

Digital Lives of Australians 2021

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Foreword from Rosemary Sinclair AM, CEO auDA

I am pleased to present the 2021 Digital Lives of Australians Report; the .au Domain Administration (auDA)'s inaugural study into Australians' online experiences.

The .au domain is part of Australia's critical Internet infrastructure. It supports more than 3.3 million active domain names and responds to more than 3 billion .au nameserver queries each day, connecting Internet users worldwide to .au websites and email addresses.

From auDA's work managing this high volume of traffic across .au, we know that the online environment is essential for the majority of Australian consumers and small businesses – supporting the ways in which we socialise, work, learn and access essential services.

To successfully deliver on auDA's purpose and vision – to administer a trusted .au domain for the benefit of all Australians and to unlock positive social and economic value for Australians through an open, free, secure and global Internet – we must have a rich understanding of Australians' online experiences.

The 2021 Digital Lives of Australians Report has sought feedback from more than 1,500 Australian consumers and more than 400 small business owners about their online needs and challenges, who they turn to for advice and their hopes to better harness the Internet in the future.

The findings provide a significant snapshot of Australian consumer and small businesses' online experiences, including:

- Most consumers (89%) feel that the Internet has a positive impact on their lives and has improved all aspects of their lives.
- Most small businesses use the Internet every day and almost all small businesses (92%) feel the Internet is important to their business and is an invaluable channel for generating revenue
- 84% of small businesses value the Internet as an important channel for engaging with customers
- The majority of working Australians rely on the Internet, with 58% telling us they could not perform their job without it
- Individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds were more likely to report the Internet was invaluable to their lives than other Australians.



Rosemary Sinclair AM
auDA Chief Executive Officer

However, the research also found consumers and small businesses are not as confident as they could be using the Internet and that they face a number of online challenges. This indicates there are numerous opportunities for further investment, support, education and guidance, including:

- Cyber security is the dominant digital concern among consumers, with at least three quarters of Internet users worrying about the security of their personal information online (84%), the privacy of their online activities (81%) and the risk of falling for an online scam (75%)
- Cyber security is also a concern for small business, with just under a quarter (22%) reporting they do not use the Internet more frequently because they are worried about being scammed or hacked
 - Despite this concern, small businesses do not invest heavily in cyber security, with:
 - » Only 27% of small businesses having established cyber security practices or policies and 31% providing their staff with cyber security training
 - » Sole traders reporting they spend around \$200 annually on cyber security, compared with micro businesses (\$500) and small businesses (\$3,500).

- Both consumers and small business survey respondents reported there is no single, official source of cyber security information that they turn to. This underscores the need for accessible, trusted and authoritative cyber security support for consumers and small businesses
- Raising the general digital confidence levels for consumers and small businesses would help Australians better harness the benefits delivered by the Internet:
 - For consumers, this may include accessible educational resources on how to pay bills online or how to access digital government services
 - For small businesses without a website, learning how to create one is high on their to-do list to access the benefits of the Internet.

Despite these challenges, the overwhelming majority (86%) of Australian consumers feel positively about the future of Internet and both consumers and small businesses see it remaining an integral part of their day-to-day lives or activities.

In addition to delivering insights into how Australians use and rely on the Internet, auDA's hope is this report will stimulate conversation and cultivate innovation within and between consumers, industry, business, government and academic institutions, and in turn enrich Australians' online experiences.

The 2021 Digital Lives of Australians report is just the beginning of this story. We will build on these findings in future years, delivering a longitudinal study of Australians' online experiences. We look forward to continuing to share the results with you to nurture a better online future for Australians.



Contents

Introduction 05

Background	06
Methodology overview	07
Notes to the reader	07

Key findings: Consumers 08

Key findings: Small business 10

Detailed findings 12

How important is the Internet?	13
How do people use the Internet?	14
How do small businesses use the Internet?	15
How much do consumers and small businesses depend on the Internet?	16
How confident are Internet users?	17
What role does the Internet play for working Australians?	20
How does the Internet impact people's lives?	21
What would consumers miss without the Internet?	27
What value does the Internet provide to small businesses?	28
What would small businesses miss without the Internet?	29
What worries or frustrates Internet users?	30
What concerns do consumers have when using the Internet?	32
What concerns do small businesses have when using the Internet?	33
How important is cyber security for consumers?	34
What prevents people from using the Internet more often?	35
What prevents small businesses from using the Internet more often?	36
How do consumers manage their cyber security?	37
How do small businesses manage their cyber security?	38
How do small businesses communicate internally about cyber security?	39
How much do small businesses spend on cyber security and technology?	40
What online skills would consumers like to improve?	41
What online skills would small businesses like to improve?	42
Where do consumers get support for cyber security issues?	43
Where do small businesses get support for cyber security issues?	44
How do consumers feel about the future possibilities of the Internet?	45
What online activities are consumers interested in undertaking in the future?	46
What online activities are small businesses interested in undertaking in the future?	47
Detailed sample breakdown	48



Introduction

Background

auDA is a not-for-profit organisation responsible for administering the .au domain for the benefit of all Australians. auDA works with a range of stakeholders including industry, government and the Australian and international community to develop and administer the rules for the .au domain, maintain high levels of security in .au, and champion an open, free, secure and global Internet.

auDA's inaugural *Digital Lives of Australians 2021* research was undertaken to explore the online experiences of Australian consumers and small businesses to understand and gain statistically robust measures of what activities they undertake online, how the Internet delivers value to them, what they find challenging and how their online experiences could be improved.

The findings provide a clear understanding of the nature and extent of online engagement among Australian consumers and small businesses, their views on Internet-related issues, and their feelings about using the Internet in the future. It provides important benchmarks that can be measured and monitored for changes over time.

Specifically, the research sought to address the following key questions:

1. What value does the Internet add to the lives of consumers and small businesses?

- How do consumers and small businesses use the Internet?
- How important and valuable is the Internet to them?
- How does the Internet impact consumers' lives?
- What would they miss if they could not access the Internet?

2. How could the online experience be improved?

- What concerns do consumers and small businesses have when using the Internet?
- What prevents people from using the Internet more often?
- How important an issue is cyber security?
- Where do consumers and small businesses get support for cyber security issues?
- What skills would Internet users like to improve?
- What online activities do consumers and small businesses want to do in the future and how do they feel about the future of the Internet?



Methodology overview

The research was undertaken by SEC Newgate Research, with the findings drawn from a survey of 1,526 consumers and 404 small businesses undertaken between 14 and 26 October 2021. During this period, COVID-19 lockdown restrictions were in place in Victoria and restrictions in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory had only recently begun to ease. These experiences would have been fresh in those participants' minds at the time of the survey.

Both the consumer and small business surveys were administered online with participants sourced from commercial opt-in research panels. Participants were able to complete the survey at their own pace, at a time convenient to them and received a nominal incentive payment in the form of reward points upon completion.

The consumer survey also included telephone interviews to provide broader coverage of the population than is possible when using opt-in online research panels only. A total of 151 consumers completed the survey by telephone, with trained telephone interviewers.

All participants who completed the survey *online* were, by definition, Internet users. Within the telephone component of the consumer survey, 20 of the 151 participants indicated that they never use the Internet. This cohort answered a shorter survey – they were not asked any of the questions related to online activities and experiences.

A detailed breakdown of the consumer and small business sample can be found on page 48.

Notes to the reader

When interpreting findings in this report, please note:

- For all survey results, the base (number and type of participants asked each question) and the survey question itself are shown in the footnote.
- All survey results have been examined for statistically significant differences between subgroups (within the same category) where meaningful in the context of the question. For example, the subgroup of those aged 18 to 49 years has been tested against those aged 50 plus. Where significant differences are noted, they are significant at the 95% confidence level. Where no differences are noted, it should be assumed that no differences existed or were meaningful.
- Survey results may not always total 100% due to rounding or multiple-response questions for which participants could select more than one response.
- To ensure data reliability, survey results are typically only shown when the base size is at least n=30. Results with lower base sizes, where used, should be interpreted with caution.
- The report includes direct quotes provided by survey participants. Participant profile characteristics have been attributed to quotes however the names shown are fictitious, for illustrative purposes only.

About SEC Newgate Research

SEC Newgate Research is one of Australia's preeminent market and social research firms for issues, opinion and reputation research amongst senior stakeholders, influencers, the community, customers and employees.

We explore and measure knowledge, attitudes and behaviours to inform decisions around policies, organisational strategies, communications and messaging.

SEC Newgate Research is accredited to ISO 20252:2019 (the international standard for market research) and holds membership with the leading market and social research industry associations The Research Society and the Australian Polling Council.



Key findings: Consumers



The Internet delivers significant value to Australians.

It provides functional value by enabling and making many everyday activities easier, but the true value for consumers lies in its social value – the power to connect people with those they care most about. Consumers feel positive about the role the Internet plays in their lives and the future possibilities it will enable, but they are seeking guidance to ensure they can maintain a secure online experience.

How do people use the Internet and what value does it provide?

88%

of consumers consider the Internet an **important** aspect of their **everyday lives**.



Nearly **three in ten** (28%) believe they would **struggle** to live **without it**.



The majority of **working Australians** rely on the Internet – **58% could not perform their job** at all without it and an additional **27%** say they would be **less productive without it**.

Many **Australians are not as confident** as they could be when using the Internet: **only 46% feel very confident**, representing a substantial opportunity to improve digital literacy as lives are increasingly being lived online.



Above all else, the Internet is **valued** as a way for people to **maintain contact** with friends and family. Without prompting, **31%** said that this is what they would **miss most** if they could **no longer access** the Internet. This highlights the crucial role the Internet played during the COVID-19 pandemic when many Australians were unable to see loved ones in person due to travel restrictions.

Consumers report that the Internet has **improved all aspects of their lives** including:

information and online learning opportunities	81%	management of personal affairs	70%	relationships with friends	70%
access to goods and services	80%	pursuit of hobbies and interests	70%	relationships with family	66%

How could the online experience be improved for consumers?



While almost all Internet users **take steps to ensure their cyber security** (92% use at least one cyber security behaviour), they report widespread **interest in developing cyber security skills** – particularly how to keep personal information secure online (35%), how to spot an online scam (32%) and where to report a data security breach if it occurs (38%).

The **main barriers** consumers have to using the Internet more often:

fear of being scammed or hacked	30%
worry about security of personal data online	28%



Cyber security is the **primary concern** for all Internet users regardless of how much they use the Internet or how **confident** they are online. At least three quarters of Internet users worry about the security of their personal information online (84%), the privacy of their online activities (81%) and the risk of falling for an online scam (75%).

Consumers could not cite a single **authoritative** or **official source of information** and **support for cyber security**. Instead, they rely mainly on friends and family (49%) or information they can find for themselves via a search engine (37%). This also represents a considerable opportunity to raise the profiles of relevant organisations they can turn to for reliable guidance.



Key findings: Small business





Almost all small businesses depend on the Internet.

Small businesses have embraced the Internet to undertake or enhance their everyday business activities and grow revenue. However, there is a substantial opportunity to build confidence and competence in online business activity and cyber security, and to grow revenue streams and realise efficiencies.

How do small businesses use the Internet and what value does it provide?



Almost **all small businesses** (92% of those surveyed) feel the Internet is **important** to their business and many consider it is an **invaluable channel** for **generating revenue**. More than a **third** (34%) of small businesses feel that **without the Internet** they would **not be able to operate** or would experience a significant **reduction in income**.

The Internet **supports** and **enhances** a range of **business functions**, most importantly:

customer interactions	84%	working from home	80%
working while travelling	75%	promotion and marketing	78%
monitoring business performance	73%	creating efficiencies	73%



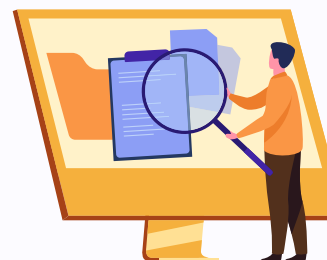
While **small businesses** are **more confident** than consumers using the Internet overall, like consumers **they are relatively less confident** with activities related to **creating** and **sharing content** and **maintaining a secure online presence**.

How could the online experience be improved for small businesses?



Cyber security is the **dominant concern** among **small businesses** using the Internet – far greater an issue than connectivity or accessibility. Almost a quarter (22%) consider fear of online scams a barrier to using the Internet more often.

Despite this concern, just **over a quarter** (27%) of **small businesses report having established cyber security practices** and, among **employing businesses**, fewer than **a quarter** (23%) **have cyber security** on the **agenda** at management level. These behaviours represent a crucial area for attention, when so much is at stake for businesses at risk of security breaches.



of **small businesses do not** currently **have a website** but are **interested** to **establish** one in the **future** to realise the benefits of a greater online presence.



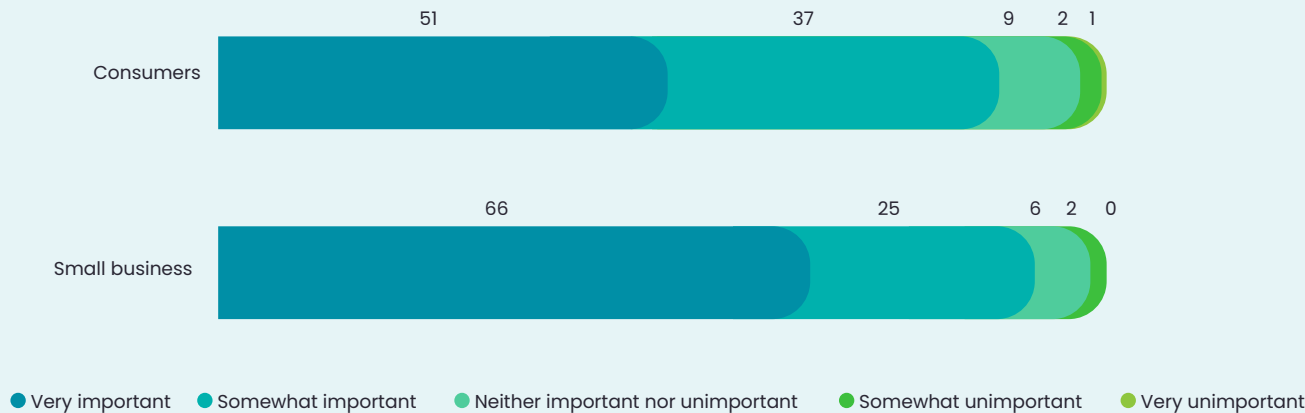
Detailed findings

How important is the Internet?

Half (51%) of all consumers who use the Internet consider it to be very important in their lives, while a further 37% consider it somewhat important. Only a small minority (3%) consider it to be unimportant even though they use it.

By comparison, the Internet is even more important to small businesses. Around two-thirds (66%) of small businesses consider the Internet to be very important to their business and a further 25% feel it is somewhat important. Only 2% think it is unimportant.

Perceived importance of the Internet (%)



Source: A4 Overall, thinking about all aspects of your life, how important would you say the Internet is to you? C1 Overall, thinking about all aspects of your business, how important would you say the Internet is to the business? Base: All consumers who use the Internet (n=1506). All small business participants (n=404).



Consumers most likely to feel the Internet is very important to their lives are:

- Individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (67%)
- Self-employed workers (64%)
- Office workers (61%)
- Aged 18 to 49 years (60%)
- Those who live in one of Australia's five major capital cities (52%).

Consumers least likely to feel the Internet is very important to their lives are:

- Aged 50 years or above (39%) and especially those aged 70 plus (33%)
- Those who live in other parts of Australia (46%)
- Skilled and manual workers (48%).

77% of small businesses who work from a home office or studio consider the Internet very important.

Small businesses in the following sectors **placed the greatest importance** on the Internet:

- IT and computing (93% very important)
- Transport and logistics (89%)
- Manufacturing (80%).

Small businesses in the construction (33%) and arts and entertainment (45%) sectors are least likely to consider the Internet to be very important to their business.

How do people use the Internet?

Participants were asked how frequently they undertake different online activities including information gathering, fun and entertainment, organisation tasks, connecting with others and buying and selling goods and services online.

The vast majority of people (88%) said they do at least one of these activities every day, while nearly all (98%) do at least one of these online activities at least once a week.

The most common online activities undertaken daily are accessing news or information (72%), using streaming services (66%), social media (64%) and instant messaging apps (53%).

Find news or information online (from sources other than social media)	72
Watch or listen to a streaming service	66
Use social media	64
Use instant messaging apps to communicate with friends, relatives or others	53
Make or receive video calls	44
Use Internet or mobile banking	36
Play video games online	36
Order takeaway meals to be delivered to your home using online food delivery platforms	32
Make bookings or reservations online (e.g. accommodation, dining, medical appointments)	18
Listen to podcasts (i.e. using a podcast app or other streaming service)	14
Buy groceries online (e.g. for home delivery or click & collect)	6
Buy other products online (i.e. online shopping not including groceries)	6

Source: S8 How often do you personally do the following online activities, if at all? Base: All consumers who use the Internet (n=1506).



Most people who use the Internet do so every day (88%). Weekly Internet use is almost universal (98%).

Online activities vary between different groups:

- **Males** (79%) are more likely than females (65%) to search online for news and information daily
- Conversely, **females** are more likely to use social media (69%) and instant messaging apps (57%) daily compared to males (60% and 48% respectively)
- **Office workers** are more likely than **skilled and manual workers** to do most online activities every day, with the exception of social media – 69% of both groups report using social media daily
- Those who live in Australia's five major **capital cities** (56%) are more likely than those in other parts of Australia (45%) to use instant messaging apps every day.



How do small businesses use the Internet?

Small business participants were asked how frequently they undertake different online activities for business purposes.

The vast majority (83%) said they do at least one of these activities every day, while nearly all (96%) do at least one of these online activities at least once a week.

The most common online activities undertaken daily are using social media for sales or marketing purposes (54%), instant messaging apps to communicate with colleagues, customers, suppliers or others (51%), mobile or Internet banking (44%) and finding business-related news or information (37%).

Online activities undertaken daily – Small businesses (%)

Use social media for sales or marketing purposes	54
Use instant messaging apps to communicate with colleagues, customers, suppliers or others	51
Use Internet or mobile banking	44
Find business-related news or information online (from sources other than social media)	37
Pay bills or send or receive money online payment systems	28
Make or receive video calls	24
Order or buy products or services online	18
Access government services online	16
Host or undertake an online class, course or webinar	10

Source: AI How often do you do the following online activities for business purposes, if at all? Base: All small business participants (n=404).



Most small businesses use the Internet every day (83%). Almost all use it at least once a week (96%).

Businesses of different sizes report differences in their online activity:

- **Sole traders** are significantly less likely to use social media (42% vs 62% of micro businesses and 59% of small businesses), instant messaging apps (41% vs 59% and 55%) or mobile or Internet banking (34% vs 51% and 48%) for business purposes on a daily basis
- **Small businesses** are significantly more likely to pay bills or send or receive money using online payment systems every day (54% vs 30% of micro businesses and 14% of sole traders).

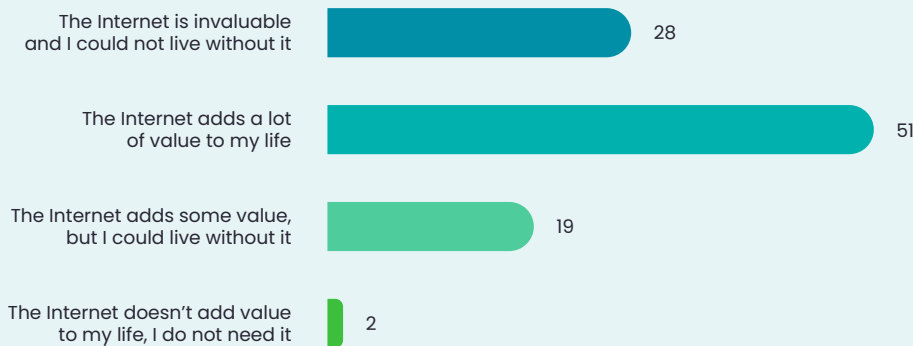


How much do consumers and small businesses depend on the Internet?



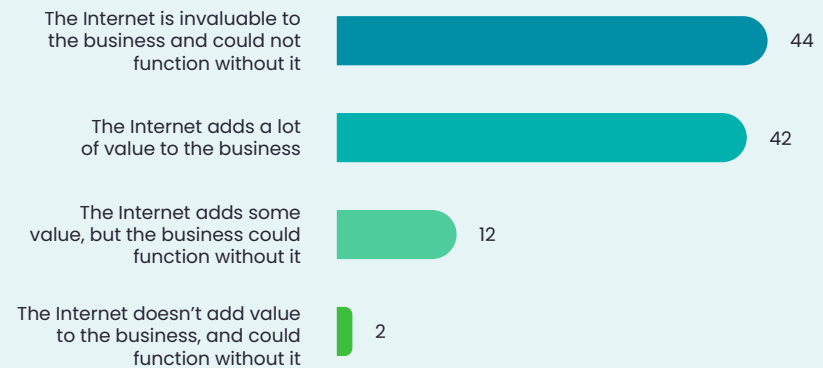
When asked how they feel about the Internet, a significant 28% of consumers identified it as an invaluable asset they could not live without. A further 51% feel it adds a lot of value to their lives. Only 2% say that it doesn't add any value and is unnecessary to their lives. Small businesses are even more likely to feel the Internet is invaluable - nearly half say their business could not function without it (44%).

Perceived value of the Internet – Consumers (%)



Source: A5 Which one of the following statements best describes how you personally feel about the Internet? Base: All consumers who use the Internet (n=1506).

Perceived value of the Internet – Small businesses (%)



Source: C2 Which one of the following statements best describes how you feel about the Internet and the role it plays in your business? Base: All small business participants (n=404).

Consumers most likely to feel the Internet is invaluable to their lives are:

- Self-employed workers (37%)
- Individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (35% vs 28% of other Australians)
- Aged 18 to 49 years (34% vs 21% of those aged 50 years or above)
- Office workers (33%)
- Capital city residents (30% vs 24% of regional Australians).

Most and least likely to view the Internet as invaluable

Small businesses in the **business services** (55%) and **retail** (53%) sectors are most likely to feel the Internet is invaluable while those in the construction (15%) and personal care (21%) sectors are least likely to feel the Internet is invaluable.



Business services



Retail



Construction



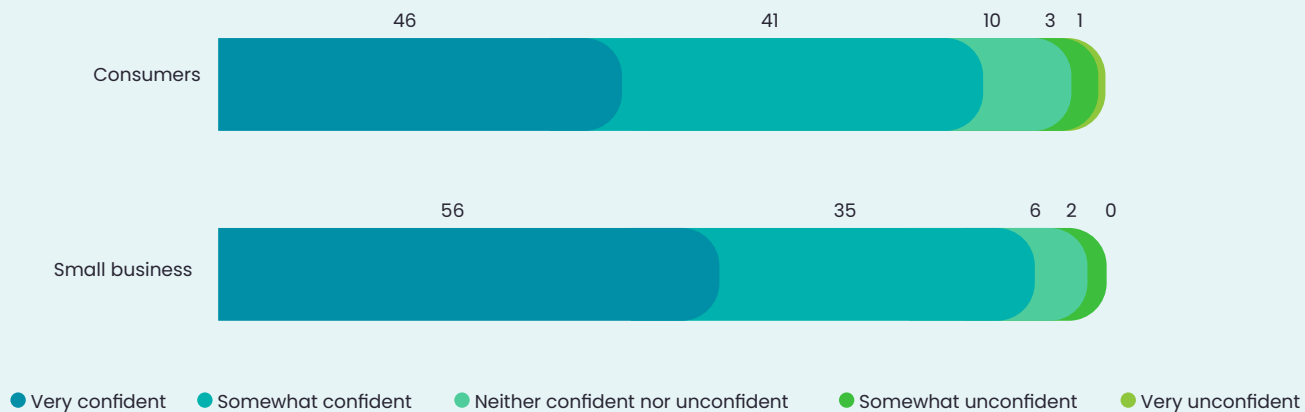
Personal care

How confident are Internet users?

Most consumers are confident in their ability to use the Internet, although less than half (46%) indicated that they are *very* confident. This suggests there are substantial opportunities to improve consumer confidence in using the Internet as we forge more deeply into the Digital Age.

By contrast, small businesses are more confident, with over half (56%) feeling very confident using the Internet. However, like consumers there is a substantial opportunity to uplift small business confidence amongst those who do not feel very confident.

Overall confidence using the Internet (%)



Source: A3 Overall, how confident would you say you are in using the Internet? D1 Overall, how confident would you say you are in using the Internet? Base: All consumers who use the Internet (n=1506). All small business participants (n=404).



Consumers most likely to feel very confident using the Internet are:

- Office workers (57%)
- Aged 18 to 49 years (55%)
- Males (50%)
- Capital city residents (47%).

Consumers who are least confident and would benefit most from additional support are:

- Aged 50 years or above (33% very confident) and especially those aged 70+ (26%)
- Females (42%)
- Those who live outside the five major capital cities (41%)
- Skilled and manual workers (42%).

Small businesses in the **IT and computing** (80%) and **retail** (67%) sectors are most confident in their ability to use the Internet. By contrast, small businesses in the construction sector (35%) and those with annual revenue of less than \$50,000 (43%) are least confident using the Internet.

At a broad level, consumers are very confident using the Internet for **basic activities**: 70% are very confident sending emails, 54% are very confident searching online for information and 52% are very confident making online purchases and bookings.

However, fewer than half of all consumers are very confident with online activities requiring more skills.

How confident are Internet users? cont.



Confidence with specific online activities – Consumers (%)

	Very confident	Very or somewhat confident
Sending an email	70	92
Finding news or information you need online	54	87
Buying products or services online or booking appointments	52	82
Making a video call	43	72
Being able to spot an online scam	30	71
Knowing how to keep your personal information secure online	28	69
Posting content on social media platforms such as photos, videos, comments or links to other online sources	40	69
Selling products or services online	29	60
Troubleshooting to solve Internet connection problems	25	57
Knowing where to report a data security breach	22	51
Creating and publishing content online (e.g. website content; creating and maintaining a blog or regular e-newsletter)	21	45
Knowing how to create your own website	16	37

Source: DI How confident would you be in doing each of the following? Base: All consumers who use the Internet (n=1506).

Confidence varies between demographic cohorts:

- **Younger consumers** (aged 18 to 49 years) are more confident than older consumers (aged 50 years or above) with all online activities except those requiring more basic skills i.e. sending emails and finding information online, where older consumers are equally confident
- **Males** exhibit greater confidence than females on many activities, most notably troubleshooting to solve Internet connection problems (67% vs 48%), creating and publishing content online (52% vs 38%) and knowing how to create their own website (45% vs 30%)
- **Males** also report being more confident than females when it comes to cyber security issues – knowing where to report a data security breach (57% vs 46%), being able to spot an online scam (77% vs 65%) and knowing how to keep your personal information secure online (73% vs 65%)
- **Office workers** are more confident than skilled and manual workers with all online activities except posting content on social media, where skilled and manual workers are equally confident.

These findings suggest that targeted support to develop online skills among older people and females may help to build confidence and improve outcomes for consumers overall.

How confident are Internet users? cont.



Confidence with specific online activities – Small business (%)

	Very confident	Very or somewhat confident
Sending an email	78	91
Finding news or information you need online	62	90
Buying products or services online or booking appointments	59	89
Making a video call	60	87
Being able to spot an online scam	36	81
Selling products or services online	46	75
Knowing how to keep your staff and client's personal data secure online	36	74
Knowing how to keep your business's information secure online	36	72
Troubleshooting to solve Internet connection problems	30	69
Digitising your business systems such as pay roll and customer databases	37	66
Knowing what to do if any of your business accounts were hacked or your business had a cyber security breach	27	63
Knowing how to create your own business website	30	60

Source: D2 How confident would you be in doing each of the following? Base: All small business participants (n=404).

Confidence among **small businesses** is highest for basic online activities such as sending emails (78% very confident), finding information (62%) and online purchases and bookings (59%). Small businesses, however, are more confident than consumers making video calls (60% vs 43% very confident).

Like consumers, fewer than half of small businesses are very confident when it comes to online activities related to creating and sharing content and maintaining a secure online presence.



What role does the Internet play for working Australians?

The majority of consumers currently in the workforce say they could not do their job at all without the Internet (58%). Only 16% say they can do their jobs independently from the Internet.

Dependence on the Internet for work – Consumers in the workforce (%)



Source: B3 Do you need the Internet to perform your job? Base: All consumers currently in the workforce (n=858).



Those most likely to say they could not perform their job without the Internet are:

- From culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (74%)
- Office workers (70%)
- Those who live in one of Australia's five major capital cities (60%).

Those who rely on the Internet for work are more likely to consider the Internet to be very important to their lives (66%) compared to workers who do not need the Internet for their job (45%). Workers who rely on the Internet for their jobs are also more likely to feel that they could not live without it (38% vs 23%).

"I could not work if I didn't have the Internet. Since the beginning of the COVID pandemic I have been working from home. I am very reliant on my Internet connection."

40-year-old female, Victoria



How does the Internet impact people's lives?



Most consumers (89%) feel the Internet has a positive impact on them and improves all aspects of their lives.

The greatest positive impact is felt in terms of:



Information and learning



Accessing goods and services



Managing personal affairs



Pursuing hobbies and interests



Relationships with friends and family

The **most widely recognised benefit** of the Internet (when prompted) is the role it plays in enabling people to access information, as well as goods and services.

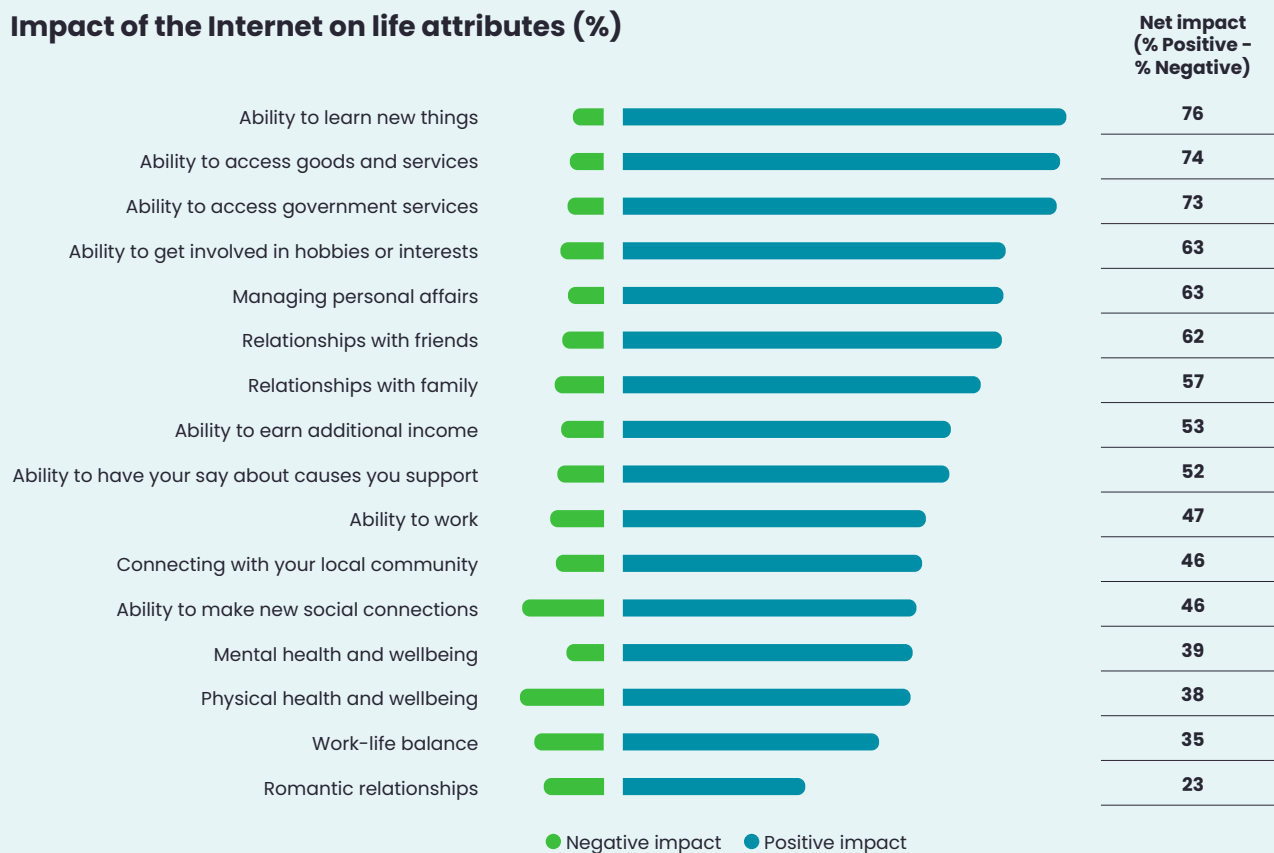
The **majority** of consumers indicated that the Internet has **positive effects** for allowing them to engage in their personal hobbies and interests (70%) rather than negative effects (6%) and helping them to manage their personal affairs (70% positive, 8% negative). The Internet also has an overwhelmingly positive impact on personal relationships.

On balance, across **all life attributes** more consumers felt the Internet had a positive impact rather than a negative impact. While relatively few consumers felt the Internet had a negative impact on their lives, the areas that stood out as being most likely to have a negative effect were people's mental health (15% saying the effects were more negative than positive), physical health (15%), work-life balance (13%) and romantic relationships (11%).





Impact of the Internet on life attributes (%)



Source: C1 - Please indicate whether, on balance, the Internet has had a positive effect or negative effect on the following aspects of your life. Base: All consumers who use the Internet (n=1,506).

Younger consumers (those aged 18 to 34 years) were the most likely to say the Internet has a negative impact on their mental health (24%, compared with 17% of those aged 35 to 49 years and just 7% of those aged 50 plus).

The same group were also the most likely to say the Internet has a negative impact on their physical health (21%), and their work-life balance (19%).



Impact – By age group

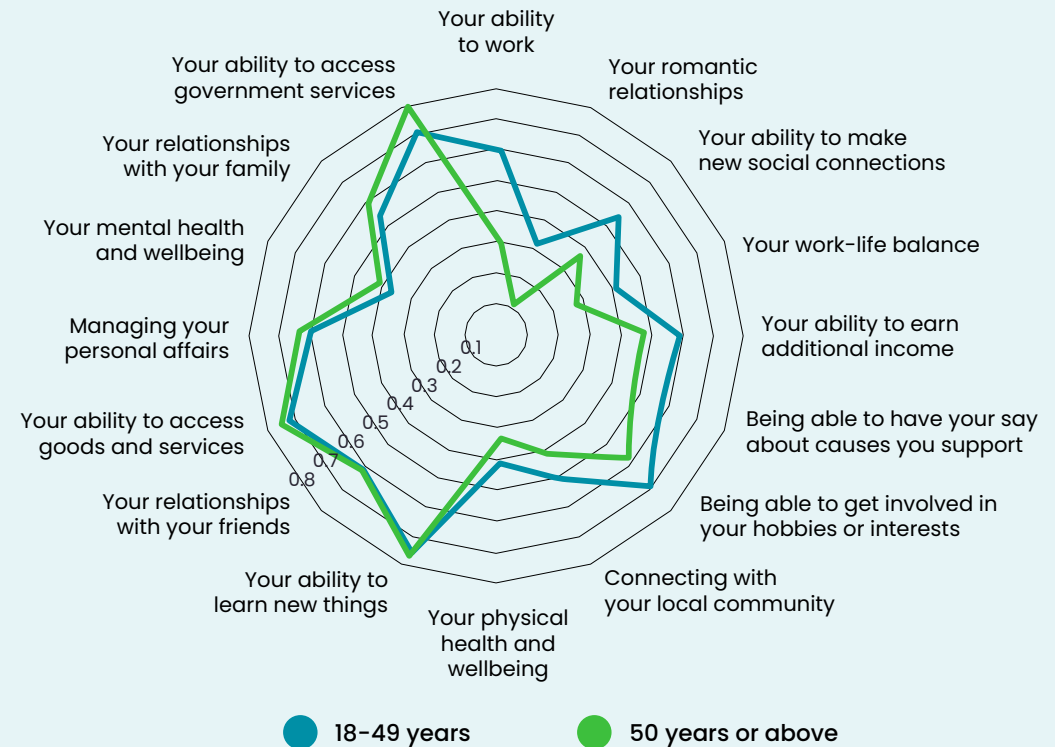
While the primary benefits of the Internet are felt universally by participants, differences are evident between younger and older Australians.

- **Consumers** aged 18 to 49 years are more likely than those aged 50 plus to feel the Internet has a positive impact on their work and social lives, and as a platform for voicing their views on issues important to them
- Conversely, **older Australians** are more likely to feel the Internet positively impacts their ability to access government services and, to a lesser extent, relationships with their family.

These results reinforce the important role that the Internet plays in the most fundamental aspects of the daily lives of younger Australians in particular.



Impact of the Internet on life attributes – By age group: Net impact (% positive – % negative)



Source: C1 - Please indicate whether, on balance, the Internet has had a positive effect or negative effect on the following aspects of your life. Base: All consumers who use the Internet. Age 18 to 49 years (n=828), Age 50 years or above (n=678).

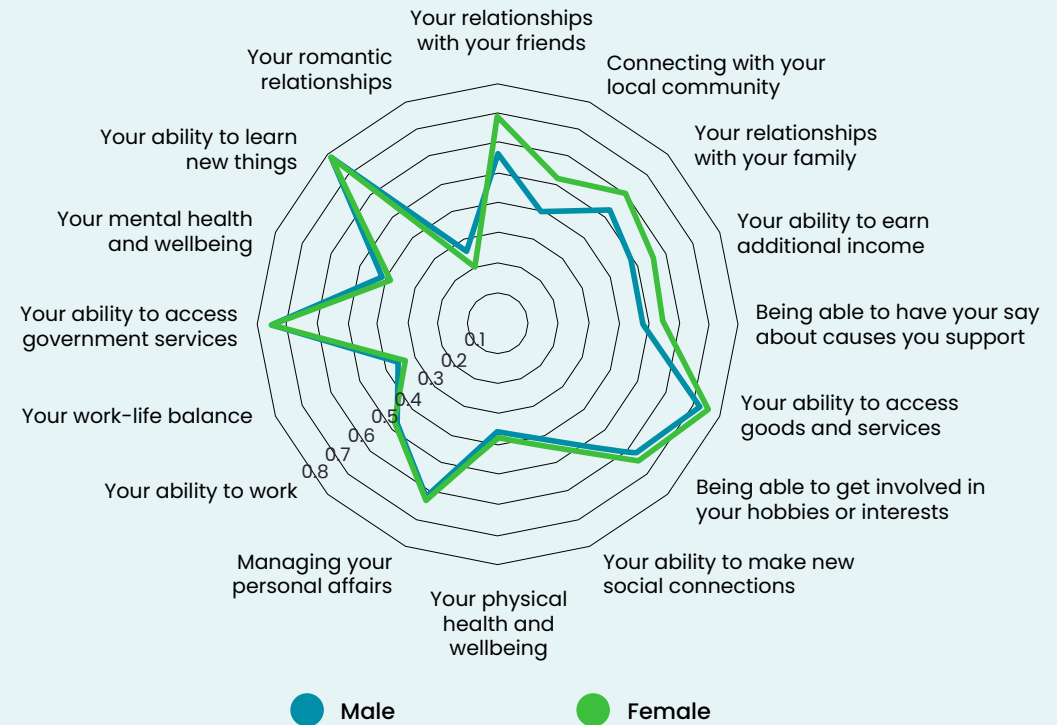
Impact – By gender

Overall, **females** are significantly more likely than males to feel the Internet has a positive impact on their lives – in particular, their relationships with friends and family, ability to connect with their local community, to earn additional income and to have their say on issues important to them.

The Internet plays a vital role for females in maintaining connections with those closest to them but these findings suggest there is an opportunity for males to better leverage the Internet for this purpose.



Impact of the Internet on life attributes – By gender: Net impact (% positive minus % negative)



Source: C1 – Please indicate whether, on balance, the Internet has had a positive effect or negative effect on the following aspects of your life. Base: All consumers who use the Internet – Male (n=757), Female (n=749).

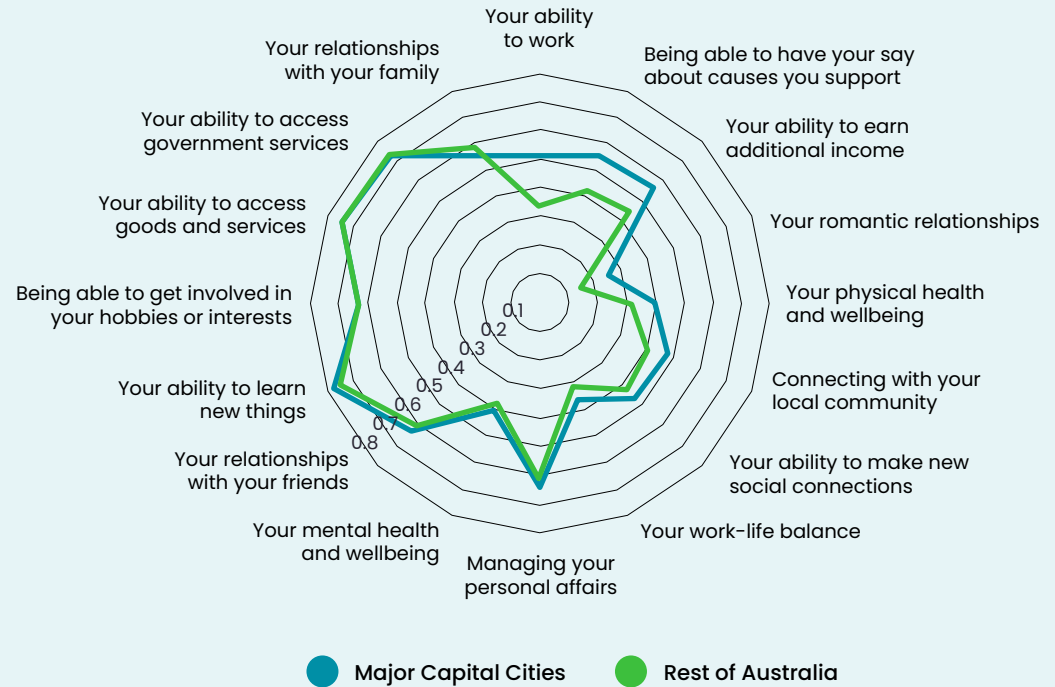
Impact – By location

People who live in Australia’s major **capital cities** are more likely than those who live elsewhere in Australia to feel the Internet has a positive impact on most aspects of their lives. The Internet better supports these consumers to work and generate additional income, have their say on causes important to them, connect with their local community and with romantic partners.

Note: while there is a skew to an older age profile outside of the major capital cities, these findings suggest that the Internet has yet to facilitate the same opportunities for working Australians in the smaller cities and regional areas.



Impact of the Internet on life attributes – By location: Net impact (% positive minus % negative)



Source: C1 - Please indicate whether, on balance, the Internet has had a positive effect or negative effect on the following aspects of your life. Base: All consumers who use the Internet – 5 Capital Cities (n=996), Rest of Australia (n=510).

Internet Impact Score

An aggregate impact score was derived from the ratings provided for each of the 16 individual life attributes. The Internet Impact Score ranges from -100 (indicating a negative impact for all 16 attributes) to 100 (indicating a positive impact for all 16 attributes).

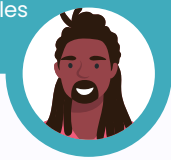
The vast majority (89%) of Internet users reported a positive score, which means, on balance, **the Internet creates value in their lives.**

A small proportion had a score of zero (5%), meaning the Internet has no discernible impact on their lives, while only 6% of consumers had a negative score, indicating their concerns about the Internet outweigh the positives.

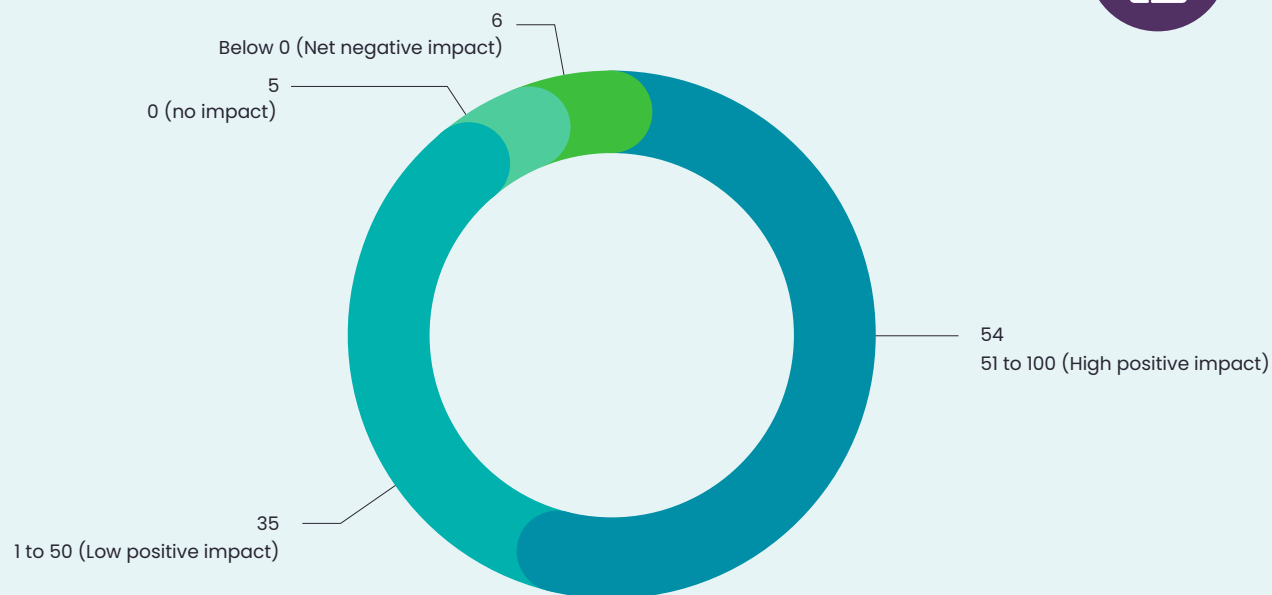
The average Internet Impact Score for all consumers is **52.9** highlighting the strong positive influence of the Internet on everyday lives.

“Losing the Internet would take away my ability to find news, it would take away my ability to learn how to do new things and most importantly it would take away my ability to have fun.”

55-year-old male, New South Wales



Internet Impact Score (% Consumers)



Source: C1 - Please indicate whether, on balance, the Internet has had a positive effect or negative effect on the following aspects of your life. Base: All consumers who use the Internet (n=1506).

Positive impact correlates with Internet usage – heavy Internet users report the highest Internet Impact Score (63.1) followed by average (55.1) and light (39.4) users. **This suggests that the more you use the Internet the more you realise the benefits it can provide.**

“My life is organised through the Internet, and I would be lost without it. I use it every day to keep track of what I eat and how much I exercise. My bank account is organised by a software program and my bills are kept on a spreadsheet.”

66-year-old female, South Australia



What would consumers miss without the Internet?



When asked an open-ended question about what they would miss if they no longer had the Internet (with responses manually sorted into themes), a substantial proportion (31%) of **consumers say they would miss maintaining contact with family and friends**. Given the timing of the research, this finding is likely influenced by people's experiences of lockdowns and border closures related to COVID-19. Nonetheless, this correlates with other findings from the research about the value of the Internet in maintaining social relationships and is a standout result for an unprompted question.

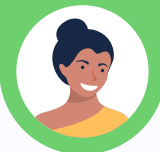
Other things consumers say they would miss include their ability to find news and information (25%), online entertainment such as streaming services and gaming (16%), ability to manage financial affairs (14%), and shopping online (11%).

The importance of being able to use the Internet to maintain contact with friends and families is strongest among:

- Females (38% vs 24% of males)
- Those aged 18 to 34 years (36%)
- Individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (37% vs 31% of other Australians).

“Living in Australia, the Internet is the main connection that I have with my family and friends who live in different countries.”

48-year-old female, South Australia



“I would miss everything about the Internet – especially social media and video group calls. My world would be so boring without the Internet.”

27-year-old female, Queensland



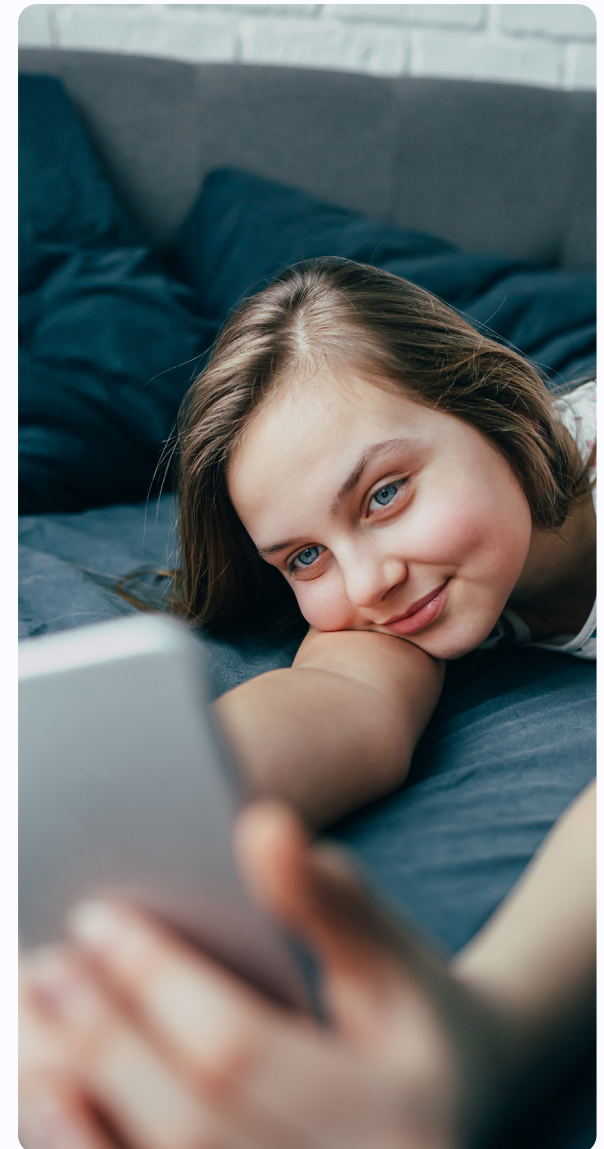
The importance of being able to find information online is strongest among those **aged 50 years and above** (mentioned by 30% vs 20% of those aged 18 to 49 years).

Conversely, **younger consumers** (aged 18 to 49 years) would more likely than those **aged 50 years or older** to miss online entertainment services (20% vs 10%).

Females (13%) are more likely than **males** (9%) to say they would miss online shopping and social media (9% vs 6%).

“Not being able to video chat, not being able to trade, no movies, no news, no music. To not have these things available at my fingertips would be life changing.”

40-year-old male, South Australia



What value does the Internet provide to small businesses?



The Internet is critical for a range of business functions, most notably:



Customer interactions



Promotion and marketing



Working remotely



Performance and productivity

Small business participants were asked to rate the importance of 12 reasons for using the Internet, spanning a range of business activities. Each reason was rated as either very or somewhat important by more than half of all participants.

Overall, the most important reasons for using the Internet are to interact with customers (84%), to be able to work from home (80%), and to promote the business (78%).

Reasons for using the Internet – Small business (% very or somewhat important)

To interact with customers	84
To be able to work from home	80
To promote the business to potential customers	78
To be able to work while travelling	75
To create efficiencies in work practices	73
To monitor business performance	73
To access online channels for marketing	73
To reduce costs	70
To allow staff to communicate more effectively with one another	69
To automate activities	69
To monitor competitors	63
To manage staff	54

Source: B4 – How important are the following considerations for your business when using the Internet? Base: All small business participants (n=404).

- Using the Internet to **interact with customers** is most important to micro businesses (91%), manufacturing businesses (95%), food and beverage businesses (89%), and those in arts and entertainment (88%).
- Using the Internet to **promote the business** is considered more important to small (85%) and micro (83%) businesses than it is for sole traders (68%). Those in the education sector (92%), and retail (89%) also highly value this benefit.



What would small businesses miss without the Internet?



When asked what they would miss if they no longer had the Internet, many small business participants said that the business would simply no longer be able to operate (16%).

The main activities small businesses would miss without the Internet are:

- Revenue from sales and/or missed sales opportunities (18%)
- Communications and messaging (17%)
- Ability to promote the business online (16%)
- Everything – without the Internet the business would not be able to operate (16%)
- Financial management (12%)
- Finding information online (10%)
- Customer interactions (10%).

Source: Imagine for a moment that the Internet and online activities were no longer available. Thinking specifically about your business, what are the things that the business would most miss if it no longer had access to the Internet? Base: all small business participants (n=404). Note: themes coded from open text response.

“I hope it never happens! First, we’d lose all of our customers, and then our business.”

Finance manager, retail small-business, New South Wales (metro)



“We’d lose marketing opportunities to reach a broader section of the community. Word of mouth only goes so far.”

Manager, construction micro-business, New South Wales (regional)



“I’d miss having knowledge at my fingertips, the ease of communication, the ability to serve clients online and keep abreast of current trends and innovations.”

Sole trader, personal services, Victoria (regional)



What worries or frustrates Internet users?



When consumers were asked to describe, in their own words, what worries or frustrates them about using the Internet, two broad themes emerged:

- 43% mentioned issues related to **privacy** and **cyber security**
- 17% mentioned **connectivity** issues.

Around one in five (19%) of consumers said they had no worries or frustrations when using the Internet, while the remainder described various issues including lack of confidence or know-how when using the Internet (6%), antisocial behaviour online (e.g. bullying) (4%), and misinformation and 'fake news' (2%).

Given the wide range, and relative seriousness, of the various issues described by consumers, the fact that nearly half mentioned they were worried about privacy and cyber security demonstrates how significant an issue it is.

Note: consumers often conflate issues of privacy and cyber security, viewing them both as an overall threat when using the Internet.

"The breach of important data. I'm worried about information being released and becoming readily available without consent. This has occurred to me when I was applying for jobs during the pandemic."

21-year-old female,
Western Australia (metro)



"I'm worried about our lack of autonomy and the potential for privacy to be thing of the past."

24-year-old male,
Australian Capital Territory



Those most likely to be worried about **cyber security** and **privacy** include the self-employed (55%) and office workers (49%), those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (52%) and those who use the Internet more – average (44%) or heavy users (47%).

Despite these differences, privacy and security are by far the main concerns expressed by all segments of the population. It is universally the biggest concern for all Internet users.

Self-employed workers (27%) and heavy Internet users (20%) are most likely to be frustrated by **connectivity** issues.

A third theme to emerge among light Internet users is a lack of confidence or competence in using the Internet (13%). For light users of the Internet, this is as big an issue as connectivity problems (13%).

Only one in five consumers (19%) said they had **no concerns** about using the Internet at all. This attitude is most prevalent among those who do not use the Internet much i.e. those aged 70 years or above (24%), skilled and manual workers (23%) and those disinterested in technology in general (28%).

"The phishing for information by fraudulent means. I'm sick of having to be suspicious of everything."

54-year-old male, Queensland (metro)



"I get super annoyed when the broadband doesn't work properly, especially when I am trying to work from home."

52-year-old female,
Queensland (regional)



"My Internet connection is constantly dropping out. It's a huge issue."

30-year-old male,
Western Australia (metro)



What worries or frustrates Internet users? cont.



When small businesses were asked what worries or frustrates them about using the Internet, two main themes emerge:

1. Privacy and cyber security (39%)
2. Connectivity issues (23%)

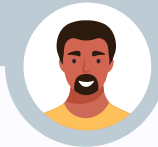
Employing businesses are more likely to have privacy and cyber security issues as their key concern: 45% of micro businesses expressed this, and 46% of small businesses, compared with just 28% of sole traders. By contrast, micro businesses are the most likely to mention **connectivity** issues (30% vs 19% of sole traders and 15% of small businesses).

While privacy, security and connectivity issues are the dominant concerns for businesses of all sizes, **sole traders are also more worried about a lack of confidence or competence** using the Internet (11% vs 3% of micro and 2% of small businesses) or frustrated by constant updates and changes (11% vs 4% of micro and 1% of small businesses).

Small businesses in the **personal care** sector are among those most likely to be worried about a lack of confidence or competence using the Internet (16%), while those in **education and training** are most likely to be frustrated by constant updates and changes (29%).

"I'm in a constant state of vigilance against cyber-attack and things grinding to a halt when there is a service interruption."

Sole trader, food services, South Australia



"My biggest concern is when the Internet drops out or slows down so we can't do our business effectively."

Manager, real-estate micro-business, New South Wales



"The older I get, the more difficult it gets for me to understand new features of the Internet. Technology is too fast for me now!"

Sole trader, personal care sector (naturopathy), Tasmania



"As the development of technology is becoming more advanced, we are increasingly concerned about the inability to secure the company's information."

IT manager, import/export micro-business, Victoria



"When problems arise, it is very time consuming. The pace and rate of change is difficult to keep up with."

HR manager, education and training small business, Queensland





What concerns do consumers have when using the Internet?

When consumers were asked how worried they are by each item on a list of potential concerns, privacy and security emerged as most worrying. Secondary concerns include misinformation and 'fake news', and the cost of accessing the Internet.

Concerns related to using the Internet – Consumers (%)

	Very worried	Very or somewhat worried
The security of your personal information	42	84
The privacy of your online activities	38	81
Falling victim to an online threat such as a phishing scam	34	75
Being misled or deceived by fake news and misinformation online	28	71
The cost of buying devices to access the Internet	23	63
The cost of Internet access (i.e. mobile data or home broadband)	20	62
Not knowing how to perform the online activity you wish to	16	55
Spending too much time online	21	54
Not knowing where to find the information or website you need	16	50
Being abused or bullied online	17	44

Source: F2 How worried are you personally about the following issues when using the Internet, if at all? Base: All consumers who use the Internet (n=1506).

"I'm worried about keeping up to date at a reasonable cost."

69-year-old male, Tasmania



"There is a lot of negativity and toxic environments."

30-year-old female, Victoria



Heavy Internet users are significantly more likely to be worried about all issues they were asked about, except for 'not knowing how to perform the online activity that you wish to', although they are as worried about this as average and light users.

Other secondary worries that emerged among certain cohorts included:

- The **cost of Internet access** is very or somewhat worrying for skilled and manual workers (74%), those aged 18 to 49 years (68%) and low-income earners (66%).
- **Spending too much time online** is a far greater concern for those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (80% vs 52% of other Australians), those aged 18 to 49 years (64% vs 42% for those aged 50 years or above), and for heavy Internet users (68% vs 57% of average and 37% of light users)
- Younger people – those aged 18 to 49 years are significantly more likely to be worried about being **abused or bullied online** (55% vs 29% of those aged 50 years or above), as are those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (61% vs 42% of other Australians)

What concerns do small businesses have when using the Internet?

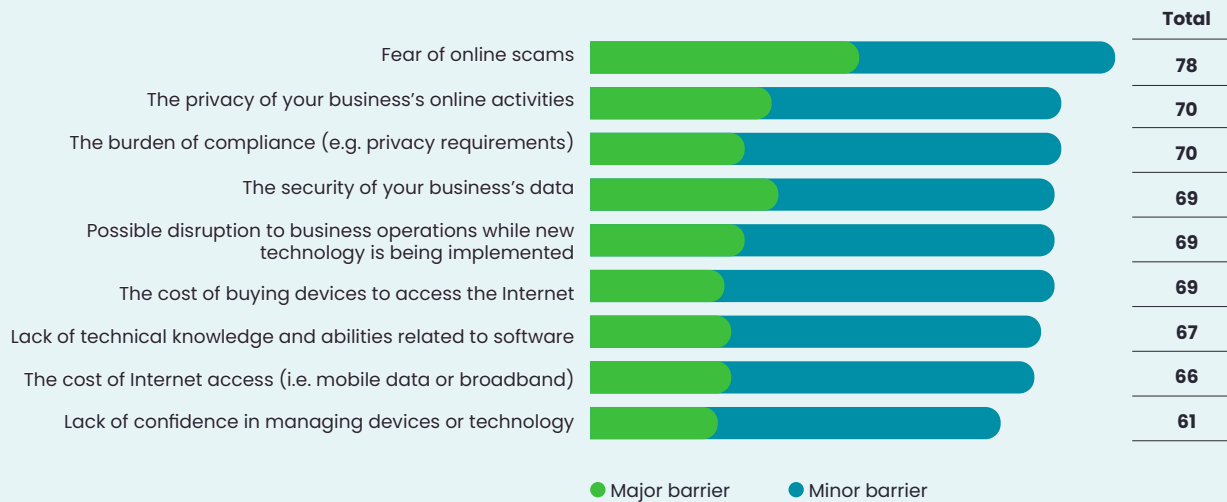


The majority of small businesses indicated numerous barriers exist for them when using the Internet. They are **most concerned about privacy and cyber security**.

More than three quarters (78%) of all small businesses consider online scams a barrier to using the Internet, with two-in-five (40%) rating this as a major concern.

In addition to the central threat of cyber security breaches, the burden of compliance related to using the Internet is also a prominent concern for many small businesses.

Concerns related to using the Internet – Small businesses (%)



Source: F2 How much are the following issues a barrier to your business using the Internet? Base: All small business participants (n=404).

Micro businesses are most likely to consider privacy and security concerns an issue when using the Internet.

- Fear of online scams (90% vs 71% of sole traders and 67% of small businesses)
- The privacy of your business' online activities (80% vs 62% of sole traders and 64% of small businesses)
- The perceived burden of compliance (78% vs 63% of sole traders and 66% of small businesses).

Small businesses in the food and beverage sector (86%), and those in education and training (87%) are more likely to consider the cost of devices a barrier to using the Internet.

Fear of online scams is greatest among small businesses in regional Australia (84% vs 75% of those in major capital cities). Small businesses in the construction sector (89%) are more likely to see this as a barrier to using the Internet, compared to those in other sectors.

How important is cyber security for consumers?

When forced to choose, a majority of consumers place greater importance on privacy and cyber security over having access to online activities and services. This suggests that many consumers would be inclined to **avoid certain online activities if they had sufficient doubt about the security of their personal data.**

Providers of online services and organisations that interact with consumers online should be mindful of this potential barrier to consumers engaging more deeply.

Trade-off between access to online activities and cyber security



Source: C2 Which one of these two things is most important to you? Base: All consumers who use the Internet (n=1506).



While the emphasis on privacy and cyber security is true for all consumer groups, it is **strongest** among:

- Aged 50 years or above (79% vs 64% of those aged 18 to 49 years)
- Light Internet users (74% vs 71% of average users and 66% of heavy users)
- Those who are generally disinterested in technology (82%) or slow to adopt new technology (74%).



What prevents people from using the Internet more often?



More than a quarter of consumers (28%) cite concerns about the security of their personal data online as one of the main reasons they do not use the Internet more often, and 30% said concern about being scammed or hacked limits their Internet activity.

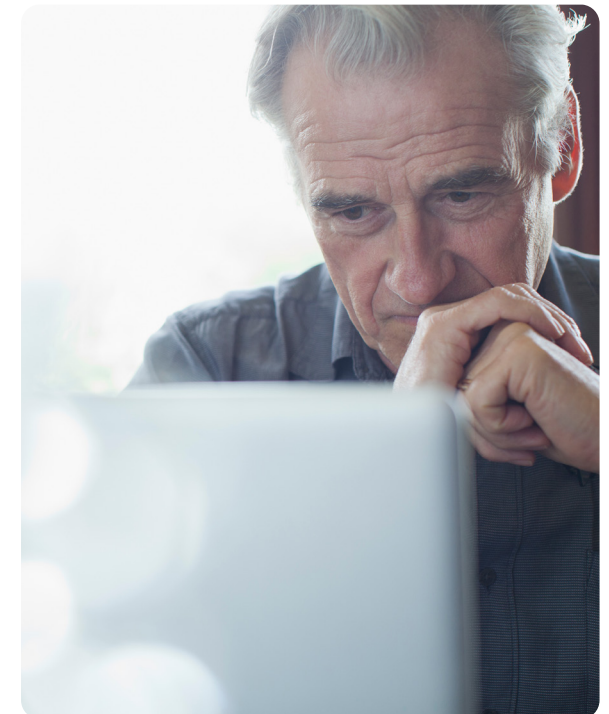
Privacy concerns aside, 22% of consumers said simply that they prefer to do things 'the traditional way', while 16% cited accessibility issues and 14% cited unreliable connection as reasons for not using the Internet more often. One in ten consumers (10%) were prevented from using the Internet more often for cost reasons, while only 9% indicated that they do not use the Internet more because they are not interested.

Reasons for not using the Internet more often – Consumers (%)

I worry about being scammed or hacked	30
I am worried about the security of my personal data online	28
I prefer to do things the traditional way	22
My Internet connection is too slow or unreliable to do online activities	14
Too expensive – I can't afford to pay for broadband or mobile data	10
I am not interested in the Internet or online activities	9
I do not trust Internet service providers	8
I live in a remote area with limited or no Internet available	6
Accessibility standards for online activities do not cater to my needs	6
I do not have access to any Internet-enabled devices (i.e. laptop, smartphone, tablet, etc.)	5
I live in an assisted living facility (such as a retirement village or nursing home) and do not have access to the Internet	4
I do not know how to use the Internet	4

Source: B7 Which of the following are reasons why you do not use the Internet more often? Base: All consumers (n=1412).

- **Light users** prefer to undertake activities offline and as a result use the Internet less frequently (31% vs 16% of average users and 19% of heavy users)
- **Heavy users** are more likely to say they are prevented from using the Internet more often due to unreliable connection (26% vs 11% of average users and 7% of light users).



What prevents small businesses from using the Internet more often?

Concern about cyber security is a key reason for small businesses to limit their use of the Internet. Just under a quarter (22%) said they do not use the Internet more frequently because they are worried about being scammed or hacked, while 18% are concerned about the security of their business data online.

Reasons for not using the Internet more often – Small business (%)

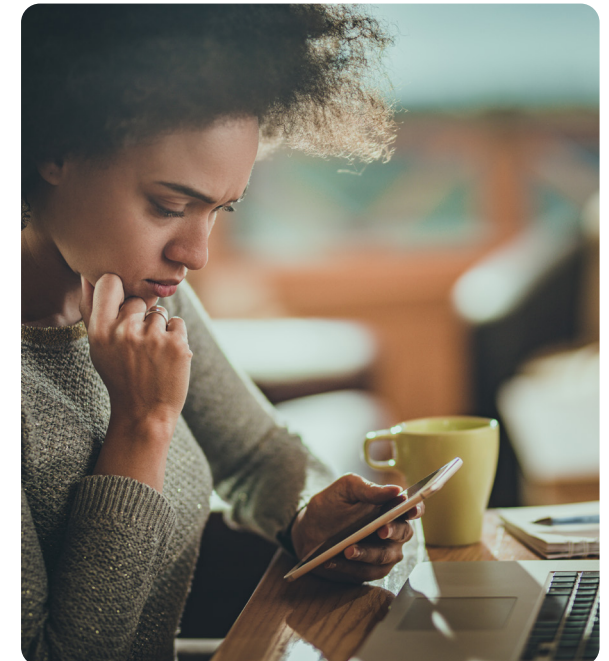
I worry about being scammed or hacked	22
I prefer to do things the traditional way	18
I am worried about the security of business data online	18
The business's Internet connection is too slow or unreliable to do online activities	9
The business doesn't need the Internet	9
I am not interested in the Internet or online activities	8
Too expensive – can't afford to pay for broadband or mobile data	6
The business is in a remote area with limited or no Internet available	6
I do not trust Internet service providers	6
I do not know how to use the Internet	5

Source: B5 Which of the following are reasons why your business does not use the Internet more often? Base: All small businesses (n=404).



Small businesses who are **heavy users** of the Internet are more likely to limit their Internet use due to concerns about cyber security issues compared to light users:

- 30% of heavy users are worried about the security of business data online vs 10% of light users
- 27% of heavy users are worried about being scammed or hacked vs 19% of light users.



How do consumers manage their cyber security?

Almost all consumers (92%) report doing at least one thing with cyber security in mind.

The **most common cyber security behaviours** reported by consumers include use of strong passwords (46%), changing passwords regularly (39%), ensuring software is up to date (46%), and backing up data regularly (38%).

Cyber security behaviours – Consumers (%)



Source: D3 Thinking now about cyber security. Which of the following, if any, do you personally do?
Base: Consumers who use the Internet (n=1492).



On average, consumers report using 3.7 cyber security behaviours.

- Males (4.0) report a wider range of behaviours than females (3.4)
- Those aged 50 years or above (3.9) also appear to be more security conscious when using the Internet than their younger counterparts (3.5)
- Office workers (4.0) report a higher number of cyber security behaviours than skilled and manual workers (3.1)
- Heavy Internet users (4.3) use more than average (3.3) and light (3.4) users.

While they use fewer cyber security behaviours overall, young people aged 18 to 49 years are more likely than their older counterparts (aged 50 years or above) to set up their personal accounts with two-factor authentication (39% vs 30%).

Worryingly, young people are also more likely to keep a list of passwords on their phone or computer (22% vs 16%). This unsafe behaviour undermines their otherwise greater confidence in using the Internet and suggests there may be an element of complacency in how they approach the Internet and cyber security.

How do small businesses manage their cyber security?

Almost all small businesses (96%) report taking steps to protect their cyber security.

Small businesses report using 4.1 cyber security behaviours on average. In particular, sole traders use significantly fewer cyber security behaviours than micro businesses (3.7 vs 4.6 on average).

Almost half (47%) of all small businesses report using two factor authentication, making this the most used cyber security practice. Other common behaviours include ensuring software is up to date (46%), strong passwords (45%) and backing up data regularly (44%).

While it is the behaviour used the least, almost a quarter (22%) of small businesses report keeping a list of passwords on an Internet-enabled device.

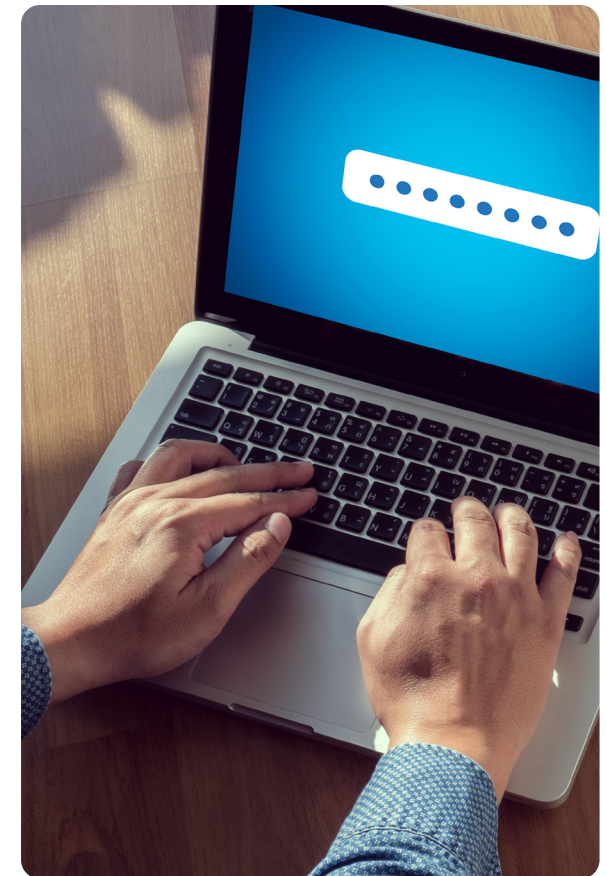
Cyber security behaviours used by small businesses (%)



Source: D4 Thinking now about cyber security. Which of the following, if any, do you do for your business?
Base: All small businesses (n=404).



Small businesses in the ICT sector (4.7), retail (4.5) and business services (4.4) use the broadest range of cyber security behaviours, while those in education and training (2.5) and construction (3.3) report the least.



How do small businesses communicate internally about cyber security?

Just over a quarter (27%) of small businesses report having established cyber security practices or policies, and a similar proportion (31%) said they provide staff with cyber security training (on either a one-off or ongoing basis).

These low figures indicate a significant need for resources to assist small businesses to formalise and embed cyber security within their businesses.

Cyber security practices within small businesses (%)

The business has established cyber security practices or policy	27
Regularly talk about cyber security with staff	25
Provide staff with regular cyber security training	22
Audit cyber security practices and procedures on a regular basis (i.e. annually)	22
Regularly talk about cyber security at board or management meetings	19
Provide staff with one-off cyber security training	16
Don't do any of these things	38

Source: D7 Which of these things does your business do in relation to cyber security?
Base: All small businesses (n=404).



Office-based businesses (62%), businesses in regional Australia (57%) and those generating \$300,000 or more revenue annually (48%) are most likely to say they have established cyber security practices or policies.

Small businesses are significantly more likely to provide staff with cyber security training (48% provided either one-off or ongoing training) compared to 37% of micro businesses.

Small businesses are also more likely to regularly discuss cyber security at board or management meetings (34%) compared to micro businesses (18%). However, this means around **two-thirds of small businesses and four out of five micro businesses do not have cyber security on the agenda at board and management levels.**

Just over half (51%) of **sole traders** indicated they **do not use any** of these cyber security practices. They are especially unlikely to audit their cyber security practices and procedures on a regular basis (13% vs 29% of micro and 23% of small businesses).

How much do small businesses spend on cyber security and technology?

The amount of money spent by small businesses on cyber security and technology in general (including both software and hardware) correlates with the size of the business. Sole traders report spending the least on cyber security (median spend of \$200 annually) compared with micro businesses (\$500) and small businesses (\$3,500).

Annual spend on technology in general is much higher, ranging from \$800 for sole traders, to \$1,200 for micro businesses and \$8,000 for small businesses.

These figures suggest that small and micro businesses allocate a larger share of their technology budget than sole traders – almost half – to things that help with cyber security, while sole traders' spend on cyber security accounts for just a quarter of their overall technology spend.

Annual cyber security spend by small businesses



Sole traders

\$200



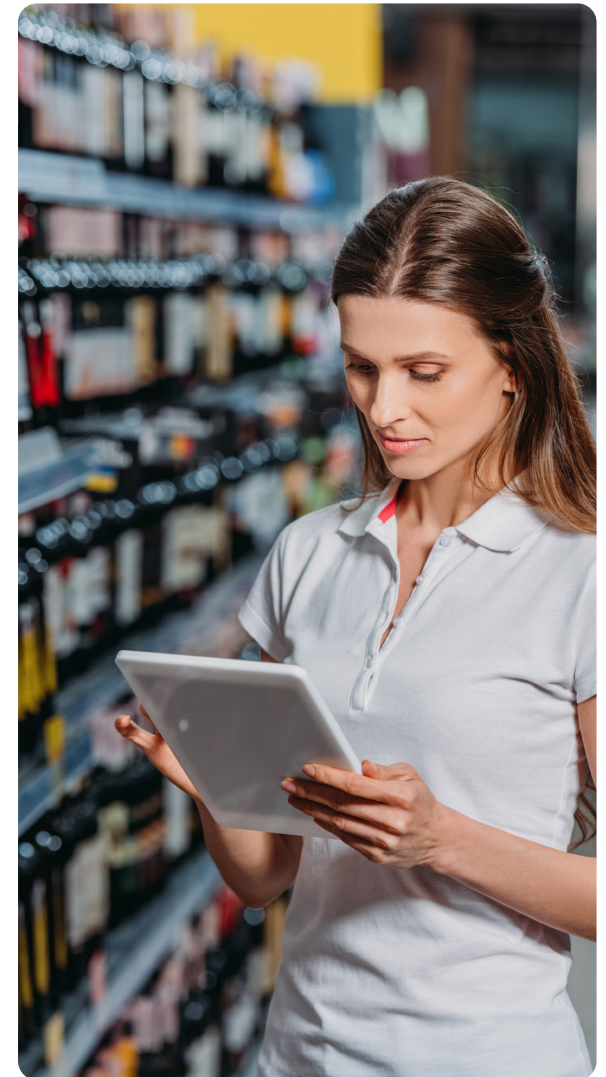
Micro businesses

\$500



Small businesses

\$3,500



What online skills would consumers like to improve?

The online skills consumers would most like to develop reflect their concerns about online privacy and cyber security. There is relatively high interest among consumers to learn how to spot an online scam (32%), how to respond in the event of being hacked (38%) and how to keep personal information secure online (35%).

Skills that consumers would be interested in learning more about (%)

	Very confident doing this	Interested in learning more about this
Knowing where to report a data security breach	22	38
Knowing how to keep your personal information secure online	28	35
Troubleshooting to solve Internet connection problems	25	32
Being able to spot an online scam	30	32
Knowing how to create your own website	16	25
Creating and publishing content online (e.g. website content; creating and maintaining a blog or regular e-newsletter)	21	20
Selling products or services online	29	17
Finding news or information you need online	54	15
Making a video call	43	14
Posting content on social media platforms such as photos, videos, comments or links to other online sources	40	13
Sending an email	70	12
Buying products or services online or booking appointments	52	11

Source: D2 Which of these Internet skills would you be interested in learning more about? Base: All consumers who use the Internet (n=1506).



While heavy Internet users expressed greater interest in learning about all Internet skills, they too consider cyber security the top area they would like to develop their skills in.

Older Australians (aged 50 years or above) are most interested in learning to spot an online scam (35% vs 29% of those aged 18 to 49 years) and troubleshooting Internet connection problems (36% vs 29%). Aside from these two areas, the older cohort are generally less interested in other Internet skills and a higher proportion of them (31% vs 15%) said they are not interested in learning about any of the skills proposed.

Conversely, **younger Australians** (aged 18 to 49 years) express greater interest in learning about most other Internet skills. This reflects the broader range of online activities they undertake. After cyber security skills, the younger cohort are interested in learning more about creating their own website (28%), creating and publishing content online (25%) and selling products or services online (21%).

What online skills would small businesses like to improve?



The online skills small businesses would most like to develop also reflect their privacy and cyber security concerns. Almost half (47%) of small businesses want to know more about how to respond to a hack or cyber security breach.

A third or more of small businesses are interested to learn more about keeping their business information secure online (36%) and keeping staff and client data secure online (33%).

The skills that small businesses are most interested in developing are those they are least confident about. This reinforces the need for information and education about cyber security.

Internet skills that small businesses would be interested in learning more about (%)

	Very confident doing this	Interested in learning more about this
Knowing what to do if any of your business accounts were hacked or your business had a cyber security breach	27	47
Knowing how to keep your business's information secure online	36	36
Knowing how to create your own business website	30	36
Knowing how to keep your staff and client's personal data secure online	36	33
Being able to spot an online scam	36	29
Troubleshooting to solve Internet connection problems	30	28
Digitising your business systems such as pay roll and customer databases	37	27
Selling products or services online	46	26
Finding news or information you need online	62	19
Sending an email	78	13
Buying products or services online or booking appointments	59	12
Making a video call	60	12

Source: D3 Which of these Internet skills would you be interested in learning more about? Base: All small businesses (n=404).



Where do consumers get support for cyber security issues?

Consumers are likely to turn to a search engine (37%) or a family member (36%) for help with cyber security. Around a quarter would contact a friend (26%) or their Internet service provider (ISP) (26%), while 23% would seek information from a government resource.

This highlights the lack of awareness of available support and resources to help consumers understand and navigate this important issue. It presents an opportunity to raise the profile of relevant organisations people can rely on for trusted information.

Sources of information and help with cyber security – Consumers (%)



Source: D6 If you needed to find out more about cyber security, or you needed to upgrade your cyber security settings, who would you go to for help? Base: All consumers who use the Internet (n=1506).



Some differences are evident between consumer segments:

- **Females** (43%) and those aged 70 years or above (47%) are significantly more likely to go to a family member in the first instance
- **Office workers** are more likely to take advantage of a knowledgeable colleague (23%) or workplace IT support service (28%)
- **Light users** (13%) and those aged 50 years or above (10%) are most likely to be unsure where to find information.

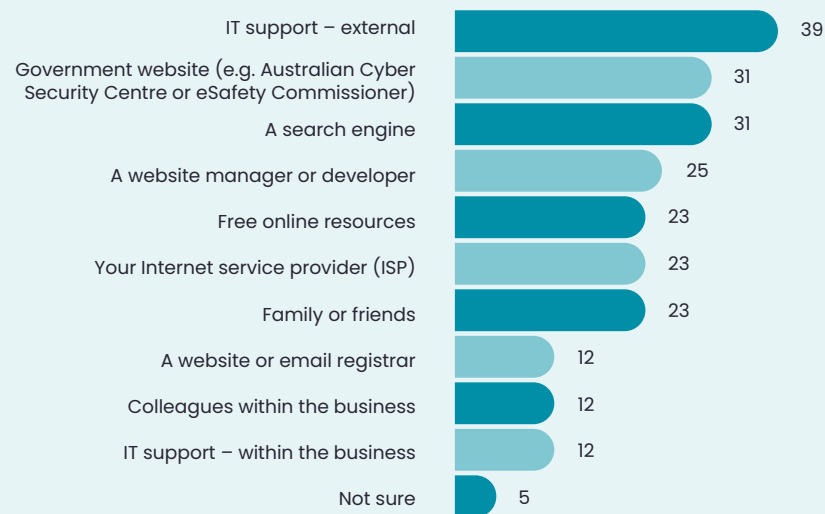


Where do small businesses get support for cyber security issues?

Small businesses are more likely than most consumers to have a **dedicated source of support** for cyber security issues. 39% of small businesses are able to call on an external IT support provider, while 12% have IT support available within their business. Small businesses are also more likely than consumers to be aware of government support services (31%).

However, like consumers, many small businesses will seek information and help with cyber security issues from a search engine first (31%).

Sources of information and help with cyber security – Small business (%)



Source: D9 If you needed to find out more about cyber security, or you needed to upgrade your business' cyber security settings, who would you go to for help? Base: All small businesses (n=404).



Small businesses are most likely to have cyber security support available within the business (30%) or have other colleagues in the business who can provide this support (22%) compared to sole traders and micro businesses.

Meanwhile, **sole traders** (29%) are significantly less likely than micro (45%) and small businesses (49%) to call on an external IT support provider for information or help with cyber security issues.

Like consumers, a search engine is used as the primary source of advice for sole traders (40%) vs micro (23%) and small businesses (31%). This highlights that, despite some having access to professional support, there is still an opportunity to increase awareness of existing resources that small businesses can turn to for support with cyber security and related issues.





How do consumers feel about the future possibilities of the Internet?

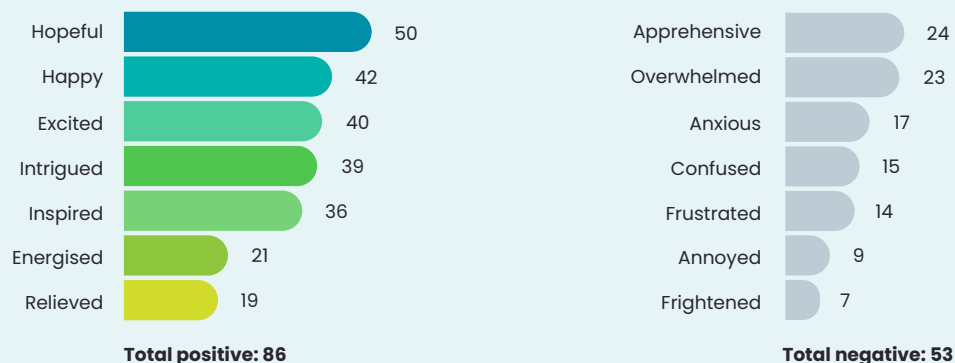
Consumers feel largely positive when thinking about the future and the potential offered by the Internet. The strongest emotions reported were:



When asked to select from a range of positive and negative feelings, 86% of consumers overall selected positive traits while 53% selected negative traits.

- While 1 in 2 people feel hopeful about the future of Internet technology, 1 in 4 feel apprehensive or overwhelmed.
- While 2 in 5 people feel happy, excited or intrigued about the future of Internet technology, nearly 1 in 5 feel anxious about it.

Feelings about the future possibilities of the Internet (%)



E4 Which of the following words describe how you feel when thinking about the Internet and the type of online services and activities that will be possible in the future? Base: All consumers (n=1526). Note: participants could select up to five words.

Feelings about the future of the Internet tend to vary between different consumer groups:

- **Younger people** (aged 18 to 49 years) are most likely to feel happy and excited, along with those who are working full time, males and people who enjoy new technology in general
- Those who live in the major **capital cities**, those who are self-employed and people who tend to keep up with new technology are most likely to feel hopeful and intrigued
- Those who are currently only **light users** of the Internet, and those not in the workforce are most likely to feel anxious, overwhelmed or confused
- **Older people** (aged 50 years or above), females and those who tend to embrace technology reluctantly are most likely to be apprehensive.



What online activities are consumers interested in undertaking in the future?

Online activities that consumers would most like to start doing include accessing online payment systems (27% of those who do not currently do this would be interested in doing it in the future), selling products online (21%), accessing government services online (20%) and using 'smart home' devices (19%). There may be an opportunity for independent advice and guidance for consumers wishing to get started with these online activities.

Interestingly, some online activities, namely social media (1%), online gaming (2%) and podcasts (5%) appear to have reached a natural equilibrium, with very few consumers who do not already do these things saying they would be interested in doing them in the future.

Interest in starting online activities – Consumers (%)

Pay bills or send and receive money via online payment systems	27%
Sell products online	21%
Access government services online	20%
Use an Internet connected 'smart home' device	19%
Make bookings or reservations online	17%
Make or receive video calls	15%
Buy other products online	15%
Host or undertake an online class, course or webinar	14%
Buy groceries online	14%
Manage investments online	14%
Find news or information online	14%
Watch or listen to a streaming service	13%
Use a virtual assistant	12%
Use an Internet enabled wearable device	11%
Use Internet or mobile banking	10%
Use instant messaging apps to communicate with friends, relatives or others	8%
Meet new people via online dating sites	7%
Order takeaway meals to be delivered to your home using online food delivery platforms	7%
Listen to podcasts	5%
Play video games online	2%
Use social media	1%

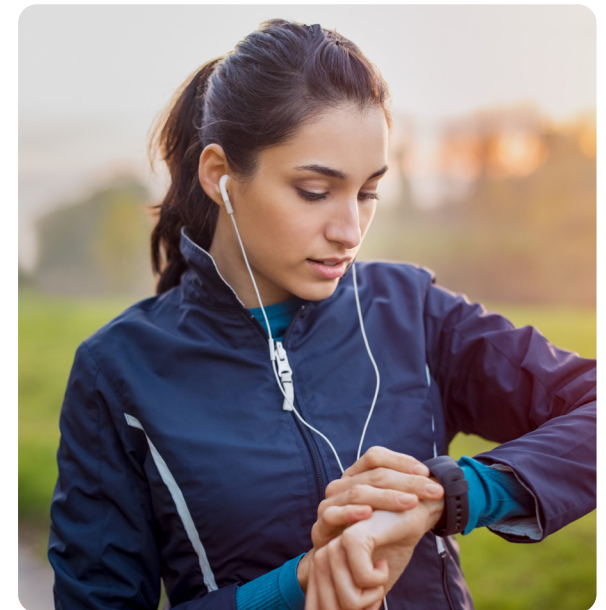
Source: D2 Which of these Internet skills would you be interested in learning more about? Base: Consumers who do not currently undertake each online activity (from n=117 to n=1316).



Activities of more interest to individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds were:

- Online payment systems (43% vs 25% of other Australians)
- 'Smart home' devices (31% vs 18%)
- Selling products online (36% vs 20%).

Those who are self-employed are significantly more interested in starting to sell products online (33%) while males (23%) are more interested than females (16%) in starting to use 'smart home' devices.



What online activities are small businesses interested in undertaking in the future?

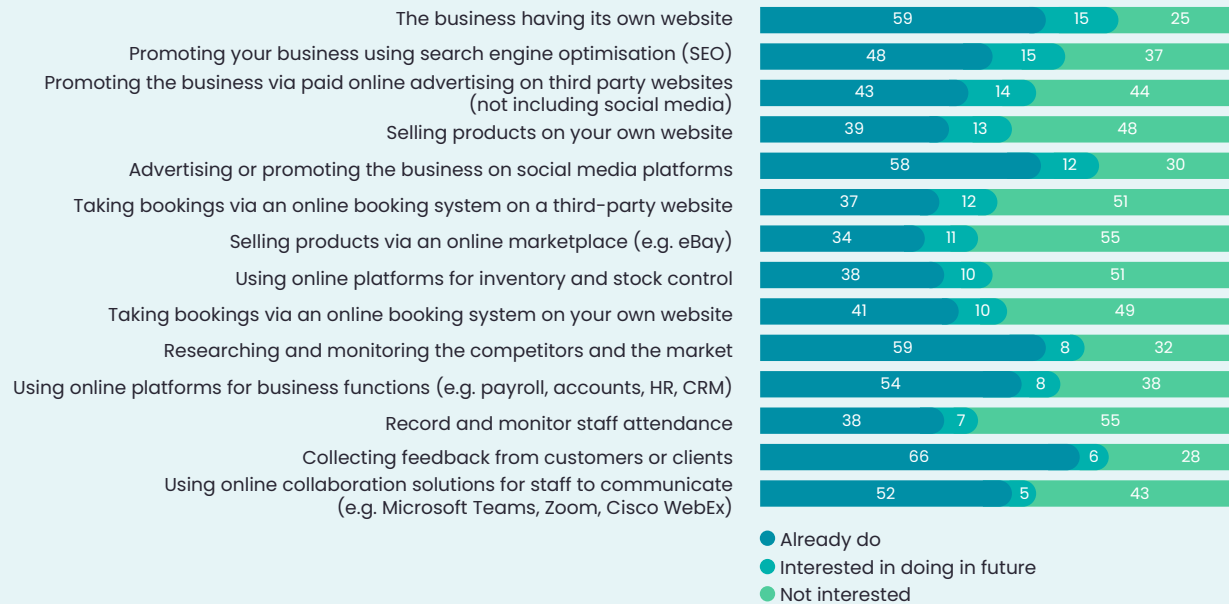


Around one in seven (15%) small businesses do not currently have a business website but would be interested in establishing one in the future, making this the online activity with the greatest interest among those not already doing it.

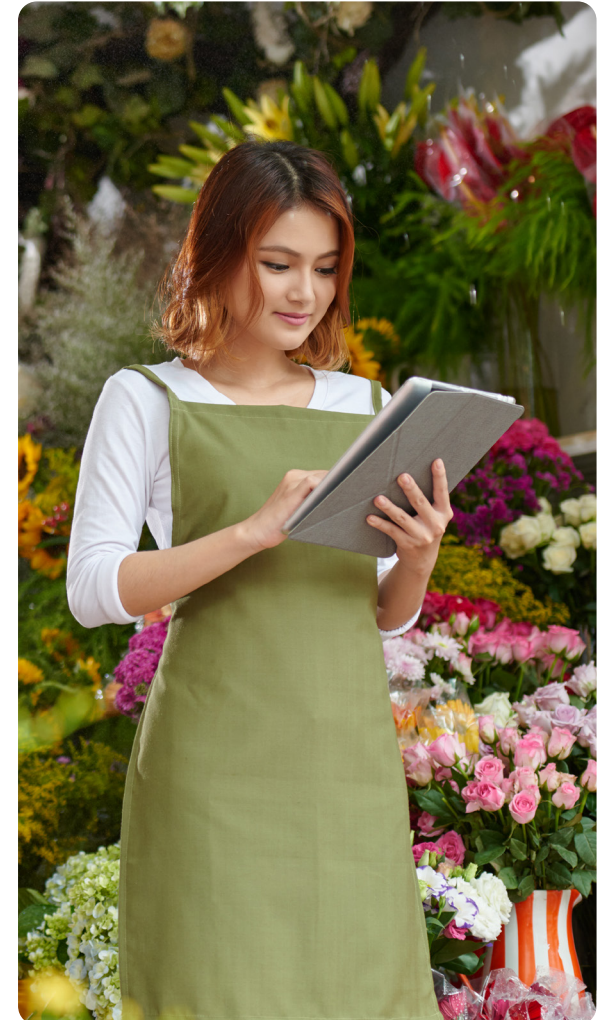
As shown earlier in the report, there is low confidence among small businesses to create a website. This demonstrates a need for clear, unbiased and practical support and guidance to not only build a website but to maintain and leverage it to achieve good long-term business outcomes.

Other online activities with relatively high interest among small businesses not currently doing them are using search engine optimisation (SEO) to promote the business (15%), online advertising (14%), using social media to promote the business (12%) and selling products via the business' own website (13%).

Interest in online activities – Small business (%)



Source: D3 Which of these Internet skills would you be interested in learning more about? Base: All small businesses (n=404).



Detailed sample breakdown

The sample was weighted to reflect population profile using best practice techniques. For the consumer sample, the weighting design included age, sex, geographic location, highest level of education and workforce participation. The small business sample weighting design included industry sector and geographic location.

The surveys were developed following an initial literature review to ensure it would build upon (and not replicate) existing data on Australia's Internet usage and experience. The survey instrument was refined following cognitive testing with six consumers and four small business representatives.

Throughout this report, results are presented for various segments with the main segments detailed in the following tables.

Consumer segments

Category	Group	Description	Sample size
Gender	Female	Identify as female	764
	Male	Identify as male	762
Age	18 to 49	Aged 18 to 49 years (inclusive)	829
	50 plus	Aged 50 years or older	697
Location	5 Capital Cities	Live in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane Perth, or Adelaide	1,003
	Rest of Australia	Live elsewhere in Australia	523
Internet usage	Heavy user	Participate in 15 or more (of 22) online activities)	511
	Average user	Participate in 11 to 14 (of 22 activities)	517
	Light user	Participate in 10 or fewer (of 22 activities)	478
Occupation	Office workers	Work in a professional, managerial, or other executive role, or non-managerial office, sales or service worker	637
	Skilled and manual workers	Work as a skilled or semi-skilled manual person, plant or machine operator, driver or other transport worker, or general labourer or manual worker	229
Background	Culturally and linguistically diverse	Born overseas and speak a language other than English	155
	Other Australian	Do not meet the above criteria	1,371
Technology adoption	Innovator	I am always one of the very first to try new things	246
	Early Adopter	I usually try new things before most other people I know	367
	Early Majority	Other people I know (i.e. friends and family) usually try new things before I do	353
	Late Majority	I usually wait until most other people have used new things before I do	338
	Disinterested	I am not interested and would only use new things if I really had to	202

Small business segments

Category	Group	Description	Sample size
Business size	Sole trader	Zero (0) employees	200
	Micro	1 to 4 employees	137
	Small	5 to 19 employees	67
Location	5 Capital Cities	Based in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane Perth, or Adelaide	258
	Rest of Australia	Based elsewhere in Australia	146
Sector	Business services	Business or administration services, consulting, or finance and insurance	52
	Retail	Retail, or clothing and accessories	49
	Food and beverage	Food or drinks production, catering, cafes, and restaurants	40
	Construction	Construction, manual and building industry	32
	Personal care	Personal care, beauty, and wellbeing	30
	Education	Education, training, and childcare	30
	Health	Healthcare, caring and support services	26
	Arts and entertainment	Arts and entertainment	25
	Manufacturing	Manufacturing	21
	IT and computing	Information technology products and services	20
Transport and logistics	Transport or delivery services, logistics and supply chain, import, export, or wholesale	15	

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