

# Computer Literacy Statistics – 2019 (Annual)

## Department of Census and Statistics

### Sri Lanka

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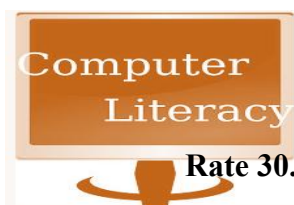


The birth of the Information Age which is also known as Computer Age, is associated with the Digital Revolution, just as the Industrial Revolution marked the birth of the Industrial Age. The Digital and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) revolutions are twin revolutions. The rapid developments in ICT have greatly contributed in enhancing human living standards worldwide. The advanced capability of this technology facilitates with extremely efficient collaboration and access to correct, consistent and effective information, which is fundamental to manage the quality in total. In developed world, most of the key economically effective environments are increasingly ICT dominant.

Timely and accurate information on use of ICT itself is essential for justification and proper direction of the Government efforts, private sector investments, to study the changing pattern of the demand for internet services and for continuous progress monitoring on ICT achievements. For this computer literacy data, can contribute immensely to an understanding of the demand and supply of skills in the global, knowledge based economy. Also statistics on the availability of a computer/laptop in households and usage of internet and email can be used to assess digital divide.

To cater the relevant data needs the Department of Census and Statistics (DCS) has conducted several surveys on computer literacy in Sri Lanka. The surveys were conducted in 2004, 2006/07, 2009 and from 2014 onward a survey module is attached to Sri Lanka Labour Force Survey. From 2014 onward two separate bulletins are published on Computer Literacy. This bulletin reveals the major findings of the survey conducted in the year 2019. For the analysis of the computer literacy survey a nationally distributed sample of 25,750 households and persons of aged 5 – 69 years were enumerated.

## Highlights



More than one out of four person (aged 5-69) computer literated.

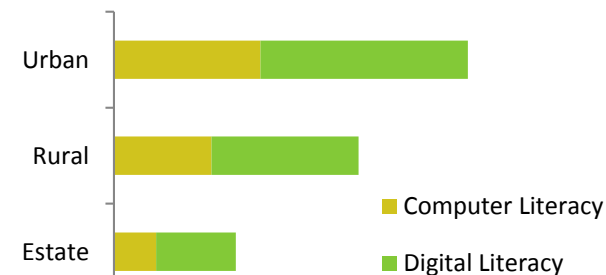
More than two out of five person (aged 5-69) digital literated.



22.0% of households owned desktop or laptop computer.



Urban sector shows more literated on both computer and digital literacy.



Computer literacy and Digital literacy by Sector

## Computer literacy

**Definition for Computer literacy:** A person (aged 5-69) is considered as a computer literate person if he/she could use computer on his/her own. For example, even if a 5 years old child can play a computer game then he/she is considered as a computer literate person.

**Definition for computer literacy rate:** Computer Literate population expressed as a percentage to the total population, (aged 5 – 69 years) within the respective domain.

## Digital literacy

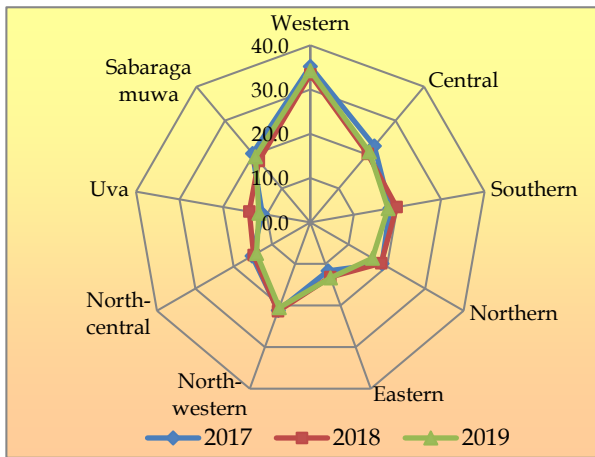
**Definition for Digital literacy:** A person (aged 5-69) is considered as a digital literate person if he/she could use computer, laptop, tablet or smartphone on his/her own.

**Definition for Digital literacy rate:** Digital Literate population expressed as a percentage to the total population, (aged 5 – 69 years) within the respective domain.

## Household computer ownership

If a desktop or laptop is available at a household then that household is considered as a computer owned household. Table 1 shows the percentage distribution of computer owned households by Sector and Province. In 2019, at least one computer is available in 22.0 percent of households in the country. That is about one out of every five households owns either a desktop or a laptop computer. This percentage is 38.0 in Urban sector and Rural and Estate sector show 19.7 percent and 4.6 percent respectively. When the provinces are considered the highest availability is in the Western province (34.3%) while the lowest availability is reported from the Uva (11.8%).

**Figure 1: Percentage of Desktop or Laptop computer owned households by Province**



Percentage of availability of desktop or laptop computer at a household vary between 22% - 23% between 2016 to 2019 period.

**Table 1: Percentage of computer owned households by sector, province and Survey year**

Sector/ Province	Desktop (%)				Desktop or Laptop (%)			
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>Sri Lanka</b>	<b>12.1</b>	<b>12.1</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>8.0</b>	<b>21.6</b>	<b>22.8</b>	<b>22.3</b>	<b>22.0</b>
Urban	17.6	18.5	13.4	12.6	35.4	38.2	37.5	38.0
Rural	11.4	11.2	9.1	7.4	19.6	20.6	20.0	19.7
Estate	4.1	2.9	1.5	1.2	6.1	4.5	4.2	4.6
<b>Province</b>								
Western	18.3	18.2	13.7	11.0	33.6	35.2	33.4	34.3
Central	12.4	12.4	9.5	8.6	21.2	22.5	20.2	20.8
Southern	10.8	9.6	8.6	7.6	17.9	18.3	19.8	17.9
Northern	6.5	7.2	6.0	5.6	16.7	18.7	18.5	16.2
Eastern	5.8	5.6	5.5	5.4	11.2	11.7	13.2	13.4
North-western	9.7	11.4	8.8	7.1	19.2	21.2	21.4	20.5
North-central	8.7	7.0	5.9	4.8	13.8	15.2	14.8	14.0
Uva	8.2	6.9	6.4	3.7	11.9	11.0	14.0	11.8
Sabaragamuwa	11.7	12.8	9.6	9.2	17.9	20.3	18.1	19.3

These figures are to be treated with caution as the corresponding CV (Coefficient of variation) values are high.

## Computer Literacy and Digital Literacy

**Table 2: Computer literacy rate by sector, province and survey year**

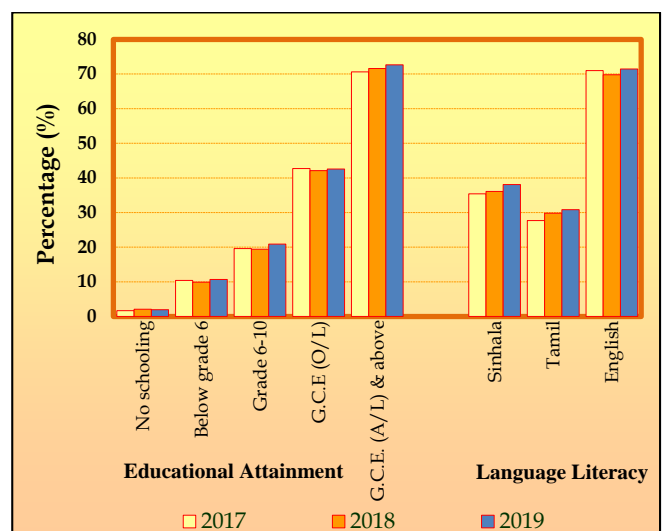
Sector/Province	Computer literacy rate (%)			
	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>Sri Lanka</b>	<b>27.6</b>	<b>28.6</b>	<b>29.0</b>	<b>30.8</b>
<b>Sector</b>				
Urban	39.2	40.5	40.4	43.6
Rural	26.1	27.1	27.5	29.0
Estate	10.4	9.1	10.8	12.6
<b>Province</b>				
Western	38.1	38.8	40.0	44.1
Central	26.3	28.8	28.7	28.8
Southern	27.4	29.3	30.6	31.2
Northern	21.1	16.9	19.5	19.3
Eastern	14.8	14.7	14.8	15.7
North Western	27.1	28.0	29.8	29.1
North Central	21.7	23.6	21.6	21.7
Uva	18.3	17.9	18.8	21.6
Sabaragamuwa	24.0	26.8	23.5	27.2

Percentage of Computer Literate population (Computer Literacy) over the survey periods has been gradually increasing. Overall Computer Literacy reported in 2019 for Sri Lanka is 30.8 percent.

The survey results show an increase of 3.2 percentage points from 2016 to 2019. Urban sector shows the highest computer literacy rate (43.6%) among residential sectors. Computer literacy rate for Rural and Estate sectors are 29.0 percent and 12.6 percent respectively.

Among the provinces the highest level of computer literacy is reported from the Western province (44.1%). The lowest computer literacy is reported from the Eastern province (15.7%).

**Figure 2: Distribution of computer literacy rate by Educational attainment and Language literacy – 2017, 2018 & 2019**



As given in Table 3 the Computer literacy among males (32.9%) is higher than that of females (28.9%) in 2019. Young youths (aged 15 – 19 years) show the highest computer literacy rate (64.9%) among all other age groups.

The survey results reveal that higher the level of education higher the computer literacy. The group with A/L or above level of education shows the highest computer literacy rate (72.6%). Also computer literacy is higher among those who are literate in English language (71.5%).

**Table 3: Computer literacy rate by Gender, Age group, Level of education, and Language literacy - 2017, 2018 & 2019**

Gender, Age group, Educational attainment and Language literacy	Computer literacy rate (%)		
	2017	2018	2019
<b>Sri Lanka</b>	28.6	29.0	30.8
<b>By Sex</b>			
Male	31.1	31.0	32.9
Female	26.4	27.2	28.9
<b>By Age group (years)</b>			
5 - 9	13.2	12.4	14.3
10 - 14	40.6	39.5	42.2
15 - 19	63.0	60.8	64.9
20 - 24	56.9	58.7	58.8
25 - 29	46.7	47.9	51.7
30 - 34	35.2	37.5	40.6
35 - 39	26.6	27.5	29.8
40 - 49	19.8	20.9	22.0
50 - 59	11.0	11.7	12.8
60 - 69	5.9	6.1	6.6
<b>By Educational attainment</b>			
No schooling	1.7	2.1	2.0
Below grade 6	10.4	9.9	10.7
Grade 6-10	19.6	19.4	20.9
G.C.E (O/L)	42.7	42.1	42.6
G.C.E. (A/L) and above	70.6	71.6	72.6
<b>By Language literacy</b>			
Sinhala	35.4	36.1	38.1
Tamil	27.7	29.8	30.8
English	71.0	69.8	71.5

**Table 4: Computer literacy among unemployed population (aged 15 – 69 years) by age group – 2017, 2018 & 2019**

Age group (years)	Percentage of computer literate population among unemployment (%)		
	2017	2018	2019
<b>Sri Lanka</b>	57.7	63.7	61.3
15 - 19	51.3	47.1	53.2
20 - 24	69.6	72.6	74.0
25 - 29	67.7	76.1	71.5
30 - 39	42.3	58.2	51.2
40 - 69	27.7	30.1	28.9

Among the unemployed, aged (20-24) group shows highest computer literate population percentage (74.0%). Annual results reveal that among unemployed many have at least some ICT skills. Even among the group aged 40-69 every one out of three is computer literate (28.9%) in 2019.

**Table 5: Computer literacy among computer aware employed population (aged 15 – 69 years) by Occupation group – 2017, 2018 & 2019**

Occupation group	Computer literacy rate (%)		
	2017	2018	2019
<b>Sri Lanka</b>	59.0	63.2	65.1
Managers, Senior Officials and Legislators	70.0	70.2	76.1
Professionals	86.8	87.4	87.9
Technicians and Associate Professionals	82.9	83.8	85.1
Clerks and Clerical support workers	89.1	89.9	90.9
Services and Sales workers	56.6	60.5	55.6
Skilled Agricultural, Forestry and Fishery workers	22.2	21.0	22.6
Craft and Related Trades workers	37.6	41.6	41.7
Plant and Machine operators and Assemblers	41.9	42.4	43.1
Elementary occupations	24.0	30.5	27.8
Armed Forces Occupations & unidentified occupations	77.8	80.1	88.1

These figures are to be treated with caution as the corresponding CV (Coefficient of variation) values are high.

Computer literacy among the employed population who are aware of computer in Sri Lanka is around 65.1 % in 2019. The positions such as Senior officials and Managers (76.1%), Professionals (87.9%), Technical and Associate professionals (85.1%), Clerks and Clerical support workers (90.9%) have higher computer literacy rates. Also, even among the individuals engage in elementary occupations 27.8 percent are computer literate.

**Table 6: Computer literacy rate and Digital literacy rate by Gender, Sector and Age group – 2019**

Gender, Sector, Age group	Computer Literacy	Digital Literacy
<b>Sri Lanka</b>	30.8	46.0
<b>By Sex</b>		
Male	32.9	49.7
Female	28.9	42.6
<b>Sector</b>		
Urban	43.6	61.7
Rural	29.0	43.8
Estate	12.6	23.7
<b>By Age group (years)</b>		
5 - 9	14.3	28.4
10 - 14	42.2	54.7
15 - 19	64.9	77.8
20 - 24	58.8	78.6
25 - 29	51.7	73.4
30 - 34	40.6	63.1
35 - 39	29.8	53.5
40 - 49	22.0	40.2
50 - 59	12.8	22.8
60 - 69	6.6	12.3

When the digital literacy is considered 46.0% (aged 5 -69) has digital literacy. Digital literacy is higher than computer literacy for all disaggregated levels, showing the drift from Personal Computer to Smartphones/Tables.

## Source of computer training

Table 7 shows that the majority of those who are computer literate have received training from School/University or Private institutions. The training received through Government training centres are comparatively low (6.0%).

**Table 7: Percentage distribution of Computer literate household population (aged 5 – 69 years) by sources of receiving computer knowledge\* and sector – 2019**

Source of receiving computer knowledge	Total (%)	Residential sector (%)		
		Urban	Rural	Estate
Private training course	22.6	24.9	22.0	14.5
School/University	54.3	57.4	53.1	62.0
Govt. training centres	6.0	5.6	6.1	5.3
Employment activities	19.8	27.8	17.5	7.8
Work place	12.7	16.9	11.5	6.5
Family members	26.5	27.6	26.5	14.6
Friends/ Relatives	23.9	20.7	25.1	20.7
Self	36.8	41.7	35.7	17.9
Other	4.2	3.7	4.4	4.0

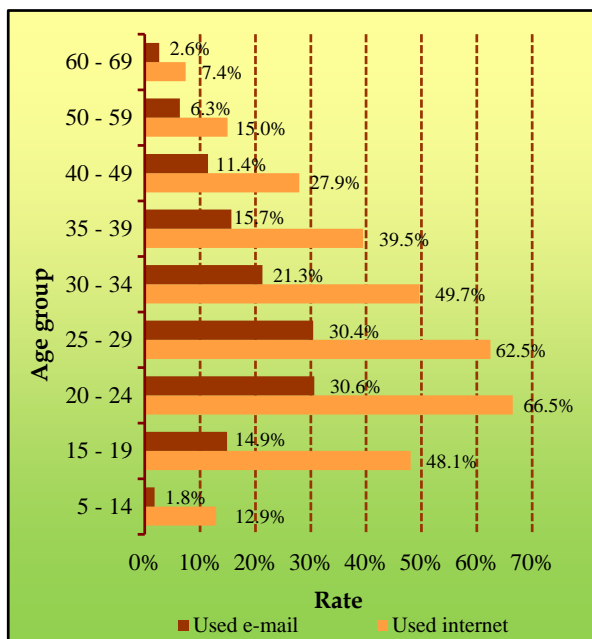
\* Multiple choice answers

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## Internet and E-mail use

The Table 8 depicts that 30.3 percent of the population aged 5 to 69 years use the internet facility at least once during twelve months in 2019. The survey results further reveal that in the Urban sector, where the facilities are largely available, shows the highest usage of both e-mail and internet compared to other two sectors.

**Figure 3: Percentage distribution of Internet and E-mail using household population (aged 5 – 69 years) by age group – 2019**



The Table 8 and Figure 3 show that persons in age group 20 - 24 indicate a higher internet and email usage compared to the persons in other age groups.

**Table 8: Percentage distribution of Internet and E-mail using household population (aged 5 – 69 years) by Sex, Sector and Age group – 2017, 2018 & 2019**

Gender, Sector, Age group (years)	Household Population (aged 5-69)					
	Internet (%)			E-mail (%)		
	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019
<b>Sri Lanka</b>	22.7	26.8	30.3	11.2	10.2	11.9
<b>By Sex</b>						
Male	27.0	31.4	34.4	13.5	12.3	14.0
Female	19.0	22.7	26.5	9.2	8.2	9.9
<b>By Sector</b>						
Urban	38.1	42.7	47.4	21.8	20.5	23.0
Rural	20.3	24.3	27.5	9.4	8.3	10.0
Estate	5.2	9.0	12.2	2.5	2.8	2.7
<b>By Age group (years)</b>						
5 - 14	9.3	10.6	12.9	2.3	1.2	1.8
15 - 19	38.7	42.7	48.1	16.0	12.1	14.9
20 - 24	55.4	62.8	66.5	29.7	27.4	30.6
25 - 29	49.2	56.5	62.5	27.3	24.8	30.4
30 - 34	37.0	44.8	49.7	19.2	19.8	21.3
35 - 39	28.1	33.7	39.5	14.4	12.7	15.7
40 - 49	18.9	24.1	27.9	10.0	9.8	11.4
50 - 59	9.5	13.1	15.0	5.5	5.5	6.3
60 - 69	4.9	5.6	7.4	2.8	2.5	2.6

The survey results reveal that 11.9 percent of the household population aged 5 – 69 years have used E-mail facility at least once during the last 12 months period.

**Table 9: Percentage distribution of device use to connect to internet/ email household population\* (aged 5 – 69 years) by Sex, Sector and Age group – 2019**

Gender, Sector, Age group	Desktop/ Laptop	Smartphone	Tablet computer	Mobile phone
<b>Sri Lanka</b>	24.1	72.2	2.0	1.7
<b>By Sex</b>				
Male	13.3	39.2	1.1	0.9
Female	10.7	33.0	0.9	0.7
<b>Sector</b>				
Urban	8.3	19.8	0.6	0.3
Rural	15.7	51.1	1.4	1.4
Estate	0.1	1.3	0.0	0.0
<b>By Age group (years)</b>				
5 - 9	0.3	1.5	0.0	0.0
10 - 14	1.5	3.9	0.2	0.1
15 - 19	3.4	10.1	0.2	0.3
20 - 24	3.7	11.8	0.3	0.3
25 - 29	3.4	10.5	0.3	0.2
30 - 34	2.7	8.7	0.3	0.2
35 - 39	2.3	8.0	0.2	0.2
40 - 49	3.7	10.5	0.3	0.2
50 - 59	2.1	5.2	0.1	0.1
60 - 69	0.8	2.0	0.1	0.1

\* Multiple choice answers

■ These figures are to be treated with caution as the corresponding CV (Coefficient of variation) values are high.