



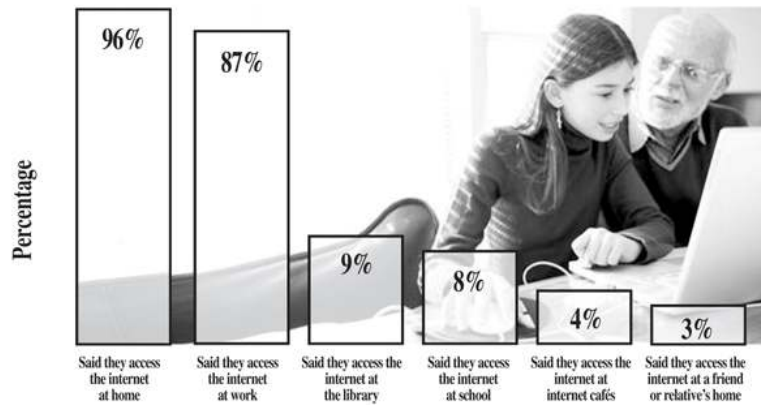
Poll STATION

With Linda Banister



While Internet access has been commonplace amongst Edmontonians for quite some time, social networking websites like *MySpace* and *Facebook* are exploding on the international scene. This month's *Poll Station* asked Edmontonians about their Internet access and usage habits, as well as their subscription to social-networking websites.

DO YOU ACCESS THE INTERNET? WHERE AND WHAT FOR?



To begin, participants were asked about their access to the Internet. A total of 97 percent of those surveyed stated that they had access to the Internet. The majority of these individuals stated that they had access at home (96 percent) and at work (87 percent). Additionally, nine percent of participants access the Internet at the library, eight percent go on-line at school, four percent take advantage of Internet cafés, and three percent gain access at the home of a friend or relative.

Respondents were then asked about the top two things they utilize the Internet for. Nearly two-thirds (63 percent) indicated they primarily conduct research, while 59 percent use it to check their e-mail. Other responses included playing on-line games (12 percent), checking the news (10 percent), on-line banking and paying bills (nine percent), work-related tasks (nine percent), and purchasing items online (eight percent).

DO YOU SUBSCRIBE TO FACEBOOK? WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?



Next respondents were asked about their use of the social networking website *Facebook*. Just over one quarter of respondents stated that they have a *Facebook* profile (26 percent) and an additional 17 percent said that other member(s) of their household subscribe. More than half (57 percent) of respondents did not have a *Facebook* profile, most commonly because they were not interested or felt they did not need one (67 percent). Fourteen percent did not know what *Facebook* is or how to use it, or while 12 percent said they would not have time to use it.

Facebook users were asked how often they access their profiles. Over half (55 percent) check two to three times per week, while 10 percent access it once per day, and another 10 percent check it more than once per day. The remaining 25 percent reported accessing their profiles once per week or less.

When asked to name the biggest benefit of having a *Facebook* profile, the majority of respondents (70 percent) said it was keeping in touch with friends and family. Ten percent said the biggest benefit was staying connected with people from work or for other business purposes, and five percent said sharing pictures was of greatest value to them.

ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT PRIVACY ISSUES?

All survey participants were asked to rate their level of concern with privacy issues associated with sharing personal information on *Facebook* or similar websites such as *MySpace*. Most respondents (79 percent) stated that they were concerned, 65 percent being very concerned. Those who reported being concerned stated reasons including: unknown people accessing their private information (34 percent), identity theft (20 percent), fear of hackers (19 percent), fear of scams or of fraudulent activities (six percent), fear for the safety of their children (six percent) and having their information sold for marketing purposes (six percent).

The *Poll Station* surveyed 100 City of Edmonton residents on the topic and, while the results of the research are not statistically reliable, they do provide a qualitative indication of what Edmontonians are thinking.

Want a question included in the Edmontonians Poll?

Contact Linda at 780.451.4444 or e-mail at lbanner@edmontonians.com.

Linda Banister is a certified management consultant and the owner of Banister Research and Consulting Inc., a full service provider of market research and program evaluation services. Visit www.banister.ab.ca.