

Majority of Online Canadians Have Used a Webcam to Stay Connected

Men are Twice as Likely than Women to Have Used a Webcam to Meet People and for Business Purposes

Public Release Date: Thursday, June 3, 2010, 10:00 AM EDT



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Toronto, ON – A majority (56%) of online Canadians over the age of 18 have used a webcam to stay connected, according to a new Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of Microsoft. As might be expected, Canadians aged 18 to 34 are most likely (74%) to have used a webcam, while usage rates are lower among those aged 35 to 54 (51%) or older than 55 (45%).

Among those who have used a webcam at least once in the past, 15% say they continue to do so on a regular basis, indicating that they use a webcam either daily (4%) or weekly (11%). A further two in ten (18%) use a webcam once or twice a month to stay connected, while 62% rarely use it. Just 5% who have used a webcam at least once don't ever use it. Interestingly, among those who have used a webcam, older individuals are just as likely (18%) as middle-aged (15%) and younger adults (14%) to use a webcam on at least a weekly basis.

Thinking about the various uses for a webcam, most (73%) webcam users have used it to bridge a long distance, communicating with a friend, a significant other or family member in another city or country. One in three (34%) say they've used it to communicate with a friend, family member or significant other who actually lives in the same city. Others have used it to record videos and capture photos to be shared online (18%), to meet new people through online dating sites and chats (12%) or some other activity (3%).

Almost all (94%) webcam users ‘agree’ (53% strongly/41% somewhat) that ‘using a webcam to communicate with loved ones helps you feel closer to them’, while just 6% ‘disagree’ (1% strongly/5% somewhat) that using a webcam makes them feel this way. Similarly, nine in ten (87%) ‘agree’ (38% strongly/49% somewhat) ‘using a webcam to communicate with loved ones ensures you don’t miss out on big moments or event’s’. Just one in ten (13%) ‘disagree’ (2% strongly/12% somewhat).

But personal reasons are not the only uses for a webcam, as 6% of users say they’ve used a webcam in the past for business purposes, and 1% has even used a webcam for a job interview.

A majority (79%) of webcam users ‘agree’ (24% strongly/54% somewhat) that ‘conducting business meetings over a webcam is more effective than a phone call’, while just two in ten (21%) ‘disagree’ (5% strongly/17% somewhat) with this notion. Further, most (91%) ‘agree’ (46% strongly/45% somewhat) that ‘conducting business meetings over a webcam saves companies on travel costs’. Only one in ten (9%) ‘disagree’ (3% strongly/7% somewhat) that webcams can do this.

Making business more personal, nine in ten (86%) ‘agree’ (29% strongly/58% somewhat) that ‘conducting business meetings over a webcam helps employees in different locations feel more part of the team’. Just one in ten (14%) ‘disagree’ (4% strongly/10% somewhat) that webcams can bring business colleagues closer together.

When it comes to the important features of a webcam, most (71%) say that the clarity and sharpness of the image is most important when using a webcam, while two in ten (17%) believe sound quality is most important and one in ten (9%) think having high-definition

quality video is most important. Three percent (3%) think some other aspect of the webcam is paramount.

Men are Twice as Likely to Have Used a Webcam to Meet People and for Business...

Among those who have used a webcam, some demographic differences exist when examining webcam-usage behaviour:

- Men (17%) are more than twice as likely as women (7%) to say they've used a webcam to meet new people.
- Women (77%) are more likely than men (69%) to say that they've used a webcam to communicate with a friend, significant other or family member in another city.
- Men (8%) are twice as likely as women (4%) to say they've used a webcam for business.

Generational Divide...

The use of webcams differs slightly based on one's age:

- Interestingly, younger individuals are more likely to use webcams for various social reasons with the exception of communicating with people in other cities, where older Canadians (80%) are most likely to have reported using a webcam for that purpose compared to fewer middle-aged (71%) and younger (70%) adults.
- Middle-aged Canadians are most likely (8%) to have used a webcam for business, while older (6%) and younger (4%) individuals are less likely to have done so. Further,

16% of individuals with a university degree have used a webcam for business purposes.

Quebecers are Most Likely to have Used a Webcam...

The data revealed some interesting differences across the country:

- Quebecers (63%) are most likely to have used a webcam at some point in the past, followed by British Columbians (61%), Ontarians (53%), Atlantic Canadians (51%) Albertans (48%) and residents of Saskatchewan and Manitoba (45%).
- However, among webcam users, residents of Saskatchewan and Manitoba (18%) are most likely to use it on a weekly basis or more often, followed by those living in British Columbia (17%), Alberta (15%), Ontario (15%), Quebec (15%) and Atlantic Canada (11%).
- Interestingly, British Columbians are more likely than those living in other parts of the country to use a webcam to connect with friends and family from another city (81%), while Quebecers (39%) are the most likely across the country to have used a webcam to connect with people in the same city.
- Quebec webcam users are also the most likely across the country to have used a webcam to meet new people (16%), while users in Saskatchewan and Manitoba are more likely than others to use it for business purposes (14%).



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These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted on April 21 to 23, 2010, on behalf of Microsoft. For this survey, a sample of 1,035 adults from Ipsos' Canadian online panel was interviewed online. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of this size and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of +/-2.2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what the results would have been had the entire population of adults in Canada been polled. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

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