Eurobarometer: Europeans' use and views of electronic communications in the EU

The Commission published the results of the Special Eurobarometer survey on E-communications, showing recent trends in electronic communications across the EU.

iStock photo Getty Images plus

The Eurobarometer responses show trends in the use of e-communications services across the EU. The survey asked Europeans about internet access, fixed and mobile phones, service bundles, receiving costly fraudulent calls and SMSs, roaming, international calls between EU countries, emergency communications, information about the environmental impact of electronic communications and service subscriptions during the pandemic.

The results of the E-communications Eurobarometer

The survey results show that nearly all Europeans (96%) have access to a mobile telephone and 53% have access to a fixed telephone. Over eight in ten, or 82%, households have internet access. It is important to note that the Covid-19 pandemic caused some changes to the Eurobarometer interview methodology, which may influence these results.

A large majority of Europeans, 81%, are satisfied with the quality of the internet connection's download speed and 82% with their upload speed. Those who live in rural villages are less satisfied, particularly, 77% of respondents.

This appears as a positive development from the 2017 data that reported that over half of Europeans had experienced delays in downloading or uploading content.

The survey also asked Europeans about their internet subscriptions during the pandemic, and found

that even though connectivity demands were high due to teleworking, online education and online entertainment services, not many Europeans made changes to their internet subscriptions. Only 7% of Europeans made changes to their internet subscription because of the pandemic, while 3% of Europeans switched their internet provider.

As for roaming, when travelling abroad in the EU, 33% of people said that they experienced lower mobile internet speed than they usually have in their home country. 10% of travellers have been charged when using a toll free number while roaming. Over a third (34%) of those who use mobile phones while travelling in the EU still say they switched off their data roaming, while 15% were switching off their mobile phone. In its recent proposal to extend the benefits of roaming, the Commission addressed these issues, aiming to improve the traveller's experience in using communication services while roaming.

In addition, the survey revealed that a relatively high number of people are receiving costly fraudulent calls or SMS. Specifically, 13% Europeans have been the target of unwanted phone calls and 12% received SMS, both of which led to extra charges.

When it comes to emergency communications, 74% of Europeans say that in their own country they would call the 112 single European emergency number. When people go abroad to another EU country, 41% say they would call the 112 number, while a somewhat lower percentage, 39%, say they would not know which number to call when abroad.

The survey inquired about the effect that information about the environmental footprint of electronic communications would have on people's choices. Over 40% (44%) of Europeans say their choice of service provider or use would be affected with information on the environmental footprint of communications services, with much variation between the countries.

The survey was conducted from November and December of 2020, and from February to March 2021, in 27 Member States and with the participation of 27,213 EU citizens. Contrary to previous years, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, in a number of Member States, this Eurobarometer was carried out partly or fully online and sometimes households were contacted by phone, which can influence some results.

Find online the full report and the presentation of the Eurobarometer on E-communications in the EU.

Related topics

Connectivity

Source URL:
https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/news/eurobarometer-europeans-use-and-views-electronic-communications-eu