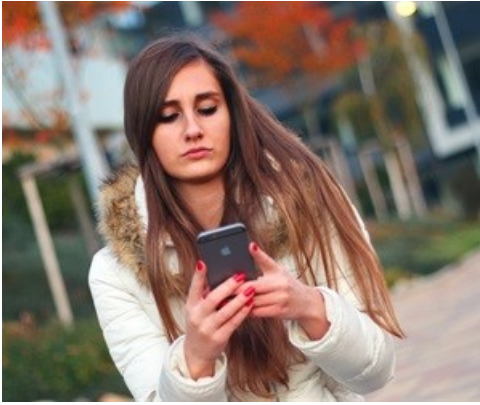


# Research unpacks South African cellphone, internet penetration

Spark Media's latest Roots research gives marketers, advertisers and media agencies understanding of consumers' cellphone and internet penetration. The research indicates that the era of connectivity is growing.



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“Over the years, Roots has given us insights into consumers at a local level and, as the world changes so do our questions,” said Gill Randall, joint CEO of SPARK Media. “Although many categories and questions remain constant to enable trending, questions and categories are continually added in order to stay current.

“Cellphone and internet penetration are cases in point. For example, Hot Spot or free WiFi areas were introduced in the 2016 data. While it is interesting to note that on average, across the data range, 16% of PDMs (purchase decision makers) access the internet where free WiFi is available, but the behaviour changes at a local level. In Fourways, 53% of PDMS make use of the free WiFi while in Port Elizabeth the number drops to 34%.”

It is useful to track and trend data. Internet access is rising rapidly across the country. Overall, from 2013 to 2016, internet access in the past four weeks has increased from 37% to 60% while the category ‘consumers accessing the internet several times a day’ has increased from 22% to 47%.

Internet penetration is driven mainly by a young working population (20-44 years) residing in urban areas. Midrand now has 99% connectivity (up from 65%) while Polokwane East is up to 87% from 45%. Perhaps the most startling statistic is the Newcastle Metro, which only had 33% connectivity in 2013, is now at nearly 90%.

As shown, we live in an era of connectivity. Devices have come a long way and their popularity can clearly be seen in the

growth of the smartphone market. In three years, 33% up, to 80% penetration in this product, landlines have suffered as a result and with only 16% of homes having a fixed telephone.

What do consumers do with all this internet penetration and connectivity? 83% access social networks such as Facebook and Twitter and 40% do that every day. 70% use instant messaging or online chatting, 66% upload photos, videos or music, 65% send and receive emails and 55% read the news, sport or weather and 21% do this every day.

Other activities include, the downloading of music or video files, watching videos online, searching for information online about products/brands seen on TV, purchasing or researching products online before buying them and using internet banking or a banking app.

“It is clear that major opportunities exist for brands to engage with their consumers in a world that becomes more and more connected, particularly at a local level. The data provides insights by category and area, down to suburban level and that is where the magic happens for brands. No one area or target market is the same. This area by area information on connectivity and internet behaviour becomes valuable when marketers plan or evaluate on their campaigns,” concludes Randall.

For more information, go to [www.sparkmedia.co.za](http://www.sparkmedia.co.za).

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