

Electronic Technology (ET) Project

Background

The initiation for this project is based on our shared awareness that the millennium generation is engaged with online technology, especially social media, such as Facebook, YouTube, instant messaging and texting, and we wanted to know if these trends include WIC participants. Since this generation expects to access programs and schedule appointments online, WIC Programs are rethinking how to reach WIC participants and how to design online programs.

Key Partners and Stakeholders

USDA Western Region WIC Programs include Alaska, American Samoa, Arizona, California, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Navajo Nation, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington. Consultants are Altarum Institute, Amanda Hovis & Company, Limetree Research, Tim Hoerl, and Western Michigan University.

Goal

We wanted to discover innovative ways to serve the ever growing tech-savvy WIC participants and identify new online approaches to communicate with WIC participants.

Objectives

1. Conduct research of online communication tools used by WIC participants and their interest in online WIC services.
2. Evaluate the research, identify WIC participants preferred tools and WIC services.
3. Conduct strategic planning research and recommend an implementation plan.

Methods

In October, November and December 2011, the consultants conducted a total of 17 focus groups throughout the Western Region. Four focus groups were conducted in California (CA): 1 in English at Watts Healthcare Corporation, 2 in English and 1 in Spanish at United Health Centers of San Joaquin Valley.

From November 7, 2011 to December 9, 2011, every state and territory in the Western Region (WR) participated in the online survey.

California Results

The results of the **CA focus groups** confirmed that WIC participants are engaged online and are interested in online WIC services.

A total of 8,144 WIC participants in the WR completed the survey and 640 of the surveys were completed in Spanish. **In California**, 6108 WIC participants completed the survey and 557 of the surveys were completed in Spanish. **In California**, 270 (4.6%) of the participants completing the survey are 15-19 years of age; 3807 (64.6%) are 20-31 years of age or in the millennial generation, and 1820 (30.9%) are 32 or more years of age.

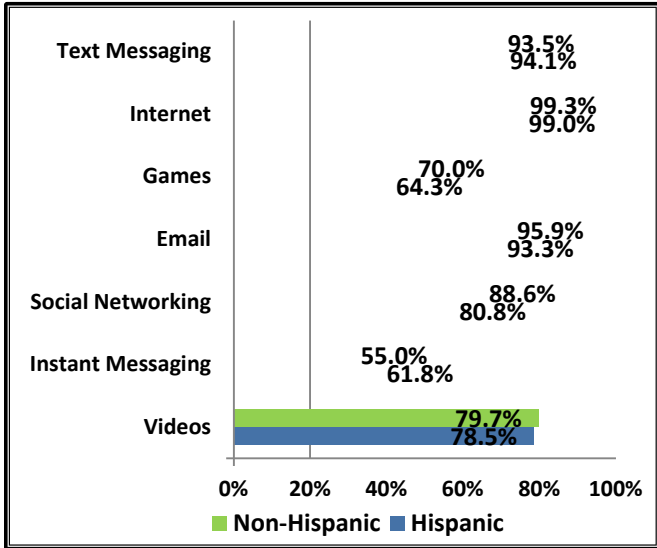
CA Survey results

- 92.3% (5622) own a cell phone.
- 80% (4477) have unlimited texting.
- 56.7% (3172) have unlimited data plans.
- 25.2% (1419) own a basic cell phone without a data plan.

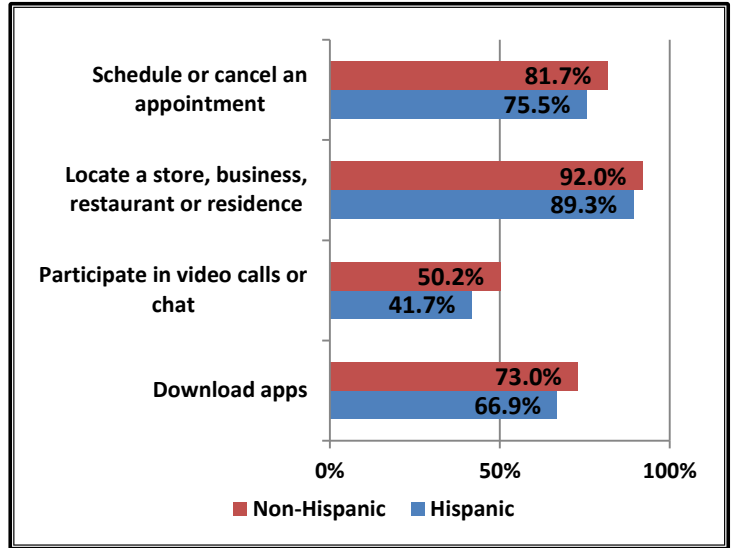


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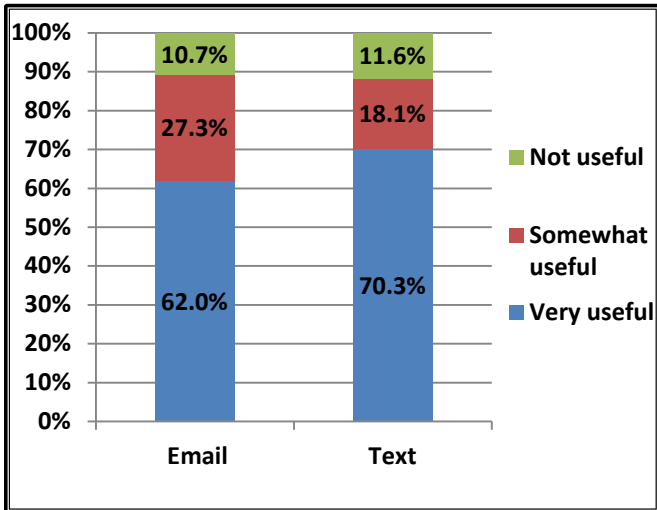
CA WIC Participants Usage of Apps (Hispanic vs. Non-Hispanic)



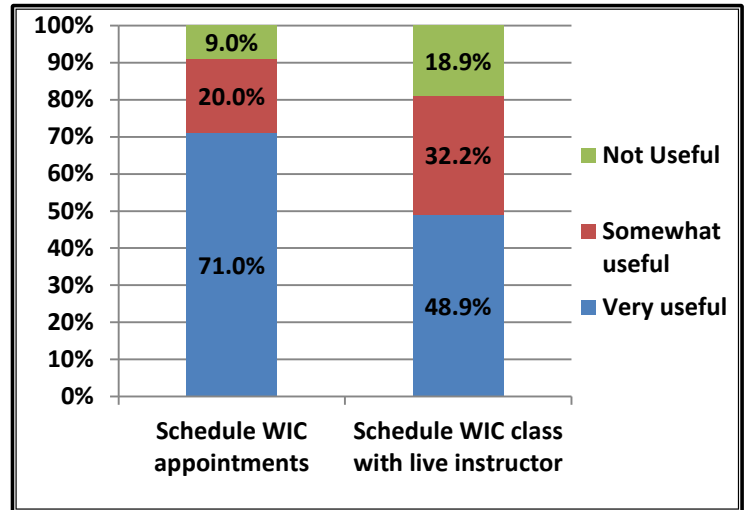
Percentage of CA WIC Participants currently use the internet to...? (Hispanic vs. Non-Hispanic)



CA -How useful would it be to receive WIC appointment reminders via....?



CA -How useful would it be online to ...?



Summary

We confirmed WIC participants use of online technology, applications, and interest in connecting with WIC services online. Our next steps are strategic planning and implementation.

Drop by the sharing table for more research results.

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