



Computer Literacy Statistics 2021

Annual Bulletin

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Ministry of Finance, Economic Stabilization and National Policies

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 the developed world, most of the key economically effective environments are increasingly ICT dominant.

Timely and accurate information on the 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 January to December in 2021. 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.

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- ❑ **One out of three-persons (aged 5-69) computer literated. (Computer Literacy Rate 34.3%)**
 - ❑ **One out of two persons (aged 5-69) digitally literated. (Digital Literacy Rate 57.2%)**
 - ❑ **22.9% of households owned desktop or laptop computer.**
 - ❑ **Urban sector shows more literated on both computer and digital literacy.**
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Content

Household Computer Ownership (Page 1)
Computer Literacy & Digital Literacy (Page 1- 3)
Source for Computer Training (Page 3)
Internet & E- mail Use (Page 4)

Source Publication

<http://www.statistics.gov.lk/ComputerLiteracy/StaticallInformation/Bulletins/2021-Annual>

Household Computer Ownership

Computer Owned Household

If a desktop or a laptop is available in a household, then that household is considered as a computer owned household.

Table 1: Percentage of Computer owned households by Sector, Province and Survey year

Sector/ Province	Desktop (%)			Desktop or Laptop (%)		
	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021
Sri Lanka	8.0	7.6	7.0	22.0	22.2	22.9
Urban	12.6	10.6	10.3	38.0	37.1	38.3
Rural	7.4	7.3	6.6	19.7	20.1	20.7
Estate	1.2	1.9	1.6	4.6	3.8	4.1
Province						
Western	11.0	10.9	11.0	34.3	35.1	36.5
Central	8.6	6.8	6.1	20.8	19.7	19.7
Southern	7.6	7.5	6.2	17.9	20.1	19.8
Northern	5.6	3.4	3.1	16.2	14.3	15.1
Eastern	5.4	4.2	3.8	13.4	12.6	11.9
North-western	7.1	6.8	5.5	20.5	18.6	18.6
North-central	4.8	3.7	4.3	14.0	15.3	16.1
Uva	3.7	4.5	3.7	11.8	11.9	13.4
Sabaragamuwa	9.2	10.7	8.7	19.3	20.2	22.0

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

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

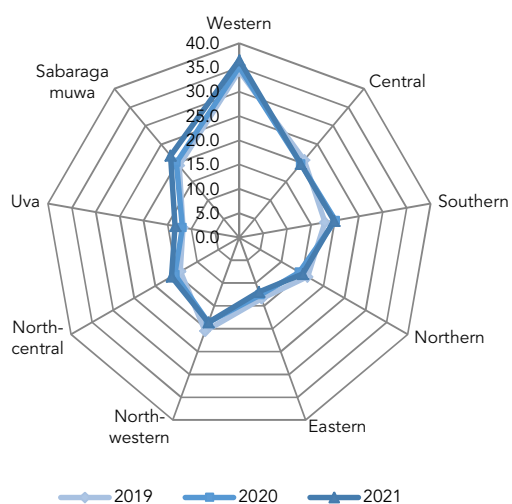


Table 1 shows the percentage distribution of computer owned households by Sector and Province. In 2021, at least one computer is available in 22.9 percent of households in the country. That is more than one out of every five households owns either a desktop or a laptop computer. This percentage is 38.3 in Urban sector and Rural and Estate sector show 20.7 percent and 4.1 percent respectively. When the provinces are considered the highest availability is in the Western province (36.5%) while the lowest availability is reported from the Eastern (11.9%).

Percentage of availability of desktop or laptop computer at a household varies between 22% - 23% between 2019 to 2021 period.

Computer Literacy and Digital Literacy

Computer Literate Person

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

Computer Literacy Rate

Computer Literate population expressed as a percentage of the total population, (aged 5 – 69 years) within the respective domain.

Digitally Literate Person

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

Digital Literacy Rate

Digital Literate population expressed as a percentage of the total population, (aged 5 – 69 years) within the respective domain.

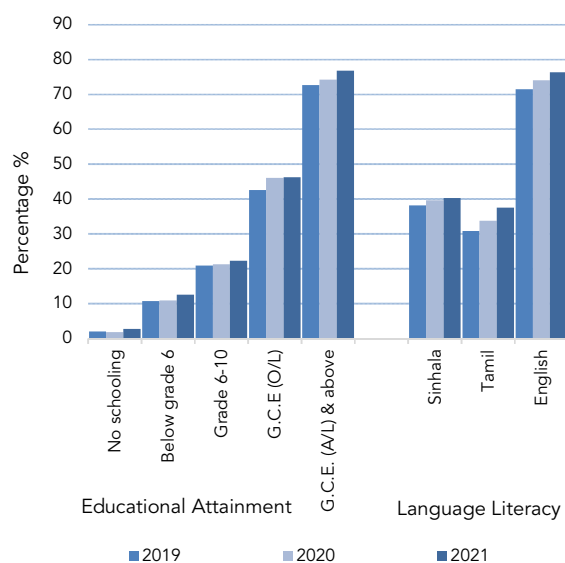
Table 2: Computer literacy rate by Sector, Province and Survey year

Sector/Province	Computer literacy rate (%)		
	2019	2020	2021
Sri Lanka	30.8	32.3	34.3
Sector			
Urban	43.6	45.4	49.0
Rural	29.0	30.7	32.3
Estate	12.6	12.7	13.9
Province			
Western	44.1	45.2	45.9
Central	28.8	31.9	31.6
Southern	31.2	31.6	30.7
Northern	19.3	18.0	27.9
Eastern	15.7	19.7	28.9
North Western	29.1	29.3	31.2
North Central	21.7	22.5	23.4
Uva	21.6	22.3	24.2
Sabaragamuwa	27.2	32.0	34.1

Percentage of Computer Literate population (Computer Literacy) over the survey periods has been gradually increasing. Overall Computer Literacy reported in 2021 in Sri Lanka is 34.3 percent.

The survey results show an increase of 3.5 percentage points from 2019 to 2021. Urban sector shows the highest computer literacy rate (49.0%) among residential sectors. Computer literacy rate for Rural and Estate sectors are 32.3 percent and 13.9 percent respectively.

Among the provinces the highest level of computer literacy is reported from the Western province (45.9%). The lowest computer literacy is reported from the North Central province (23.4%).

Figure 2: Distribution of computer literacy rate by Educational attainment and Language literacy – 2019, 2020 & 2021**Table 3: Computer literacy rate by Gender, Age, Level of education, and Language literacy - 2019, 2020 & 2021**

Gender, Age group, Educational attainment and Language literacy	Computer literacy rate (%)		
	2019	2020	2021
Sri Lanka	30.8	32.3	34.3
By Sex			
Male	32.9	34.1	36.1
Female	28.9	30.7	32.6
By Age group(years)			
5 - 9	14.3	14.3	17.1
10 - 14	42.2	44.8	47.0
15 - 19	64.9	67.9	71.4
20 - 24	58.8	63.8	67.8
25 - 29	51.7	52.9	55.8
30 - 34	40.6	42.0	44.9
35 - 39	29.8	31.3	34.0
40 - 49	22.0	22.5	23.9
50 - 59	12.8	13.7	14.4
60 - 69	6.6	6.7	7.0
By Educational attainment			
No schooling	2.0	1.8	2.8
Below grade 6	10.7	10.9	12.6
Grade 6-10	20.9	21.3	22.3
G.C.E (O/L)	42.6	46.1	46.2
G.C.E. (A/L) and above	72.6	74.3	76.8
By Language literacy			
Sinhala	38.1	39.7	40.3
Tamil	30.8	33.7	37.5
English	71.5	74.0	76.3

As given in Table 3 the Computer literacy among males (36.1%) is higher than that of females (32.6%) in 2021. Young youths (aged 15 –19 years) show the highest computer literacy rate (71.4%) among all other age groups.

The survey results further reveal that higher the level of education, higher the computer literacy. The group with the A/L or above level of education shows the highest computer literacy rate (76.8%). Also, computer literacy is higher among those who are literate in English language (76.3%).

Table 4: Computer literacy among computer aware employed population (aged 15 – 69 years) by Occupation group – 2019, 2020 & 2021

Occupation group	Computer literacy rate (%)		
	2019	2020	2021
Sri Lanka	65.1	65.2	66.3
Managers, Senior Officials and Legislators	76.1	78.3	86.0
Professionals	87.9	90.3	93.4
Technicians and Associate Professionals	85.1	87.7	90.3
Clerks and Clerical support workers	90.9	94.2	91.9
Services and Sales workers	55.6	55.2	55.0
Skilled Agricultura ¹ , Forestry and Fishery workers	22.6	21.9	21.2
Craft and Related Trades workers	41.7	38.6	38.7
Plant and Machine operators and Assemblers	43.1	39.7	37.7
Elementary occupations	27.8	34.0	30.2
Armed Forces Occupations & unidentified occupations	88.1	80.2	85.1

According to Table 4 computer literacy among the employed population who are aware of computer in Sri Lanka is around 66.3 % in 2021. The positions such as Senior officials and Managers (86.0%), Professionals (93.4%), Technicians and Associate professionals (90.3%), Clerks and Clerical support workers (91.9%) have higher computer literacy rates. Also, even among the individuals engage in elementary occupations 30.2 percent are computer literate in 2021.

Table 5: Computer literacy among Unemployed population (aged 15 – 69 years) by Age group – 2019, 2020 & 2021

Age group (years)	Percentage of computer literate population among unemployment (%)		
	2019	2020	2021
Sri Lanka	61.3	65.5	67.6
15 - 19	53.2	57.5	56.9
20 - 24	74.0	74.8	77.1
25 - 29	71.5	79.2	77.7
30 - 39	51.2	53.7	56.7
40 - 69	28.9	32.3	34.3

As given in Table 5 among the unemployed, aged (25-29) group shows highest computer literate population percentage (77.7%) in 2021. 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 (34.3%) in 2021.

Table 6: Computer literacy rate and Digital literacy rate by Gender, Sector and Age groups – 2021

Gender, Sector, Age group	Computer Literacy	Digital Literacy
Sri Lanka	34.3	57.2
By Sex		
Male	36.1	60.3
Female	32.6	54.5
Sector		
Urban	49.0	72.0
Rural	32.3	55.2
Estate	13.9	38.2
By Age group(years)		
5 - 9	17.1	43.2
10 - 14	47.0	73.1
15 - 19	71.4	89.0
20 - 24	67.8	89.2
25 - 29	55.8	83.7
30 - 34	44.9	77.3
35 - 39	34.0	68.7
40 - 49	23.9	52.2
50 - 59	14.4	31.3
60 - 69	7.0	16.4

When the digital literacy is considered 57.2% (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 for Computer Training

Table 7: Percentage distribution of Computer literate household population (aged 5 – 69 years) by Sources of receiving computer knowledge* and Sector – 2021

Source of receiving computer knowledge	Total (%)	Residential sector (%)		
		Urban	Rural	Estate
Private training course	17.4	17.0	17.7	11.7
School/University	60.7	59.2	60.9	74.4
Govt. training centers	6.9	5.8	7.2	5.8
Employment activities	21.4	29.3	19.1	14.2
Workplace	14.5	19.5	13.0	9.4
Family members	33.8	38.0	32.8	18.9
Friends/ Relatives	30.6	27.4	31.8	22.8
Self	46.8	55.9	44.2	31.6
Other	7.3	7.4	7.2	8.9

* Multiple choice answers

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

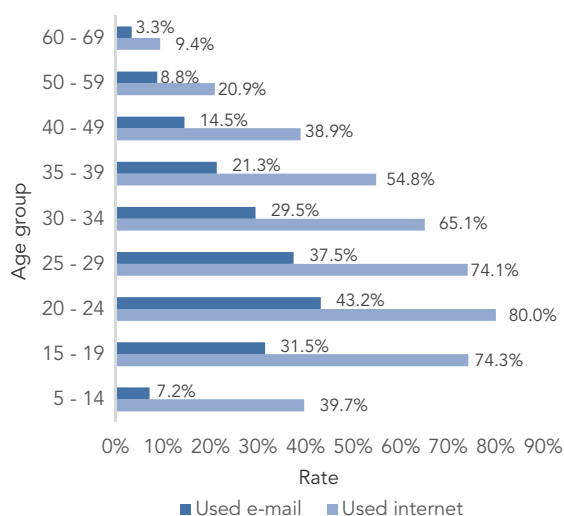
Table 7 shows that the majority of those who are computer literate, have received training from the School/University. The training received through Government training centers are comparatively low.

Internet and E-mail Use

Table 8: Percentage distribution of Internet and E-mail using household population (aged 5 – 69 years) by Sex, Sector and Age group – 2019, 2020 & 2021

Gender, Sector, Age group (years)	Household Population (aged 5-69)					
	Internet (%)			E-mail (%)		
	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021
Sri Lanka	30.3	36.0	44.5	11.9	14.0	17.8
By Sex						
Male	34.4	39.9	47.9	14.0	16.0	19.7
Female	26.5	32.4	41.4	9.9	12.1	16.2
By Sector						
Urban	47.4	54.5	61.2	23.0	26.2	30.3
Rural	27.5	33.3	42.0	10.0	12.0	16.0
Estate	12.2	13.9	26.0	2.7	2.7	4.4
By Age Groups						
5 - 14	12.9	19.7	39.7	1.8	2.8	7.2
15 - 19	48.1	57.8	74.3	14.9	20.3	31.5
20 - 24	66.5	74.3	80.0	30.6	38.4	43.2
25 - 29	62.5	67.5	74.1	30.4	32.3	37.5
30 - 34	49.7	57.6	65.1	21.3	23.8	29.5
35 - 39	39.5	46.1	54.8	15.7	17.4	21.3
40 - 49	27.9	32.8	38.9	11.4	12.3	14.5
50 - 59	15.0	18.5	20.9	6.3	7.3	8.8
60 - 69	7.4	8.6	9.4	2.6	3.1	3.3

Figure 3: Percentage distribution of Internet and E-mail using household population (aged 5 – 69 years) by age group – 2021



The Table 8 depicts that 44.5 percent of the population aged 5 to 69 years uses the internet facility at least once during twelve months in 2021. 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

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

The survey results reveal that 17.8 percent of the household population aged 5 – 69 years use E-mail facility at least once during the last 12 month period in 2021.

Table 9: Percentage distribution of device use to connect to internet/ email household population* (aged 5 – 69 years) by Sex, Sector and Age group – 2021

Gender, Sector, Age group	Total (%)	Device uses to connect to internet/ email (%)			
		Desktop/ Laptop	Smartp hone	Tablet computer	Mobile phone
Sri Lanka	100.0	20.1	77.1	1.7	1.1
By Sex					
Male	100.0	20.7	76.4	1.8	1.1
Female	100.0	19.4	77.9	1.6	1.1
By Sector					
Urban	100.0	27.0	69.8	2.3	1.0
Rural	100.0	18.1	79.2	1.5	1.2
Estate	100.0	7.1	91.5	1.3	0.1
By Age group (years)					
5 - 9	100.0	15.3	81.4	2.4	0.9
10 - 14	100.0	17.9	79.3	2.1	0.8
15 - 19	100.0	19.9	77.2	1.7	1.2
20 - 24	100.0	21.7	75.3	1.6	1.4
25 - 29	100.0	22.5	74.9	1.5	1.1
30 - 34	100.0	20.7	77.0	1.5	0.8
35 - 39	100.0	18.9	78.7	1.1	1.3
40 - 49	100.0	18.7	78.5	1.7	1.1
50 - 59	100.0	22.7	74.2	1.9	1.2
60 - 69	100.0	19.3	77.5	2.1	1.0

* Multiple choice answers

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

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