

Measuring Chicago's internet use

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Following up on a 2008 study finding that many Chicago residents did not or could not use the Internet, a University of Illinois at Chicago researcher is working with Rutgers University's Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling to survey city residents on their current use of the Internet and technology.

"In 2008, we found that about 25 percent of Chicagoans did not use the Internet, and about 15 percent had only limited access. It's important for us to see whether disparities between different groups have lessened, especially given the programs underway in many neighborhoods," said Karen Mossberger, UIC professor of public administration.

Beginning this week, more than 3,000 households will be randomly selected to discuss their Internet access and how they use it to find jobs, learn about health care, or obtain government services.

"Other questions will ask about barriers to technology use -- why people aren't online or don't have broadband at home," Mossberger said.

"We want to reach people who use the Internet and those who do not. The [phone survey](#) will take only ten minutes or less. We encourage all Chicagoans who are selected to complete it," said David Redlawsk, Rutgers professor of political science and director of the Eagleton Center.

The resulting information will be shared with [city](#) and state policymakers and foundations to plan programs that promote equitable Internet access

and use.

Since the 2008 study, the City of Chicago and partner organizations have launched initiatives such as the Smart Communities program in five Chicago neighborhoods, and the citywide Public Computer Center program. These projects have attracted \$16 million in federal funding, and another \$5.7 million in matching funds from the MacArthur Foundation, the Chicago Community Trust, the Chicago Local Initiative Support Corporation, and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

The 2011 survey has been commissioned by the City of Chicago's Department of Innovation and Technology, and is supported by the Partnership for a Connected Illinois through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Provided by University of Illinois at Chicago

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