



*behavior research center's*

# *Rocky Mountain Poll*

NEWS RELEASE  
RMP 2002-I-05

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## INTERRUPTIONS IN PHONE AND INTERNET SERVICES SURPRISINGLY WIDESPREAD

Phoenix, Arizona, January 31, 2002. In our January survey of consumers, a fifth of adult heads of household across Arizona report they experience interruptions in their basic local phone service and close to a fourth say they have similar difficulties with their long distance phone service, each month. Concerns about service reliability, coupled with growing public concern about privacy of personal information held by communications companies, may help explain the recent outcry over Qwest's announcement of its intention to share and possibly sell customer records to other companies. (See RMP-2002-I-01 in which 94 percent believe that Qwest should be required to ask customers for permission to sell their records rather than requiring customers to take steps to "opt out" of having their records made available to other companies.)

In addition to interruptions in basic phone service, the study finds that among people with Internet access – which now includes 83 percent of all households in the state and 95 percent or more of households in the urban areas – the proportion reporting monthly interruption in those services is twice as high compared to discontinuity in phone service. More specifically, nearly half (46 percent) experience monthly interruptions with Internet access and 39 percent report their access to e-mail is interrupted once a month or more often.

The findings outlined in this report are based on a survey of 638 consumer adults across Arizona conducted between January 9 and January 17, 2002, by the Behavior Research Center of Arizona as part of the Center's independent and non-partisan Rocky Mountain Poll series. The public is welcome to visit [www.brcpolls.com](http://www.brcpolls.com) to read this and other recent polls.

Rural customers appear to have the most difficulty with interruptions in basic phone, long distance and e-mail services. It also appears that most people experience some interruption in their basic phone service only one or twice a month. At the same time, there is another cluster of customers representing close

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to ten percent of the customer base, who say they have on-going problems with their phone service, experiencing disruption on a weekly basis and some on a daily basis.

Also of interest are the readings on Internet and e-mail access, both now reported in 83 percent of households surveyed. This is a huge increase over the 55 percent registered in June of 2000 and the 45 percent reported the year prior to that. While connectivity has increased across all groups, it is particularly interesting that even within the lowest income groups connectivity now registers 63 percent, and it registers at 68 percent within the retirement community, an enormous increase over 1999 when only 24 percent of this segment were hooked up to the Internet. Among Hispanic consumers, 85 percent are now connected. Three years ago, not even 40 percent of Hispanic households were connected, and at that time, few of those households were Spanish-language dependent. The grave financial difficulties of QuePasa.com might have been averted had they entered the market at a later time when connectivity within the Hispanic consumer market was much broader.

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This Rocky Mountain Poll Arizona (2002-I-05) is based on 638 interviews with consumer adults across Arizona conducted from January 9<sup>th</sup> through January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2002. Where necessary, figures for age, sex, and race were weighted to bring them into line with their actual proportion in the population. In a sample of this size, one may say with a 95 percent certainty that the results have a statistical precision of plus or minus 4.0 percent of what they would have been had the entire adult population been surveyed. The Rocky Mountain Poll is conducted by the Behavior Research Center of Arizona and is an independent and non-partisan research program sponsored by the Center.

This statement conforms to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

**STATISTICAL DATA**

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Rocky Mountain Poll - Arizona  
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	% CONNECTED TO THE INTERNET			% WITH EMAIL
	2002	2000	1999	2002
TOTAL	82%	55%	45%	83%
<u>Age</u>				
Under 35	95	60	53	96
35 To 54	83	63	53	84
55+	71	41	28	74
Retired	68	35	24	70
<u>Income</u>				
Under \$25K	63	26	20	70
\$25K to \$44.9K	79	40	38	80
\$45K+	91	74	61	91
<u>Ethnicity</u>				
Caucasian	82	59	48	84
Hispanic	85	44	38	84
Other	68	31	30	68

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*"How many days a month do you experience interruption in each of the following:?"*

	<u>STATEWIDE</u> <u>REPORTING ANY</u> <u>MONTHLY</u> <u>INTERRUPTION</u>
Local Telephone Service	23%
Long Distance Telephone Service	20
Internet Access	46
E-mail Access	39
 <u>Local Telephone Service</u>	
Maricopa	22
Pima	21
Rural	26
 <u>Long Distance Phone Service</u>	
Maricopa	19
Pima	18
Rural	23
 <u>Internet Access</u>	
Maricopa	45
Pima	48
Rural	47
 <u>E-mail Access</u>	
Maricopa	33
Pima	40
Rural	51