



Major survey on networked Switzerland: Digital networking binds Switzerland together

How is Switzerland networked? How does the typical Swiss person keep in touch with friends and relatives? What would we rather go without – a car or a fast Internet connection? How long does it take for a new place of residence to feel like home if we move to a new region for work or love? And how do we stay in touch with our old home? A representative study by research institute sotomo on behalf of Swisscom reveals new, exciting aspects to the question of how the Swiss population is networked and connected.

The results of the survey speak for themselves: There are no digital provinces in Switzerland and there is no networking gap between urban and rural areas, as is often maintained. Whether it's a mobile phone or Internet at home or on the move, digital networking is almost as important to those living in rural areas as it is to those in towns and cities – they would all rather be without a car than an Internet and mobile connection. Traditional methods of communication, such as fixed-line telephony, letter and parcel post have declined in importance just as much in the countryside as in towns and cities. The digital divide is therefore a myth – and digital networking has now become the most powerful social bond in Switzerland.

The Swiss increasingly maintain their friendships online

It is no longer possible to imagine life without mobile communication. This is also clear from the ways in which people keep in touch with their friends. For 73% this includes visiting them at home. But almost as important, at 72%, is exchanging text messages by SMS or messaging services such as Whatsapp – digital networking in the truest sense of the word. 'Phone calls' and 'going out' are seen as less important (56% and 53% respectively). Here too, the differences between urban and rural areas are negligible. Even what is perceived as typical of rural areas plays a subordinate role: only a little under a third (32%) use encounters in their locality to maintain friendships and clubs and associations play a role for less than a quarter (24%). 'Friends' are seen as particularly important throughout



Switzerland – at 62% they are the most frequently named factor that signifies ‘home’, surprisingly ranked even higher than ‘family’ (57%), ‘locality’ (52%) and ‘dialect’ (38%).

Language barrier for online dating

According to the study, some 80% of people in Switzerland are in a committed relationship, and more than one in ten couples (13%) met online. Among 33 to 55-year-olds, considered to be ‘digital immigrants’, the figure is as high as one in seven. A striking feature is that cantons with less developed urban centres are particularly into online dating. For instance, in Aargau one in five couples (21%) met online, while in Thurgau the figure is 18%. Despite popular opinion, online dating is therefore not a characteristic specific to major cities. What is also fascinating is that there are clear differences between language regions: on the other side of the language barrier in French-speaking Switzerland, the Internet is a far less popular platform for meeting partners than in German-speaking Switzerland (only 6% in Geneva, for example).

The results of the survey show that digital networking clearly outstrips other types of networking. The study also confirms once again the enormous potentials that lie dormant in digital networking, such as partially compensating for mobility. Three out of four of the working population currently access work e-mails from home and more than half carry out other work for their employers from home. More than a third (35%) would like to do so more frequently, particularly among those whose work involves them being frequently online and who have long commutes. By institutionalising and further developing home office models, digitalisation therefore has great potential to ease the burden on transport infrastructure, something which is urgently required.

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Research institute sotomo surveyed 14,174 people about various online channels from 11 to 23 February 2016 on behalf of Swisscom (blick.ch, lematin.ch, bluewin.ch, facebook.com). The results are weighted by socioeconomic criteria. They are representative of Switzerland’s 18 to 75-year-old resident population.

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Press release

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