



The State Bar of California



ATILS TASK FORCE STUDY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A key initiative for The State Bar of California is to improve access to and affordability of legal services. As part of this effort, The State Bar formed the [Task Force on Access Through Innovation of Legal Services](#) (ATILS). The goal of the ATILS task force is to recommend regulatory changes to increase access to legal services, including regulatory changes that might support the delivery of legal services through online modalities. To help inform this work, The State Bar engaged NORC at the University of Chicago to investigate the rates at which Californians have access to the internet and what barriers might exist to Californians' use of online legal services.

Lack of access to the internet is not a major barrier for using online legal services for most Californians. At least 88% of Californian adults across demographic groups report having access to the internet at home, either through a broadband subscription or via a cellular data plan with a smartphone.¹ Smartphone dependency – accessing the internet through a smartphone only, rather than with a broadband or satellite subscription – can have a major impact on how individuals interact with websites and the usability of website features. Few Californians, however, are smartphone dependent. Californians with less education are more likely to lack access to the internet via broadband; still, just 11% of those with a high school diploma or less are smartphone dependent.

Californians' personal confidence using the internet, as well as their attitudes about the reliability of legal services online, are barriers to increasing the use of legal websites. About a quarter of Californians lack a high degree of confidence in their own ability to use the internet, and only a third

¹ Any reported differences between subgroups have been confirmed as statistically significant differences at the $p < 0.05$ level in both multivariate regression and bivariate significance testing. In all models, multivariate significance testing controls for age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, income, and whether the respondent speaks Spanish at home.

believe online information about legal issues is accurate. While 75% of Californians have looked for legal information online – such as legal forms or advice – fewer have done so among those who are less confident in their own digital ability as well as those who have concerns about the reliability of online information. Given these barriers, Californians place highest priority on a legal-advice website having high standards of data security, privacy protections comparable to those for lawyers and clients offline, and involvement of a lawyer in the website’s content.

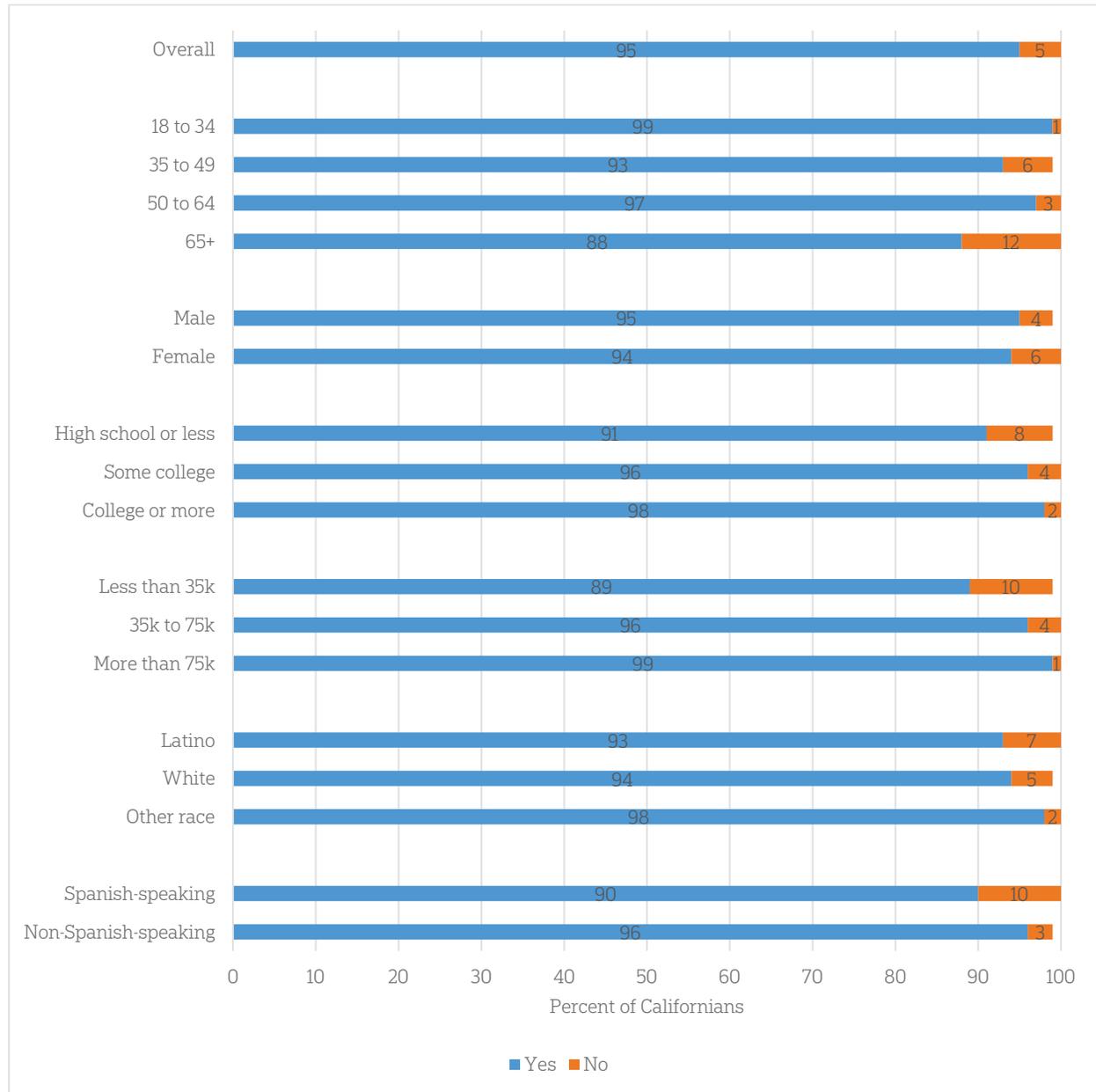
Other key findings:

- Californians place a higher priority on lawyers owning a law firm they are considering using (65% extremely or very important) than a legal-advice website they are deciding to use (46%).
- Older Californians and those with less education express lower levels of confidence in using the internet.
- Among those Californians that report seeking some form of online legal help, the most common legal issues they sought assistance for are money, debt, or tax issues, jobs and employment concerns, and health and medical benefits. As shown in the [2019 California Justice Gap Study](#), these are the most common civil legal issues Californians experience.

INTERNET ACCESS AND USAGE

A broad majority of Californians have internet access at home. Californians age 65 and older, those with lower household incomes and those who speak Spanish are somewhat less likely to have access. Still, at least 88% among these groups are able to get online at home. There are not significant differences among the other demographic groups.

Figure 1: Most Californians across demographic groups have access to internet at home.

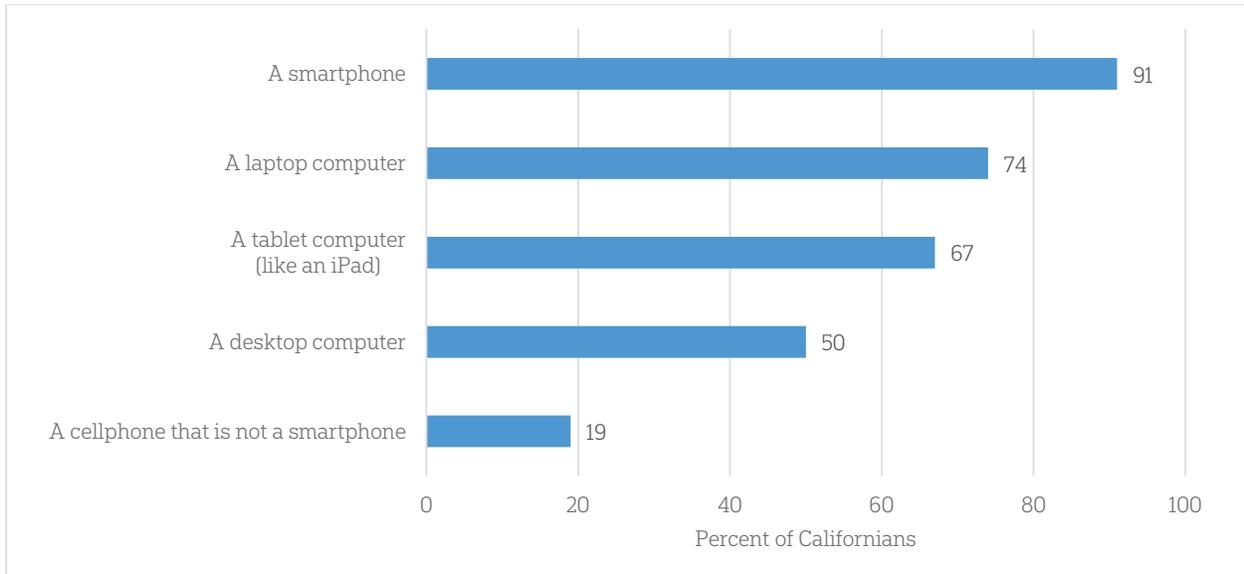


Question: Do you have access to the internet at home?

Source: State Bar of California survey conducted 1/22-2/4/2020 with 1,037 California adults, by NORC at the University of Chicago.

Californians have a variety of devices at home that could be used to access the internet. The most common is a smartphone, but half or more also have a laptop, tablet, or desktop computer. Few Californians report having a non-smartphone cellphone.

Figure 2: Most Californians have smartphones at home.

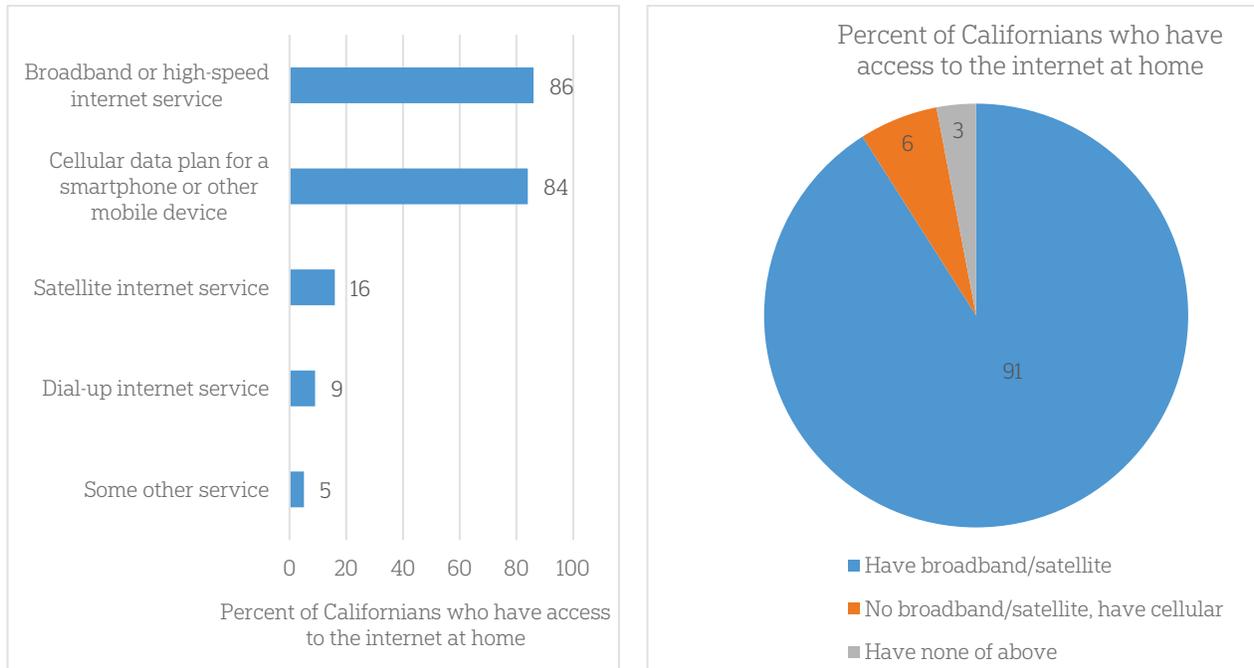


Question: Do you, personally, have access to each of the following at home, or not?

Source: State Bar of California survey conducted 1/22-2/4/2020 with 1,037 California adults, by NORC at the University of Chicago.

Among those Californians with access to the internet at home, the two most common ways to get online are through a broadband or a cellular data plan. Few have service through satellite or dial-up. Just 6% of those with internet access report being smartphone dependent – meaning they have access to the internet via a cellular data plan only and not through broadband or satellite service.

Figure 3: Broadband and cellular data are the most common ways that Californians access the internet at home; few have cellular and no broadband or satellite service



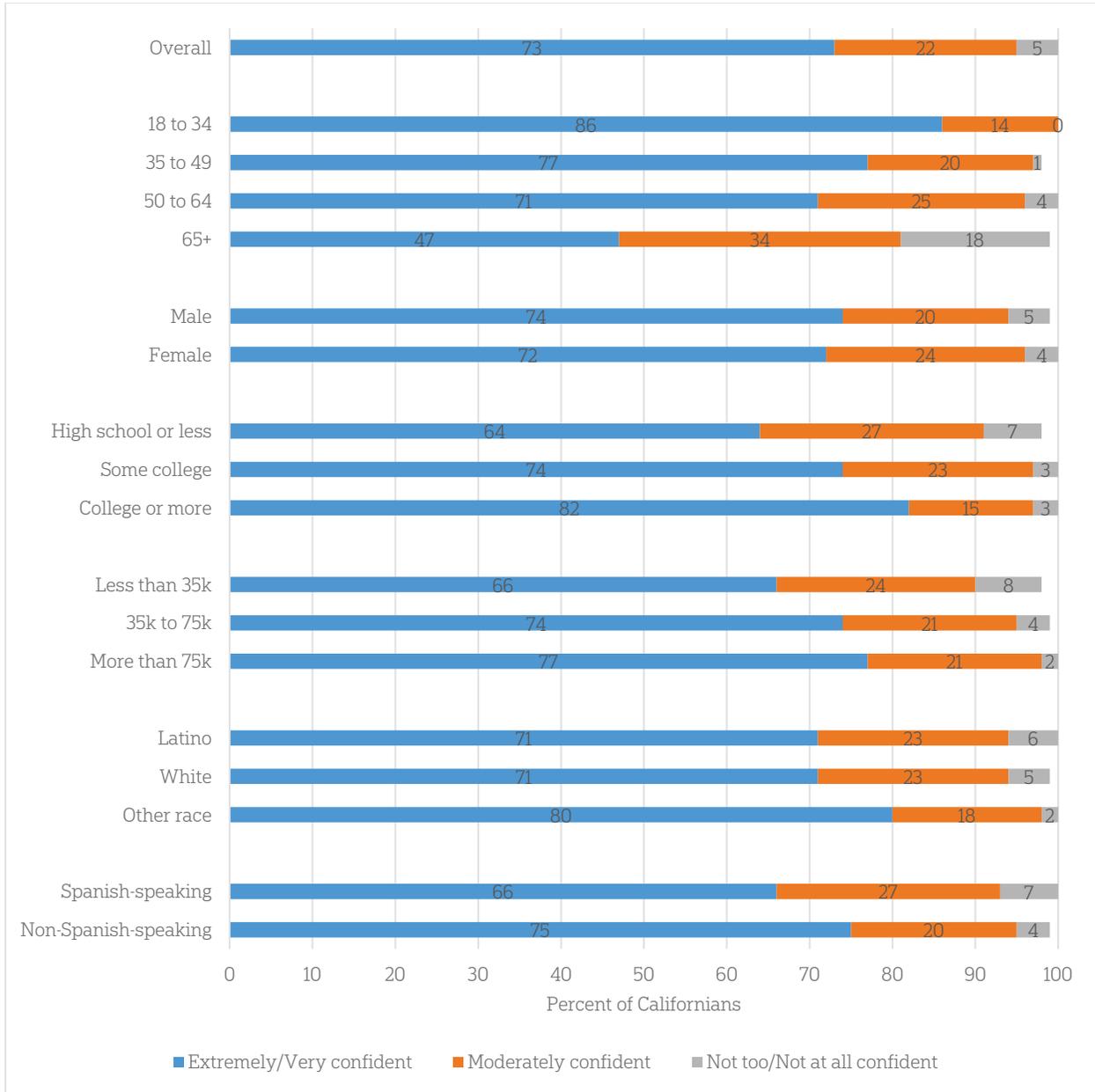
Question: Do you have access to the internet at home using a:
Source: State Bar of California survey conducted 1/22-2/4/2020 with 1,037 California adults, by NORC at the University of Chicago.

Californians use the internet often, and a majority is comfortable doing so. Ninety percent use it at least once a day, including 89% who go online several times a day. Just 9% do so less often than daily.

Nearly three-quarters of Californians are extremely or very confident using electronic devices to do things online, while 22% are moderately confident, and just 5% are not too or at all confident.

Californians who are older are less likely to access the internet daily and less likely to feel confident doing so. Adults with lower incomes are less likely to access the internet frequently, while adults with less education are less likely to feel confident using the internet. There are no significant differences by gender, race and ethnicity, or language on either of these questions.

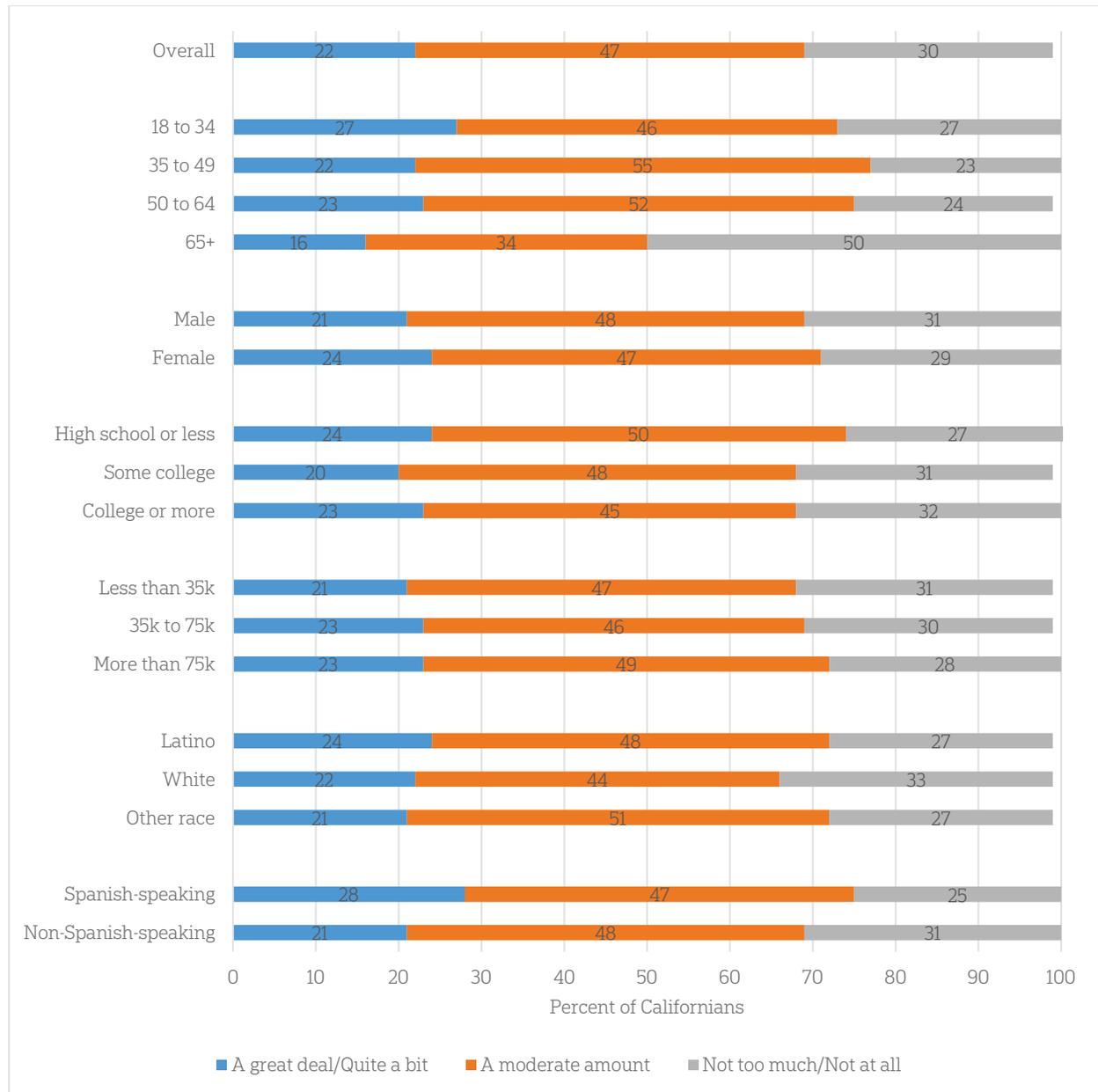
Figure 4: Older Californians and those with less education are less confident using the internet.



Question: Overall, how confident do you feel using computers, smartphones, or other electronic devices to do things online?
 Source: State Bar of California survey conducted 1/22-2/4/2020 with 1,037 California adults, by NORC at the University of Chicago.

Despite high levels of internet usage, most Californians have only a moderate amount of trust in the security of their information online. Older Californians are least likely to trust websites to secure their personal information. No significant differences emerge among other demographic groups.

Figure 5: Few Californians trust websites to store their personal information safely.

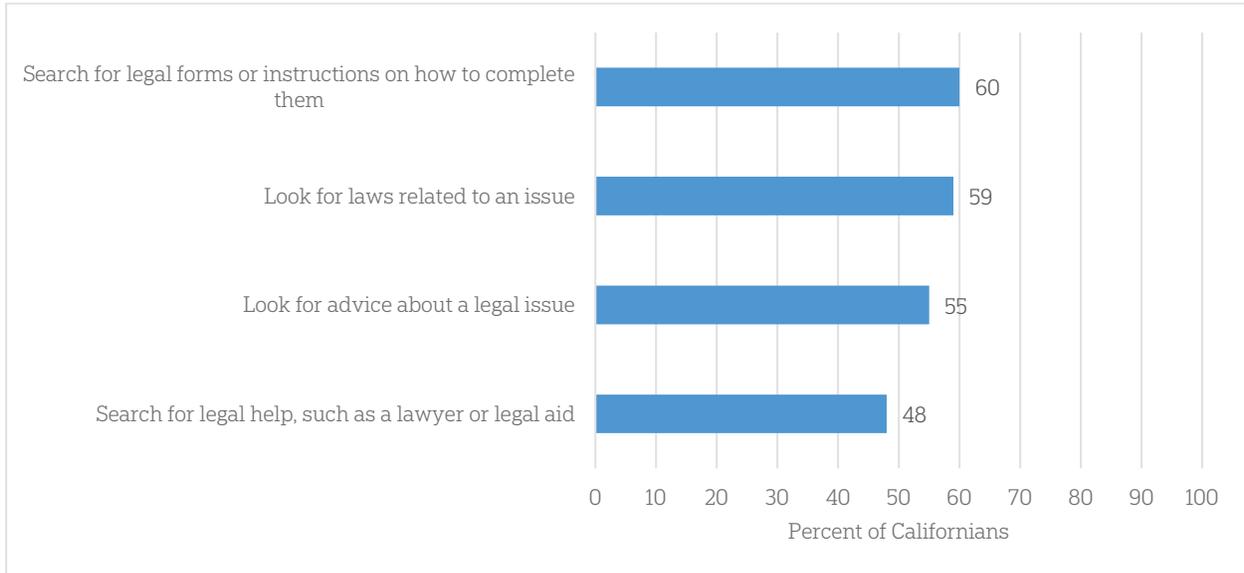


Question: How much do you trust websites to properly secure personal information that you share with them online?
Source: State Bar of California survey conducted 1/22-2/4/2020 with 1,037 California adults, by NORC at the University of Chicago.

ADDRESSING LEGAL ISSUES ONLINE

Many Californians have searched for some form of online help with legal issues. The most common activities are looking for legal forms or how to complete them, and researching laws related to an issue they are experiencing. Fewer Californians report searching for lawyers or legal aid offices online. Three-quarters of Californians have done at least one of these activities online.

Figure 6: Many Californians have gone online for legal advice.

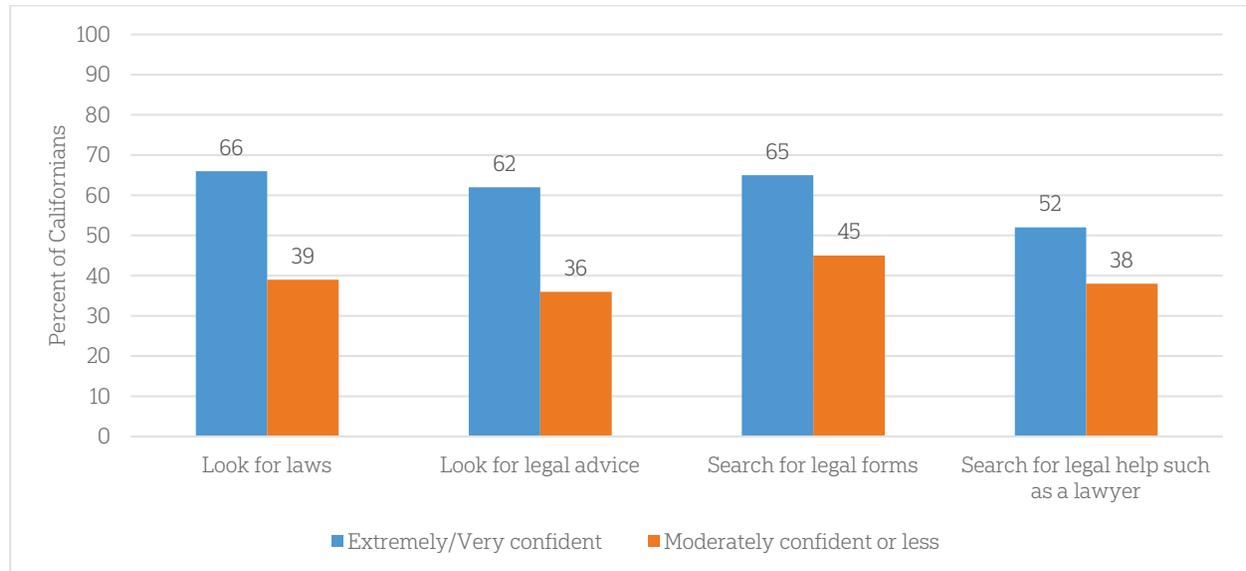


Question: Have you ever used the internet to do any of the following?

Source: State Bar of California survey conducted 1/22-2/4/2020 with 1,037 California adults, by NORC at the University of Chicago.

Californians who are confident using the internet are more likely to have gone online for legal help. For example, 66% of Californians who are comfortable with the internet say they have looked online for laws related to an issue they were experiencing, compared with just 39% of those who are less confident.

Figure 7: Californians who are comfortable with the internet are more likely to use it for legal advice.



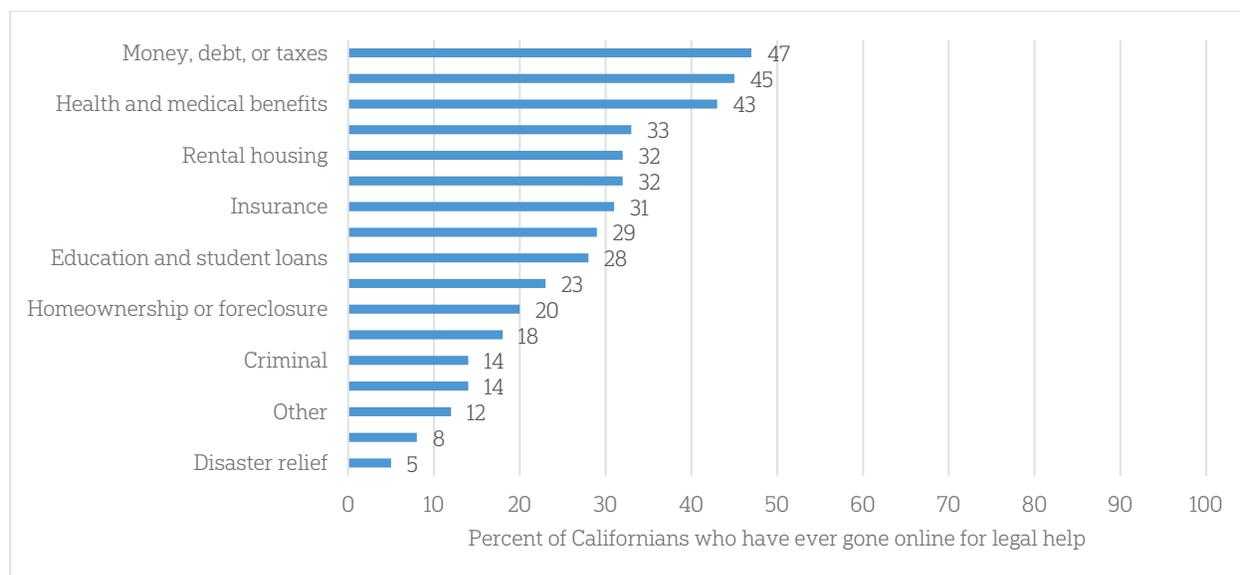
Questions: Overall, how confident do you feel using computers, smartphones, or other electronic devices to do things online? / Have you ever used the internet to do any of the following?

Source: State Bar of California survey conducted 1/22-2/4/2020 with 1,037 California adults, by NORC at the University of Chicago.

Californians age 65 and older and those with lower levels of education are less likely to have sought legal information online. For example, 39% of older adults have looked online for laws about an issue, compared with 63% of those age 18 to 34. Similarly, 45% of Californians with a high school degree or less have used the internet to look for laws, while 70% of college graduates have done this.

Among those Californians who report seeking some form of online legal help, the most common legal issues they sought assistance for are money, debt, or tax issues, jobs and employment concerns, and health and medical benefits. As noted in the 2019 California Justice Gap Study, these are the most common civil legal issues Californians face. Californians are least likely to go online for help with criminal issues, immigration issues, veteran's benefits, or disaster relief.

Figure 8: Californians are most likely to go online for legal help with finance, employment, or health issues.



Question: What types of legal issues did you seek help for online? Select all that apply.

Source: State Bar of California survey conducted 1/22-2/4/2020 with 1,037 California adults, by NORC at the University of Chicago.

There are some large demographic differences in the type of legal issues Californians investigate online. Among those who have gone online to seek help for legal issues, those age 18-34 are much more likely to look for help with education and student loan concerns than those age 65 or older (44% vs. 8%); conversely, older Californians are more focused on wills and estates (50% vs. 10%).

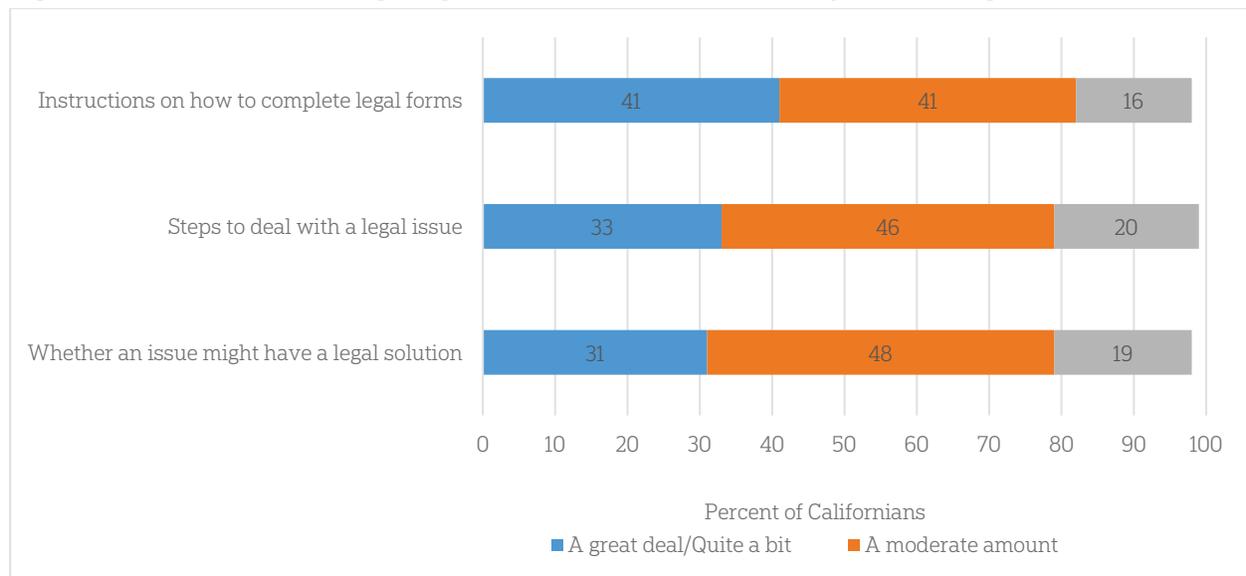
Men are much more likely than women to search for information related to money, debt, or taxes (57% vs. 38%), and less likely to seek help with family, children, or divorce issues (18% vs. 28%), as well as disability benefits (12% vs. 23%).

Californians with at least a college degree are more focused on education concerns (34% vs. 21%) than those with a high school diploma or less.

Californians with a household income below \$35,000 are more likely to have searched for legal information related to rental housing (44% vs. 23%), disability benefits (28% vs. 13%), and government benefits (39% vs. 26%) than those with household incomes of \$75,000 or more; those with higher incomes are more likely to seek help for wills and estates (38% vs. 19%).

When it comes to the accuracy of online legal information, Californians are most confident in information about how to complete legal forms. Fewer have a high degree of trust in online advice about legal steps to solve a particular problem or whether an issue might have a legal solution.

Figure 9: Californians lack a high degree of confidence in the accuracy of online legal information.

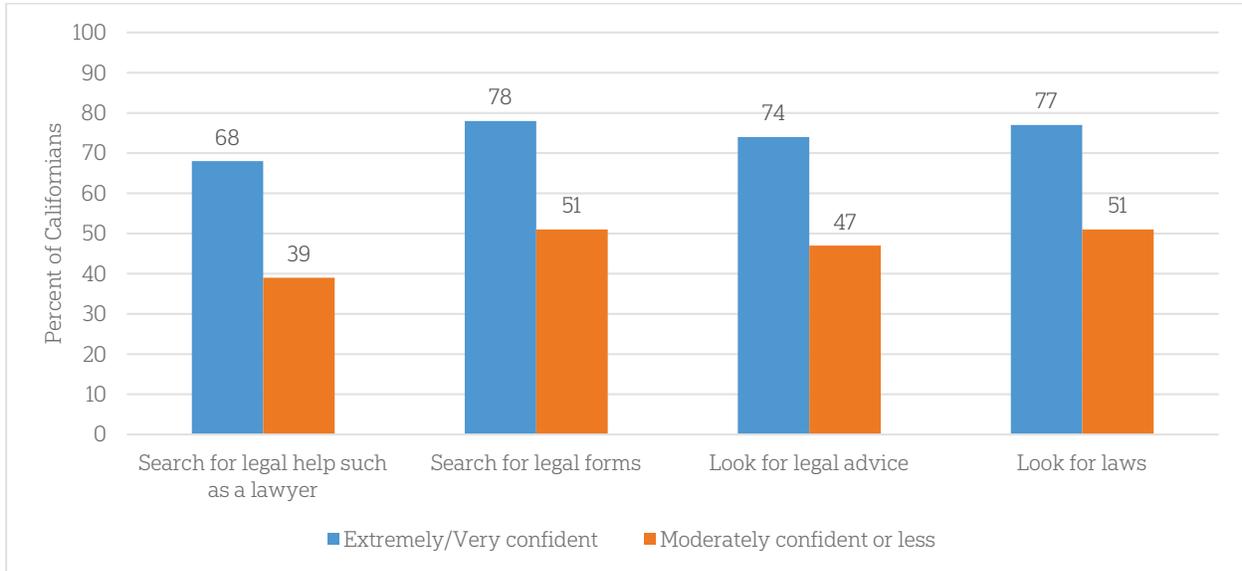


Question: How much confidence do you have in the accuracy of online information about:
Source: State Bar of California survey conducted 1/22-2/4/2020 with 1,037 California adults, by NORC at the University of Chicago.

Younger Californians are more confident about the accuracy of online information they encounter. For example, 46% of adults age 18-34 say they are confident in the accuracy of online instructions about legal forms compared with 34% of those age 65 or older.

Trust in the accuracy of online legal information is strongly related to whether Californians go online to get legal advice. For example, those who have a high degree of trust in online information about steps to deal with a legal issue are at least 26 percentage points more likely to turn to the internet to find legal help across the four items asked about.

Figure 10: Californians who are confident in the accuracy of online legal information are more likely to go online for legal advice.

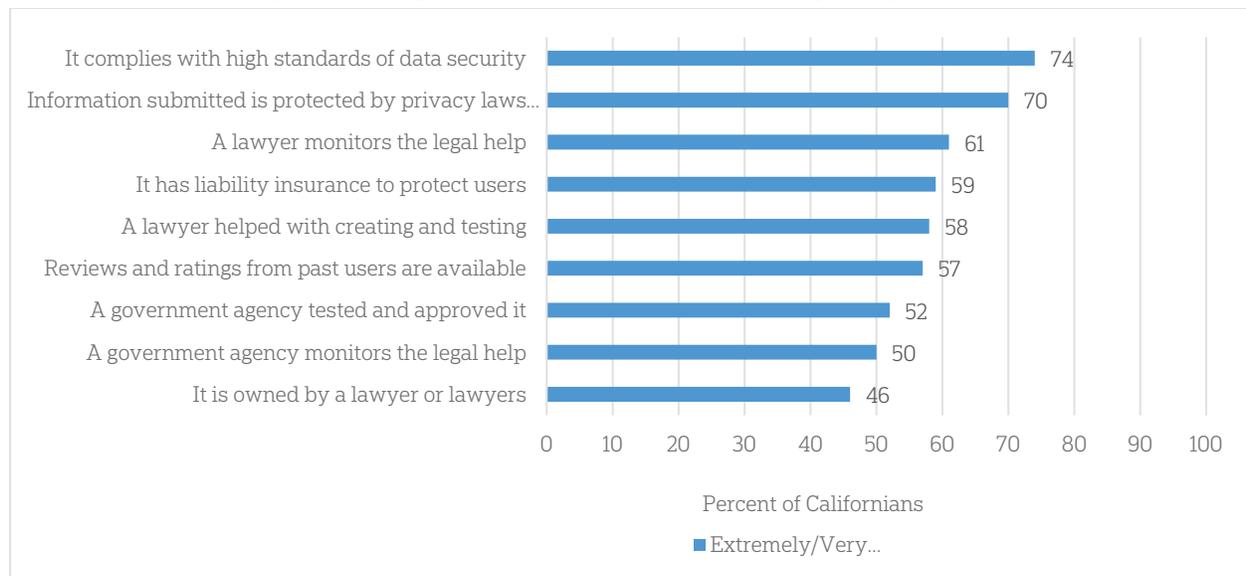


Questions: Overall, how much confidence do you have in the accuracy of online information about steps to deal with a legal issue you're experiencing? / Have you ever used the internet to do any of the following?

Source: State Bar of California survey conducted 1/22-2/4/2020 with 1,037 California adults, by NORC at the University of Chicago.

The key components to promoting the use of a legal website are strict security, protections for information shared just like meeting with a lawyer in person, and the involvement of lawyers in the website's content. Broad majorities of Californians say that high standards for data security and protections for privacy of information are extremely or very important to them when deciding to use a website that offers legal help. Lawyers monitoring the legal advice given and being involved with creating and testing the website or application are also top priorities.

Figure 11: Data security is most important to Californians seeking legal help online.



Question: When deciding to use a website or application that offers legal help, how important is it to you that:
Source: State Bar of California survey conducted 1/22-2/4/2020 with 1,037 California adults, by NORC at the University of Chicago.

Still, lawyers *owning* the website is less critical when it comes to getting online legal advice than when looking for a law firm. While 65% of Californians say that a law firm being owned by lawyers is extremely or very important to them when deciding to use it, just 46% say the same about using a website for legal advice.

Californians who primarily speak Spanish at home (58% vs. 43% of non-Spanish speakers) and women (53% vs. 39% of men) are more likely to value a website or application being owned by lawyers.

STUDY METHODOLOGY

This survey was conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago with funding from The State Bar of California.

Data were collected using the AmeriSpeak Panel, NORC's probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. household population. During the initial recruitment phase of the panel, randomly selected U.S. households were sampled with a known, non-zero probability of selection from the NORC National Sample Frame and then contacted by U.S. mail, email, telephone, and field interviewers (face-to-face). The panel provides sample coverage of approximately 97% of the U.S. household population. Those excluded from the sample include people with P.O. Box only addresses, some addresses not listed in the USPS Delivery Sequence File, and some newly constructed dwellings.

Interviews for this survey were conducted between January 22 and February 4, 2020, with adults age 18 and over representing California. Panel members who reside in California were randomly drawn from AmeriSpeak, with their state of residence reconfirmed in field. A total of 1,037 completed the survey—955 via the web and 82 via telephone. Interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish, depending on respondent preference. The final stage completion rate is 25.5%, the weighted household panel response rate is 24.1%, and the weighted household panel retention rate is 85.6%, for a cumulative response rate of 5.26%. The overall margin of sampling error is +/-4.28 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level, including the design effect. The margin of sampling error may be higher for subgroups. Below is a table of the major subgroups analyzed in this report, with unweighted n-sizes and percentages, as well as the final weighted percentage.

Once the sample has been selected and fielded, and all the study data have been collected and made final, a raking process is used to adjust for any survey nonresponse as well as any noncoverage or under- and oversampling resulting from the study-specific sample design. Weighting variables included age, gender, census division, race/ethnicity, internet access, and education. Weighting variables were obtained from the 2018 Current Population Survey and the 2018 American Community Survey. The weighted data reflect the California population of adults age 18 and over.

	Unweighted n	Percent (unweighted)	Percent (weighted)
Gender			
Men	502	48	49
Women	535	52	51
Age			
18-34	249	24	32
35-49	242	23	26
50-64	260	25	23
65+	286	28	19
Education			
High school or less	163	16	38
Some college	378	36	28
Bachelor's degree or more	496	48	34
Race/Ethnicity			
White (non-Latino)	538	52	41
Latino	289	28	35
Other non-Latino, non-white	210	20	24
Household income			
Less than \$35,000	285	27	33
\$35,000 to \$74,999	286	28	27
More than \$75,000	466	45	39
Language spoken at home			
Spanish	174	17	23
Not Spanish	863	83	77

For more information, please contact info@apnorc.org.

ABOUT THE STATE BAR OF CALIFORNIA

The State Bar of California's mission is to protect the public and includes the primary functions of licensing, regulation, and discipline of attorneys; the advancement of the ethical and competent practice of law; and support of efforts for greater access to, and inclusion in, the legal system.

The State Bar:

- Licenses attorneys and regulates the profession and practice of law in California
- Enforces Rules of Professional Conduct for attorneys
- Disciplines attorneys who violate rules and laws
- Administers the California Bar Exam
- Advances access to justice
- Promotes diversity and inclusion in the legal system

Created by the legislature in 1927, The State Bar is an arm of the California Supreme Court, protecting the public by licensing and regulating attorneys.

The State Bar licenses more than 250,000 attorneys, investigates approximately 16,000 complaints of attorney misconduct annually and distributes over \$30 million in grants to legal aid organizations.

The State Bar serves the people of California through careful oversight of the legal profession.

ABOUT NORC AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

NORC at the University of Chicago is an independent research institution that delivers reliable data and rigorous analysis to guide critical programmatic, business, and policy decisions. Since 1941, NORC has conducted groundbreaking studies, created and applied innovative methods and tools, and advanced principles of scientific integrity and collaboration. Today, government, corporate, and nonprofit clients around the world partner with NORC to transform increasingly complex information into useful knowledge.

NORC conducts research in five main areas: Economics, Markets and the Workforce; Education, Training, and Learning; Global Development; Health and Well-Being; and Society, Media, and Public Affairs.

For more information, visit www.norc.org

State Bar of California: Online Access Poll

Conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago

Interviews: 01/22-02/04/2020

1,037 adults

Margin of error: +/- 4.3 percentage points at the 95% confidence level among all adults

NOTE: All results show percentages among all respondents, unless otherwise labeled.

Attachment B: NORC ATILS Survey Report

State Bar of California: Online Access Poll

Q1. Do you, personally, have access to each of the following at home, or not?

AP-NORC 01/22-02/04/2020	Yes	No	DON'T KNOW	SKIPPED/ REFUSED
A smartphone	91	9	*	1
A cellphone that is not a smartphone	19	75	-	5
A desktop computer	50	48	-	2
A laptop computer	74	24	-	2
A tablet computer (like an iPad)	67	30	-	3

N = 1,037

Q2. Do you have access to the Internet at home?

	AP-NORC 01/22-02/04/2020
Yes	95
No	5
DON'T KNOW	-
SKIPPED/REFUSED	*

N = 1,037

Show if Yes in Q2.

Q3. Do you have access to the Internet at home using a:

AP-NORC 01/22-02/04/2020	Yes	No	DON'T KNOW	SKIPPED/ REFUSED
Cellular data plan for a smartphone or other mobile device	84	12	*	4
Broadband or high speed Internet service such as cable, fiber optic, or DSL service installed in your home	86	12	*	2
Satellite Internet service installed in your home	16	77	*	7
Dial-up Internet service installed in your home	9	85	1	6
Some other service	5	85	1	9

N = 1,002

Attachment B: NORC ATILS Survey Report

State Bar of California: Online Access Poll

Q4. How often do you use the Internet?

	AP-NORC 01/22-02/04/2020
Several times a day/Once a day NET	90
Several times a day	89
Once a day	2
Several times a week	4
Once a week/Less often NET	5
Once a week	1
Less often	4
DON'T KNOW	*
SKIPPED/REFUSED	*

N = 1,037

Q5. Overall, how confident do you feel using computers, smartphones, or other electronic devices to do things online?

	AP-NORC 01/22-02/04/2020
Extremely/Very confident NET	73
Extremely confident	44
Very confident	29
Moderately confident	22
Not too/Not confident at all NET	5
Not too confident	2
Not confident at all	3
DON'T KNOW	-
SKIPPED/REFUSED	1

N = 1,037

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State Bar of California: Online Access Poll

Q6. How much do you trust websites to properly secure personal information that you share with them online?

	AP-NORC 01/22-02/04/2020
A great deal/Quite a bit NET	22
A great deal	6
Quite a bit	17
A moderate amount	47
Not too much/Not at all NET	30
Not too much	25
Not at all	5
DON'T KNOW	-
SKIPPED/REFUSED	*

N = 1,037

Q7. Have you ever used the Internet to do any of the following?

AP-NORC 01/22-02/04/2020	Yes	No	DON'T KNOW	SKIPPED/ REFUSED
Look for advice about a legal issue you or someone in your household was experiencing	55	43	*	1
Search for legal help, such as a lawyer or legal aid	48	51	-	*
Look for laws related to an issue you or someone in your household was experiencing	59	40	-	1
Search for legal forms or instructions for completing legal forms	60	40	-	1

N = 1,037

Attachment B: NORC ATILS Survey Report

State Bar of California: Online Access Poll

Show if Yes to any in Q7.

Q8. What types of legal issues did you seek help for online? Select all that apply.

	AP-NORC 01/22-02/04/2020
Families, children, or divorce, including child support and custody	23
Health and medical benefits, including health insurance	43
Education and student loans	28
Rental housing, including eviction	32
Money, debt, or taxes	47
Disability benefits	18
Homeownership or foreclosure	20
Jobs and employment	45
Disaster relief	5
Veterans benefits	8
Wills and estates	29
Immigration	14
Criminal	14
Traffic	33
Insurance, other than health insurance	31
Government benefits, including social security and food stamps	32
Other	12
DON'T KNOW	-
SKIPPED/REFUSED	1

N = 808

Q9. How much confidence do you have in the accuracy of online information about:

AP-NORC 01/22-02/04/2020	A great deal/Quite a bit NET	A great deal	Quite a bit	A moderate amount	Not too much/None at all NET	Not too much	None at all	DK	SKP/REF
Whether an issue you're experiencing might have a legal solution	31	8	23	48	19	13	7	1	1
Steps to deal with a legal issue you're experiencing	33	8	25	46	20	12	8	*	1
Instructions to complete legal forms	41	10	31	41	16	9	7	1	1

N = 1,037

Attachment B: NORC ATILS Survey Report

State Bar of California: Online Access Poll

Q10. When deciding to use a website or application that offers legal help, how important is it to you that:

AP-NORC 01/22-02/04/2020	Extremely /Very imp. NET	Extremely imp.	Very imp.	Moderately imp.	Not too/Not imp. at all NET	Not too imp.	Not imp. at all	DK	SKP/ REF
A lawyer helped with the original creation and testing of it	58	25	33	27	13	9	5	*	2
A lawyer regularly monitors the legal help provided by it	61	28	33	28	10	6	3	*	1
It is owned by a lawyer or lawyers	46	17	29	32	20	14	6	1	1
A government agency tested and approved it	52	21	30	32	15	10	6	*	1
A government agency monitors the legal help provided by it	50	21	29	33	15	9	6	*	1
Reviews and ratings from past users are posted on it	57	26	31	32	9	5	3	*	1
It complies with high standards of data security	74	44	30	19	6	3	2	1	1
The information users submit to it is protected by confidentiality and privacy laws just like information shared with a lawyer	70	42	28	22	7	4	3	1	1
It has liability insurance that protects users	59	27	33	28	11	8	3	1	1

N = 1,037

Attachment B: NORC ATILS Survey Report

State Bar of California: Online Access Poll

Q11. When deciding to use a law firm, how important is it to you that it is owned by lawyers, rather than other types of professionals?

	AP-NORC 01/22-02/04/2020
Extremely/Very important NET	65
Extremely important	32
Very important	33
Moderately important	26
Not too/Not important at all NET	8
Not too important	6
Not important at all	2
DON'T KNOW	*
SKIPPED/REFUSED	1
N =	1,037

AGE.

	AP-NORC 01/22-02/04/2020
18-24	12
25-34	20
35-44	17
45-54	15
55-64	18
65-74	12
75+	7
N =	1,037

GENDER.

	AP-NORC 01/22-02/04/2020
Male	49
Female	51
N =	1,037

Attachment B: NORC ATILS Survey Report

State Bar of California: Online Access Poll

RACE.

	AP-NORC 01/22-02/04/2020
White	41
Black or African American	6
Hispanic	35
Other	19

N = 1,037

MARITALSTATUS.

	AP-NORC 01/22-02/04/2020
Married	41
Widowed	5
Divorced	12
Separated	3
Never married	28
Living with partner	10

N = 1,037

EMPLOYMENTSTATUS.

	AP-NORC 01/22-02/04/2020
Employed	57
Not employed	43

N = 1,037

EDUCATION.

	AP-NORC 01/22-02/04/2020
Less than a high school diploma	14
High school graduate or equivalent	23
Some college	28
College graduate or above	34

N = 1,037

Attachment B: NORC ATILS Survey Report

State Bar of California: Online Access Poll

INCOME.

	AP-NORC 01/22-02/04/2020
Under \$10,000	6
\$10,000 to under \$20,000	10
\$20,000 to under \$30,000	13
\$30,000 to under \$40,000	9
\$40,000 to under \$50,000	6
\$50,000 to under \$75,000	17
\$75,000 to under \$100,000	14
\$100,000 to under \$150,000	15
\$150,000 or more	11
N =	1,037

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For more information, please contact info@apnorc.org.

About the State Bar of California

The State Bar of California's mission is to protect the public and includes the primary functions of licensing, regulation and discipline of attorneys; the advancement of the ethical and competent practice of law; and support of efforts for greater access to, and inclusion in, the legal system.

The State Bar:

- Licenses attorneys and regulates the profession and practice of law in California
- Enforces Rules of Professional Conduct for attorneys
- Disciplines attorneys who violate rules and laws
- Administers the California Bar Exam

Attachment B: NORC ATILS Survey Report

State Bar of California: Online Access Poll

- Advances access to justice
- Promotes diversity and inclusion in the legal system

Created by the Legislature in 1927, the State Bar is an arm of the California Supreme Court, protecting the public by licensing and regulating attorneys.

The State Bar licenses more than 250,000 attorneys, investigates approximately 16,000 complaints of attorney misconduct annually and distributes over \$30 million in grants to legal aid organizations.

We serve the people of California through careful oversight of the legal profession.

About NORC at the University of Chicago

NORC at the University of Chicago is an independent research institution that delivers reliable data and rigorous analysis to guide critical programmatic, business, and policy decisions. Since 1941, NORC has conducted groundbreaking studies, created and applied innovative methods and tools, and advanced principles of scientific integrity and collaboration. Today, government, corporate, and nonprofit clients around the world partner with NORC to transform increasingly complex information into useful knowledge.

NORC conducts research in five main areas: Economics, Markets and the Workforce; Education, Training, and Learning; Global Development; Health and Well-Being; and Society, Media, and Public Affairs.