

WIKI n°21: Internet as a New Mode of Communication

Over-information is a pervasive phenomenon in contemporary societies. *"Humanity has produced [in thirty years] more information than in the previous two millennia"*⁸⁷. Indeed, the volume of data generated, collected, and consumed globally went from 2 zettabytes in 2010 (1 zettabyte equals 10^{21} octets) to 120 zettabytes in 2023. This volume is projected to exceed 181 zettabytes by 2025⁸⁸.

The Internet has significantly contributed to this over-information. Its expansion has followed an exponential trajectory: the number of Internet users worldwide reached approximately 5.5 billion in 2023, compared to just 1 billion in 2005⁸⁹, representing an average annual growth rate of nearly 10%⁹⁰.

And yet, 2.5 billion people—32% of the global population— still lack Internet access because of technical and financial constraints. The majority of these people reside in sub-Saharan Africa, where Internet usage has nonetheless grown significantly, from 2% in 2005 to 37% in 2023⁹¹. Despite these advances, Africa lags behind access levels in Europe (90%) and the Americas (87%)⁹².

In 2023⁹³, only the Americas and Europe saw a proportion of Internet users above respective shares in the global population.

Region	Share of Global Population (%)	share of internet users (% of global population using the internet)
Africa	18	11,4
Americas	13	16,7
Asia	59	47,9
Europe	9	13
Oceania	1	0,7

⁸⁷ [Infobésité, gros risques et vrais remèdes | Cairn.info](#)

⁸⁸ "The total amount of data created, captured, copied, and consumed globally is forecast to increase rapidly, reaching 64.2 zettabytes in 2020. Over the next five years up to 2025, global data creation is projected to grow to more than 180 zettabytes." [Data growth worldwide 2010-2025 | Statista](#)

⁸⁹ <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/stat/default.aspx>

⁹⁰ Calculs IRES. <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/stat/default.aspx>

⁹¹ ITU. Global and Regional ICT DATA. 2020-2023

⁹² Idem que 5

⁹³ [2023-World-Population-Data-Sheet-Booklet.pdf \(prb.org\)](#)

Source: UN - World Population Prospects 2024; International Telecommunication Union

In low-income countries, only 27% of the population had Internet access in 2023, compared to 93% in high-income countries. This 66% disparity highlights the significant digital divide between high-income and low-income nations⁹⁴.

In 2023, China's Internet penetration rate hit 77%, whereas it topped 90% in a number of developed countries, including the United Kingdom, the United States, Taiwan, Germany, Canada, Austria, and Belgium. In contrast, India—despite its reputation for producing skilled IT professionals—had an Internet penetration rate of approximately 40%⁹⁵.

In Morocco, Internet penetration in 2023 stood at 90%, with 34 million users ⁹⁶, 21.3 million of whom were active on social media (56.6% of the population).⁹⁷

Countries exhibit clear heterogeneity in their use of cyberspace. Some nations show intensive Internet usage, particularly for information and education, while others use it more sparingly.

The ever-growing volumes of information make comprehensive processing nearly impossible, even for well-resourced institutions. This information overload increases stress, leading to mental exhaustion and chronic fatigue among professionals.

Furthermore, the coexistence of true and false information complicates discerning truth from manipulation, a challenge exacerbated by the viral nature of online content. It is possible that the Internet hosts more false information than reliable content. According to a 2018 study conducted by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, false information is 70% more likely to be shared on Twitter than accurate information⁹⁸.

Accordingly, tensions in human relationships are likely to persist, potentially destabilizing societies and fostering disillusionment, fragmentation, and polarization. Growing distrust of institutions and governments is likely to intensify, encouraging the formation of affinity-based communities, sometimes referred to as "tribes," some of which may seek to drive social and political change to assert their needs and interests.

⁹⁴ [Facts and Figures 2023 - Internet use \(itu.int\)](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/stat/default.aspx)

⁹⁵ <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/stat/default.aspx>

⁹⁶ Idem que 9

⁹⁷ https://mediamarketing.ma/article/APPBADDG/les_chiffres_claes_des_raeseaux_sociaux_au_maroc_2023.html#:~:text=D'apr%C3%A8s%20les%20donn%C3%A9es%20de,%2C6%25%20de%20la%20population.

⁹⁸ Vosoughi, S., Roy, D., & Aral, S. (2018). The spread of true and false news online. *Science*, 359(6380), 1146-115