ithra Digital Wellbeing

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Country Report

Chile

Country insights report 2024

sync

Chile

Overall score
59.6 (out of 100)

Placed
13th (out of 35)

The Digital Wellbeing Index (DWI) showcases both strengths and areas for potential growth in Chile's digital landscape. With an overall score of 59.6, Chile is placed 13th among the 35 countries analyzed. The country is relatively strong with the "Capturing opportunities" sub-index, with particularly good performance in the social connectedness pillar. The "Balancing needs" sub-index showcases average scores, with strengths in the ability to disconnect pillars and room for improvement in the cybersafety and physical health sub-pillars.

Scoring 59.6, Chile is placed 2nd among the Latin American countries in the index, closely behind Argentina with a score of 60.2. It scores higher than the DWI average (57.2) although there is still room for improvement.

Comparative performance in the DWI

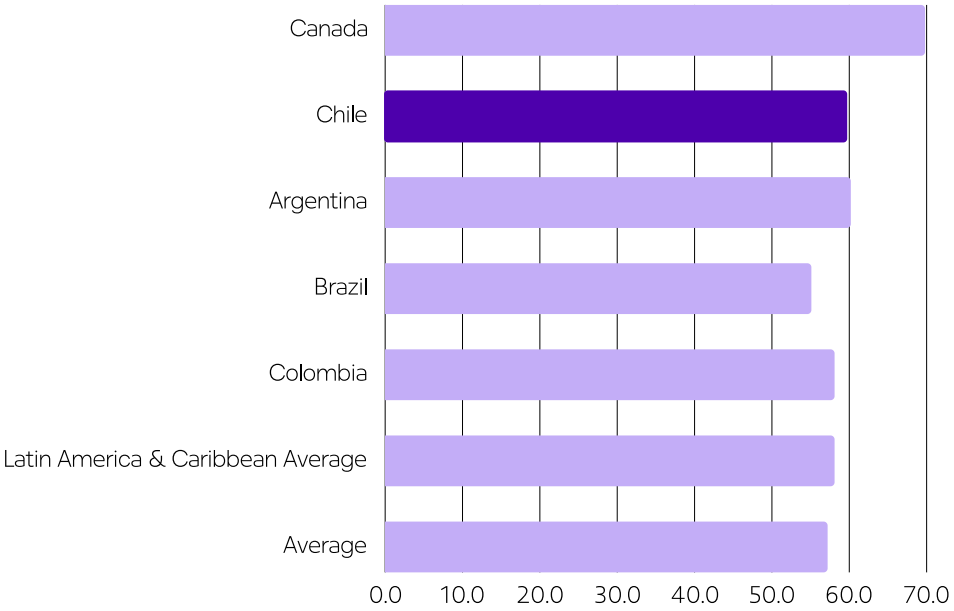


FIGURE 1
Source: Global Digital Wellbeing Index 2024

The context of digital wellbeing in the country

The OECD has stated that Chile made great progress in digitalization and is a leading force in the region. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a rapid digital transformation in the country. In particular, the IT sector grew substantially, seeing a 35% increase from 2020 to 2021. It is estimated that at least 5,000 professionals are needed per year to fill the IT skills gap, and a survey by SENCE and Pulso Digital showed that 70% of companies planned to hire IT professionals in the short term.

Progress has been strong in connectivity, with Chile having one of the fastest mobile connections in the world and the highest internet penetration in its region. With a market dominance of 3G and 4G, Chile invested $3.5 billion in their 5G infrastructure in 2021, which will strengthen current connectivity as well as increase internet penetration across the country. Although, this new 5G infrastructure quadrupled the number of cyberattacks attempted in 2021, reaching 9.4 billion. The Chilean government also experienced these attacks and tackled a ransomware attack that resulted in several government services and systems going offline in 2022.

As a result, the Cybersecurity and Critical Infrastructure bill was introduced in 2022. The bill set out the necessary institutional framework to strengthen cybersecurity, expand and reinforce preventive work, create a public culture of digital security, address contingencies in the public and private sectors, and safeguard the security of people in cyberspace. The bill also aims to increase cooperation between various government agencies, under a safe and secure system.

This was incorporated into a wider Chile Digital 2035 strategy, a new legislation focused on reducing digital inequality and guiding the digital transformation of the country by promoting digital rights, infrastructure development, cybersecurity, and digitalization of the public sector. Chile already displays relatively strong e-Government services, with 86% of public services already being digitalised in 2022. However, Chile Digital 2035 set ambitious goals of achieving 95% by 2025 and 100% by 2035.

In terms of digital health progress, the Department of Digital Health in the Ministry of Health was created in 2019 to manage and monitor "Hospital Digital," a government initiative to improve the technology used in the country's healthcare system. An online platform was also created where people were able to remotely schedule an hour with different health professionals, review vaccination history and access health tips. The COVID-19 pandemic also accelerated the telemedicine infrastructure within the country, with the distribution of medicine moving online and Chile registering nearly 50,000 telemedicine appointments during March and June 2020.

Chile has showed a commitment to ensuring they are aligned with future technological advances in the digital space. Artificial intelligence technologies are expected to receive a public sector investment of $26 million in order to support organizations to automate tasks, anticipate trends, and reduce time implementing solutions. Chile is also positioning itself as the digital hub of Latin America, with companies such as Google, Amazon, Starlink, Microsoft, Huawei and Oracle making investments or engaging in projects in the country.

The country's strengths and areas for improvement

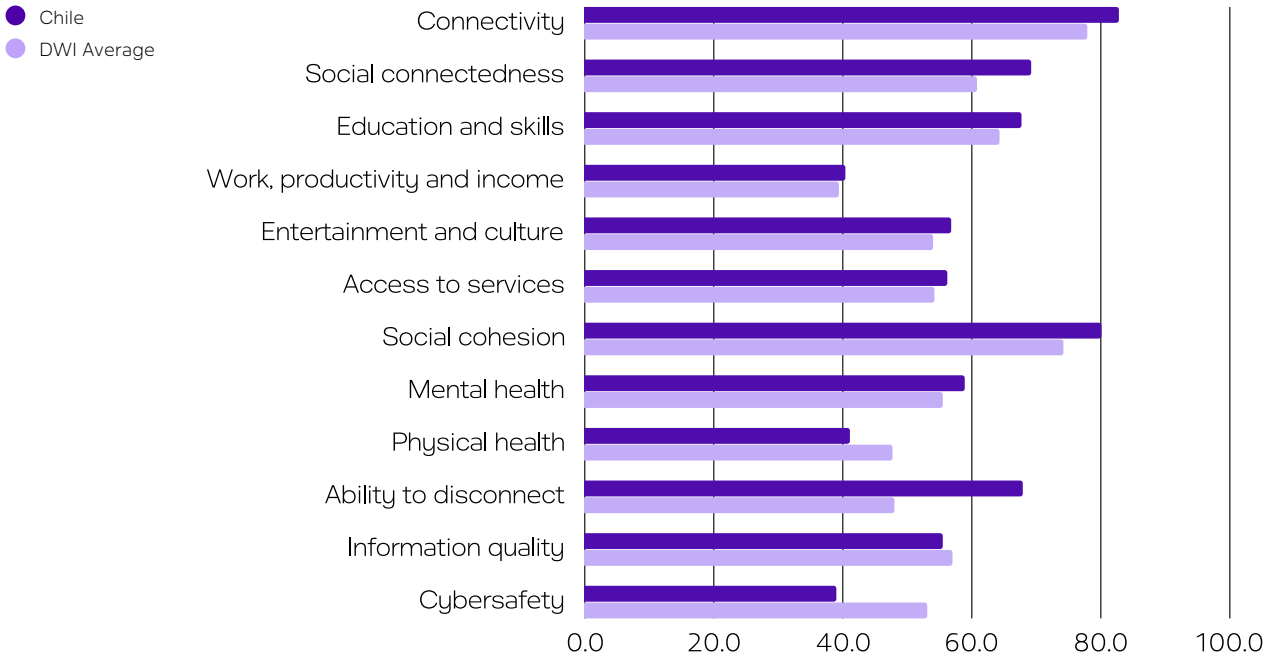
Chile scores above the index average in many areas. In social connectedness, a measure of how digital technology is used to maintain and discover new relationships, Chile scores 69.2 (2nd). Moreover, the index suggests Chileans are able to disconnect from digital devices and understand how to maintain a healthy work-life balance, scoring 67.9 (8th). Chile also scores relatively well in areas that measure how technology impacts the mental health of users and the extent to which education and skills can be advanced online.

There are three main areas where there is room for improvement in Chile's digital wellbeing. Cybersafety scores 39.0 (34th), indicate that the cyber environment may not be safe from harmful content and risks of data breaches are relatively higher in Chile compared to other countries. There is also room for progress in Chile's information quality (20th), suggesting citizens could be better equipped to analyse misinformation and the quality of sources available online. Lastly, Chile scores 41.1 (22nd) in physical health, which is a measure of how well people can use technology without undermining their physical health. The citizens can further amplify their efforts to protect themselves from the harmful effects of digital technology.

FIGURE 2

Source: Global Digital Wellbeing Index 2024

Performance of Chile by index pillars compared to DWI sample



Overall performance by index pillars

TABLE 5 Source: Global Digital Wellbeing Index 2024

Dimensions	Score (0 to 100)	Placed (out of 35)	Key findings
Connectivity	82.8	13	Chile has developed an internet service that covers a large majority of the population (90%). It is affordable compared to the index average. However, of this coverage, work can be done to improve access to the quicker networks.
Social connectedness	69.2	2	Survey respondents suggest social networks are well used in Chile, with people actively participating to maintain relationships and meet new people.
Education and skills	67.7	11	While schools have strong internet access, people believed that the digital skills taught in schools were not necessarily good enough to compete in the world economy.
Work, productivity and income	40.4	15	While remote work policies exist, there is currently no digital nomad visa. Technology plays an above index-average role in finding a job, being productive and entrepreneurial activities.
Entertainment and culture	56.8	17	Entertainment and culture are both created and shared in relatively large amounts online. However, there could be more done to promote tourism and culture digitally by the government.
Access to services and goods	56.2	14	Survey respondents suggest digital finance, government and health services are all established in Chile.
Social cohesion	80.1	14	Strong work has been done to establish digital literacy and inclusion policies. However, a policy could be formalised to improve rural access to digital technology.
Mental health	58.9	11	Survey respondents suggest that remote workers and consumers of media understand the mental health implications of online addictive behaviours. However, Chileans display social media use far above index average.
Physical health	41.1	22	Survey respondents suggest that Chileans' physical health is impacted by digital technology. Improvement can be made in creating policies to educate those on the physical impacts of technology use.
Ability to disconnect	67.9	8	While a right to disconnect law exists, the ability to ensure a work-life balance is below index average.
Information quality	55.5	20	On an index level, survey participants indicate that, on average, they critique the information and sources they utilize. Nevertheless, there is room for improvement in educating the broader society about misinformation.
Cybersafety	39.0	34	Regulatory bodies in data protection and internet related issues do not currently exist. Concerted efforts can be made towards educating parents and the youth about cyberbullying and data protection skills as well as punishing offenders.

Suggestions that may contribute to improvements across the digital ecosystem:

Health impact of digital use
Educate people about the impacts of using digital technology on both their physical and mental health. This could be done via the 'Hospital Digital' platform to provide information to users as well as directed advice to those suffering from symptoms that are associated with excessive digital activity. Efforts can be combined with social media campaigns about excessive use and partnerships with social media companies to encourage healthy consumption.

Misinformation education
Inform society about the impacts of misinformation and how to critically analyse information and its source. While work is already being done within schools, wider society should also be educated on behaviours to stop the spread of fake news. Future attempts in line with the recent draft constitution to prevent the spread of misinformation could also be considered.

Regulation authorities in cybersafety
Establish regulatory authorities alongside the work being done within the Cybersecurity and Critical Infrastructure bill. First, a data protection authority could be established to hold the government and businesses accountable to keeping data secure and preventing any illegal profiteering from data selling activities. Secondly, a regulatory authority that oversees internet related issues such as internet governance, domain names and intellectual property.

Cyberbullying action
Introduce education for cyberbullying activities and prevention across society. Within formal education, campaigns to address what cyberbullying looks like, avoiding it and reporting it are important to ensuring young people feel safe on the internet. Furthermore, it is crucial to combine this with educating parents on how to help their children if they are victims of cyberbullying. This could be through school-distributed emails or posters or via parents' community groups. Lastly, Chile can ensure that offenders of cyberbullying are punishable in law and that there is an efficient and effective reporting system in place.

Global Digital Wellbeing Index Executive Summary

Digital technologies have reshaped how we connect, work, and perceive the world. As our dependence on these tools grows, so too does the need to understand and optimize the balance between technology use and wellbeing. The Global Digital Wellbeing Index (DWI) explores the foundational elements of digital wellbeing, acknowledging the complex and multifaceted dimensions involved. The DWI aims to stimulate global discussions, influence policymakers, and provide a benchmark for stakeholders to navigate the evolving landscape of digital wellbeing. It covers 35 countries and combines data from well-established secondary sources (e.g. UN, World Bank), a dedicated survey, and policy assessments into a framework that consists of 12 pillars, organized into two complementary components or sub-indices (1) balancing needs and (2) capturing opportunities. The DWI provides overall country-level scores out of 100, as well as scores for both components and for each of the 12 pillars (also out of 100).

In terms of overall scores on the index, Canada, Australia, Singapore, Estonia, France, the United Kingdom, Germany, the United States, and Italy do especially well. China stands out with a strong performance among middle-income countries. While wealthier countries achieve the best scores on average, having a higher income does not always guarantee a better performance: for example, China, Argentina, Colombia, Malaysia, Mexico, and Bulgaria achieve scores equal to or above the global average (57 out of 100). Across the entire sample, the pillars with the highest scores are connectivity (78) and social cohesion (74). Those with the lowest scores, requiring the most attention, are work, productivity and income (39), physical health (48), and the ability to disconnect (48). As highlighted throughout this report, each country has its relative digital wellbeing strengths as well as areas for growth and enhancement.

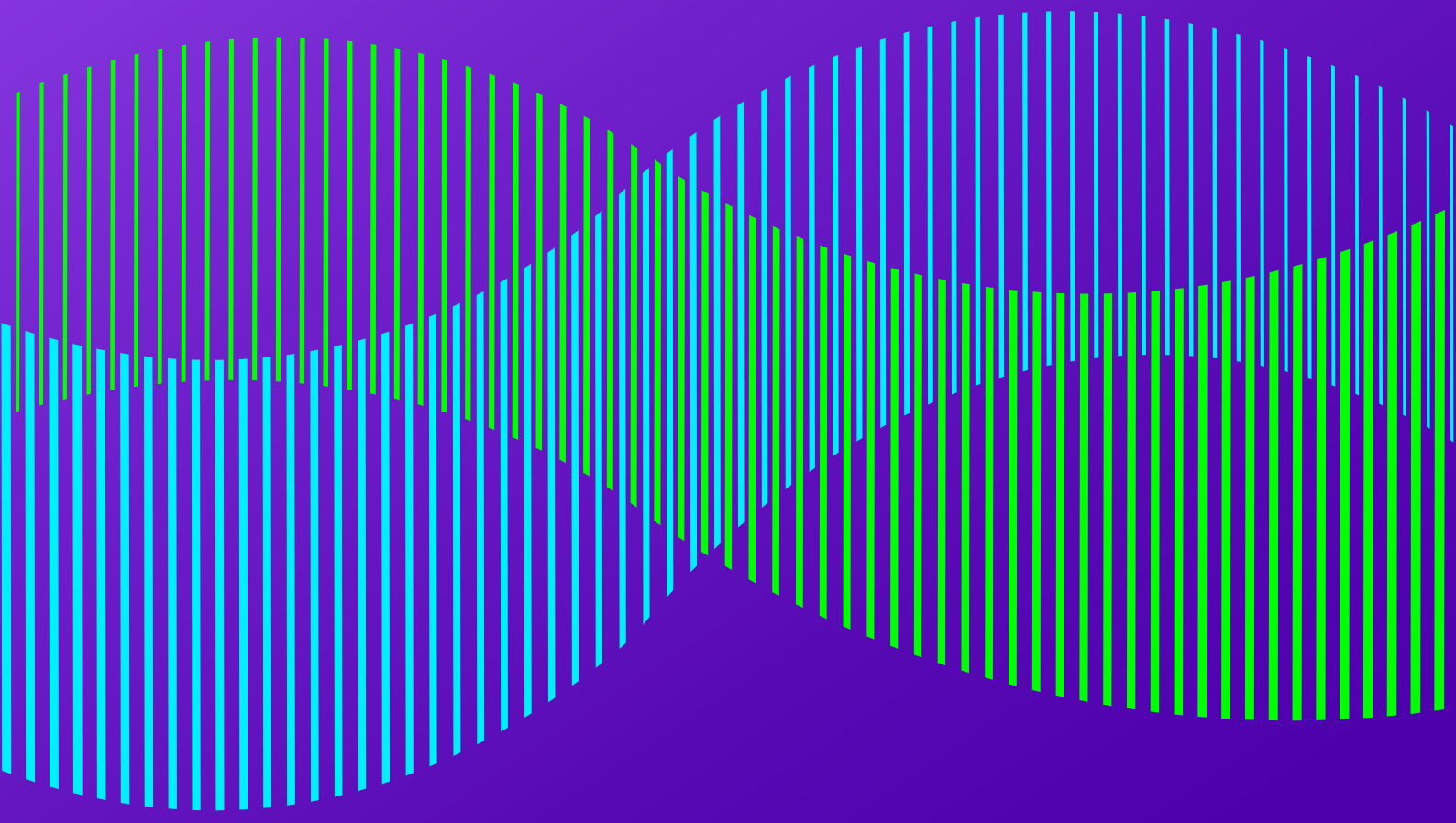


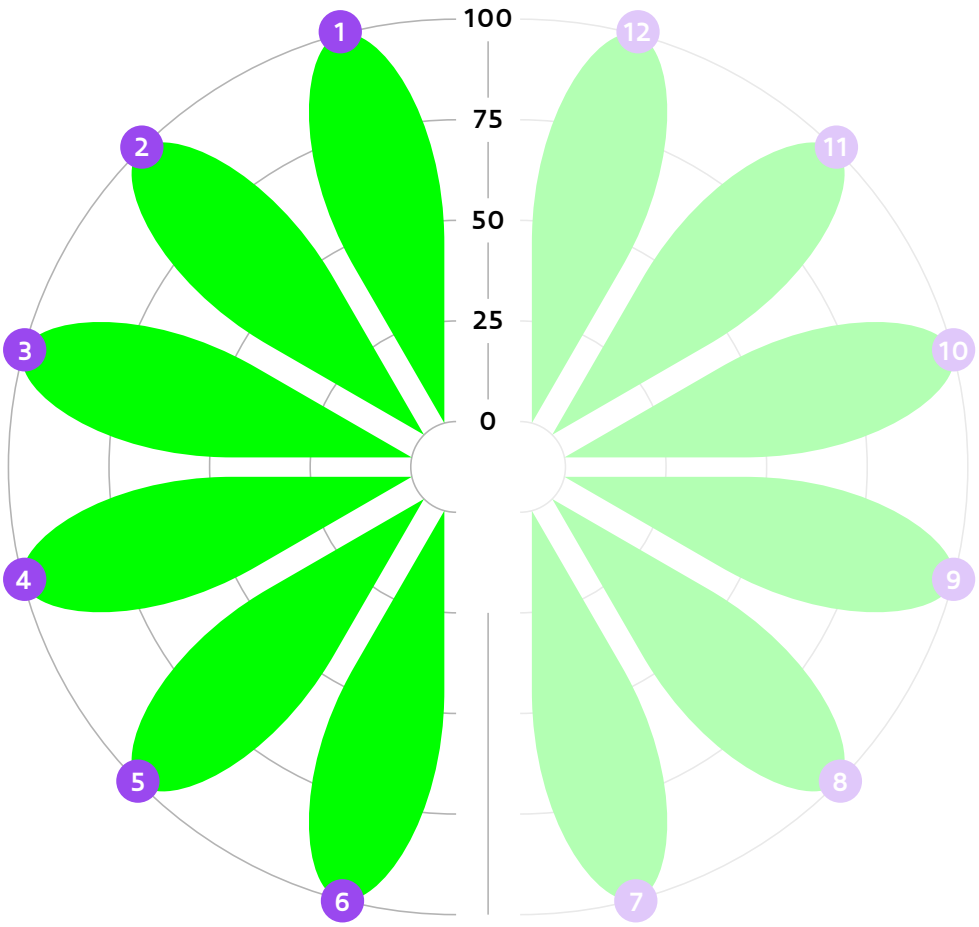
TABLE 1
Source: Global Digital Wellbeing Index 2024

Overall performance in the DWI

Rank	Country	Score (0-100)
1	Canada	69.8
2	Australia	69.0
3	Singapore	68.1
4	Estonia	67.1
5	France	66.8
6	United Kingdom	66.3
7	Germany	65.2
8	United States	61.0
=9	China	60.5
=9	Italy	60.5
11	Argentina	60.2
12	Sweden	60.2
=13	Chile	59.6
=13	Korea, Republic of	59.6
15	Colombia	58.1
16	United Arab Emirates	57.9
17	Malaysia	57.8
=18	India	57.5
=18	Japan	57.5
20	Mexico	57.4
21	Bulgaria	57.2
22	Brazil	55.1
=23	Indonesia	54.5
=23	Kenya	54.5
25	Türkiye	54.4
26	Viet Nam	54.1
27	Saudi Arabia	53.8
28	South Africa	53.0
29	Ghana	50.6
30	Kuwait	50.0
31	Nigeria	48.4
32	Egypt	46.6
33	Pakistan	45.1
34	Bangladesh	44.1
35	Algeria	39.8

Balancing Needs

The "Balancing Needs" sub-index includes six pillars examining the risks posed by digital technology and to what extent these risks are being addressed. This component of the DWI captures the most direct action being taken around the world to support digital wellbeing.



1 Social Cohesion
2 Mental Health
3 Physical Health
4 Ability to Disconnect
5 Information Quality
6 Cybersafety
7 Connectivity
8 Social Connectedness
9 Education and Skills
10 Work, Productivity, and Income
11 Entertainment and Culture
12 Access to Services and Goods

For the Balancing Needs component, data collected for the DWI reveals:

Policies to support digital mental health can help vulnerable individuals — an area with the potential to be improved across the board.
Singapore leads in the mental health pillar, followed by the United Kingdom and the Republic of Korea. Generally, advanced economies have better scores, but China and Algeria stand out among middle-income nations. Only eight countries have complete frameworks for digital mental health — that is, the use of digital technology to directly support mental health care and service provision — with Singapore, the United Kingdom, and Canada showcasing successful integration into education. Bangladesh, India, and the United Arab Emirates report greater levels of distress associated with extended digital technology use, while the United States, Australia and Canada report the most significant psychological impacts such as feelings of loneliness and anxiety linked with remote working or studying. Less affluent countries report lower levels of such distress, potentially due to less common remote activities, which can be linked to connectivity gaps and lower flexibility of work arrangements.

Maintaining physical health is a challenge given growing exposure to digital technologies, stressing the need for more dedicated policies.
Canada, France, and Australia lead in the physical health pillar; overall, richer countries attain higher scores in this area. Eight countries have clear government recommendations on the healthy use of digital technologies. Only Canada, India, Estonia, and Ghana fully address physical health risks in school curricula. Viet Nam, Malaysia, Ghana, and Nigeria reported more physical health complaints associated with digital technologies including dry eyes, headaches, and back pain. Algeria, Ghana, and Bangladesh reported greater disruption to offline activities such as in-person engagement with family and friends, and missing work and school related activities.

"Right to disconnect"[01] policies show decisive action to promote digital wellbeing and represent one area with the potential to be developed around the world.
Affluent countries are generally stronger in this area, with Australia, Italy, and Germany leading in the ability to disconnect pillar. Argentina, Mexico, and Colombia, middle-income countries, demonstrate a strong performance too. Nine countries in the DWI — Australia, Argentina, Canada, Chile, Colombia, France, Germany, Italy, and Mexico — have established legislation on the right to disconnect. When it comes to remote work or study, challenges in maintaining healthy boundaries show no significant differences across income segments, but advanced economies show overall higher adoption rates of measures to promote digital wellbeing at work.

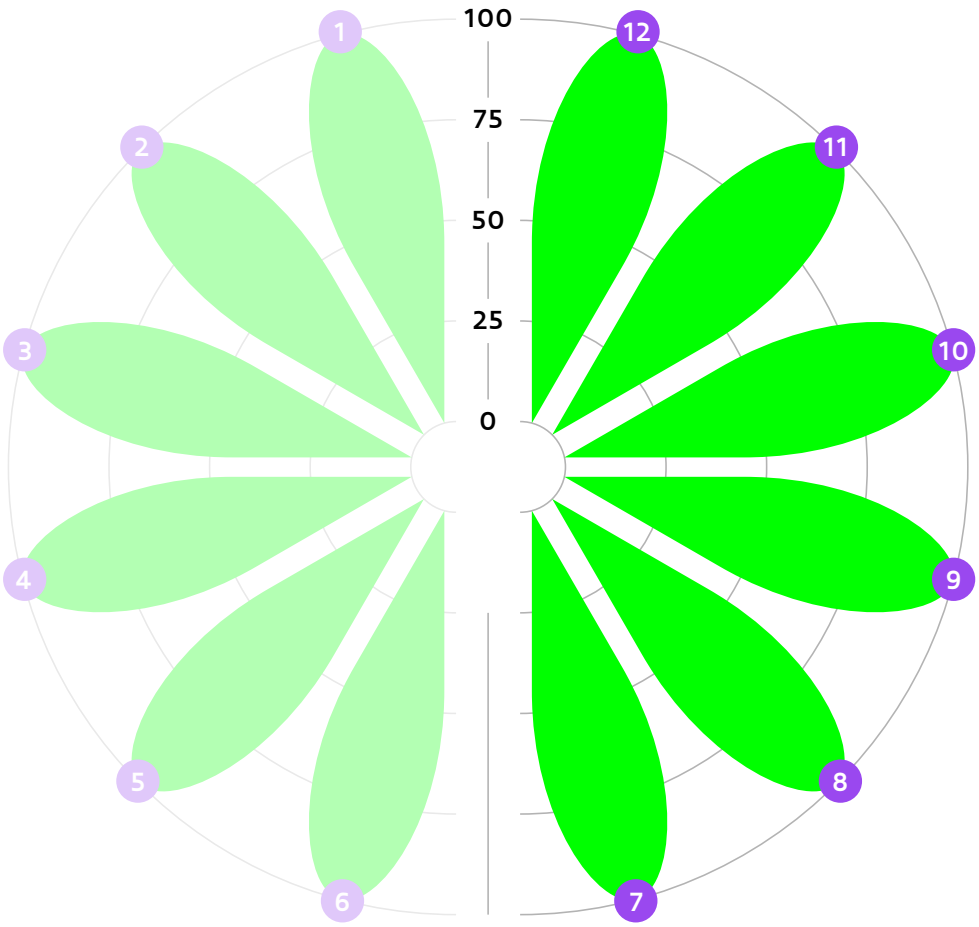
Misinformation and disinformation pose risks to wellbeing that require government action around the world.
Estonia leads in the information quality pillar, followed by Argentina, and Canada. Fourteen countries demonstrate clear governmental action against misinformation. Seventeen countries, across all income levels integrate disinformation awareness into education. Trust in online information is highest in Nigeria, followed by Bangladesh, Germany, and Estonia with generally similar levels across income segments. Viet Nam, Indonesia, and Malaysia are the most active in verifying information accuracy.

Challenges in data safety are more evident in middle-income countries, while cyberbullying needs more policy action around the world.
The top performers in the cybersafety pillar are the United States, France, and Singapore. The United States, Saudi Arabia, and the United Kingdom lead in cybersecurity commitment. More secure internet servers are found in wealthier nations. Australia, China, and Canada lead in user strategies to protect personal data. The United States leads in cyberbullying and cybersafety policies, followed by Canada and France. Across most countries, policies focused on parents are well established. These include resources and digital safety toolkits for parents to deal with cyberbullying. However, policies focused on children and youth, such as e-safety guidelines and provisions for cyber wellness in education curriculum, are less common.

01 Refers to the "Right to disconnect" is defined as the right not to engage in work-related electronic communications during non-work hours.

Capturing Opportunities

The "Capturing Opportunities" sub-index/component examines six pillars comprising enablers of digital adoption and opportunity across a range of contexts. This component captures the pre-requisites for adopting digital technologies and the extent to which opportunities are maximized.



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For the Capturing Opportunities component, data collected for the DWI reveals:

Digital interaction does not always lead to meeting people offline, and some of the least affluent countries are the most dynamic in online activism.

The strongest social connectedness is evidenced in the United Arab Emirates, Chile, Bulgaria, Colombia, and Malaysia. Social media engagement averages 68% across all countries, with advanced economies leading. Meeting new people using digital devices is less common in high-income nations (35%) compared with upper-middle-income (55%) and lower-middle-income countries (59%). China and India lead in online engagement, while Nigeria and Kenya are leaders in online activism. Generally, emerging economies score higher in active online engagement and activism.

Middle-income countries embrace online education and training, but still have a journey ahead in integrating digital skills (e.g. using digital safety tools, ability to verify misinformation) in curricula.

Estonia leads the education and skills pillar, followed by Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, and Kenya. While this reflects a mix of income levels, richer countries generally score higher. Internet access in schools is led by advanced economies, and less affluent nations face challenges in integrating digital skills. Most countries recognize micro-credentials, indicating a widespread trend among both employees and employers to be more open to new types of qualifications. Middle-income countries show strong engagement with digital tools in education, and digital device use for accessing information is also high across this group.

Advanced economies lead in work flexibility, while digital technologies and regulation allow middle-income countries to participate more fully in the knowledge economy.

Estonia, Singapore, Australia, and the United Arab Emirates lead in the work, productivity, and income pillar, with upper-middle-income countries outperforming high-income ones on average. Less affluent countries — including India, Viet Nam, and Bangladesh — have ample room for growth. Remote work frameworks are more advanced in richer nations, while digital nomad visas[02] are prominent in middle-income countries such as Argentina, Colombia, and Brazil. Estonia and Singapore have some of the strongest tech sectors. Ghana and Kenya, meanwhile, have growing tech sectors, demonstrating how the digital economy can empower emerging economies.

Digital technologies are democratizing access to art and entertainment.

Argentina leads in the entertainment and culture pillar, followed by Estonia, the Republic of Korea, India, and Sweden. The DWI notes widespread government support for digital tourism and culture, particularly in wealthier countries. Estonia stands out in experiencing art digitally, while China leads in using technology for creating and sharing art. Middle-income countries generally report greater use of digital devices for consuming artistic and cultural content online compared to their high-income counterparts.

02 "A digital nomad visa is a type of visa that allows you to work remotely for a country registered outside of the country you have chosen to currently live in. Typically, to work in another country, you must have a work permit, and be registered as a taxpayer. This requires you to uproot your entire life back home. Digital nomad visas, on the other hand, have the benefit of becoming a temporary resident of another country, while you work (and pay taxes) in your home country. In the majority of cases, digital nomads are not required to pay taxes in their host country." Source Schengen Visa Info https://www.schengenvisainfo.com/digital-nomad-visa/

There is widespread availability of key digital services for the population, but participatory policymaking remains nascent in some countries.

Seventeen out of the 35 countries have a telecom or ICT regulator for managing digital applications such as e-health and e-education. Meanwhile, Estonia leads in access to services and goods, followed by China and Singapore, with advanced economies dominating the top half of the list. China excels in overall digital health engagement, with lower-middle-income countries surpassing their higher-income counterparts. Digital payments have a 71% engagement rate globally. China leads in online shopping (80%), while Sweden and the United Kingdom do well in managing finances online, additionally, Estonia, Sweden, China, and Colombia show strong engagement with transportation technologies (e.g. car sharing or public transport apps).

Universal internet access is a goal around the world, but some disparities highlight the need for further government support.

The United Kingdom, followed by Canada and France, leads in social cohesion, which focuses on universal access policies, digital literacy for all, and digital inclusion). Almost all countries have universal access and service policies, while 16 countries, mostly high-income, feature comprehensive regulatory frameworks for information and communications technology accessibility. Digital literacy initiatives outside formal education show progress across countries, with notable examples in middle-income countries. The International Telecommunication Union gender parity score indicates that more women than men use the internet in some affluent countries, while Germany, the United Kingdom, and Estonia lead in socio-economic inclusion.

Some countries still require infrastructure investment to reach universal connectivity.

The United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait excel in connectivity, with Malaysia and Bulgaria challenging the notion that only the wealthiest economies provide comprehensive connectivity. Despite widespread 4G coverage, some emerging economies face challenges in network infrastructure. Internet penetration rates vary significantly, with high-income countries at 93%, upper-middle-income countries at 79%, and lower-middle-income countries at 53%. Affordability issues reflect economic disparities, with people in richer nations spending less than 0.1% of their income on connectivity, compared with 2.3% and 5.4% in upper-middle and lower-middle-income countries.

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sync

Sync is a digital wellbeing initiative by King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture (Ithra) with a vision to create a world where we are all in control of our digital lives.

The program is guided by extensive research - in collaboration with global entities - to understand the implications of technology and how it's affecting our lives, and translate the knowledge we gain into awareness campaigns, tools, experiences, educational content and programs aiming to raise global awareness around the topic.

sync.ithra.com