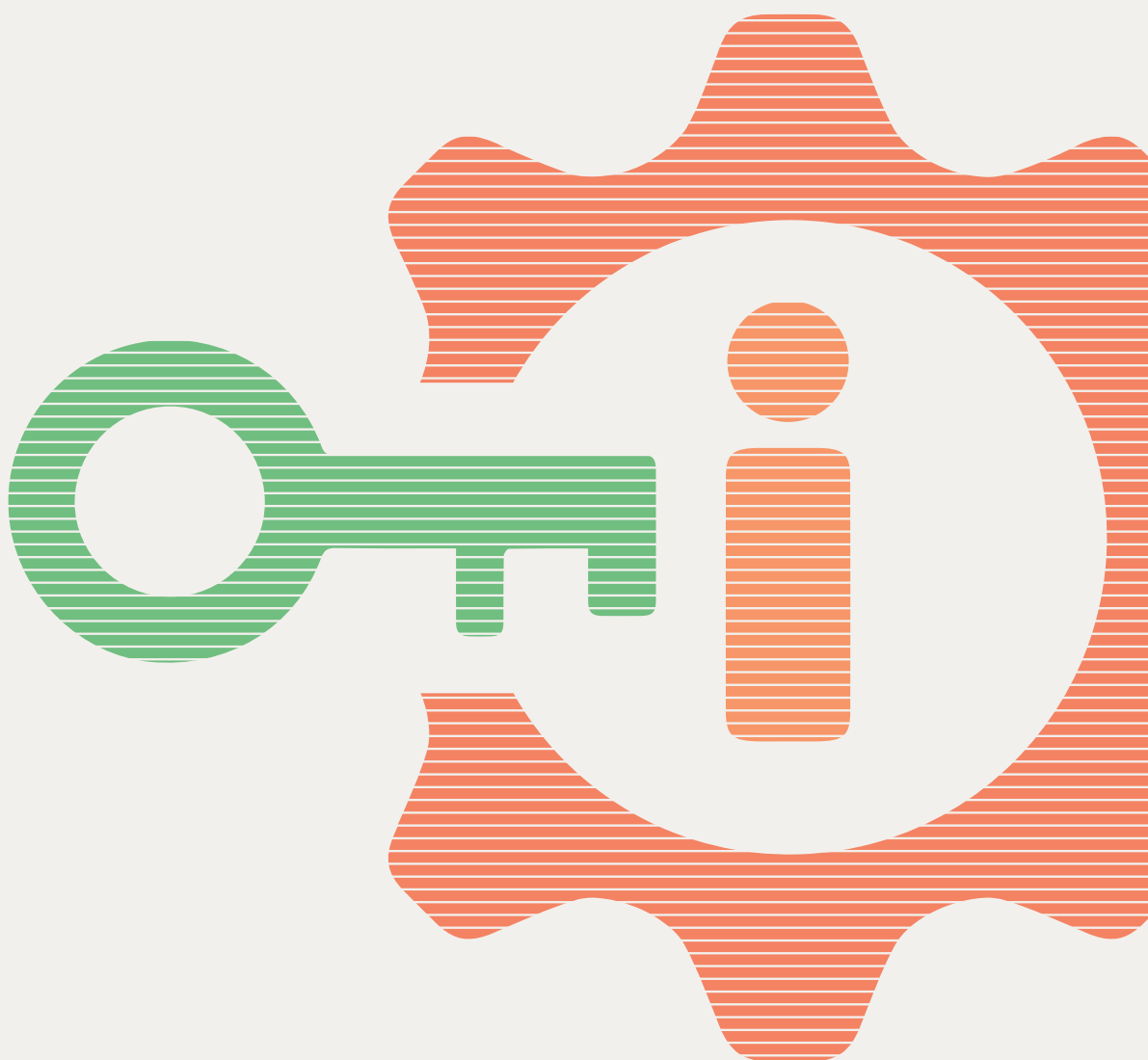


Development *and* Access to Information

2017

Fact Sheet



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UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON
Information School

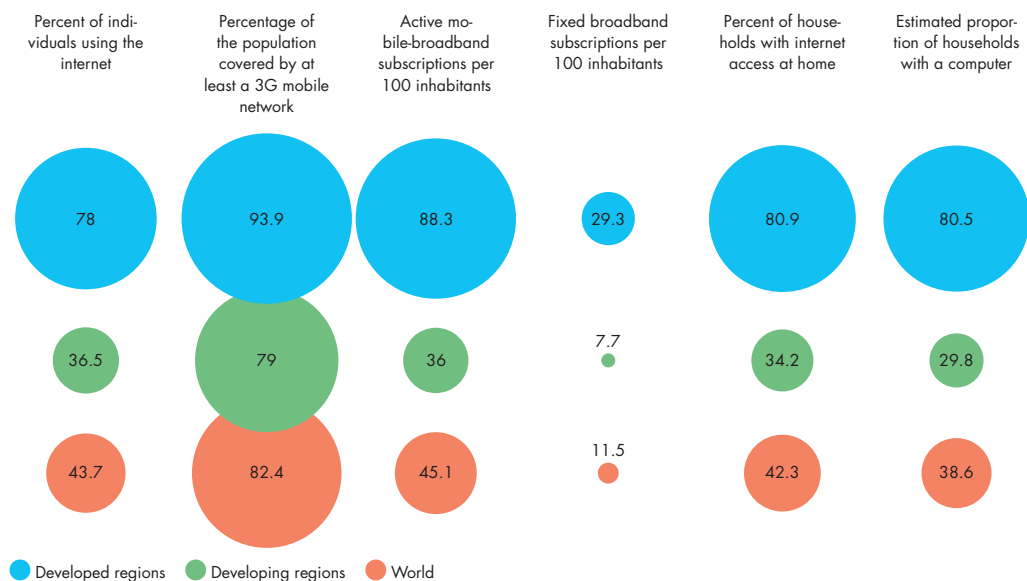
IFLA in partnership with the Technology & Social Change Group

Fact Sheet: *The State of Access to Information in 2017*

Access to information: The right and capacity to use, create, and share information in ways that are meaningful to each individual, community, or organization.

- Between **2010 and 2015**, the share of the world's population using the Internet rose from **30 percent to almost half** – over **3 billion people**. A majority of the **nearly 1.3 billion new users were connected** via mobile devices.
- All regions experienced some growth; **however, in Southern Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Southeast Asia, more than 70 percent of the population still remains offline. In Oceania, that number rises to 87 percent offline** – the highest percentage among all the regions.

Figure 1.1: Overall state of A2I infrastructure availability in 2015 worldwide



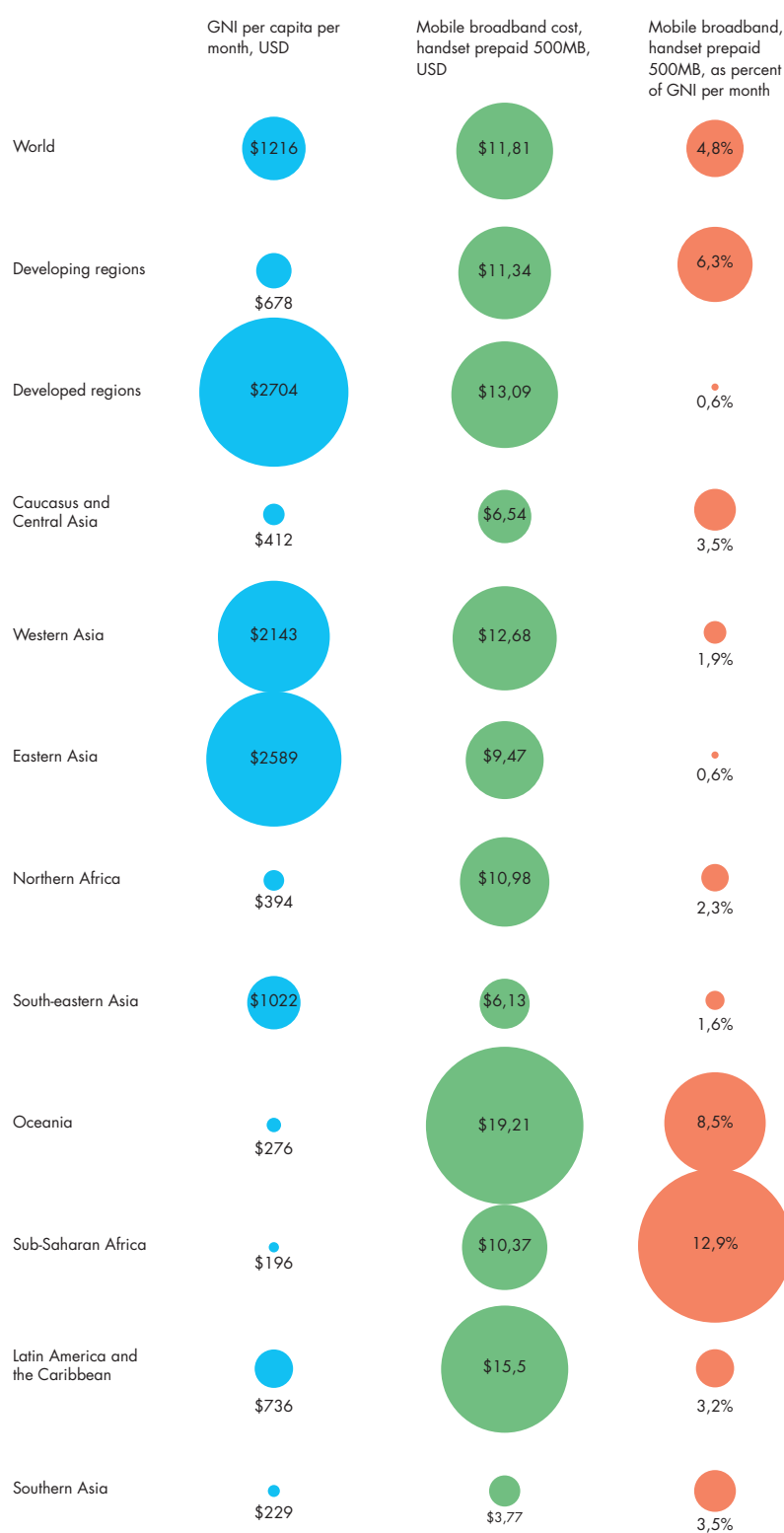
Source: ITU

Note: Data from 2015. Percentage of individuals using the internet (187 countries); fixed broadband subscriptions (196 countries); number of mobile subscriptions (189 countries); active mobile-broadband subscriptions (184 countries); percentage of population covered by at least 3G (166 countries); estimated proportion of households with a computer (185 countries); percentage of households with internet access at home (181 countries).

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- By 2016, over **80 percent of people lived in areas covered with at least a 3G network**.
- **Affordability of mobile services and devices remain a challenge.** Despite the network coverage, far fewer mobile broadband subscriptions were active in less-developed countries (36 per 100 inhabitants) than in more-developed countries (88 per 100 inhabitants). In Sub-Saharan Africa, mobile broadband costs almost 13 percent of monthly Gross National Income per capita, and in Oceania at 8.5 percent.

Figure 1.5: Mobile broadband costs as a percentage of monthly GNI.



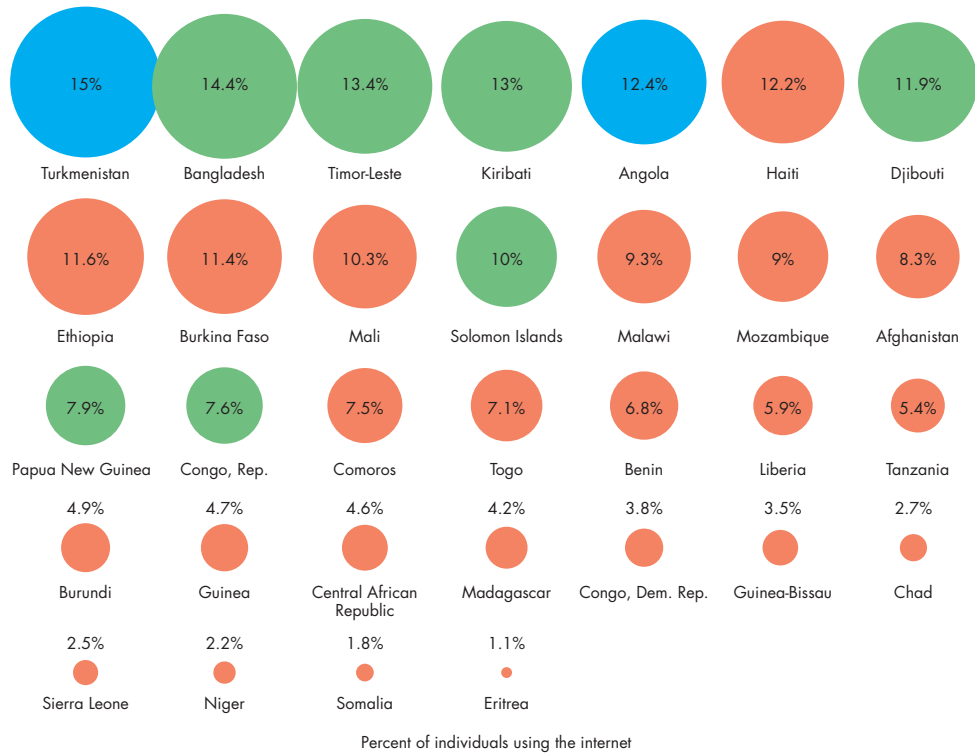
Source: ITU.

Note: 177 countries, data from 2015.

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- **Almost 40% of women in less-developed regions are now online compared to 80% in more developed regions.** The internet user gender gap is the widest in Africa (23%) followed by Arab States (20%)

Figure 1.12: Countries at the highest risk of not achieving the Connect 2020 target



● Low income ● Lower middle income ● Upper middle income

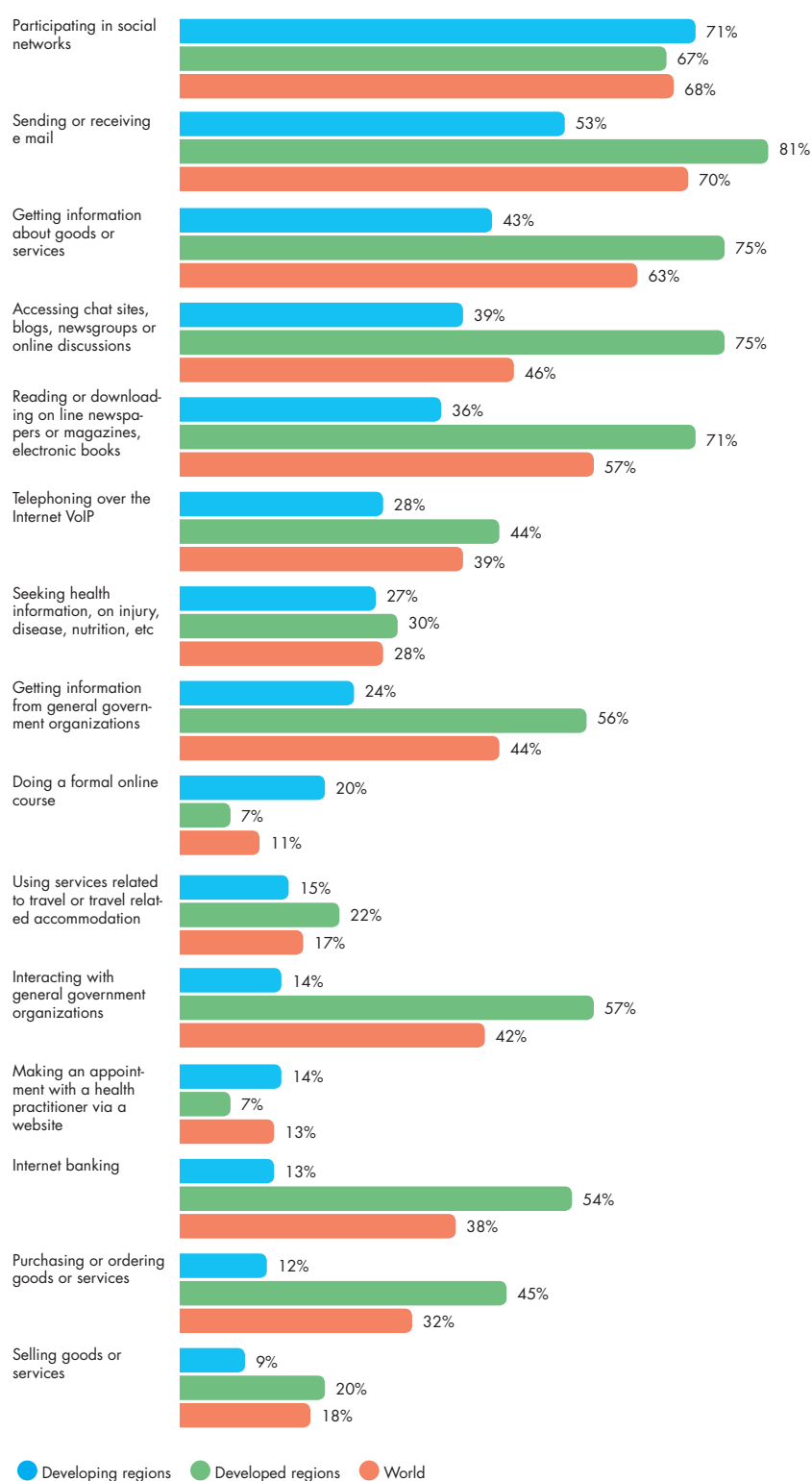
Source: ITU.

Note: 32 countries shown, data from 2015

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- **People in less-developed countries are using social networking sites more actively than people in developed ones** (71 percent compared to 67 percent).
- **People in less-developed countries use the internet for online courses more actively than people in more-developed countries.** Twenty percent of people in less-developed countries reported taking an online course compared to only 7 percent in more-developed ones.
- **Only 39 percent of people in less-developed countries use the internet to access blogs, forums, or discussion sites and to read or download news or books,** compared with 75 percent in more-developed countries.

Figure 1.14: ICT activities by type of activity



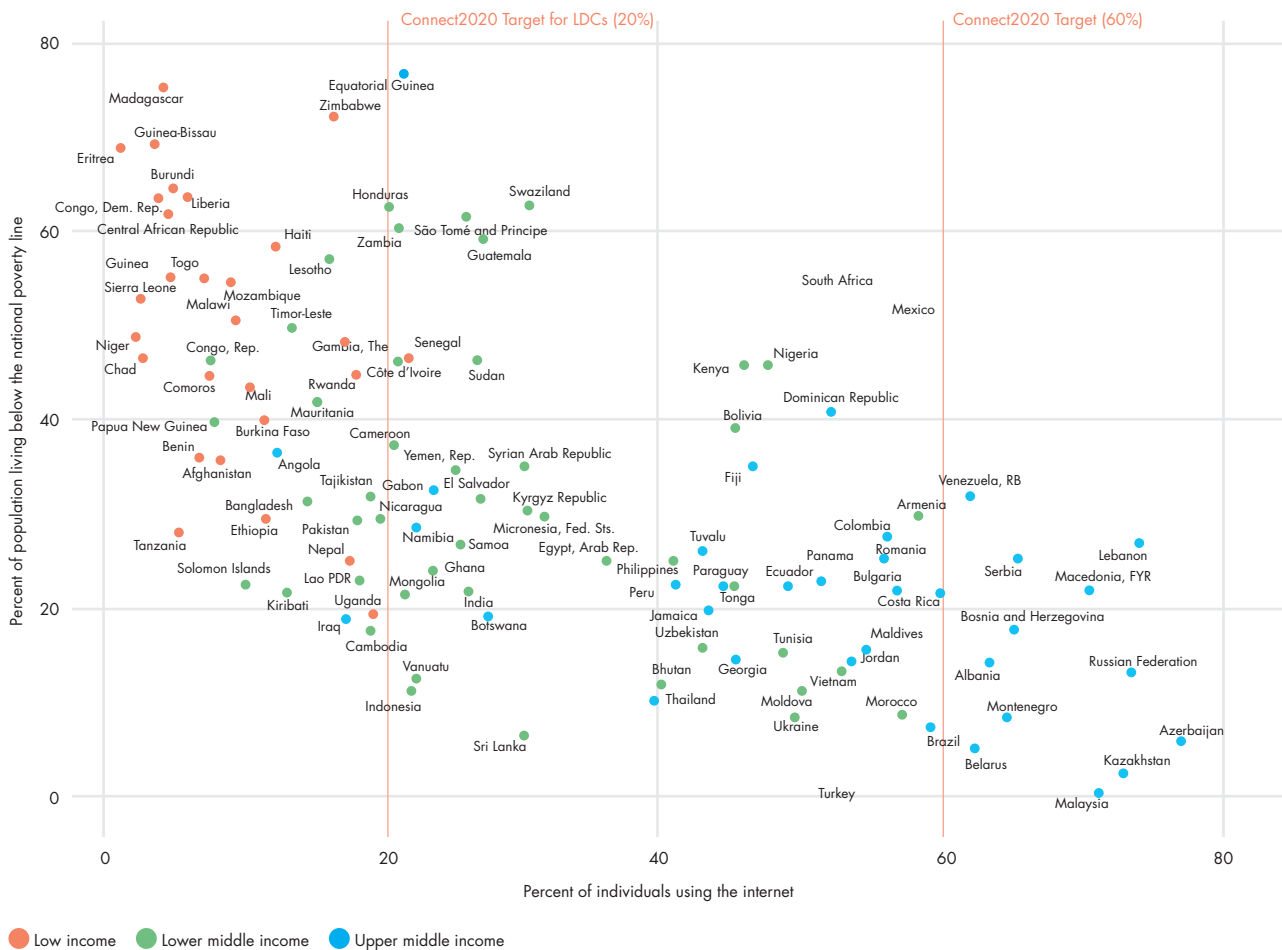
Source: ITU.

Note: 61 countries. Regional averages not representative of the world, but illustrate that large gaps exist.

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- **Poverty and economic standing significantly affect people's ability to use information meaningfully.** At the same time, access does offer an avenue for reducing poverty and creating economic opportunity, though what people can do with this access is still bounded by structural inequalities.

Figure 1.16: Percentage of people using the internet vs. percentage living below the national poverty line.



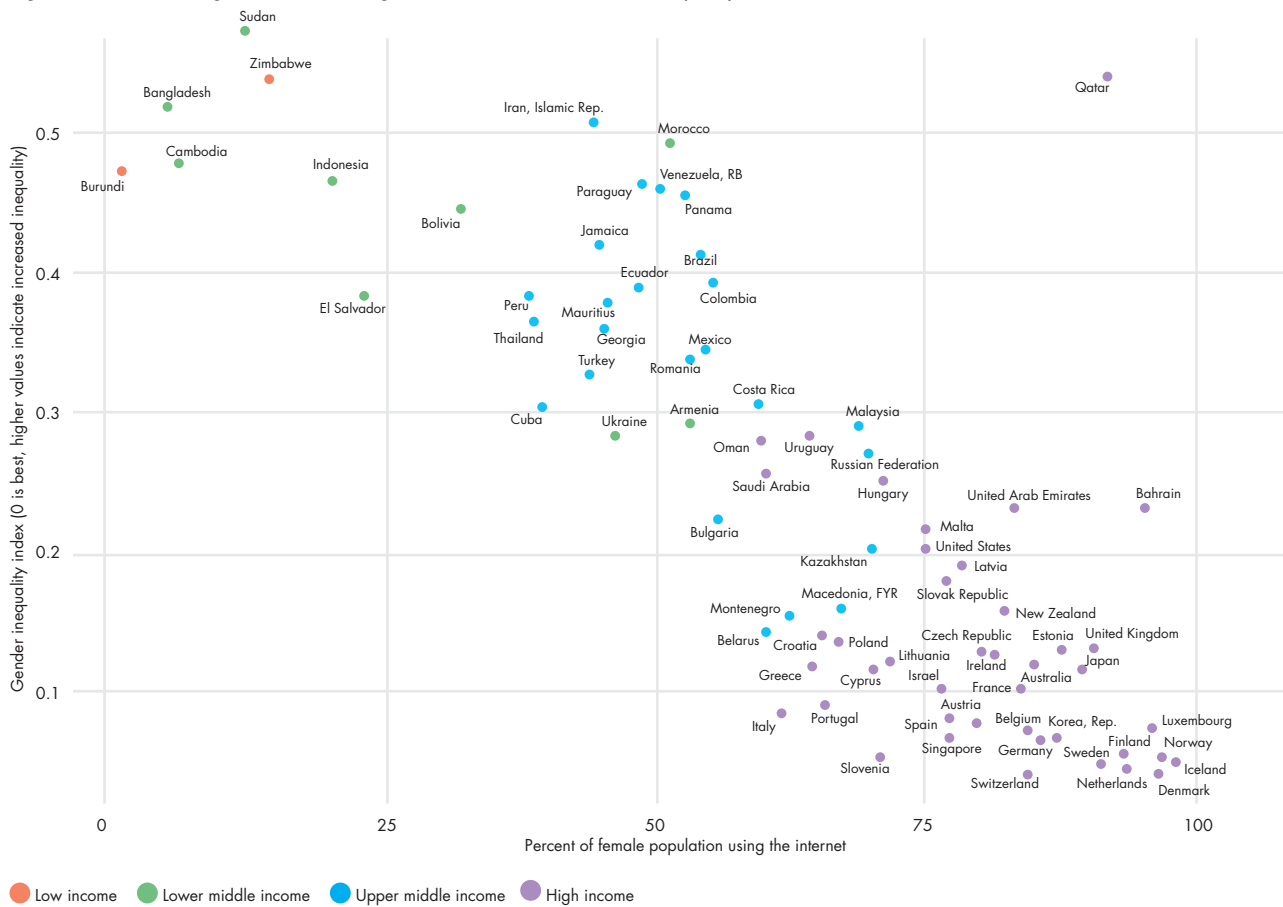
Sources: ITU (percentage using the internet), UN (percentage living below the national poverty line), World Bank (income groups).

Note: 113 countries (graph excludes high-income countries); data from 2015 for percentage using the internet, data from 1993-2015 for the percentage living below the national poverty line.

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- **Women need access to the internet and the resources that information and communication provide.** Access promotes economic self-sufficiency for women. It allows them to make informed decisions about their bodies, their health, and their families.
- **Gender inequality and low internet usage among women are most prevalent in the poorest countries.**

Figure 1.18: Percentage of females using the internet vs. the Gender Inequality Index



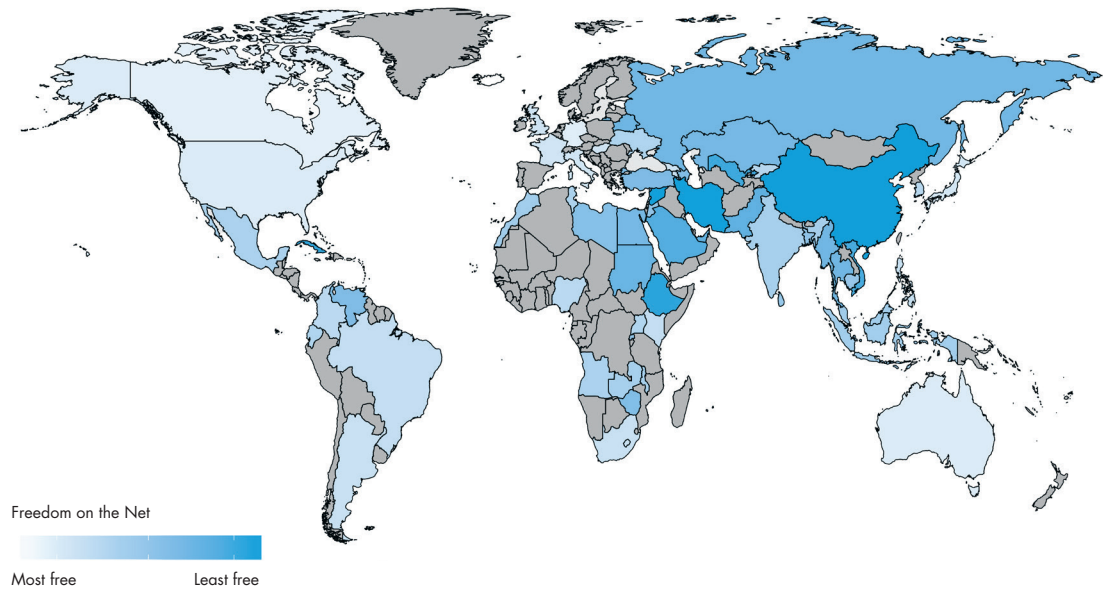
Sources: UN (Gender Inequality Index), ITU (percentage using the internet by gender)

Note: 78 countries, data from 2012-2015, depending on country.

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- **According to Freedom House (2016), internet freedoms have been declining for six years**, with Freedom of the Net scores falling in at least half of the countries monitored each year.
- The implications are significant: Freedom House estimates that, in the previous 12 months, **60 percent of internet users lived in countries where people were arrested or imprisoned for posting content on political, social, and religious issues; while 49 percent of users live in countries where people have been attacked or killed for their online activities.**

Figure 1.25: Freedom on the Net in the world in 2015



Source: Freedom House

Note: 65 countries, data from 2015

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Access to information can transform lives. It can help lift people out of poverty, promote gender equality, and create opportunities for youth. However, its transformative potential is bounded by local, social, political, and economic forces. While ICT infrastructure is key to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, the physical tools that provide access to information are not enough. To help create more just and equal societies, the access must be meaningful.

About the DA2I

Development and Access to Information (DA2I) is a joint project between the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) and the Technology & Social Change Group (TASCHA) at the University of Washington Information School. It demonstrates how access to information and libraries contribute to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

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IFLA
P.O. Box 95312
2509 CH Den Haag
Netherlands
www.ifla.org

Contact: DA2I@ifla.org
Website: DA2I.ifla.org