

Study: Internet-Use Typology of Canadians: Online Activities and Digital Skills

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Canadians' proficiency on the Internet

A new study released today categorizes Canadians into five Internet user groups based on their online activities and digital skills. Findings from "[Internet-use Typology of Canadians: Online Activities and Digital Skills](#)" show that more than a third of Canadians are classified as advanced users.

The Internet and digital technologies continue to reshape communities and society and have profound impacts on the lives of individuals. The ability to operate and adapt in light of this allows the users to benefit from the opportunities provided by the digital transformation and to avoid the associated risks.

Based on responses to the 2018 Canadian Internet Use Survey (CIUS), about 9% of Canadians had not used the Internet in the three months prior to the survey and were classified as non-users. Another 16% were classified as basic users, mainly using the Internet for simple tasks such as emailing and checking the weather. Together, almost one in four Canadians had either no engagement or only basic engagement with the Internet and digital technologies.

Another 20% of Canadians were classified as intermediate users. In addition to basic tasks, many in this group used the Internet to access music, videos and streamed content. A further 22% of Canadians were classified as proficient users. In addition to doing basic tasks and accessing online entertainment, many in this group used work-related software and exhibited device-related skills, such as updating operating systems.

The remaining 34% of Canadians were classified as advanced users and exhibited a broad range of online activities and skills, including the use of cloud technologies. Of the 36 activities and skills used to create the classification, basic users reported 5.1 and advanced users reported 28.9, on average.

Age and education were the sociodemographic characteristics most strongly associated with the distribution of Canadians across user groups. For example, almost 8 in 10 Canadians aged 15 to 34 years were either proficient or advanced users while over 6 in 10 Canadians aged 65 years and older were either non-users or basic users.

A follow-up study using data from the 2018 and 2020 CIUS will compare the distributions of Canadians across Internet user groups prior to and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [4432](#).

The study "[Internet-use Typology of Canadians: Online Activities and Digital Skills](#)," part of the *Analytical Studies Branch Research Paper Series* ([11F0019M](#)), is now available.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca).

