**Information and communications technology**

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**Information and communications technology** (**ICT**) is an extended term for [information technology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_technology) (IT) which stresses the role of [unified communications](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unified_communications)[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_and_communications_technology#cite_note-ICT-D-00-1) and the integration of [telecommunications](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Telecommunications) ([telephone](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Telephone) lines and wireless signals), computers as well as necessary [enterprise software](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enterprise_software), [middleware](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middleware), storage, and audio-visual systems, which enable users to access, store, transmit, and manipulate information.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_and_communications_technology#cite_note-2)

The term *ICT* is also used to refer to the [convergence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Convergence_(telecommunications)) of audio-visual and [telephone networks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Telephone_network) with [computer networks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer_network) through a single cabling or link system. There are large economic incentives (huge cost savings due to elimination of the telephone network) to merge the telephone network with the computer network system using a single unified system of cabling, signal distribution and management.

However, ICT has no universal definition, as "the concepts, methods and applications involved in ICT are constantly evolving on an almost daily basis."[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_and_communications_technology#cite_note-ICT_-_What_is_it-3) The broadness of ICT covers any product that will store, retrieve, manipulate, transmit or receive information electronically in a digital form, e.g. personal computers, digital television, email, robots. For clarity, Zuppo provided an ICT hierarchy where all levels of the hierarchy "contain some degree of commonality in that they are related to technologies that facilitate the transfer of information and various types of electronically mediated communications".[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_and_communications_technology#cite_note-Defining_ICT_in_a_Boundaryless_World:_The_Development_of_a_Working_Hierarchy-4) [Skills Framework for the Information Age](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skills_Framework_for_the_Information_Age) is one of many models for describing and managing competencies for ICT professionals for the 21st century.[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_and_communications_technology#cite_note-5)

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**Etymology[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Information_and_communications_technology&action=edit&section=1" \o "Edit section: Etymology)]**

The phrase "information and communication technologies" has been used by academic researchers since the 1980s,[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_and_communications_technology#cite_note-6) and the abbreviation *ICT* became popular after it was used in a report to the UK government by [Dennis Stevenson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dennis_Stevenson,_Baron_Stevenson_of_Coddenham) in 1997,[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_and_communications_technology#cite_note-7) and in the revised [National Curriculum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Curriculum_(England,_Wales_and_Northern_Ireland)) for England, Wales and Northern Ireland in 2000. But in 2012, the [Royal Society](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Society) recommended that *ICT* should no longer be used in British schools "as it has attracted too many negative connotations",[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_and_communications_technology#cite_note-8) and with effect from 2014 the National Curriculum uses the word [*computing*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computing)*,* which reflects the addition of [computer programming](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer_programming) into the curriculum.[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_and_communications_technology#cite_note-9)

Variations of the phrase have spread worldwide, with the United Nations creating a "[United Nations Information and Communication Technologies Task Force](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Information_and_Communication_Technologies_Task_Force)" and an internal "Office of Information and Communications Technology".[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_and_communications_technology#cite_note-10)

**Monetization[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Information_and_communications_technology&action=edit&section=2" \o "Edit section: Monetization)]**

The money spent on IT worldwide has been most recently estimated as US $3.5 trillion and is currently growing at 5% per year, doubling every 15 years.[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_and_communications_technology#cite_note-omtco1-11) The 2014 IT budget of US federal government is nearly $82 billion.[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_and_communications_technology#cite_note-12) IT costs, as a percentage of corporate revenue, have grown 50% since 2002, putting a strain on IT budgets. When looking at current companies' IT budgets, 75% are recurrent costs, used to "keep the lights on" in the IT department, and 25% are cost of new initiatives for technology development.[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_and_communications_technology#cite_note-omtco1-11)

The average IT budget has the following breakdown:[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_and_communications_technology" \l "cite_note-omtco1-11)

* 31% personnel costs (internal)
* 29% software costs (external/purchasing category)
* 26% hardware costs (external/purchasing category)
* 14% costs of external service providers (external/services).

**Technological capacity[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Information_and_communications_technology&action=edit&section=3" \o "Edit section: Technological capacity)]**

The world's technological capacity to store information grew from 2.6 (optimally compressed) [exabytes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exabytes) in 1986 to 15.8 in 1993, over 54.5 in 2000, and to 295 (optimally compressed) [exabytes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exabytes) in 2007, and some 5 [zettabytes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zettabytes) in 2014.[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_and_communications_technology#cite_note-HilbertLopez2011-13)[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_and_communications_technology#cite_note-InfoBiosphere2016-14) This is the informational equivalent to 1.25 stacks of [CD-ROM](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CD-ROM) from the [earth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earth) to the [moon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moon) in 2007, and the equivalent of 4,500 stacks of printed books from the [earth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earth) to the [sun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sun) in 2014. The world's technological capacity to receive information through one-way [broadcast](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Broadcast) networks was 432 [exabytes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exabytes) of (optimally compressed) information in 1986, 715 (optimally compressed) [exabytes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exabytes) in 1993, 1.2 (optimally compressed) [zettabytes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zettabytes) in 2000, and 1.9 [zettabytes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zettabytes) in 2007.[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_and_communications_technology#cite_note-HilbertLopez2011-13) The world's effective capacity to exchange information through two-way [telecommunication](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Telecommunication) networks was 281 [petabytes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Petabytes) of (optimally compressed) information in 1986, 471 [petabytes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Petabytes) in 1993, 2.2 (optimally compressed) [exabytes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exabytes) in 2000, 65 (optimally compressed) [exabytes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exabytes) in 2007,[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_and_communications_technology#cite_note-HilbertLopez2011-13) and some 100 [exabytes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exabytes) in 2014.[[15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_and_communications_technology#cite_note-HilbertBitsDivide-15) The world's technological capacity to compute information with humanly guided general-purpose computers grew from 3.0 × 10^8 MIPS in 1986, to 6.4 x 10^12 MIPS in 2007.[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_and_communications_technology#cite_note-HilbertLopez2011-13)

**ICT sector in the OECD[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Information_and_communications_technology&action=edit&section=4" \o "Edit section: ICT sector in the OECD)]**

The following is a list of [OECD](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organisation_for_Economic_Co-operation_and_Development) countries by share of ICT sector in total value added in 2013.[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_and_communications_technology#cite_note-16)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Rank** | **Country** | **ICT sector in %** | **Relative size** |
| 1 | https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/0/09/Flag_of_South_Korea.svg/23px-Flag_of_South_Korea.svg.png [South Korea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Korea) | 10.7 | 10.7 |
| 2 | https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/thumb/9/9e/Flag_of_Japan.svg/23px-Flag_of_Japan.svg.png [Japan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japan) | 7.02 | 7.02 |
| 3 | https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/4/45/Flag_of_Ireland.svg/23px-Flag_of_Ireland.svg.png [Ireland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic_of_Ireland) | 6.99 | 6.99 |
| 4 | https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/thumb/4/4c/Flag_of_Sweden.svg/23px-Flag_of_Sweden.svg.png [Sweden](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sweden) | 6.82 | 6.82 |
| 5 | https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/c/c1/Flag_of_Hungary.svg/23px-Flag_of_Hungary.svg.png [Hungary](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hungary) | 6.09 | 6.09 |
| 6 | https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/thumb/a/a4/Flag_of_the_United_States.svg/23px-Flag_of_the_United_States.svg.png [United States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) | 5.89 | 5.89 |
| 7 | https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/c/cb/Flag_of_the_Czech_Republic.svg/23px-Flag_of_the_Czech_Republic.svg.png [Czech Republic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Czech_Republic) | 5.74 | 5.74 |
| 8 | https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/b/bc/Flag_of_Finland.svg/23px-Flag_of_Finland.svg.png [Finland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Finland) | 5.60 | 5.6 |
| 9 | https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/thumb/a/ae/Flag_of_the_United_Kingdom.svg/23px-Flag_of_the_United_Kingdom.svg.png [United Kingdom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom) | 5.53 | 5.53 |
| 10 | https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/8/8f/Flag_of_Estonia.svg/23px-Flag_of_Estonia.svg.png [Estonia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Estonia) | 5.33 | 5.33 |
| 11 | https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/e/e6/Flag_of_Slovakia.svg/23px-Flag_of_Slovakia.svg.png [Slovakia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slovakia) | 4.87 | 4.87 |
| 12 | https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/thumb/b/ba/Flag_of_Germany.svg/23px-Flag_of_Germany.svg.png [Germany](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germany) | 4.84 | 4.84 |
| 13 | https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/d/da/Flag_of_Luxembourg.svg/23px-Flag_of_Luxembourg.svg.png [Luxembourg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luxembourg) | 4.54 | 4.54 |
| 14 | https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/2/20/Flag_of_the_Netherlands.svg/23px-Flag_of_the_Netherlands.svg.png [Netherlands](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netherlands) | 4.44 | 4.44 |
| 15 | https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/f/f3/Flag_of_Switzerland.svg/16px-Flag_of_Switzerland.svg.png  [Switzerland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Switzerland) | 4.63 | 4.63 |
| 16 | https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/thumb/c/c3/Flag_of_France.svg/23px-Flag_of_France.svg.png [France](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/France) | 4.33 | 4.33 |
| 17 | https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/f/f0/Flag_of_Slovenia.svg/23px-Flag_of_Slovenia.svg.png [Slovenia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slovenia) | 4.26 | 4.26 |
| 18 | https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/9/9c/Flag_of_Denmark.svg/20px-Flag_of_Denmark.svg.png [Denmark](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Denmark) | 4.06 | 4.06 |
| 19 | https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/thumb/9/9a/Flag_of_Spain.svg/23px-Flag_of_Spain.svg.png [Spain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spain) | 4.00 | 4 |
| 20 | https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/thumb/c/cf/Flag_of_Canada.svg/23px-Flag_of_Canada.svg.png [Canada](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canada) | 3.86 | 3.86 |
| 21 | https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/thumb/0/03/Flag_of_Italy.svg/23px-Flag_of_Italy.svg.png [Italy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italy) | 3.72 | 3.72 |
| 22 | https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/9/92/Flag_of_Belgium_%28civil%29.svg/23px-Flag_of_Belgium_%28civil%29.svg.png [Belgium](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belgium) | 3.72 | 3.72 |
| 23 | https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/4/41/Flag_of_Austria.svg/23px-Flag_of_Austria.svg.png [Austria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Austria) | 3.56 | 3.56 |
| 24 | https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/5/5c/Flag_of_Portugal.svg/23px-Flag_of_Portugal.svg.png [Portugal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portugal) | 3.43 | 3.43 |
| 25 | https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/thumb/1/12/Flag_of_Poland.svg/23px-Flag_of_Poland.svg.png [Poland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poland) | 3.33 | 3.33 |
| 26 | https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/d/d9/Flag_of_Norway.svg/21px-Flag_of_Norway.svg.png [Norway](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norway) | 3.32 | 3.32 |
| 27 | https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/5/5c/Flag_of_Greece.svg/23px-Flag_of_Greece.svg.png [Greece](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greece) | 3.31 | 3.31 |
| 28 | https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/c/ce/Flag_of_Iceland.svg/21px-Flag_of_Iceland.svg.png [Iceland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iceland) | 2.87 | 2.87 |
| 29 | https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/9/9b/Flag_of_Nepal.svg/16px-Flag_of_Nepal.svg.png   [Nepal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nepal) | 2.77 | 2.77 |

**ICT Development Index[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Information_and_communications_technology&action=edit&section=5" \o "Edit section: ICT Development Index)]**

The [ICT Development Index](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ICT_Development_Index) ranks and compares the level of ICT use and access across the various countries around the world.[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_and_communications_technology#cite_note-17) In 2014 ITU (International Telecommunications Union) released the latest rankings of the IDI, with Denmark attaining the top spot, followed by South Korea. The top 30 countries in the rankings include most high-income countries where quality of life is higher than average, which includes countries from Europe and other regions such as "Australia, Bahrain, Canada, Japan, Macao (China), New Zealand, Singapore and the United States; almost all countries surveyed improved their IDI ranking this year."[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_and_communications_technology#cite_note-librarylearningspace.com-18)

**The WSIS process and ICT development goals[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Information_and_communications_technology&action=edit&section=6" \o "Edit section: The WSIS process and ICT development goals)]**

On 21 December 2001, the [United Nations General Assembly](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_General_Assembly) approved Resolution 56/183, endorsing the holding of the [World Summit on the Information Society](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Summit_on_the_Information_Society) (WSIS) to discuss the opportunities and challenges facing today's information society.[[19]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_and_communications_technology#cite_note-Intro1-19) According to this resolution, the General Assembly related the Summit to the [United Nations Millennium Declaration](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Millennium_Declaration)'s goal of implementing ICT to achieve [Millennium Development Goals](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Millennium_Development_Goals). It also emphasized a multi-stakeholder approach to achieve these goals, using all stakeholders including civil society and the private sector, in addition to governments.

To help anchor and expand ICT to every habitable part of the world, "2015 is the deadline for achievements of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which global leaders agreed upon in the year 2000."[[20]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_and_communications_technology#cite_note-itu.int-20)

**In education[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Information_and_communications_technology&action=edit&section=7" \o "Edit section: In education)]**

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Mobile_software_development_laboratory_in_The_Estonian_Information_Technology_College.jpg)

Today's society shows the ever-growing computer-centric lifestyle, which includes the rapid influx of computers in the modern classroom.

Information and Communication Technology can contribute to universal access to education, equity in education, the delivery of quality learning and teaching, teachers' professional development and more efficient education management, governance and administration. [UNESCO](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UNESCO) takes a holistic and comprehensive approach to promoting ICT in education. Access, inclusion and quality are among the main challenges they can address. The Organization's Intersectral Platform for ICT in education focuses on these issues through the joint work of three of its sectors: Communication & Information, Education and Science.[[21]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_and_communications_technology#cite_note-21)

**Today[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Information_and_communications_technology&action=edit&section=8" \o "Edit section: Today)]**

In modern society ICT is ever-present, with over three billion people having access to the Internet.[[22]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_and_communications_technology#cite_note-ReferenceA-22) With approximately 8 out of 10 Internet users owning a smartphone, information and data are increasing by leaps and bounds.[[23]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_and_communications_technology#cite_note-23) This rapid growth, especially in developing countries, has led ICT to become a keystone of everyday life, in which life without some facet of technology renders most of clerical, work and routine tasks dysfunctional. The most recent authoritative data, released in 2014, shows "that Internet use continues to grow steadily, at 6.6% globally in 2014 (3.3% in developed countries, 8.7% in the developing world); the number of Internet users in developing countries has doubled in five years (2009-2014), with two thirds of all people online now living in the developing world."[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_and_communications_technology#cite_note-librarylearningspace.com-18)

However, hurdles are still at large. "Of the 4.3 billion people not yet using the Internet, 90% live in developing countries. In the world's 42 Least Connected Countries (LCCs), which are home to 2.5 billion people, access to ICTs remains largely out of reach, particularly for these countries' large rural populations."[[24]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_and_communications_technology#cite_note-24) ICT has yet to penetrate the remote areas of some countries, with many developing countries dearth of any type of Internet. This also includes the availability of telephone lines, particularly the availability of cellular coverage, and other forms of electronic transmission of data. The latest "Measuring the Information Society Report" cautiously stated that the increase in the aforementioned cellular data coverage is ostensible, as "many users have multiple subscriptions, with global growth figures sometimes translating into little real improvement in the level of connectivity of those at the very bottom of the pyramid; an estimated 450 million people worldwide live in places which are still out of reach of mobile cellular service."[[22]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_and_communications_technology#cite_note-ReferenceA-22)

Favorably, the gap between the access to the Internet and mobile coverage has decreased substantially in the last fifteen years, in which "2015 [was] the deadline for achievements of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which global leaders agreed upon in the year 2000, and the new data show ICT progress and highlight remaining gaps."[[20]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_and_communications_technology#cite_note-itu.int-20) ICT continues to take on new form, with nanotechnology set to usher in a new wave of ICT electronics and gadgets. ICT newest editions into the modern electronic world include smart watches, such as the [Apple Watch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apple_Watch), smart wristbands such as the [Nike+ FuelBand](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nike%2B_FuelBand), and smart TVs such as [Google TV](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Google_TV). With desktops soon becoming part of a bygone era, and laptops becoming the preferred method of computing, ICT continues to insinuate and alter itself in the ever-changing globe.

Information communication technologies play a role in facilitating [accelerated pluralism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Accelerated_pluralism) in [new social movements](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_social_movements) today. The internet according to Bruce Bimber is "accelerating the process of issue group formation and action"[[25]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_and_communications_technology#cite_note-:0-25) and coined the term [accelerated pluralism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Accelerated_pluralism) to explain this new phenomena. ICTs are tools for "enabling social movement leaders and empowering dictators"[[26]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_and_communications_technology#cite_note-:1-26) in effect promoting societal change. ICTs can be used to garner [grassroots](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grassroots) support for a cause due to the internet allowing for political discourse and direct interventions with state policy[[27]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_and_communications_technology#cite_note-27) as well as change the way complaints from the populace are handled by governments.