

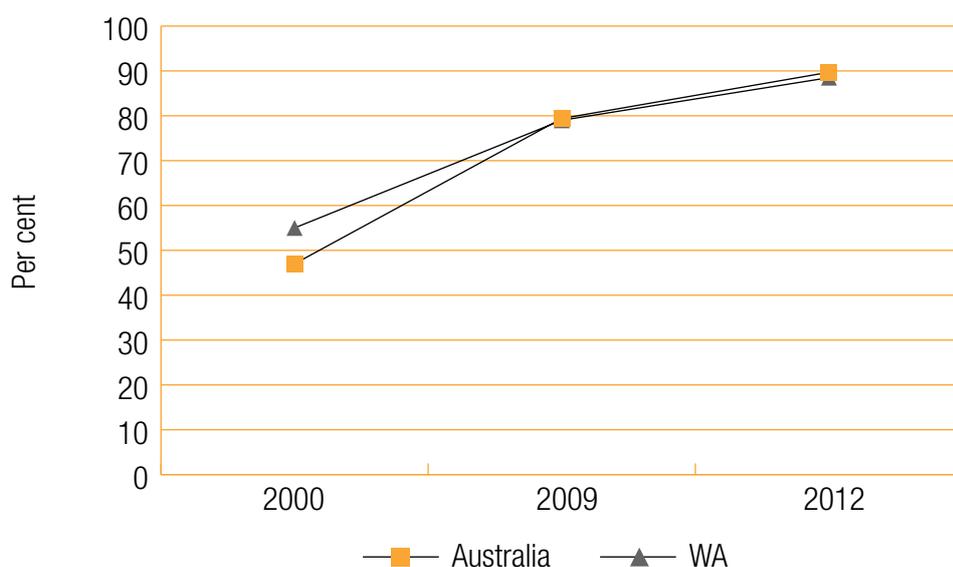
7.2 Internet access

Why this measure is included

Internet access is regarded as an increasingly important indicator of material basics and social inclusion,⁴¹⁷ providing children and young people with a range of educational, entertainment and social opportunities.⁴¹⁸ Having an Internet connection is included as an indicator which UNICEF considers when measuring children's material wellbeing in its report card on child wellbeing in rich countries.⁴¹⁹

There is an increasing recognition of the Internet's capacity as a tool and setting for promoting the health and wellbeing of young people, particularly in the area of mental health.^{420 421}

Figure 7.3: Internet access by children and young people 5 to 14 years: in per cent, Western Australia and Australia, 2000, 2009 and 2012



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Children's Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities*, 2000–2012 [series]

Table 7.6: Internet access by children and young people 5 to 14 years: in per cent, by age group, Western Australia and Australia, 2009 and 2012

| | 2009 | | 2012 | |
|----------------|------|-----------|------|-----------|
| | WA | Australia | WA | Australia |
| 5 to 8 years | n/a | 59.9 | 75.7 | 79.1 |
| 9 to 11 years | n/a | 88.5 | 96.1 | 96.0 |
| 12 to 14 years | n/a | 95.5 | 98.2 | 97.8 |
| Total | 79.0 | 79.4 | 88.5 | 89.7 |

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Children's Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities*, 2000–2012 [series]



Table 7.7: Internet access by children and young people 5 to 14 years: in per cent, by selected characteristics, Western Australia, 2012

| Selected characteristic | | Per cent |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------|
| Males | | 88.6 |
| Females | | 88.4 |
| Perth metropolitan area | | 90.6 |
| Regional/remote WA | | 83.0 |
| One-parent families | Parent employed | 85.3 |
| | Parent not employed | 78.4 |
| Couple families | Born in other country* | 77.7 |
| | Both parents born in other country* | 78.4 |
| | Neither parent employed | 76.1 |

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2012, *Children's Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities, Australia, 2012*

* The group 'other country' comprises all countries except Australia and the other main English-speaking countries (the United Kingdom, Ireland, South Africa, Canada, the United States of America and New Zealand).

Table 7.8: Internet use by children and young people 5 to 14 years: in per cent, by type of Internet activity done at home, Western Australia, 2012

| | 5 to 8 years | 9 to 11 years | 12 to 14 years | Total |
|---|--------------|---------------|----------------|-------|
| Educational activities | 82.3 | 92.7 | 95.5 | 90.4 |
| Playing online games | 66.8 | 74.6 | 58.6 | 66.3 |
| Listening to music or watching videos or movies | 46.6 | 62.5 | 78.9 | 63.3 |
| Other general surfing or browsing | 16.1 | 40.7 | 54.3 | 37.7 |
| Downloading videos, movies or music | 10.4 | 30.8 | 59.0 | 34.4 |
| Visiting or using social networking sites | 2.8 | 20.8 | 63.9 | 30.6 |
| Emailing | 6.2 | 28.9 | 53.9 | 30.6 |
| Making phone calls online | 12.8 | 21.9 | 35.9 | 24.0 |
| Visiting news, sports or weather sites | 6.3 | 20.2 | 29.9 | 19.2 |
| Using chat rooms, forums or instant messaging | 2.1 | 5.6 | 25.8 | 11.7 |
| Creating online content | n/a | n/a | 16.5 | 7.6 |
| Using eBay, auction sites or Internet shopping | n/a | n/a | 10.4 | 4.8 |

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2012, *Children's Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities, Australia, 2012*

What is this measure?

This measure looks at Internet access and use⁴²² by children and young people aged five to 14 years.

The data shows the percentages of children and young people in Western Australia (WA) and nationally who had access to the Internet at home, in school and at other places, and the most common types of Internet activity at home by children and young people. It includes situations where a parent is present teaching the child or where the parent is operating the mouse or keyboard under the child's direction, but does not include situations where the child is only observing the parent accessing the Internet.⁴²³

The data is taken from the Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) *Children's Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities* for 2000, 2009 and 2012.⁴²⁴ Data for this publication is collected every three years as a supplement to the monthly ABS Labour Force Survey. The data on children's Internet access and use was collected with reference to the preceding 12-month period.⁴²⁵ The data does not provide a breakdown on Internet access and use by Aboriginal children, nor does it include children living in Aboriginal communities, who were not in the scope of the survey for operational reasons.⁴²⁶

In order to provide some indication of Internet access and use by Aboriginal children, data has been sourced from the 2008 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS).⁴²⁷ This data considered all Aboriginal children aged five to 14 years in Australia.

Commentary

The majority (88.5%) of WA children and young people aged five to 14 years accessed the Internet in the 12 months to April 2012. The proportion has steadily increased from 55.0 per cent in 2000 and 79.0 per cent in 2009 (Figure 7.3). Generally, the proportion of children and young people in WA who accessed the Internet increased with age, with 75.7 per cent of five to eight year-olds having accessed the Internet, 96.1 per cent of nine to 11 year-olds and 98.2 per cent of 12 to 14 year-olds (Table 7.6).

Almost the same proportion of girls as boys accessed the Internet (88.4% compared to 88.6%), although there was a difference in access between children and young people in the Perth metropolitan area and in other parts of WA. More than 90 per cent of children residing in the metropolitan area accessed the Internet compared with 83 per cent of children in regional and remote areas (Table 7.7).

Children and young people living in one-parent families where the parent is not employed, and those from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, were less likely than their peers to access the Internet (78.4% and 77.7% respectively) (Table 7.7).

In addition, more than one-third of all children (34.4%) living in the most disadvantaged⁴²⁸ communities of WA did not access the Internet at home. This proportion is higher than for all of Australia (31.9%). In comparison, fewer than one in 10 children (8.9%) living in the most advantaged communities in WA did not access the Internet at home⁴²⁹ (Table 7.10).

Of the more than 235,000 children and young people who did access the Internet at home, 90 per cent used the Internet for educational activities, which was the most popular purpose. Playing online games and listening to music or watching videos or movies were the second and third most popular Internet activities for children and young people. This result was observed across all surveyed age groups with the exception of age group 12 to 14 years where visiting or using social networking sites was third (Table 7.8).

The ABS estimates that in 2008, around 69 per cent of Aboriginal children aged five to 14 years in Australia used the Internet, often accessing the Internet from more than one site. School was the most popular location: 84 per cent of Aboriginal children who used the internet accessed the internet from school, 58 per cent from their homes and 21 per cent from a neighbour's, friend's or relative's house.⁴³⁰

The most popular online activities identified by Aboriginal children in 2008 were education or study (77%), entertainment or leisure (59%) and social communication (26%).⁴³¹

Strategies

Students Online Policy, Government of Western Australia (released 2013)

This policy supports the development of school-based processes and procedures to protect and inform students and parents in their use of Department of Education online services. Information is available at www.det.wa.edu.au/policies/detcms/policy-planning-and-accountability/policies-framework/policies/students-online.en?oid=au.edu.wa.det.cms.contenttypes.Policy-id-3784406

National Strategy for Young Australians, Commonwealth Government (released 2010)

This national strategy provides the Commonwealth Government's vision for all young people to grow up safe, healthy, happy and resilient and to have the opportunities and skills they need to learn, work, engage in community life and influence decisions that affect them. It focuses on eight key priority areas including enabling young Australians to participate confidently and safely online. Information is available at www.youth.gov.au/sites/youth/ayf/media/pages/nationalstrategyforyoungaustralians

Closing the Gap: National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Public Internet Access – Indigenous Communications Program, Council of Australian Governments (released 2009)

This program is being delivered under a 2009 National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Public Internet Access. It aims to improve telecommunications services and basic public Internet access facilities for 120 remote indigenous communities that have limited or no public access Internet facilities. Information is available at www.communications.gov.au/funding_and_programs/indigenous_communications_programme

Cybersmart, Commonwealth Government

Cybersmart is a national cyber safety and cyber security education program managed by the Australian Communications and Media Authority. The program is specifically designed to meet the needs of children, young people, parents, teachers and library staff. Information is available at www.cybersmart.gov.au/

Stay Smart Online, Commonwealth Government

Stay Smart Online is a Commonwealth Government initiative providing cyber security information for Australian Internet users about ways to protect their personal information online. It includes information on using social networking sites safely, dealing with cyber bullying and online grooming, and how to secure mobile phones. Further information is available at www.staysmartonline.gov.au/kids_and_teens

Youth Advisory Group on Cyber Safety, Commonwealth Government (established 2009)

This group of young people aged eight to 17 years provides advice to government on cyber safety issues. They provide an insight into cyber safety issues affecting children and teenagers and how they can be addressed from the perspective of young people themselves. Further information is available at www.communications.gov.au/funding_and_programs/cyber_safety/youth_advisory_group



Want to know more?

Data on Internet access and use

The Australian Bureau of Statistics produces information on children's access and use of the Internet every three years, available at www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4901.0Main+Features1Apr%202012?OpenDocument

Research, reports and articles

The July 2012 report *Review of access to telecommunication services by people with disability, older Australians and people experiencing illness* was undertaken by the Commonwealth Government to consider how best to support use of telecommunications by people with a disability, including Internet access and use. The report is available at www.communications.gov.au/consultation_and_submissions/previous_consultation_and_submissions/review_of_access_to_telecommunication#report

The Commonwealth Parliament's Joint Select Committee on Cyber-Safety June 2011 Interim Report *High-Wire Act: Cyber-Safety and the Young* is available at www.aph.gov.au/parliamentary_business/committees/house_of_representatives_committees?url=jsc/report.htm

Like, post, share: Young Australians' experience of social media, August 2011, reports on qualitative research conducted for the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA). This report can be accessed at www.acma.gov.au/theACMA/Library/researchacma/Research-reports/young-australians-and-social-media

The Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre explores the role of technology in young people's lives and how technology can be used to improve the mental health and wellbeing of young people aged 12 to 25 years. The Centre is funded under a Commonwealth Government initiative and unites young people with researchers, practitioners, innovators and policy makers from over 70 partner organisations across the not-for-profit, academic, government and corporate sectors. Further information is available at www.yawcrc.org.au/partners

Other information

The State Library of Western Australia (SLWA) provides free public access to the Internet at the Perth Cultural Centre site. In addition, many public libraries provide free internet access to members. www.slwa.wa.gov.au/find/services/services_and_equipment/internet
www.slwa.wa.gov.au/find/guide_to_public_libraries

Cyber Strong Schools provides resources to help WA school communities support students to engage in positive ways with social media. CSS is part of Friendly Schools PLUS developed by the Child Health Promotion Research Centre at Edith Cowan University. Information is available at friendlyschools.com.au/cyberstrong

Solid Kids – Solid Schools – Solid Families is a childhood bullying prevention and management resource relevant to Aboriginal communities in the Mid-West Education District of Western Australia. The project was led by the Child Health Promotion Research Centre in partnership with the Combined Universities Centre for Rural Health and the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research. Further information about the resource is available at www.solidkids.net.au/index.php/

Information on the Commonwealth Government's approach to cyber safety, including research to inform policy development, is available on the Department for Communications' website at www.communications.gov.au/online_safety_and_security/cyber_safety

The Australian Communications and Media Authority is a Commonwealth Government agency responsible for the regulation of broadcasting, the Internet, radio communications and telecommunications. Information for parents, children and young people on Internet use is available at www.acma.gov.au/Citizen

Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC)/Education Services Australia (ESA) Education Portal is available at www.abc.net.au/learn/education-portal.htm



Additional tables

Table 7.9: Internet access by children and young people 5 to 14 years: number and in per cent, by location of Internet access, Western Australia, 2012

| Location of Internet access | Per cent | Number |
|-----------------------------|----------|---------|
| Home | 89.5 | 235,400 |
| School | 90.1 | 237,000 |
| Other places | 51.9 | 136,600 |
| Total | 100.0 | 262,900 |

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2012, *Children's Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities, Australia, 2012*

Table 7.10: Internet use at home by children and young people 5 to 14 years: in per cent, by Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage

| | Western Australia | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| | Lowest quintile | Second quintile | Third quintile | Fourth quintile | Highest quintile |
| Internet accessed at home | 65.6 | 72.6 | 80.7 | 80.6 | 91.1 |
| Internet not accessed at home | 34.4 | 27.4 | 19.3 | 19.4 | 8.9 |
| | Australia | | | | |
| | Lowest quintile | Second quintile | Third quintile | Fourth quintile | Highest quintile |
| Internet accessed at home | 67.8 | 76.7 | 80.7 | 86.3 | 90.5 |
| Internet not accessed at home | 31.9 | 23.0 | 19.2 | 13.6 | 9.5 |

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2012, *Children's Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities, custom report*

