodations.

- 46% of the current Internet users report buying books or music on-line, with another 27% saying they think they will do so within two years--also representing about 40 percent of all New Jerseyans over 18, even without any additional growth of Internet usage.

- Just over four-in-ten of those who currently go on-line say they have shopped for presents or household items, with another three-in-ten saying they expect to do so within a couple of years. This also equates to about 40 percent of all New Jersey adults.

Cliff Zukin, director of the Rutgers-based poll commented, "We are seeing the beginning of a fundamental change in the way that New Jerseyans conduct their personal business. And this is the tip of the iceberg. We can expect Internet usage to grow, and the things people do on the Internet to expand, in almost geometric proportions. Not only will this change the nature of basic commerce, it will raise fundamental issues of equity--the technological "haves" versus the technological "have-nots." Almost all innovations have defined new cleavage lines in the social fabric, and the Internet is no different. While the Internet is diffusing quickly through society it is upper status New Jerseyans who are better positioned to take advantage of the benefits it offers."

The survey indeed shows that Internet usage continues to vary greatly by income, education and age, less so by race, and not at all by gender. The percentage of each demographic category reporting having used the Internet either from home or work on at least a weekly basis is as follows:

**Overall Statewide Average 53%**

| Age | Household Income | |
|---|---|---|
| *Age* | *Household Income* | |
| 69% 18-29 | 27% Under $35,000 | |
| 65% 30 to 49 | 55% $35,000 to $70,000 | |
| 50% 50 to 64 | 73% Over $70,000 | |
| 14% 65+ | *By Gender* | |
| *Education* | 54% Men | |
| 34% High school grad or less | 53% Women | |
| 65% Some College | *By Race* | |
| 79% College Graduate | 55% White | |
| | 46% Black and Latino | |

The poll found other uses of the Internet currently at a lower level of public usage, but also likely to expand in the near future, according to on-line users' expectations.

- Currently, just 17 percent say they use the Internet to pay bills, but twice as many (35%) say they expect to do so in the next couple of years. This half of on-line users equates to about one-quarter of the entire New Jersey adult public, which, if public intention comes to fruition, could signal a fundamental change in how banking is done.

- Fourteen percent of the 53 percent now on-line say they have already taken an educational class or received job training on-line. While this is currently only about 7 percent of all New Jersey adults, a significant 42 percent of those who currently go on-line say they expect to do so. If so, and if Internet usage grows as expected, a powerful market for on-line educational services would exist among New Jersey adults.

- Currently it is but a small number--6 percent of those currently going on-line, representing about 3 percent of all New Jersey adults--who say they have currently shopped for food through the Internet. But three times this number say they may consider doing so within the next couple of years.

Not all of what New Jerseyans use the Internet for will be a replacement of an old form of doing something with a new form. Much will be supplemental. Newspaper reading is a good example. While 38 percent of those going on-line now read a newspaper while they are connected, about two-thirds of this number say they cannot see the Internet replacing the daily newspaper at some point in the next few years. Statewide, just 13 percent believe they will replace the daily newspaper with news from the Internet.

Zukin commented, "So far, we have seen the Internet more as a supplement than a replacement for traditional forms of media. While this may change as the Internet expands and reaches a different cohort of users, so far the Internet has mainly brought more information to the already better informed.

But as we move into the next decade, there is no doubt that the Internet will continue to grow, and that users will get more and more comfortable getting all kinds of information from the 'Net' and transacting an expanded range of business. Make no mistake, the development, growth and diffusion of the Internet will transform commerce, politics, the structure of media and knowledge diffusion--and probably social relations--as we move into the early part of the next decade. At this point it is difficult to both pinpoint or overstate its effects."

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## A.  The Future of Technology and the Internet in Daily Life

*The latest Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll was conducted between November 16 and 24 with a statewide sample of 802 adult New Jerseyans. The sampling error for the full sample size is ±3.5 percent. Question TI6 was asked only of the 472 New Jersey residents who reported they go on-line weekly. The sampling error for this subset is ±4.5 percent. The text of questions asked and distribution of responses is as follows:*

TI1  How do you feel about computers and technology...do you like them, dislike them, or do you have mixed feelings about them?

| | |
|---|---|
| 63 | Like |
| 5 | Dislike |
| 29 | Mixed feelings |
| 3 | (VOL) Don't know/Refused |
| **100%** | **(N=802)** |

TI2  How much do you worry that computers and technology are being used to invade your privacy–a lot, some, not much, or not at all?

| | |
|---|---|
| 30 | Lot |
| 34 | Some |
| 16 | Not much |
| 18 | Not at all |
| 2 | (VOL) Don't know/Refused |

**100%     (N=802)**

TI3 People have different feelings about computers, the world wide web and the Internet. Please tell me if each of the following words **DOES or DOES NOT** describe how YOU feel about the Internet.

|  | Does | Does Not | Don't Know | Total (N) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Comfortable | 64 | 28 | 8 | 100% (802) |
| Frustrated | 34 | 58 | 8 | 100% (802) |
| Left behind | 28 | 65 | 7 | 100% (802) |
| Excited | 53 | 42 | 5 | 100% (802) |
| In control | 47 | 43 | 10 | 100% (802) |
| Powerful | 50 | 44 | 6 | 100% (802) |

TI4  Do you read a newspaper on a regular basis–that is pretty much every day?

65        Yes

35        No

**100%     (N=802)**

TI5  Thinking of just yourself, can you see replacing the daily newspaper with the Internet at some point in the next few years, or will you still get the daily newspaper?

13        (VOL) Internet will replace/Already has

84        Still get paper

1        (VOL) Depends

2        (VOL) Don't know/Refused

**100%     (N=802)**

TI6  I'm interested in what things people might do on the Internet in the next couple of years. For each item I read please tell me if you do it now, expect to do it, or don't think you will do it. First, (RANDOMIZE) Do you do this now, expect to do it, or not? (Asked only of those who go on-line weekly)

|  | Does it now | Expect to do it | Don't expect to do it | Don't Know | Total (N) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A Buy books and music | 46 | 27 | 27 | -- | 100% (472) |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| B Pay bills | 17 | 35 | 47 | 1 | 100% (472) |
| C Plan travel and vacations | 48 | 38 | 13 | 1 | 100% (472) |
| D Read the newspaper | 38 | 20 | 41 | 1 | 100% (472) |
| E Go shopping for food | 6 | 21 | 72 | 1 | 100% (472) |
| F Shop for presents or household items | 42 | 31 | 27 | -- | 100% (472) |
| G Take educational classes or get job training | 14 | 42 | 43 | 1 | 100% (472) |

W2  Do you use a computer at work, or not?

65 Yes

35 No

**100%** **(N=585)**

W3  In the past 10 years, how much would you say your job has been changed by technology such as computers--a great deal, some, not much, or not at all?

59 A Great Deal

22 Some

11 Not Much

7 Not at All

2 (VOL) Don't Know/Refused

**101%** **(N=585)**

W4  Is technology more of a threat to your job or a help in doing it?

7 Threat

84 Help

4 (VOL) Both

6 (VOL) Don't know/Refused

**101%** **(N=585)**

W5  How much do you worry that your job might outgrow you–that you won't be able to keep up with the education and training you need to do it well–a lot, some, or is this not really a worry of yours?

| | |
|---|---|
| 7 | A lot |
| 16 | Some |
| 76 | Not a worry |
| 1 | (VOL) Don't know/Refused |
| **100%** | **(N=585)** |


Q6  Do you use the Internet either from home or work on at least a weekly basis?

| | |
|---|---|
| 53 | Yes |
| 47 | No |
| **100%** | **(N=802)** |