

Press release

## DIGITAL DEVICE OWNERSHIP AND USAGE

### Digital Market Barometer: Half the population uses generative AI

Paris, 9 February 2026

Today, Arcep, the Economic Council (CGE) and France's National Agency for Territorial Cohesion (ANCT) are publishing the findings of the Digital Market Barometer, an annual survey conducted by CREDOC<sup>1</sup> in June 2025 on the adoption of digital devices, and how their use has evolved over time in France.

#### **Close to half of the French population already uses generative AI services; one third of users on a daily basis**

Generative AI is now being used by 48% of the population, marking a 15-point increase in a single year. By way of comparison, generative AI reached a level of adoption in three years that took smartphones seven years to achieve. AI use is massive amongst young adults (85%) and senior managers/executives (76%).

More than one in three users employ generative AI on a daily basis. Different generative AI services are used, although practices appear to be polarised around two chatbots. An array of use cases are involved: the most popular are information search (73% of users), help in drafting or translating texts (58%) and generating new ideas (57%).

#### **In most use cases, users prefer AI to search engines: 73% of 18 to 24-year olds use it to help with their homework**

Generative AI users prefer AI in most use cases, especially for drafting and translating texts, creating content, computer programming and data processing, rather than using a search engine or other digital tools such as software for research. By and large, a vast majority of young people already use AI to help with their homework (68% of 12 to 17-year olds, 73% of 18 to 24-year olds). Seventy four percent of those surveyed say that the main reasons for adopting AI were user friendliness and to save time.

#### **Wariness about this new technology is decreasing, but still remains an impediment to its use**

If the majority of the population says they are wary about AI, this reticence is decreasing as the tool becomes more ubiquitous. The percentage of people who remain wary stood at 52% in 2025, down 5 points year on year (YoY). The lack of trust in the answers provided by the tools and uncertainties over how their personal data will be used are the main obstacles to the use of generative AI: around 30% of non-users cite these reasons as major obstacles; 26% said they do not use AI because they lack the skills.

#### **Users becoming aware of the issues surrounding the environmental impact of AI**

Despite the growing use of AI, most people (46%) believe the technology has a greater environmental impact than search engines, while only 17% believe it has a smaller impact.

<sup>1</sup> Methodology: Conducted by the CREDOC research centre devoted to the study and observation of living conditions, the survey polled a representative sample of 4,145 people, aged 12 and up, who were queried by phone and online.

## **Influenced by their contacts, instant messaging users employ several services**

Instant messaging services have become a key communication channel: 86% of the population use these services; two thirds of them on a daily basis. The most popular IM services are WhatsApp, Messenger and Instagram.

A vast majority of users (82%) send messages from at least two different IM services, and more than four out of 10 users employ four or more services. For 66% of IM users, the choice of service is influenced by who they are chatting with. The other reasons for their choice, such as the security of the personal data they send, are minor.

## **A clear progression in fibre coverage in less densely populated areas, despite having the same take-up levels as large metropolitan areas**

In June 2025, 86% of the population had a fixed internet subscription, and 78% had a fibre connection. Fibre access is now homogeneous across Metropolitan France. The Digital Market Barometer reveals a clear progression in coverage levels in the least populated municipalities (76%, +7 points YoY), making it possible to reach equipment levels similar to those found in the country's large metropolitan areas.

The same trend can be seen in mobile device ownership, with a large increase in the percentage of people with smartphone that enable them to access 5G networks. If 91% of the population own a smartphone, 61% of smartphones are now compatible with 5G networks, up 13 points YoY.

## **Digital device repairs allow users to stay within their budgets and be more green**

Close to one in four people have repaired a digital device (smartphone, computer, television, etc.) over the past three years. A third of them say they had their device repaired for financial reasons, and a quarter for environmental reasons. Ownership levels for refurbished or second hand smartphones remain low, however. Only 20% of those polled fall into that category, a percentage is no longer increasing.

### **Associated documents:**

- [Infographic: snapshot of the main findings of the Digital Market Barometer](#) (in French)
- [Presentation given at the press conference](#) (in French)
- [Digital Market Barometer page](#)
- [The complete survey \(in French\)](#)
- [Infographics of the results of the questions asked by Arcep](#) (in French)
- [Open datasets: the complete Digital Market Barometer since 2007 can be found at: data.gouv.fr](#)

### **Arcep at a glance**

The Regulatory Authority for Electronic Communications, Postal Affairs and Print Media Distribution (Arcep), a neutral and expert arbitrator with the status of independent administrative authority (AIA), is the architect and guardian of internet, fixed and mobile electronic communications, postal and press distribution networks in France.