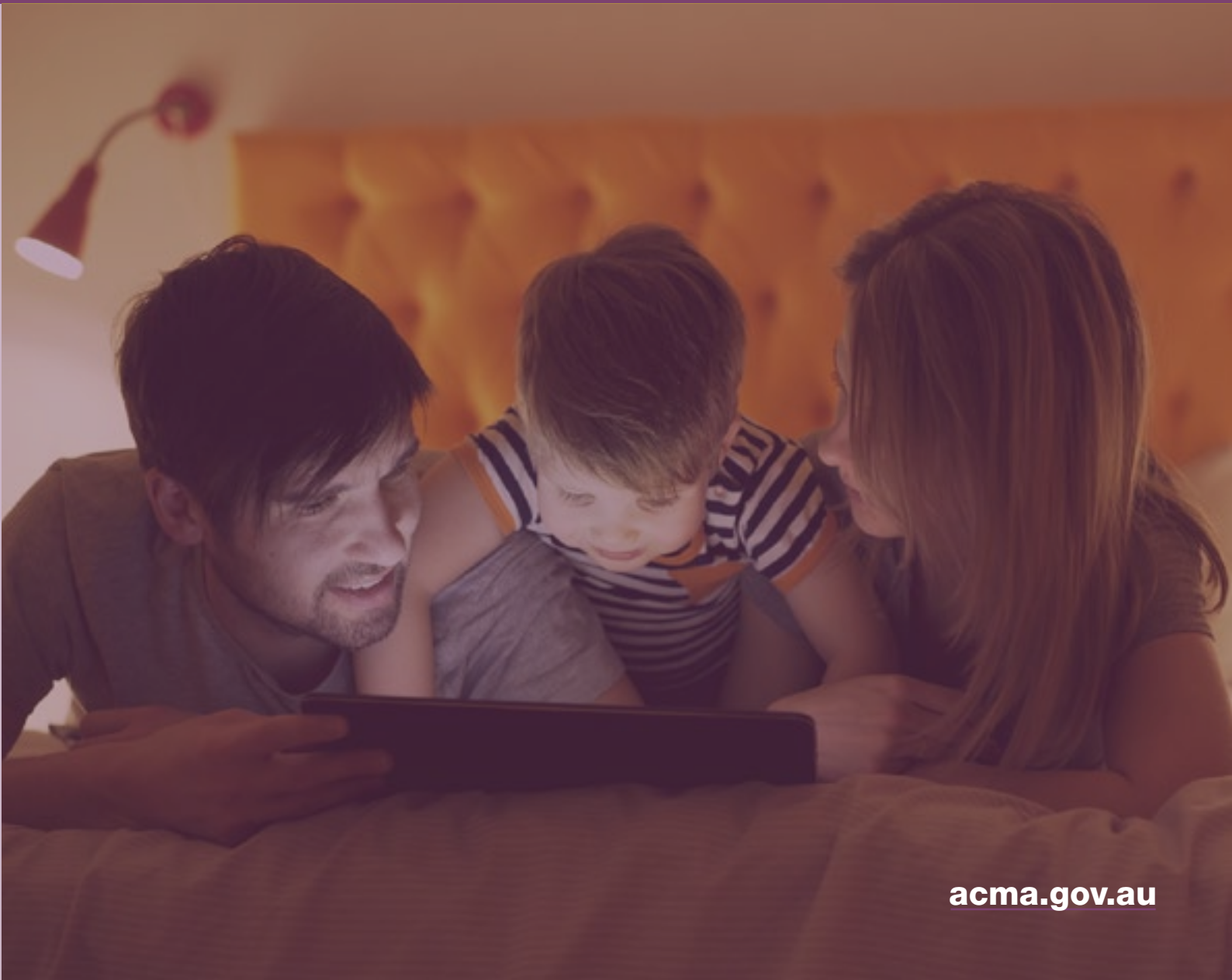


Trends in online behaviour and technology usage

ACMA consumer survey 2020

Quantitative research

September 2020



About the research

This quantitative consumer research was undertaken to further understand trends in consumer take-up and usage of communications and media services.

The Social Research Centre (SRC) conducted the survey using their probability-based panel, Life in Australia™. 2,009 surveys were completed from 9–21 June 2020, representative of the Australian population aged 18 years and over.

See the full methodology for sample sizes of subgroups and additional notes.

researchacma

The ACMA is undertaking research to:

- > support time-series tracking of patterns of consumer communications and media use
- > inform regulatory development by providing an evidence base on consumer behaviour, adoption of and attitudes towards media and communications services in Australia.

This research is part of the [ACMA research program](#).

Key research findings

Our reliance on the internet and communications services has increased

In 2020, more Australian adults accessed the internet, with increased participation in many activities and services since 2019.



Devices used

- > Nearly all Australians (99%) accessed the internet in the previous 6 months in 2020 (up from 90% in 2019).
- > Australian internet users, on average, used 4.4 types of devices to access the internet (increase from 4.0 types in 2019).



Smart devices

- > The most popular smart devices used were smart TVs, wearable devices and voice-controlled smart speakers.



Internet-based activities

- > Engagement in online activities increased significantly in 2020—this is likely to be driven by COVID-19 restrictions.
- > Emailing, general web browsing, watching videos and banking/paying bills were the most common internet activities undertaken.



Services used to communicate

- > More Australians are using communications services.
- > Fixed-line home phone usage continues to decline—from 44% in 2019 to 40% in 2020.



Use of communications apps

- > Over three-quarters (77%) of Australian adults used a communication app in the previous 6 months (up from 67% in 2019).
- > Facebook Messenger was the most popular app (66%), followed by Zoom (43%).



Social networking sites and apps

- > Nearly three-quarters (72%) of Australian adults used a social networking app in the previous 6 months (up from 63% in 2019).
- > Facebook was the most popular social networking app used by 63% of users.

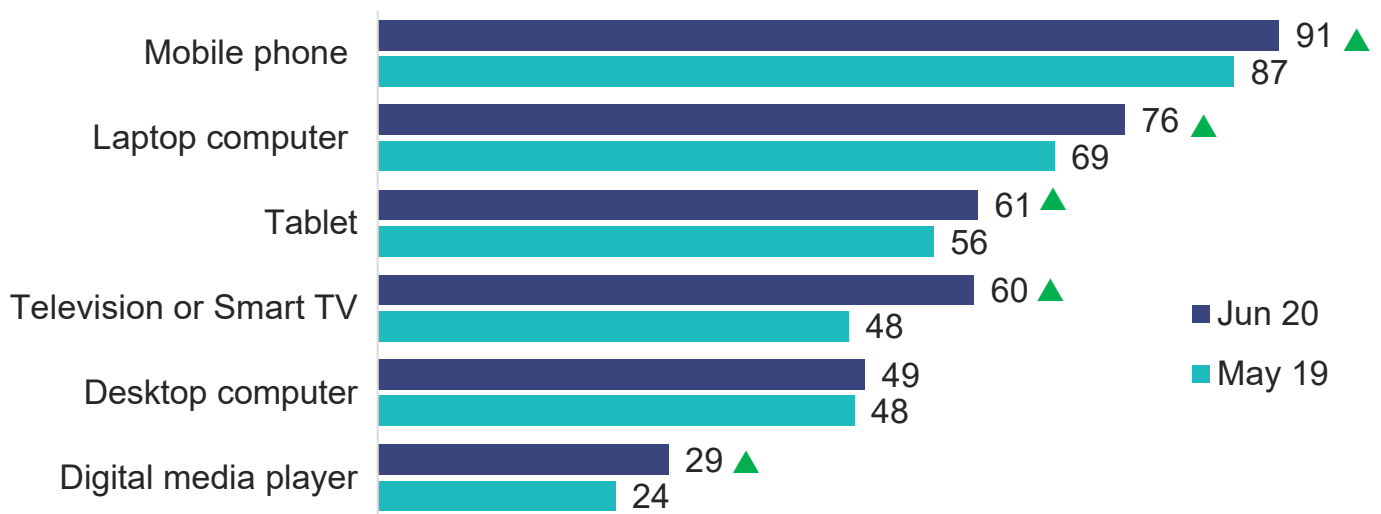


Devices used to go online

In 2020, more Australians were online and, on average, used a larger range of devices to access the internet

99% of Australian adults accessed the internet in the previous 6 months to June 2020 (up from 90% in 2019).

Top devices used to go online* (%)

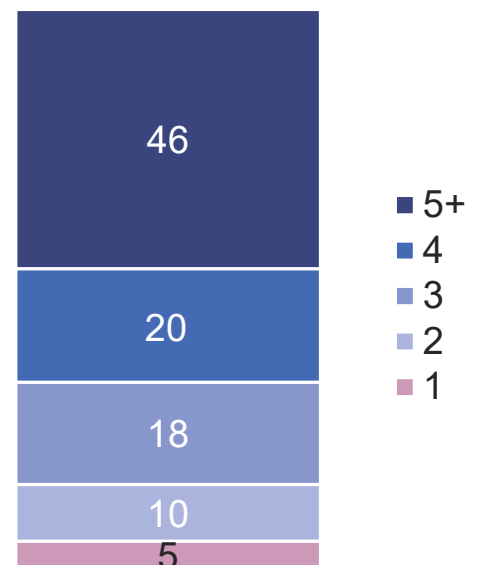


▲ Significantly different to prior year at the 95% confidence level

Number of types of devices used to go online* (%)

> 46% of online Australians used 5+ types of devices to access the internet

> 4.4 types of devices were used, on average, to access the internet, up from 4.0 in 2019



*Adult internet users in the 6 months to May 2019 and June 2020.

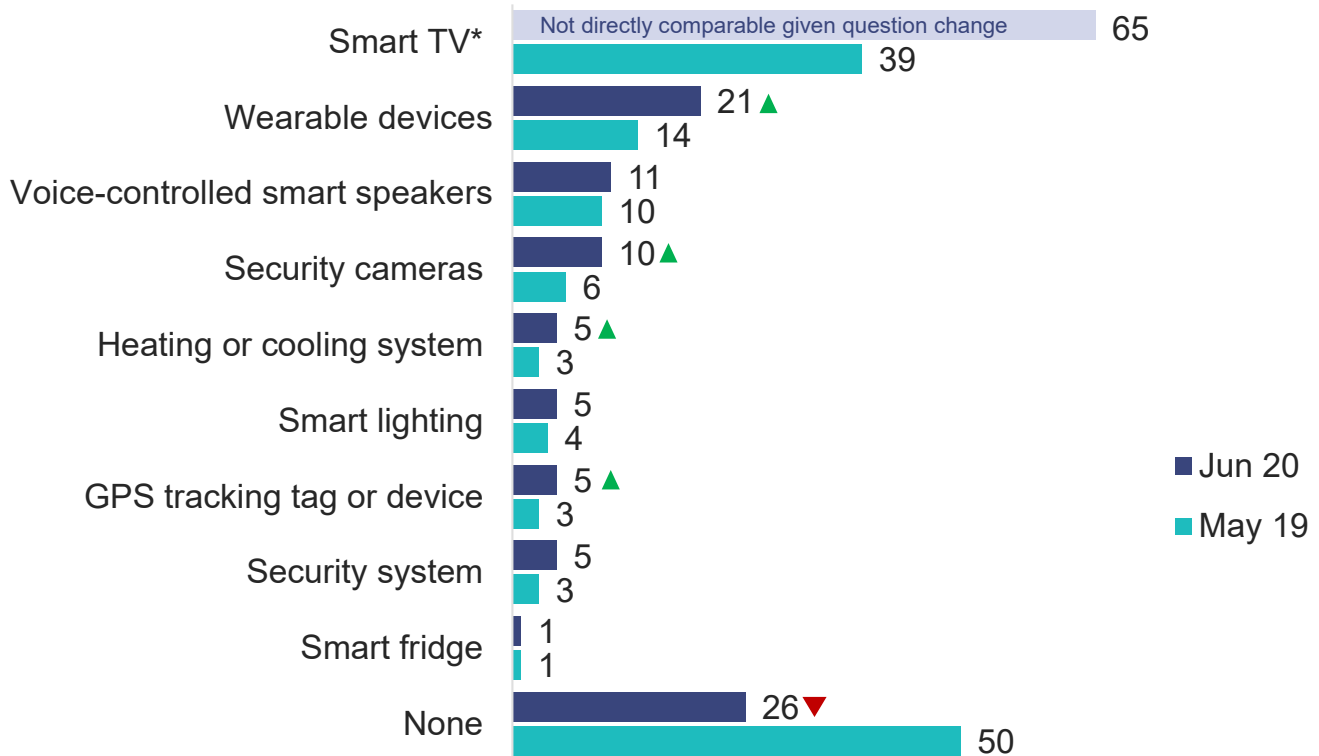


Smart devices connected to the internet

In 2020, more Australians had a smart device connected to the internet

73% of Australian adults had used an internet-connected smart device, excluding computers, tablets and mobile phones.

Connected smart devices (%)



▲ ▼ Significantly different to prior year at the 95% confidence level



- > **64% of Australian adults had a smart TV at home** (46% had a standard TV)
- > **1.3 types of smart devices connected to the internet** were used by Australian adults

*Smart TV ownership asked as a separate question in 2020, including a detailed description of a 'smart TV', and is not directly comparable with other smart devices.

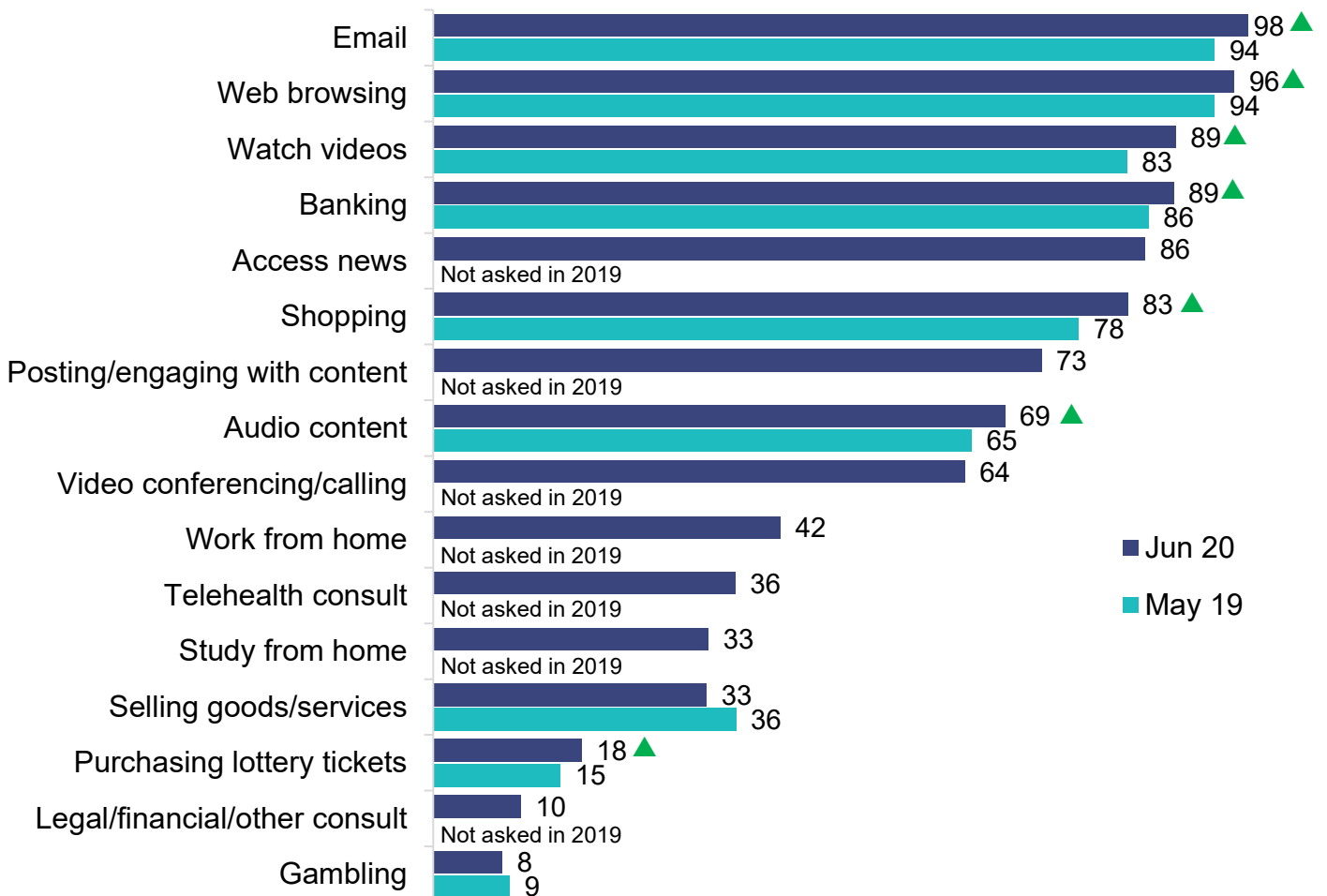


Online activities

More Australians had participated in a wide range of online activities in the previous 6 months to June 2020, compared to 2019

From 2019 to 2020, **increases in most internet activities were likely driven by COVID-19 restrictions**, given there was no significant change from 2018 to 2019.

Activities performed online in the past 6 months* (%)



▲ Significantly different to prior year at the 95% confidence level

Older Australians (aged 55+)*:



- > participated less across nearly all internet activities than those aged 18–54
- > undertook more telehealth, legal, financial or other professional consultations compared to those aged 18–54

*Adult internet users in the 6 months to May 2019 and June 2020.

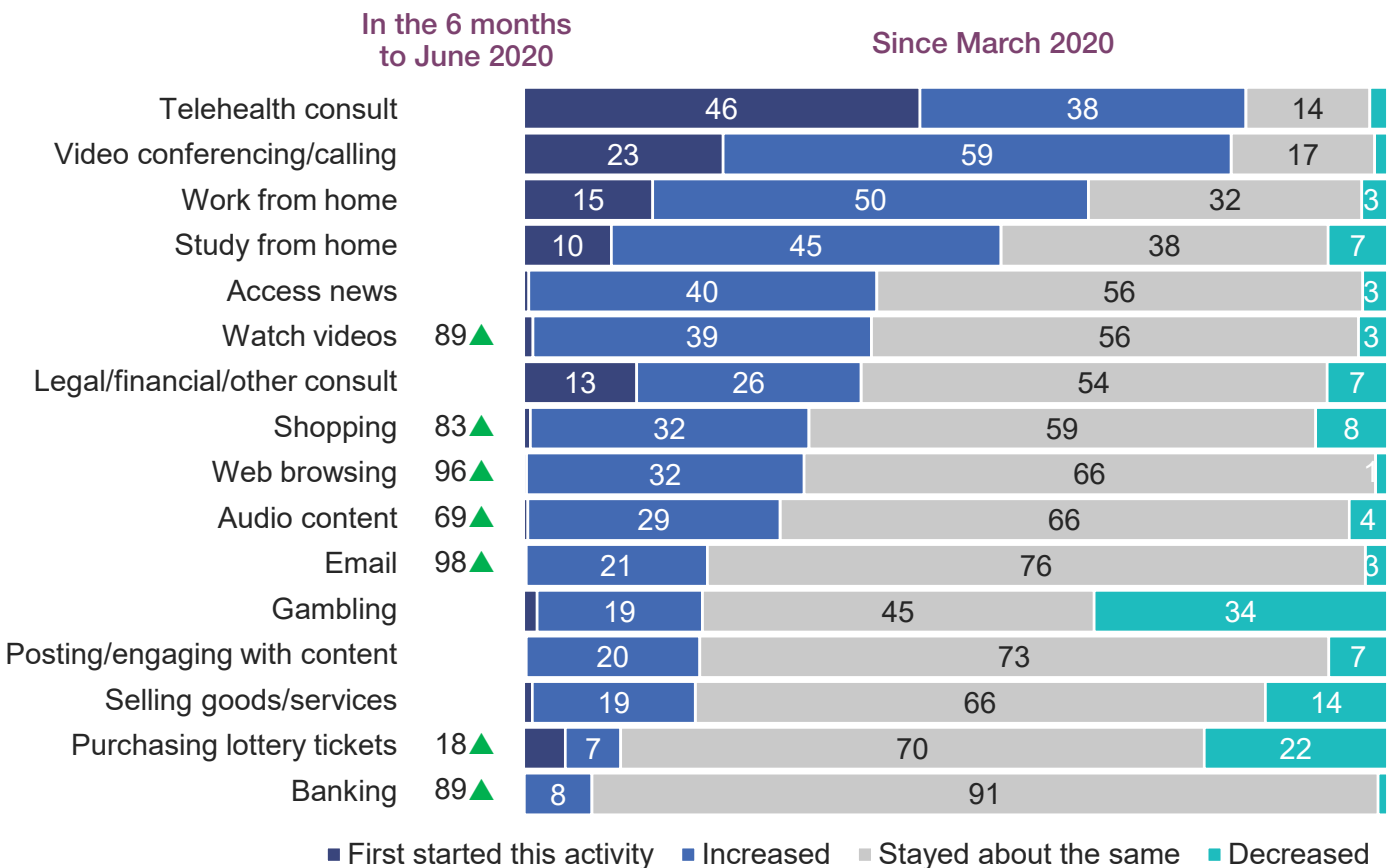


Change in internet activities since COVID-19

Increases in online activities observed in 2020 are likely to be driven by COVID-19 restrictions

4 in 5 Australian adults started or increased their participation for both telehealth consultations and video conferencing/calling since COVID-19 restrictions were introduced in March 2020.

Change in participation in online activities undertaken* (%)



▲ Significantly different to prior year at the 95% confidence level

Since the COVID-19 restrictions were introduced in March 2020, **Australians who just started or increased various online activities were more likely to be aged 18–54 than aged 55+**. Of those who undertook each activity*:



	18–54 years	55+ years
Working from home	71%	42%
Accessing news	46%	29%
Watching videos online	43%	32%

*Adult internet users in the 6 months to May 2019 and June 2020.

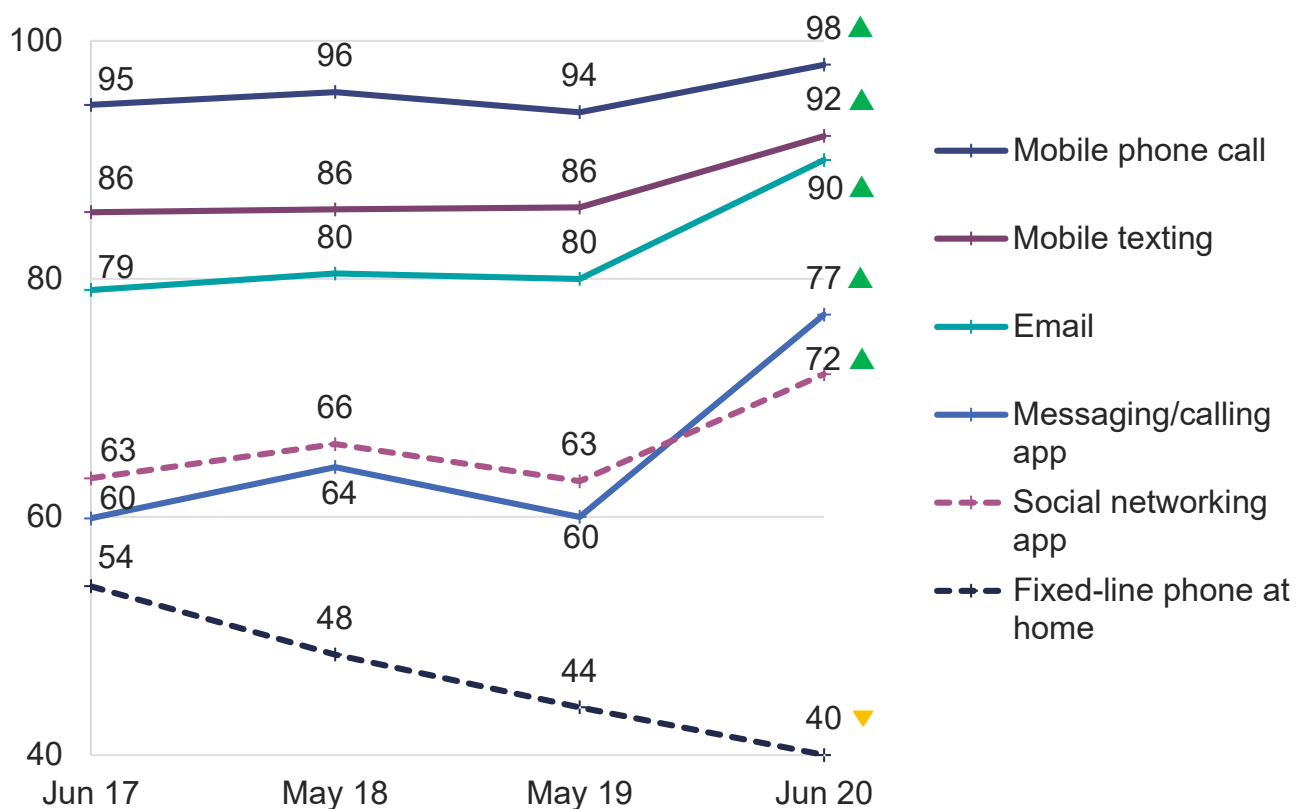


Services used to communicate

Fixed-line telephone usage continues to decline while all other services increased in the previous 6 months to June 2020 compared to 2019

74% of Australian adults used 5+ separate communications services in the previous 6 months, up from 60% in 2019

Use of communications services for personal purposes* (%)



▲ Significantly different to prior year at the 95% confidence level

▼ Significantly different to two years prior at the 95% confidence level

While more **older Australians*** continued to use a fixed-line service at home, their **usage has declined**:



> **58%** of those aged 45+ used a fixed-line phone at home in 2020, down from 65% in 2019

*Australian adults in the 6 months to May 2019 and June 2020.



Use of communications apps and social networking

Use of apps for communication and social networking has grown since COVID-19

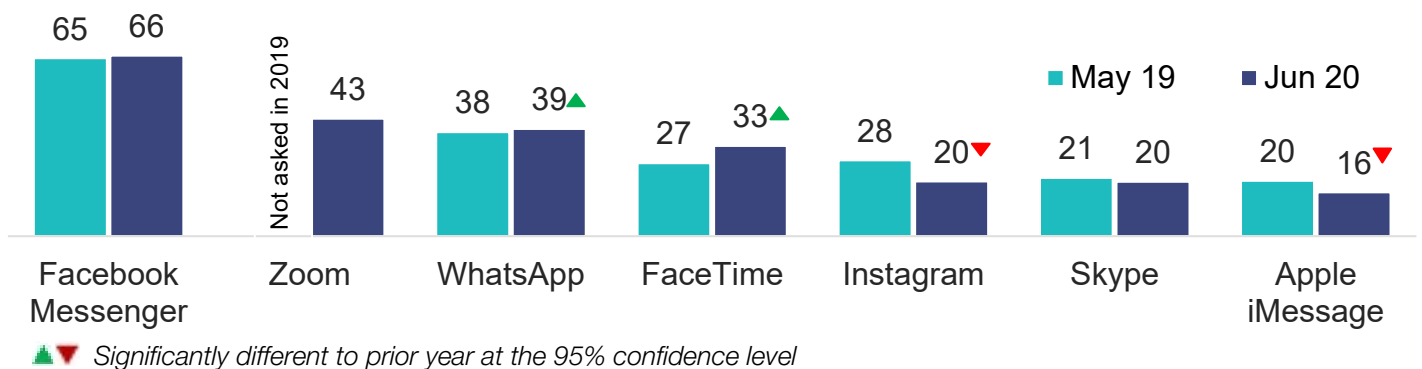
Use of communications apps*:

- > 77% used an app to communicate via messages, voice or video (67% in 2019):
 - > 73% voice calls (42% in 2019)
 - > 47% video calls (41% in 2019)

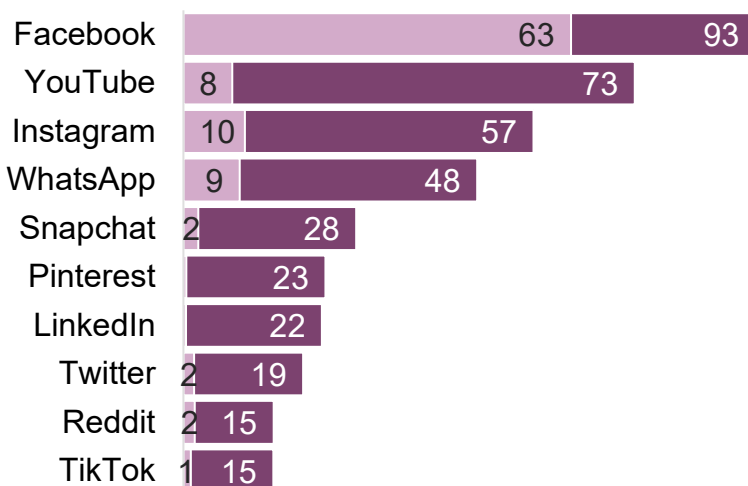
Number of different apps used to communicate*:

- > 55% used 1–3 (57% in 2019)
- > 35% used 4+ (27% in 2019)
- > 10% used 0 (16% in 2019)

Top communications apps used* (%)



Top 10 social networking sites used † (%)



> 72% of Australian adults used a social networking app, up from 63% in 2019

Since COVID-19 restrictions:

- > 36% increased their use of social networking
- > 59% reported no change in their usage

■ Used most often ■ Used in the previous 6 months

*Adult internet users in the 6 months to May 2019 and June 2020.

†Adults who used an app for social networking in the 6 months to June 2020.