

# Could being online actually be good for you? New study reveals a surprising finding

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Spending time online may boost your well-being, the results of a large international study have revealed.

Researchers at the University of Oxford examined 16 years of data from 2.4 million people, tracking things like life satisfaction and sense of purpose. They found that people with access to the web scored 8% higher in measures of well-being compared with those without access.

"We were surprised to find a positive correlation between well-being and [internet use](#) across the majority of the thousands of models we used for our analysis," Matti Vuorre, an experimental psychologist and researcher in the study, said in a May 13 news release.

The study mined Gallup World Poll data from 2006 to 2022. Researchers examined answers from 2,414,294 participants aged 15 and up and across 168 countries. This scope offered them a more zoomed-out perspective than previous studies, where researchers focused primarily on [young people](#) in the U.S. and Europe.

"We set out to address this gap by analyzing how internet access, mobile internet access and active internet use might predict psychological well-being on a global level across the life stages. To our knowledge, no other research has directly grappled with these issues and addressed the worldwide scope of the debate," Andrew Przybylski, a psychologist and another researcher in the study, said in the release.

Vuorre and Przybylski found that the association between internet access and well-being were consistently positive. According to the study, people who had access to the internet reported greater life satisfaction, positive experiences and social [life satisfaction](#). They also reported lower scores in negative experiences than individuals who did not have access.

These results fly in the face of years of concern over the potential harms of internet use, which hit a crescendo in recent weeks as President Biden signed legislation that could lead to a national TikTok ban.

"We hope our findings bring some greater context to the screentime debate," Przybylski said.

The researchers would like to see this work go further. Psychologists and other social scientists interested in studying internet use and [mental health](#) are aware there are troves of behavioral data that are simply out of reach.

"We urge platform providers to share their detailed data on user behavior with [social scientists](#) working in this field for transparent and independent scientific inquiry, to enable a more comprehensive understanding of internet technologies in our daily lives," Przybylski said.

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