

# Gender equality and youth: the opportunities and risks of digitalisation – Factsheet



## Gender equality and youth: the opportunities and risks of digitalisation

In the EU, young women and men have most digital skills and access to the internet, but their behaviour online differs. Most use of new young women (52% for men and 55% for women) is for the internet only. This generation, aged from 15 to 24, is the most digitally skilled in the EU, with 84% of young women and 88% of men having above-average digital skills.

Despite the similarities and skills, young men have more confidence in their digital skills than women. For example, 75% of young men aged 15-24 feel comfortable installing software by themselves, compared with 69% of women.

Music, gaming and social networking are usually popular online activities for both young women and men, but, for some other activities, big differences emerge. For example, 67% of young men play video games, compared with 45% of women, and 59% of young women look for health information online, while only 44% of men do.

**How does the online space look for young women and men?**

**Young men are more politically active online**

Digital spaces are broader spaces for youth to exercise and both young women and men actively use social media, but in different ways. More young men (26%) than women (12%) post comments about politics on Facebook through online social networks or blogs. Young men are also more likely to follow websites on social media (51% compared to women 46%). Young women and men also post different types of content. Young women (30%) upload more self-made content, such as photos, than men (24%).

However, the same holds true: young women than men post updates on social and political issues on their own in online writing. Young women are more likely to write themselves in their own words, communicate possible feedback for their online political participation.

**“I also think that it (Facebook) has become that big because of social media and that's good, because the internet just offers the option to speak publicly” (girl, aged 17, Austria)**

**Figure 1. Online activities performed by young women and men aged 14-24 in the EU-28 (2016/2017)**



Activity	Young women (%)	Young men (%)
Making an appointment with a practitioner	~15	~15
Buying goods or services	~25	~25
Playing or downloading games	~45	~67
Internet banking	~40	~40
Seeking health information	~59	~44
Collecting or related content to be shared	~30	~24
Telephoning or video calls	~40	~40
Reading online news or other papers/magazines	~40	~40
Finding information about goods and services	~40	~40
Listening to music	~40	~40
Watching internet television (TV or video)	~40	~40
Watching/reading e-books	~40	~40
Participating in social or professional networks	~40	~40

Source: Eurostat, EIGE, Eurobarometer 74. Data for 2016/2017. More information available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurobarometer/>. Further info: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurobarometer/>.

Digital technologies offer young women and men innovative ways to get involved in politics. From receiving instant news notifications on political developments, to engaging in online debates and expressing opinions on social media, political and civic participation has become faster and easier. Yet, one of the downsides experienced by this generation, who is the most digitally skilled in the EU, is the risk of online abuse.

This factsheet is based on the report Gender equality and youth: opportunities and risks of digitalisation (forthcoming), prepared at the request of the Austrian Presidency. It explores how digital technologies can be used to promote gender equality and also focuses on the gender-related risks of digitalisation for young women and men. More information on the data referred to in the text, including exact references can be found in the report.

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## Downloads



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