

Countries respond to COVID-19 through digital connectivity, surveys show

By: Calyssa Richie

As people are being forced to stay inside due to COVID-19, it has become a struggle to continue with our everyday tasks such as working, school, shopping and hanging out with friends and family. Globally, people are heavily relying on digital connectivity through the internet and social media.

Social media and the internet are heavily used in countries around the globe. In April 2020, there was an [survey published by Pew Research Center](#), that shows that a median of 77% across 34 countries use the internet occasionally or own an internet-enabled smartphone. Additionally, younger people who have higher incomes and live in wealthier countries are more probable to be digital technology users.

Molly Weast, a student majoring in communications at Kansas State University, believes that younger people are more likely to be digital technology users because they are more tech-savvy and have a stronger desire to be connected with people through social media.

“If I did not have my smartphone and social media during this pandemic I would be lost,” Weast said. The internet is a prevalent part of many people’s lives across the globe.

She expanded on that and discussed how she has been using the internet to keep in touch with the outside world. Weast said, “Without the internet I would not be able to meet for my classes on Zoom and keep in touch with my friends and family through snapchat or Facebook.” She continued, “The internet and social media is also how I stay up to date on COVID-19 statistics.”

Social media has been a great platform to spread and receive news updates and statistics on COVID-19. It falls just below internet use. Published by Pew Research Center, a majority of countries use some form of [social media](#). From the 34 countries surveyed, 30 countries claim they use social media sites like Facebook, Twitter or other country-specific forms of social media.

Anna Richie, a Physician working directly with COVID-19 patients, said she feels that the social media platforms are a great way to communicate with the world how to stay safe during this pandemic. “By posting on Facebook I am able to reach a large audience. I have posted many different things in regard to COVID-19 and have received over [twenty-two thousand views](#),” she said. She feels that the internet is beneficial because of the wide age range and the global reach it offers.

Dr. Richie thinks that without online social media across the globe everyone would feel so “disconnected and unaware of the harm COVID-19 has caused.”

Dr. Richie went on to describe how people are using social media to document their experiences during quarantine. “Social media has become a large platform for entertainment during this time. It also has brought our world closer as we all use the same viral hashtags and messages such as #stayhome.”

Weast and Dr. Richie both have similar views on the how the internet has allowed people around the world to stay in touch with others as the COVID-19 outburst forces individuals to remain at home. No matter the age, income or education level, the internet and social media are extremely prevalent.

Source List

Molly Weast – Communications student at Kansas State University

Relation: Neighbor

Email: weastmolly@gmail.com

Anna Richie – Physician and working directly with COVID-19 patients at respiratory clinics.

Relation: Mother

Email: Richie.anna@mhsil.com

Source regarding internet use around the world

<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/04/02/8-charts-on-internet-use-around-the-world-as-countries-grapple-with-covid-19/>

Source showing Anna Richie’s media

<https://www.facebook.com/anna.m.richie/videos/10223374521137758/>