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Gallup Vault: Misjudging Cellphone Adoption

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In early 2000, about a decade after mobile phones had gone mass market, half of U.S. adults told Gallup they had a "cellular phone" and half said they did not. Of those without a cellphone, almost half -- equivalent to 23% of all adults -- said they had no intention of ever getting one.

Americans' Cellphone Ownership and Intentions in 2000

Do you currently own a cellular phone, or not? IF NO: Do you intend to get a cellular phone for your own use within the next couple of years, within the next five years, at some point in the future or never?

	Have cellphone	Will get one	Will never get one
	%	%	%
U.S. adults	50	25	23
Age			
18 to 29	41	41	18
30 to 49	60	22	17
50 to 64	58	20	21
65+	29	19	50

Note: % No opinion not shown

GALLUP, MARCH 30-APRIL 2, 2000

Cellphone ownership varied significantly by age in 2000, with only about three in 10 seniors owning one, compared with about four in 10 adults younger than 30 and six in 10 middle-aged adults.

Likewise, seniors were the most likely to say they would never get one, with 50% forecasting this. Still, it wasn't just elders who couldn't see cellphones in their future. Roughly one in five adults in each of the younger age categories said the same, including 18% of 18- to 29-year-olds.

Fast forward to 2018, when only 5% of Americans are cellphone-free, and it seems that many in the 2000 poll misjudged themselves or the technology -- or both. Of course, demographic changes could account for some of this. Many older Americans who may have accurately predicted their non-adoption of cellphones have passed away since 2000, and the younger Americans who have replaced them in the population are nearly universal adopters. Both forces are driving up the total share of the population that uses cellphones.

However, this doesn't account for the entire gap, given the nearly 100% use of cellphones by those under 65 today, according to Pew, and the 85% use among those 65+.

In 2007, the iPhone and other smartphone products were introduced, creating an incentive for people to adopt mobile technology that adults in the 2000 poll couldn't have anticipated. No longer were phones just for talking; they were also for texting,

checking email, shopping, banking, reading, listening to music, surfing the web and more.

As a 2015 Gallup survey found, in less than 20 years, cellphones have gone from something half of Americans didn't have and a quarter thought they'd never need, to something a solid majority say has improved their lives and almost half couldn't imagine living without.



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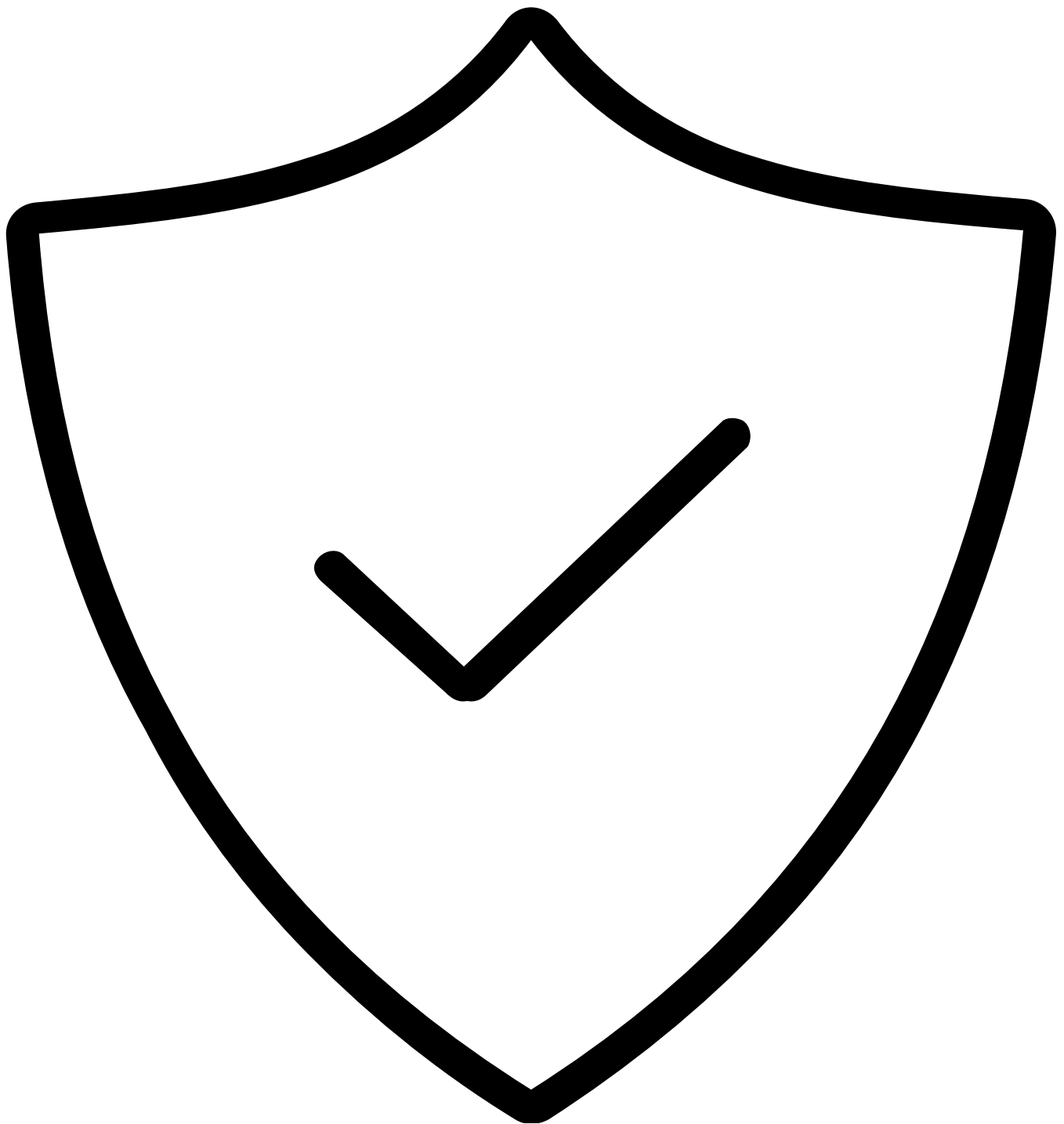
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