

## No 20 Internet access good for our health

A new study says Internet access is good for our health. A report from the Oxford Internet Institute in the UK suggested that being connected to the worldwide web has a positive effect on our well-being. Researchers looked at data on people's Internet use and mental health from 168 countries. The data was gathered between the years 2006 and 2021.

It included information on two million people aged 15 to 99. The research team looked at eight factors that affect people's well-being. These included life satisfaction, positive experiences and happiness with social life. The team found that people with Internet access were eight per cent happier than those without web access.

The research included some surprising conclusions. One was the suggestion that Internet access had a similar, positive effect to walking in nature. It helps people to learn new things, practice hobbies, watch movies, and make new friends. However, the research did not look at how social media impacted people's lives.

Many recent studies show that social media is having a negative effect on people's mental health. Researcher Tobias Dienlin said: "The study cannot contribute to the recent debate on whether or not social media use is harmful, or whether or not smartphones should be banned at schools." He added that: "Different channels and uses of the Internet have vastly different effects on well-being."

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