

Mixed emotions in emerging economies on smartphones, social media

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A survey in 11 emerging economies showed people in those countries happy to be connected with smartphones and social media, even if they worry about the impact of digital lifestyles on society and on children.

The Pew Research Center report found the vast majority of adults in these countries have access to a [mobile phone](#) of some kind, with 53

percent using a smartphone capable of accessing the internet and running apps.

Across these countries, a median of 64 percent use at least one of seven different social media sites or messaging apps.

Most of these people say they personally benefit from the technology: more than nine in 10 say the devices have helped them stay in touch with loved ones, and nearly eight in 10 said they use them to get news and information about important issues.

But when asked if mobile phones and social media have been good for [society](#), the responses are mixed, with many expressing concerns about the impact of digital technologies on [children](#).

Some 79 percent of adults surveyed said people should be very concerned about children being exposed to harmful or immoral content, and nearly two-thirds said mobile phones have had a bad influence on children in their country.

"The rapid advancement of the mobile-social package invites people to think about the role of these devices in their lives and to look around and see how they might be affecting their societies," said Lee Rainie, Pew's director of internet and technology research.

"On the positive side, people in these nations say they reap [personal benefits](#) from the spread of mobile phones.

"Yet, fewer say mobile phones and [social media](#) are bringing the same level of benefit to their societies, and a key flashpoint of their concern is the impact of mobile connectivity on children."

The report is based on surveys conducted among 28,122 adults from

September 7 to December 7, 2018 in Colombia, Venezuela, Mexico, South Africa, Kenya, India, Vietnam, the Philippines, Lebanon, Jordan and Tunisia.

There were variations across these countries, but strong majorities said mobile phones have been beneficial for education and the economy.

Most respondents said their devices are important for news but express concern about false or inaccurate information.

Facebook was used by a median of 62 percent of adults in these countries, and WhatsApp by 47 percent.

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