

*Communications and media in
Australia series:*

How we use the internet
Executive summary and key findings

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Executive summary



About this report

This report contains the executive summary and key findings from our *How we use the internet* report, which is part of our *Media and communications in Australia* series.

An [interactive version](#) of the entire report can be accessed on our website. We recommend this document is read in conjunction with the entire report as the key findings reference charts in the report. The website also has data files, links to the methodology used, a data quality statement and a glossary of terms for the report.

How we use the internet

The way Australians use the internet has changed as COVID-19 related lockdowns and social distancing rapidly digitised the way we live, learn and work. Over the past 2 years, significant disruptions forced many of us to move our activities online, using different services and technologies.

In 2022, the overall trend toward greater digitisation has continued, though in some areas our online behaviours appear to be stabilising, with some returning to pre-COVID levels.

While young people remain the strongest adopters of digital technology, there has been more significant change in the online habits of older Australians.

Using the internet

In 2022, accessing the internet remained near universal, with 99% of Australian adults going online in the 6 months to June – a significant rise from 90% in 2019.

While older Australians continued to trail younger people in their online engagement, internet use for those aged 65 and over surged in 2020 and has since remained stable. Internet use for 65- to 74-year-olds' has increased from 71% in 2019 (pre-COVID) to 98% in 2022. Similarly, the proportion of those aged 75 and over who are now online has almost doubled, from 52% to 94%.

How we connect

At June 2022, 93% of Australian adults had a home internet connection. The majority connected via the NBN (82%), while non-NBN home internet connections, such as ADSL and cable, continue to decline.

We mostly used mobile phones to connect to the internet (94% of online adults), followed by laptops, smart TVs and tablets. While 35- to 44-year-olds were more likely than any other age group to use a mobile phone to go online, use by those aged 75 and over jumped to 77%, from 32% in 2017.

While COVID-19-related restrictions steered many of us online for work, study, shopping and leisure, our reliance on the internet for everyday tasks and activities has

continued and, in some instances, has increased. Lockdowns and social distancing measures in 2020 saw Australians spending more time at home, increasing our online activities such as emailing, shopping and listening to audio content.

In 2022, emailing and shopping online stabilised, while compared to 2021, listening to audio content, accessing news online and telehealth consultations increased.

The total volume of data downloaded across retail broadband internet and mobile services increased by 18% to 11.6 million terabytes in the 3 months to 30 June 2022, from 9.8 million terabytes in the same quarter of the previous year. While the volume of data downloaded over the NBN continued to rise, non-NBN broadband network downloads remained steady. Downloads using mobile devices increased by 18% to 1.3 million terabytes from the previous quarter (December 2021).

About the research

This report is based on an ACMA-commissioned nationally representative tracking survey seeking to understand consumer take-up, views and attitudes around communications and media services. More detailed information relating to sample and the ACMA annual consumer survey is available in the [methodology](#).

Key findings

1. Home internet access

Base: Australian adults, 6 months to June 2022

- > 93% of us had a household internet connection (stable with 91% in 2021), with the majority (82%) connected via the NBN.
- > Those more likely to have an NBN connection lived in metropolitan areas (85% compared to 76% in regional areas).

2. Online vs offline Australians

Base: Australian adults, 6 months to June 2022

- > Nearly all (99%) continued to access the internet – the last increase was up from 90% in 2019. This was likely fuelled by the COVID-19-related lockdowns, where many Australians increased their online communications and access to internet services.
- > Internet use among those aged 75+ sharply increased from 52% in 2019 (prior to COVID-19-related lockdowns) to 94% in 2022.

3. Devices connected to the internet

Base: Australian adults, 6 months to June 2022

- > Nearly all of us (94%) used a mobile phone to go online (a 10-percentage point increase from 2017).
- > 35- to 44-year-olds were more likely to go online via a mobile than other age groups. While fewer Australians aged 75+ used a mobile phone online compared to all other age groups, their take-up jumped from 32% in 2017, to 77% in 2022.
- > 74% used a laptop computer to go online. Australians aged 75+ noted the greatest increase in online laptop use (from 40% in 2017 to 56% in 2022).
- > 34% used a digital media player to go online, up from 25% in 2021. Those in age groups over 45 years all increased their use of digital media players to go online compared to 2021.
- > 10% used an e-reader to access the internet, up from 8% in 2021. E-reader users were more likely to live in metropolitan areas (11% compared to 7% in regional areas).
- > 44% used a desktop computer to go online, consistent with 2021, following steady declines since 2017 (54%). Users were more likely to be male (51% compared to 37% of females).

4. Number of devices connected to the internet

Base: Online Australian adults, 6 months to June 2022

- > On average, we used 4.1 different types of devices to access the internet, similar to 4.0 in 2021. This peaked in 2020 at 4.4 devices, likely related to the COVID-19-related restrictions at that time.
- > More of us used 5+ devices (39% up from 35% in 2021), but still below the peak of 46% in 2020 during the COVID-19 restrictions. Those more likely to use 5+ devices were aged 35–44 (compared to all other age groups except those aged 45–54) males (41% compared to 36% of females) and those in metropolitan areas (41% compared to 35% in regional areas).

5. Smart devices connected to the internet

Base: Australian adults, 6 months to June 2022

- > The rise of smart devices connected to the internet continued, reaching 83% up from 79% in 2021. This figure has increased remarkably since 2018 when less than half of us (47%) had internet-connected smart devices.
- > Australians aged 75+ were least likely to have an online smart device (67%), however their use has more than quadrupled, from 14% in 2018 to 67% in 2022.
- > Those in metropolitan areas were more likely to have an internet-connected smart device (85% compared to 81% in regional areas).
- > Smart TVs remained the leading smart device, further increasing to 73% (from 70% in 2021). Wearable devices had the most growth since 2021 (27% compared to 21%), followed by voice-controlled smart speakers (18% compared to 15%), security cameras (14% compared to 12%) and heating/cooling systems (5% compared to 7%).

6. Number of smart devices connected to the internet

Base: Australian adults, 6 months to June 2022

- > On average, we had 1.8 types of smart devices connected to the internet (up from 1.4 in 2021). Metropolitan residents had more smart devices, on average, than those living in the regional areas.
- > Almost a quarter (23%) of us used 3 or more types of internet-connected smart devices (up from 17% in June 2021). Those using 3 or more were also more likely to be male (26% compared to 21% of females), living in metropolitan areas (27% compared to 18% of those living regionally) and aged 35–44 (34% compared to all other age groups aside from those aged 18–24).

7. Frequency of internet use

Base: Online Australian adults, 6 months to June 2022

- > Most internet users (84%) used a mobile phone multiple times a day to access the internet, up from 81% in 2021.
- > 95% of internet users aged 18–24 connected with a mobile phone multiple times a day, compared to 69% of those aged 65–74, and 46% of those aged 75+.
- > 34% used a laptop computer multiple times a day to access the internet and were more likely to be males (38% compared to 31% of females).

8. Volume of data downloaded

Base: Australian adults, 3 months to 30 June 2022

- > The total volume of data downloaded increased by 18% to 11.6 million terabytes (TB), from 9.8 million TB in June 2021.
- > The volume of data downloaded over the NBN continued to rise while non-NBN broadband network downloads remained steady.
- > 84% (9.8 million TB) of total data downloaded was via NBN services, 11% (1.3 million TB) via mobile services and 5% (0.5 million TB) via non-NBN services.
- > Downloads using mobile services further increased by 18% to 1.3 million TB from 1.1 million TB in the previous quarter (December 2021).
- > Post-paid services accounted for just over half (0.7 million TB) of data downloaded over mobile networks, more than triple the volume for prepaid (0.2 million TB).

9. Activities performed online

Base: Online Australian adults, 6 months to June 2022

- > More Australians performed activities online. Since 2021, there were increases in listening to audio content online (from 74% to 78%), accessing news online (from 85% to 93%), and telehealth consults (from 41% to 52%), which has increased each year since first being asked in 2020.
- > Those aged 75+ were least likely to shop online (63%), listen to audio content online (41%) and sell goods and services online (15%), while 18- to 24-year-olds were most likely to study online from home (71%) while 35- to 44-year-olds were more likely to work from home online (64%).
- > Australians continued to embrace online activities. Since June 2019, more people in the 2 oldest age bands have listened to audio content online and shopped online. For those aged 75+, in the previous 12 months participation also increased for online access to news (71% to 85%) and telehealth consults (37% to 49%).
- > Females were more likely to access telehealth (59% compared to males 44%).
- > People in metropolitan areas were more likely than those in regional areas to work online from home (49% compared to 36%), listen to audio content online (81% compared to 73%), study online from home (31% compared to 24%), participate in video calling (71% compared to 55%) and get legal financial or other professional consultation online (18% compared to 13%).

10. Gambling activities performed online

Base: Australian adults who gambled online, 6 months to June 2022

- > Overall, a third (32%) of Australian adults undertook some form of online gambling – increasing from 28% in 2021.
- > Lottery was the most common online activity amongst online gamblers (77%).
- > Online sports betting (including e-sports) stabilised in 2022 (17% compared to 19% in 2021) following a sharp increase from 12% in 2020, likely due to sports being impacted by early COVID-19-related lockdowns.
- > Females were more likely to take part in an online lottery compared to males (82% compared to 72%). Males were more likely than females to participate in online sports betting (23% compared to 10%) and betting on racing (22% compared to 14%).
- > Those aged 18–24 were the least likely to participate in an online lottery (29%) compared to all other age groups.