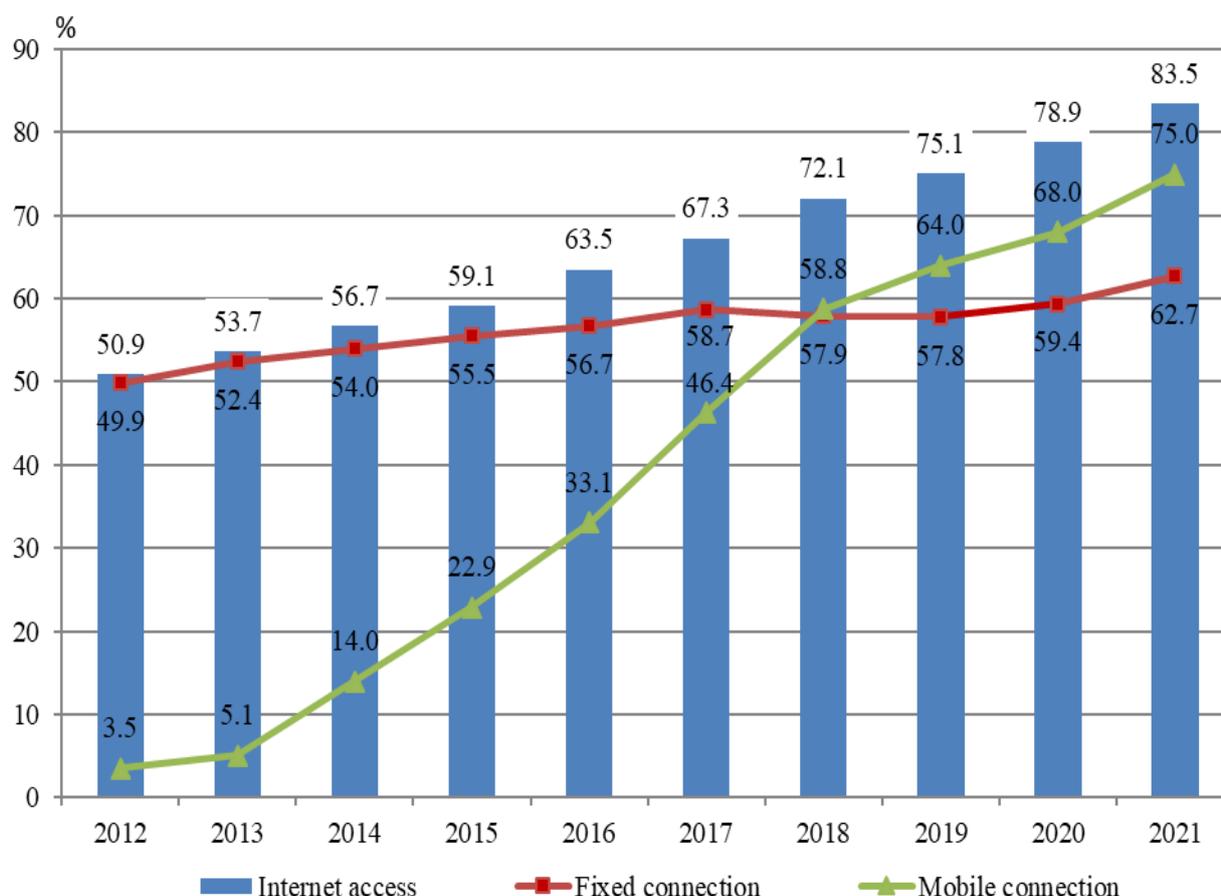


## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES USAGE IN HOUSEHOLDS AND BY INDIVIDUALS IN 2021

In 2021, 83.5% of the households in Bulgaria had internet access at home, which was by 4.6 percentage points more compared to the previous year. Mobile connection to the internet via mobile phone network used 75.0% of the households and 62.7% had a fixed wired connection.

**Figure 1. Share of households with internet access by type of connection**



In 2021, the highest relative share of households with internet access was found in Yugozapaden region (86.2%), while the lowest relative share was observed in Severozapaden region - 73.5%.

The relative share of the households resided in towns that had internet access was 87.4% and of those resided in villages - 71.5%. Households with children used the global network more actively as 96.7% of them had internet access, compared to 80.0% of the households without children.

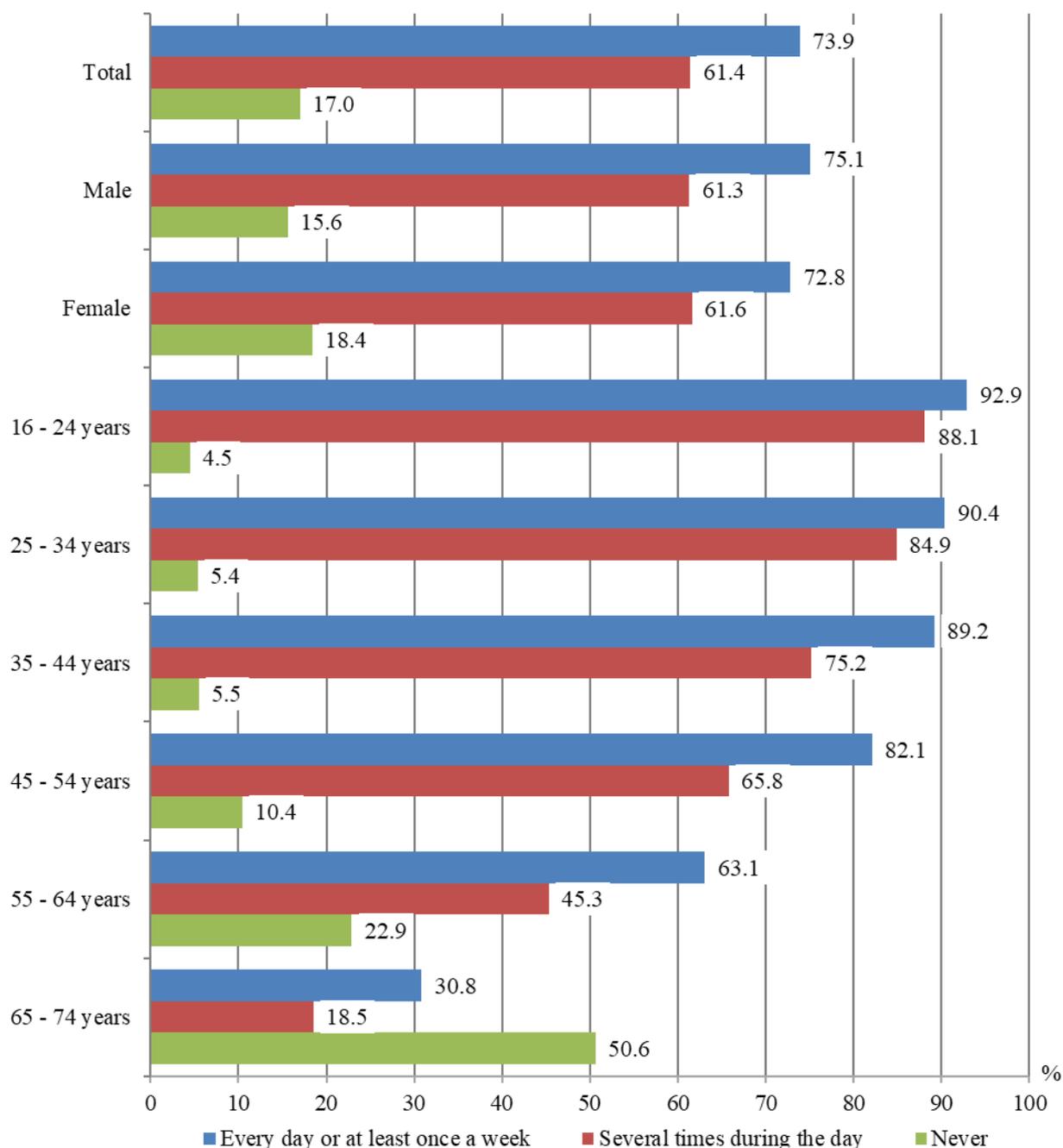
### Use of the internet

In 2021, 73.9% of the **individuals aged between 16 and 74 years** used the internet every day or at least once a week at home, at work or any other place and 61.4% took advantage of the

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resources of the global network several times during the day. The most active users of the internet were those with tertiary education (92.7%), as well as the young people aged between 16 and 24 years - 92.9%. Males used the internet more than females - respectively 75.1% and 72.8%.

**Figure 2. Frequency of internet usage by individuals by sex and age in 2021**



Most preferred device to access the internet was the mobile phone (incl. smartphone) which was used by 71.8% of the people, followed by:

- laptop - 30.7%;

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- desktop computer - 25.6%;
- tablet - 10.8%;
- other devices (smart TV, game console, e-book reader, smart watch) - 6.0%.

Individuals used the network mostly for communication as 63.4% of them carried out phone or video calls (using applications, e.g. Viber, WhatsApp, Skype, FaceTime, Messenger, Snapchat), and 60.0% participated in social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, etc.).

### 1. Share of individuals by purpose of internet usage and sex in 2021

(Per cent)

Purposes	Total	Male	Female
<b>Communication</b>			
Making calls (including video calls) over the internet	<b>63.4</b>	64.5	62.4
Participating in social networks	<b>60.0</b>	59.5	60.6
Using instant messaging, i.e. exchanging messages	<b>56.5</b>	56.7	56.3
Sending / receiving e-mails	<b>43.5</b>	43.6	43.5
<b>Access to information</b>			
Reading online news sites / newspapers / news magazines	<b>54.4</b>	55.9	52.9
Finding information about goods or services	<b>45.7</b>	45.3	46.2
Seeking health-related information	<b>36.0</b>	29.5	42.3
<b>Civic and political participation</b>			
Expressing opinions on civic or political issues on websites or in social media	<b>15.1</b>	15.4	14.9
Taking part in online consultations or voting to define civic or political issues	<b>4.0</b>	4.0	4.0
<b>Professional life</b>			
Looking for a job or sending a job application	<b>6.7</b>	6.8	6.5
<b>Other on-line services</b>			
Internet banking (including mobile banking)	<b>14.9</b>	14.7	15.0
Selling of goods or services via a website or app	<b>6.2</b>	7.2	5.2

### Use of e-government

In the last 12 months, 26.6% of the individuals used the global network for interaction with the public and local authorities, in order to:

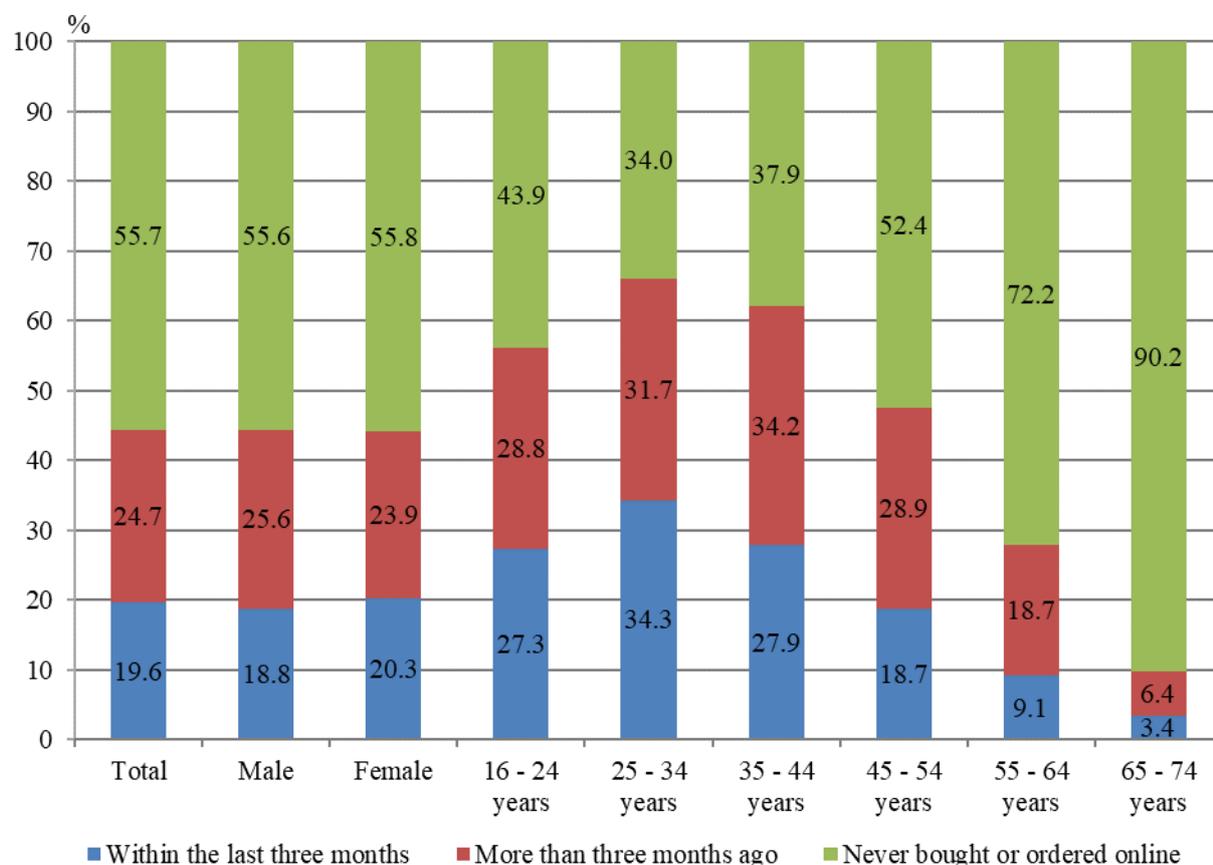
- obtain information from public administration's websites or apps - 19.1%;
- submit completed forms online - 15.5%;
- download official forms - 13.4%.

Females were more active than males in the use of online services offered by the public authorities - respectively 27.8% and 25.3%.

### Electronic commerce (e-commerce)

The share of the individuals who bought goods or services for private use over the internet in the last three months was 19.6%, as the most active in internet shopping were those with tertiary education with a relative share of 38.8%, as well as people in the age group 25 - 34 years (34.3%). Females were more active in online shopping than males - respectively 20.3% and 18.8%.

**Figure 3. Structure of individuals who bought goods or services over the internet by sex and age in 2021**



Internet shoppers most frequently bought:

- clothes, shoes or accessories - 76.4%<sup>1</sup>;
- sports goods - 23.5%;
- furniture, home accessories or gardening products - 22.2%;
- accommodation (from hotels, travel agencies or from private persons) - 19.4%;
- deliveries from restaurants, fast-food chains, catering services - 18.9%;
- cosmetics, beauty or wellness products - 18.8%.

<sup>1</sup> The relative shares were calculated on the basis of individuals who bought goods and services in the last three months.

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Of those who purchased over the internet in the last three months, 96.1% bought goods or services from national sellers, 29.7% from sellers from EU countries, and 16.5% purchased online from sellers from other countries.

The main reasons for not buying online were: preference to shop in person, loyalty to shops or force of habit (31.4%); no need to buy online (14.3%) and concerns about sufficiency of skills - 7.6%.

## Digital skills

In 2021, 39.1% of the individuals were able to copy or move files or folders, 27.9% used word processing software, and 25.0% downloaded or installed software or apps.

### 2. Share of individuals having digital skills by education in 2021

(Per cent)

Digital skills	Total	Basic education or lower	Upper secondary education	Tertiary education
Copying or moving files (e.g. documents, data, images, video) between folders, devices	39.1	17.3	34.9	72.5
Using word processing software	27.9	11.2	21.2	62.2
Downloading or installing software or apps	25.0	11.6	21.6	47.6
Creating files (e.g. document, image, video) incorporating several elements, e.g. text, picture, table, chart, animation, sound	20.0	8.9	14.2	46.3
Changing settings of software, app or device	18.8	8.4	15.7	37.4
Editing photos, video or audio files	18.6	9.6	17.2	31.6
Using spreadsheet software	14.4	5.3	8.3	39.2
Writing code in a programming language	1.1	0.1	0.6	3.4

In 2021, 38.1% of the individuals indicated that they found information that they considered untrue or doubtful on internet news sites or social media. From them, 41.7% checked the truthfulness of the information found on the internet through:

- checking the sources or finding other information on the internet - 71.1%<sup>1</sup>;
- following or taking part in a discussion on the internet regarding the information - 46.0%;
- discussing the information offline with other persons or using sources, not on the internet - 41.8%.

### Privacy and protection of personal data on the internet

In 2021, 47.1% of the individuals carried out activities to manage access to their personal data on the internet, such as:

- reading privacy policy statements before providing personal data - 34.4%;
- restricting or refusing access to the geographical location - 19.7%;

<sup>1</sup> The relative shares were calculated on the basis of individuals who checked the truthfulness of the information found on the internet.

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- refusing the use of personal data for advertising purposes - 18.8%;
- limiting access to profile or content on social networking sites - 17.7%.

Concerns that their online activities were being recorded to provide with tailored advertising had 37.3% of the individuals, and 9.1% used software that limited the ability to track their activities on the internet.

More than half of the individuals (52.6%) were aware that cookies can be used to track the visited websites and 15.5% changed the settings of their internet browser to limit the number of cookies that were stored on their devices.

## Methodological notes

The survey on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) usage in households and by individuals is a part of the European statistical programme and has been carried out in Bulgaria according to the Commission implementing Regulation (EU) 2020/1013. The survey was jointly financed by the NSI and by the European Commission under a signed agreement between the two institutions. 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 16 to 74 years**. In the period April - June 2021, 4 091 randomly selected households and 8 796 individuals were surveyed. The survey was conducted by face-to-face interview, carried out by NSI staff. The 2021 questionnaire comprised several modules, which collect information about availability and use of the internet in households and by individuals, e-government, e-commerce, digital skills, privacy and protection of personal data on the internet, as well as questions related to the socio-demographic characteristics of the households and individuals. The data collected during the survey refer to three periods: to the moment of the survey, to the last three months before the survey or the last 12 months before the survey.

**Fixed wired connection** includes DSL, ADSL, VDSL, LAN, cable modem CATV, optical fibre, satellite, public Wi-Fi connection, etc.

A **mobile connection** means internet connection via mobile phone network (at least 3G), using SIM card or USB key, mobile phone or smartphone as a modem.

**Cookies** are small text files that a website downloads to a user's device to track their behaviour on the website and to remember their preferences.

More information and data from surveys on Information and Communications Technologies usage in households and by individuals can be found at the NSI's website (<http://www.nsi.bg/en/node/6096>) and in Information System 'Infostat' ([https://infostat.nsi.bg/infostat/pages/module.jsf?x\\_2=240&lang=en](https://infostat.nsi.bg/infostat/pages/module.jsf?x_2=240&lang=en)).