



15 September, 2021

Latest research shows broadband-enabled households saved time and connected more during COVID-19

New research from consultancy firm Accenture, commissioned by NBN Co, found that Australians continue to derive immense value from the Internet and that COVID-19 has amplified Australians' reliance on services over the **nbn™** network for essential tasks, entertainment, and connection.¹

This is shown by both the time that households spend and the importance they place on connectivity enriching their lives and enabling them to do more of what they value most in life.

Key findings include:

- Two out of three **nbn** customers² stated were reliant on the **nbn™** network to stay in touch with loved ones during COVID-19.
- 5.6 million Australian households primarily access the **nbn™** network for essential life tasks like email, banking, telehealth, and working remotely.
- Access to internet connectivity saved **nbn** customers 170 hours per year by enabling essential tasks to be performed online.
- The vast majority (91 per cent) of customers surveyed state access to the **nbn™** network enables them to do what they value most in life.
- By enabling the convenience of performing essential tasks online via access to the **nbn™** network, the average **nbn** customer has saved more than 170 hours in time and effort, or around four working weeks per year.
- The time users spent on work tools to support remote working via the **nbn™** network rose 175 per cent.
- There has been a rise of 45 per cent in **nbn™** powered telehealth as well as a 29 per cent increase in online learning as we communicated from home in the pandemic.

Additionally, COVID-19 has amplified the reliance of households with services over the **nbn™** network on access to connectivity, with up to 450,000 customers across Australia upgrading their **nbn™** powered plan to a higher speed tier in 2020 to better connect with family and friends or online entertainment.

By enabling the convenience of performing essential tasks online via access to the **nbn™** network, the average **nbn™** customer has saved more than 170 hours in time and effort, or around four working weeks per year.

Key time savers from using services over the **nbn™** network include telehealth, where Australians are estimated to save 2.3 hours per visit when compared to face-to-face consultations, followed by remote working, which saved an estimated average of 70 minutes in travel and increased productivity per day.

During COVID-19, the **nbn™** network powered online and remote learning activities across the country. 61% of surveyed **nbn** users reported they were reliant on the **nbn™** network for formal learning, and users engaged in online learning reported a 29% increase in time spent online for learning during the pandemic.

Two out of three **nbn** users said they were reliant on the **nbn**[™] network to stay in touch with loved ones, while the vast majority (91 per cent) of customers say that their connection enables them to do what they value most in life - which is connecting with family and friends (60 per cent) building a career (19 per cent), travel and adventure (12 per cent), and religion and spirituality (5 per cent), self-development and learning (5 per cent).

This research also found that increasingly, **nbn** users are spending more time on activities that enrich their lives online, such as online gaming, which provides enjoyment, community connection, and unique experience.

Brad Whitcomb, Chief Customer Officer at NBN Co said:

“COVID-19 has accelerated the need for access to connectivity and this research highlights how the network is becoming more embedded in our everyday lives.

“We’re pleased that our customers have expressed that they see additional lifestyle value in the **nbn**[™] powered plans they are purchasing from internet providers.

“It was fantastic to see in this research that the **nbn**[™] network is the main way Australians access the internet at home, powering 89 per cent of home broadband plans in Australia and driving 88 per cent of Australia’s data downloads on the internet.³”

Dr Andrew Charlton, Managing Director within Accenture Australia, said:

“The internet is an incredible force that now shapes almost all facets of modern life. Our analysis has found that **NBN** Co customers continue to derive immense value from the internet to perform essential tasks to improve convenience, save time and effort, and to connect with others.”

“This research shows **NBN** Co customers derive \$1,920 in value from their service every year, more than twice what they currently pay for their service. This equates to \$15.7 billion in the total value that households derive from the **nbn**[™] network per annum.”

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Resources

Case Studies and images are available on request.

Notes to editors

¹This report is the compilation of results from a Consumer sentiment survey of 2,420 respondents in March 2021. The analysis and data in this report was commissioned by NBN Co and prepared by Accenture on behalf of NBN Co.

²An end customer's experience, including the speeds actually achieved over the **nbn**[™] broadband access network, depends on the **nbn**[™] access network technology and configuration over which services are delivered to their premises, whether they are using the internet during the busy period, and some factors outside of **nbn**'s control (like their equipment quality, software, chosen broadband plan, signal reception, or how their provider designs its network). Speeds may also be impacted by the number of concurrent users on the **nbn**[™] Fixed Wireless network, including during busy periods. Satellite end customers may also experience latency.

³Average calculated on the preceding three months; Mobile data remains an important means of connecting to the internet, however it has excluded from scope as this study focuses on consumer internet behaviour at home. SOURCES: ACCC Internet Activity Record Keeping Rule (RKR), as at Dec 20. Accenture analysis.

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