
Connected Youth: preliminary results on young people's Internet use

Background

In the last couple of weeks, almost one thousand high school students from Geraldton completed a survey on their use of the Internet. The results demonstrate that youth are thoroughly connected. The Internet is integral to their social life, school work and many of their other interests.

The widespread use of the Internet is largely youth driven. Schools and parents do not play much part in young people's online life.

These preliminary results are based on the first 484 responses drawn from Geraldton Senior, Geraldton Grammar, Nagle College and Strathalbyn.

Access

- Internet use is universal for high school students in years 10, 11 and 12.
- Most students (83%) have a mobile phone that connects to the Internet.
- Most students also have another device that they use at home to connect with the Internet: 82% have access to a laptop, 62% have access to a desktop computer and 23% have access to a tablet.
- One of the main dislikes about the Internet was that connections were too slow.

Use

- Two out of three young people reported they connect to the Internet at least 3-5 times a day and 80% connect at least once a day.
- Listening to music was the activity reported by the most young people (85%) followed by social media (81%) and school work (78%).
- Other Internet activities reported by 50% or more of high school students were online chatting, watching video clips, instant messaging, shopping and gaming.
- Students wrote that what they like best about the Internet is having 'everything' available 'all the time'. Everything includes information about their interests – such as music and footy, and access to their friends – as well as what they need for school assignments.

Social relations

- High school students' most common methods of staying in touch with their friends are texting (81%), using social media (67%) and phoning with a mobile (62%).
- High school students most common methods of staying in touch with their parents or other adults who look after them are phoning on a mobile (74%), texting (72%) and phoning on a landline (27%).
- Facebook is by far the most common social media site used, followed by Tumblr at a distant second.
- 78% of high school students said they had observed someone being nasty or cruel to someone else online.
- When they saw nasty behavior, the most common action reported was to ignore it (89%), defend the person (67%), join in being nasty (14%) and ask someone advice on what to do (17%).

School and the Internet

- The most common use of the Internet at school is to look up information for classes (98%).
- In the past two weeks, few students used the Internet at school on school projects with students from other schools (9%) or were taught by another teacher online (5%).
- The extent students supported having all of their class curriculum, resources and assignments online and available outside of the school depended on their school. 61% of Nagel students thought it was a good idea but only 37% of Geraldton Senior students.
- Students learned how to do things on the Internet on their own (89%) or from friends (75%).
- Only 30% reported they learned about the Internet from teachers or in class or from their parents.

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