



Computer Literacy Statistics 2023

Annual Bulletin

Department of Census and Statistics
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 2023. 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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- ❑ Two out of five persons (aged 5-69) computer literated. (Computer Literacy Rate 39.0%)
 - ❑ Three out of five persons (aged 5-69) digitally literated. (Digital Literacy Rate 63.5%)
 - ❑ 20.2% of households owned desktop or laptop computer.
 - ❑ Urban sector shows more literated on both computer and digital literacy.
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Source Publication

<http://www.statistics.gov.lk/ComputerLiteracy/StaticInformation/Bulletins/2023-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 (%)		
	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023
Sri Lanka	7.0	6.3	5.7	22.9	21.9	20.2
Urban	10.3	9.6	8.0	38.3	36.1	34.0
Rural	6.6	5.9	5.5	20.7	20.0	18.1
Estate	1.6	0.7	1.6	4.1	3.1	4.6
Province						
Western	11.0	9.5	8.5	36.5	35.8	33.5
Central	6.1	4.8	4.8	19.7	19.0	17.6
Southern	6.2	6.2	5.4	19.8	19.5	17.7
Northern	3.1	1.6	3.3	15.1	12.9	13.2
Eastern	3.8	3.7	1.6	11.9	11.4	8.6
North-western	5.5	6.4	4.8	18.6	19.3	15.7
North-central	4.3	3.6	4.7	16.1	13.4	16.0
Uva	3.7	3.3	3.7	13.4	12.4	10.2
Sabaragamuwa	8.7	7.9	7.7	22.0	20.0	18.2

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

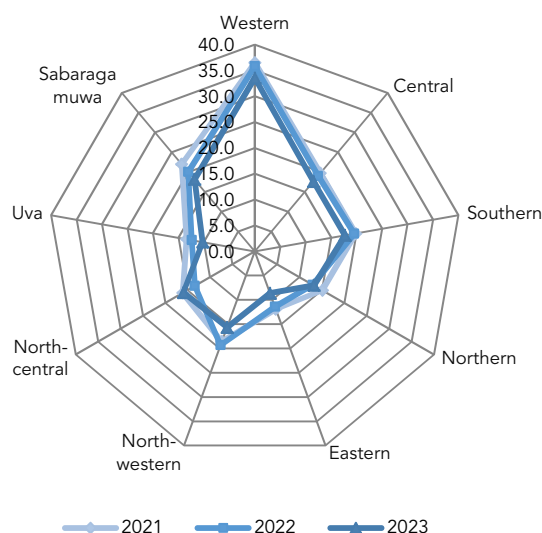


Table 1 shows the percentage distribution of computer owned households by Sector and Province. In 2023, at least one computer is available in 20.2 percent of households in the country. That is one out of every five households owns either a desktop or a laptop computer. This percentage is 34.0 in Urban sector and Rural and Estate sector show 18.1 percent and 4.6 percent respectively. When the provinces are considered the highest availability is in the Western province (33.5%) while the lowest availability is reported from the Eastern (8.6%).

Percentage of availability of desktop or laptop computer at a household varies between 20% - 23% between 2021 to 2023 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.

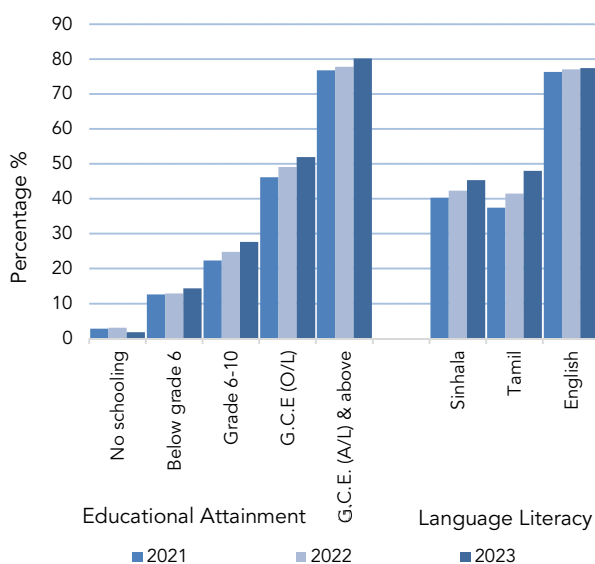
Table 2: Computer literacy rate by Sector, Province and Survey year

Sector/Province	Computer literacy rate (%)		
	2021	2022	2023
Sri Lanka	34.3	36.0	39.0
Sector			
Urban	49.0	48.9	52.9
Rural	32.3	34.6	37.1
Estate	13.9	11.5	17.9
Province			
Western	45.9	47.5	49.9
Central	31.6	33.7	37.0
Southern	30.7	33.9	39.6
Northern	27.9	31.4	38.2
Eastern	28.9	30.2	34.3
North Western	31.2	33.1	31.7
North Central	23.4	24.0	29.3
Uva	24.2	24.1	26.5
Sabaragamuwa	34.1	35.3	37.0

Percentage of Computer Literate population (Computer Literacy) over the survey periods has been gradually increasing. Overall Computer Literacy reported in 2023 in Sri Lanka is 39.0 percent.

The survey results show an increase of 4.7 percentage points from 2021 to 2023. Urban sector shows the highest computer literacy rate (52.9%) among residential sectors in 2023. Computer literacy rate for Rural and Estate sectors are 37.1 percent and 17.9 percent respectively.

Among the provinces the highest level of computer literacy is reported from the Western province (49.9%). The lowest computer literacy is reported from the Uva province (26.5%).

Figure 2: Distribution of computer literacy rate by Educational attainment and Language literacy – 2021, 2022 & 2023**Table 3: Computer literacy rate by Gender, Age, Level of education, and Language literacy - 2021, 2022 & 2023**

Gender, Age group, Educational attainment and Language literacy	Computer literacy rate (%)		
	2021	2022	2023
Sri Lanka	34.3	36.0	39.0
By Sex			
Male	36.1	37.3	40.9
Female	32.6	34.8	37.2
By Age group(years)			
5 - 9	17.1	15.5	15.5
10 - 14	47.0	49.0	56.3
15 - 19	71.4	74.8	79.4
20 - 24	67.8	69.3	74.7
25 - 29	55.8	59.3	64.1
30 - 34	44.9	47.4	52.8
35 - 39	34.0	38.4	39.8
40 - 49	23.9	25.7	29.4
50 - 59	14.4	14.8	16.6
60 - 69	7.0	7.5	8.3
By Educational attainment			
No schooling	2.8	3.1	1.8
Below grade 6	12.6	12.9	14.3
Grade 6-10	22.3	24.8	27.7
G.C.E (O/L)	46.2	49.1	51.9
G.C.E. (A/L) and above	76.8	77.8	80.1
By Language literacy			
Sinhala	40.3	42.3	45.4
Tamil	37.5	41.5	48.0
English	76.3	77.1	77.4

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

As given in Table 3 the Computer literacy among males (40.9%) is higher than that of females (37.2%) in 2023. Young youths (aged 15 –19 years) show the highest computer literacy rate (79.4%) 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 (80.1%). Also, computer literacy is higher among those who are literate in English language (77.4%).

Table 4: Computer literacy among computer aware employed population (aged 15 – 69 years) by Occupation group – 2021, 2022 & 2023

Occupation group	Computer literacy rate (%)		
	2021	2022	2023
Sri Lanka	66.3	68.5	72.4
Managers, Senior Officials and Legislators	86.0	87.2	90.9
Professionals	93.4	93.8	96.0
Technicians and Associate Professionals	90.3	92.2	94.0
Clerks and Clerical support workers	91.9	93.4	94.1
Services and Sales workers	55.0	58.2	61.4
Skilled Agriculture ¹ , Forestry and Fishery workers	21.2	24.8	26.2
Craft and Related Trades workers	38.7	42.0	50.5
Plant and Machine operators and Assemblers	37.7	40.8	45.7
Elementary occupations	30.2	37.2	39.0
Armed Forces Occupations & unidentified occupations	85.1	70.3	96.4

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

According to Table 4 computer literacy among the employed population who are aware of computer in Sri Lanka is around 72.4 % in 2023. The positions such as Senior officials and Managers (90.9%), Professionals (96.0%), Technicians and Associate professionals (94.0%), Clerks and Clerical support workers (94.1%) have higher computer literacy rates. Also, even among the individuals engage in elementary occupations 39.0 percent are computer literate in 2023.

Table 5: Computer literacy among Unemployed population (aged 15 – 69 years) by Age group – 2021, 2022 & 2023

Age group (years)	Percentage of computer literate population among unemployment (%)		
	2021	2022	2023
Sri Lanka	67.6	67.2	70.3
15 - 19	56.9	52.8	61.8
20 - 24	77.1	77.3	82.7
25 - 29	77.7	78.4	83.7
30 - 39	56.7	66.6	65.3
40 - 69	34.3	32.5	28.3

As given in Table 5 among the unemployed, aged (25-29) group shows highest computer literate population percentage (83.7%) in 2023. Results reveal that among unemployed many have at least some ICT skills. Even among the group aged 40-69 every one out of four is computer literate (28.3%) in 2023.

Table 6: Computer literacy rate and Digital literacy rate by Gender, Sector and Age groups – 2023

Gender, Sector, Age group	Computer Literacy	Digital Literacy
Sri Lanka	39.0	63.5
By Sex		
Male	40.9	65.9
Female	37.2	61.3
Sector		
Urban	52.9	76.6
Rural	37.1	61.7
Estate	17.9	44.8
By Age group(years)		
5 - 9	15.5	47.2
10 - 14	56.3	77.8
15 - 19	79.4	93.0
20 - 24	74.7	93.8
25 - 29	64.1	89.7
30 - 34	52.8	84.2
35 - 39	39.8	75.4
40 - 49	29.4	62.5
50 - 59	16.6	39.6
60 - 69	8.3	23.3

When the digital literacy is considered 63.5% (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 – 2023

Source of receiving computer knowledge	Total (%)	Residential sector (%)		
		Urban	Rural	Estate
Private training course	19.7	21.1	19.3	18.7
School/University	61.0	59.7	61.1	73.9
Govt. training centers	6.4	5.2	6.7	6.4
Employment activities	19.6	25.9	18.0	11.1
Workplace	14.0	19.7	12.5	7.5
Family members	30.6	32.1	30.7	11.8
Friends/ Relatives	29.5	28.3	30.1	19.7
Self	40.2	49.9	37.8	17.2
Other	7.7	8.0	7.6	4.3

* Multiple choice answers

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

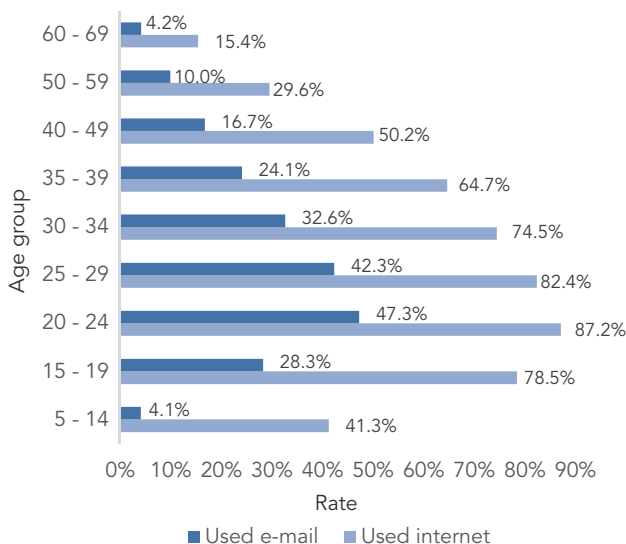
Table 7 shows that the majority of those who are computer literate, have received training from the School/University. The training received through Government training centers are comparatively low.

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 – 2021, 2022 & 2023

Gender, Sector, Age group (years)	Household Population (aged 5-69)					
	Internet (%)			E-mail (%)		
	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023
Sri Lanka	44.5	48.3	51.2	17.8	17.6	18.6
By Sex						
Male	47.9	51.0	53.8	19.7	19.4	20.7
Female	41.4	46.0	48.8	16.2	16.1	16.6
By Sector						
Urban	61.2	62.2	66.9	30.3	25.6	29.8
Rural	42.0	46.6	48.8	16.0	16.6	16.8
Estate	26.0	27.1	32.4	4.4	5.3	6.5
By Age Groups						
5 - 14	39.7	40.3	41.3	7.2	5.1	4.1
15 - 19	74.3	77.8	78.5	31.5	29.2	28.3
20 - 24	80.0	83.1	87.2	43.2	43.6	47.3
25 - 29	74.1	79.3	82.4	37.5	38.8	42.3
30 - 34	65.1	70.3	74.5	29.5	29.6	32.6
35 - 39	54.8	61.8	64.7	21.3	23.2	24.1
40 - 49	38.9	44.8	50.2	14.5	15.3	16.7
50 - 59	20.9	24.6	29.6	8.8	8.3	10.0
60 - 69	9.4	12.7	15.4	3.3	3.7	4.2

Figure 3: Percentage distribution of Internet and E-mail using household population (aged 5 – 69 years) by age group – 2023



The Table 8 depicts that 51.2 percent of the population aged 5 to 69 years uses the internet facility at least once during twelve months in 2023. 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 18.6 percent of the household population aged 5 – 69 years use E-mail facility at least once during the last 12 month period in 2023.

Table 9: Percentage distribution of device use to connect to internet/ email household population* (aged 5 – 69 years) by Sex, Sector and Age group – 2023

Gender, Sector, Age group	Total (%)	Device uses to connect to internet/ email (%)			
		Desktop/ Laptop	Smartphone	Tablet computer	Mobile phone
Sri Lanka	100.0	18.0	79.7	1.4	0.9
By Sex					
Male	100.0	19.0	78.5	1.5	0.9
Female	100.0	17.0	80.9	1.3	0.8
By Sector					
Urban	100.0	24.1	73.1	2.2	0.6
Rural	100.0	16.4	81.5	1.2	0.9
Estate	100.0	7.4	90.4	1.0	1.2
By Age group (years)					
5 - 9	100.0	9.6	88.0	1.6	0.8
10 - 14	100.0	15.8	81.8	1.6	0.9
15 - 19	100.0	18.3	79.1	1.4	1.3
20 - 24	100.0	21.3	76.4	1.4	0.8
25 - 29	100.0	22.2	75.5	1.6	0.8
30 - 34	100.0	19.9	77.8	1.5	0.9
35 - 39	100.0	17.2	80.8	1.2	0.8
40 - 49	100.0	15.9	81.8	1.4	0.9
50 - 59	100.0	17.4	80.5	1.5	0.7
60 - 69	100.0	13.6	84.7	1.3	0.4

* 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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