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Contact: Jessica Scadron - jessica@everyoneon.org, 415-713-9150

New National Survey Shows Link Between Digital Skills and Trust in Determining Household Connectivity Among Low- and Lower-Middle Income Households During the Pandemic

EveryoneOn releases second report in a three-part series on connectivity, finding that 47% of those with high levels of digital skills were satisfied with their connectivity vs. 22% of those with low levels of digital skills

Los Angeles, CA, February 4, 2022 – Today, [EveryoneOn](#), a national digital inclusion organization, released the second report in a three-part series on the digital divide during the pandemic: *Digital Skills and Trust*. The findings were informed by a national survey on broadband adoption among low- and lower-middle income households conducted by EveryoneOn in collaboration with [Dr. John B. Horrigan](#), an expert digital divide researcher. The survey was funded by Ballmer Group and Microsoft.

The report shows that digital skills (how to use the internet) and trust (the degree to which people trust public and private institutions for information on internet service discount plans) play crucial roles when it comes to getting online. Both digital skills and trust are key factors to people using the internet for meaningful online applications, such as school and work.

The report shows that:

- 46% of those with high levels of digital skills trust community anchor institutions for information about internet benefit programs compared with 23% of those with low levels of digital skills;
- 47% of those with high levels of digital skills have been very satisfied with their internet connection during the pandemic compared with 22% of those with low levels of digital skills;
- 36% of those with high levels of digital skills (and who currently use an internet discount offer) say it would be very easy to keep service even without a discount compared with 15% of those with low levels of digital skills;
- 34% of those who trust community anchor institutions "a lot" to find out about internet benefit programs have heard of discount plans compared with 22% of all others; and
- 55% were not confident in their ability to find or access government services.

"We know digital skills are critical for people to get online," said Norma Fernandez, CEO, EveryoneOn. "The findings make it clear that government and philanthropy must invest in digital skills training as well as fund trusted community-based organizations if we are truly committed to digital equity and inclusion."

For policymakers and other stakeholders, the findings mean the following:

- Investment in digital skills has payoffs in helping people deal with unfamiliar applications while at the same time alleviating concerns they may have about how to use them.
- Digital skills investments help inform and empower consumers, as those with greater digital skills are more likely to shop for more affordable internet plans and have higher levels of service satisfaction.
- Community anchor institutions – schools, libraries, local nonprofits – are an appropriate locus

for investments in digital skills and spreading the word about internet benefit programs. They are highly trusted as both sources for such information and venues to acquire digital skills training. Internet service providers have much lower levels of trust in this area.

“In this digital age, people need high-speed internet, access to devices and the digital skills necessary to use them,” said Naria Santa Lucia, general manager, Digital Inclusion and U.S. Community Engagement at Microsoft. “By helping people learn digital skills, we can inform and empower consumers, build trust in institutions like libraries and nonprofits, and create opportunity for all.”

“This report clearly shows how digital skills increase access to the services and supports people need to thrive, and how critically important trusted community institutions are to strengthening those skills,” said Kevin Bromer, executive director, head of Technology and Data Strategy, Ballmer Group. “We hope the work of EveryoneOn can further catalyze investments in the critical community institutions that support digital equity across the country.”

The *Digital Skills and Trust* report is available for download on EveryoneOn’s website: everyoneon.org/2021-national-study.

The third and final comprehensive report, *Focus Group Insights from Households Affected by the Digital Divide*, will be released in March 2022.

Methodology

This report uses data from two national surveys of low- and lower-middle income households. One is an online panel of 2,512 respondents from SSRS, Inc., a survey and market research firm. It includes households whose annual incomes are \$50,000 or less and have some online connectivity. Most (85%) have high-speed connections such as fiber, cable modem or digital subscriber line service. Remaining online users have limited home access via cellular data plans, satellite or dial-up service. The other survey was a telephone survey of 382 households with no internet connectivity at home, a sample aimed at understanding barriers to subscribing to internet service at home.

About EveryoneOn

Since 2012, [EveryoneOn](https://everyoneon.org) has helped people in underserved communities unlock social and economic opportunity by connecting them to low-cost internet and devices, and providing digital skills training. The organization collaborates with government, community organizations, nonprofits, foundations and corporations to deliver services that give individuals and families the power to use the internet. EveryoneOn has connected over 890,000 people to the internet, provided more than 5,000 devices and delivered digital skills trainings to hundreds of participants nationwide. To learn more, visit www.everyoneon.org, and follow on Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram @EveryoneOn.

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