

Broadband adoption slows down, but blacks catch up

August 11 2010, By PETER SVENSSON , AP Technology Writer

(AP) -- The adoption of high-speed Internet service in homes has slowed to a crawl this year after a decade of rapid growth, according to two new studies. And it looks as if broadband is going to be a tough sell for those who don't already have it.

The Pew [Internet](#) & American Life Project said 66 percent of U.S. adults now use broadband at home, up from 63 percent last year. The difference is not statistically significant.

Leichtman Research Group issued a separate report that said cable TV and phone companies added a net 336,000 broadband subscribers in the April-June period, fewer than in any quarter in the last nine years. Phone companies lost a net 7,500 subscribers - a first. Cable TV companies accounted for the growth.

Leichtman's research was based on earnings statements reported by the major phone and cable companies for the second quarter, while Pew conducted a phone survey of 2,252 people in April and May. Both reports came out Wednesday.

Of the adults Pew surveyed, 53 percent said they didn't believe the spreading of affordable broadband access should be a major government priority. Non-Internet users were even less likely to support government intervention in the industry.

That fits in with previous Pew surveys, which have shown that most

people who don't have Internet service at home just aren't interested in it, particularly if they're over the age of 64. A minority don't have it because it's too expensive or not available at all.

The FCC's national broadband plan, released in March, found that 14 million to 24 million Americans do not have access to broadband. The plan, mandated by last year's stimulus bill, lays out a roadmap for bringing high-speed connections to all Americans.

The Pew survey found one group that has signed up for broadband at a rapid pace in the past year: blacks. Last year, 46 percent of them used broadband at home. This year, the figure was 56 percent, meaning they're closing the gap with Americans at large, but there's still room for further gains.

The study found that blacks and English-speaking Latinos are significantly more likely than whites to say that a lack of [broadband](#) access is a "major disadvantage" when it comes to such things as finding out about job opportunities and getting health information. The survey was conducted only in English and did not include Latinos who spoke only Spanish.

The Pew study has a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 2.4 percentage points.

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