

South Africa not online - 63% have no access

A recent poll by Ipsos, investigating various online habits of South Africans, indicates that only 34% of South Africans have access to the Internet, whilst 63% say they are not able to access it.

Overall, there is a larger proportion of the younger population accessing the Internet than older age groups. Only 34% of people aged between 35-49 years have access to the Internet and this drops to 14% amongst those over 50 years old.

The incidence of accessing the Internet is also much higher amongst the white population, with 70% stating they go online, compared to 43% of the Indian population, 36% coloured and 29% of the black population.



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When asked how and where they access the internet, 88% state that they use their mobile phone to go online. Just over a fifth (22%) access the Internet at home, 17% go online at work and 11% use public places such as Internet cafes to go online. "The fact that mobile phones are predominantly used to get online highlights a big reason for the large percentage not accessing the internet," states Mari Harris, director of Public Affairs at Ipsos. "For the many millions that do not have smart phones or the budget to buy data, going online is simply not an option."

While using phones to go online is popular across all age groups, the younger age groups are far more likely to do so - 94% of those aged 15-17 and 93% of those aged 18-24 go online via their mobile devices, compared to 72% of those aged over 50 years old.

Social media

Well over three-quarters (81%) of South Africans have access to social media like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Not surprisingly, Facebook is the most popular, with 88% saying they access the social network site. Second most popular is WhatsApp, with 26% using the instant messaging application. Twitter follows with over a fifth (23%) accessing this platform. Over a tenth (12%) access YouTube (12%). LinkedIn starts the bottom of the scale with 3% with Instagram and Mxit with 2%.

"It is important to state that the research interviews adults only and would thus yield a lower result for Mxit. Thus the youngsters who use Mxit (the tweenies aged 10 to 15 years) are not included in our figures and these are the people that support Mxit and do not necessarily have smartphones."

Of those who access Facebook, the majority access it once or twice a day - 24% say once, 23% say twice and 17% saying thrice daily. Frequency of visiting the site then drops quite significantly - with only 8% saying they visit the site 4 times a day. Less than 1% visit the site more than 12 times a day.

Twitter users make fewer daily visits to the site - 38% saying they only visit Twitter once a day. Just over a quarter (26%) check it twice a day and 9% check it 3 times. The majority (71%) of YouTube users only access the site once a day, with less than a fifth (17%) visiting twice a day.

When it comes to WhatsApp, a fifth (20%) of users say they access the app 10 times a day, 9% state that they use it 20 times a day and 5% use it 30 times a day.

Time spent on social media

Almost a quarter (24%) of those who access Facebook say they spend about 30 minutes on the site per day. 13% stay on for about 10 minutes, while just over a tenth spend up to an hour on the social networking site per day.

Twitter users seem to spend less time on the site, with only 8% saying they will spend up to an hour on the site, whilst 10 minutes or 30 minutes seems to be about the standard amount spent - each yielding 16% of responses.

Methodology

The research was conducted with 3730 face-to-face interviews with randomly selected adult South Africans. The interviews were done in the homes and home languages of respondents, using CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing) and all results were collated and analysed in an aggregate format to protect the identity and confidentiality of respondents.

Trained quantitative fieldworkers from all population groups were responsible for the interviewing, which took place from March-April 2014. This methodology ensured that the results are representative of the views of the universe and that findings can be weighted and projected to the universe ie adult South Africans (over 15 years of age).

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