

*Communications and media in  
Australia series:*

**How we communicate**  
Executive summary and key findings

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# Contents

<b>Executive summary</b>	<b>1</b>
How we communicate	1
Services used to communicate	1
Apps and digital platforms	2
Age	2
About the research	2
<b>Key findings</b>	<b>3</b>
1. Services used	3
2. Use of apps for calls or messaging	3
3. Which websites/apps were used	3
4. What we used for messages and calls	4
5. How websites/apps are used	5
6. Number of websites/apps used – past 6 months	6
7. Number of websites apps used – past 7 days	6
8. Satisfaction with communication services (2018–21)	7



# Executive summary



## About this report

This report contains the executive summary and key findings from our *How we communicate*, 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 communicate

The COVID-19 restrictions and lockdowns of 2020 and 2021 accelerated our transition to digital communications, contributing to an unprecedented reliance on telecommunications services. The way we communicate and use services also changed as we embraced a more dynamic and virtual environment as a part of our daily lives.

In 2022, we are actually consolidating the number of different websites and apps we use to communicate. Our use of larger platforms such as Facebook and Instagram has plateaued, and smaller services, such as Google Meet, are becoming more popular.

Younger Australians are still engaging the most with the digital world, but older age groups are catching up.

Meanwhile, women and Australians living in metropolitan areas continue to do more online compared with their counterparts, increasing their take-up of digital technologies and use of social media.

## Services used to communicate

Calling from a mobile phone is still our most popular way to make voice calls (96%). However, 81% of us now use apps for calling and messaging (up from 77% in 2020), with the increase coming from more of us making video and voice calls. For online Australians, 63% used app for video calls and 52% used an app for voice calls (up from 55% and 45% in 2021 respectively). For messaging, our use of both texts from a mobile phone and those via apps has stayed consistent.

Older Australians also appear to be closing the gap on younger adults, with more 55- to 64-year-olds using apps for messages or calls (from 69% in 2021 to 79% in 2022).

The decline in fixed-line calls has stabilised for the first time since 2017. Less than a quarter of Australians (23%) made a landline call at home in the first half of 2022. Despite overall use remaining steady, it fell for those aged 65–74, from 46% in 2021 to 39% in 2022.

## **Apps and digital platforms**

Our overall use of digital platforms in Australia plateaued in 2022, with 95% of us using a communication or social media website or app in the previous 6 months (96% in 2021). However, on average, the number of platforms we used declined, from 5.7 in 2021 to 5.2 in 2022.

Although Meta-owned websites or apps (formerly Facebook, Inc.) are still dominant, over the previous 12 months, there were declines in use for well-established platforms including Facebook (from 75% to 71%), Facebook Messenger (from 70% to 68%) and Instagram (from 44% to 41%). During this period, Zoom, FaceTime, Microsoft Teams, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Pinterest and Skype also saw a decline in use.

Google Meet (including Duo) made inroads in 2022, increasing from 3% in 2021 to 6% – the only app or website to record an increase in uptake on the previous year.

## **Age**

Younger Australians continue to use social media and digital communication tools the most. On average, 18- to 24-year-olds uses 5.5 websites or apps, with 77% of this age group using 4 or more in a week, compared to 10% of those aged 75+.

Over the past 6 months, only 2% of these younger Australians had not used any apps or websites, compared to 25% of those aged 75+ (who used 2.3 on average).

Despite this difference, older Australians continue to engage in digital communications – 23% of those aged over 75 said they used one website or app in the previous week, 20% said they used 2, 13% said 3 and 10% said they used 4 or more. As age groups get younger, usage of 4 or more apps/websites increases.

## **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. Services used

*Base:* Australian adults, 6 months to June 2022

- > Mobile calls, texts, and messaging/calling apps were the main services used for personal purposes. While calls from mobile phones fell to 96% from 98% in 2022, usage remained well above levels seen before the COVID-19 pandemic.
- > Messaging/calling apps were particularly popular with younger Australians. However, usage among Australians aged 55–64 increased this year, up from 69% in 2021 to 79% in 2022. Usage was also greater among females (85%) compared to males (76%), and those living in metropolitan areas (83%) compared to those living in regional areas (77%).
- > Fixed-line home phone calls have stabilised for the first time since 2017. Less than a quarter of Australians (23%) made a fixed-line phone call at home – which is on par with 2021 (24%). Usage fell for those aged 65–74 to 39% from 46% in 2021.

## 2. Use of apps for calls or messaging

*Base:* Online Australian adults, 6 months to June 2022

- > Voice calls via an app were used by 52%, up from 45% in 2021. Despite this increase, levels remain well below those observed during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 (73%).
- > Those living in metropolitan areas were more likely to use an app for voice calls (57%) than those in regional areas (43%).
- > Video calls via an app were used by almost 2 in 3 (63%), up from 55% in 2021 and 47% in 2020.
- > Those more likely to use video calls were females (67% compared to 58% for males) and those living in metropolitan areas (66% compared to 57% in regional areas).
- > Messaging via an app remained stable (75%), following an increase from 61% in 2020 and 58% in 2019.
- > Those more likely to use a messaging app included females (79% compared to 69% for males) and those living in metropolitan areas (76% compared to 70% in regional areas).
- > Younger Australians remained more likely to use messaging apps. Those aged 18–24 were the greatest adopters at 89%. However, take-up by older Australians has increased, particularly among those aged 55–64 (71%, up from 64% in 2021).

## 3. Which websites/apps were used

*Base:* Australian adults, **6 months** to June 2022

- > Almost everyone (95%) used a communication or social media website or app for personal purposes. This remained stable with 2021 (96%).
- > Facebook was still the dominant service, but usage fell to 71% in 2022 from 75% in 2021.
- > Use of other apps owned by Meta (formerly Facebook, Inc.) also declined in the previous year. These included Facebook Messenger (70% in 2021 to 68%) and Instagram (44% in 2021 to 41%). Use of WhatsApp remained stable at 43% (from 44% in 2021).

- > Younger people and females were more likely to use Tik Tok. Those aged 18–24 used Tik Tok at a higher rate than older Australians (43%, compared to 4% for those aged 65–74 and 2% for 75+). 23% of females used Tik Tok compared to 11% of males.

**Base:** Australian adults, **previous 7 days** to June 2022

- > Nine in 10 (92%) used a communication or social media website or app for personal purposes. Four of the top 5 apps used were owned by Meta.
- > Females were more likely than males to have used Facebook (69% compared to 60%), Facebook Messenger (67% compared to 51%), Instagram (44% compared to 26%), FaceTime (19% compared to 12%), Snapchat (19% compared to 8%) and TikTok (18% compared to 8%).
- > Snapchat was used by 14% and they were more likely to be aged 18–24 (41%).

## 4. What we used for messages and calls

### ***Used to send messages***

**Base:** Australian adults, previous 7 days to June 2022

- > Most of us (87%) used a communication or social media website or app to send messages. The top websites or apps used for sending messages were Facebook Messenger (55%), WhatsApp (31%) and Instagram (18%).
- > Those aged 18–24 were more likely to send messages on Instagram (46%), Snapchat (33%), Discord (17%) and TikTok (12%) than all other age groups.
- > Females were more likely than males to send messages using Facebook Messenger (63% compared to 46%), Instagram (23% compared to 11% of males) and Snapchat (13% compared to 6% of males).
- > Males were more likely than females to use Facebook (16% compared to 13%) and Discord (6% compared to 3% of females).
- > Australians living in metropolitan areas were more likely than those living in regional areas to send messages on WhatsApp (37% compared to 19%), Instagram (20% compared to 13%) and Discord (6% compared to 2%).
- > Australians living in regional areas were more likely than those in metropolitan areas to send messages using Facebook Messenger (60% compared to 53%) and Facebook (18% compared to 13%).

### ***Used to make video/voice calls***

**Base:** Australian adults, previous 7 days to June 2022

- > Just over half of us (55%) used a communication or social media website or app to make voice or video calls. The top websites or apps used were Facebook Messenger (25%), WhatsApp (18%) and FaceTime (12%).
- > Those aged 18–24 were more likely than all other age groups to make video or voice calls using Discord (14%), Instagram (9%) and Snapchat (8%).
- > Females were more likely than males to make video/voice calls using Facebook Messenger (29% compared to 21% of males) and FaceTime (14% compared to 10% of males).
- > Australians living in metropolitan areas were more likely than those in regional areas to make video/voice calls using WhatsApp (23% compared to 10%).

## 5. How websites/apps are used

### ***Used to actively engage with a piece of content***

*Base:* Australian adults, previous 7 days to June 2022

- > 75% used a website or app to actively engage with a piece of content such as sharing, commenting, or liking a post.
- > Facebook (47%) and Facebook Messenger (31%) were the leading services used to actively engage with content, followed by Instagram (25%) and YouTube (21%).
- > Females were more likely than males to engage with content on Facebook (53% compared to 42%), Facebook Messenger (37% compared to 24%), Instagram (33% compared to 17%), TikTok (12% compared to 5%), Snapchat (8% compared to 4%) and FaceTime (6% compared to 3%).
- > Males were more likely than females to engage with content on YouTube (26% compared to 16%), Twitter (8% compared to 5%) and Reddit (8% compared to 4%).
- > Australians aged 18–24 were more likely than all other age groups to engage with content on Instagram (53%), TikTok (28%), Snapchat (18%) and Discord (11%).
- > Australians living in metropolitan areas were more likely than those living in regional areas to engage with content on Instagram (28% compared to 19%), YouTube (23% compared to 15%) and WhatsApp (20% compared to 9%).
- > Australians living in regional areas were more likely than those in metropolitan areas to engage with content on Facebook (51% and 45%) and Facebook Messenger (35% compared to 28%).

### ***Used to post or create a piece of content***

*Base:* Australian adults, previous 7 days to June 2022

- > 55% used a website or app to post or create content.
- > Facebook (28%) and Facebook Messenger (19%) were the leading services used to post or create content, followed by Instagram (14%) and WhatsApp (11%).
- > Females were more likely than males to post or create content using Facebook (32% compared to 25%), Facebook Messenger (23% compared to 16%), Instagram (19% compared to 8%) and Snapchat (8% compared to 3%).
- > Australians aged 18–24 were more likely than all other age groups to post or create content on Snapchat (18%) and TikTok (7%).
- > Australians living in metropolitan areas were more likely than those living in regional areas to post or create content on Instagram (16% compared to 11%) and WhatsApp (13% compared to 7%).
- > Australians living in regional areas were more likely than those in metropolitan areas to post or create content on Facebook (32% compared to 26%) and Facebook Messenger (22% compared to 18%).
- > Australians living in regional areas were more likely than those in metropolitan areas to engage with content on Facebook (51% and 45%) and Facebook Messenger (35% compared to 28%).

### ***Used to access news***

*Base:* Australian adults, previous 7 days to June 2022

- > 61% used a website or app to access news.
- > Facebook (36%) and YouTube (16%) were the leading services used to access news, followed by Instagram (10%) and Twitter (7%).
- > Females were more likely than males to access news using Facebook (41% compared to 31%) and Instagram (14% compared to 6%).

- > Males were more likely than females to access news using YouTube (21% compared to 11%), Twitter (9% compared to 5%) and Reddit (9% compared to 3%).
- > Australians living in metropolitan areas were more likely than those living in regional areas to access news on YouTube (18% compared to 13%), Instagram (12% compared to 7%), Twitter (8% compared to 4%) and Reddit (8% compared to 3%).
- > Those least likely to access news online using a website or app were aged 55–64 (42%), followed by those aged 65–74 (39%), 45–54 (38%) and 75+ (35%).

## 6. Number of websites/apps used – past 6 months

*Base:* Australian adults, 6 months to June 2022

- > Two-thirds of Australians (66%) used an average of 4 or more communication and social media websites or apps for personal purposes. This is down from 70% in 2021.
- > Those more likely to use 4 or more websites/apps were females (71% compared with 61% for males) and those living in metropolitan areas (69% compared with 61% for those in regional areas).
- > On average, Australians used 5.2 communication and social media websites or apps, down from 5.7 in 2021.

## 7. Number of websites apps used – past 7 days

### ***Communications and websites/app used***

*Base:* Australian adults, previous 7 days to June 2022

- > Almost half of Australians (48%) used on average 4 or more communication and social media websites or apps for personal purposes.
- > Those more likely to use 4 or more websites/apps were aged 18–24 (77%, higher than all other age groups), females (53% compared with 42% for males) and living in metropolitan areas (52% compared with 39% for those in regional areas).
- > On average, Australians used 3.7 communication and social media websites or apps, this rose to 5.5 for those aged 18–24 and fell to 1.5 for those aged 75+.
- > On average, 4.0 websites or apps were used in metropolitan areas, compared to 3.2 in regional areas.

### ***Used to actively engage with a piece of content***

*Base:* Australian adults, previous 7 days to June 2022

- > One in 5 (19%) used 4 or more communication and social media websites or apps to actively engage with content. This rose to 36% for those aged 18–24 and fell to just 5% of those aged 75+.
- > Females were also more likely to use 4 or more websites or apps to actively engage with content (21% compared to 17% of males), as were those living in metropolitan areas (21% compared to 15% living in regional areas).
- > On average, 2.1 apps were used by people in metropolitan areas to actively engage with content, compared to 1.7 in regional areas.

### ***Used to post or create a piece of content***

*Base:* Australian adults, previous 7 days to June 2022

- > The greatest portion of those who posted or created content did so using only one website or app (28%)
- > Females were also more likely than males to post or create content using at least one website or app (60% compared to 48%).

### ***Used to access news***

*Base:* Australian adults, previous 7 days to June 2022

- > Almost 2 in 5 (37%) used only one website or app to access news.

### ***Used to make voice or video calls***

*Base:* Australian adults, previous 7 days to June 2022

- > Just over a third (35%) used only one website or app to make voice or video calls.
- > Australians living in metropolitan areas were more likely to use 4 or more websites or apps to make voice or video calls (3%) than those in regional areas (1%).

### ***Used to send messages***

*Base:* Australian adults, previous 7 days to June 2022

- > Just over a third (35%) used only one website or app make or send messages.
- > Those aged 18–24 were more likely than every other age group to use 4 or more websites or apps to send messages (22%), as were those living in metropolitan areas (10%) compared to regional areas (4%).

## **8. Satisfaction with communication services (2018–21)**

### ***Mobile phone service***

*Base:* Australian adults, 6 months to June 2021

*Note:* Bracketed numbers below represent the consumer satisfaction rating, which is based on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very dissatisfied and 5 is very satisfied.

- > Australians' overall satisfaction with their mobile phone services did not change in 2021 compared to 2020.
- > Satisfaction with service reliability (3.7), customer service (3.4) and call wait times (3.0) reversed back to 2019 levels after an increase in 2020, and maintained in 2021. This may indicate that the greater use of mobile phone services during COVID-19-related restrictions had some impact on satisfaction levels.
- > Regional users were less satisfied with their service reliability (3.6) compared to metropolitan users (3.8), as well as the quality of voice calls (3.9 compared to 4.0).
- > Older people were generally more satisfied with their mobile phone services. Users aged 55+ were more satisfied than those aged 18–34 with their mobile service overall (3.9 compared to 3.8), quality of voice calls (4.0 compared to 3.9), billing information (4.1 compared to 3.9), service reliability (3.9 compared to 3.7), coverage (3.7 compared to 3.5), customer service (3.5 compared to 3.4) and complaints handling (3.4 compared to 3.3).

### **Home internet service**

*Base:* Australian adults, 6 months to June 2021

*Note:* Bracketed numbers below represent the consumer satisfaction rating, which is based on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very dissatisfied and 5 is very satisfied.

- > Australians' satisfaction with home internet services remained consistent, with increased satisfaction in 2019 and 2020 continuing in 2021. This was evident across all aspects of home internet service, including overall satisfaction (3.3 in 2019 compared to 3.6 in 2021).
- > 55+ year-olds were more satisfied with their billing information than 18-to-54-year-olds (3.9 compared to 3.7), but less satisfied with call wait times when contacting their service provider (3.0 compared to 3.2).

### **Fixed-line service**

*Base:* Australian adults, 6 months to June 2021

*Note:* Bracketed numbers below represent the consumer satisfaction rating, which is based on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very dissatisfied and 5 is very satisfied.

- > Australians with fixed-line services have remained similarly satisfied with these services since 2017. However, since 2019 (and before the COVID-19 pandemic), satisfaction increased for call costs (3.4 to 3.6) and line rental costs (3.0 to 3.3).
- > Those aged 55+ were more satisfied than those aged 18–54 with their overall fixed-line service (3.7 compared to 3.5), billing information (4.0 compared to 3.7) and call costs (3.7 compared to 3.5).
- > Australians aged 75+ (who are the largest users of fixed-line phone services) were more satisfied with all service areas except call wait times, compared to those aged 18–74.
- > Males were more satisfied with service reliability (3.9) than females (3.7).