

# 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 educational outcomes differ. Most out of four young women (52%) are not able to use the internet well. This generation, aged from 18 to 24, is the most digitally skilled in the EU, with 64% of young women and 58% of their fellow adolescents using digital skills.

Despite the advantages and skills, young men face more obstacles in their digital skills than women. For example, 73% of young men aged 15-17 find installing software by themselves, compared with 69% of women.

Music, emailing and social networking are socially 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 42% of women, and 55% of young women look for health information online, which is only 44% of men's.

**How does the online space look for young women and men?**  
**Young men are more politically active online**

Digital spaces are popular places for youth to socialise and both young women and men actively use social media, but in different ways. More young men (26%) than women (14%) post comments about politics at 16 to 19 through online social networks (e.g. WhatsApp). Young men are also more likely to follow online or social media (32%), compared to women (26%). Young women and men also face different types of online harassment. Young women (30%) report more cyberstalking incidents such as identity theft than men (24%).

Likewise, the same tends to be said when young women and men use public space or take part in online voting. Young women are more likely to voice themselves in the real world, comparative public platform for their online participation.

*"I also think that it (social media) 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
Using goods or services	~25	~25
Playing or downloading games	~42	~67
Internet banking	~45	~45
Seeking health information	~55	~44
Uploading or creating content to be shared	~55	~26
Telephoning or using SMS	~60	~60
Reading online news or other papers/magazines	~65	~65
Reading information about goods and services	~70	~70
Listening to music	~75	~75
Watching internet television or on-demand	~80	~80
Searching for email	~85	~85
Participating in social or professional networks	~85	~85

Source: Eurostat, EIGE, Eurostat, 2016. 14. 12. Most information provided used for illustration only. It is not a precise figure but only an estimate.

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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