

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



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In the EU, young women and men have most digital skills and access to the internet, but their behavioural online differs. More than half of young women (59%) and even 69% do not use the internet daily. 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 demonstrated digital skills.

Despite the similarities and skills, young men have more confidence in their digital skills than women. For example, 73% of young men aged 15-24 feel comfortable installing software by themselves, compared with 69% of women.

More, enabling 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 computer games, compared with 49% of women, and 73% 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 possible places for youth to exercise and both young women and men actively use social media, but in different ways. More young men (26%) than women (18%)

post comments about politics on the internet, use social networks or blogs. Young men are also more likely to follow updates on social media (51%), compared to women (46%). Young women and men also post different types of content: young women (61%) upload more self-made content such as photos than men (54%).

However, the same holds true for young women that men post opinions on social and political issues or vote and in online voting. Young women are more likely to contact themselves on this like this communication practice but both for their online political participation.

It also shows that it (difficult) has become that big. Because of social media and that's good, because the internet just allows the system to speak publicly. (94, aged 17, Austria)

Figure 1. Online activities performed by young women and men aged 15-24 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	~49	~67
Internet banking	~45	~45
Seeking health information	~73	~44
Uploading self-created content to be shared	~61	~54
Watching or using apps	~55	~55
Reading online newspapers/magazines	~50	~50
Posting information about goods and services	~45	~45
Clicking to 'like'	~40	~40
Watching online television or videos	~35	~35
Watching/reading emails	~30	~30
Participating in social or professional networks	~25	~25

Source: Eurostat, EIGE, 2016, 2017. All data percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

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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