

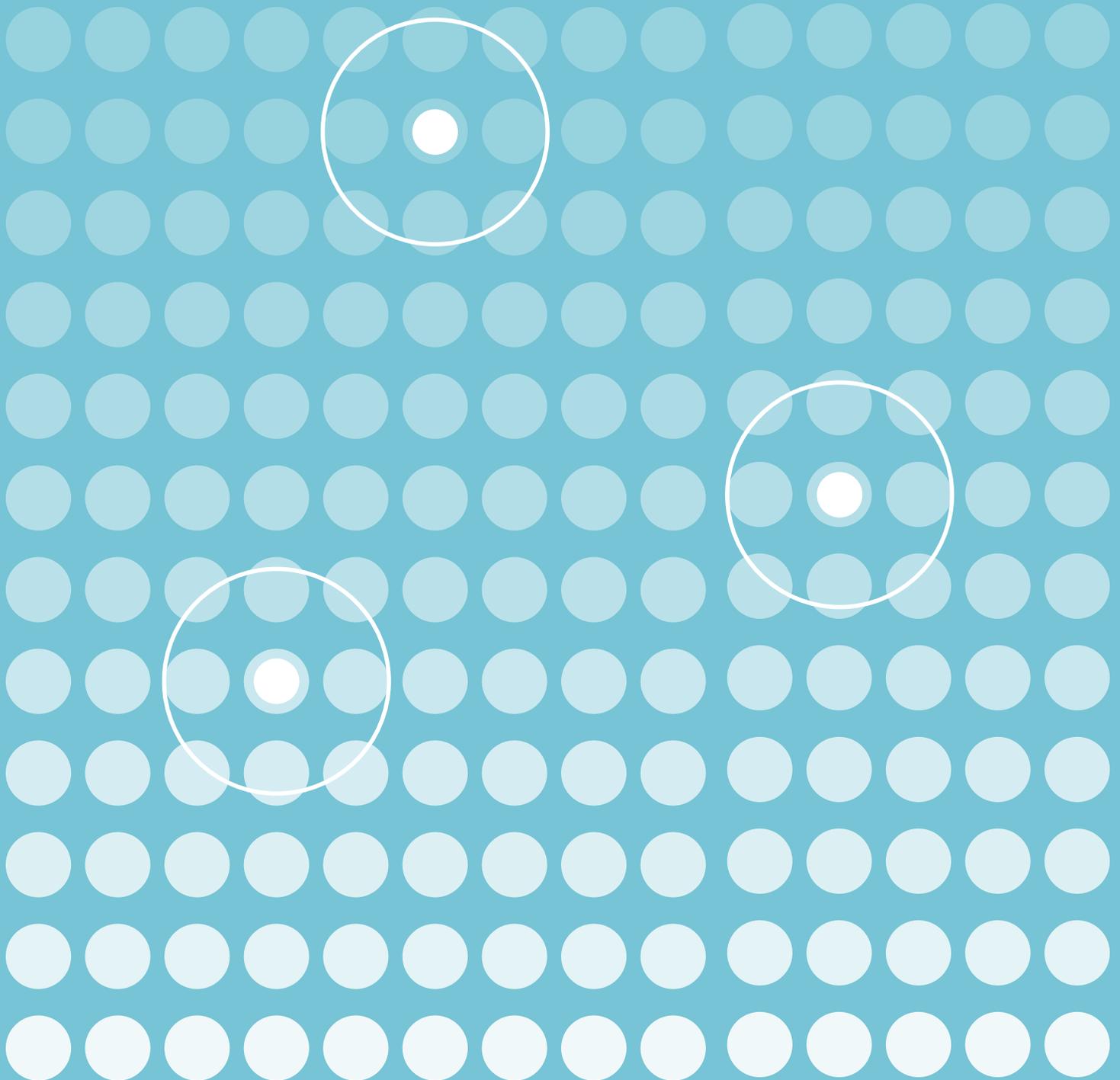
# SOCIAL MEDIA USE BY AMERICANS, 2016

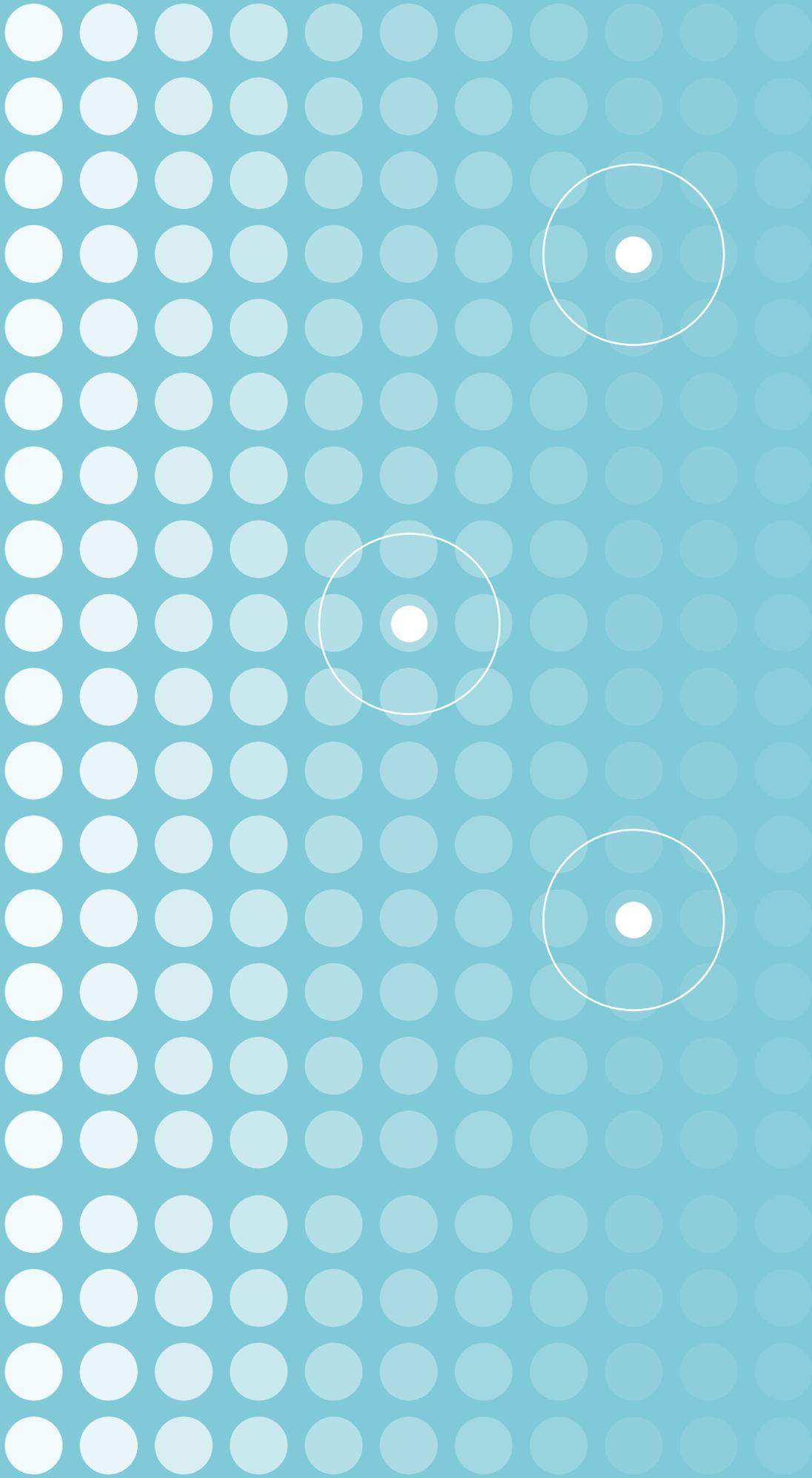
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AMANDA LENHART, Data & Society

MICHELE YBARRA, Center for Innovative Public Health Research

MYESHIA PRICE-FEENEY, Center for Innovative Public Health Research





## Where people go when they go online

Even though the vast majority of Americans use the internet, the online environments they interact in can vary dramatically. The internet isn't one large space for interaction—it is a network of many types of smaller communities that have diverse qualities that are each experienced differently by different people.

This study, part of a larger study of online harassment, asked internet users whether they use three types of platforms: Social media sites like Facebook, LinkedIn, or Instagram; video games played online with other people; and online discussion sites like Reddit or Digg. Taken together, 84% of internet users have visited at least one of these types of platforms. The remaining 16% of internet users have not used any of them.

Younger internet users are far more likely than older internet users to visit any of these three types of online spaces: Among those under 30 years of age, just 4% do not use any of the three types of platforms (social media sites, online games, or online discussion sites), and 20% use all three. In contrast, among internet users ages 65 and older, 58% do not use any of these platforms, and only 1% use all three. There are also several differences between men and women—notably in the use of online discussion sites and multiplayer video games, both of which are twice as common for men than women. For their part, internet users who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB) are much more likely to engage in each of the three online spaces than those who identify as heterosexual.

## Online platform usage

Among all internet users, the % who say they use the following types of online platforms

		Use social media like Facebook, LinkedIn, or Instagram	Play a video game online with other people	Use a discussion site like Reddit or Digg
<b>Total</b>		<b>81</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Age and sex</b>				
a	Men ages 15-29	90 <sup>cd</sup>	70 <sup>bcd</sup>	35 <sup>bcd</sup>
b	Women ages 15-29	94 <sup>acd</sup>	33 <sup>d</sup>	22 <sup>cd</sup>
c	Men ages 30+	74	28 <sup>d</sup>	16 <sup>d</sup>
d	Women ages 30+	80 <sup>c</sup>	16	7
<b>Sex</b>				
a	Men	78	40 <sup>b</sup>	22 <sup>b</sup>
b	Women	83 <sup>a</sup>	21	11
<b>Age</b>				
a	15-17	90 <sup>acd</sup>	61 <sup>bcde</sup>	22 <sup>de</sup>
b	18-29	93 <sup>acd</sup>	49 <sup>cde</sup>	30 <sup>acde</sup>
c	30-49	85 <sup>de</sup>	30 <sup>de</sup>	17 <sup>de</sup>
d	50-64	76 <sup>c</sup>	16	7 <sup>e</sup>
e	65+	55	12	4
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>				
a	White (non-Hispanic)	79	28	15
b	Black (non-Hispanic)	84	34	14
c	Hispanic	83	33 <sup>a</sup>	17
<b>Household income (among ages 18+)</b>				
a	< \$30,000	81	34	17
b	\$30,000 - \$49,999	82	34	14
c	\$50,000 - \$74,999	78	31	13
d	\$75,000 - \$99,999	85 <sup>c</sup>	29	20 <sup>bc</sup>
e	\$100,000+	83	22	21 <sup>bc</sup>
<b>Education (among ages 18+)</b>				
a	Less than high school	74	24	8
b	High school graduate	79	33 <sup>d</sup>	15 <sup>a</sup>
c	Some college	81	34 <sup>ad</sup>	17 <sup>a</sup>
d	College graduate	81	21	17 <sup>a</sup>
<b>Sexual identification</b>				
a	LGB	92 <sup>b</sup>	49 <sup>b</sup>	37 <sup>b</sup>
b	Heterosexual	81	30	15

Columns marked with a superscript letter (\*) indicate a statistically significant difference at the 95% level between that row and the row designated by that superscript letter. Statistical significance is determined inside the specific section covering each subgroup.

Source: Data & Society / CiPHR Measuring Cyberabuse Survey, May 17- July 31, 2016. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish (total n=3,002 U.S. internet users age 15 and older).

### Online platform usage (continued)

Among all internet users, the % who say they use the following types of online platforms

		Use social media like Facebook, LinkedIn, or Instagram	Play a video game online with other people	Use a discussion site like Reddit or Digg
<b>Total</b>		<b>81</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Military experience</b>				
a	Military experience	74	33	19
b	No military experience	81 <sup>a</sup>	28	16
<b>Parent</b>				
a	Parent of minor	84 <sup>b</sup>	28	14
b	Not a parent	80	32	17

Columns marked with a superscript letter (a) indicate a statistically significant difference at the 95% level between that row and the row designated by that superscript letter. Statistical significance is determined inside the specific section covering each subgroup.

Source: Data & Society / CiPHR Measuring Cyberabuse Survey, May 17- July 31, 2016. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish (total n=3,002 U.S. internet users age 15 and older).

## Young adults and women are more likely to use social media

Social media use has become nearly ubiquitous in the United States, with more than eight in ten internet users (81%) reporting that they use services like Facebook, LinkedIn, or Instagram.

Among internet users, women are significantly more likely than men to use social media, although the difference is relatively modest (83% of women compared with 78% of men). However, there are large differences in the prevalence of social media usage by age group: 90% of teens ages 15-17 and 93% of young adults ages 18-29 saying they use social media, compared with 55% of adults age 65 and older. Internet users who identify as LGB are more likely to use social media than heterosexual internet users (92% versus 81%), although this difference is not statistically significant once age and other demographic and household factors are taken into account.

There are no statistically significant differences in the use of these platforms across race/ethnicity, nor are there notable differences by education level. Those in higher-income households are more likely to use social media than those in households with an annual income of less than \$30,000, even after controlling for other factors. Parents with minor children living at home are more likely than non-parents to use social media, although this appears to be explained by underlying differences in age and other factors.



## Three in ten internet users play online video games with other people, including 70% of young men under age 30

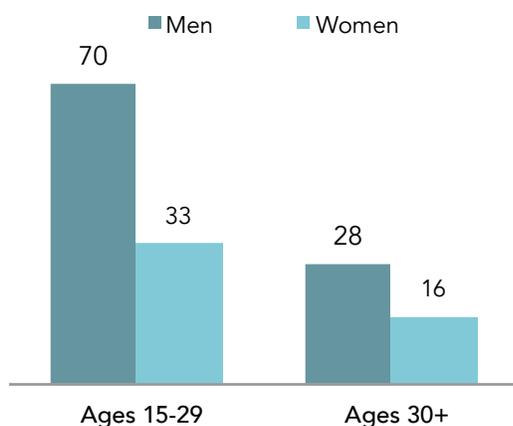
Contrary to popular imagination, which may paint video game play as a solitary sport, online game play is remarkably social.<sup>1</sup> Games can connect people by text and voice to play with or against each other. About 30% of American internet users say they have played a video game online with other people.

Once again, there are strong differences in patterns of use based on sex and age. In this case, men (40%) are almost twice as likely as women (21%) to say they play video games online with other people. In terms of age, older teens 15-17 years old are the age group most likely to play video games online with others, with 61% reporting that they have done so.

Larger differences emerge when we look at men and women within different age groups: 70% of online men under age 30 play video games online with others compared to 33% of women under age 30 and 28% of men ages 30 and older.

### Seven in ten men under age 30 play video games online with other people

Among internet users, % who play video games online with other people, by age and sex



Source: Data & Society / CiPHR Measuring Cyberabuse Survey, May 17- July 31, 2016. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish (total n=3,002 U.S. internet users age 15 and older).

1. A. Lenhart. "Chapter 3: Video Games Are Key Elements in Friendships for Many Boys." Pew Research Center: Internet, Science & Tech, August 6, 2015. <http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/08/06/chapter-3-video-games-are-key-elements-in-friendships-for-many-boys/>.

There are few race/ethnicity differences in the likelihood of playing video games, although Hispanic internet users are more likely than White internet users to play games with others online. Among Hispanic internet users, those who completed the survey in English were twice as likely as those who completed the survey in Spanish to play video games (31% versus 15%).

Holding age and other demographic factors constant, internet users in the middle of the educational spectrum—those with a high school diploma or some college experience—are more likely to play games than those with more education and, in some cases, those with less education.

LGB respondents are more likely to play video games (49% versus 30%) than heterosexual respondents. This difference persists after controlling for age, education, household income, and other factors. There are no differences in the likelihood of playing video games by military experience, or whether the respondent is a parent.

## 16% of online Americans use discussion sites

About one in six internet users (16%) use online discussion sites like Reddit or Digg. These sites are also known as news aggregation sites, as users can submit content or links and vote on the best submissions.

As with online video games, there are significant differences between younger and older internet users in their use of discussion sites, although in this case, young adults ages 18-29 are the age group most widely represented instead of adolescents 15-17 years of age. And while men are twice as likely as women to use these types of sites overall, the differences by sex are not as large among younger internet users as what we saw with social media sites: Among those under age 30, discussion sites are used by 35% of men and 22% of women. Parents are significantly *less* likely than non-parents to use discussion sites once these other factors are controlled for.

Similar to social media sites, use of discussion sites is not significantly different across race/ethnicity or by household income after controlling for demographic and household characteristics. Among adults, those with higher levels of education are *more* likely to use discussion sites than those with lower levels, even when other factors are taken into account.

LGB internet users are more than twice as likely to use discussion sites (37% versus 15%) as heterosexual respondents, a difference that persists after controlling for age, education, household income, and other factors. Regression analysis suggests that those with military experience are more likely to use discussion sites such as Reddit or Digg than those without military experience, controlling for other demographic and household factors.

## There is substantial overlap between the users of these types of online communities

As noted earlier, more than eight in ten internet users (81%) use social media; as a result, there is substantial overlap between social media users and those who play video games online and those who use online discussion sites: 93% of discussion site users and 91% of online video game players also use social media. In addition, 61% of discussion site users say they also play video games (compared with 24% of internet users who don't use discussion sites), and 33% of those who play video games also visit discussion sites (compared with 9% of non-gamers).

### Methods

The data for this study were collected through the Data & Society / CiPHR Measuring Cyberabuse Survey, a nationally representative telephone survey conducted on cell phones and landlines, interviewing 3,002 American internet users ages 15 and older. The survey was conducted by **Princeton Survey Research Associates International (PSRAI)** and funded by the **Digital Trust Foundation**. Survey design and data analysis were executed by staff at the **Data & Society Research Institute** and the **Center for Innovative Public Health Research**. Interviews were administered in English and Spanish by Princeton Data Source from May 17 to July 31, 2016. Statistical results are weighted to correct known demographic discrepancies. The margin of sampling error for the complete set of weighted data is  $\pm 2.0$  percentage points. For more detail, please see the Methods page at <http://www.datasociety.net/pubs/oh/methods.pdf>.

**Data & Society** is a research institute in New York City that is focused on social, cultural, and ethical issues arising from data-centric technological development. To provide frameworks that can help address emergent tensions, D&S is committed to identifying issues at the intersection of technology and society, providing research that can ground public debates, and building a network of researchers and practitioners that can offer insight and direction. To advance public understanding of the issues, D&S brings together diverse constituencies, hosts events, does directed research, creates policy frameworks, and builds demonstration projects that grapple with the challenges and opportunities of a data-saturated world.

**The Center for Innovative Public Health Research**, known as CiPHR, examines the impact that technology has on health and how it can be used to affect health. We have developed programs to reduce HIV transmission, increase smoking cessation, and provide supportive resources for youth experiencing cyberbullying and people with depression. CiPHR is a non-profit, public health research incubator founded under the previous name, Internet Solutions for Kids, Inc. (ISK). Our vision is to promote positive human development through the creation and implementation of innovative and unique technology-based research and health education programs. Public health is ever evolving and so are we.

## Contact

Amanda Lenhart

amanda@datasociety.net

Data & Society Research Institute

36 West 20th Street, 11th Floor New York, NY 10011

Tel. 646-832-2038

datasociety.net

## Notes

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Data & Society Research Institute  
36 West 20th Street, 11th Floor  
New York, NY 10011  
Tel 646.832.2038  
Fax 646.832.2048  
info@datasociety.net