

Internet Usage Habits in Yemen

Findings of an Internet Survey

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Social Research & Development Center (SRDC)

www.srdcyemen.org

About the Social Research and Development Center (SRDC)

The Social Research and Development Center (SRDC) is an independent, non-government and not-for-profit research and development organization. SRDC is licensed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor with a registration certificate no. 536 issued in July 2011. It offers quantitative, qualitative, communication and market research services with best possible quality.

SRDC's mission lies on working with local and international organizations, donor community, government institutions, and local communities to provide solutions for development challenges, building sound development models and contributing to Yemen's sustainable development. Additionally, the center strives to fulfill all research needs of development organizations, the donor community, private sector, local NGOs and government institutions together with strengthening political and social participation, strengthening NGOs, small and medium-sized businesses, supporting entrepreneurship with the aim of making them more effective and efficient and achieve more social impact. We also work towards empowering women, children and young people.

SRDC offers a wide range of services for local and international organizations, development institutions, the donor community, government organizations, private sector, including, among several others, qualitative and quantitative research services, economic, social and demographic studies, monitoring and evaluation and needs assessments. Additionally, the center offers consultancy services in the fields of management, marketing strategic planning for SMEs, NGOs and entrepreneurs.

SRDC's staff has long-standing experience in qualitative and quantitative research, NGOs management, running and supervising internationally-funded projects as well as offering managerial, strategic planning consultancies. The center enjoys excellent relations with several NGOs and has strategic partnerships and alliances with many research institutions that would allow conducting large research and consultancy projects.

In 2013, SRDC conducted several projects for the Save the Children International including the National Dialogue Survey, Empowerment of Women and Young People and Economic Development as well as Health and Children's Rights Project. It also

conducted many self-funded projects including Water Security, Measuring Performance of the State's Executive Body, etc.

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1. Introduction

The current survey is part of SRDC's work on market research and internet polls. This survey was conducted last August and it targeted a random sample of internet users through the mailing lists kept by the Center.

1.1. About the Internet in Yemen

Only 14.2%¹ of Yemen's population has access to internet and they are mostly in urban areas. However, the Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Technology (MTIT) says the percentage is 17% and the number of internet subscribers is 595,759, with a sizable portion for commercial use. This includes both ADSL and Dial up subscriptions. According to MTIT, there are over 4 million "casual"² users of internet in Yemen, but it is not clear who they come up with this statistics.

1.2. Why E-Polls?

The introduction of internet has made a major breakthrough in how people communicate and it has also made the global village even much smaller and more connected than ever before and it did away with spatial and temporal differences and considerations. The Internet has also changed the way people do business. On the other hand, there has been a major tendency around the world to move to e-polls to replace face-to-face and telephone surveys, most particularly in countries whose populations have access to internet. Even in countries where internet coverage is limited, there is a huge increase in internet users and companies are working hard to invent devices that would make internet cheaper and available to all citizens of the world.

In Yemen, there is a large expansion in internet usage through fixed broadband and people are now turning to mobile internet provided through the mobile phone operators. The four mobile phone operators combined have 12 million subscribers (almost half of Yemen's overall population). Recently, access to internet through WiMAX and mobile internet modems has been on the rise. The key challenge now is how to provide cheaper and faster internet service, be that for mobile or fixed internet. This can be evidenced by the number of internet subscribers in Yemen which was just

¹ This is according to the Internet World Statistics (<http://www.internetworldstats.com/middle.htm>).

² Those are internet users who have no internet subscriptions with the Yemen Net or TeleYemen (Internet Service Providers) and they have access to internet through internet cafes, friend's computer, etc.

7000 in 2000 and it rose to 581,752 subscribers in 2011, according to the Statistics Department at MTIT.

1.3. About the Sample

This survey was conducted on a random sample of internet users in Yemen; 500 internet users selected randomly from the mailing list kept by SRDC were contacted to complete the survey. The study sought to know the consumption patterns of internet, types of devices used, the favored times for surfing the internet, etc. Out of 500 questionnaires sent to the selected respondents, 107 questionnaires were completed and sent back. Later, four questionnaires were excluded as they contain missed data. The response rate for this survey is 21%.

The low response rate is common in internet surveys and there is another problem connected with internet sample since the overwhelming majority of people in Yemen has no access to internet.

2. Demographics

2.1. Age

About 51%³ of respondent fall within the age group 36 – 50 years, 34% are within the age group 18 – 25 and 16% fall within the age group 36 – 50.

³ All numbers are rounded to the nearest integer

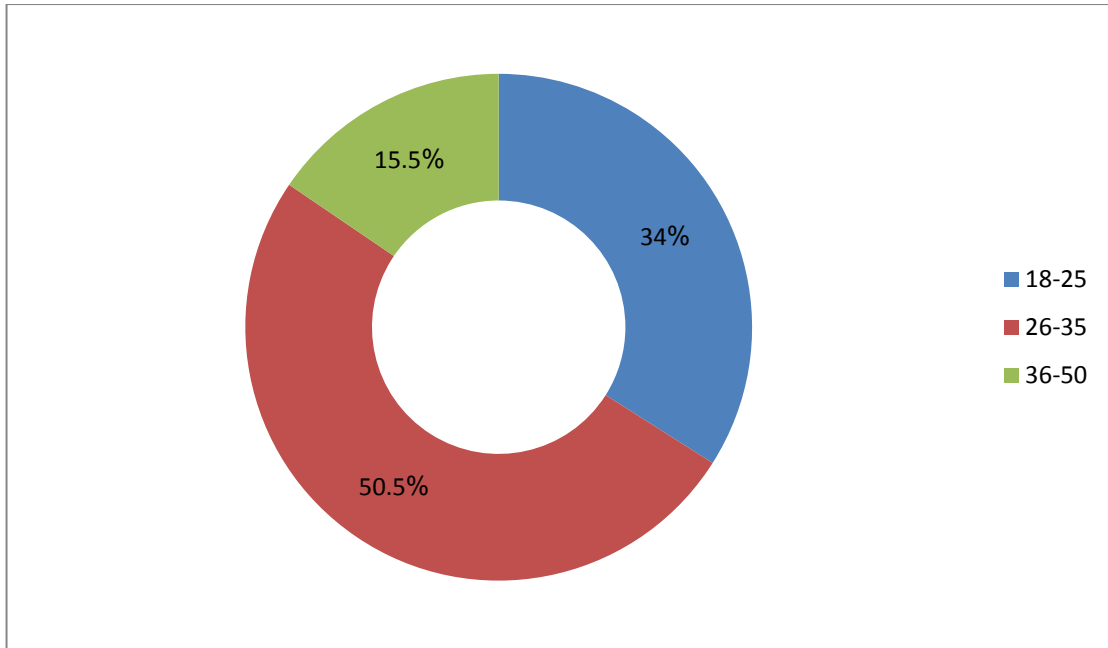


Figure1: age of respondent

2.2. Gender

The overwhelming majority of respondents are males since they account for 90% while female respondents accounted for 10% only. In terms of internet usage, there is a big gap between males and females in Yemen and most internet subscriptions are made by males.

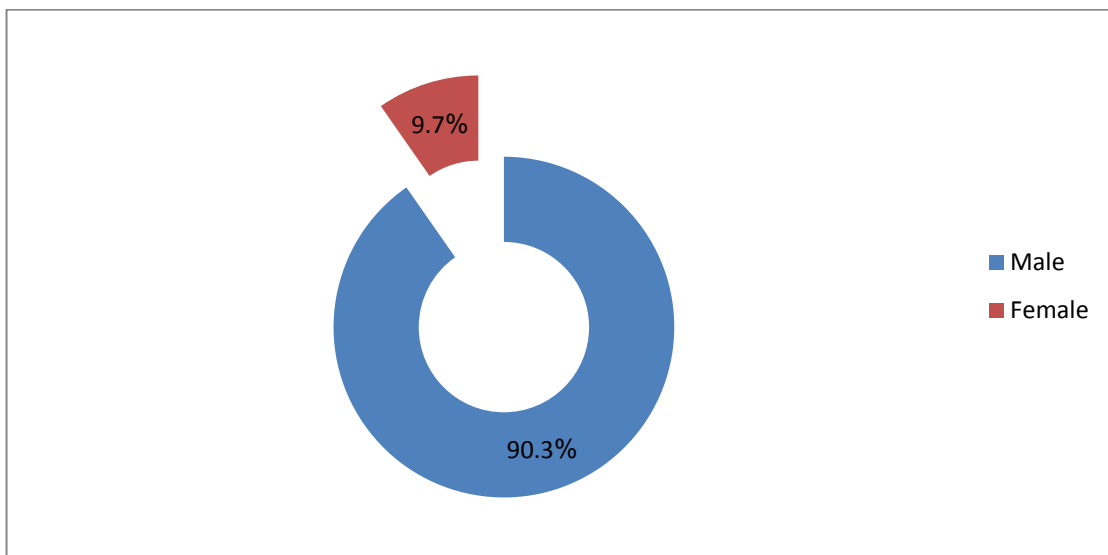


Figure 2 :Gender of Respondent

2.3 Educational Level

The majority of respondents are BA holders at 57%. This is followed by postgraduates who account for 16% and then secondary school certificate holders at 14% and holders of technical and vocational certificates at 12%.

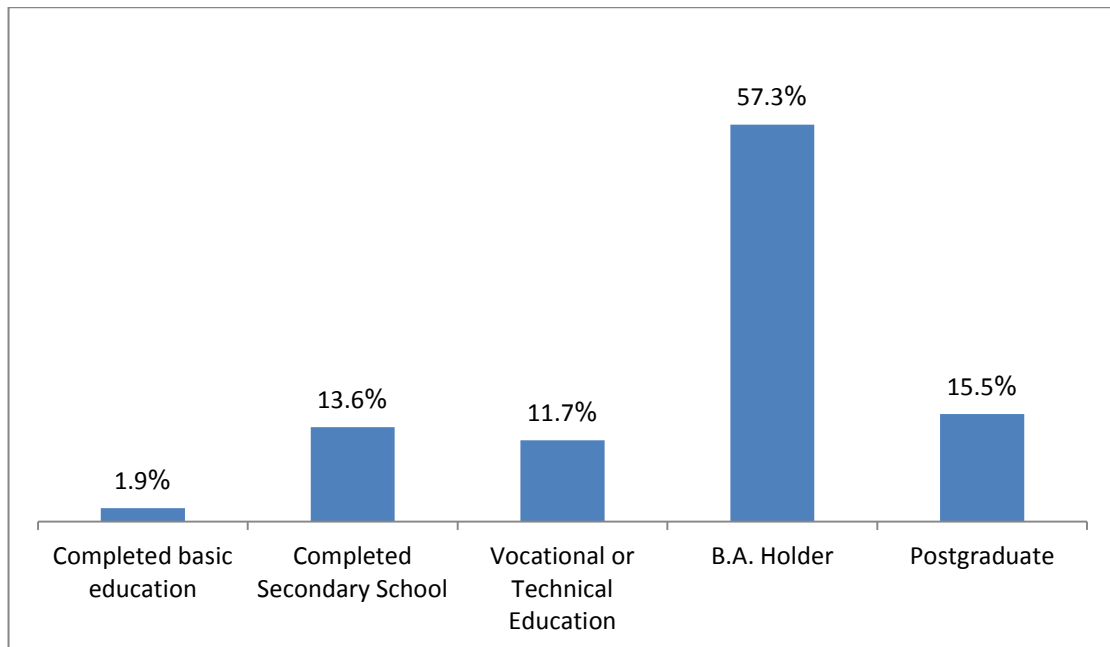


Figure3 :Education Level

2.4 Marital Status

Half of respondents (48%) are married and have children, followed by singles who account for 44%. Married people with no children make up about 6% while those divorced or widowed account for 2%.

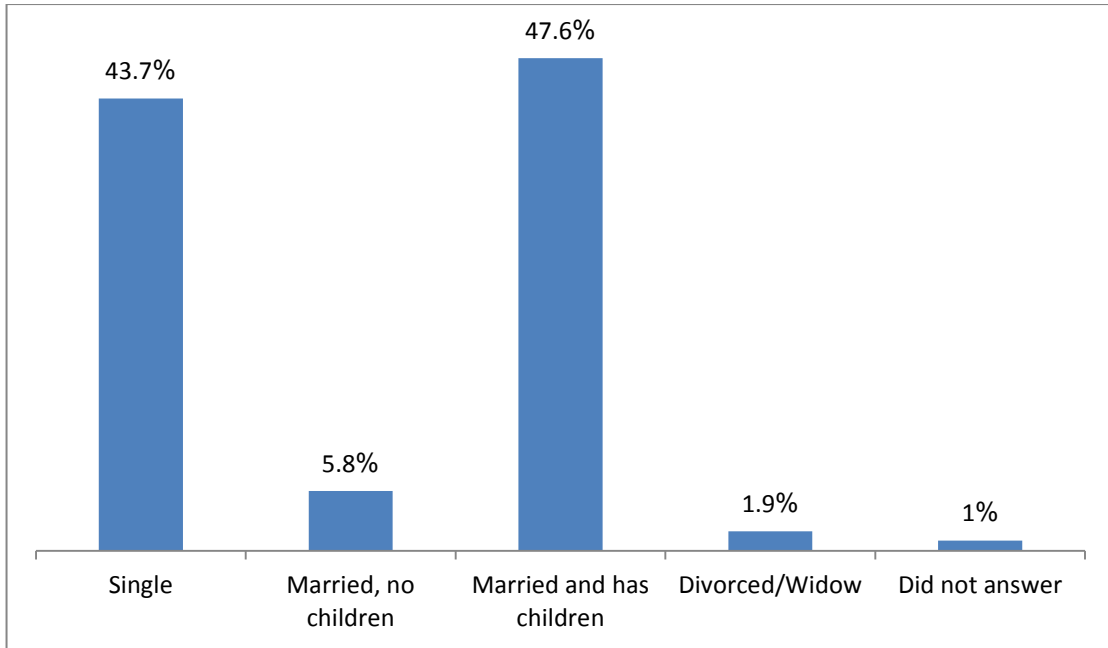


Figure 4 :Marital Status of Respondent

3. General Findings

3.1 Place of Internet Access

Asking respondents about the place from which they access the internet, the majority (69%) stated they access the internet from their homes, 13% reported they access internet from their workplace, 12% stated they access the internet from the internet café and 4% mentioned they use their smart phones to access the internet.

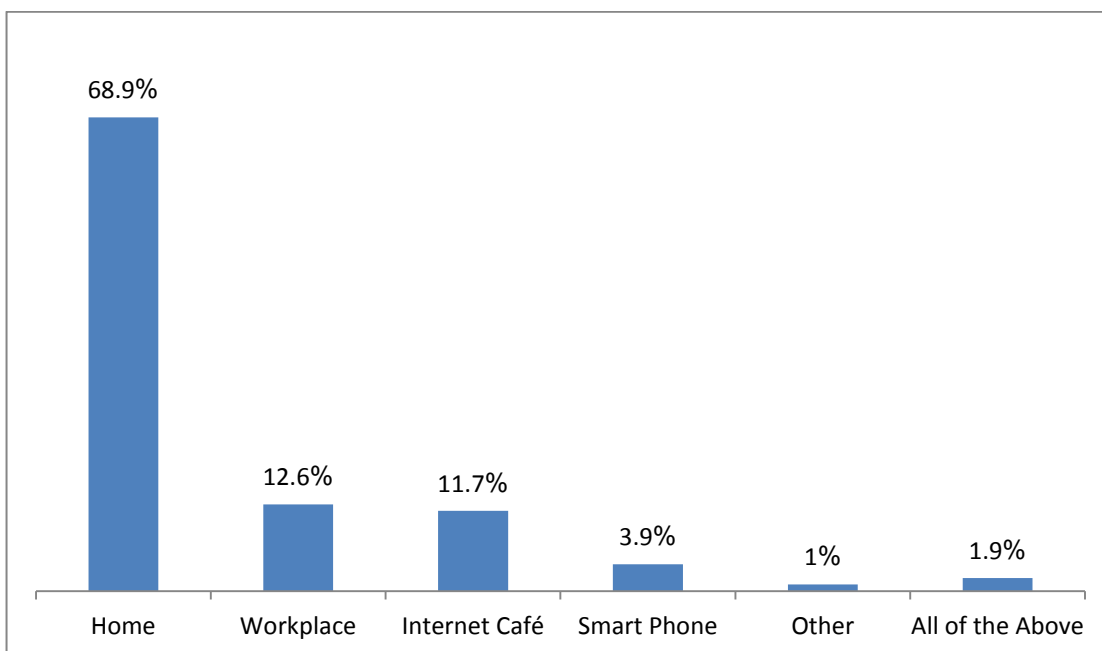


Figure 5 :From where do you access the internet?

3.2 Device Used to Access the Internet

The majority of respondents (64%) use their laptops to access the internet, while 21% use their desktops to access the internet and 12% stated they use their smart phones to access the internet. This clearly indicates that the tendency to use laptops and smart phones to access the internet is on the rise.

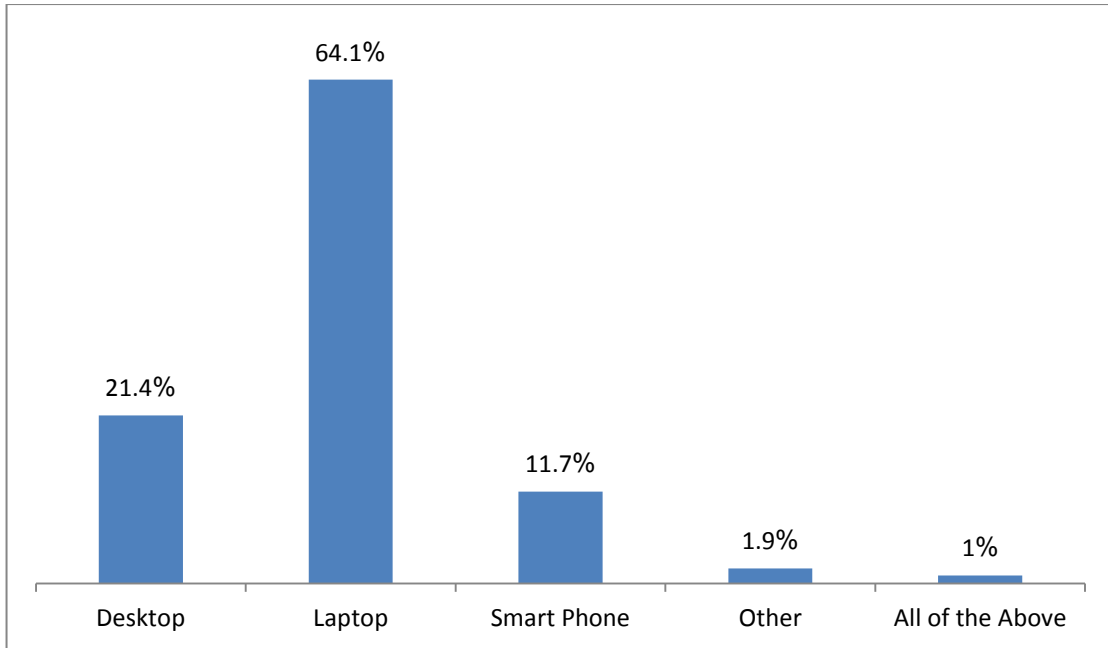


Figure 6 :Type of Device Used to Access the Internet

3.3 Ownership of Devices Used to Access Internet

As to the ownership of the devices used to access the internet (regardless of being a desktop, laptop or smart phone), the majority of respondents (56%) stated they are the lone users of the device, 24% stated it is a communal device and 19% reported they are the main users of the device.

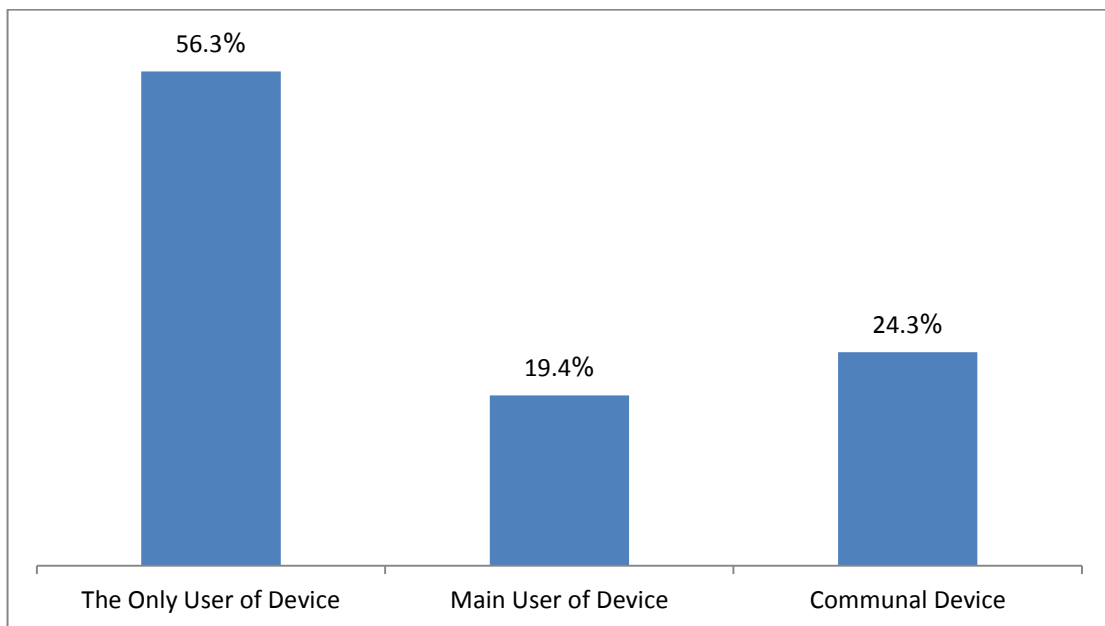


Figure 7 :Ownership of Devices Used in Surfing the Internet

3.4 Frequency of Internet Usage

About 68% of respondents revealed they use the internet more than once each day, 20% mentioned they use it once a day, while 5% noted they use the internet once per week.

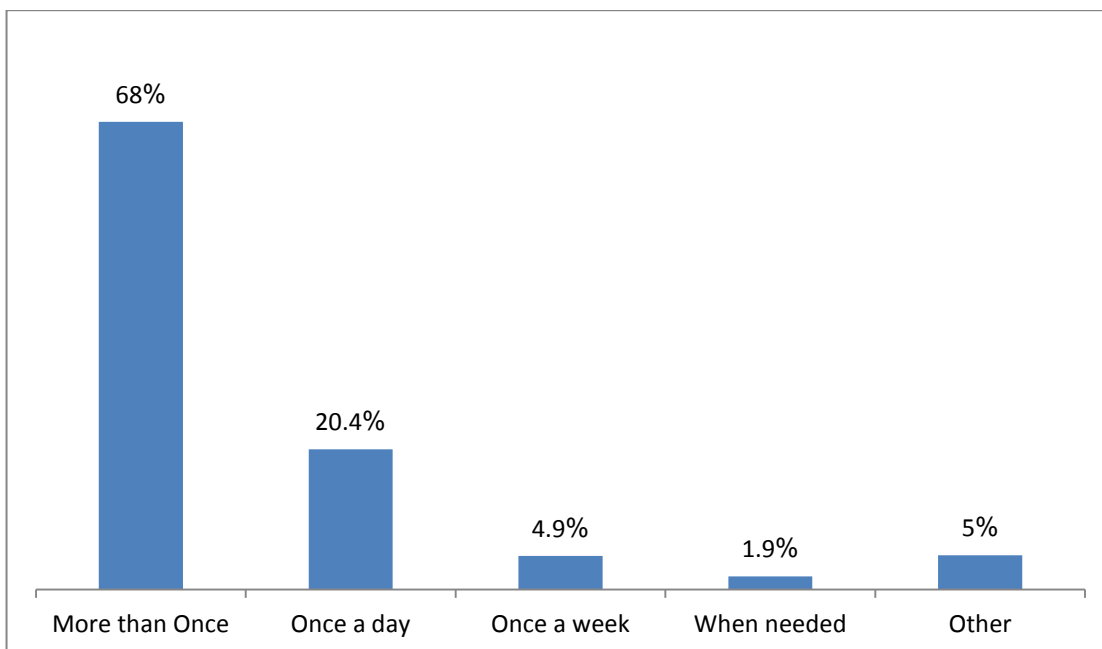


Figure 8 :Frequency of Internet Usage

3.5 Number of Hours Spent in Surfing the Internet

Slightly more than half of respondents (52%) spend 2–5 hours in surfing the internet, while 18% spend 6–10 hours in surfing the internet and another 18% spend only one hour in surfing the internet. About 8% of respondents stated they spend more than 10 hours and 4% spend less than one hour in internet surfing.

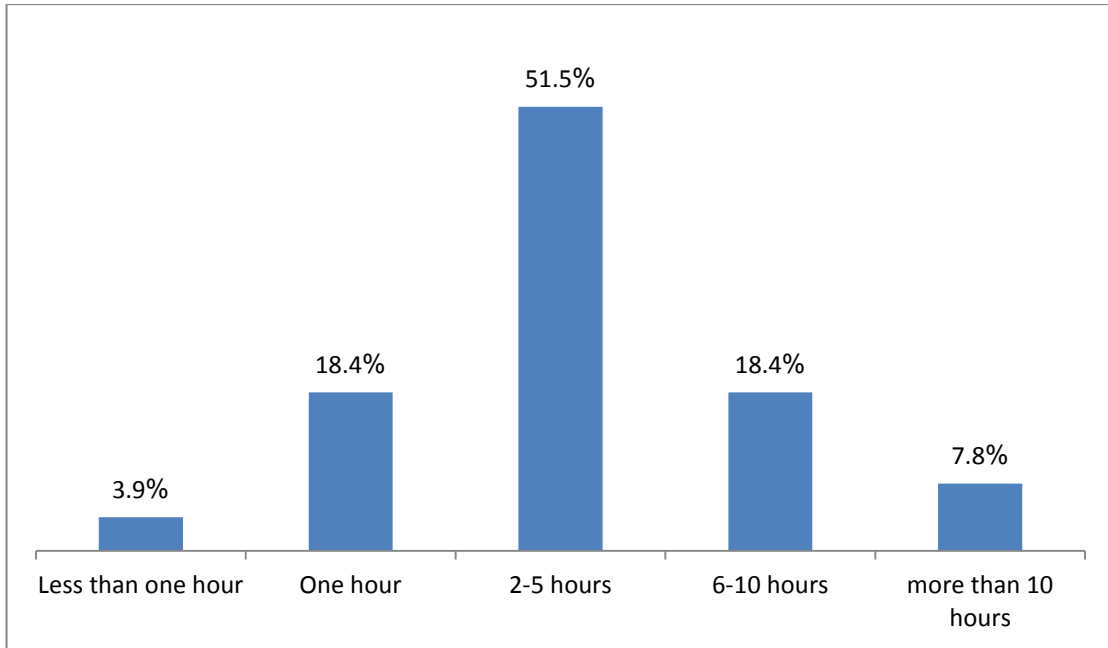


Figure 9 :Number of Hours Spent in Internet Surfing

3.6 Times Favored for Internet Surfing

As to the favored times for surfing the internet, the overwhelming majority of respondents (64%) prefer the night, while 20% prefer to surf the internet in the morning and 10% prefer to surf the internet in the afternoon.

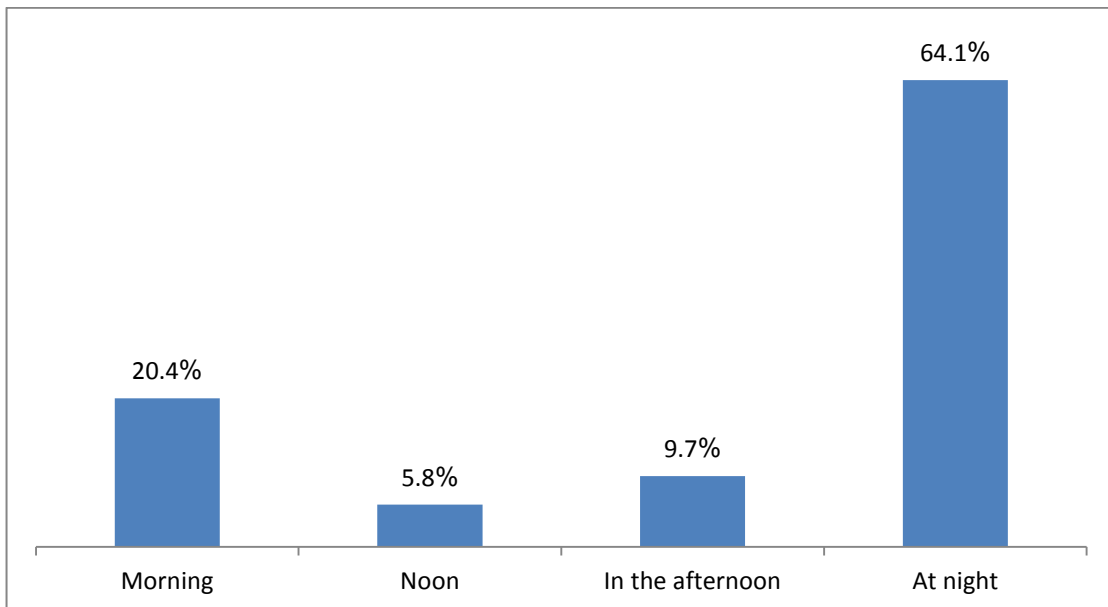


Figure 10 :Favored Times for Surfing the Internet

3.7 What Respondents Do with the Internet?

Half of respondents (51%) spend their time using the Facebook, 19% spend their time searching for information and books, 13% use the internet for e-mails, 6% spend their time following news and 11% spend their time doing all of the above.

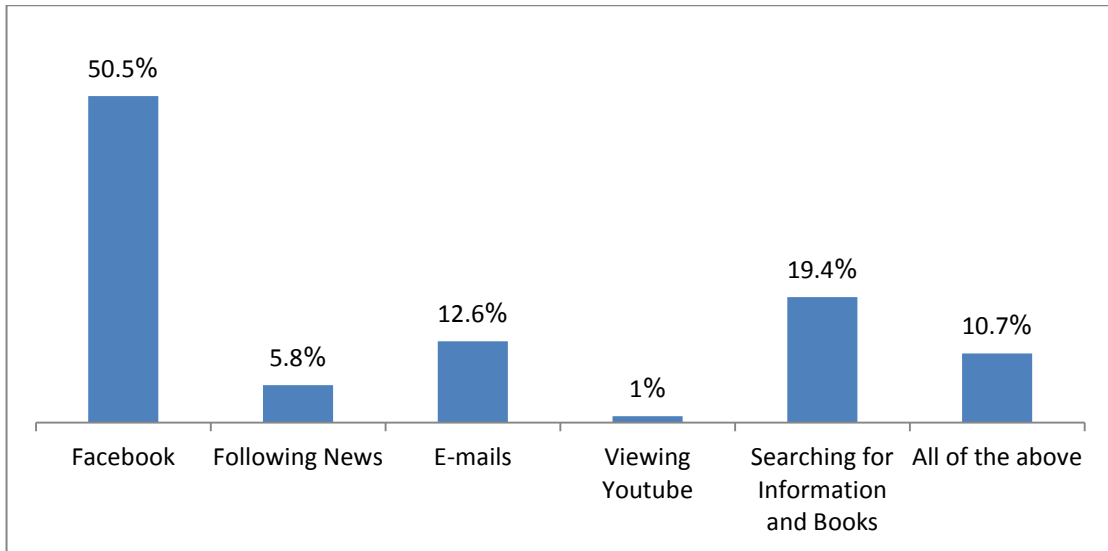


Figure 11 :What Respondents Do with the Internet?

4. Conclusion:

Although the sample size is small, this survey provides some indicators about internet usage in Yemen. It also provides some information about places from which the internet is being accessed, the devices used, times favored and things done on the internet. This survey reveals that laptops are increasingly replacing the desktops. It also reveals that using smartphones to access the internet is on the rise too.

Based on the findings of this survey, home is considered the best place for accessing the internet and it seems that sharing devices is declining especially when the majority stated that they use their own devices to access the internet.

Additionally, the survey reveals that internet is becoming more and more important in people's lives since the majority of respondents surf the internet on a daily basis and they spend some 2-5 hours in using the internet. Night is thought to be the best time for surfing the internet and the interests of respondents range between following social networks, most particularly Facebook, to checking e-mails and viewing YouTube.