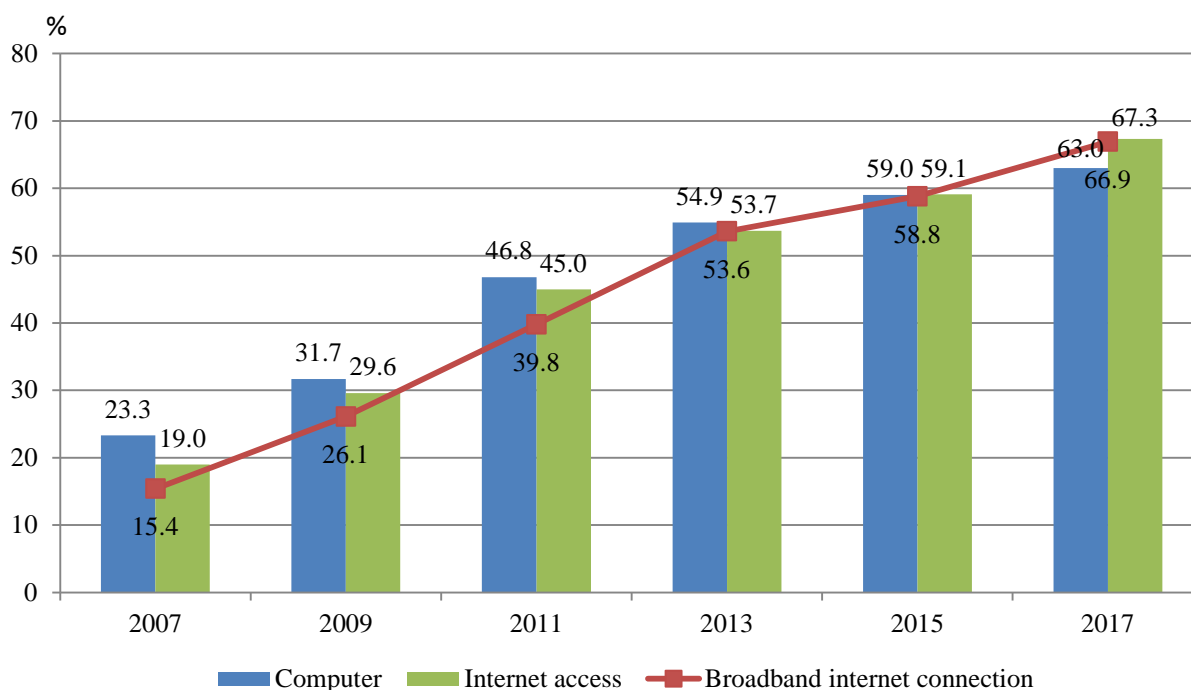




MAIN RESULTS OF THE SURVEY ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY IN HOUSEHOLDS IN 2017

The results of the 2017 survey on the usage of information and communication technologies (ICT) in households and by individuals showed that 67.3% of the households in Bulgaria had internet access¹ at home and 63.0% had a desktop computer, laptop or tablet at their disposal. 66.9% of the households were provided with fast and reliable broadband connection, which included fixed wired connection and internet connection through a mobile phone network (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Share of households with computer, internet access and broadband internet connection



In 2017, the highest relative share of households with internet access was found in the Yugozapaden and Yuzhen tsentralen region, respectively 70.5% and 70.4%. The households in the Yugoiztochen and Severozapaden region lagged behind the tendency within the country, as there 62.1% and 57.8% of the households had internet access at home.

Households with children used the global network more actively and 87.2% of them had internet access, compared to 62.0% of the households without children.

Despite the dynamic development of information technologies in Bulgaria, 32.2% of the households still do not have internet access at home. More than a half of them (53.6%) stated that the main reason was the lack of skills for working with internet, 48.8% believed that they did not need it (not useful, interesting, etc.) and according to 27.9% the equipment was expensive.

¹ Any internet-enabling device should be considered - desktop, laptop, netbook or tablet computers as well as smart phones, games consoles, smart TVs or e-book readers.



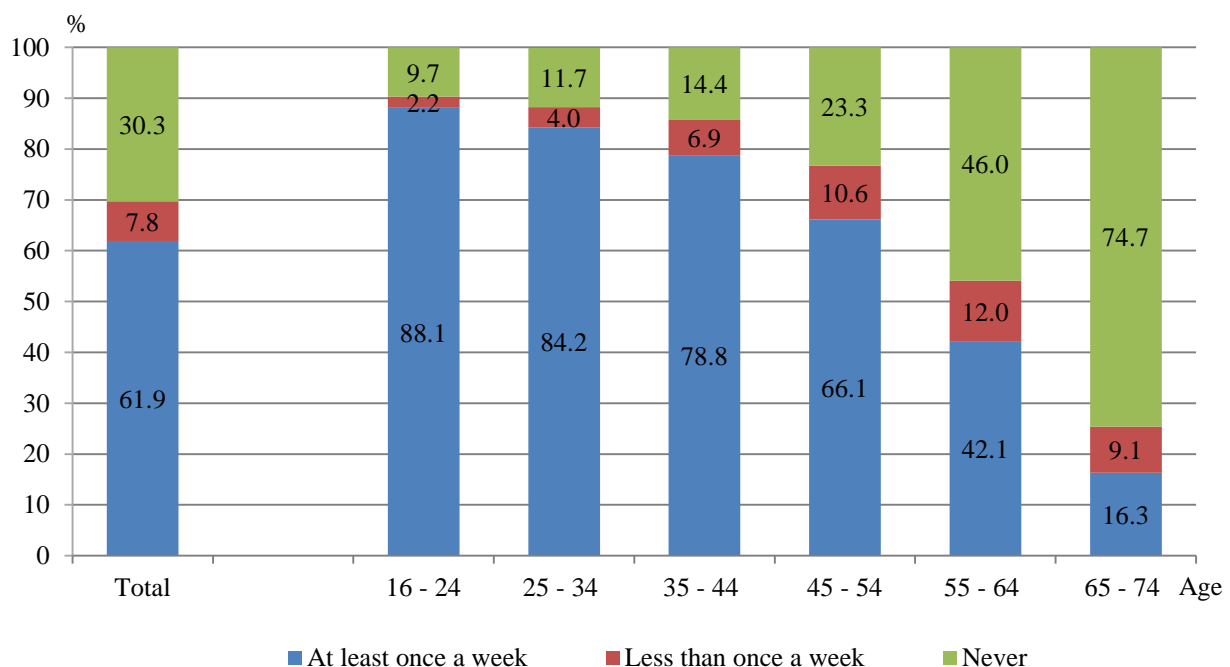
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ICT usage by individuals

In 2017, 58.8% of the individuals aged between 16 and 74 years used a computer¹ every day or at least once a week at home, at work or any other place. There is a stable trend of growth in the regular internet usage by individuals and 61.9% of them used the internet every day or at least once a week.

The most active ICT users were young people aged between 16 and 24 years, as respectively 82.8% and 88.1% of them used a computer or the internet every day or at least once a week. With age increasing, the desire and need of the persons to be present in the global network decreases and only 16.3% of the individuals aged between 65 and 74 years surf regularly and 15.7% used a computer in their daily routine (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Structure of internet usage by individuals by frequency and age in 2017



Males were more active in regular computer and internet usage in comparison to females. 59.7% of men used a computer, and 63% used the internet while the respective relative shares of the women were 58.0% and 60.8%.

There were significant differences in the regular use of computers and internet by education - while 89.8% of those with tertiary education used a computer in their daily activities regularly and 90.2% surf the global network regularly, only 27.7% and 32.0% of the individuals with basic or lower education benefited from the opportunities that computers and internet provide.

The employment situation also affected the activity of the individuals in the digital society. Computers were most often used by students (95.6%) and 97.8% of them surf regularly. Among employees and self-employed persons, the relative shares were respectively 76.3% and 79.6%.

¹ A computer is a desktop, laptop, netbook or tablet computer.

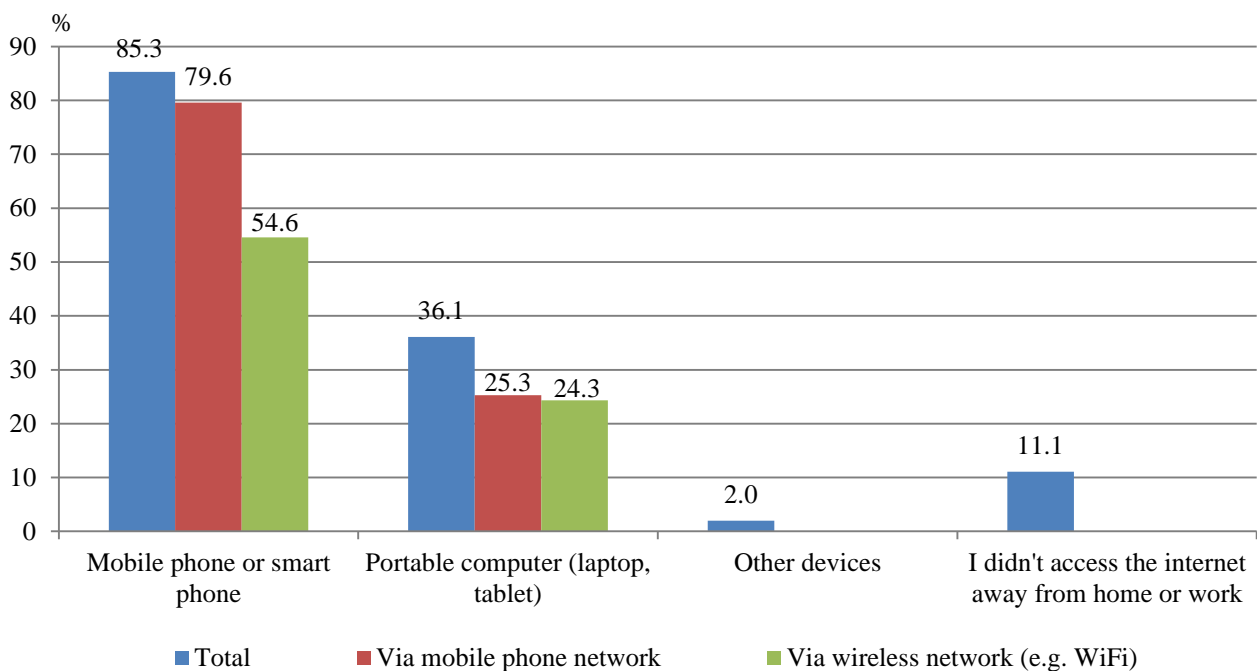


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Almost half of the unemployed regularly benefited from the opportunities provided by the internet (44.4%), and 41.0% used computers.

Most preferred device to access the internet away from home or work was the mobile phone used by 85.3% of the active internet users. 36.1% surfed the internet by a laptop or a tablet computer (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Relative share of individuals, who used mobile devices to access the internet away from home or work in the last three months by device and network in 2017

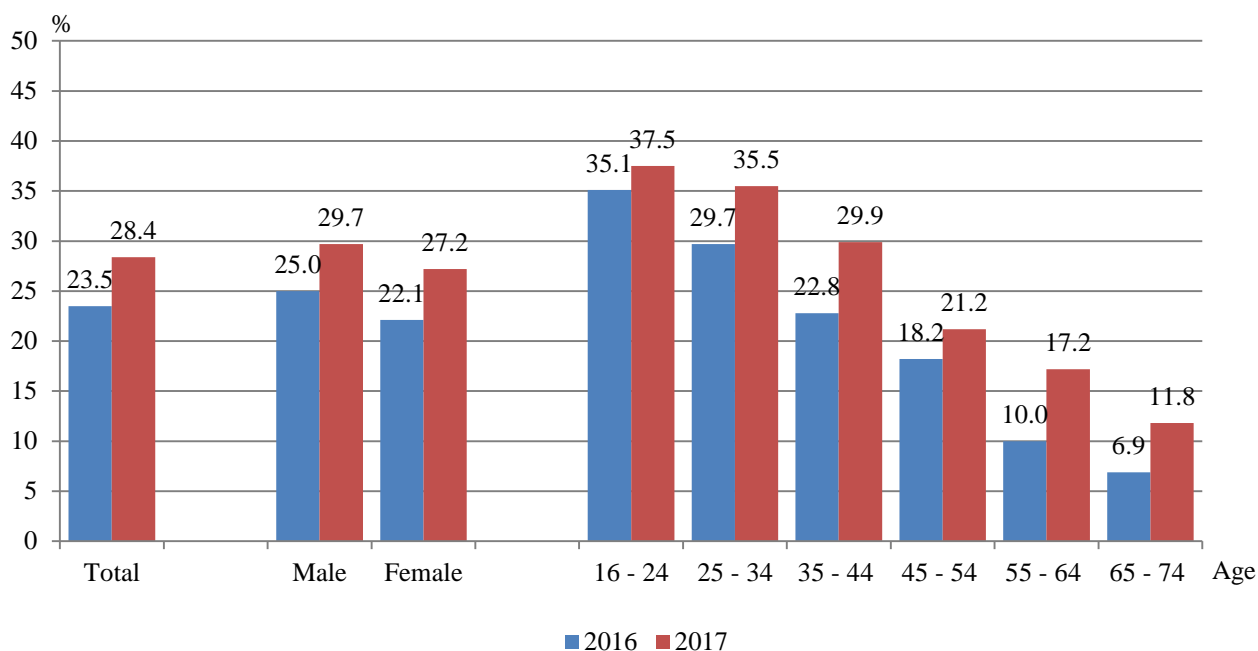


Regular internet users used the network mostly for communication. 97.4% of them carried out phone or video calls, participated in social networks, sent/received e-mails or shared self-created content (text, photos, music, videos) in a website. The most popular social network in Bulgaria was Facebook, as 38.5% of the regular internet users checked their account several times per day. 87.0% of the individuals used the internet to access information, read online newspapers, news, magazines, seek health related information or find information about goods or services. The relative shares of the persons who used the internet for civic and political participation (posting opinions on civic or political issues via websites, taking part in on-line consultations or voting) and for professional purposes (looking for a job or sending a job application, participating in professional networks) were equal - 13.0%.

Survey results showed that 28.4% of the regular internet users used storage space on the internet to store documents, photos, music, videos or other files. 29.7% of males and 27.2% of females used cloud services. The most active users of these services were the persons aged 16 to 24 years (37.5%), followed by those aged 25 to 34 years (35.5%). Only 11.8% of the individuals aged 65 and over used storage space on the internet (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Relative share of individuals, who used storage space on the internet in the last three months by sex and age



The occurrence of sharing economy was observed for the first time in the 2017 ICT usage survey. Sharing economy refers to the use and share of resources like accommodation (room, apartment, holiday cottage) and transport services (e.g. by car) between private individuals. The results showed that 12.1% of the individuals who used the internet in the last twelve months arranged an accommodation from another individual via dedicated platforms (websites or apps) like Airbnb or via social networks. The relative share of the individuals who benefited from shared travel offers was smaller - 3.9%.

Use of e-Government

In 2017, 20.7% of the individuals used the global network for interaction with the public administration. The most significant was the share of individuals who obtained information from public administration's websites (14.7%), followed by the share of individuals who downloaded official forms (10.4%) and those who submitted completed forms (8.3%) in the last twelve months.

Females were more active than males in the use of online services offered by the public administration - respectively 21.6% and 19.8%.

E-skills

In order to take advantage of the opportunities offered by information technologies and global network, users need to have appropriate digital knowledge and e-skills. The results of the survey showed that 44.3% of the individuals were able to copy or move files or folders, and 27.9% worked with word processing software. They were followed by the individuals who managed to install software or applications (19.9%), used spreadsheet software (16.4%) or created presentations (15.0%). Only 1.2% of the individuals stated that they wrote code in a programming language.

Electronic commerce (E-commerce)

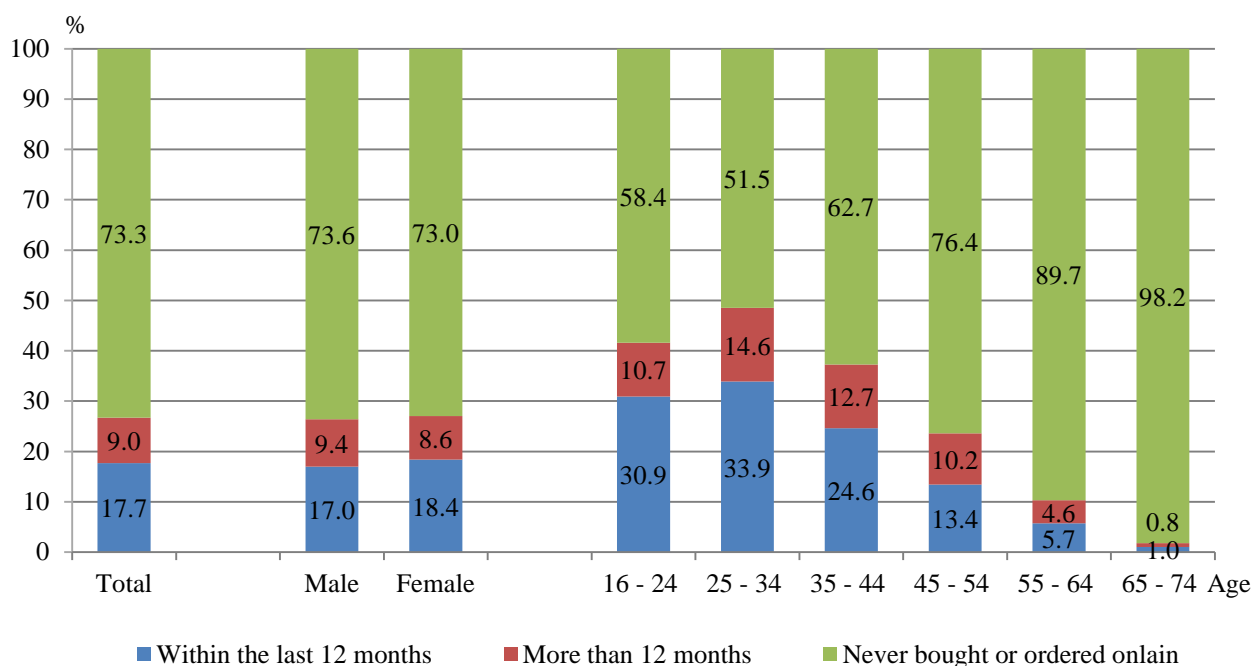


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In 2017, the share of individuals who bought or ordered goods or services for private use over the internet reached 17.7%¹. Most active in online shopping were individuals in age groups 16 - 24 and 25 - 34 years with relative shares respectively 30.9% and 33.9%, and only 1.0% of individuals aged 65 - 74 years purchased online. Females were more active in online shopping than men - respectively 18.4% and 17.0% (Figure 5). Clothes and sport goods were purchased most often online, as 73.3% of internet buyers purchased such goods, followed by orders of household goods (30.5%) and orders related to travel arrangements and accommodation (20.4%). Most goods and services were bought from sellers from Bulgaria (87.5%), but many people purchased from sellers from other European countries (34.6%) or from countries outside the EU - 16.2%. Mainly physical goods (85.7%)² and travel, accommodation or holiday arrangements (25.3%) were bought from abroad.

In the last three months before the survey most of the individuals purchased goods or services once or twice (62.8%) and the total amount of purchases was less than 200 BGN.

Figure 5. Structure of individuals who bought or ordered goods or services over the internet by sex and age in 2017



Despite the wide spread of digital technologies in our daily life, almost three quarters of the individuals have never purchased online. 75.0% of them preferred to shop in person, had loyalty to shops or just by force of habit. 15.5% lacked of skills or knowledge, and 10.9% had security or privacy concerns. Not a few individuals were concerned about receiving or returning goods and complaint (9.3%) or did not have a payment card allowing to pay over the internet - 8.2%.

¹ Relative share of the individuals aged between 16 and 74 years, who bought or ordered goods or services in the last twelve months.

² The relative shares were calculated on the basis of individuals who bought or ordered goods or services from other countries in the last twelve months.



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Methodological notes

The survey on Information Communication Technologies (ICT) usage in households and by individuals is a part of the European statistical programme and has been carried out in Bulgaria since 2004 according to the Regulation (EU) No. 808/2004. The main purpose of the survey was to obtain reliable and comparable data, which reflect the dissemination and usage of ICT at national and European level.

The statistical units are households and individuals. The population of households consists of all private households and their members in the age group of 16 to 74 years. In 2017, 4 194 randomly selected households and 9 271 individuals were surveyed. The survey was conducted by face-to-face interview, carried out by NSI staff. The questionnaire for 2017 comprised several modules which collect information about availability and use of internet in households and by individuals, social media, e-government, e-commerce, e-skills, sharing economy, as well as questions related to the socio-demographic characteristics of households and individuals.

Fixed broadband connection include DSL, ADSL, VDSL, LAN, cable modem CATV, optical fibre, satellite, public Wi-Fi connection, etc.

A **mobile broadband connection** means internet connection via mobile phone network (UMTS/HSPA+ - 3G, LTE - 4G), using SIM card or USB key, mobile phone or smart phone as modem.

More information and data from surveys on Information and Communications Technologies usage in households and by individuals can be found at the NSI's web site:

<http://www.nsi.bg/en/content/6096/ict-usage-households> and in Information System 'Infostat'.