

USE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY BY THE WORLD'S CHILDREN AND YOUTH



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THE WORLD'S CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

A statistical compilation

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PREFACE

The expansion of electronic and digital infrastructure has given many millions of people the potential to learn, publish and communicate on an unprecedented scale. The rapidly declining real cost of the requisite information and communication technologies, combined with vast changes to available infrastructure, have allowed many young people to take advantage of technology to do and achieve things unknown to earlier generations.

While access to technology and associated electronic content has significantly changed the lives of many young people in wealthier economies, the same is not generally true of those in less developed economies.

The main purpose of this report is to shed light on the current situation by presenting and describing statistical information on the use of information and communication technology (ICT) by the children and youth of the world.

A secondary goal is to describe the limitations of existing statistics, and to present proposals to increase the availability and comparability of statistics on young people's use of ICT. An important limitation, affecting both the data and the conclusions presented in this publication, is the small number of countries for which relevant data are available. While the majority of developed economies have rich datasets on individual use of ICT, data availability is poor for most developing and transition economies, and particularly poor for the least developed economies (only two of which collect any individual ICT use data).

This is the first ITU-D statistical report on use of information and communication technology by young

people. ITU's Youth Initiative identified the need to develop global statistical indicators to measure use of ICT by children and youth (including by gender and disabilities), as a follow-up project to the ITU Youth Forum in 2006 (ITU, 2008). The publication is jointly produced by the ITU-D/SIS-Youth Initiative and ITU-D STAT and will enable users and analysts to have a better perspective on the evolution of the digital divide among youth and children.

Need for this publication also arose from ITU's recognition of the important relationships between ICT use and young people including the role of ICT in enhancing the development of children, and the contributions that young people can make to the development of an inclusive Information Society (World Summit on the Information Society, Tunis Commitment, articles 24 and 25). These were emphasized by the resolution of, the World Telecommunication Development Conference (Resolution 38, 2006) which called upon ITU to "... promote the interests and capabilities of youth in ICT..." and "... develop and strengthen actions to make ICTs accessible to children and youth, particularly the disadvantaged and marginalized, thereby bridging the digital divide."

This report is expected to be updated every four years in order to track use of ICT by the world's young people. This will enable ITU member states and sector members to monitor developments and to prepare a roadmap for actions and projects that would facilitate young people's integration into the Information Society.

The report will be distributed to ITU member states and made freely available on the ITU website.

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The data contained in the report were collected from national statistical offices by ITU or were compiled using other national statistical sources. Eurostat data were used for the European countries for which Eurostat collects ICT use statistics.

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The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of ITU or its membership.

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