

The Catalan-speaking internet weathers the storm of the Covid-19 crisis despite the regional inequalities

Internet consumer habits have suddenly changed in light of the situation generated by the coronavirus pandemic and the declared state of emergency with the subsequent confinement of the population. This has meant that network connectivity infrastructures have had to deal with a much more intense, widespread and extensive demand than usual.

Concerned for general performance and for the hit the service has taken over recent weeks, **the .cat Foundation has reached a partnership agreement with Ookla International**, one of the leading companies worldwide in connectivity verification and performance data analysis, **to have access to connectivity data in the Catalan-speaking regions with the highest population.**

In general terms, what the figures from the report indicate using data from the Speedtest.net tool by Ookla International can be summarised as follows:

1. The inequality that exists among Catalan-speaking regions in terms of internet connection.

The download speed for fixed connections (installations providing permanent internet access for offices and homes, such as optical fibre or ADSL) during the period studied shows the divide that exists between Catalonia, the Balearic Islands, and the Region of Valencia. With an average of 150Mbps (megabits per second), **Catalonia is on a par with the European countries with the best broadband services**, over 20 percent above the Spanish average. **However, both the Balearic Islands and the Region of Valencia are down on the national average at barely 9 percent and 18 percent below, respectively.** This means that the connections operate at a speed of between 20% and 26% below that of Catalonia.

Insofar as download speed for mobile connections (3G/4G), the Balearic Islands leads the way with an average speed of 39Mbps, compared with the 37Mbps and 34Mbps of the Region of Valencia. In this case, only the Region of Valencia is below the Spanish average. Something similar happens with the upload speed for mobile phones. This report indicates the decline in mobile download speed, whereas the decline in fixed download speed is no greater than 7.2% in the Region of Valencia, the Balearic Islands or Catalonia.

However, this inequality is seen most clearly in the file upload speed over fixed broadband. **Catalonia heads this category with 145Mbps, followed by the Balearic Islands with 107 Mbps and the Region of Valencia with 95Mbps, 12% and 35% below Catalonia.**

2. The Catalan-speaking internet endures Covid-19.

Despite the fact that internet consumer habits have suddenly changed, with much more intense, widespread and extensive demand than usual, **we are far from the collapse that the major national operators predicted** ([link to the news](#)). With an increase in IP network traffic of almost 40% at 15th March amidst the state of emergency, the download speed suffered a drop of only 10% to 15%, according to data from these same companies. This is corroborated by the [figures provided](#) by the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC) on the state of connections.

Now more than ever, and based on data such as that contained in this report, the .cat Foundation underlines its defence for internet neutrality. Internet neutrality is considered the requirement for internet service providers to treat all internet data equally, without discrimination.

What a report like this one indicates is that the Catalan-speaking regions are far from an even playing field in terms of connection speed, but that the Catalan-speaking internet has weathered the Covid-19 storm very well in times of exceptional traffic.