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Ipsos: Rich Spend More Time Online

The affluent spend 23-plus hours per week on the Internet

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NEW YORK The rich are different, at least when it comes to their use of digital media.

The new Affluent Survey from Ipsos Mendelsohn (known as Monroe Mendelsohn Research, until Ipsos bought it earlier this year) found that as the rich get richer, they spend more time online.

Not surprisingly, affluent heads of house (defined as those with an income of \$100,000 and up) are highly wired, with almost all owning and using a desktop or laptop and cell or mobile, according to the survey. This group, representing about 20 percent of U.S. households, goes online an average of 26 times per week using a computer and 17.6 times via a cellphone or mobile device.

Overall, the affluent spent 23.4 hours per week online, found the survey, out Sept. 2. Among those earning \$250,000 and up, the figure rises to 27.4 hours.

The same applies to the use of mobile devices. While 40 percent of affluent households use hand-held devices to access the Internet, the percentage rises to 57 percent among those in the \$250,000-plus bracket from 34 percent for those at the \$100,000-149,999 level.

Bob Shullman, president, Ipsos Mendelsohn, said the findings have big implications for luxury goods advertisers interested in mobile marketing.

"If you want to experiment [with mobile], they should probably be doing it much more in the affluent space, because these people are already doing it," Shullman said. "These people are much higher up the learning curve."

The survey also found that about 10 percent of the affluent make Internet purchases using their cells or mobiles. Takeout food was the most common purchase, made by 5.8 percent of the upper-income tier, followed by hotel reservations (2.5 percent), prescription drugs/medicine, plane tickets, event tickets and music/video (under 2 percent).

In other findings in the 2008 survey, magazine readership among top earners has held steady over the past five years while use of TV and radio are down. Upper-income consumers read an average of eight titles and about 18 individual issues during the four-month survey period.

"There's a direct relationship between income and education, and there's a direct relationship between education and readership," said Ted D'Amico, svp, research, Ipsos Mendelsohn. "One of the reasons it's kept pace over time is affluent people read more."

The survey data was collected via a 20-page questionnaire that was mailed to households across the U.S.