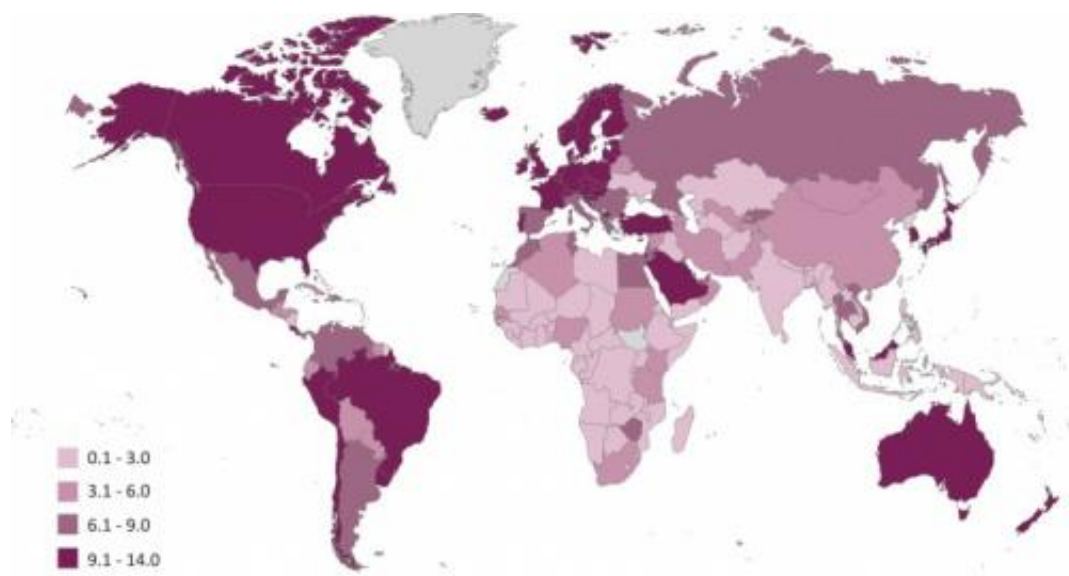


Where in the world are young people using the internet?

October 7 2013



According to a common myth, today's young people are all glued to the Internet. But in fact, only 30 percent of the world's youth population between the ages of 15 and 24 years old has been active online for at least five years. In South Korea, 99.6 percent of young people are active, the highest percentage in the world. The least? The Asian island of Timor Leste with less than 1 percent.

Those are among the many findings in a study from the Georgia Institute of Technology and International Telecommunication Union (ITU). The

study is the first attempt to measure, by country, the world's "[digital natives](#)." The term is typically used to categorize [young people](#) born around the time the personal computer was introduced and have spent their lives connected with technology.

Nearly 96 percent of American millennials are digital natives. That figure is behind Japan (99.5 percent) and several European countries, including Finland, Denmark and the Netherlands.

But the percentage that Georgia Tech Associate Professor Michael Best thinks is the most important is the number of digital natives as compared to a country's total population.

"That's because a country's future will be defined by today's young people and by technology," said Best, who co-led the study and, jointly with ITU, developed the model that calculated the worldwide figures. "Countries with a high proportion of young people who are already online are positioned to define and lead the digital age of tomorrow."

Rank	Country	100 as a % of total population	100 as a % of youth population**	Rank	Country	100 as a % of total population	100 as a % of youth population**
1	Iceland	81.401	13.4	101	Sierra Leone	0.000	0.0
2	Norway	79.700	12.9	102	Timor-Leste	0.000	0.0
3	Denmark	67.100	12.8	103	Myanmar	0.000	0.0
4	Malaysia	62.000	12.2	104	Sierra Leone	0.000	0.0
5	United States	57.000	12.1	105	Myanmar	0.000	0.0
6	Finland	51.000	11.9	106	Sierra Leone	0.000	0.0
7	Sweden	49.000	11.8	107	Myanmar	0.000	0.0
8	Denmark	48.000	11.8	108	Sierra Leone	0.000	0.0
9	Latvia	47.000	11.7	109	Myanmar	0.000	0.0
10	Denmark	46.000	11.7	110	Myanmar	0.000	0.0
11	Denmark	45.000	11.7	111	Myanmar	0.000	0.0
12	Denmark	44.000	11.7	112	Myanmar	0.000	0.0
13	Denmark	43.000	11.7	113	Myanmar	0.000	0.0
14	Denmark	42.000	11.7	114	Myanmar	0.000	0.0
15	Denmark	41.000	11.7	115	Myanmar	0.000	0.0
16	Denmark	40.000	11.7	116	Myanmar	0.000	0.0
17	Denmark	39.000	11.7	117	Myanmar	0.000	0.0
18	Denmark	38.000	11.7	118	Myanmar	0.000	0.0
19	Denmark	37.000	11.7	119	Myanmar	0.000	0.0
20	Denmark	36.000	11.7	120	Myanmar	0.000	0.0

Digital natives as a percentage of total population, 2012 Credit: Courtesy: ITU

The countries with the highest proportion of digital natives among their population are mostly rich nations, which have high levels of overall Internet penetration. Iceland is at the top of the list with 13.9 percent. The United States is sixth (13.1 percent). A big surprise is Malaysia, a middle-income country with one of the highest proportions of digital natives (ranked 4th at 13.4 percent). Malaysia has a strong history of investing in educational technology.

The [countries](#) with the smallest estimated proportion of digital natives are Timor-Leste, Myanmar and Sierra Leone. The bottom 10 consists entirely of African or Asian nations, many of which are suffering from

conflict and/or have very low Internet availability.

However, the report notes that Internet usage has increased significantly in the developing world during the past five years. The ITU believes the digital native population in these regions will more than double by 2017.

Overall, there are approximately 363 million digital natives out of a world population of nearly 7 billion (5.2 percent).

"Youth are transforming our world through the power of information and communication technologies," said Hamadoun Touré, ITU secretary-general. "The Youth Declaration developed at ITU's BYND2015 Youth Summit in Costa Rica and presented to the UN General Assembly last week by Costa Rican President Laura Chinchilla calls for more measurable targets to monitor the digital empowerment of young people at national, regional and international levels. This first attempt to measure the number of digital natives around the world is a valuable first contribution to this effort."

The model was developed using data collected by the ITU through surveys conducted around the globe. The study is part of the ITU's [Measuring the Information Society 2013 report](#), which was released on October 7.

Provided by Georgia Institute of Technology

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