

30,000 South Africans detail their digital experience during 1st pandemic year

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In the first year of Covid, across the shutdown world, digital has been a frontline worker. Internet connections, devices and apps have helped us to keep working, studying and going to school. More than that, at the worst of lockdown times, we've been able to still connect with friends, family and community, as well as shops, healthcare providers, personal trainers and bankers. Cut off from real-world culture, digital has also dominated keeping ourselves entertained. Of course, nothing has been ideal, and it may not have been easy, but many people have been keeping their show mostly on the road in these extraordinarily tough times, thanks to the new intensity of digital penetration in our day-to-day lives.



But, going forward, what does this mean for our lifestyles, the way we work and how we run our lives? The recent release of the latest [BrandMapp](#) consumer insights survey showcases the opinions of a mega-sample of 30,000 South Africans who have shared in-depth about their digital habits over the first pandemic year. BrandMapp uniquely surveys South Africans living in households with a R10,000+ monthly household income. While that may be a 30% segment of the population, they do represent 100% of the country's taxpayers and 80% of all consumers spend in the formal economy. BrandMapp offers data insights that brand owners and marketers can't get anywhere else.

BrandMapp director of storytelling, Brandon de Kock, says: "First off, we have to look at the digital enablers in the country, where exorbitant data costs and slow connections have impacted on what South Africans can do online. What we see in the latest BrandMapp survey is that 2020 was a game-changing year for fibre in South Africa. All internet providers had 'essential services' credentials and work continued unabated on the roll-out of fibre networks across the country's suburbs. The uptake of fibre in top and mid-income households was accordingly phenomenal. It's important because from both the cost-efficiency and access to uncapped data aspects, fibre is poised to accelerate a digitally-driven South Africa like no other internet-access technology. With the whole family trapped at home and needing multiple, fast, affordable internet connections for work, school and social, there's little wonder that, for many, connecting into the country's fibre network was

a no-brainer. And, I think we can safely say, that's going to be a Covid-keeper."



Data shows lockdown sucks... literally!

Brandon de Kock, BrandMapp 26 May 2020



What did we do with our data?

Streaming saved our day

Whether it was Netflix and Showmax or Spotify and Apple Music, South Africans did much more streaming during Covid, which is in line with international trends. By getting the content we wanted to the device we had in hand just when we wanted it, streaming services met many of our entertainment needs. De Kock says: "Netflix grew globally by around 20% thanks to lockdown, but here we saw usership leap from 41% to 61% – which is a pretty radical shift. If you look at the Spotify usage, we see one in five mid- to top-income South Africans now streaming their favourite music on the platform. This is the kind of penetration that the country's traditional content providers need to take note of so that they can diversify and keep connected to their audiences."

Podcasts are undeniable pleasers

"If you've been wondering whether podcasts really are 'a thing'; the answer is: hell yeah," says De Kock. "BrandMapp shows that 62% of mid- to top-income SA adults are actually listening to podcasts, and 24% of them are already hooked on the medium. We've seen how the trend towards 'on demand' has affected all forms of traditional media in recent years and this is a clear shift in listening habits that can't be ignored. If you're a brand owner or a media boss, you have to be thinking about how to get into the conversation."

Zoomed out and zoomed in

While it's smoother to coordinate meetings without the need for mute, un-mute and leaving some people ignominiously suspended in virtual waiting rooms, the universal acceptance of virtual meeting platforms has quite possibly changed the way some people will do business forever. "Covid gave most of us a crash-course in conferencing tools and for some it's been painful," says De Kock. "But it's also been a huge relief. Imperfect as it was, we got the job done thanks to new kids on the block like Zoom and Teams, and old friends like Skype. BrandMapp never measured Zoom and Teams before, but a 33% and 26% uptake respectively over 2020 is massive. When you think of all the money saved on business travel costs alone, from getting in your car to jumping on a plane, you'd be mad to bet against virtual conferencing remaining the norm and in person meeting being reserved for VIP clients!"

As an extensive and versatile dataset, BrandMapp offers endless options when it comes to applying filters and drawing insights. Applying a demographic filter shows that SA's top users of Zoom over 2020 are self-employed people who benefit significantly from containing their travel costs.

"When it comes to virtual meetings and conferencing, the filter I love is looking at the income of users," says De Kock. "51% of South Africans who earn over R150,000 per month are regular users of either Zoom or MS Teams and diminishing digital conferencing usage correlates with diminishing income. So, it's clear that the more money you make, the more likely you are to use Zoom or Teams. Or maybe the more time you spend in digital meetings, the more money you make!"

To find out more about BrandMapp 2021, visit www.brandmapp.co.za

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About BrandMapp

BrandMapp is a unique South African dataset that uses a mega-sample of more than 30,000 respondents to profile the 12 million adults who live in mid- to top-income households earning in excess of R10,000 per month. Now in its eighth year, the [BrandMapp](#) survey is a bespoke, independent survey created by [WhyFive Insights](#) in partnership with leading digital platform marketing and research group [SilverstoneCIS](#).

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