

*Communications and media in
Australia series:*

How we communicate
Executive summary and key findings

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Executive summary

Using 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 full 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 links to the methodology used, a data quality statement and a glossary of terms for the report. The data for all tables in the report can be directly exported from the interactive version.

How we communicate

Australians are more digitally connected than ever. Mobile phone calls have long been the most widely used way to communicate, but in 2023, mobile text messages came close. Messaging is also growing in popularity via apps such as Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp – we are now more likely to use an app for texting than calling, with nearly 4 in 5 of us doing it (more than in 2022).

Use of digital platforms remains high, with growth across almost all platforms. After some declines in 2022, use has returned to 2021 levels. We also found more Australians are using digital platforms to access their news, with video platforms YouTube and TikTok increasing in popularity, driven by younger age groups.

Services used to communicate

As in 2022, almost all adults used their mobile phones to make calls in 2023 (97%), whereas the proportion who used them to text (96%) increased (91% in 2022). Our use of apps such as WhatsApp for messaging also increased (to 78%, from 74% in 2022) while use of apps for voice or video calls remained unchanged. Younger Australians were more likely to message via an app, however the greatest increase compared with 2022 was among 45 to 54-year-olds, from 75% in 2022 to 82% in 2023.

Despite stabilising last year, use of landline phones once again declined in 2023 (18%, 23% in 2022).

Digital platform use

In the previous 7 days to June 2023, 95% of Australian adults used at least one communication or social media website or app for personal purposes, up from 92% in 2022. There were increases in use across most digital platforms in 2023, reversing the declines seen in 2022. This pattern was evident in the average number of platforms used by Australians in the previous 6 months, which dropped from 5.7 in 2021 to 5.2 in 2022, and increased to 5.9 in 2023.

Younger Australians were more likely to use a variety of digital platforms. Those aged 18–24 used 8.6 platforms in the previous 6 months to June 2023 compared with those aged 75+ who used 2.7 on average.

YouTube and Facebook were the 2 most popular platforms, both recording the same level of use among the Australian population – 75% in the previous 6 months to June 2023. However, Facebook was more commonly used in the previous 7 days to June 2023 than YouTube (67% compared with 62%).

Meta apps were used by more of us in 2023 than 2022. In the previous 6 months to June 2023, WhatsApp and Instagram saw the largest gains, taking them above their 2021 levels – 51% of us used WhatsApp in 2023, up from 44% in 2021, while 48% used Instagram in 2023, up from 44% in 2021.

More of us also turned to digital platforms as a source of news. Nearly a third of adults (63%) accessed news on a communication or social media website or app in the previous 7 days to June 2023, up from 59% in 2022. While use of Facebook for news (36%) was stable in 2023, use over the previous 12 months increased for YouTube (16% to 23%), Instagram (10% to 12%), Twitter (7% to 9%), TikTok (2% to 5%) and LinkedIn (2% to 4%). These increases were largely driven by younger age groups.

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. Information about the sample and the ACMA annual consumer survey is in the [methodology](#).

Key findings

1. Services used

Base: Australian adults, 6 months to June 2023.

- > Mobile calls, texts and messaging/calling apps were the main services used for personal purposes. More of us used a mobile phone for texts (96%, up from 91% in 2022) and used an app for messages and calls (84%, up from 81% in 2022).
- > Messaging/calling apps has become more popular with older Australians. Use among those aged 45–54 increased from 82% in 2022 to 89% in 2023, and also increased among those aged 65–74 from 64% to 72%. Use was also greater among females (88%) compared with males (80%), and those living in metropolitan areas (87%) compared with those living in regional areas (79%).
- > Landline (home) phone calls have dropped. Less than 1 in 5 (18%) used a landline phone for calls at home, down from 23% in 2022.

2. Use of apps for calls or messaging

Base: Australian adults, 6 months to June 2023.

- > Voice calls via an app increased but were still lower than during the first COVID wave. They were used by 58%, up from 52% in 2022, but well below their use during the COVID–19 pandemic in 2020 (72%).
- > Those living in metropolitan areas were more likely than those in regional areas to use an app for voice calls (62% compared with 51%).
- > Video calls via an app were used by almost 2 in 3 (64%). This remained stable from 2022 levels after successive years of growth since this data was collected in 2019.
- > Females (69%) were more likely than males (58%) to make video calls, as were those living in metropolitan areas (67%) compared with regional areas (58%).
- > Messaging via an app increased to 78%, up from 53% in 2019.
- > Females (82%) were more likely than males (73%) to use a messaging app, as were those living in metropolitan areas (81%) compared with regional areas (73%).
- > Younger Australians remained more likely to use messaging apps. The 2 youngest age groups reported the highest usage – 92% of those aged 18–24 and 89% of those aged 25–34.

3. Which websites or apps were used

Base: Australian adults, **6 months** to June 2023.

- > Almost all Australians (97%) used a communication or social media website or app for personal purposes, up from 95% in 2022.
- > Facebook and YouTube were the 2 most popular services, both increased to 75% after declines in 2022.
- > Use of all Meta apps increased from the previous year. This includes Facebook (71% in 2022 to 75%), Facebook Messenger (68% in 2022 to 72%), Instagram (41% in 2022 to 48%) and WhatsApp (43% in 2022 to 51%).
- > Younger people and females were more likely to use TikTok. TikTok was used by 50% of 18 to 24-year-olds, compared with 4% of those aged 65–74 and 2% of those aged 75+. More females (26%) used TikTok than males (15%).

- > Use of Facetime, TikTok, Reddit and Discord also increased – 35% used FaceTime, up from 27% in 2022; 21% used TikTok, up from 17% in 2022; 20% used Reddit, up from 17% in 2022; and 13% used Discord, up from 10% in 2022.

Base: Australian adults, **previous 7 days** to June 2023.

- > Nine in 10 (95%) used a communication or social media website or app for personal purposes. Four of the top 5 apps used were owned by Meta.
- > Females (96%) were more likely than males (93%) to have used a communication or social media website or app. They were also more likely to have used Facebook (74% compared with 62%), Facebook Messenger (72% compared with 53%), Instagram (49% compared with 31%), FaceTime (23% compared with 13%), Snapchat (19% compared with 9%), TikTok (21% compared with 10%), Pinterest (14% compared with 4%) and BeReal (3% compared with 1%).

4. What we used for messages and calls

Base: Australian adults, previous 7 days to June 2023.

- > Most of us (84%) used a communication or social media website or app to send messages, an increase from 80% in 2022. The top websites or apps used for sending messages were Facebook Messenger (58%), WhatsApp (36%) and Instagram (23%).

Used to send messages

- > Younger Australians message more over apps. Those aged 18–24 were more likely to send messages on Instagram (61%), Snapchat (34%), Discord (28%), TikTok (14%) and WeChat (11%) than all other age groups.
- > Males and females message on different platforms. Females were more likely than males to send messages using Facebook Messenger (68% compared with 48%), Instagram (29% compared with 15%), Snapchat (15% compared with 6%) and TikTok (4% compared with 1%).
- > Males were more likely than females to send messages using Discord (8% compared with 4%), Microsoft Teams (5% compared with 3%), Signal (4% compared with 2%) and LinkedIn (3% compared with 1%).
- > Those living in metropolitan areas were more likely than those living in regional areas to send messages on WhatsApp (43% compared with 21%), Instagram (26% compared with 16%), Discord (8% compared with 3%), Microsoft Teams (5% compared with 2%), WeChat (5% compared with 1%), Signal (4% compared with 2%), LinkedIn (3% compared with 1%) and Twitter (2% compared with 1%).
- > Messaging via Facebook is used more in regional areas. Those living in regional areas (18%) were more likely than those in metropolitan areas (12%) to send messages using Facebook.

Used to make video/voice calls

- > Just over half of us (58%) used a communication or social media website or app to make voice or video calls. The top websites or apps used were Facebook Messenger (26%), WhatsApp (21%) and FaceTime (14%).
- > Those aged 18–24 were more likely than all other age groups to make video or voice calls using Discord (23%), Instagram (10%) and Snapchat (10%).
- > Different genders use different platforms to make calls. Females were more likely than males to make video/voice calls using Facebook Messenger (32% compared with 20%) and FaceTime (18% compared with 10%). Males were more likely than females to use WhatsApp (23% compared with 19%), Discord (5% compared with

2%), Microsoft Teams (6% compared with 3%) and Signal (2% compared with 0.3%).

- > Where we live influences how we make calls. Those living in metropolitan areas were more likely than those in regional areas to make video/voice calls using Discord (5% compared with 2%), WhatsApp (27% compared with 10%), Zoom (6% compared with 3%), WeChat (3% compared with 0%) and Microsoft Teams (5% compared with 3%).

5. How websites or apps are used

Base: Australian adults, previous 7 days to June 2023.

Used to actively engage with a piece of content

- > 80% used a website or app to actively engage with a piece of content, such as sharing, commenting, or liking a post, up from 75% in 2022.
- > Facebook (50%) and Facebook Messenger (36%) were the leading services used to actively engage with content, followed by Instagram (29%) and YouTube (28%).
- > Use of Facebook Messenger to engage with content increased on last year from 31% to 36%, as did Instagram (25% to 29%), YouTube (21% to 28%), WhatsApp (17% to 22%) and TikTok (8% to 10%).
- > Gender drives engagement on different platforms. Females were more likely than males to engage with content on Facebook (57% compared with 44%), Facebook Messenger (43% compared with 29%), Instagram (38% compared with 20%), TikTok (14% compared with 5%), Snapchat (11% compared with 3%), FaceTime (7% compared with 4%) and Pinterest (5% compared with 2%). Males were more likely than females to engage with content on YouTube (34% compared with 22%), Twitter (9% compared with 5%), LinkedIn (7% compared with 4%), Reddit (8% compared with 4%), Discord (6% compared with 3%) and Signal (2% compared with 1%).
- > Those aged 18–24 were more likely than all other age groups to engage with content on Instagram (60%), YouTube (47%), TikTok (35%), Discord (21%), Twitter (15%), WeChat (8%) and BeReal (8%).
- > Those living in metropolitan areas (82%) were more likely than those living in regional areas (76%) to engage with content across most platforms. Of those platforms with the highest levels of reported engagement, those living in metropolitan areas had higher engagement than regional Australians with Instagram (33% compared with 22%), YouTube (32% compared with 21%) and WhatsApp (26% compared with 13%). However, there was no difference between metropolitan and regional Australians in their levels of engagement with Facebook and Facebook Messenger.

Used to post or create a piece of content

- > 54% used a website or app to post or create content, stable with 2022 (55%).
- > Facebook (28%) and Facebook Messenger (20%) were the leading services used to post or create content, followed by Instagram (15%) and WhatsApp (13%).
- > Females were more likely than males to post or create content using Facebook (33% compared with 24%), Facebook Messenger (23% compared with 17%), Instagram (19% compared with 10%), and Snapchat (10% compared with 3%).
- > Young Australians are posting or creating more content. Australians aged 18–24 were more likely than all other age groups to post or create content on Instagram (34%), Discord (11%) and BeReal (8%).
- > Where we live influences which platform we use to post content. Those living in metropolitan areas were more likely than those living in regional areas to post or

create content on Instagram (17% compared with 10%) and WhatsApp (16% compared with 9%). Those living in regional areas were more likely than those in metropolitan areas to post or create content on Facebook (33% compared with 26%) and Facebook Messenger (23% compared with 18%).

Used to access news

- > More Australians are now accessing news from websites or apps (63%, up from 59% in 2022).
- > Facebook (36%) and YouTube (23%) were the leading services used to access news, followed by Instagram (12%) and Twitter (9%).
- > While use of Facebook to access news (36%) was stable from 2022, there was increased use for YouTube (16% to 23%), Instagram (10% to 12%), Twitter (7% to 9%), TikTok (2% to 5%) and LinkedIn (2% to 4%).
- > There are gender differences in where we access news. Females were more likely than males to access news using Facebook (41% compared with 32%), TikTok (6% compared with 3%) and Instagram (17% compared with 8%). Males were more likely than females to access news using YouTube (31% compared with 16%), Twitter (12% compared with 6%), LinkedIn (5% compared with 3%) and Reddit (10% compared with 5%).
- > Living in metro or regional areas also makes a difference in how news is accessed. Those living in metropolitan areas were more likely than those living in regional areas to access news on YouTube (26% compared with 19%), Instagram (14% compared with 9%), Twitter (10% compared with 6%) and Reddit (9% compared with 4%).
- > Mid-age and older Australians were the least likely to access news online using a website or app. Of those aged 45–54, 61% said they used a website or app to access the news, followed by 49% of those aged 55–64, 42% of those aged 65–74, and 30% of those aged 75+. These rates were lower than the age groups between 18 and 44.

6. Number of websites or apps used – past 6 months

Base: Australian adults, 6 months to June 2023.

- > Two-thirds of Australians (73%) used an average of 4 or more communication and social media websites or apps for personal purposes. This is up from 66% in 2022 and 70% in 2021.
- > Women and city-dwellers used more websites or apps. Females (77%) were more likely to use 4 or more websites or apps than males (69%) as were those living in metropolitan areas (76%) compared with those in regional areas (67%).
- > On average, Australians used 5.9 communication and social media websites or apps, down from 5.2 in 2022.

7. Number of websites apps used – past 7 days

Base: Australian adults, previous 7 days to June 2023.

Used a communication and social media website/app

- > Over half of Australians (56%) used on average 4 or more communication and social media websites or apps for personal purposes.
- > Women and city-dwellers use more websites/apps. Females (60%) were more likely to use 4 or more websites/apps than males (50%) as well as those living in metropolitan areas (60%) compared with those in regional areas (46%).

- > On average, we used 4.2 communication and social media websites or apps, up from 3.7 in 2022. Those aged 18–24 had the highest use of all age groups (6.4 on average), while those aged 75+ had the lowest (1.8 on average).
- > On average, people in metropolitan areas used 4.5 websites or apps to communicate, compared to those in regional areas who used 3.6.

Used to actively engage with a piece of content

- > One in 4 (25%) used 4 or more communication and social media websites or apps to actively engage with content, up from 19% in 2022. Those aged 18–24 were more likely to use 4 or more websites or apps to engage with content (47%), higher than all older age groups.
- > Those living in metropolitan areas were more likely to use 4 or more websites or apps to engage with a piece of content (29%) than those living in regional areas (17%). On average, 2.5 apps were used by people in metropolitan areas to actively engage with content, compared with 2.0 used by those in regional areas.

Used to post or create a piece of content

- > 23% used only one website or app to post or create a piece of content.
- > Males were less likely to have used a website or app to post or create a piece of content, (51% using 0 apps compared to 40% of females).

Used to access news

- > Just over one-third (34%) used only one website or app to access news.
- > Males (7%) were more likely to use 4 or more apps to access news than females (4%).

Used for voice or video calls

- > One-third (33%) used only one website or app to make voice or video calls.
- > Those living in metropolitan areas (35%) were more likely to use only one website or app to make voice or video calls than those in living in regional areas (29%).

Used for messages

- > Almost one-third (32%) used only one website or app for messages.
- > Those aged 18–24 (25%) were more likely than every other age group to use 4 or more websites or apps for messages, as were those living in metropolitan areas (13%) compared with regional areas (5%).

8. Satisfaction with communication services (2018–21)

Base: Australian adults, 6 months to June 2021 – scaled from 1 to 5, where 1 is very dissatisfied and 5 is very satisfied.

Mobile phone service

- > Australians' overall satisfaction with their mobile phone services did not change in 2021 compared with 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 levels 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 with metropolitan users (3.8), as well as the quality of voice calls (3.9 compared with 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 with 3.8), quality of voice calls (4.0 compared with 3.9), billing information (4.1 compared with 3.9), service reliability (3.9 compared with 3.7), coverage (3.7 compared with 3.5), customer service (3.5 compared with 3.4) and complaints handling (3.4 compared with 3.3).

Home internet service

- > Australian's 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 with 3.6 in 2021).
- > 55+ year-olds were more satisfied with their billing information than 18 to 54-year-olds (3.9 compared with 3.7), but less satisfied with call wait times when contacting their service provider (3.0 compared with 3.2).

Fixed-line service

- > Australians with fixed-line services have remained similarly satisfied with these services since 2017. However, since 2019 (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+ (the largest users of fixed-line phone services) were more satisfied with all service areas except call wait times, compared with those aged 18–74.
- > Males (3.9) were more satisfied with service reliability than females (3.7).