

TELEPHONE ACCESS

The number of telephone connections – more precisely the number of fixed and mobile telecommunications access paths – has increased dramatically in OECD countries. This is associated both with growing use of the Internet and, particularly in recent years, with the growing popularity of cellular mobile telephones.

Definition

For the OECD member countries, total communication access paths are the total of fixed lines (standard analogue access lines and ISDN lines) plus the number of DSL, cable modem subscribers and mobile telephone subscribers. For Brazil, China, India, Russian Federation and South Africa, total communication access paths are the sum of main telephone lines in operation, ISDN lines, DSL and cable modem subscribers and cellular mobile telephone subscribers.

Long-term trends

Access to communications networks continues to expand in all OECD countries. At the end of 2005, the total number of fixed and mobile telecommunications paths had increased to more than 1.5 billion. This represented a 8.8% increase over 2004 and an average increase of more than 8.5% in each year since 1997.

Growth was not occurring across all access paths. The number of cellular mobile communication subscribers continues to climb. An additional 97 million mobile subscribers were added in 2005. By way of contrast, some segments of the fixed connection market have begun to decrease. The number of fixed access lines decreased in both 2003, 2004 and 2005 and will most likely continue to do so over the coming years.

By 2005, all but two OECD countries – Mexico and Turkey – had more than one telecommunications access path per inhabitant and seventeen countries reported more than one and a half per inhabitant – Spain, Austria, Australia, Portugal, New Zealand, Germany, the Netherlands, Greece, Norway, Switzerland, Finland, United Kingdom, Denmark, Italy, Sweden, Iceland and Luxembourg.

Among the five non-OECD countries shown here, growth has been spectacular in China, which had less than one access path per 100 inhabitants in 1991 but 60 in 2005. The Russian Federation has now the highest number of paths per 100 inhabitants among these countries. In spite of steady growth over the period, there were only about 13 access paths per 100 inhabitants in India in 2005.

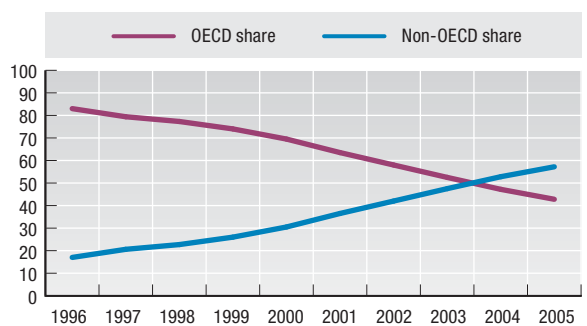
A growing trend toward liberalisation, and the consequent use of prepaid cards in competitive markets, has helped drive the growth of mobile communications in both OECD and non-OECD countries. In 2004 the total number of cellular mobile users in non-member countries overtook the total for the OECD area.


Comparability

For OECD countries, the data are collected according to agreed definitions and are highly comparable. The data shown for the five large non-OECD countries were partly collected according to the OECD definitions and partly provided by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU). The definition used by the ITU is slightly narrower than that used by the OECD, although data reported for the two sets of countries can be regarded as broadly comparable.

Mobile cellular subscribers

OECD and non-OECD share in the world total, 1996-2005



StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/270124044738>

Sources

- ITU (2006), *World Telecommunications Indicators Database*.
- OECD (2007), *OECD Communications Outlook 2007*, OECD, Paris.

Further information

Analytical publications

- Caspary, G. and D. O'Connor (2003), *Providing Low-cost Information Technology Access to Rural Communities in Developing Countries: What Works? What Pays?*, OECD Development Centre Working Papers, No. 229, OECD, Paris.
- OECD (2006), *OECD Information Technology Outlook 2006*, OECD, Paris.


Websites

- OECD Telecommunications and Internet Policy, www.oecd.org/sti/telecom.

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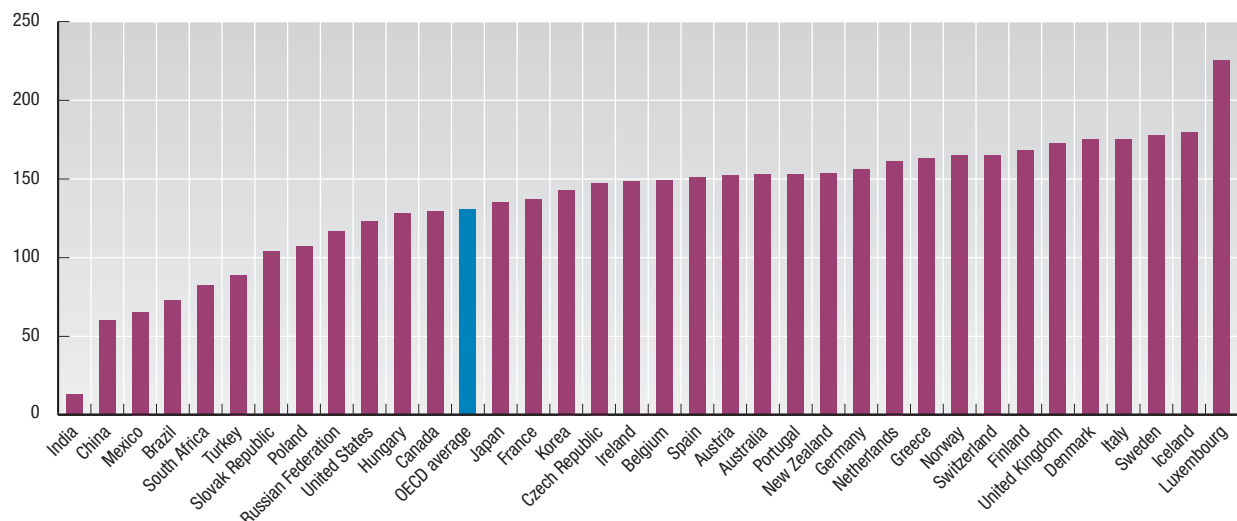
Number of telecommunication access paths per 100 inhabitants

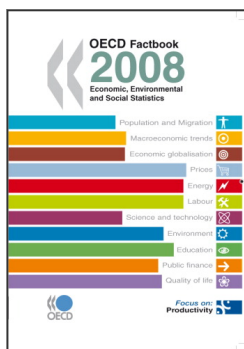
	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Australia	51.2	53.7	55.5	62.3	72.9	76.8	81.1	86.5	96.5	111.5	120.6	129.6	140.5	152.6
Austria	46.4	48.1	49.8	51.6	54.0	59.4	72.2	97.7	120.2	126.1	128.3	133.7	145.7	152.2
Belgium	43.1	44.3	46.1	48.3	51.8	59.1	63.6	76.5	100.0	121.0	128.3	135.1	143.0	149.2
Canada	60.9	62.9	65.9	57.1	72.5	76.7	82.5	86.5	96.7	106.9	111.3	116.9	122.9	129.2
Czech Republic	17.7	19.1	21.1	19.0	29.3	36.8	45.7	55.9	80.3	104.0	117.8	127.8	137.2	147.5
Denmark	62.2	65.9	69.8	77.2	86.9	87.2	96.8	109.4	124.4	137.7	148.7	156.4	166.7	175.0
Finland	61.4	53.5	54.4	55.5	84.8	97.5	112.6	121.7	131.7	141.2	148.9	153.0	158.0	168.3
France	52.1	53.5	55.0	57.8	57.8	63.3	70.4	84.4	97.9	109.4	112.6	119.5	127.7	136.7
Germany	45.5	48.7	52.6	53.7	57.0	59.6	66.3	77.4	107.2	118.7	123.7	131.8	145.8	156.2
Greece	42.8	45.2	48.4	51.1	54.7	59.1	70.1	87.6	107.1	125.8	137.3	145.1	151.1	163.2
Hungary	12.7	15.2	18.8	24.1	30.6	37.5	44.1	51.2	65.3	82.9	100.9	112.5	121.5	128.3
Iceland	59.5	61.0	64.0	67.2	74.6	81.6	96.8	120.3	134.4	141.6	154.0	163.4	168.1	179.5
Ireland	32.5	34.3	36.8	40.1	46.5	54.9	68.2	86.9	96.3	114.8	121.9	128.9	137.8	148.5
Italy	43.1	44.7	47.1	50.7	55.3	65.1	79.8	96.7	117.5	133.8	137.8	147.3	159.1	175.1
Japan	47.9	49.0	51.6	58.5	71.2	80.2	87.0	94.1	102.0	109.3	117.3	125.0	130.9	134.8
Korea	36.3	38.8	41.7	45.6	50.8	60.4	75.1	98.3	113.1	126.7	136.4	134.9	140.7	143.0
Luxembourg	52.8	55.3	58.5	62.7	70.9	77.8	83.8	98.4	125.7	155.0	163.4	177.9	206.2	225.5
Mexico	8.2	9.1	10.1	10.5	10.7	11.7	13.9	19.2	26.8	35.6	40.5	45.6	55.3	65.5
Netherlands	49.8	51.3	53.0	55.5	59.0	69.3	70.8	95.8	123.1	125.3	128.7	139.9	162.4	161.5
New Zealand	47.0	48.0	53.0	56.7	58.8	65.1	79.1	86.0	102.2	108.5	111.6	121.0	135.6	153.2
Norway	59.5	62.7	68.8	78.6	85.4	94.3	102.6	114.6	125.8	132.7	138.1	144.8	159.8	165.0
Poland	10.3	11.5	13.1	15.0	17.5	21.5	26.9	34.8	46.2	58.0	67.7	77.2	93.3	107.3
Portugal	30.6	33.8	36.5	39.2	43.8	53.3	68.8	84.2	102.3	114.7	120.3	135.5	140.8	153.1
Slovak Republic	15.5	16.8	18.9	21.1	23.7	29.6	37.2	43.0	55.4	68.6	80.4	92.6	103.5	103.7
Spain	35.7	37.1	38.4	40.7	46.9	51.6	59.2	80.3	103.7	116.8	135.2	139.1	138.7	151.2
Sweden	76.2	77.5	83.7	91.0	96.8	104.5	115.2	126.8	141.4	151.8	161.0	171.2	172.2	177.5
Switzerland	63.4	65.3	67.1	69.6	68.0	74.9	83.0	100.6	122.2	130.7	139.0	147.9	154.2	165.3
Turkey	16.3	20.6	22.5	23.7	24.1	27.8	32.3	40.2	49.6	54.4	60.7	66.4	75.7	89.0
United Kingdom	47.9	50.8	54.3	58.6	63.0	65.7	76.0	94.7	114.2	130.3	137.2	143.9	159.1	172.4
United States	59.7	62.1	65.9	70.9	65.6	71.1	76.4	82.6	90.8	94.7	100.3	103.7	112.6	122.8
OECD average	43.1	45.2	48.0	51.6	53.8	59.3	66.2	76.7	90.0	99.2	105.9	111.8	121.0	130.6
Brazil	7.2	7.4	8.2	9.2	10.9	13.2	16.4	23.7	31.6	38.3	42.2	48.5	61.7	73.0
China	1.0	1.5	2.4	3.7	5.0	6.7	8.9	12.1	18.2	25.2	32.5	42.4	52.1	60.0
India	0.8	0.9	1.1	1.3	1.6	2.0	2.4	2.9	3.6	4.4	5.3	6.6	8.7	12.9
Russian Federation	15.4	15.8	16.2	16.9	17.6	19.4	20.3	22.0	24.1	28.0	36.4	49.7	77.7	111.3
South Africa	9.2	9.4	10.3	11.1	12.4	15.2	19.3	24.1	29.6	34.5	40.2	46.6	54.9	82.2

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Number of telecommunication access paths per 100 inhabitants, 2005

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