

COMMUNICATION

Read the text.

Internet usage varies widely across countries and among social groups. In 2013, 90% and more of the adult population were accessing the Internet in Luxembourg, the Netherlands, the Nordic countries and Switzerland, but less than 60% in Greece, Italy, Mexico and Turkey.

Developments in mobile technology have also enabled people to conduct daily personal computing and communications activities “on the go”. As a result, society is increasingly made up of “nomadic” computer and Internet users: in 2013, more than 40% of adults used a mobile or smartphone to connect to the Internet in the OECD. On average, almost 80% of adults and 95% of 16-24 year-olds in the OECD use the Internet, most of them on a daily basis.

For most people, the Internet is now part of everyday life. Differences in Internet uptake are linked primarily to age and educational factors, often intertwined with income levels. In most countries, uptake by young people is nearly universal, but there are wide differences for older generations (notably seniors). More than 75% of 55-74 year-olds in Denmark, Iceland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Sweden reported using the Internet in 2013 against less than 10% in Mexico and Turkey.

Education appears to be a much more relevant factor for older people than for younger people. Usage rates for 55-74 year-olds with tertiary education are generally in line with those of the overall population, and in leading countries approach that of 16-24 year-olds. Older people, in particular those with a lower education, are thus a potential focus of strategies to foster digital inclusion.

Users include individuals who accessed the Internet within the last three months prior to surveying. Different recall periods have been used for some countries. Daily users consist of individuals accessing the Internet approximately every day on a typical week (i.e. excluding holidays, etc.).

Internet usage to perform specific activities varies widely both according to the type of activity and across countries, as a result of institutional, cultural or economic factors. Over 2012-13, on average almost 90% of Internet users reported sending emails, about 80% reported using the Internet to obtain information on goods and products, and 70% reported reading online news. The share of Internet users ordering products online was 57% while only 22% sold products over the Internet.

Activities such as sending emails, searching product information or social networking show little variation across all countries. However, the shares of Internet users performing activities usually associated with a higher level of education, with cultural elements or more sophisticated service infrastructures, tend to present higher inter-country variability. This is the case, for example, for

the majority of indicators related to e-government, e-commerce and online banking.

In 2013, the use of online banking varied significantly from over 90% in Estonia, Finland and Norway to less than 20% in Chile and Greece. Overall income and wealth levels contribute to these differences, but are not the sole factors.

Country uptake patterns for sophisticated activities tend to be similar. For example, online banking is positively correlated with the use of e-government services (also requiring trust, familiarity and infra-structural development), software downloading and, to a lesser extent, e-purchases, audio-video streaming and online gaming. Hence, other elements are likely to come into play, including familiarity with online services, trust and skills, together with country-specific elements not considered here.