Youth19 – Digital Access Brief

Digital access

Access to a computer, laptop, tablet or other device and access to the internet are important for participation in contemporary society – for taking part in learning, signing up for activities, managing banking, connecting with friends, and more.

According to the Digital 2021 New Zealand report,[1] internet use in New Zealand is high – 94% of New Zealand's population are active internet users.

Online learning is common in schools and is often critical for remote learning and homework. Having limited access to devices and the internet can perpetuate cycles of disadvantage, as these students cannot participate in learning or social communication as well as others.[2] Those without digital access are also more likely to have lower levels of subjective wellbeing. [3]

Youth19

In 2019, researchers from four Universities collaborated to survey over 7700 New Zealand adolescents in 49 Auckland, Northland and Waikato secondary schools. This is Youth19, the latest survey in the Youth2000 series.[4]

The survey was a representative, high-quality study about the wellbeing of rangatahi/youth. Schools were randomly selected from the region and then Year 9–13 students were randomly selected from each school roll. A diverse sample of students completed the anonymous survey in English or Te Reo Māori on handheld internet tablets with optional voice over.

See more at www.youth19.ac.nz.
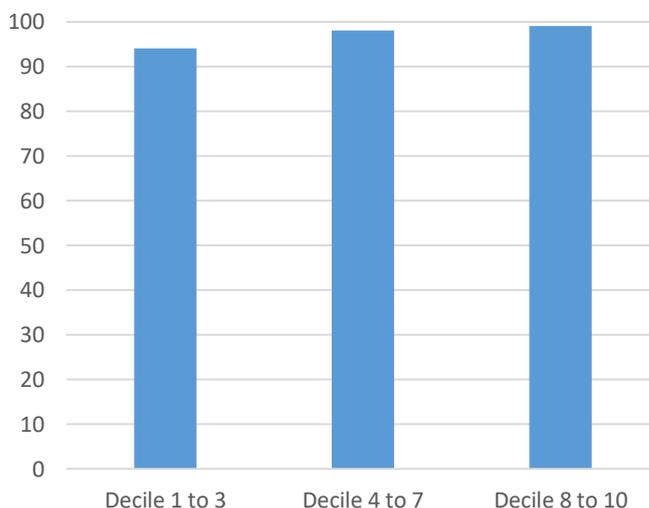
High but unequal access to devices

In total, 97% of students in Youth19 reported that they had access to a smartphone, laptop, computer, or tablet in their spare time. Although over 90% of students in each age group, school decile, and ethnic group had access to a device in their spare time, there were disparities and differences between groups.

Pacific, 'Other' ethnicity and Māori students reported less access than Pākehā and other European students. Specifically, 94% of Pacific students, 94% of 'Other' ethnicity students, 96% of Māori students, 98% of Asian students, and 99% of Pākehā and other European students reported access to a device in their spare time. This data is detailed in the table overleaf.
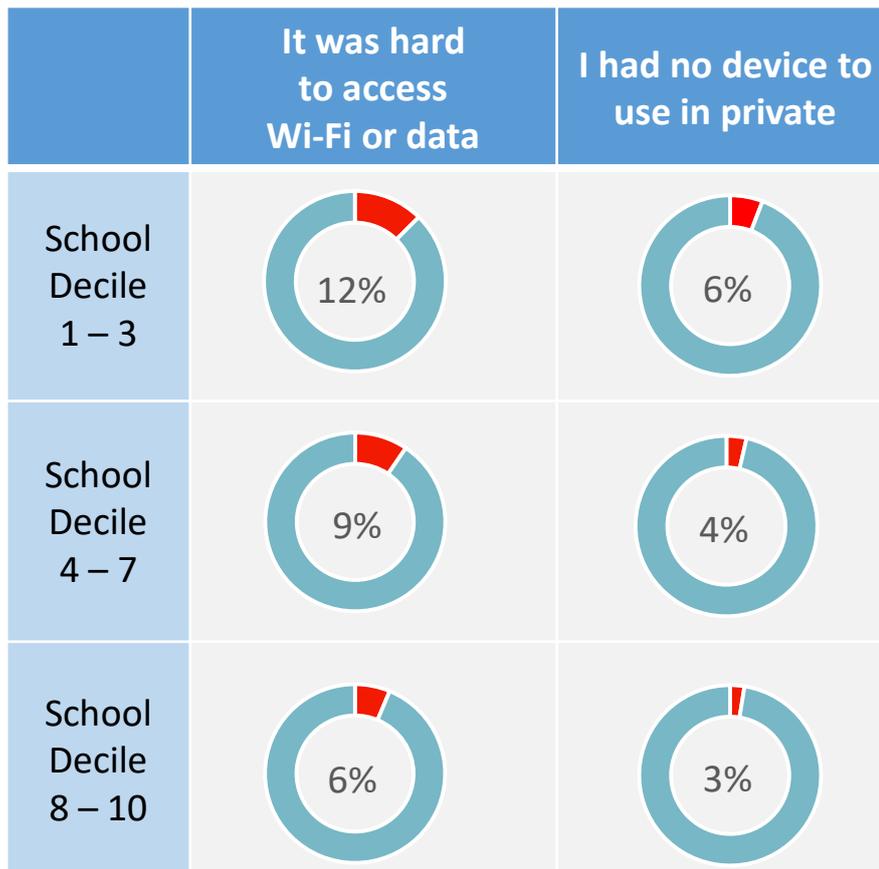
There were also disparities by school decile. 94% of students in decile 1–3 schools had access to a device in their spare time, compared to 98% of those in decile 4–7 schools and 99% of those in decile 8–10 schools.

Differences in access to Wi-Fi and use of a device in private are larger, as shown on the next page.

Percentage of Year 9–13 students with access to a device to use in their spare time, by school decile

	Decile 1 to 3	Decile 4 to 7	Decile 8 to 10
Percentage	94	98	99

Didn't find helpful info online because....

	It was hard to access Wi-Fi or data	I had no device to use in private
School Decile 1 – 3	12%	6%
School Decile 4 – 7	9%	4%
School Decile 8 – 10	6%	3%

We asked Youth19 participants:

'Here are some reasons people don't find helpful infomation online even if they want to:

- *It's hard for me to get access to data or Wi-Fi*
- *I don't have a device to use in private*

Have either of these ever applied to you?'

'Yes' responses are shown in the infographic here and in the table overleaf.

Digital access is key for learning

This infographic shows the estimated percentage of each indicator for each group, rounded to the nearest whole number.

Overall, students in lower decile schools were more likely to report that it was hard to get access to Wi-Fi or data than students in higher decile schools. 12 out of 100 students in decile 1–3 schools reported such difficulty, around double the proportion of students in high decile schools. Students in lower decile schools were also about twice as likely to report that they did not have a device to use in private than students from high decile schools.

There were also important inequities by ethnicity, as shown in the table overleaf. Māori and Pacific students were more likely to report that it was hard to access to Wi-Fi or data than Pākeha students. Pacific students were also more likely than Pākehā to report they did not have access to a device they could use in private. Those younger than 16 were also more likely to experience barriers to digital access than those aged 16 or older (see next page).

Reading the following table:

In each row, 'n' refers to the number of students who responded in a particular way. For example, in the top row, 6749 students reported that they have access to a device they can use in their spare time. 'N' refers to the number of students who answered that question (i.e. 6902 students answered this question). The value of N varies between questions as students could choose not to answer questions and the survey was branched, so students did not see questions that were not relevant to them. 'Percent' refers to the percentage of students who reported a particular response, once adjustments are made for the sampling design. This provides an estimate of the true proportion on that measure for that group of New Zealand secondary school students. The confidence interval (95% CI) indicates the precision of this estimate by providing an interval in which we are 95% sure the true value lies. Where confidence intervals do not overlap for two different groups, we can be very confident that apparent differences are real and not just due to chance.

The detail

	Has a device such as a smartphone, laptop or tablet to use in their spare time		Ever found it hard to get helpful info online because it is hard to get data or Wi-Fi		Ever found it hard to get helpful info online because of not having a device to use in private	
	n (N)	Percent [95% CI]	n (N)	Percent [95% CI]	n (N)	Percent [95% CI]
Total	6749 (6902)	97.49 [97.05-97.93]	381 (4315)	8.56 [7.74-9.37]	167 (4315)	3.47 [2.87-4.07]
Aged under 16	4170 (4282)	96.96 [96.23-97.69]	246 (2446)	11.27 [10.01-12.54]	114 (2446)	4.63 [3.53-5.73]
Aged 16 or over	2579 (2620)	98.18 [97.65-98.71]	135 (1869)	5.73 [4.63-6.83]	53 (1869)	2.26 [1.62-2.89]
Female	3759 (3823)	98.48 [98.0-98.93]	221 (2616)	7.85 [6.87-8.83]	93 (2616)	2.64 [2.04-3.24]
Male	2990 (3079)	96.46 [95.61-97.31]	160 (1699)	9.45 [7.99-10.91]	74 (1699)	4.52 [3.31-5.74]
Māori	1011 (1048)	96.23 [94.54-97.91]	73 (686)	10.67 [9.15-12.19]	22 (686)	2.75 [1.71-3.78]
Pacific	770 (815)	94.4 [92.22-96.58]	69 (544)	11.33 [8.09-14.57]	46 (544)	6.97 [4.69-9.26]
Asian	1666 (1694)	97.7 [96.72-98.69]	69 (1042)	6.61 [4.98-8.24]	31 (1042)	3.1 [2.14-4.07]
Other*	342 (354)	94.49 [91.48-97.51]	23 (232)	11.05 [6.76-15.34]	9 (232)	4.4 [2.18-6.63]
Pākehā	2960 (2991)	98.74 [98.04-99.44]	147 (1811)	7.33 [6.26-8.39]	59 (1811)	3.06 [2.23-3.89]
School Decile 1-3	959 (1017)	93.54 [91.42-95.65]	80 (662)	12.41 [10.31-14.52]	39 (662)	5.81 [3.52-8.11]
School Decile 4-7	2966 (3019)	97.64 [97.01-98.27]	177 (1834)	9.49 [7.85-11.14]	64 (1834)	3.57 [2.5-4.63]
School Decile 8-10	2785 (2827)	98.75 [98.28-99.23]	124 (1795)	6.3 [5.4-7.19]	64 (1795)	2.54 [2.03-3.05]

Students reported their ethnicity to Statistics New Zealand Level 4 classification and were able to choose as many ethnicities as applied to them. Participants belonging to multiple groups were allocated to a single ethnic group for these analyses, using the New Zealand census ethnic prioritisation method.
* 'Other' ethnicity includes Middle Eastern, Latin American, African, and ethnicity unknown.

References
1. Kemp, S. (2021). *Digital in New Zealand: All the statistics you need in 2021.* Accessed July 20, 2021 Retrieved from: https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2021-new-zealand
2. Johnson, M., J. Maguire, and Wood, A. (2017). *Digital Technologies in Schools 2016–17.* Accessed July 22, 2021. Retrieved from: https://2020.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Digital-Technologies-inSchools-2016-17-04-05-2017-FINAL.pdf
3. Grimes, A. & White, W. (2019). *Digital inclusion and wellbeing in New Zealand.* Accessed July 21, 2021. Retrieved from: https://www.motu.org.nz/assets/Documents/our-work/wellbeing-and-macroeconomics/well-being-and-sustainability-measures/Digital-inclusion-and-wellbeing-in-NZ.pdf
4. Fleming, T., Peiris-John, R., Crengle, S., Archer, D., Sutcliffe, K., Lewycka, S., & Clark, T. (2020). *Youth19 Rangatahi Smart Survey, Initial Findings: Introduction and Methods.* The Youth19 Research Group, The University of Auckland and Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.