

Press Release

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Internet used mostly for data searching and for recreation

The majority of adult South Africans use the Internet to search for information while the number of those using it for chatting has grown the fastest. This is according to the 2013 *South Africa Survey*, published by the South African Institute of Race Relations (IRR) in Johannesburg recently.

The *Survey* is the annual yearbook on all social, economic, and political aspects of South Africa that the IRR has been publishing since 1946.

In 2012 the highest number of adults, at 8.8 million, used the Internet to search for information out of the 18 most popular internet activities listed. Emailing, instant messaging, chatting, and social networking had the next highest numbers of adult users at 6.6 million, 6.6 million, 6.5 million, and 6.4 million respectively.

The information was sourced by the IRR from Eighty20 data.

Other internet activities that had over a million adult users in 2012 included music downloads, games, banking, and reading news at 4.5 million, 4.4 million, 2.7 million, and 1.9 million respectively.

Between 2007 and 2012 chatting grew from 487 000 adult internet users to 6.5 million, or by over 1 200%. Downloading podcasts, playing games, instant messaging, and dating made up the top five internet activities at growth rates of 1 015%, 949%, 887%, and 802% to 850 000, 4.4 million, 6.6 million, and 916 000 respectively.

‘The dominance of recreation activities on the Internet is consistent with findings that the majority of South Africans access the Internet on their mobile phones. Improved access to the Internet, as well lower unemployment figures, might see people using the Internet increasingly for professional activities than is currently the case,’ said Kerwin Lebone of the IRR research department.

Adults are defined as persons over the age of 16.

Ends
