



BANKWEST CURTIN ECONOMICS CENTRE

WA's Digital Divide

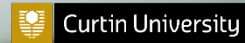
IPAA WA Seamless Delivery conference, 8 September 2021

Alan Duncan

Director, Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre

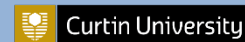


@BankwestCurtin #WADigitalDivide



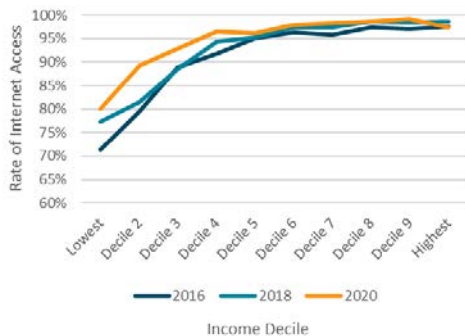
WA's digital divide

Dimensions and data

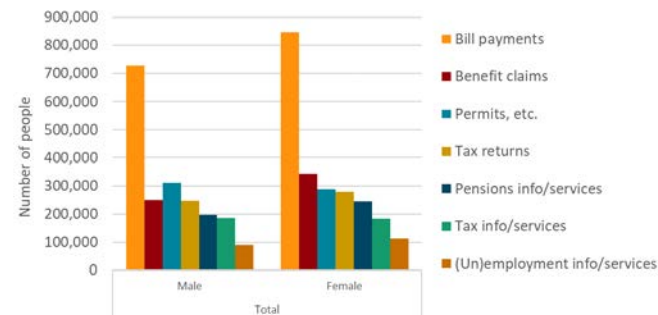


Access
Ability
Affordability

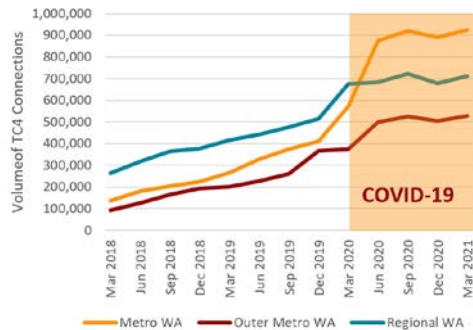
Internet access by income



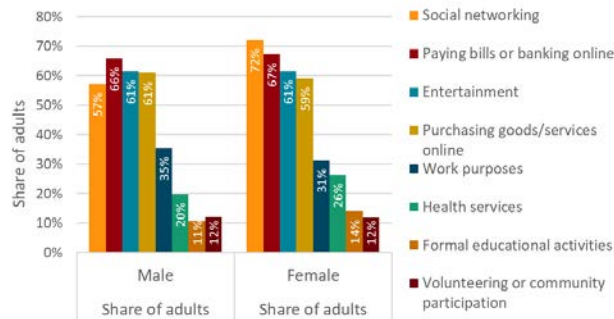
Government services accessed online



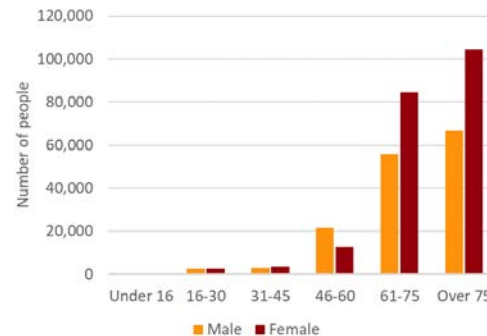
Data use by WA region



Reasons for internet use



Lack of knowledge/confidence



How to narrow the digital divide?

Issues

- Despite the move towards increased online access to social and community services, but with little in the way of a strategic plan to manage the transition.
- Lack of confidence in digital technologies among the elderly needs to be reduced.
- Inequalities in digital services access remains for those in lower socio-economic situations
- Access to high quality digital services remains inferior across regional areas of the state – in terms of data and physical infrastructure
- Digital disconnectedness can amplify the sense of isolation, and in turn, lead to poor mental health, but digital connectedness is not, in and of itself, a solution to isolation.

Solutions

- Need for an integrated ‘whole of state’ digital strategy – for example, a Digital Advisory body with representation from community, industry, and all levels of government.
- Public funded approach to common digital infrastructure
- Older age cohorts need support in basic IT literacy and skills, but also need to feel secure and have trust in engaging in online services such as banking, online tax returns, and health and government services.
- Digital strategies for the elderly need to link to other aged strategies – such as Aging in Place.
- Federally funded programs need to be connected to local governments and community organisations.
- Alternative arrangements for those unable to access or engage with online government services need to be provided
- Privacy rights need to be assured, and benchmarked with international best practice.