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Press Release

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NEW PHOENIX CENTER STUDY EXAMINES WHO USES AI, WHO DOES NOT, AND WHY

Evidence reveals distinct divides in adoption, use, career concern, and active resistance

WASHINGTON, D.C. — In a new study released today entitled *Who Uses Artificial Intelligence And Who Resists? Evidence From The Household Pulse Survey*, Phoenix Center Chief Economist Dr. George S. Ford and co-author Riley A. Ford examine how Americans are adopting and using artificial intelligence (AI), and why some choose not to use it at all. Using new data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s Household Pulse Survey, the study identifies distinct demographic patterns across AI adoption, intensity of use, concern about job displacement, and deliberate non-use.

The analysis shows that AI use is shaped by different factors at different margins. Adoption rises with education and income and declines with age. In contrast, among those who have adopted AI, the breadth of use is driven primarily by education and age, with income playing little role beyond the adoption decision.

The analysis also shows that concern about AI’s impact on careers is concentrated among more educated and teleworking individuals. Income provides little explanatory power for career concern once AI use is conditioned upon, while education and workplace exposure to AI play central roles.

Importantly, the study distinguishes between passive non-use and active resistance to AI. Among non-users, nearly one-third report deliberately opting out of AI use. This decision is largely unrelated to the factors that predict adoption, instead reflecting a different set of demographic influences, including gender and race.

These results indicate that the “AI divide” is not a single gap but multiple divides with different causes and policy implications. Adoption, intensity of use, concern about displacement, and deliberate resistance are distinct outcomes that should not be conflated in policy design.

Finally, the study cautions that increased AI use is not unambiguously beneficial. As with broadband and social media, greater access and more intensive use can generate both benefits and harms depending on the use case. Productivity-enhancing uses in the workplace may coexist with applications that substitute for learning or reduce skill formation, particularly among younger users. As a result, the question for policymakers is not simply how to increase AI adoption, but what types and levels of use generate net social benefits.

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“AI use is not one decision but several. Income helps determine who adopts AI, but it does not explain how people use it once they do. Treating these margins as the same problem risks misdirecting policy,” said study author Phoenix Center Chief Economist Dr. George S. Ford. “Also, more use is not always better – what matters is how the technology is used and by whom.”

A full copy of PHOENIX CENTER POLICY BULLETIN NO. 83, *Who Uses Artificial Intelligence And Who Resists? Evidence From The Household Pulse Survey*, may be downloaded free from the Phoenix Center’s web page at: <https://www.phoenix-center.org/PolicyBulletin/PCPB83Final.pdf>.

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