

The Internet in the World

The Internet is a worldwide network of computers that communicate using a particular protocol. This is known as the Internet protocol and refers to the way that information is grouped together into packets and how these packets are addressed. The Internet is so big and all encompassing that it does require this fairly abstract and vague definition. In 2008 the Internet is accessed by almost 22% of the world population, however this number is highly skewed towards particular countries and particular socio-economic groups. Countries like those in Western Europe, North America and Oceania have a much bigger percentage of their populations who are able to go online. In North America 73.6% of the total population have access to the Internet, and this is by far the highest amount worldwide. The next biggest numbers are fairly far off with 59.5% for Oceania and 48.1% for Europe. With the Internet meaning so much in terms of networking and connectivity between industries, the lack of its relative availability in certain regions of the Earth could lead to problems with future global economic equality. {mosgoogle center} There are way more people in Asia than anywhere else on Earth, and so their total Internet presence is still the biggest at 39.5% of world usage. However this pales in relation to less populated areas when looked at in terms of relative population, as here the Asian usage only accounts for 15.3% of the total. The difference in these two figures gives us a worrying statistical insight into the global inequality of information access. It really is a staggering difference when the top 20 countries in terms of Internet availability account for over three quarters of total world usage, while the rest of the world lies at a little less than one quarter, or only 23.8%. Exactly what these differences in Internet availability across the world mean is a very interesting topic but not a very clear cut one. The Internet means different things to different people and is used in unique ways depending on a number of circumstances. The Internet has made new forms of social interaction possible while also having a large impact on the existing economic and political spheres. Especially in democratic nations the Internet has been used as a political tool that has a huge degree of influence and an enormous scope. Other governments like those of China, North Korea and Iran have restricted the free access to some parts of the Internet and have thus restricted its scope and therefore its influence. The Internet is growing at a rapid rate all across the world, and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. The rate that it spreads into particular countries will have a big impact on the future of those nations both socially and economically. While it seems doubtful at times, hopefully the global digital divide does not get bigger but rather decreases and brings nations closer together in terms of both information availability and economic prosperity.