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Latinos are fastest growing Internet users: Study

REUTERS [FRIDAY, AUGUST 01 2003 07:54:47 AM]

SAN FRANCISCO: Latinos are getting on the Internet faster than other groups in the United States, but the disparity between the number of men versus women online is much greater than for other groups, according to a study released on Thursday.

The percentage of Latinos using the Internet at least once per month has risen 25 per cent since 2000, while the percentage of overall Internet users has inched up only 7.6 per cent, the study from the University of California, Los Angeles found.

"Latinos are the fastest growing group" among Internet users, as well as the fastest growing ethnic group in the country, said Jeffrey Cole, director of the UCLA Centre for Communication Policy.

The study found that 59 per cent of Latinos polled said they used the Internet from office, home, school or elsewhere, compared with 47 per cent in 2000, Cole said. By contrast, 71 per cent of all respondents use the Internet, compared with 66 per cent three years ago.

African Americans are the second fastest growing group getting online, with a 22 per cent jump since 2000, the study found.

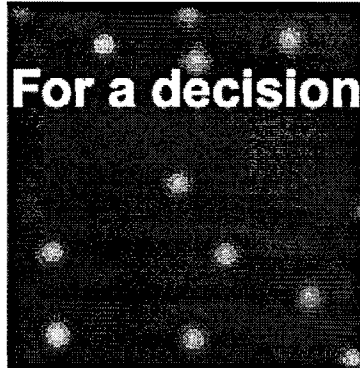
"One thing that hasn't changed is the gender gap" between Latino men and Latina women online, Cole said.

Of the Latinos who said they use the Internet, 51 per cent were women compared with 68 per cent men, difference of 17 percentage points.

For Internet users overall, and Asians and African Americans, the difference between men and women using the Internet was four percentage points or less.

"A lot of it is cultural," Cole speculated. "It is possible that there are not as many Latinas in the workplace as (Latino) men."

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For overall Internet users, 69 per cent were women and 73 per cent were men, a narrower margin.

For the annual study, the third the UCLA center has conducted, 2,000 people, including 240 Latinos, were questioned over the telephone. There is a 3-per cent margin of error.

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