

# How Pew Research Center studies the social impact of digital technologies

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# Who we are / How we do our work

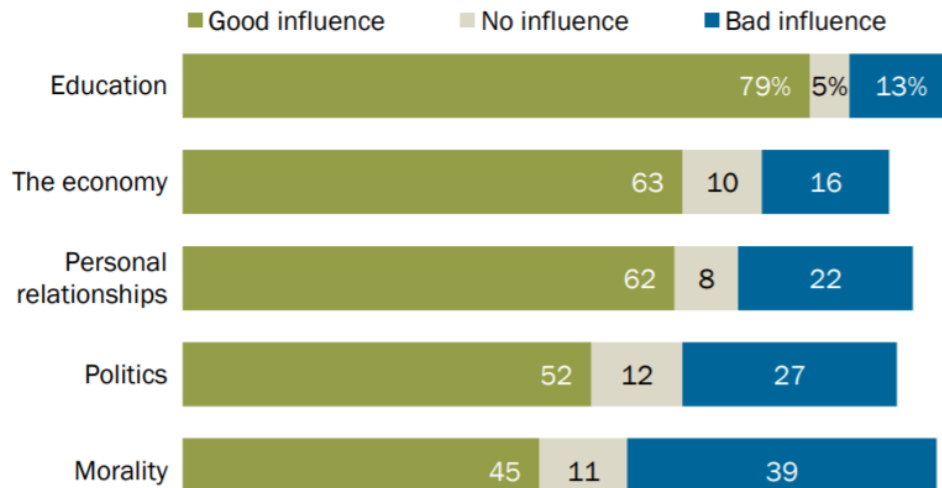
- Non-partisan “fact tank” funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts that collects data on “issues, facts and trends shaping the world”
- Topical research areas include U.S. politics; global public opinion; religious attitudes; demographic trends & global migration; science and society; media and news; internet and tech (*my team*)
- Methods include public opinion polling, demographic research, content analysis, and wide range of data-driven social science research
- Our one red line: we don’t take sides or make policy recommendations

# Our internet and tech team uses a range of methods to study the social impact of the internet and other digital technologies

- Digital divide and adoption metrics
- Emerging technologies (automation, algorithms, AI, etc.)
- Future of work
- Privacy and cybersecurity
- Political engagement
- Harassment
- Impact on interpersonal relationships
- Trust, facts, misinformation
- ...and more

# A key focus – allowing the public to express nuanced views about the good and bad aspects of increased connectivity

*Generally, do you think the increasing use of the internet has had a good influence, a bad influence or no influence at all on \_\_\_ in our country?*



Note: Percentages are six-country medians based on total sample in Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa and Tanzania.

Source: Spring 2017 Global Attitudes Survey. Q74a-e.

# Our international survey of mobile connectivity (currently in final stages of data collection)



# Focus groups in four countries highlighted the positive aspects of increased mobile access...

*“In general terms, communication is much more efficient. You are more interconnected, being with your relatives or with world affairs.”*

*“It's like the mobile phones become your partner.”*

*“When I don't have my phone, I feel as if I lost something very precious.”*

*“Just by being online, you have potential access to all knowledge known to man. If you wish to know something, you're just a search away. That's a good thing!”*

*“It makes communication faster, saves distances and time and it facilitates services which are our life's basis.”*

## ...but also the downsides of ubiquitous connectivity

*“It destroyed family bonds and communication between family members; everyone has his own virtual world nowadays even if we are in same room.”*

***“I think it [social media] negatively affected us during the previous election. Social media was actually the cause of all violence.”***

*“On Facebook there are a lot of rumors and fake news, you shouldn't trust them at 100%.”*

*“We become numb to the news, like the presidential campaigns in Mexico. A term ago, we were struggling to get more political awareness, and now everything is made a meme and laughed at. It defeats the purpose of the Internet.”*

*“Isolation from family is the most catastrophic one - everyone is far from the other. There is a lack of dialogue and the kids with tablets get negative eye effects. Comparing with before technology changed everything, it is not the same childhood now.”*

# Major deliverables

Series of reports starting in Feb 2019, examining the impact of ICT's on...

- Personal lives and society as a whole
- Political news and information
- Communication and social networks
- Digital divides, impact on migrant communities, government obligation to provide internet service, privacy, deep dives on key demographics

Throughout, we hope to examine the *trade-offs* people experience in mobile life



# Thank you!

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