

The Common Sense Census: Media Use by Tweens and Teens, 2021

The Digital Divide

What is the digital divide?

The digital divide refers to the gaps between those who have access to new technology and those who do not. In this survey, we report the gaps in computer, smartphone, and tablet access in the home.

Digital divide observations, 2021

In 2021, there was a significant digital divide in computer ownership (both in the home, and personal device ownership) between lower-, middle-, and higher-income families

Large numbers of children in lower-income households still do not have access to a computer in the home, one of the most basic building blocks of digital equity.

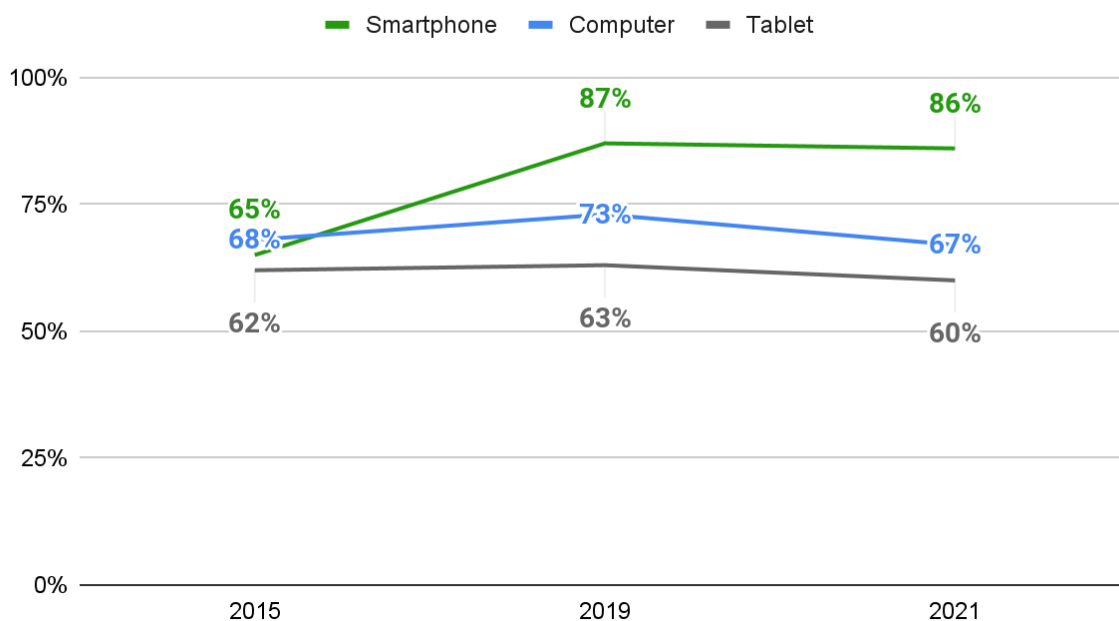
Device and technology access in the home, by household income, 2021

Among 8- to 18-year-olds, percent who have each item in their home:

	All children	Lower income	Middle income	Higher income
Computer	87%	67% ^a	89% ^b	94% ^c
Smartphone	94%	86% ^a	95% ^b	96% ^b
Tablet	74%	60% ^a	75% ^b	81% ^c

Note: "Lower income" is < \$35,000; "middle" is \$35,000-99,999; and "higher" is \$100,000 or more. Superscripts (a,b,c) are used to denote whether differences between groups are statistically significant (p<.05).

Percent of children from lower-income households with media devices in the home



Device and technology access in the home, by household income, 2021

Among 8- to 18-year-olds, percent who have their own:

	All tweens	All teens	Lower income	Middle income	Higher income
Computer	43%	64%	41% ^a	55% ^b	58% ^b
Smartphone	43%	88%	68%	69%	65%
Tablet	57%	36%	40%	47%	47%

Note: "Lower income" is < \$35,000; "middle" is \$35,000-99,999; and "higher" is \$100,000 or more. "Tweens" refers to 8- to 12-year-olds; "teens" refers to 13- to 18-year-olds. Superscripts (a,b,c) are used to denote whether differences between groups are statistically significant ($p < .05$).