



Connect South Carolina Report Examines Broadband Adoption and Lifelong Learning

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More than one in three adult South Carolina Internet users without a college education take online classes or conduct research for schoolwork via the Internet

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Columbia, SC — Connect South Carolina today released ***Broadband – A Technology Tool for Lifelong Learning***, a report detailing the key role broadband plays in developing the knowledge workforce of the new economy.

“Rapidly changing technology places everyone on a constant learning curve,” said Corey Johns, Connect South Carolina stakeholder relations manager. “This report illustrates how broadband can be a game changer for leveling the employment and economic playing field and underscores the importance of seeing that all South Carolinians cross the digital divide.”

South Carolina residents who do not have a college education face many hurdles, and the large share who find themselves on the wrong side of the digital divide portends even more challenges in the future as a growing number of services are made available exclusively online. Because this affects a substantial portion of the state, it is important for South Carolina to ensure that all residents, not just those who went to college, have access to fast, affordable service.

Among the report’s key findings:

- Fewer than **three in five** South Carolina adults who do not have a college education (**55%**) own a home computer, while slightly more than **one in three (35%)** subscribe to home broadband service. Only **26%** of South Carolina residents with a high school diploma or less go online via mobile

- broadband such as Wi-Fi or on a smartphone. This includes nearly **one in four (24%)** who access the Internet via their cell phone, compared to **46%** of South Carolinians with at least some college education.
- More than **one in three** adult Internet users (**39%**) who do not have a college education take online classes or conduct research for schoolwork via the Internet.
 - **One-half (50%)** of South Carolina Internet users who have a high school diploma or less go online to search or apply for jobs, which is more often than Internet subscribers who have a college education.
 - More than **four out of ten** South Carolina Internet users who do not have a college education (**44%**) search for medical information or communicate with healthcare professionals like doctors or insurance offices online. This includes approximately **112,000** who live in rural areas.
 - Approximately **916,000** South Carolina residents who do not have a college education do not subscribe to home broadband service. Among these residents, cost, relevance, and digital literacy are the top three barriers to broadband adoption.

This survey was conducted as part of the State Broadband Initiative (SBI) grant program, funded by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). The SBI grant program was created by the Broadband Data Improvement Act (BDIA), unanimously passed by Congress in 2008 and funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) in 2009. Find out more at www.connectsc.org.

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About Connect South Carolina: As the State Broadband Initiative, Connect South Carolina is leading the effort to increase high-speed Internet access, adoption and use to ensure South Carolina's competitiveness in the connected global economy of the twenty-first century. Connect South Carolina is a public-private partnership designated by the state to work with all broadband providers to create South Carolina's first interactive map of broadband coverage. This work serves as a foundation for addressing remaining service gaps while also engaging state, regional and local leaders in workforce development activities designed to bridge South Carolina's digital divide. For maps, research or to get involved with efforts in your community please visit: www.ConnectSC.org.

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