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Press Release



Google study outlines challenges brought by coronavirus to new internet users As essential services go online, the gap on who benefits from the internet widens

October 28, 2020 - New internet users are disproportionately affected by the socio-economic impact of COVID-19, according to a study recently released by Google's Next Billion Users initiative team.

Called "[New Internet Users in a COVID-19 World](#)," the study reveals that the challenges brought on by the global pandemic has widened the gap on who benefits from the internet, compounding the challenges faced by new internet users. As essential services like commerce, education, healthcare services and other government services move online to cope with the new norm, it sets back the life quality of those who cannot afford to stay online. Existing problems like low digital literacy and limited access to the internet or devices has become more acute and pervasive and could make it harder for those with limited access to the internet to "catch up" and get online later.

The study identifies eight needs that are persisting or surfacing for new internet users, among them the critical need for data to go farther. As food, education and even jobs transfer from physical to digital, going online becomes a necessity and staying online for longer periods of time becomes a requirement, which means data cost will eat up a bigger portion of living expenses.

"COVID-19 is a challenge for everyone, and it's hitting new internet users especially hard. But even in the face of this challenge, there is opportunity, if governments, businesses and civil society organizations work together. As technology plays a bigger role in our lives and digital economies grow, we can and should make the internet better and more inclusive in the post-COVID world, for the billions online today, the next billion to come, and beyond," says Caesar Sengupta, Google's Vice President for Payments and the Next Billion Users Initiative.

The study was conducted with participants from Brazil, Mexico, India, Indonesia, and Nigeria.

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