

# Ask Alabama Poll Results



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## PRESS RELEASE

Internet websites are the rising stars of Alabama news media

*But lack of high speed access may put ceiling on their use.*

**Auburn, August 31, 2009:** Although the majority of Alabama residents get most of their news from local television broadcasts, Internet sites are becoming players in the field of journalism and are challenging daily newspapers for the runner-up spot in the Alabama news sweepstakes.

When polled regarding the primary source for news about their region of Alabama, a majority of those surveyed (56 percent) said from local television newscasts. Daily newspapers and the Internet trailed at 15 percent and 14 percent, respectively, followed by local radio, chosen by 6 percent, weekly newspapers, 3 percent and friends and neighbors, 1 percent.

Noting the generational shift behind these numbers, Dr. David B. Hill, Associate Director of Auburn University's Center for Governmental Services (CGS), observed, "There is a new generation of news consumers and they are going to the web more often than their parents do."

The poll found that 20 percent of Alabama residents between the ages of 18 and 34 rely most on websites for news while only 4 percent of residents over 55 do so.

Dr. Don-Terry Veal, Director of CGS and advisor to local governments, says, "Local governments and public schools are learning that to effectively communicate with the public, particularly to reach young families, you must have an Internet-communications strategy; this survey confirms that observation."

The research also uncovered evidence of a much ballyhooed "digital divide," where better educated and more affluent are more likely to be using the Internet. Polling manager Patrick Rose said that his analysis shows that "persons with annual incomes over 70 thousand dollars are 2 to 3 times more likely to get news from the Internet than those with incomes under \$50 ,000."

However, there may be a ceiling on the Internet's growth unless more Alabama households get high-speed service, referred to as broadband. The poll found that just six in 10 households have true high-speed Internet service, something most get from their cable operators. The State of Alabama has a broadband initiative that is attempting, with federal stimulus funds, to push deeper into unserved and underserved rural and inner city areas to increase the availability of broadband Internet service to Alabama homes and businesses ([www.connectingalabama.gov](http://www.connectingalabama.gov)).

The survey found that Internet users are accessing the Web even when they are not at home. Many use the Internet at their jobs. Only one in four residents "never" visits the Internet on a typical day. On average, one-third of all Alabama residents accesses the Internet more than four times each day.

*The Ask Alabama survey results are based on telephone interviews conducted with a stratified random sample of 639 adult householders July 6 -- 19, 2009. The sample's geographic, gender, race, and age distributions were weighted to be proportionate to the United States Census Bureau's data for Alabama's adult (18+ years of age) householders. Patrick Rose, Manager of the Center's Survey Research Laboratory that conducted the interviews, said that poll results based on the full statewide sample have a margin of error of  $\pm 4$  percentage points.*

The Ask Alabama Poll is to be conducted quarterly by the Center for Governmental Services, a unit of Auburn University Outreach that provides research, consulting and training to government agencies, not-for-profit associations, and private sector clients. Patrick Rose, manager of the center's Survey Research Laboratory that conducted the interviews, said that poll results based on the full statewide sample have a margin of error of plus or minus 4 percentage points.

**Prior releases from the current poll include:**

**August 3 – CONSUMER CONFIDENCE.** Alabama residents have mixed views on the state of the economy.

**August 10 – MANUFACTURING.** Alabama residents see manufacturing leading economic recovery and many will be looking to purchase a new car made in Alabama.

**August 17 – SCHOOLS.** Alabama residents give their local schools high marks.

**August 24 – HUNGER.** Hunger is an issue; many residents see Alabama families skipping meals to cope with economy.

**Future releases from the current poll include:**

**STATE IMAGE.** Alabama is seen as a friendly place to raise a family or retire; but don't consider starting a business or looking for a job.

**JOBS.** Better pay and benefits top of list of what Alabama job seekers want.

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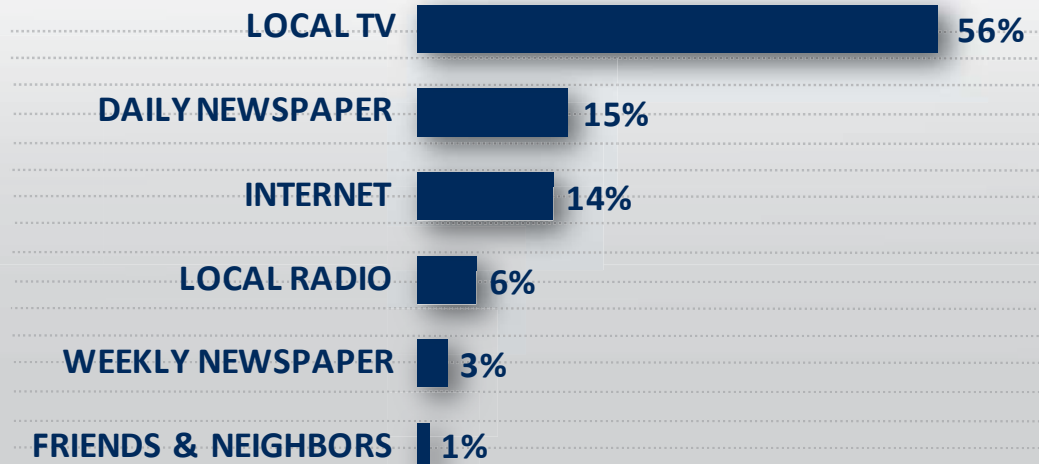
AUBURN  
CENTER FOR GOVERNMENTAL SERVICES

## Television is the most popular source of news to Alabamians.

### Question

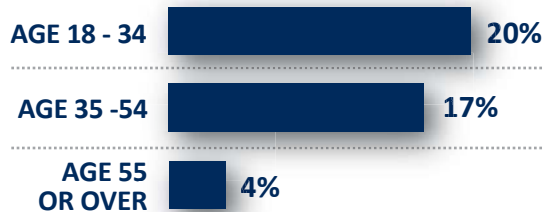
Where would you say that you get most of your news and information about what is happening in your region or part of Alabama?

#### NEWS MEDIA

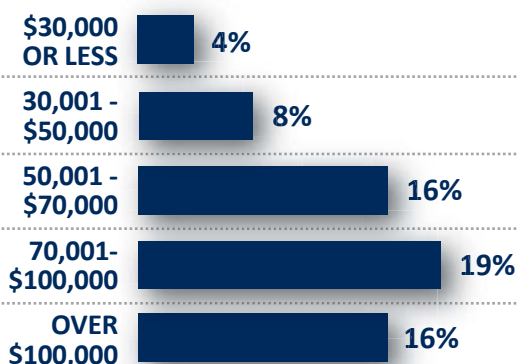


## Percent "INTERNET" By Selected Characteristics of Respondents

### BY AGE



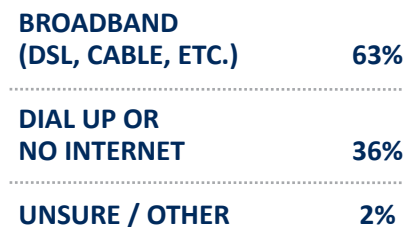
### BY INCOME



### MORE RESULTS

#### One out of three of Alabama residents do not have broadband access at home.

Do you have home Internet access through a dial-up, cable, DSL or satellite connection?



Due to rounding, some charts may not sum to 100%.

#### One-third use the internet an average four or more times a day.

On average, about how many times on a typical day do you use a computer at work or home to check email or visit Internet web-sites?



The Ask Alabama survey results are based on telephone interviews conducted with a stratified random sample of 639 adult householders in Alabama from July 6 to July 19, 2009. The sample was chosen so as to ensure that each region of the state was represented in proportion to its population. The sample's geographic, gender, race, and age distributions were weighted to be proportionate to the United States Census Bureau's data for Alabama's adult (18+ years of age) householders. Results based on all 639 respondents have a margin of error of  $\pm 4$  percentage points.