



Our Digital Lives

... Look at 2006 through a different lens and you'll see another story, one that isn't about conflict or great men. It's a story about community and collaboration on a scale never seen before. It's about the cosmic compendium of knowledge Wikipedia and the million-channel people's network YouTube and the online metropolis MySpace. It's about the many wresting power from the few and helping one another for nothing and how that will not only change the world, but also change the way the world changes.

—From *Time*, “Time’s Person of the Year: You,” by Lev Grossman, Dec. 13, 2006

Nearly
90%
of the total
general public
have used the
Internet for four
or more years.

Over
50%
of the total
general public
have used the
Internet for
seven years or
more.

The Internet has come of age.

Distinctions between the attitudes and behaviors of younger people who have grown up with personal computers and Internet technology and those born before the Internet era are no longer easy to classify. The rapid adoption of Internet applications and the duration of Internet use by users of all ages suggest that the time may have arrived when it is no longer fruitful to create comparisons between attitudes and habits of individuals born before personal computers were widespread and those born after.

Scholars, press and librarians have spent a fair amount of time researching differences in behavior, attitudes and skill sets between “digital natives”—mostly children and young adults born after 1980 and raised with access to computer technology and the Internet—and “digital immigrants”—that is, everyone else. Purchasing behaviors, learning styles, work and communication habits have been studied and analyzed between these two groups. Research suggests that these two groups analyze and process information differently. There is nothing in our research to suggest that this conclusion is not valid, nor that age differences in the use and adoption of Internet tools do not exist. Our research and other current studies do suggest, however, that due to the widespread adoption of digital technologies over more than a decade, the behaviors and attitudes of these two technology generations are beginning to converge—that many digital immigrants are now fully indoctrinated into the culture. Since the publication of the OCLC membership report *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources* in 2005, usage of many Internet activities has grown substantially in the three countries surveyed in both 2005 and 2007—Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States. Search engine use has

gone from 71% to 90%. E-mail use has grown from 73% to an outstanding 97%. And the use of blogs, a newly discovered communication medium for many in 2005, has grown from 16% to 46% in 18 months. The unfortunate exception is the use of library Web sites; usage has dropped from 2005 to 2007.

Internet access is now “standard equipment” for the majority of the general public respondents in the countries surveyed. Respondents in these countries report long-term Internet usage and experience. Nearly 90% of all respondents have used the Internet for four or more years and over half have been using the Internet for seven years or more. And, it is no longer just youth who can be labeled as the experienced Internet users. The clear majority of adults over the age of 50 have experience using the Internet.

OCLC’s survey data also found that Internet usage is quite similar across geographies, both by country, and by residential community—urban, suburban and rural locales.

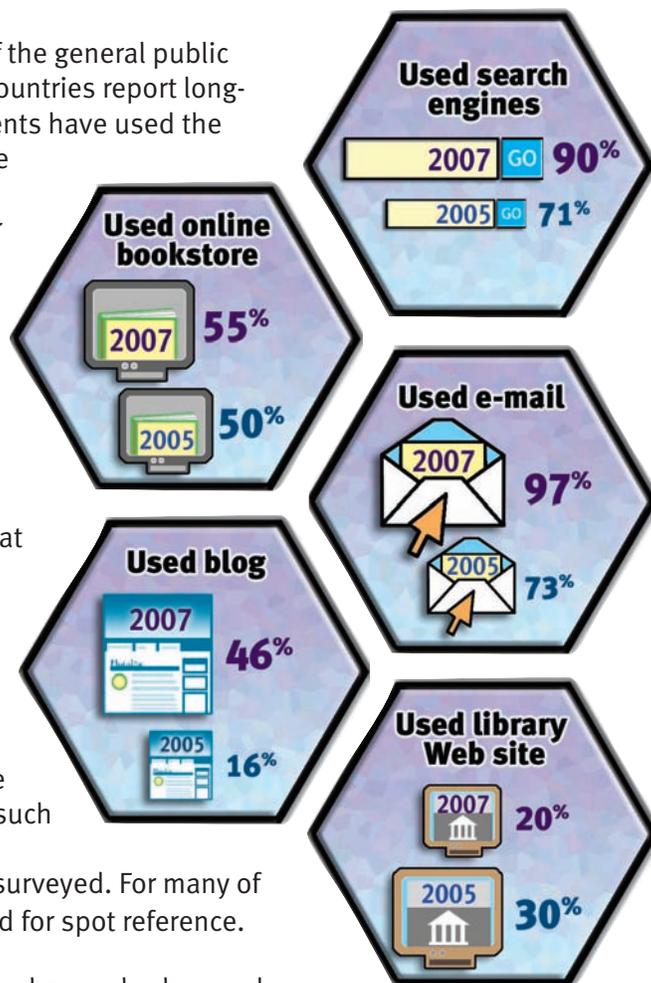
These findings prompt our belief that we may have arrived at a tipping point in the digital evolution timeline. A tipping point that may move the focus of Internet activities away from exploration toward creation and mass contribution.

Respondents are moving from Internet visitors to developers, creating their own digital experiences and communities. Respondents reported using a vast array of Internet publishing services, from blogging to building their own Web pages. Online activities considered “emerging services” just a few years ago, such as online banking and instant messaging, are now used by the majority of respondents across most age groups and countries surveyed. For many of all ages, the Internet has moved well beyond a specific tool used for spot reference.

Across the online population in the six countries and within the urban, suburban and rural communities surveyed, Internet usage tenure and types of activities respondents participate in are remarkably similar. Usage and interests across age groups also show interestingly consistent attitudes and behavior. And while usage and activity patterns are generally consistent across the parts of the world surveyed, differences between countries and age groups will be noted.

We begin our report with an update on the digital lives of the general public we surveyed in the six countries, their Internet tenure, activities and country differences.

Perceptions to Sharing ...



Figures compare data from OCLC’s 2005 report, *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources* and OCLC’s 2007 report, *Sharing, Privacy and Trust in Our Networked World* for the online populations surveyed in Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States.

On Internet Time

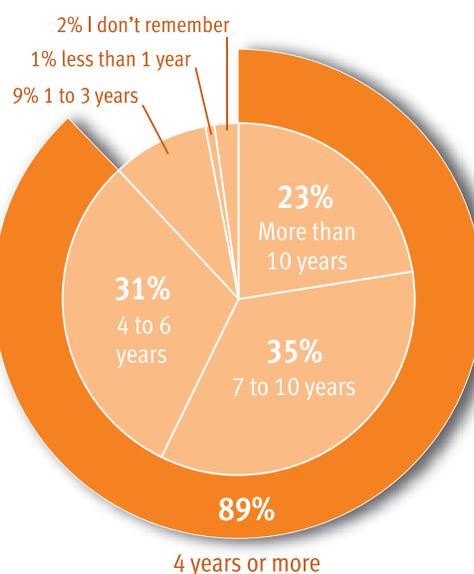
The vast majority of the total general public surveyed are not new to the Internet; 89% have used the Internet for four years or more, and nearly a quarter have been online for more than a decade.

Internet use is now well-established among the general public respondents across all countries surveyed. Nearly 90% of respondents have been using the Internet for four years or more. Nearly a third have been online for four to six years and more than a third have been online for seven to 10 years. Nearly a quarter of respondents (23%) have been using the Internet more than a decade.

Length of Time Using the Internet

By Total General Public

Thinking of your overall usage of the Internet, how many years would you estimate you have been using the Internet?

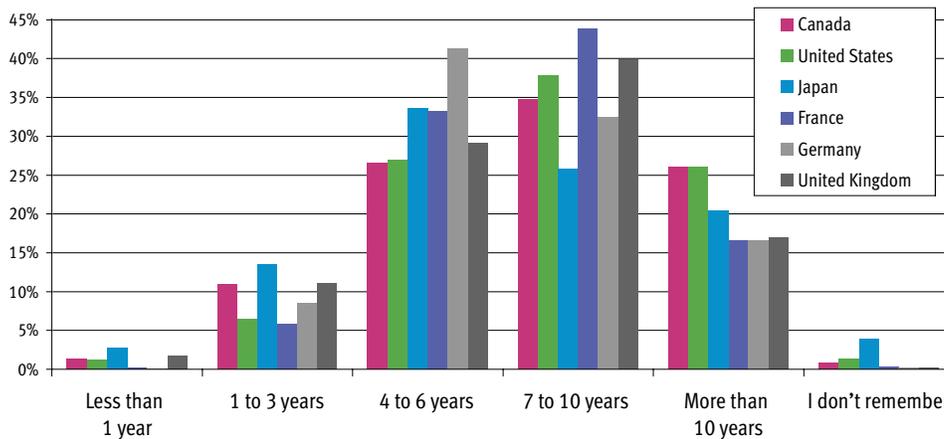


Source: *Sharing, Privacy and Trust in Our Networked World*, OCLC, 2007, question 525.

Tenure on the Internet was generally consistent among respondents across all countries surveyed. Eighty percent (80%) or more of respondents in each country have used the Internet for four years or more. The respondents in Canada and the U.S. represent the most experienced group of Internet users, with more than a quarter who have been online for more than 10 years.

Length of Time Using the Internet By Country

Thinking of your overall usage of the Internet, how many years would you estimate you have been using the Internet?

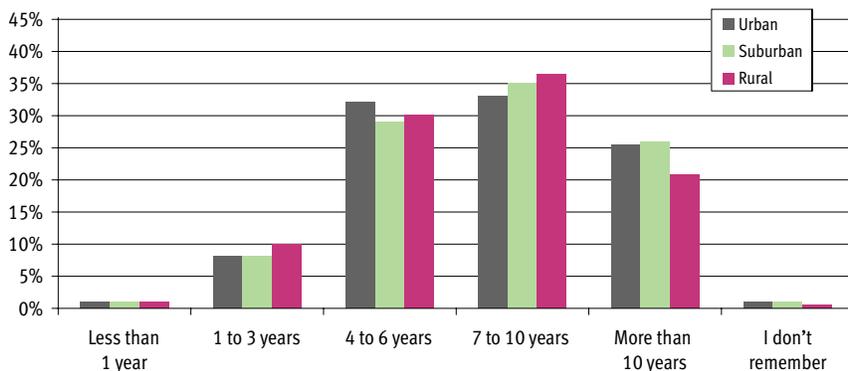


Source: *Sharing, Privacy and Trust in Our Networked World*, OCLC, 2007, question 525.

The results indicate that Internet tenure is not driven by just urban and suburban use. There is little difference in the Internet tenure among the general public respondents in urban, suburban and rural communities across the six countries surveyed. Over 50% of respondents in all communities have seven years or more experience. Slightly fewer respondents in rural communities report having been online for more than 10 years.

Length of Time Using the Internet By Community

Thinking of your overall usage of the Internet, how many years would you estimate you have been using the Internet?



Source: *Sharing, Privacy and Trust in Our Networked World*, OCLC, 2007, question 525.

Exploring Internet tenure by age of respondent provided interesting results, perhaps different than what might be expected. The most tenured group of Internet users surveyed are those age 50+. Nearly a third (30%) of the most senior Internet users have been online for more than a decade.

30%
of respondents
age 50+ have
been online for
more than a
decade.

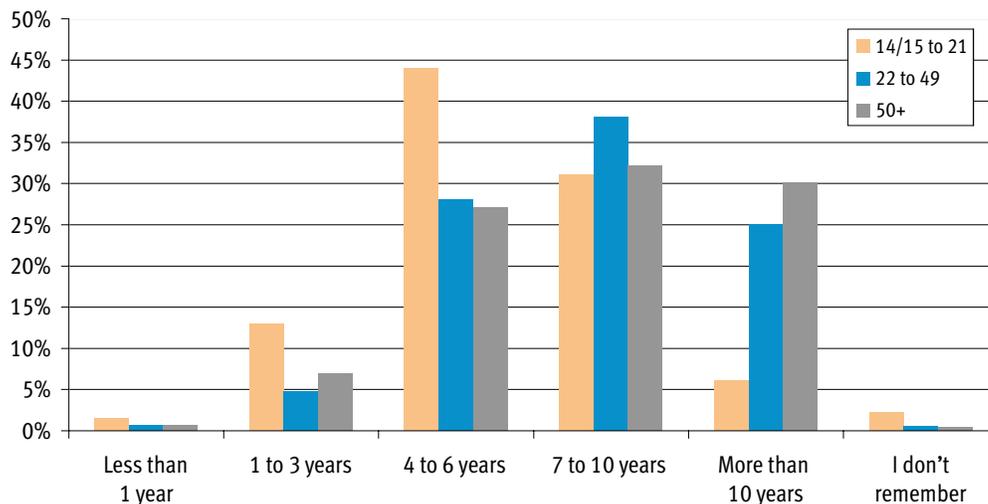
While a quarter (25%) of the general public respondents ages 22–49 have been online more than a decade, the vast majority of this age group (91%) have been online for four years or more, and nearly two-thirds have seven years or more years of experience.

The youngest respondents surveyed (ages 14/15–21) are logically the least tenured Internet users, yet over 75% have also been online for four years or more. For many in this age category, this equates to living about a quarter of their lives online.

The data reveal the online population has very few novice Internet users; less than 3%, across all age groups and geographies surveyed, have been using the Internet less than a year.

Length of Time Using the Internet By Age

Thinking of your overall usage of the Internet, how many years would you estimate you have been using the Internet?



Source: *Sharing, Privacy and Trust in Our Networked World*, OCLC, 2007, question 525.

Today’s Internet users are experienced users, who are becoming increasingly familiar and comfortable on the Web. The Internet is not used only by the technologically savvy, the youth or the urban population. And as tenure and familiarity grow, life online is beginning to take a new shape.

Life on the Internet

Searching for information, banking/investing, purchasing items, e-mailing and instant messaging are now standard online activities conducted by more than half of the total general public surveyed. Life online is moving beyond browsing and searching to interacting, creating, collaborating and community.

Life online incorporates a wide variety of activities. We asked respondents to indicate which of 18 online activities they have performed in the last 12 months. These activities were grouped into three categories: **Browsing/purchasing, Interacting** and **Creating**.

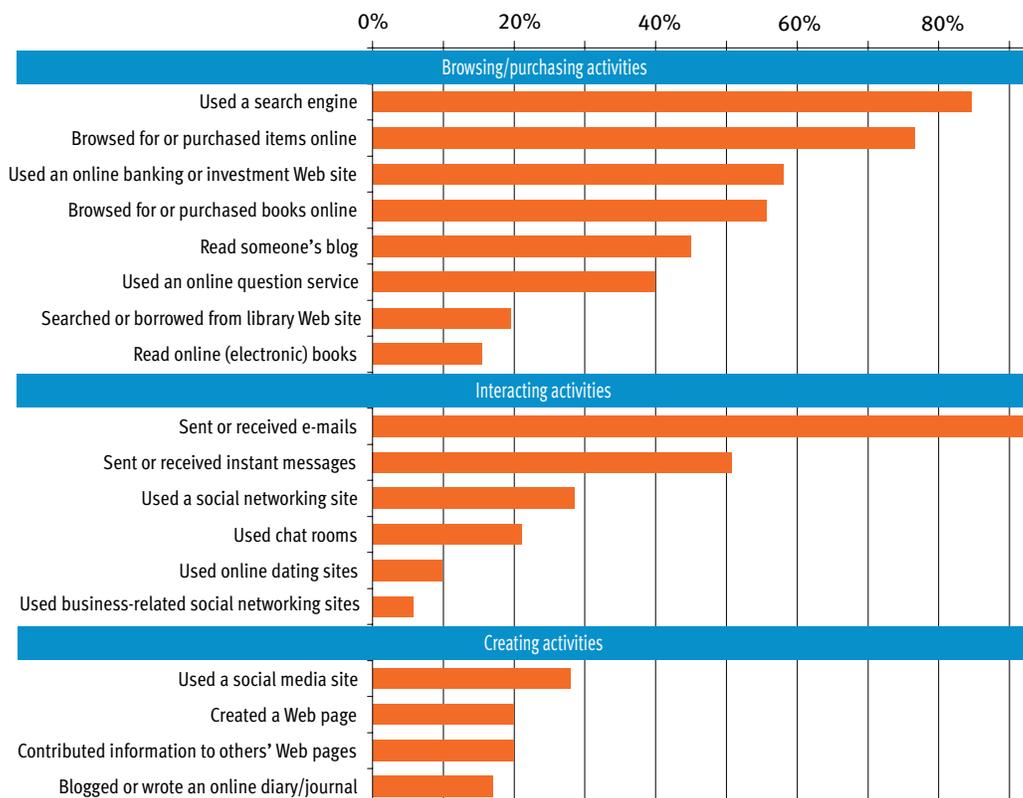
Browsing/purchasing activities: Activities considered as emerging several years ago, such as online banking, have been used by more than half of the total general public respondents. Over 40% of respondents have read someone's blog, while the majority have browsed for information and used e-commerce sites in the last year, a substantial increase in activity as seen in 2005. While commercial and searching activities have surged in the past two years, the use of the library Web site has declined from our 2005 study.

Interacting activities: The majority of the respondents have sent or received an e-mail and over half have sent or received an instant message. Twenty percent (20%) or more of respondents have participated in social networking and used chat rooms.

Creating activities: Twenty percent (20%) or more of respondents have used a social media site and have created and/or contributed to others' Web pages; 17% have blogged or written an online diary/journal.

Online Activities By Total General Public

What types of online activities have you done or participated in during the last 12 months? Please select all that apply.



Source: *Sharing, Privacy and Trust in Our Networked World*, OCLC, 2007, question 530.

While usage among general public respondents across all countries surveyed was generally consistent, there were also some interesting differences.

The Japanese respondents showed the largest variation in online activity usage when compared to the other countries' respondents. Overall, Japanese respondents were least likely to have used most of the online activities evaluated, including e-mail and search engines, and significantly fewer have used library Web sites in the last 12 months, at 12%. Their online activity exceeded the other five countries' respondents in three of the four "creating categories": created a Web page, contributed to others' Web pages, and blogged or wrote an online diary/journal.

The general public respondents in the U.S. had the highest usage (37%) of only one online activity: social networking. Tied with France, the U.S. general public showed the lowest propensity to have created a Web page, at 18%.

The Canadian respondents reported the highest usage of a library Web site and the lowest usage of browsing for or purchasing books online.

31%
of respondents
age 50+ have
read blogs;

40%
have used
instant
messaging.

37%
of American
respondents
have used
a social
networking site,
the highest rate of any
country surveyed.

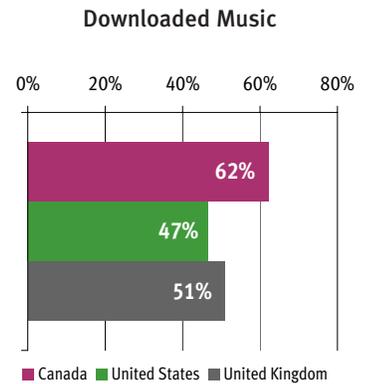
Our Digital Lives

The German respondents were more likely to have used chat rooms and online question services, and to have browsed for or purchased books online, while significantly less likely to have read a blog. German and French respondents were among the least likely to have used a social networking site during the last 12 months, at 13% and 10%, respectively.

Most respondents have not used an online dating service; overall usage was less than 10%. The highest usage of online dating sites was among the French general public, at 17%.

The French and the Canadian general public respondents were the most likely to have sent or received instant messages. The lowest level of use of social networking and social media sites was among the French general public at 10% and 19%, respectively.

The U.K. general public respondents reported the highest levels of e-mail and search engine use. They also had the greatest propensity to have browsed for or purchased items online and used online banking/investment sites.



Source: *Sharing, Privacy and Trust in Our Networked World*, OCLC, 2007, question 1220. This question was directed to the Harris HPOL only, so respondents in Japan, France and Germany were not asked.

26%
*of Japanese respondents have
contributed to others' Web pages,
the highest rate of any country surveyed.*

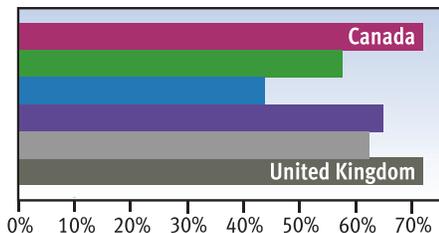
69%
*have used
search engines,
th lowest of any country.*

Online Activities—Country Highlights

What types of online activities have you done or participated in during the last 12 months? Please select all that apply.

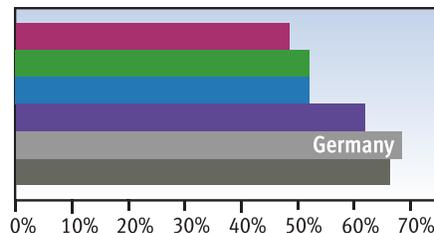
Canada United States Japan France Germany United Kingdom

Online banking



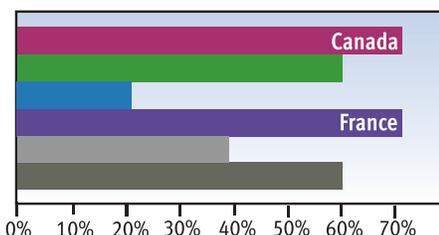
The U.K. (72%) and Canadian (71%) general public respondents were most likely to have used online banking or investment services. (Total=58%)

Browsed for or purchased books



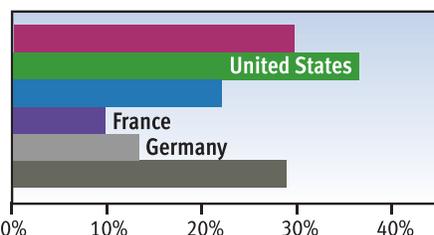
The German general public were the most likely to have browsed for or purchased books online (69%). (Total=56%)

Sent or received instant messages



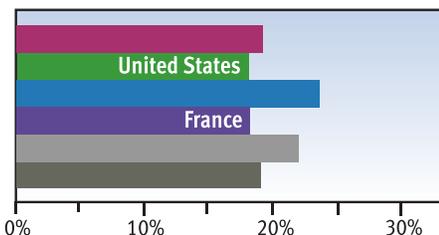
The Canadian and French respondents were the most likely to have sent or received an instant message, at 71% each. (Total=51%)

Used a social networking site



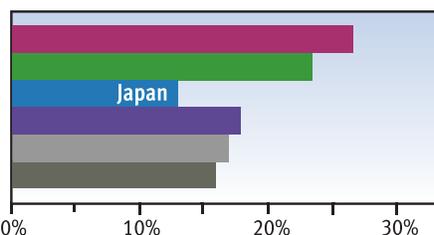
The American general public were most likely to have used a social networking site (37%); France (10%) and Germany (13%) were least likely. (Total=28%)

Created a Web page



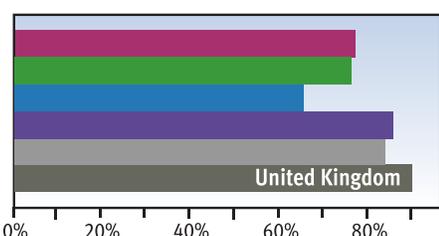
The general public respondents in the U.S. (18%) and France (18%) were the least likely to have created Web pages. (Total=20%)

Used a library Web site



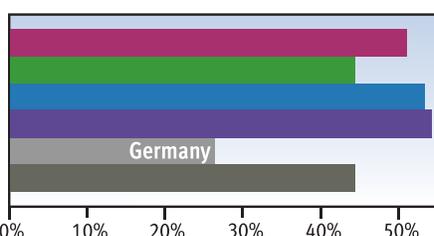
Japan's general public were significantly less likely to have borrowed items or searched on a library Web site (12%). (Total=20%)

Browsed for or purchased items online



The general public in the U.K. (90%) were most likely to have browsed for or purchased items online. (Total=77%)

Read someone's blog



The general public in Germany were significantly less likely to have read someone's blog (26%). (Total=45%)

Source: Sharing, Privacy and Trust in Our Networked World, OCLC, 2007, question 530.

34%

of U.K. respondents

used a social media site, the highest rate of any country surveyed.

71%

of French and Canadian respondents have

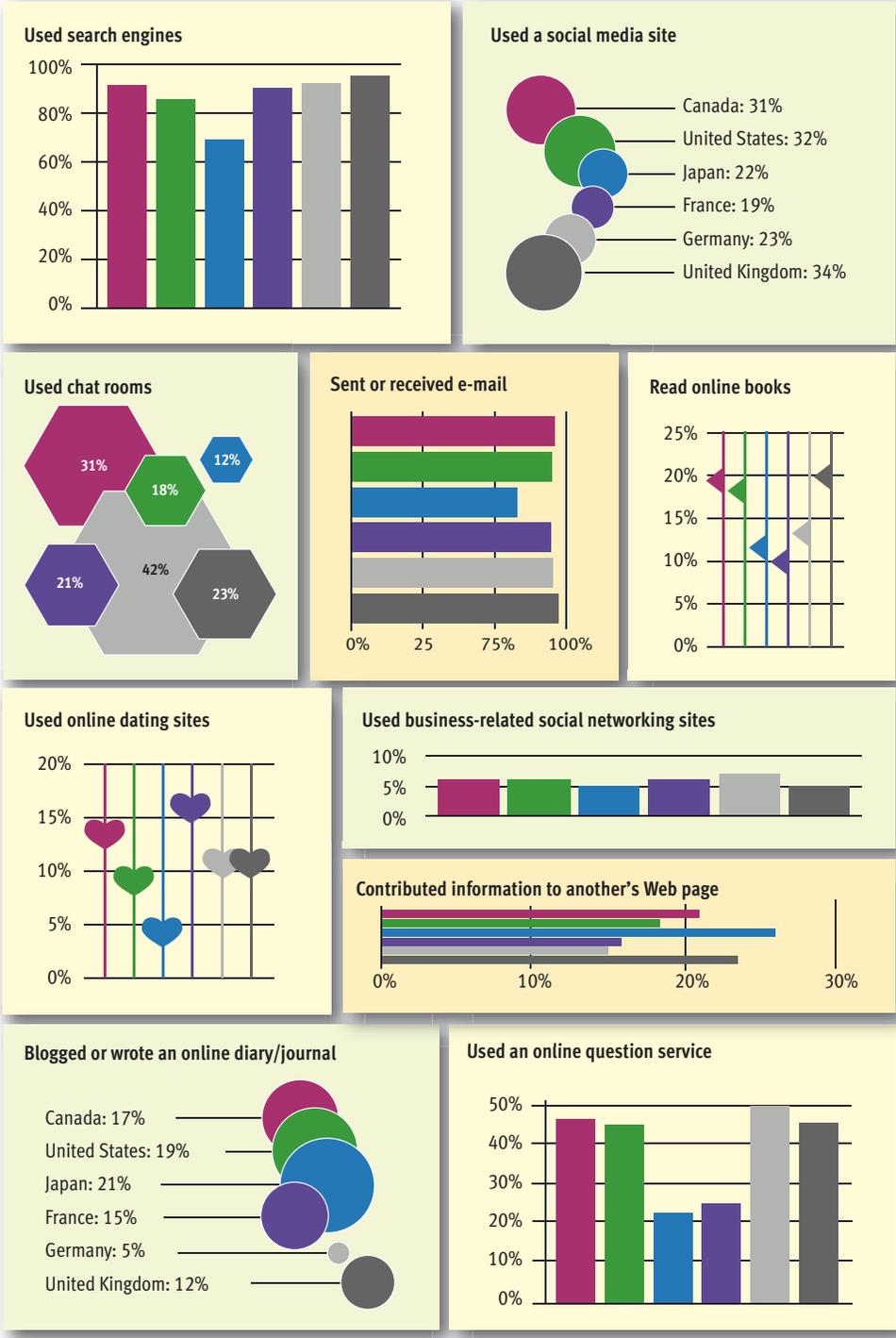
sent or received instant messages.

Online Activities

By Country

What types of online activities have you done or participated in during the last 12 months? Please select all that apply.

■ Canada ■ United States ■ Japan ■ France ■ Germany ■ United Kingdom



German respondents were most likely to have used chat rooms and least likely to have blogged.

At 27%, Canadian respondents reported the highest use of a library Web site.

Source: Sharing, Privacy and Trust in Our Networked World, OCLC, 2007, question 530.

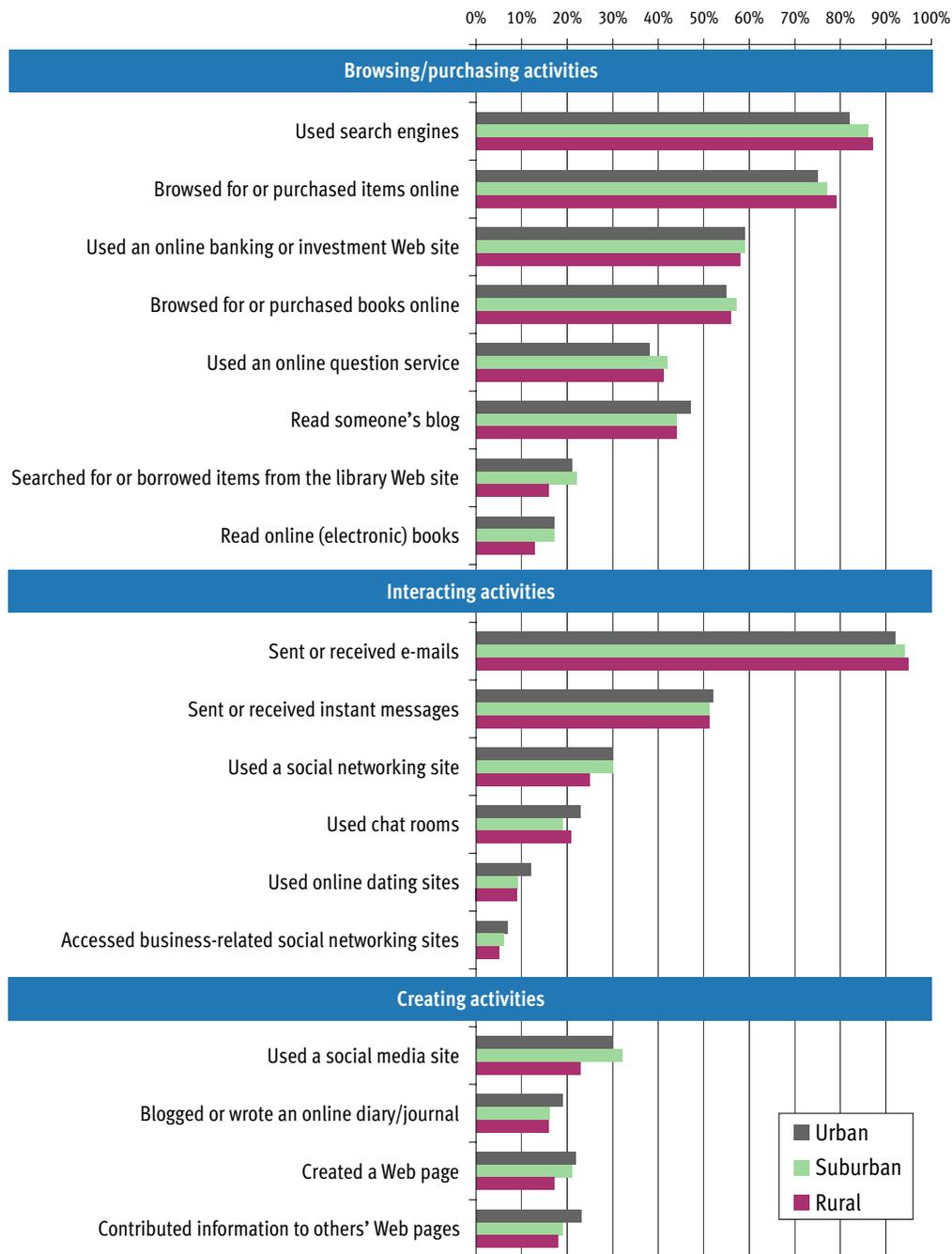
When comparing online activity by geographic community, we saw remarkable consistency among the general public respondents across the urban, suburban and rural online population.

Online Activities

By Community

What types of online activities have you done or participated in during the last 12 months? Please select all that apply.

Usage of online activities is remarkably similar by the general public respondents across urban, suburban and rural communities.



Source: *Sharing, Privacy and Trust in Our Networked World*, OCLC, 2007, question 530.

Online activities can no longer be characterized by just searching or browsing. Usage is evolving to interacting, and quickly to creating and sharing content. In the first years of the Internet, posting online content was done by a Webmaster. Creating a Web page required a certain knowledge of complex technological concepts and tools. Services today have made it possible for almost any Internet user to post a blog entry or to build a Web page or engage in a social networking community; the composition of online activities is changing.

Creating Web Pages

The top reason for creating a Web page is to communicate with friends and family.

It is estimated that there are over 22 billion Web pages on the Internet today. And more and more, these Web pages are being built by end users and their primary motives are not commercial, but communication.

To communicate with friends and family (37%) is the top reason among the total general public for creating a Web page. To write a blog and/or diary/journal (28%), to share photos (27%), to promote and sell products (21%) and to publish writing or music (19%) are also key motivations. Personal Web sites often combine aspects of social networking (to write diaries and share photos and music), social media (to share photos and music) and commercial (to promote or sell products) sites.

Respondents are sharing content using multiple avenues. Of the total general public surveyed who have used a social networking site (28%), 47% have also created a Web page.

20%
*of the total
general public
have created a
Web page.*

As we compare the general public respondents across the six countries surveyed, we see many similarities as well as some interesting variances as to why they created a Web page.

Half of the respondents in Canada and Germany created a Web page *to communicate with friends and family*, the highest rate among respondents in the countries surveyed. The Canadian respondents were also the most likely to have created a Web page *to share photos*.

Over half of the Japanese respondents (53%) created a Web page *to write a blog and/or diary/journal*, a rate significantly higher than the general public in the other countries surveyed.

The American, Canadian and German respondents were the most likely to have created a Web page *to promote or sell products*, at 26% each.

Reasons for Creating a Web Page By Country

Earlier you mentioned that you created a Web page(s)/site(s).
Why did you create the Web page(s)/site(s)?

Base: Respondents who have created a Web page/site.

	Total General Public	Canada	United States	Japan	France	Germany	United Kingdom
To communicate with friends and family	37%	50%	36%	28%	43%	51%	33%
To write a blog and/or diary/journal	28%	23%	21%	53%	25%	11%	23%
To share photos	27%	53%	31%	13%	44%	22%	30%
To promote and sell products	21%	26%	26%	11%	11%	26%	18%
To publish my own writing or music	19%	16%	15%	26%	19%	26%	14%
To share information about homework	7%	6%	10%	4%	5%	6%	5%
To share information about online games	7%	9%	3%	11%	17%	7%	5%
To share videos	6%	10%	8%	2%	11%	4%	8%

Source: *Sharing, Privacy and Trust in Our Networked World*, OCLC, 2007, question 820.

Our Digital Lives

Responses by age group highlight interesting motivational differences for creating Web pages. The general public ages 14/15–21 and age 50+ show the largest differences in motivations for creating a Web page.

To communicate with friends and family was the top reason cited by the 14/15–21 and 22–49-year-olds, at 41% and 36%, respectively.

The top reason cited among the 50+ age group was *to promote and sell products* (36%).

Thirty-nine percent (39%) of the 14/15–21-year-olds created a Web page *to write a blog and/or diary/journal*, a rate nearly three times that for age 50+ (14%).

To share photos was among the top three reasons for creating Web pages for each of the age groups surveyed. Nearly a quarter of the respondents surveyed ages 14/15–21 created a Web page *to publish their own writing or music*.

Reasons for Creating a Web Page

By Age

Earlier you mentioned that you created a Web page(s)/site(s).

Why did you create the Web page(s)/site(s)?

Base: Respondents who have created a Web page/site.

	Age 14/15 to 21	Age 22 to 49	Age 50+
To communicate with friends and family	41%	36%	34%
To write a blog and/or diary/journal	39%	26%	14%
To share photos	29%	29%	18%
To promote and sell products	3%	25%	36%
To publish my own writing or music	24%	17%	16%
To share information about homework	9%	7%	5%
To share information about online games	12%	6%	1%
To share videos	11%	5%	4%

Source: *Sharing, Privacy and Trust in Our Networked World*, OCLC, 2007, question 820.

Collaborating and sharing of content online is expanding from e-mail and instant messaging to include the creation of Web pages and other social sites.

Online Addresses

Most Internet users surveyed have multiple online addresses, at least one instant messaging account and between two and four e-mail accounts.

The individuals in the online community surveyed have multiple digital addresses. Approximately three-quarters of the total general public surveyed (72%) who have sent or received an e-mail have more than one e-mail address; most have between two and four and 12% have five or more. The general public respondents in France and Germany are more likely than those in the other countries surveyed to have five or more e-mail addresses.

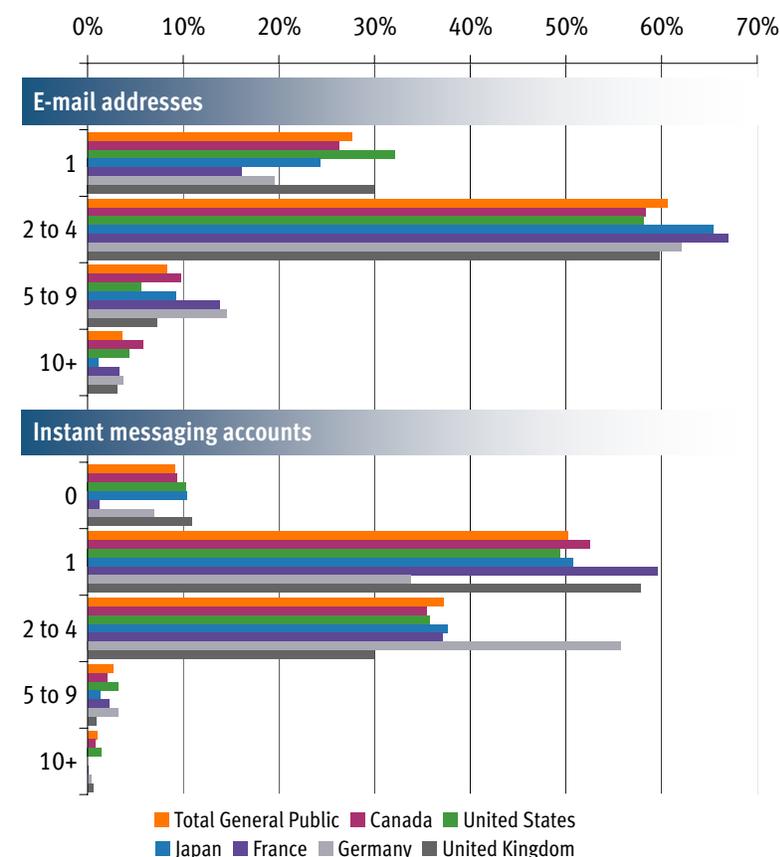
Half of the total general public who indicated they have sent or received an instant message have at least one instant messaging (IM) account. More than a third have multiple IM accounts. The German general public are significantly more likely to have more than one IM account.

Online Addresses

By Country

Most respondents have multiple e-mail accounts and at least one instant messaging account.

How many e-mail addresses do you have?
How many IM (instant messaging) accounts do you have?
Base: Respondents who have sent or received an e-mail and/or instant message.



Source: *Sharing, Privacy and Trust in Our Networked World*, OCLC, 2007, questions 535 and 540.

The more tenured the Internet user, the more likely he or she is to have multiple e-mail accounts. Over 60% of the general public surveyed who have used the Internet for four years or longer have two to four e-mail addresses; those who have been using the Internet for longer than 10 years are more likely to have five to nine e-mail accounts.

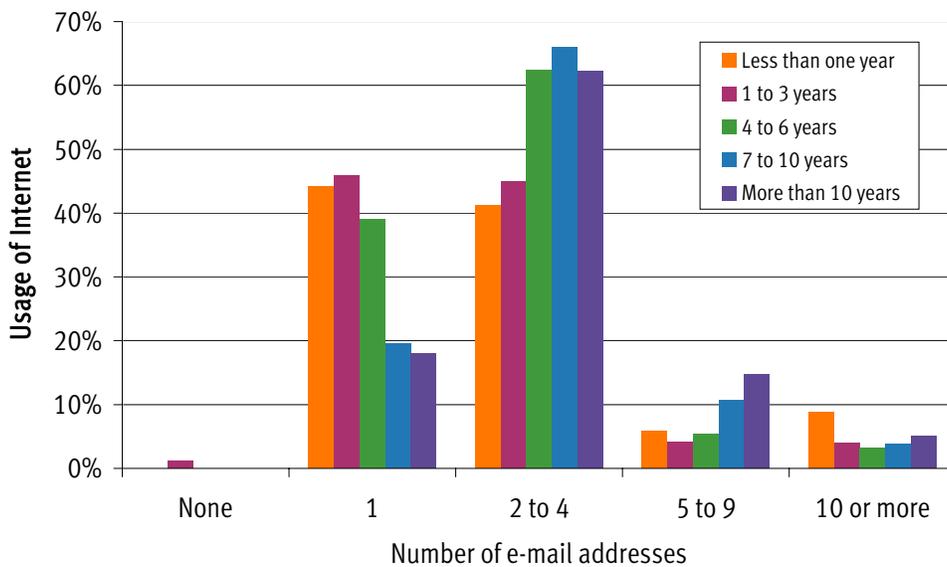
Number of E-Mail Accounts and Internet Tenure

By Total General Public

Thinking of your overall usage of the Internet, how many years would you estimate you have been using the Internet?

How many e-mail addresses do you have?

Base: Respondents who have sent or received an e-mail.



Source: *Sharing, Privacy and Trust in Our Networked World*, OCLC, 2007, questions 525 and 535.

Cell Phone Usage

The majority of the general public surveyed have cell phones and more than three-quarters use them for more than just talking.

For many, cell phones have become as important a digital communication and content transmission device as the personal computer. According to the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), the ownership of cell phones is strong in all countries represented in our study, and in some instances has approached or exceeded one cell phone per user.

Our survey data on the online population show similar usage rates. Eighty-nine percent (89%) of the general public surveyed have cell phones. The German general public have the highest penetration of cell phone ownership, at 96%, and Canadian respondents have the lowest, at 78%, which is significantly less.

More than three-quarters of the general public respondents use their cell phones for more than just placing calls. Over half are “texting,” using text messaging services, and over a third use their phones *to take or send photos*. About a quarter of all respondents have *downloaded or used ringtones*.

While the ownership of cell phones is high among the total general public respondents in all six countries surveyed, those in Japan are significantly more likely to use multiple services available on their cell phones. The Japanese general public use their cell phones for many of the services that were once considered the domain of the personal computer, including *text messaging* (68%), *sending e-mails* (55%), *searching the Internet* (40%) and *recording or downloading music* (20%). As noted earlier in this report, while the Japanese general public were less likely to have participated in several of the online activities evaluated, they are using the cell phone for some of the same digital services.

15%

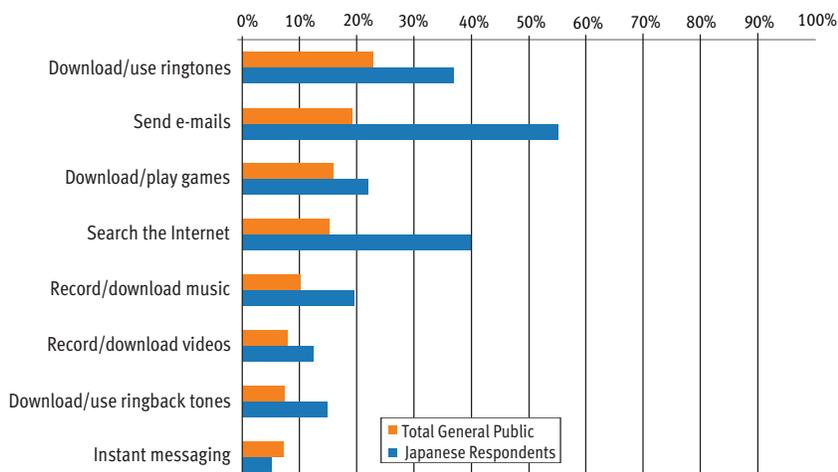
of the total general public use cell phones to search the Internet.

40%

of Japanese respondents use cell phones to search the Internet.

Cell Phone Feature Usage

Which of the following functions/features do you use on your cell phone? Please select all that apply.



Source: *Sharing, Privacy and Trust in Our Networked World*, OCLC, 2007, question 945.

The American and Canadian respondents report the lowest use of cell phone features and are the most likely to use their cell phones *only to make and receive calls*.

Text messaging on cell phones is highest among the U.K. and German respondents, at 78% and 73%, respectively.

Cell Phone Use

By Country

Which of the following functions/features do you use on your cell phone?
Please select all that apply.



Source: *Sharing, Privacy and Trust in Our Networked World*, OCLC, 2007, question 945.

Reading—Print and Online

The general public respondents have read more in the last year. Twenty-eight percent (28%) of the total general public spend over 10 hours per week reading online and/or print materials. Thirty-five percent (35%) read 11 or more books per year.

While it is evident respondents are spending time online and engaging in many activities on the Web, they are still reading. Whether online or in print format, respondents read and indicate that they are reading more.

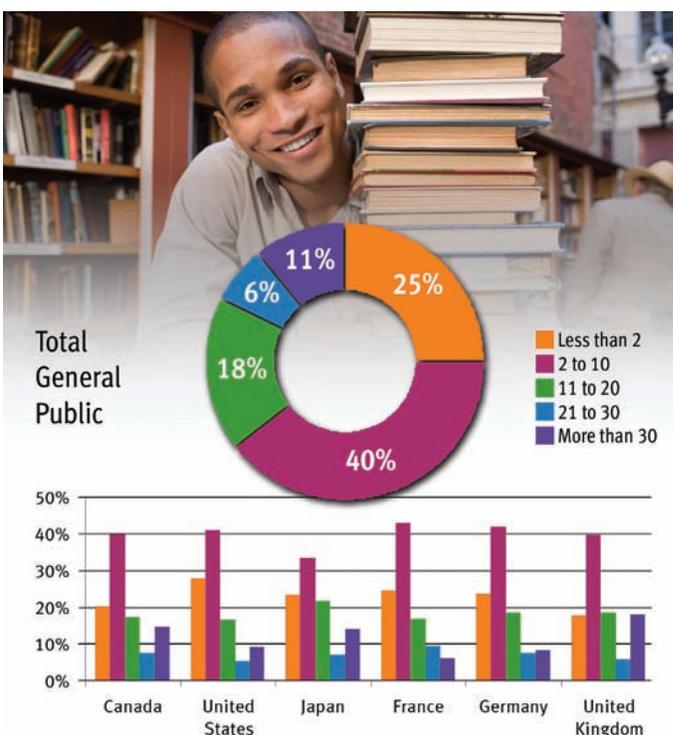
U.S. reading rates have increased in the past 50 years. A 27-month study conducted by the Social Science Research Council in 1948 found that about half (48%) of the U.S. population indicated that they read no books per year. Another 18% read just one to four books per year. Our 2007 survey results show increased reading levels among respondents in the U.S. Forty-one percent (41%) read two to ten books a year.

Forty-three percent (43%) of Japanese respondents have read 11 or more books during the past 12 months, tied with the U.K. as the highest rate among respondents across the countries surveyed. Thirty-one percent (31%) of the U.S. general public surveyed have read 11 or more books in the past 12 months.

Number of Books Read Annually

By Country

Approximately how many books have you read or listened to in the past 12 months (e.g., print books, electronic books, electronic audiobooks, books on tape, etc.)?



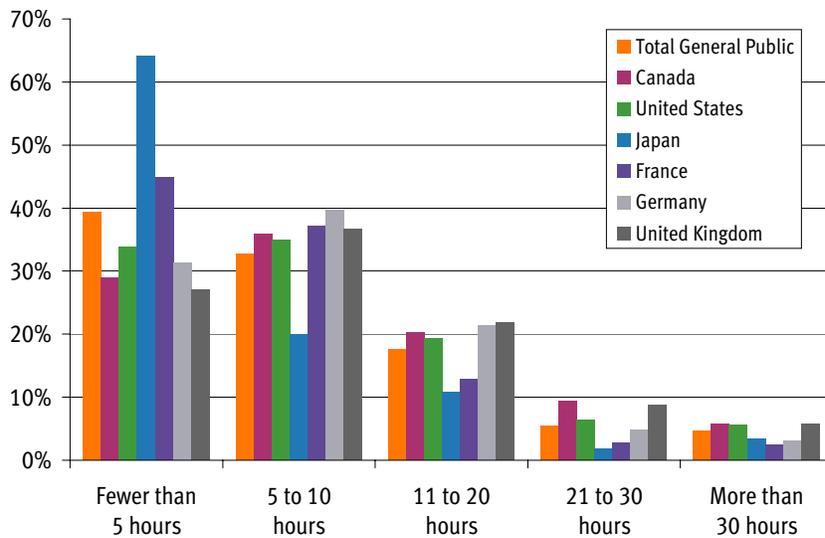
Source: *Sharing, Privacy and Trust in Our Networked World*, OCLC, 2007, question 510.

Respondents are reading books, magazines and digital content on the Web. More than a quarter of the total general public surveyed (28%) read 11 or more hours a week.

More than a third of the general public in Canada and the U.K. read 11 or more hours per week, the highest rates among respondents in the countries surveyed. The majority of the general public in Japan and France spend 10 hours or less a week reading, the lowest rates among respondents in the countries surveyed.

Time Spent Reading Per Week By Country

Overall, how much time do you estimate you spend reading on a weekly basis (including books, magazines, online Web sites, blogs, etc.)?



Source: *Sharing, Privacy and Trust in Our Networked World*, OCLC, 2007, question 515.

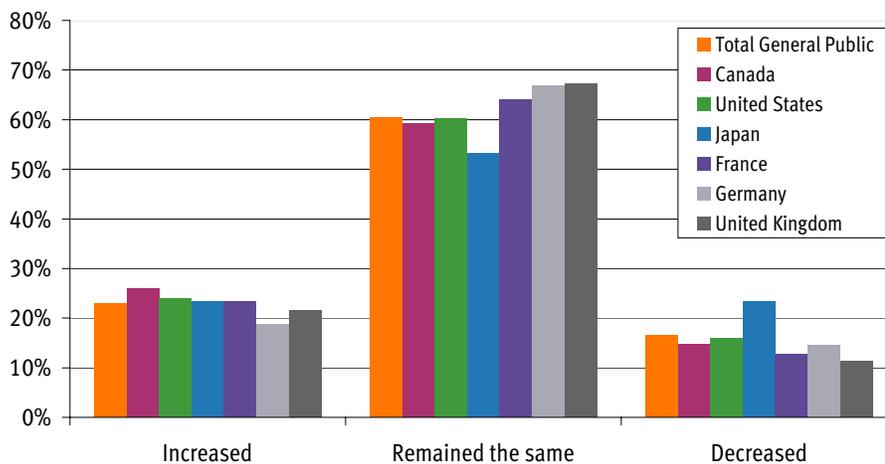
The general public are reading more compared to a year ago. Approximately a quarter of the total general public surveyed reported the time they have spent reading, in any format, print or digital, has increased in the last 12 months. This increase was fairly consistent across all countries, with more general public in Canada reporting an increase in reading (26%), and the respondents in Germany reporting the lowest increase, at 19%.

In no country did the general public report larger decreases in reading than increases; only Japanese respondents reported no growth in reading.

The online population surveyed are reading more.

Change in Reading By Country

During the last 12 months, has the amount you have read in any format increased, decreased or remained the same?

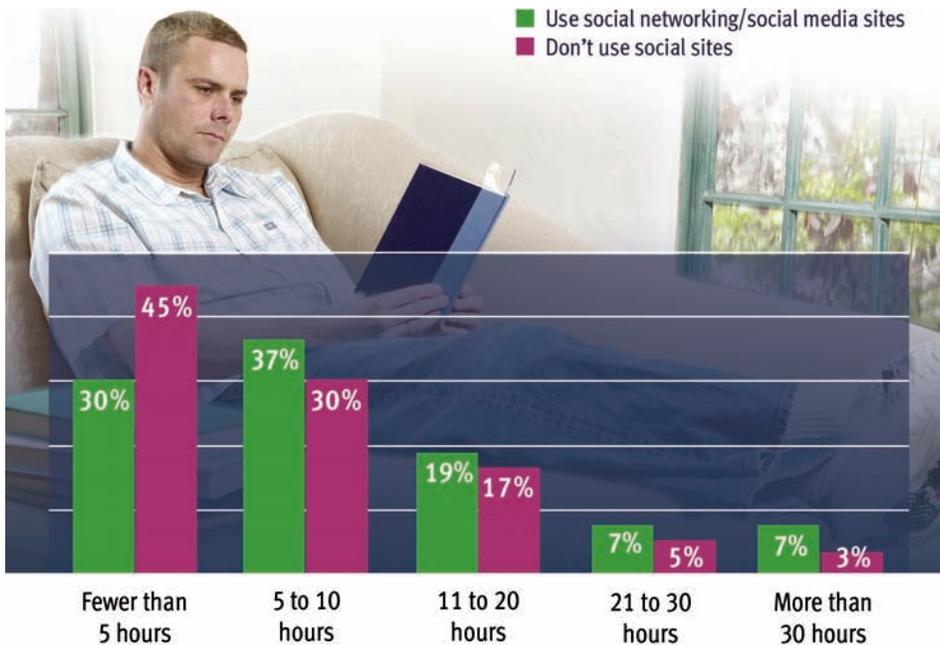


Source: *Sharing, Privacy and Trust in Our Networked World*, OCLC, 2007, question 520.

Our results also show those who use social sites spend more time reading than non-social site users. Nearly seventy percent of the general public who use social sites read five hours or more per week compared to 55% of the general public who do not use these sites.

Time Spent Reading By Total General Public

Overall, how much time do you estimate you spend reading on a weekly basis (including books, magazines, online Web sites, blogs, etc.)?



Source: *Sharing, Privacy and Trust in Our Networked World*, OCLC, 2007, question 515.

Summary

Respondents are participating in a variety of Internet activities: browsing/purchasing, interacting and creating content.

The majority are experienced Web users; most have been online for four years or more. The activities are expanding as they move from browsing to borrowing to creating Web content. These digital activities are largely PC-based today, but the use of cell phones for sharing and creating digital content is on the rise.

Respondents read and indicate that the amount they are reading has increased. Digital activities are not replacements for reading but perhaps increase the options for expanding communication and sharing content.