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Searching for Work in the Digital Era

The internet is a central resource for Americans looking for work, but a notable minority lack confidence in their digital job-seeking skills

BY Aaron Smith

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Searching for Work in the Digital Era

The internet is a central resource for Americans looking for work, but a notable minority lack confidence in their digital job-seeking skills

The internet is an essential employment resource for many of today's job seekers, according to a new survey by Pew Research Center. A majority of U.S. adults (54%) have gone online to look for job information, 45% have applied for a job online, and job-seeking Americans are just as likely to have turned to the internet during their most recent employment search as to their personal or professional networks.

Yet even as the internet has taken on a central role in how people find and apply for work, a minority of Americans would find it difficult to engage in many digital job seeking behaviors – such as creating a professional resume, searching job listings online, or following up via email with potential employers. And while many of today's job seekers are enlisting their smartphones to browse jobs or communicate with potential employers, others are using their mobile devices for far more complex and challenging tasks, from writing a resume to filling out an online job application.

Among the key findings:

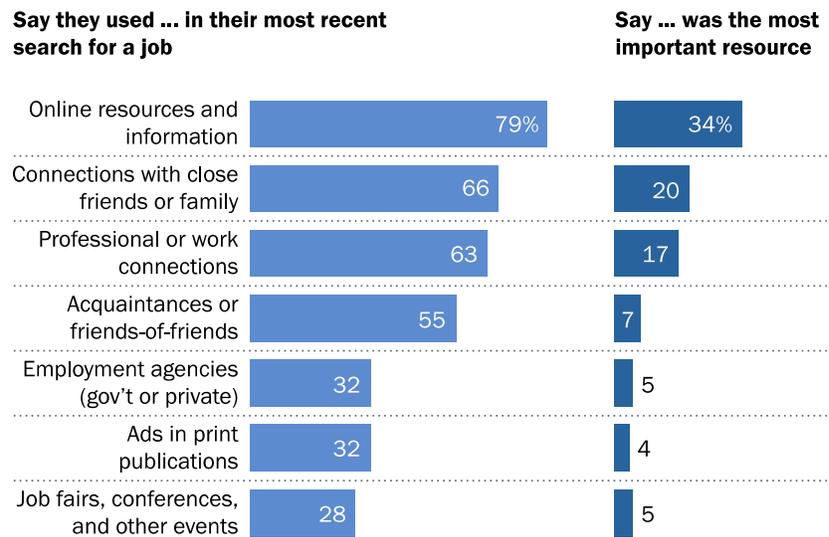
The internet is a top resource for many of today's job hunters: Among Americans who have looked for work in the last two years, 79% utilized online resources in their most recent job search and 34% say these online resources were the *most* important tool available to them

Online employment resources now rival personal and professional networks as a top source of job information for Americans who are looking for work. Roughly one-third of Americans have looked for a new job in the last two years, and 79% of these job seekers utilized online resources in their most recent search for employment. That is higher than the proportion who made use of close personal connections (66%) or professional contacts (63%) and more than twice the proportion who utilized employment agencies, print advertisements, or jobs fairs and other events. Taken together, 80% of recent job seekers made use of professional contacts, close friends or family, and/or more distant personal connections in their most recent search for employment – nearly identical to the 79% who utilized resources and information they found online.

Indeed, 34% of these job seekers say resources and information they found online were the *most* important resource available to them in their most recent job search, which places the internet just behind personal and professional networks of all types on the list of Americans' most important job resources. In total, 45% of recent job seekers indicate that personal or professional contacts of any kind were the most important resource they utilized in their last search for employment: 20% cite close personal connections as their most important source of assistance, 17% cite professional or work contacts, and 7% cite more distant personal acquaintances.

Roughly one-third of recent job seekers say the internet was the most important resource available to them during their most recent employment search

Among Americans who have looked for a new job in the last two years, the % who ...



Note: Based on the 34% of Americans who have looked for a new job in the last two years.

Survey conducted June 10-July 12, 2015. Sample size = 2,001

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Like many other aspects of life, job seeking is going mobile: 28% of Americans have used a smartphone as part of a job search, and half of these “smartphone job seekers” have used their smartphone to fill out a job application

Americans increasingly reach for a smartphone when they need to accomplish a variety of online tasks and looking for work is no exception. Some 28% of Americans – including 53% of 18- to 29-year-olds – have used a smartphone in one way or another as part of a job search.¹

For the most part, these “smartphone job seekers” are using their mobile devices to conduct background research or facilitate on-the-go interactions with potential employers:

¹ 68% of American adults are smartphone owners, and 41% of them have used their smartphone as part of a job search in any way. This works out to 28% of all American adults.

- 94% of smartphone job seekers (representing 26% of all American adults) have used their smartphone to browse or research job listings.
- 87% (representing 24% of all adults) have called a potential employer on the phone using their smartphone.
- 74% (representing 20% of all adults) have used their smartphone to email someone about a job they were applying for.

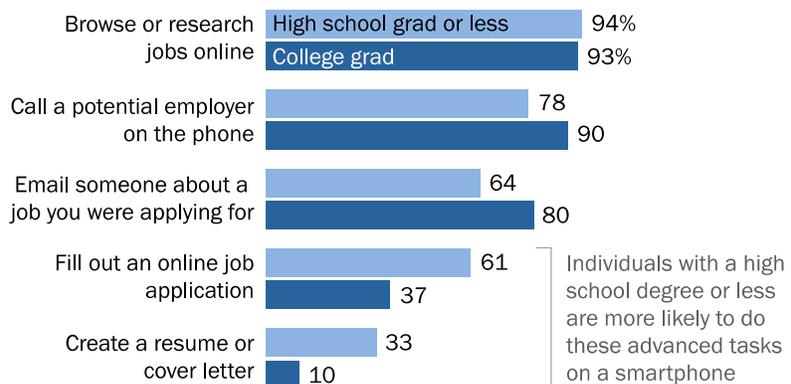
At the same time, many are using their phones for much more complex tasks:

- 50% of smartphone job seekers (representing 14% of all adults) have used their smartphone to fill out an online job application.
- 23% (representing 6% of all adults) have used their smartphone to create a resume or cover letter.

Americans with relatively low levels of educational attainment tend to [lean heavily on their smartphones](#) for online access in general, and this also play out in the ways members of this group utilize their smartphones while looking for employment. Among Americans who have used a smartphone in some part of a job search, those with higher education levels are more likely to use their phone for basic logistical activities – such as calling a potential employer on the phone or emailing someone about a job. On the other hand, smartphone job seekers who

Smartphone job seekers with lower education levels are much more likely to use their phone to fill out a job application or create a resume or cover letter

Among Americans who have used a smartphone as part of a job search, the % in each education group who have done so in order to ...



Note: Based on the 28% of Americans who have used a smartphone during a job search

Survey conducted June 10-July 12, 2015. Sample size = 2,001

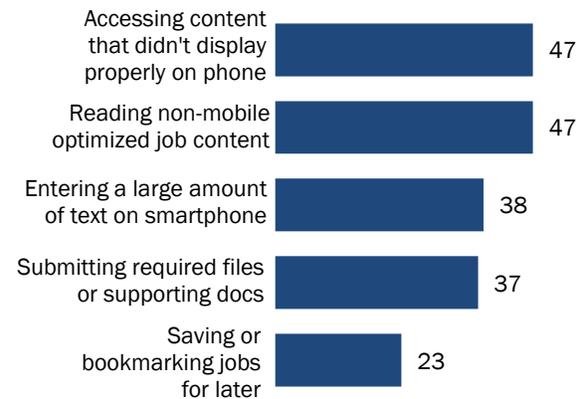
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have not attended college are substantially more likely to have used their phone for more advanced tasks, such as filling out an online job application or creating a resume or cover letter.²

Overall, 47% of smartphone job seekers say their phone is “very important” in helping them look for job and career resources, and an additional 37% describe it as “somewhat important.” But despite the overall significance of smartphones to these users, many of them have encountered challenges navigating the job search process on a mobile device. Nearly half of smartphone job seekers have had problems accessing job-related content because it wasn’t displaying properly on their phone or had difficulty reading the text in a job posting because it was not designed for a mobile device. And more than one-in-three have had trouble entering a large amount of text needed for a job application or had difficulty submitting the files or other supporting documents needed to apply for a job.

Smartphone job seekers encounter a range of problems navigating online employment resources

Among Americans who have used a smartphone as part of a job search, the % who have experienced the following problems



Note: Based on the 28% of Americans who have used a smartphone during a job search

Survey conducted June 10-July 12, 2015. Sample size = 2,001

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² Compared with smartphone job seekers who have graduated from college, smartphone job seekers who have not proceeded past high school are three times as likely to indicate that they do not have traditional broadband service at home.

Even as digital job seeking skills have become increasingly important, a minority of Americans would find it challenging to engage in tasks such as creating a professional resume, using email to contact potential employers, or filling out a job application online

Despite the importance of digital resources when it comes to looking for work today, a minority of Americans would find it difficult to engage in a variety of digital job-seeking behaviors.

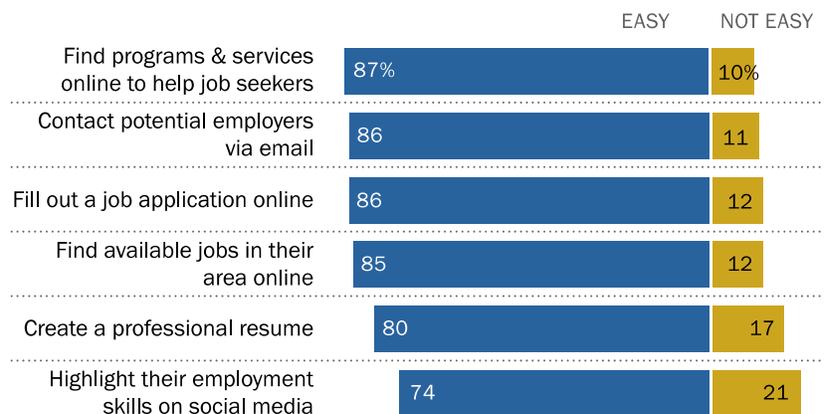
Building a professional resume is among the most prominent of these challenges: Some 17% of Americans (not including those who are retired and/or disabled) indicate that it would *not* be easy to create a professional resume if they needed to do so. Another 21% say that it would *not* be easy to highlight their employment skills using a personal website or social media profile. Roughly

one-in-ten indicate that it would be difficult for them to go online to find lists of available jobs (12%); fill out a job application online (12%); use email to contact or follow up with a potential employer (11%); or look up online services available to assist job seekers (10%).

In many cases, Americans who might benefit the most from being able to perform these behaviors effectively – such as those with relatively low levels of educational attainment – are the ones who find them most challenging. For instance, 30% of those with a high school diploma or less would have trouble creating a professional resume (compared with just 6% of college graduates), as would 28% of those who are currently not employed (double the 14% of employed Americans who would find it difficult to do this).

Most Americans are relatively confident in their digital job-seeking skills, but a minority would find it challenging to accomplish tasks such as building a professional resume

% of Americans who feel it would be easy (or not easy) to accomplish the following tasks if they needed to do so



Note: Based on those who are not retired or disabled

Survey conducted June 10-July 12, 2015. Sample size = 2,001

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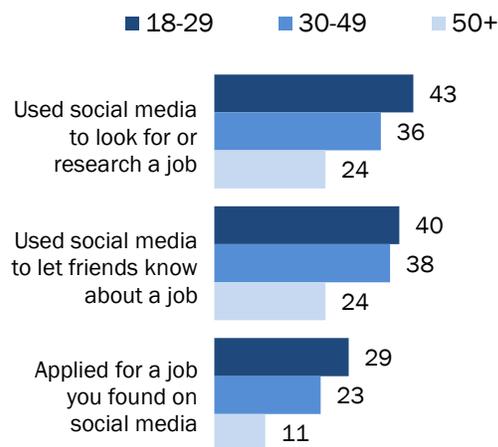
Many Americans now use social media to look for and research jobs, share employment opportunities with friends, and highlight their skills to potential employers; 13% of social media users say their social media presence has helped them find a job

Nearly two-thirds of Americans now use social media platforms of some kind, and a substantial number of social media users are utilizing these platforms to look for work – and also to pass along employment tips to their own friend networks. Some 35% of social media users have utilized social media to look for or research jobs, while 21% have applied for a job they first found out about through social media, and 34% have used social media to inform their friends about available jobs at their own place of employment. In addition, 13% of social media users say information that they have posted on social media has helped them get a job.

Younger users are especially active at utilizing these platforms for employment-related purposes, but many older users are taking advantage of social media when looking for work as well. Roughly one-quarter of social media users ages 50 and older have used these platforms to look for work or to let their friends know about job openings, and 11% of older social media users have applied for a job they first found out about on social media.

Social media users from a range of age groups use these platforms for employment-related purposes

% of social media users in each age group who have ...



Note: Based on the 65% of Americans who use social media

Survey conducted June 10-July 12, 2015. Sample size = 2,001

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1. The internet and job seeking

The state of the job market consistently ranks among Americans' [top policy priorities](#), and access to online resources has long been viewed – by policymakers and the public alike – as an essential tool to help Americans find and apply for jobs. The FCC's [National Broadband Plan](#) cited expanded access to jobs and training as a key benefit of increased broadband adoption, and a 2010 Pew Research Center survey [found that](#) two-thirds of Americans believe people without broadband are at a disadvantage when it comes to finding out about job opportunities or learning new career skills. [Other studies](#) have found that the internet is especially important to the job seeking habits of certain demographic groups, such as African Americans.

This report, based on a nationally representative survey of 2,001 U.S. adults ages 18 and older, documents the current state of digital job seeking in America. It first examines the basic contours of this issue – how many people have looked or applied for a job online, how the internet stacks up to other sources of job information in terms of overall importance, and how confident Americans feel in their own digital job-seeking skills. After that, the report examines the specific role smartphones and social media platforms are playing in Americans' job seeking habits.

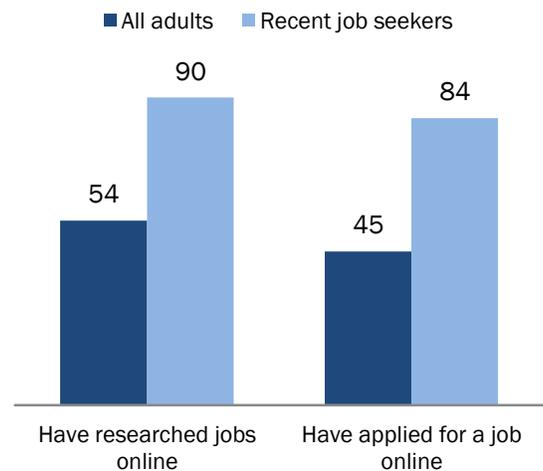
The internet is a near-universal resource among those who have looked for work recently

Digital resources are now more important than ever to Americans' ability to research and apply for jobs. A majority of Americans (54%) have gone online to look for information about a job, and nearly as many (45%) have applied for a job online. The proportion of Americans who research jobs online has doubled in the last 10 years: In a Pew Research Center survey conducted in early 2005, 26% of Americans had used the internet to look for job information.³

Notably, these figures are based on the entire public – many of whom are retired, not in the job market, or have simply not had a reason to look for a job recently. Narrowing the focus to the 34% of Americans who have actually looked for a new job in the last two years, fully 90% of these recent job seekers have ever used the internet to research jobs, and 84% have applied to a job online.

Researching and applying for jobs online is nearly universal among recent job seekers

% in each group who ...



Note: "Recent job seekers" are defined as those who have looked for a new job in the last two years.

Survey conducted June 10-July 12, 2015. Sample size = 2,001

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³ This is the first time Pew Research Center has conducted a stand-alone measurement of how many Americans actually apply for jobs online.

Not surprisingly, young adults are the demographic group most likely to engage in these online job seeking behaviors. Roughly eight-in-ten Americans ages 18 to 29 have researched (83%) as well as applied for a job (79%) online. However, a substantial majority of those ages 30 to 49 (and a sizeable minority of those ages 50 to 64) have engaged in these behaviors as well.

Along with these differences related to age, African Americans are more likely than whites to engage in online job-seeking behaviors; urban and suburban residents are more likely to do so than those living in rural areas; and Americans with higher levels of income and educational attainment are more likely to do so than those with lower income and education levels.

Online employment resources now rival personal and professional networks as a top source of job information

Clearly, the vast majority of American job seekers have utilized online resources at one time or another to look for and apply for jobs – but the internet is just one resource that job seekers might take advantage of when looking for work. How do online resources stack up to the many other ways of looking for and finding employment, whether online or offline?

To examine this question more deeply, the survey asked a series of questions about the resources recent job seekers took advantage of in their *most recent* search for employment. These findings illustrate that Americans utilize a wide range of resources when looking for work – but online resources, along with personal and professional networks, are especially important when it comes to finding employment in America today.

Demographics of online job seeking

% of U.S. adults in each group who have ...

	Looked online for job info	Applied for a job online
All adults	54%	45%
Male	53	44
Female	55	46
18-29	83	79
30-49	68	57
50-64	43	32
65+	10	7
White, non-Hispanic	50	43
Black, non-Hispanic	60	56
Hispanic	55	43
Less than high school	32	24
High school grad	44	38
Some college	60	51
College+	65	56
Less than \$30K	50	43
\$30-\$74,999K	57	50
\$75K or more	62	51
Urban	58	51
Suburban	55	47
Rural	41	31

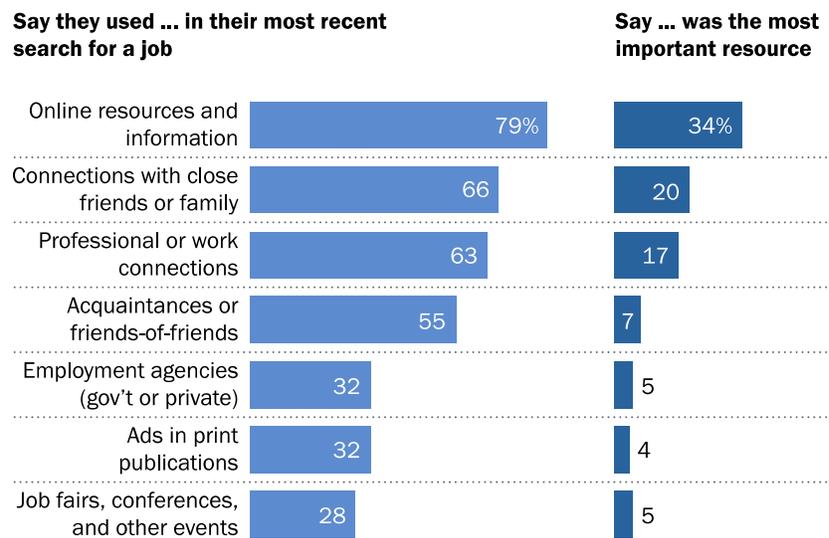
Survey conducted June 10-July 12, 2015. Sample size = 2,001

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Roughly one-third of Americans (34%) indicate that they have looked for a new job at some point in the last two years, and 79% of these job seekers utilized resources or information they found online as part of their most recent employment search. By comparison, 66% of these recent job seekers turned to personal connections with close friends or family members, 63% turned to professional or work connections, and 55% sought assistance from acquaintances or friends-of-friends. Taken together, 80% of recent job seekers used professional contacts, close personal connections, and/or more distant personal connections in their most recent search for employment – nearly identical to the 79% who used online resources and information.

Roughly one-third of recent job seekers say the internet was the most important resource available to them during their most recent employment search

Among Americans who have looked for a new job in the last two years, the % who ...



Note: Based on the 34% of Americans who have looked for a new job in the last two years

Survey conducted June 10-July 12, 2015. Sample size = 2,001

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Several other resources are used by a substantial minority of recent job seekers: 32% utilized government or private employment agencies in their most recent job search, 32% utilized ads in print publications, and 28% utilized events such as conferences or job fairs.

Job seekers in a range of demographic groups rely heavily on the internet as an employment resource,⁴ but Americans with high levels of educational attainment are especially likely to do so. Some 88% of college graduates utilized online resources and information as part of their most recent job search, compared with 77% of those who have attended but not graduated from college, and 69% of those who have not attended college at all.

⁴ Due to the relatively small number of African Americans (n=87) and Latinos (n=85) in this survey who indicated looking for a new job in the last two years, we are not able to include a stand-alone analysis of the specific resources that these groups utilize when looking for work.

Educational attainment has long been a **strong predictor** of whether or not Americans go online or not, but the differences noted here are *not* merely the result of higher rates of internet adoption by Americans with relatively high education levels. Even when non-internet users are excluded from this analysis, job seekers who have attended or graduated from college are substantially more likely to rely on online resources compared with job seekers with only a high school education.

These better-educated job seekers are also more likely than job seekers with lower education levels to have relied on professional connections (but not close personal connections or friends-of-friends) in their most recent job search. Nearly three-quarters (72%) of college graduates utilized professional connections in their most recent job search, compared with 59% of those who have attended but not graduated from college, and 57% of those who have not attended college at all.

34% of job seekers point to resources and information they found online as the *most important source of information in their most recent job search*

Americans today typically incorporate a number of different information sources into their hunt for employment: Fully 52% of recent job seekers indicate that they utilized four or more resources (out of a total of seven) in their most recent employment search, while just 11% indicate that they used only one resource. But although job seekers tend to leave few stones unturned when searching for employment, a small number of resources – including those found online – stand out as being especially important to a large number of Americans.

In addition to asking which resources they utilized in any way during their most recent job search, the survey also asked these job seekers to indicate the resource they consider to be the *single most important* in helping them look for work. Roughly one-third of job seekers (34%) say resources and information they found online were the *most important* resource they used in their last job search; 20% cite close personal connections, and 17% cite professional or work contacts as their most important resource.

Relatively modest numbers of job seekers point towards other types of resources as their most important source of assistance during their most recent job search: 7% cite connections with acquaintances or friends-of-friends, 5% cite employment agencies, 5% cite events such as job fairs, and 4% cite ads in print publications.

There are relatively few demographic differences when it comes to the resources job seekers rely on most heavily when looking for work. Younger job seekers and those who have not attended college were a bit more likely to say personal connections with friends or family members were

most important when they were looking for work, while college graduates and older job seekers tend to indicate they relied more heavily on professional or work contacts.

Minority of Americans lack confidence in digital job-seeking skills

As job-related services and information increasingly move online, most Americans feel fairly confident in their ability to navigate various aspects of the digital job hunt. But at the same time, a minority lack confidence in their ability to perform even relatively basic tasks such as emailing potential employers or finding lists of available jobs online. This is especially true among those who have not attended college and those who are not currently employed for pay.

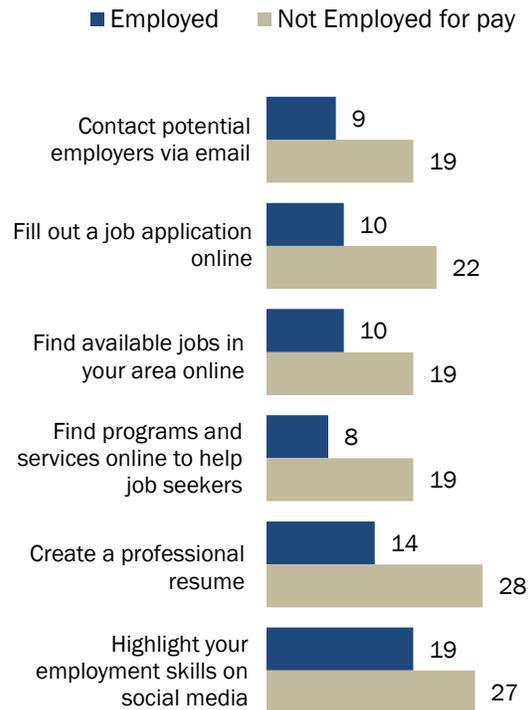
The survey asked Americans (not including those who indicate that they are either retired or disabled when asked for their employment status) how easy it would be for them to perform a number of tasks in the event they needed to look for a new job and found that:

- 87% say it would be easy to *look up online services and programs available to job seekers*, with 58% saying this would be “very easy.”
- 86% say it would be easy to *contact and follow up with potential employers via email*, with 70% saying this would be “very easy.”
- 86% say it would be easy to *fill out a job application online*, with 65% saying this would be “very easy.”
- 85% say it would be easy to *go online to find lists of available jobs*, with 63% saying this would be “very easy.”
- 80% say it would be easy to *create a professional resume*, with 54% saying this would be “very easy.”
- 74% say it would be easy to *highlight their employment skills using a personal website or social media profile*, with 45% saying this would be “very easy.”

Clearly, the ability to engage in these behaviors might be especially useful for people who are not currently employed – and yet, Americans who are not employed for pay are much more likely than those who are to indicate that they would have a difficult time performing these tasks. For instance, 28% of Americans who are currently not employed indicate that it would *not* be easy to create a professional resume if they needed to do so (compared with 14% of those who currently have a job); 22% would have a hard time filling out an online job application (compared with 10% of those who are currently employed); and 19% would have a hard time contacting employers via email, finding lists of jobs online, or looking up services available to job seekers.⁵

Many who are not currently employed lack confidence in their digital job-seeking skills

% in each group who say it would NOT be easy to do the following if they needed to look for a new job



Note: Based on those who are not retired or disabled; Employed category includes both full-time and part-time workers.

Survey conducted June 10-July 12, 2015. Sample size = 2,001

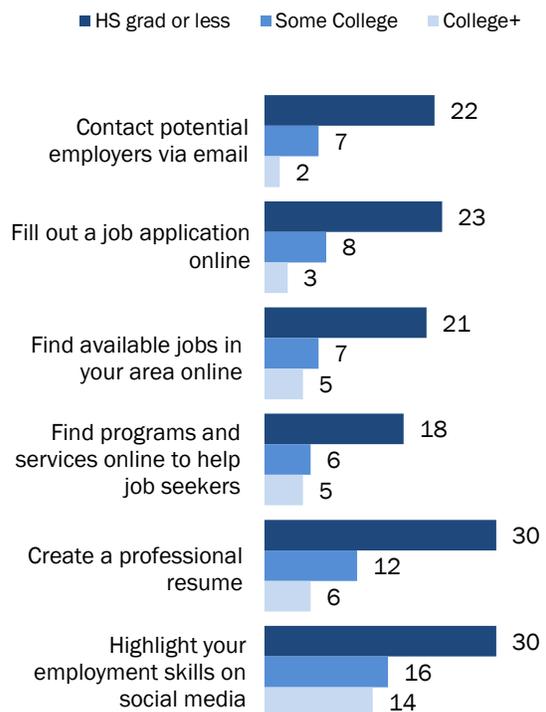
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⁵ Among Americans who are not currently employed for pay, 13% do not use the internet, 43% lack broadband service at home, and 58% have a high school diploma or have not completed high school.

Americans who have not attended college also indicate that they would have a particularly difficult time performing many of these tasks. Roughly one-in-five adults with a high school diploma or less indicate that it would *not* be easy to contact a potential employer via email, find programs online that help job seekers, fill out an online job application, or find lists online of available jobs in their local area. And nearly one-in-three who haven't attended college indicate that it would be *not* be easy for them to create a professional resume or use social media to highlight their job skills. In each case, Americans who have attended and/or graduated from college are significantly more comfortable with these aspects of the modern job seeking process.

Many who have not attended college would find it difficult to look for a job digitally

% in each group who say it would NOT be easy to do the following if they needed to look for a new job



Note: Based on those who are not retired or disabled

Survey conducted June 10-July 12, 2015. Sample size = 2,001

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2. Job seeking in the era of smartphones and social media

As the internet has become an increasingly important resource for finding and applying for jobs, significant disparities persist when it comes to the devices and tools that job seekers have available to access these resources. As home broadband adoption has slowed in recent years, smartphones have become a key source of online access for [as many as one-in-five Americans](#). And out of choice or necessity, many job seekers are now incorporating mobile devices into various aspects of their search for employment – despite the fact that these devices might not be ideal for tasks such as building a resume or cover letter.

In addition to the growing relevance of mobile devices, a [substantial majority](#) of working-age Americans now use at least one social media platform. Social media potentially offers a place for job seekers to tap into their networks for help finding work, alert their friends when they hear of jobs availabilities, or promote their own skills in a way that is publicly visible to potential employers. On the other hand, the public nature of these platforms puts potential job seekers at risk that something they say on social media could be used against them when applying for a job.

This chapter takes a closer look at the use and impact of smartphones and social media on job seeking in America today.

28% of Americans – and half of young adults – have used a smartphone during a job search

Some 68% of American adults now own a smartphone, and 41% of these smartphone owners have used their mobile phone in some aspect of a job search. That works out to 28% of all Americans (including smartphone owners, as well as non-owners) who have utilized a smartphone as part of a job search in some way or another. In the analysis that follows, we refer to this 28% of the public as “smartphone job seekers.”

Young adults are especially likely to use their smartphones to look for work: 53% of 18- to 29-year-olds have used a smartphone as part of a search for employment. This behavior is not limited to just the youngest job seekers, as 37% of 30- to 49-year-olds have done so as well. African Americans also tend to rely heavily on smartphones when looking for employment: 38% are smartphone job seekers, compared with 24% of whites.

Americans with high levels of income and educational attainment often have a number of devices and access options to choose from when they wish to go online. Yet interestingly, these Americans are actually *more* likely than those with lower income and education levels to use a smartphone when looking for work. For example, some 35% of college graduates (and 33% of those who have attended but not graduated college) are smartphone job seekers, compared with 18% of those who have not attended college.⁶

When asked about the overall impact of their smartphone on their ability to look for work and access career resources, fully 47% of smartphone job seekers say that their phone is “very important” to them and an additional 37% describe it as “somewhat important.” Fewer than one-in-five smartphone job seekers describe their phone as either “not too important” (13%) or “not at all important” (3%) when it comes to their ability to look for jobs. And

53% of 18- to 29-year-olds have used a smartphone as part of a job search

% of U.S. adults in each group who have used a smartphone in any way as part of a job search

All adults	28%
Male	27
Female	28
18-29	53
30-49	37
50-64	13
65+	3
White, non-Hispanic	24
Black, non-Hispanic	38
Hispanic	29
HS grad or less	18
Some college	33
College+	35
Less than \$30K	22
\$30-\$74,999K	32
\$75,000K or more	36
Urban	33
Suburban	26
Rural	20

Survey conducted June 10-July 12, 2015.
Sample size = 2,001

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⁶ As will be discussed in more detail in the analysis that follows, these more highly educated users typically incorporate their mobile devices into relatively simple aspects of the job search process, such as calling employers or doing basic research.

a substantial majority of smartphone job seekers describe their phone as “very” or “somewhat” important across various age, income and educational categories.

Roughly one-quarter of “smartphone job seekers” have used their phone to create a resume or cover letter

When asked about specific ways in which they have used their phones during a job search, these smartphone job seekers report utilizing their mobile devices for a wide range of purposes. Three relatively basic job-seeking behaviors – browsing job listings, calling or emailing potential employers – stand out as particularly widespread:

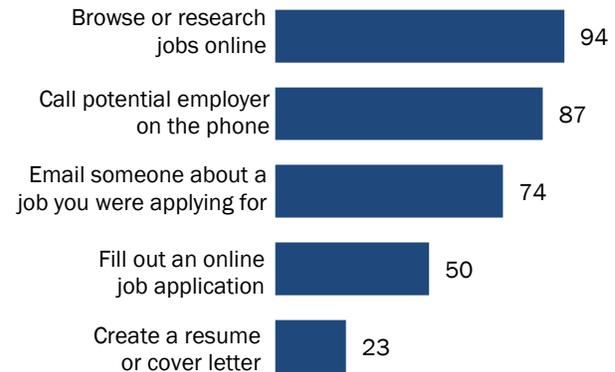
- 94% of smartphone job seekers have used their smartphone to *browse or research jobs online*.
- 87% have used their smartphone to *call a potential employer on the phone*.
- 74% have used their smartphone to *email someone about a job they were applying for*.

More complex activities – such as filling out a job application or creating a resume on one’s smartphone – are less common, but are still done by a relatively substantial proportion of smartphone job seekers:

- 50% of smartphone job seekers have used their smartphone to *fill out an online job application*.
- 23% have used their smartphone to *create a resume or cover letter*.

Half of smartphone job seekers have filled out a job application using their phone; nearly one-quarter have used a smartphone to create a resume or cover letter

Among Americans who have used a smartphone as part of a job search, the % who have done so in order to ...



Note: Based on the 28% of Americans who have used a smartphone during a job search.

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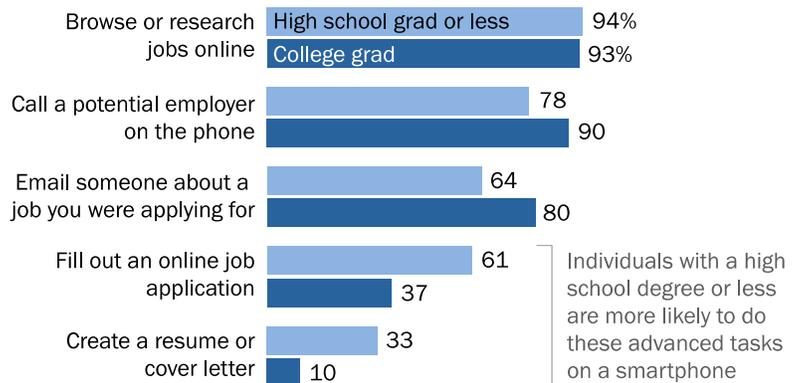
As noted above, college graduates are more likely than Americans who have not attended college to incorporate their smartphone into a job search in one way or another. However, there are substantial differences between those with lower and higher levels of educational attainment when it comes to the specific ways that each group uses their mobile devices for job seeking.

Overall, college graduates who use their smartphone during a job search are more likely to use it for basic communication tasks. For example, they are more likely to have used their smartphone to call a potential employer on the phone (90% have used their phone in this way, compared with 78% of those who have not attended college) or to email someone about a job in which they were interested (80% vs. 64%).

On the other hand, smartphone job seekers lacking college experience are substantially more likely to have used their phone for relatively advanced tasks, such as filling out an online job application (61% vs. 37% among college graduates). They are also three times as likely to have used their phone to create a resume or cover letter – fully 33% of smartphone job seekers with a high school diploma or less have created a resume or cover letter using their phone, compared with just 10% of those with a college degree.⁷ And while the survey did not specifically probe people’s reasons for using their phones in this way, the availability of more traditional access options (or lack thereof) looms large: Among Americans who have used their smartphone as part of a job search, those who have not attended college are around three times as likely as college graduates to say that they *do not* currently have broadband service at home.

Smartphone job seekers with lower education levels are much more likely to use their phone to fill out a job application or to create a resume or cover letter

Among Americans who have used a smartphone as part of a job search, the % in each education group who have done so in order to ...



Survey conducted June 10-July 12, 2015. Sample size = 2,001

Note: based on the 28% of Americans who have used a smartphone during a job search.

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⁷ Due to the relatively small number of African Americans (n=77) and Latinos (n=75) in this survey who have used a smartphone to look for a job, we are not able to include a stand-alone analysis of the specific tasks that people in these groups have conducted on their smartphones while looking for work.

Many smartphone job seekers have encountered challenges using their phones during job search

Even as many smartphone owners are using their phones in various aspects of the job seeking process, the experience of navigating that process on a small screen lacking a dedicated keyboard can be a challenge for many users.

The survey asked about a number of problems or challenges smartphone job seekers might encounter while using their mobile devices and found that problems reading or accessing job-related content are among the most prominent. Some 47% of smartphone job seekers have had problems *accessing job-related content* because it wasn't displaying properly on their phone, and an identical 47% have had problems *reading the text in a job posting* because it was not designed for a mobile device.

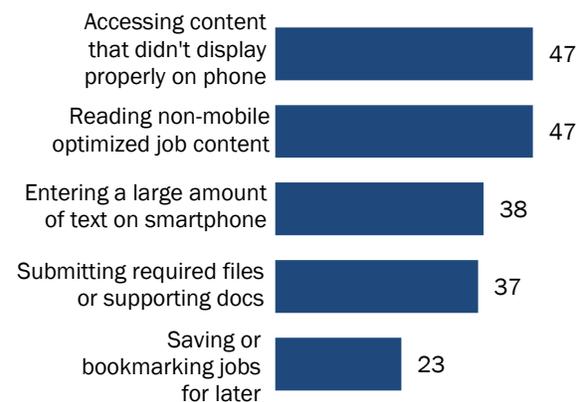
Many smartphone job seekers have also encountered problems with text entry or with being able to submit the required documents necessary to apply for a job. Some 38% of smartphone job seekers have had problems *entering a large amount of text* on their smartphone while searching for a job, while 37% have had problems *submitting the files or other supporting documents* needed to apply for a job. An additional 23% have had problems *saving or bookmarking jobs* on their phone so they could go back and apply for them later.

Social media has become an important venue for today's job seekers

Some 65% of Americans now use social media platforms, and for many users these sites offer a venue for highlighting professional accomplishments to prospective employers, finding jobs through one's networks and alerting friends to available employment opportunities.

Nearly half of smartphone job seekers have had problems accessing or reading job-related content on their smartphone

Among Americans who have used a smartphone as part of a job search, the % who have experienced problems ...



Note: Based on the 28% of Americans who have used a smartphone during a job search.

Survey conducted June 10-July 12, 2015. Sample size = 2,001

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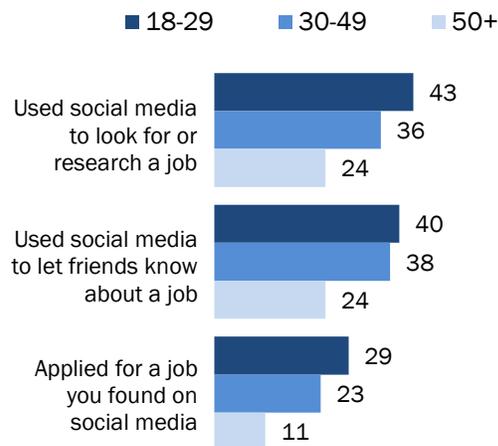
Among Americans who use social media:

- 35% have used social media to look for or research a job.
- 34% have used social media to inform their friends of an available job at their place of employment.
- 21% have applied for a job they initially found out about through their social media contacts.

Younger social media users are especially active when it comes to using these platforms to look for employment and alert their networks about available jobs, but this behavior is in no way limited to these younger users alone. Social media users ages 30 to 49 are just as likely as younger users to engage in each of these behaviors, and roughly one-quarter of social media users ages 50 and older have used these platforms to look for work and let their friends know about job openings at their own company.

Social media users from many age groups use these platforms for employment-related purposes

% of social media users in each age group who have ...



Note: Based on the 65% of Americans who use social media.

Survey conducted June 10-July 12, 2015. Sample size = 2,001

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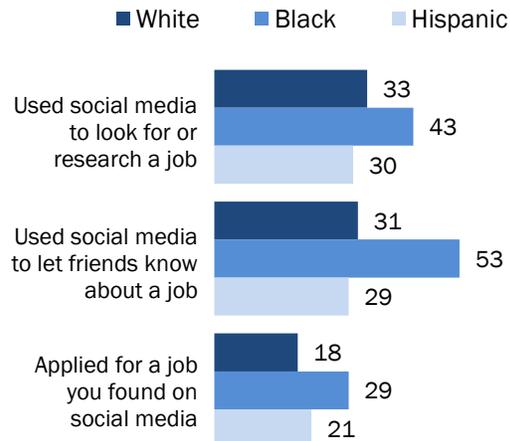
African American social media users also report using these platforms for job-related purposes at higher rates relative to whites. This is particularly true when it comes to alerting one's friend networks about available jobs via social media – fully 53% of African American social media users have done this, compared with 31% of whites.

Along with serving as a venue for finding and researching jobs, prospective job seekers can also use their social media presence to highlight relevant skills to prospective employers. Just over one-in-ten social media users (13%) say information that they have posted on social media has helped them to get a job.

On the other hand, information posted on social media can also have negative employment consequences, although the frequency is more limited: Some 2% of social media users say information they've posted on social media has caused them to lose a job or not get hired for a job they were applying for.⁸

African Americans are especially likely to use social media for job-seeking

% of social media users in each group who have ...



Note: Based on the 65% of Americans who use social media.

Survey conducted June 10-July 12, 2015. Sample size = 2,001

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⁸ Of course, this 2% figure represents the proportion of social media users who are aware their behavior or posts on social media have impacted them in this way. It is possible more have experienced these negative consequences, but are not aware of having done so.

Methodology

The analysis in this report is based on a Pew Research Center survey conducted June 10-July 12, 2015, among a national sample of 2,001 adults, 18 years of age or older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia. Fully 701 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone and 1,300 were interviewed on a cellphone, including 749 who had no landline telephone. The survey was conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. A combination of landline and cellphone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see <http://www.pewresearch.org/methodology/u-s-survey-research/>

The combined landline and cellphone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and nativity, and region to parameters from the 2013 Census Bureau's American Community Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status (landline only, cellphone only, or both landline and cellphone) based on extrapolations from the 2014 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cellphones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size among respondents with a landline phone. The margins of error reported and statistical tests of significance are adjusted to account for the survey's design effect, a measure of how much efficiency is lost from the weighting procedures.

The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus...
Total sample	2,001	2.5 percentage points
Internet users	1,740	2.7 percentage points
Smartphone owners	1,327	3.1 percentage points
Social media users	1,223	3.2 percentage points
Have looked for job in last two years	605	4.6 percentage points
Have used smartphone as part of job search	487	5.1 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

Pew Research Center is a nonprofit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization and a subsidiary of The Pew Charitable Trusts, its primary funder.

Survey Questions

WEB1-A Next... Please tell me if you ever use the internet to do any of the following things. Do you ever... [INSERT ITEMS; RANDOMIZE]?

	TOTAL HAVE EVER DONE THIS	----- DID YESTERDAY	HAVE NOT DONE THIS	(VOL.) DON'T KNOW	(VOL.) REFUSED
<i>Based on all internet users [N=1,740]</i>					
Look online for information about a job ⁹					
Current	62	n/a	38	*	0
May 2011	56	11	43	*	0
May 2010	54	10	46	0	0
April 2009	52	9	48	0	0
May 2008	47	6	53	*	--
August 2006	46	5	54	0	--
January 2005	44	7	56	0	--
June 2004	42	4	58	*	--
May 2003	43	6	57	0	--
March 12-19, 2003	44	8	56	0	--
March/May 2002	47	4	53	*	--
March 2000	38	5	62	0	--
<i>Based on all internet users [N=1,740]</i>					
Apply for a job online					
Current	52	n/a	48	*	0

⁹ In January 2005, item wording was "Look for information about a job online." Prior to January 2005, item wording was "Look for information about a job."

JOB1 These days, many resources for job seekers are posted online and employers often expect applicants to find and apply for jobs using the internet, email, or mobile apps. If you needed to look for a new job, how easy would it be for you to [INSERT ITEMS; RANDOMIZE] if you needed to do so ... very easy, somewhat easy, not too easy, or not at all easy?

Next, how easy would it be to [INSERT ITEM]? [IF NECESSARY: Very easy, somewhat easy, not too easy, or not at all easy?]

Based on those who are employed, not employed, students, other, DK or Refused [N=1,369]

	VERY EASY	SOMEWHAT EASY	NOT TOO EASY	NOT AT ALL EASY	(VOL.) DON'T USE INTERNET OR MOBILE APPS	(VOL.) DK	(VOL.) REFUSED
a. Create a professional resume	54	26	9	8	*	2	*
b. Use email to contact and follow up with potential employers	70	16	5	7	1	1	*
c. Go online to find a list of available jobs in your area	63	22	7	5	*	2	*
d. Fill out a job application online	65	21	6	6	*	1	1
e. Use a social media profile or personal website to highlight your employment skills	45	29	12	9	1	3	1
f. Go online to look up services and programs that are available to help job seekers	58	29	5	5	1	2	*

JOB2 In the last two years have you looked for a new job, or have you not done this?

CURRENT		
%	34	Yes
	65	No
	*	(VOL.) Don't know
	0	(VOL.) Refused

JOB3 People may use many different resources when looking for a job. Thinking of your MOST RECENT job search, please tell me if you used any of the following resources. (First,/Next,) what about [INSERT ITEMS; RANDOMIZE; ASK a,b,c TOGETHER AND IN ORDER; ITEM h ALWAYS LAST]? [READ FOR FIRST ITEM, THEN AS NECESSARY: Did you use this in your most recent job search?]

Based on those who have looked for a job in the last two years [N=605]

	YES	NO	(VOL.) DK	(VOL.) REFUSED
a. Personal connections with close friends or family members	66	34	0	0
b. Personal connections with acquaintances or friends of friends	55	45	*	0
c. Connections with people you know from a professional or work setting	63	37	*	0
d. Resources or information you found online	79	21	*	0
e. Government or private employment agencies	32	68	*	0
f. Ads in print publications	32	67	*	0
g. Job fairs, conferences, or other events	28	72	*	0
h. Some other resource I haven't already mentioned (SPECIFY)	11	86	3	*

JOB4 Thinking of the resources that you used in your last job search, which of them was the MOST important? [READ OPTIONS IF NECESSARY: Was it [READ; ONLY INCLUDE "YES" RESPONSES FROM JOB3; LIST RESPONSES IN SAME ORDER AS JOB3]]¹⁰

Based on those who have looked for a job in the last two years [N=605]

	CURRENT	
%	34	Resources or information you found online
	20	Personal connections with close friends or family member
	17	Connections with people you know from a professional or work setting
	7	Personal connections with acquaintances or friends of friends
	5	Government or private employment agencies
	5	Job fairs, conferences, or other events
	4	Ads in print publications
	4	Or some other resource
	1	(VOL.) Don't know JOB4
	1	(VOL.) Refused JOB4
	2	None is a resource

¹⁰ Question was asked of respondents who gave two or more "Yes" responses in JOB3. Results shown here also include respondents who gave only one "Yes" response in JOB3.

SMJOB1 Have you ever used your smartphone as part of a job search in any way?

Based on all smartphone owners [N=1,327]

	CURRENT	
%	41	Yes
	59	No
	0	(VOL.) Don't know
	0	(VOL.) Refused

SMJOB2 Thinking about some specific ways you might have used your smartphone as part of a job search, have you used a smartphone to... [INSERT ITEMS; RANDOMIZE]? Have you ever used your smartphone to [INSERT NEXT ITEM]?

Based on smartphone job seekers [N=487]

	YES	NO	(VOL.) DK	(VOL.) REFUSED
a. Browse or research jobs online	94	6	0	0
b. Email someone about a job you were applying for	74	26	*	0
c. Fill out an online job application	50	50	0	0
d. Create a resume or cover letter	23	77	0	0
e. Call a potential employer on the phone	87	13	0	0

SMJOB3 Overall, how important is your smartphone when it comes to looking for job and career resources? Is it [READ]

Based on smartphone job seekers [N=487]

	CURRENT	
%	47	Very important
	37	Somewhat important
	13	Not too important, OR
	3	Not at all important?
	*	(VOL.) Don't know
	*	(VOL.) Refused

SMJOB4 Thinking about some problems you might have experienced while using your smartphone in a job search, have you ever experienced problems... [INSERT ITEMS; RANDOMIZE]? Next, have you ever had problems [INSERT NEXT ITEM]?

Based on smartphone job seekers [N=487]

	YES	NO	(VOL.) DK	(VOL.) REFUSED
a. Entering a large amount of text on your smartphone while searching for a job	38	61	*	*
b. Accessing job-related content because it wasn't displaying properly on your phone	47	52	*	*
c. Submitting files or supporting documents that were required for a job application	37	61	2	*
d. Saving or book marking jobs on your phone that you were interested in so you could apply to them later	23	76	1	*
e. Reading the text in a job posting or application because it was not designed for a mobile device	47	52	1	*

SNSJOB1 Thinking about social media sites like Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn... Have you ever... [INSERT ITEMS; RANDOMIZE]?

Based on social media users [N=1,223]

	YES	NO	(VOL.) DK	(VOL.) REFUSED
a. Used social media to look for or research a job	35	65	0	*
b. Applied for a job that you found out about on social media	21	79	0	*
c. Used social media to let your friends know about a job that was available at your place of employment	34	66	*	*

SNSJOB2 Has information that you've posted on social media ever... [INSERT ITEMS; RANDOMIZE]?

Based on social media users [N=1,223]

	YES	NO	(VOL.) DK	(VOL.) REFUSED
a. Helped you get a job	13	86	1	*
b. Caused you to lose a job, or not get hired for a job you were applying for	2	97	*	*