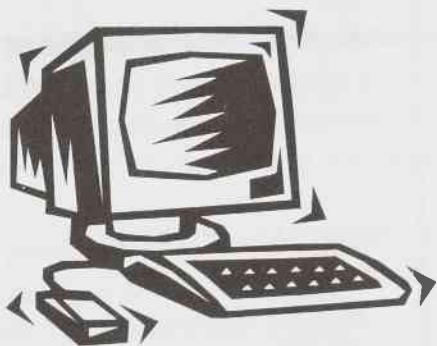# Logging On

by
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Don't call, send an email. Don't waste gas going to the mall, order something on the net. Buying another CD? Why not download your favorite songs instead? It seems like computers are taking over the country and America is welcoming it. However, it has been suggested that blacks may not be reacting to technology in the same numbers as other races. Siona LaFrance of Times-Picayune newspaper wrote an article headlined, African Americans, "The Smallest but Fastest-Growing Ethnic Group Using the Internet."

LaFrance notes that Forrester Research recently discovered that the number of blacks using the Internet is still lower than any other ethnic group. This includes Latinos and Asians, groups that have fewer numbers than blacks.

Why has it been so difficult to attract more blacks to the Internet in the first place? Jacobe Foster, a UNC-CH senior, has designed websites for the Bank of America, U.S. Olympic Committee and UNC's National Pan-Hellenic Council. Foster said, "Blacks now have a reason to consistently visit the Internet other than for academics. Now there are actual communities." Communities such as BlackPlanet.com ask questions like, "What do you appreciate most about black culture and black history?" Discussions are held concerning black fraternities and sororities and information is provided about searching for ancestors and family trees. In addition, viewers are free to design their own web pages, helping them to meet other people with new ideas and view other websites linked to black issues.

"It's like if you want to see black businesses grow," Foster added, "People should support the black websites that are posted now." But in order for something to grow, people have to know it exists. This could be one explanation for why there are not as many blacks on the Internet. Perhaps computers are not present in as many black homes due to expenses. Also, not all homes, especially in black communities, may be near a local library with Internet access.

Parents may not find introducing their children to computers at a young age important. Yet, increased exposure to the Internet is a necessity, whether it requires visiting places with Internet access or, as Foster puts it, buying the Gateway over the Gameboy.