

Booking Holdings Releases New Study on "The Next Billion" People Who Will Gain Access to the Internet
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Study Reveals One of the Biggest Barriers to Internet Adoption is not Technology, but Language

NORWALK, Conn., Jan. 17, 2019 /PRNewswire/ -- The biggest potential barrier to Internet adoption is not technical, but language, according to a new survey, "The Next Billion Online," conducted by Booking Holdings (NASDAQ: BKNG), the global leader in online accommodations and travel e-commerce.

According to the research, which explored the impact of Asia's digital transformation, three-quarters of respondents (76%) said that the online dominance of English prevented their countrymen and women from fully participating in a digitally economic, cultural and social life. Similarly, 76% of respondents cite lack of affordable Internet service as a major barrier and 72% cite lack of affordable devices.

Along with language difficulties, 84% of respondents said poor online security, concerns about government censorship (71%), paucity of useful local content (68%) and fear of new technology (57%) as potential disincentives to mass online participation.

Despite these barriers, Internet penetration rates across Asia are expected to climb to match those found in Western markets, with another one billion people coming online. To gain insight into how this burgeoning population will be affected by increased Internet access, Booking Holdings commissioned a survey of more than 1,000 digital leaders and experts in Asia's three most populous countries: China, India and Indonesia. The study probed expectations, aspirations and areas of caution for the digital future of their countries and communities.

Data from the survey found that much has already changed about attitudes toward the Internet:

- 79% of respondents consider the Internet a basic necessity and 82% of people go further, calling Internet access "a fundamental right."
- 9 in 10 respondents in these countries believe that increased Internet access will advance their social standing and provide economic gains in their society.
- A majority — 78% across all three markets — believe all citizens should have equal access to Internet connectivity.

The "Next Billion Online" research revealed that the rapid growth of Internet use and the clear link between connectivity and opportunity has caused a change in attitudes similar to that seen in Western markets a decade ago. People have stopped regarding the Internet as a luxury and come instead to regard it as a human right.

Economic Opportunity on the Horizon

When asked what the Next Billion would use the Internet for, respondents' answers included:

- to buy goods and services (67%)
- to consume news (71%)
- to use social media (75%)
- for entertainment (66%)
- for job searches (66%)
- and for dining (51%)

"Looking at the ways in which respondents anticipate the Next Billion using the Internet, a picture emerges of aspirations waiting to be unleashed," said Glenn Fogel, CEO of Booking Holdings. "When these consumers are finally connected to the Internet, it is likely to accelerate a whole range of areas including the retail market, the job market and leisure and entertainment landscape."

One of the most notable and economically significant impacts of the expansion of connectivity in Asia has been the corresponding improvement in the lives of women and girls: 79% said that gender was not a barrier to Internet adoption in their country. 86% said that increased gender equality would drive adoption, and 91%

said greater digital participation would also improve gender equality in their country.

Barriers to Access Remain

However, survey respondents identified a range of barriers to digital participation which must be removed if the next generation of Asian Internet users is to gain maximum benefit from going online.

With findings pointing to the dominance of English being one of the biggest barriers to Internet adoption, the research points to a paradox of the Internet: connectivity provides the potential to access information and education (including language skills) but if new Internet users do not already speak a commonly used language, then the potential benefits of the Internet remain out of reach.

Having identified these issues, there is opportunity for governments and organizations alike to help overcome these barriers. The value of effective localization has long been recognized. What's more, this challenge is also an opportunity, primarily for Asians themselves. The demand for high-quality localized content is here and it's going to grow massively over the next decade. Unlocking the barriers of adoption will itself release even more growth, for Asia and for the world economy.

About Booking Holdings

[Booking Holdings](#) Inc. (NASDAQ: BKNG) is the world leader in online travel and related services, provided to customers and partners in over 220 countries and territories through six primary brands -[Booking.com](#), [KAYAK](#), [priceline](#), [agoda.com](#), [Rentalcars.com](#) and [OpenTable](#). The mission of Booking Holdings is to help people experience the world. For more information, visit [Bookingholdings.com](#).

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