Computer Literacy Survey - 2009

Department of Census and Statistics

Sri Lanka

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The rapid developments in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) have greatly contributed in enhancing human living standards worldwide as the advanced capability of the technology facilitates with extremely efficient collaboration and access to correct, consistent and effective information, which is fundamental to manage the quality in total. In successful world, most of the key economically effective environments are increasingly ICT dominant and therefore, investing on ICT developments in the 21st century has become a compulsory requirement for a country to survive. For justification and proper direction of the investments, continuous progress monitoring, again with timely and accurate information on ICT achievements itself is also essential.

Accepting this global challenge, to expedite the move towards e-Sri Lanka in a vision to take the advantages of using the technology in total development of the country, President Mahinda Rajapakse, initiating with large investments on English language and ICT development projects, formally declared 2009 as the Year of English and Information Technology and the Department of Census and Statistics (DCS) was called to measure e–readiness of the public at large. The DCS, identifying this national necessity in advance had already conducted two household surveys on computer literacy in 2004 and 2006/07 and this issue exposes the major findings of the first six months starting from February to July, 2009 of the third Computer Literacy Survey (CLS). The CLS is to continue hereafter as a regular household survey along with the Labour Force Survey (LFS) which is also conducted by the DCS in every year around. A nationally distributed sample of 10,150 households with 31,302 persons aged 5 – 69 years was enumerated for this issue of the CLS and all the districts other than the districts in the Northern province were covered.

Household computer ownership

The CLS records the household availability of computers. The Table 1 shows that the computer ownership at household level has increased during 2004 to 2009 in every surveyed provinces and the North-central province and the Sabaragamuwa province shows the highest gain.

The CLS 2009 results reveal that at least one computer is available in one out of every ten households on average in Sri Lanka. The household computer availability in Urban sector (23.6%), where a computer is available in one out of every four households is much higher than the Rural sector (9.2%) and the Estate sector (3.1%) in 2009.

Table 1: Percentage of computer owned households by Sector and Province - 2004, 2006/07 and 2009.

Sector/ Province	Desktop (%)			Desktop or Laptop 2009
	2004	2006/07	2009	
Sri Lanka	**3.8**	**8.2**	**10.6**	**11.4**
Urban	10.5	17.8	23.6	26.3
Rural	3.1	6.9	9.2	9.8
Estate	0.3	1.1	3.1	3.3
Province				
Western	8.4	16.4	19.0	20.7
Central	3.3	6.7	9.7	10.4
Southern	2.2	4.9	6.6	7.2
Eastern	1.2	3.7	5.8	5.9
North-western	3.1	4.8	6.9	7.1
North-central	1.4	2.7	6.1	6.8
Uva	0.4	2.7	4.6	4.9
Sabaragamuwa	2.0	3.3	7.3	7.5

Table 2 shows the year of acquisition of the first computer to the household. It was revealed that 73 percent of the households have acquired the first computer during the last five years (2005 – 2009) and the Rural sector shows a higher recent acquisition (75%) than the Urban sector (66%).

Table 2: Computer owned households (percentage) by the year of first acquisition of a computer -2009

Sector	Total	Before 2001	2001-2004	2005-2009
Sri Lanka	**100**	**9.3**	**17.7**	**72.9**
Urban	100	16.3	18.0	65.7
Rural *	100	7.0	17.6	75.4

* Including the Estate sector

Map1: Household computer ownership (percentage) - 2009

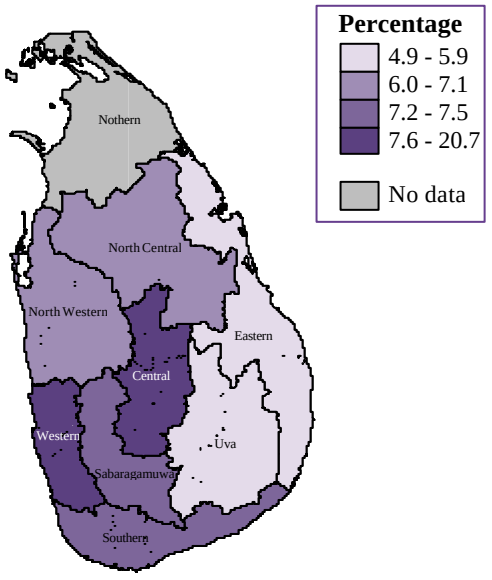


Figure1: Desktop computer owned households (percentage) by Sector: 2006/07and 2009

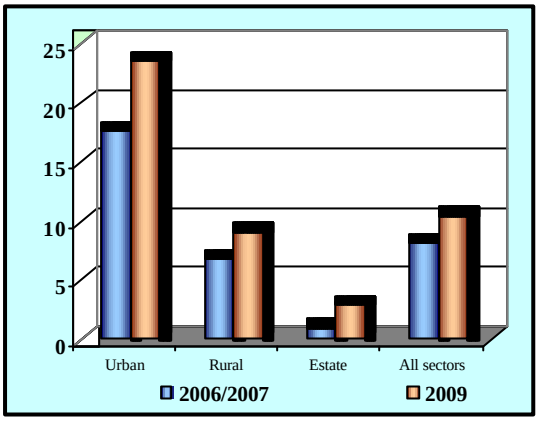
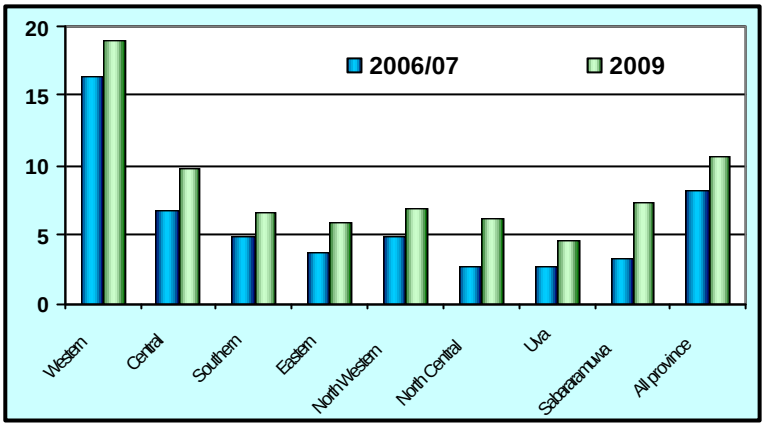


Figure2: Percentage of desktop computer owned households by province: 2006/07and 2009



Computer awareness and Computer literacy

Definition for Computer awareness

Computers are used in wide range of applications from playing games to complicated aeronautic applications. If a person has heard at least of one of these uses, then he is considered as a person in computer awareness.

Definition for Computer literacy

A person is considered as a computer literate if he could use computer on his own. For example, even if a 5 years old child can play a computer game then he is considered as a computer literate person.

Table 3: Computer awareness and Computer literacy of household population (aged 5 - 69) by sector and province

Sector/Province	Computer awareness (%)		Computer literacy (%)	
	2006/07	2009	2006/07	2009
Sri Lanka	**37.1**	**43.8**	**16.1**	**20.3**
Sector				
Urban	47.4	60.0	25.1	31.1
Rural	36.9	43.0	15.1	19.3
Estate	10.3	15.8	04.3	08.4
Province				
Western	47.9	50.7	23.2	27.7
Central	31.0	34.8	14.8	18.0
Southern	43.2	45.0	15.6	19.8
Eastern	31.5	46.6	11.4	12.9
North Western	31.8	42.1	12.6	16.5
North Central	27.5	40.4	8.9	14.1
Uva	22.3	29.3	9.9	14.7
Sabaragamuwa	30.2	44.6	12.3	19.1

Figure 3: Computer literacy (percentage) of population (aged 5 - 69 years) by province - 2006/07 and 2009

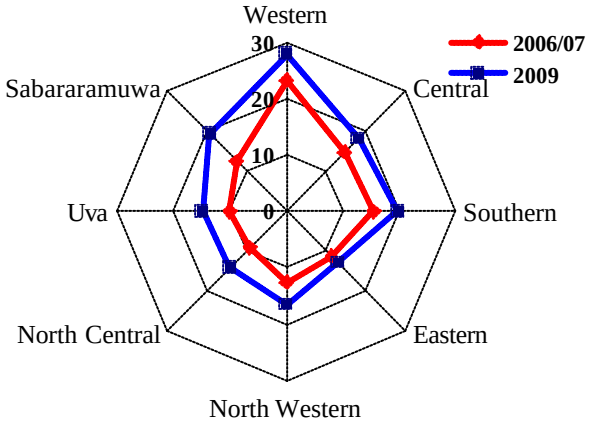


Table 3 shows that 44 percent of the population in the age group of 5 – 69 years aware about computers in 2009 in Sri Lanka and it was 37 percent in 2006/07.

There are significant differences in computer awareness across the sectors. The highest (60%) computer awareness is reported from the Urban sector households and the lowest (15.8%) awareness is reported by the Estate sector households in 2009.

Among the provinces the highest computer awareness is reported by the Western province (51%) and the lowest is from the Uva province (29%). It is obvious that the computer awareness has increased in all the provinces from 2006/07 to 2009 and the Eastern province and the Sabaragamuwa province has gained about 50 percent increase.

Computer literacy reported in 2009 in Sri Lanka is 20.3 percent and shows a 25 percent increase from 16.1 percent reported in 2006/07.

There are highly significant differences also in computer literacy across the residential sectors. The highest (31.1%) computer literacy is reported from the Urban sector households and the lowest (8.4%) is reported among the Estate sector household population. In Urban areas, almost one out of every three persons is a computer literate person. However the Estate sector shows the highest growth of above 50 percent in both computer literacy and awareness during the period from 2006/07 to 2009.

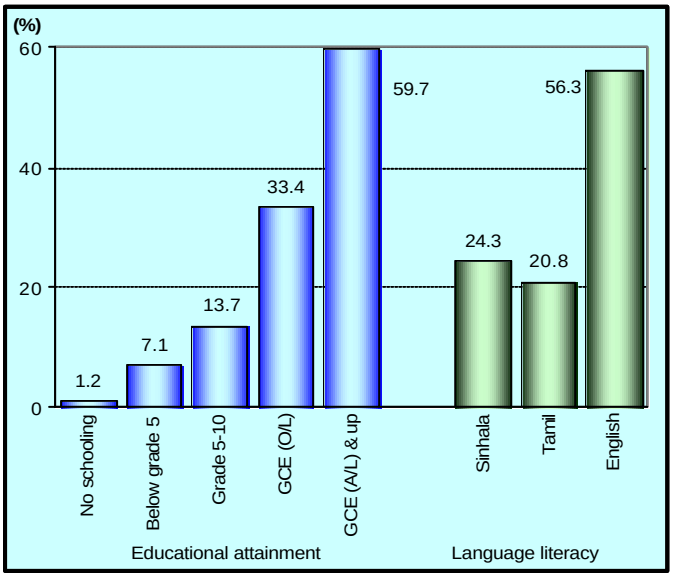
Among the provinces the highest level of computer literacy is also reported from the Western province (28%) and the least level is in the Eastern province (13%).

Table 4: Computer literacy (Percentage) of population aged 5 – 69 years by Sex, Age, Level of education, and Language literacy - 2009

Sex, Age Group, Educational attainment and language literacy	Computer literacy (%)
Sri Lanka	**20.3**
By Sex	
Male	22.0
Female	18.7
By Age group(years)	
5 - 9	10.2
10 - 14	31.5
15 - 19	47.6
20 - 24	40.6
25 - 29	27.7
30 - 34	19.4
35 - 39	15.6
40 - 49	10.3
50 - 59	6.4
60 - 69	2.8
By Educational attainment	
No schooling	1.2
Below grade 6	7.1
Grade 6-10	13.7
G.C.E (O/L)	33.4
G.C.E. (A/L) or above	59.7
By Language literacy	
Sinhala	24.3
Tamil	20.8
English	56.3

According to Table 4 the Computer literacy among male (22%) is only a little higher than that of female (19%) in 2009. Young generation (aged 15 – 19 years) shows the highest computer literacy rate among all the age groups in 5 to 69 years and the older age groups beyond 50 years show comparatively low computer literacy rate.

Figure 4: Computer literacy (Percentage) of household population (aged 5 – 69 years) by Educational attainment and Language literacy - 2009



The Educational attainment and the Computer literacy is highly related and the higher the level of education higher the computer literacy, according to Table 4. G.C.E. (A/L) and above qualified group shows the highest computer literacy rate close to 60 percent.

The Figure 4 clearly shows that, according to the survey results the literacy in English language has greatly contributed to raise the computer literacy as those who are literate in English show nearly 3 times higher computer literacy rate (56%) than the national level.

Table 5: Computer literacy (Percentage) of employed population (aged 10 – 69 years) by Occupation - 2009

Occupation group	Computer literacy (%)
Sri Lanka	**40.6**
Senior officials and Managers	85.9
Professionals	71.7
Technical and Associate professionals	69.8
Clerks	76.8
Proprietors and Managers of Enterprises	29.9
Sales and Service workers	31.8
Skilled Agricultural and Fishery workers	17.0
Craft and Related workers	24.3
Plant/Machine operators/Assemblers	21.4
Elementary occupations	19.8
Unidentified	32.8

Computer literacy among the employed population in Sri Lanka is above 40 percent in the first half of 2009 and the higher the position such as Senior officials and Managers (86%), Professionals (72%), Technical and Associate professionals (70%) and Clerks (77%) higher the computer literacy. However, nearly 20 percent of computer literacy rate is reported by the individuals engaged in the category of Elementary occupations as well.

Table 6: Computer literacy (Percentage) of unemployed population (aged 10 – 69 years) by age group - 2009

Age group (years)	Total	Computer literacy (%)	
		Literate	Not literate
Sri Lanka	**100**	**59.6**	**40.4**
15 - 19	100	44.4	55.6
20 - 24	100	68.6	31.4
25 - 29	100	70.1	29.9
30 - 39	100	44.5	55.5
40 and above	100	24.7	75.3

The Sri Lanka Labour Force Survey (LFS) reports that the unemployment among youth (aged 15 – 29 years) is comparatively higher than the upper age groups in Sri Lanka. The computer literacy rates among different unemployed age groups in Table 6 show that the unemployed youths are highly computer literate than the older unemployed population. It is worth to note here that, as per the above, a sizeable young labour force, equipped with most needed technical qualifications is waiting to enter in to the work force of the country.

Source of computer training

Table 7 says that majority of those who are computer literate have received training from Private institutions or School/University. Although the training received through Government training centres are comparatively low (8.4%), a considerable portion of Rural sector (9.1%) and Estate sector (11.9%) computer literates have gained computer training from them bringing to notice that the Government training centres have contributed to increase the ICT know-how among those live in non-urban areas.

Table 7: Computer literate household population (percentage) aged 5 – 69 years by sources of receiving computer knowledge and sector - 2009

Source of computer training (multiple ans.)	Total	Residential sector (%)		
		Urban	Rural	Estate
Private training course	40.1	45.8	38.7	48.2
School/University	40.2	36.5	41.3	29.0
Govt. training centres	8.4	5.2	9.1	11.9
Employment activities	15.5	19.9	14.6	10.6
Work place	6.9	9.9	6.3	1.7
Family members	12.5	16.5	11.6	12.7
Friends/ Relatives	16.3	18.8	15.9	6.0
Self	14.1	25.6	11.7	3.5
Other	2.6	4.8	2.1	3.6

Internet use

The Table 8 depicts that about 13 percent of the population aged 5 to 69 years has used the Internet facility at least once during the last twelve months. The pattern of using the Internet among provinces is similar to the pattern of e-mail use and it is important to note that the higher the use of Internet higher the use of e-mail. Urban sector, where the facilities are commonly available, shows higher use of both e-mail and Internet than the non-urban sectors.

Table 8: Internet and e-mail using household population (Percentage) 5 – 69 years aged by sector and province - 2009

Sector and Province	Used in last 12 months (%)	
	Internet	e-mail
Sri Lanka	**13.1**	**12.0**
Sector		
Urban	23.9	22.9
Rural	11.1	9.9
Estate	9.2	8.1
Province		
Western	19.2	18.5
Central	13.2	12.3
Southern	10.6	8.5
Eastern	11.4	10.5
North Western	6.3	5.0
North Central	10.4	7.9
Uva	9.4	7.2
Sabaragamuwa	8.1	7.1

E-mail use

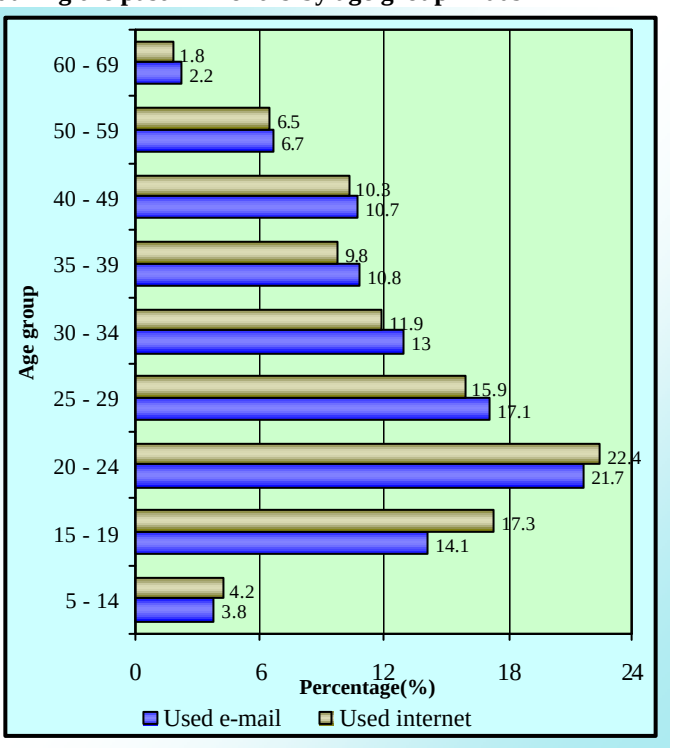
The survey results have revealed that about 12 percent of the household population aged 5 – 69 years has used e–mail facility at least once during the last 12 months period. Highest e-mail use is reported from the Western province (18.5%) followed by the Central province (12.3%). The lowest e–mail use (5%) among the provinces has reported by the North-western province.

Table 9: Households population aged 5 – 69 years (Percentage) who used Internet and e-mail at least once during the past 12 months by age group - 2009

Age group (years)	Used in last 12 months (%)	
	Internet	e-mail
Sri Lanka	**13.1**	**12.0**
5 - 14	4.2	3.8
15 - 19	17.3	14.1
20 - 24	22.4	21.7
25 - 29	15.9	17.1
30 - 34	11.9	13.0
35 - 39	9.8	10.8
40 - 49	10.3	10.7
50 - 59	6.5	6.7
60 - 69	1.8	2.2

The Table 9 with Figure 5 exposes the high popularity of e-mail and Internet among youth who are in the age group of 15 – 29 years, and in the 20 - 24 years age group, more than one out of every five persons have used the facility at least once during the last 12 months.

Figure 5: Households population aged 5 – 69 years (Percentage) who used Internet/ E-mail at least once during the past 12 months by age group - 2009



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