

Computer Literacy Statistics – 2020 (Annual)

Department of Census and Statistics

Sri Lanka

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The birth of the Information Age which is also known as Computer Age, is associated with the Digital Revolution, just as the Industrial Revolution marked the birth of the Industrial Age. The Digital and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) revolutions are twin revolutions. The rapid developments in ICT have greatly contributed in enhancing human living standards worldwide. The advanced capability of this technology facilitates with extremely efficient collaboration and access to correct, consistent and effective information, which is fundamental to manage the quality in total. In developed world, most of the key economically effective environments are increasingly ICT dominant.

Timely and accurate information on use of ICT itself is essential for justification and proper direction of the Government efforts, private sector investments, to study the changing pattern of the demand for internet services and for continuous progress monitoring on ICT achievements. For this computer literacy data, can contribute immensely to an understanding of the demand and supply of skills in the global, knowledge based economy. Also statistics on the availability of a computer/laptop in households and usage of internet and email can be used to assess digital divide.

To cater the relevant data needs the Department of Census and Statistics (DCS) has conducted several surveys on computer literacy in Sri Lanka. The surveys were conducted in 2004, 2006/07, 2009 and from 2014 onward a survey module is attached to Sri Lanka Labour Force Survey. From 2014 onward two separate bulletins are published on Computer Literacy. This bulletin reveals the major findings of the survey conducted in the year 2020. For the analysis of the computer literacy survey a nationally distributed sample of 25,750 households and persons of aged 5 – 69 years were enumerated.

Highlights



Almost one out of three person (aged 5-69) computer literated.

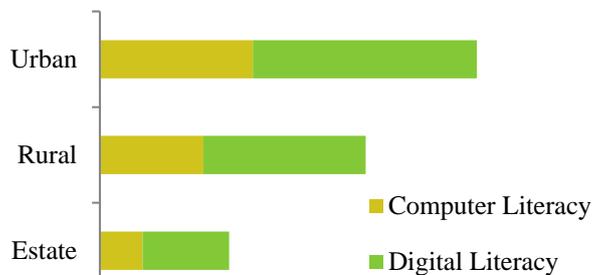
One out two person (aged 5-69) digital literated.



22.2% of households owned desktop or laptop computer.



Urban sector shows more literated on both computer and digital literacy.



Computer literacy and Digital literacy by Sector

Computer literacy

Definition for Computer literacy: A person (aged 5-69) is considered as a computer literate person if he/she could use computer on his/her own. For example, even if a 5 years old child can play a computer game then he/she is considered as a computer literate person.

Definition for computer literacy rate: Computer Literate population expressed as a percentage to the total population, (aged 5 – 69 years) within the respective domain.

Digital literacy

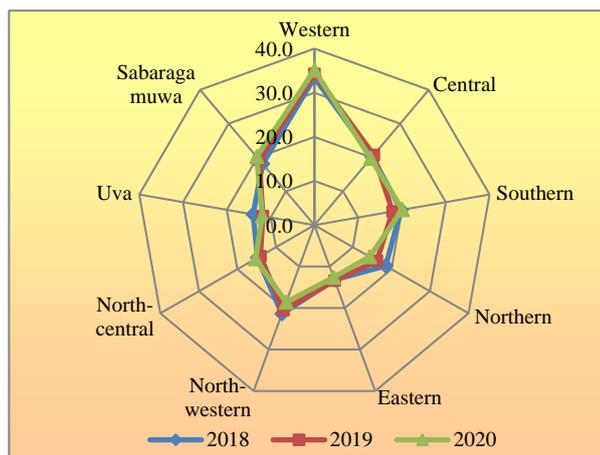
Definition for Digital literacy: A person (aged 5-69) is considered as a digital literate person if he/she could use computer, laptop, tablet or smartphone on his/her own.

Definition for Digital literacy rate: Digital Literate population expressed as a percentage to the total population, (aged 5 – 69 years) within the respective domain.

Household computer ownership

If a desktop or laptop is available at a household then that household is considered as a computer owned household. Table 1 shows the percentage distribution of computer owned households by Sector and Province. In 2020, at least one computer is available in 22.2 percent of households in the country. That is about one out of every five households owns either a desktop or a laptop computer. This percentage is 37.1 in Urban sector and Rural and Estate sector show 20.1 percent and 3.8 percent respectively. When the provinces are considered the highest availability is in the Western province (35.1%) while the lowest availability is reported from the Uva (11.9%).

Figure 1: Percentage of Desktop or Laptop computer owned households by Province



Percentage of availability of desktop or laptop computer at a household vary between 22% - 23% between 2017 to 2020 period.

Table 1: Percentage of computer owned households by sector, province and Survey year

Sector/ Province	Desktop (%)				Desktop or Laptop (%)			
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2017	2018	2019	2020
Sri Lanka	12.1	9.5	8.0	7.6	22.8	22.3	22.0	22.2
Urban	18.5	13.4	12.6	10.6	38.2	37.5	38.0	37.1
Rural	11.2	9.1	7.4	7.3	20.6	20.0	19.7	20.1
Estate	2.9	1.5	1.2	1.9	4.5	4.2	4.6	3.8
Province								
Western	18.2	13.7	11.0	10.9	35.2	33.4	34.3	35.1
Central	12.4	9.5	8.6	6.8	22.5	20.2	20.8	19.7
Southern	9.6	8.6	7.6	7.5	18.3	19.8	17.9	20.1
Northern	7.2	6.0	5.6	3.4	18.7	18.5	16.2	14.3
Eastern	5.6	5.5	5.4	4.2	11.7	13.2	13.4	12.6
North-western	11.4	8.8	7.1	6.8	21.2	21.4	20.5	18.6
North-central	7.0	5.9	4.8	3.7	15.2	14.8	14.0	15.3
Uva	6.9	6.4	3.7	4.5	11.0	14.0	11.8	11.9
Sabaragamuwa	12.8	9.6	9.2	10.7	20.3	18.1	19.3	20.2

These figures are to be treated with caution as the corresponding CV (Coefficient of variation) values are high.

Computer Literacy and Digital Literacy

Table 2: Computer literacy rate by sector, province and survey year

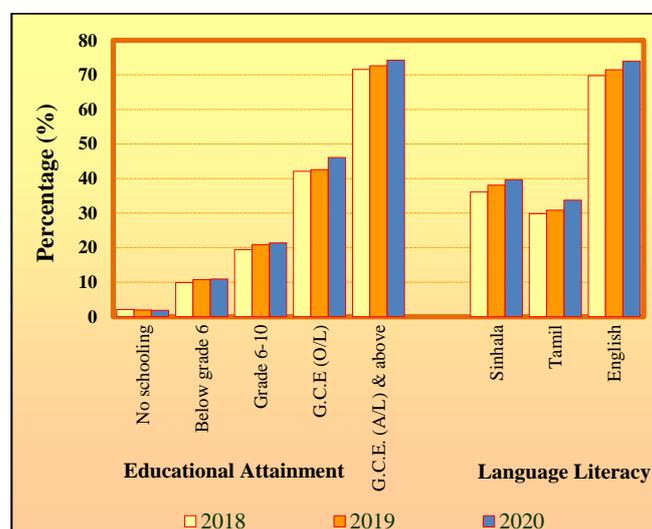
Sector/Province	Computer literacy rate (%)			
	2017	2018	2019	2020
Sri Lanka	28.6	29.0	30.8	32.3
Sector				
Urban	40.5	40.4	43.6	45.4
Rural	27.1	27.5	29.0	30.7
Estate	9.1	10.8	12.6	12.7
Province				
Western	38.8	40.0	44.1	45.2
Central	28.8	28.7	28.8	31.9
Southern	29.3	30.6	31.2	31.6
Northern	16.9	19.5	19.3	18.0
Eastern	14.7	14.8	15.7	19.7
North Western	28.0	29.8	29.1	29.3
North Central	23.6	21.6	21.7	22.5
Uva	17.9	18.8	21.6	22.3
Sabaragamuwa	26.8	23.5	27.2	32.0

Percentage of Computer Literate population (Computer Literacy) over the survey periods has been gradually increasing. Overall Computer Literacy reported in 2020 for Sri Lanka is 32.3 percent.

The survey results show an increase of 3.7 percentage points from 2017 to 2020. Urban sector shows the highest computer literacy rate (45.4%) among residential sectors. Computer literacy rate for Rural and Estate sectors are 30.7 percent and 12.7 percent respectively.

Among the provinces the highest level of computer literacy is reported from the Western province (45.2%). The lowest computer literacy is reported from the Northern province (18.0%).

Figure 2: Distribution of computer literacy rate by Educational attainment and Language literacy – 2018, 2019 & 2020



As given in Table 3 the Computer literacy among males (34.1%) is higher than that of females (30.7%) in 2020. Young youths (aged 15 – 19 years) show the highest computer literacy rate (67.9%) among all other age groups.

The survey results reveal that higher the level of education higher the computer literacy. The group with A/L or above level of education shows the highest computer literacy rate (74.3%). Also computer literacy is higher among those who are literate in English language (74.0%).

Table 3: Computer literacy rate by Gender, Age group, Level of education, and Language literacy - 2018, 2019 & 2020

Gender, Age group, Educational attainment and Language literacy	Computer literacy rate (%)		
	2018	2019	2020
Sri Lanka	29.0	30.8	32.3
By Sex			
Male	31.0	32.9	34.1
Female	27.2	28.9	30.7
By Age group(years)			
5 - 9	12.4	14.3	14.3
10 - 14	39.5	42.2	44.8
15 - 19	60.8	64.9	67.9
20 - 24	58.7	58.8	63.8
25 - 29	47.9	51.7	52.9
30 - 34	37.5	40.6	42.0
35 - 39	27.5	29.8	31.3
40 - 49	20.9	22.0	22.5
50 - 59	11.7	12.8	13.7
60 - 69	6.1	6.6	6.7
By Educational attainment			
No schooling	2.1	2.0	1.8
Below grade 6	9.9	10.7	10.9
Grade 6-10	19.4	20.9	21.3
G.C.E (O/L)	42.1	42.6	46.1
G.C.E. (A/L) and above	71.6	72.6	74.3
By Language literacy			
Sinhala	36.1	38.1	39.7
Tamil	29.8	30.8	33.7
English	69.8	71.5	74.0

Table 4: Computer literacy among unemployed population (aged 15 – 69 years) by age group – 2018, 2019 & 2020

Age group (years)	Percentage of computer literate population among unemployment (%)		
	2018	2019	2020
Sri Lanka	63.7	61.3	65.5
15 - 19	47.1	53.2	57.5
20 - 24	72.6	74.0	74.8
25 - 29	76.1	71.5	79.2
30 - 39	58.2	51.2	53.7
40 - 69	30.1	28.9	32.3

Among the unemployed, aged (25-29) group shows highest computer literate population percentage (79.2%). Annual results reveal that among unemployed many have at least some ICT skills. Even among the group aged 40-69 every one out of three is computer literate (32.3%) in 2020.

Table 5: Computer literacy among computer aware employed population (aged 15 – 69 years) by Occupation group – 2018, 2019 & 2020

Occupation group	Computer literacy rate (%)		
	2018	2019	2020
Sri Lanka	63.2	65.1	65.2
Managers, Senior Officials and Legislators	70.2	76.1	78.3
Professionals	87.4	87.9	90.3
Technicians and Associate Professionals	83.8	85.1	87.7
Clerks and Clerical support workers	89.9	90.9	94.2
Services and Sales workers	60.5	55.6	55.2
Skilled Agricultural, Forestry and Fishery workers	21.0	22.6	21.9
Craft and Related Trades workers	41.6	41.7	38.6
Plant and Machine operators and Assemblers	42.4	43.1	39.7
Elementary occupations	30.5	27.8	34.0
Armed Forces Occupations & unidentified occupations	80.1	88.1	80.2

Computer literacy among the employed population who are aware of computer in Sri Lanka is around 65.2 % in 2020. The positions such as Senior officials and Managers (78.3%), Professionals (90.3%), Technical and Associate professionals (87.7%), Clerks and Clerical support workers (94.2%) have higher computer literacy rates. Also, even among the individuals engage in elementary occupations 34.0 percent are computer literate.

Table 6: Computer literacy rate and Digital literacy rate by Gender, Sector and Age group – 2020

Gender, Sector, Age group	Computer Literacy	Digital Literacy
Sri Lanka	32.3	50.1
By Sex		
Male	34.1	53.7
Female	30.7	46.9
Sector		
Urban	45.4	66.3
Rural	30.7	48.1
Estate	12.7	25.6
By Age group(years)		
5 - 9	14.3	30.9
10 - 14	44.8	60.1
15 - 19	67.9	82.3
20 - 24	63.8	84.5
25 - 29	52.9	77.4
30 - 34	42.0	68.8
35 - 39	31.3	58.7
40 - 49	22.5	44.9
50 - 59	13.7	26.6
60 - 69	6.7	13.2

When the digital literacy is considered 50.1% (aged 5 -69) has digital literacy. Digital literacy is higher than computer literacy for all disaggregated levels, showing the drift from Personal Computer to Smartphones/Tablets.

Source of computer training

Table 7 shows that the majority of those who are computer literate have received training from School/University. The training received through Government training centres are comparatively low (6.0%).

Table 7: Percentage distribution of Computer literate household population (aged 5 – 69 years) by sources of receiving computer knowledge* and sector – 2020

Source of receiving computer knowledge	Total (%)	Residential sector (%)		
		Urban	Rural	Estate
Private training course	20.6	20.1	21.0	12.0
School/University	58.6	59.8	57.8	74.7
Govt. training centres	6.0	5.2	6.3	4.6
Employment activities	20.6	27.4	18.7	7.6
Work place	13.5	16.6	12.7	5.9
Family members	29.7	34.3	28.6	15.4
Friends/ Relatives	27.1	25.5	27.8	15.3
Self	41.1	48.4	39.3	18.6
Other	5.6	5.2	5.7	4.9

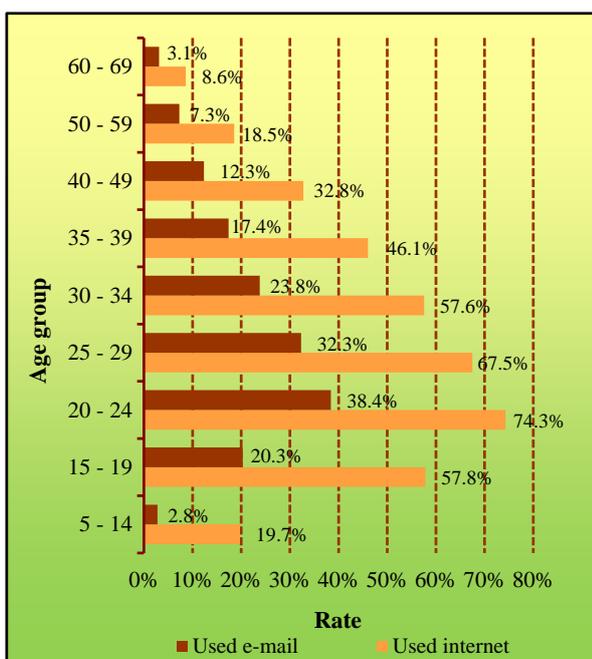
* Multiple choice answers

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Internet and E-mail use

The Table 8 depicts that 36.0 percent of the population aged 5 to 69 years use the internet facility at least once during twelve months in 2020. The survey results further reveal that in the Urban sector, where the facilities are largely available, shows the highest usage of both e-mail and internet compared to other two sectors.

Figure 3: Percentage distribution of Internet and E-mail using household population (aged 5 – 69 years) by age group – 2020



The Table 8 and Figure 3 show that persons in age group 20 - 24 indicate a higher internet and email usage compared to the persons in other age groups.

Table 8: Percentage distribution of Internet and E-mail using household population (aged 5 – 69 years) by Sex, Sector and Age group – 2018, 2019 & 2020

Gender, Sector, Age group (years)	Household Population (aged 5-69)					
	Internet (%)			E-mail (%)		
	2018	2019	2020	2018	2019	2020
Sri Lanka	26.8	30.3	36.0	10.2	11.9	14.0
By Sex						
Male	31.4	34.4	39.9	12.3	14.0	16.0
Female	22.7	26.5	32.4	8.2	9.9	12.1
By Sector						
Urban	42.7	47.4	54.5	20.5	23.0	26.2
Rural	24.3	27.5	33.3	8.3	10.0	12.0
Estate	9.0	12.2	13.9	2.8	2.7	2.7
By Age group (years)						
5 - 14	10.6	12.9	19.7	1.2	1.8	2.8
15 - 19	42.7	48.1	57.8	12.1	14.9	20.3
20 - 24	62.8	66.5	74.3	27.4	30.6	38.4
25 - 29	56.5	62.5	67.5	24.8	30.4	32.3
30 - 34	44.8	49.7	57.6	19.8	21.3	23.8
35 - 39	33.7	39.5	46.1	12.7	15.7	17.4
40 - 49	24.1	27.9	32.8	9.8	11.4	12.3
50 - 59	13.1	15.0	18.5	5.5	6.3	7.3
60 - 69	5.6	7.4	8.6	2.5	2.6	3.1

The survey results reveal that 14.0 percent of the household population aged 5 – 69 years have used E-mail facility at least once during the last 12 months period.

Table 9: Percentage distribution of device use to connect to internet/ email household population* (aged 5 – 69 years) by Sex, Sector and Age group – 2020

Gender, Sector, Age group	Total (%)	Device use to connect to internet/ email (%)			
		Desktop/ Laptop	Smart phone	Tablet computer	Mobile phone
Sri Lanka	100.0	21.8	75.4	1.5	1.2
By Sex					
Male	100.0	21.9	75.3	1.6	1.2
Female	100.0	21.7	75.6	1.4	1.3
By Sector					
Urban	100.0	26.1	72.1	1.4	0.4
Rural	100.0	20.4	76.4	1.6	1.6
Estate	100.0	8.8	89.7	0.2	1.3
By Age group (years)					
5 - 9	100.0	17.0	81.0	1.4	0.6
10 - 14	100.0	22.3	75.4	1.5	0.9
15 - 19	100.0	23.2	74.1	1.4	1.3
20 - 24	100.0	22.7	74.3	1.5	1.5
25 - 29	100.0	22.7	74.1	1.8	1.4
30 - 34	100.0	20.5	77.2	1.3	1.0
35 - 39	100.0	19.5	77.5	1.9	1.1
40 - 49	100.0	20.3	76.8	1.6	1.3
50 - 59	100.0	23.6	73.9	1.2	1.3
60 - 69	100.0	22.9	74.0	1.7	1.4

* Multiple choice answers

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