Institute for Information, the Internet and Democracy

How Americans Spend Their Time Online

A Report on Desktop Browsing Behavior in the United States

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National Internet Observatory

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Summary

We examine where people spend their time online, analyzing desktop browsing data collected from the National Internet Observatory (NIO). Key findings include:

- **A few platforms dominate where we spend our time.** The top 10 platforms captured about half (49%) of all online time, with Gmail at number one with 16.4%.
- **A tiny number of companies dominate where we spend time.** Most user attention is funneled through a handful of corporations. Alphabet (Google's parent company) alone accounts for 35% of total browsing time in our sample, followed by Meta (8.9%), Microsoft (5.1%), Yahoo (4.3%), and Amazon (3.0%). These five companies capture more than half of all time Americans spend online on desktop.
- **Americans spend half their online time on just two things: social media (25.3%) and email (24.9%).**
- **AI is already bigger than news.** Large Language Model (LLM) tools, such as ChatGPT, now account for 2.9% of total online time, while news is only 2.5%.
- **The Web is highly age-segregated.** Users over 65 spend 36.7% of their online time on email and 14% on Facebook, versus 11% and 2%, respectively, for users under 30. Older people are still using Yahoo and AOL for email (9%, 2%, respectively), both of which barely register among younger users. The oldest cohort spends 4.7% of their time on news sites, far more than the youngest cohort (1.2%). In contrast, users under 30 spend 13% of their time on YouTube, 9% on Google apps (Docs, Drive, Meet, Classroom, and other Google services excluding Gmail, Search, and YouTube), and 3% on ChatGPT, as compared to 6%, 3%, and <1%, respectively, among the oldest cohort.

1. Introduction

A large portion of our lives is now spent online. How do we spend that time? This report examines desktop web browsing behavior of U.S. adults (18+ years of age), drawing on data from the National Internet Observatory[1] that tracked browsing activity between June 2024 and December 2025 (a report on mobile time on app will follow in the near future). We organize our findings around three questions:

(1) Which companies and platforms dominate online attention?

(2) What kinds of activities do people spend most of their time doing?

(3) How do these patterns vary across generations?

We note that desktop web browsing is of course only one part of online activity, and a future report will examine, in particular, where we spend our time on mobile devices.

2. Findings

Finding 1: Online attention is dominated by a tiny number of platforms and companies.

At the platform level, we treat distinct services as separate even when they share a parent domain (e.g., mail.google.com, docs.google.com, and meet.google.com), but we merge URL variants that point to the same service (e.g., web.facebook.com and facebook.com). The online ecosystem

[1] The National Internet Observatory is an open, large-scale research infrastructure designed to help academics study online behavior in a scientifically rigorous and privacy-preserving way. Participants install a browser extension on their desktop or laptop to donate their online activity data alongside responses to regular surveys. More information is available at nationalinternetobservatory.org.

is highly concentrated at this level. The single top platform, Gmail (mail.google.com), accounted for 16.4% of all user time. The top 10 websites together captured nearly half of all browsing time (49.7%), and the top 100 absorbed close to 70%. The remaining 344,653 websites—representing more than 99.9% of all 344,753 unique websites in the sample—collectively account for just 31.5% of user attention. To put this in perspective, the average person in our sample spent more time on Gmail alone than on the bottom 300,000 websites combined. In other words, a tiny number of websites capture the vast majority of where we spend our time online, while most of the web is rarely visited. [2]

To show the platforms accounting for more than 1% of user time, Figure 2 applies the same aggregation rules as Figure 1 and additionally groups Outlook products (e.g., outlook.com and hotmail.com) and Google applications (e.g., Drive, Meet, Calendar) so that closely related services do not crowd out other platforms in the figure. Gmail leads with 16.4% of browsing time, followed by YouTube (10.4%), Facebook (8.0%), Google applications including Drive and Meet (5.9%), Yahoo Mail (3.7%), Microsoft Outlook (2.9%), Google Search (2.3%), Amazon (1.9%), ChatGPT (1.5%), Reddit (1.5%), X (1.3%), and AOL Mail (1.1%). Please refer to Appendix A for the underlying values used in the figures.

[2] This highly skewed distribution echoes findings from prior studies of online attention concentration (e.g., Hindman 2008, 2018; Crichton et al. 2021; Goel et al. 2012; Kumar and Tomkins 2010). See Appendix B for a comparison of the top sites across these studies.

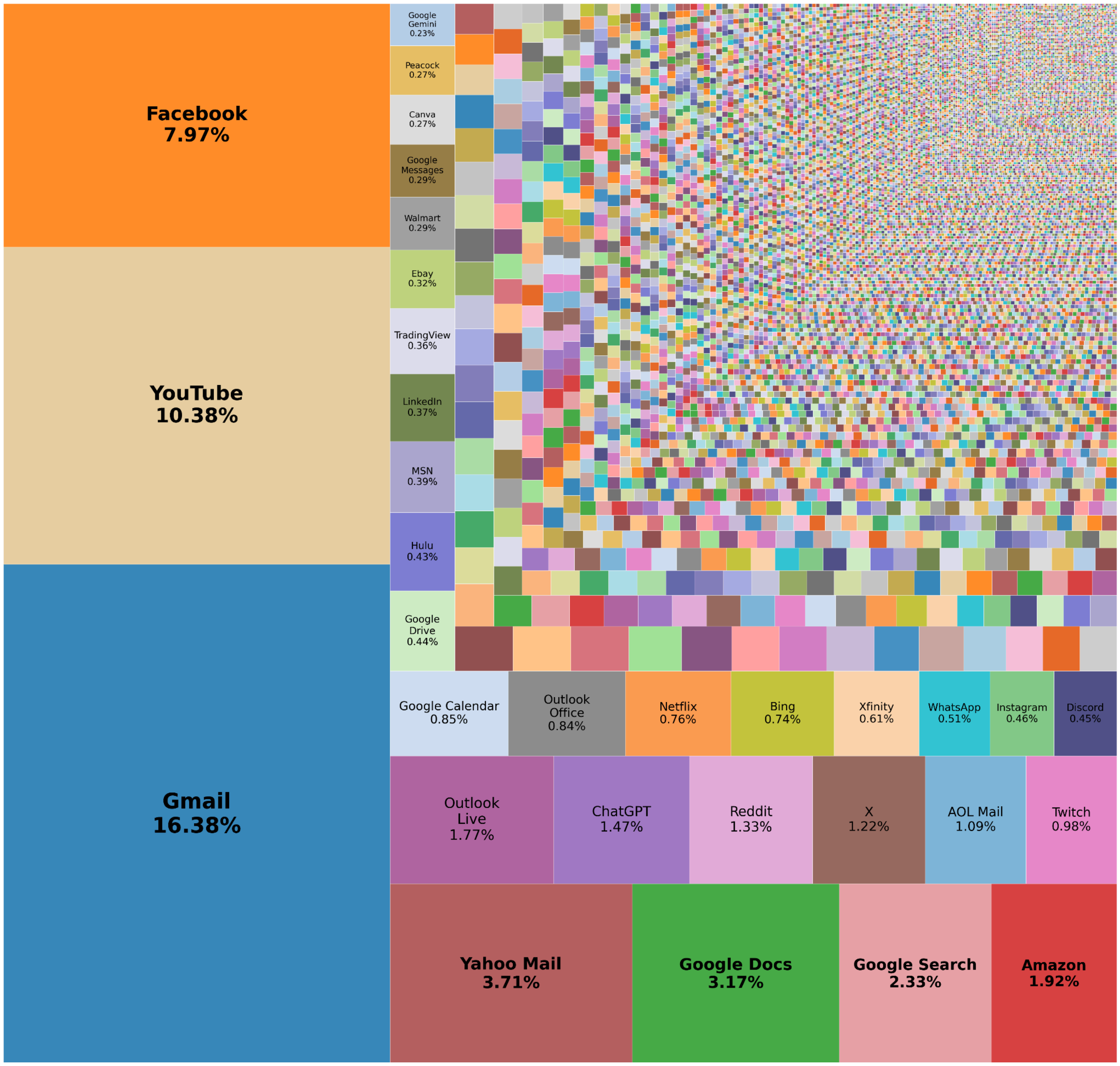

Figure 1. *Distribution of online attention across platforms. Each rectangle represents a website, sized proportionally to its share of total user time. Websites accounting for the top 70% of user time are labeled; the remaining 30% (the long tail) appears as a field of unlabeled squares, as precise rendering of hundreds of thousands of small websites is computationally prohibitive. Based on 344,753 unique websites viewed between June 2024 and December 2025.*

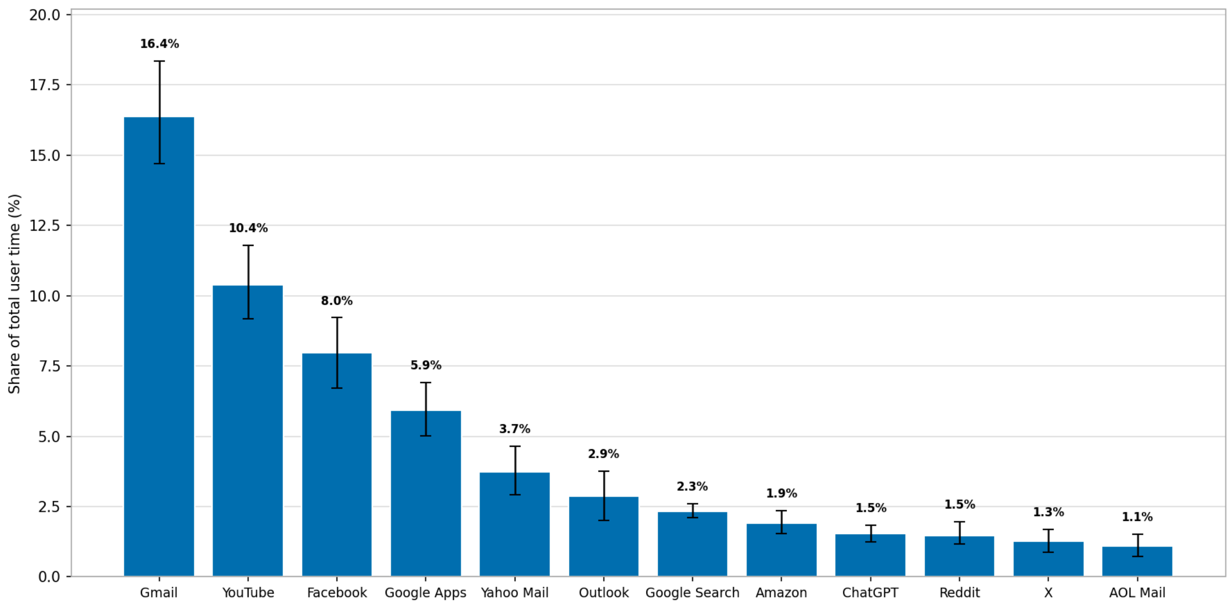

Figure 2. *Percentage of total online time spent at the top 12 platforms (June 2024 – December 2025).*

Many of the largest online platforms share corporate ownership, meaning collective user attention is channeled through a remarkably small number of companies. As shown in Figure 3, Alphabet — encompassing Google Search, YouTube, and related properties — accounted for 35.0% of all desktop browsing time– more than one third of total observed activity. Meta (Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and associated platforms) ranked a distant second at 8.9%. The remaining companies each commanded substantially smaller shares: Microsoft (5.1%), Yahoo (4.3%), Amazon (3.0%), OpenAI (1.5%), Reddit (1.5%), X (1.3%), AOL Mail (1.1%), and Netflix (0.8%).

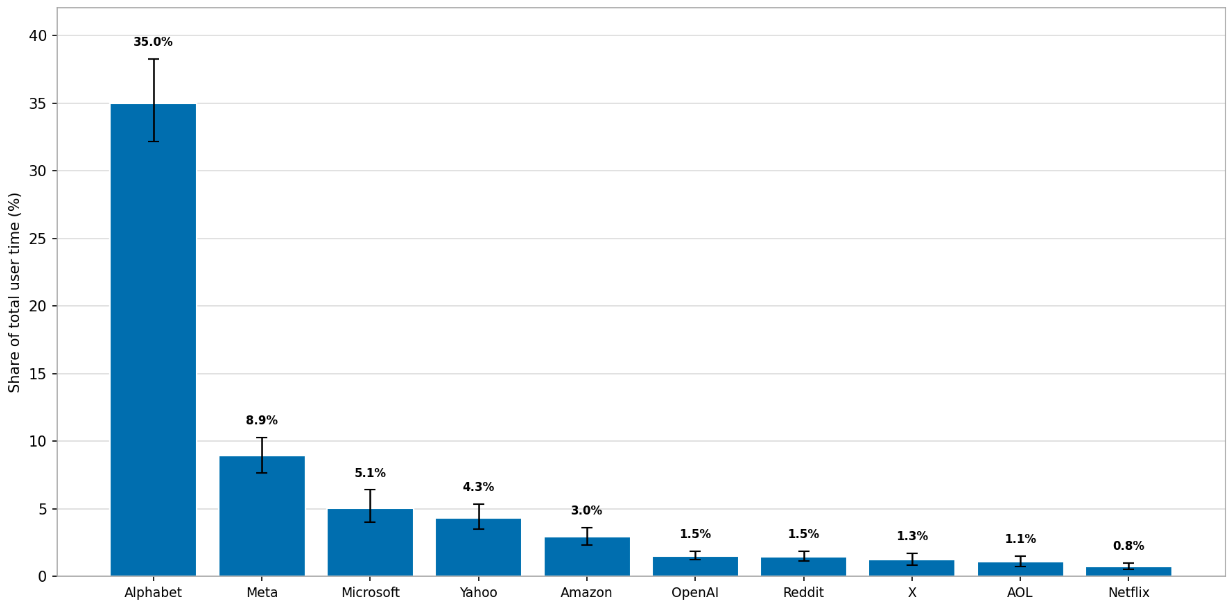

Figure 3. *Percentage of total online time spent on platforms, classified by corporation (June 2024 – December 2025).*

Finding 2: Social media and email dominate time spent on desktop

To understand what people are doing online beyond which specific sites they visit, we classified all 344,753 unique websites into functional categories based on their primary use (e.g., Social Media, Email, Commerce, Productivity). Figure 4 shows the distribution of browsing time across these categories. Social Media (25.3%) and Email (24.9%) are by far the two largest, together accounting for roughly half of all desktop time. Productivity tools such as Google Docs and Drive rank third at 13.0%, followed by Commerce at 8.9%, Streaming at 5.7%, Search at 4.3%, LLMs at 2.9%, Gaming at 2.8%, and News at 2.5%. We note that if YouTube were shifted from Social Media to Streaming, Streaming would jump to 16.1% and Social Media would drop to 14.9%, reversing their relative positions.

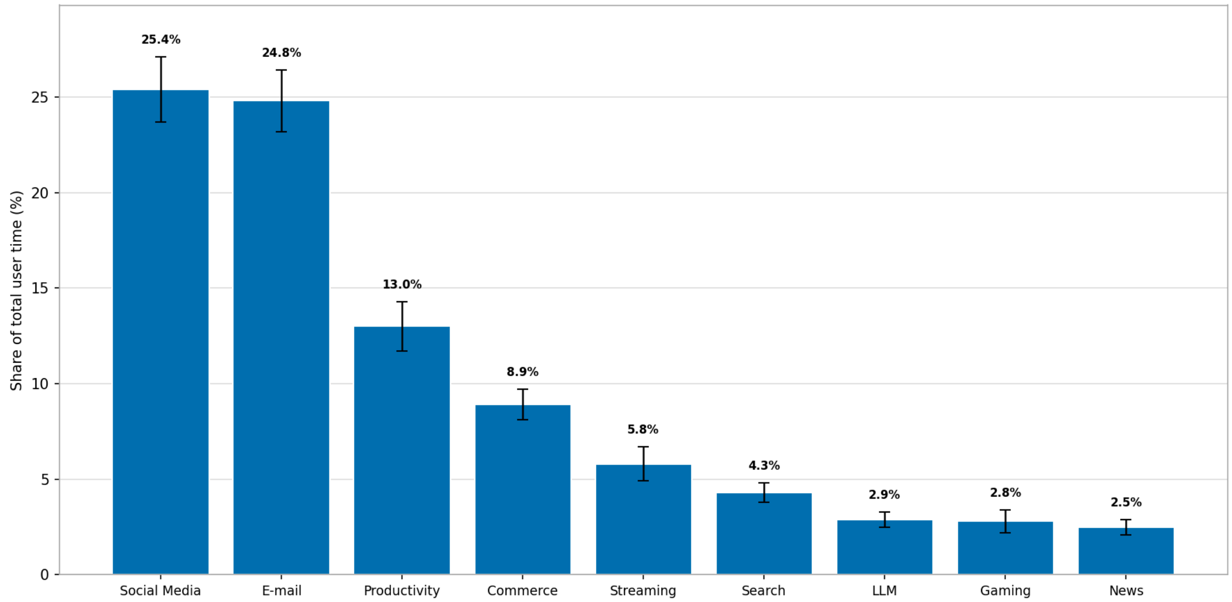

Figure 4. *Percentage of total online time spent in each category, survey sites excluded (June 2024 – December 2025).*

Finding 3: Older adults spend a larger share of their time on email and news, while younger users allocate more time to social platforms, productivity tools, and AI-powered services

Age-based differences in platform use are pronounced. Figure 5 breaks down desktop time by age group across the top 12 platforms. Email platforms (Gmail, Yahoo Mail, Outlook, AOL Mail) and Facebook dominate among older cohorts. Gmail's share rises steadily with age: 9% for 18-29 year-olds, 16% for 30-49, 19% for 50-64, and 20% for 65+. Other mail platforms follow even steeper gradients—AOL and Yahoo Mail, effectively nonexistent among younger users, still capture substantial attention from 65+ users. Facebook accounts for 14% of browsing time for users 65+, but only 2% for those under 30. Younger demographics allocate more time to X (2% versus negligible for older users), Reddit (2% versus negligible), and ChatGPT (3% versus negligible). Google Search, Google applications, and YouTube show moderate age gradients, tilting toward younger users.[3]

Figure 6 illustrates how browsing behavior varies across functional categories. Adults aged 65+ devoted 36.7% of their desktop time to email, compared with 11.6% for those aged 18-29. Older adults also allocated a far greater share to news sites (4.6% versus 1.1%). Youngest users spent considerably more time on productivity tools such as Google Docs, Drive, and Canvas - a learning management system - (21.3% for ages 18-29 versus 7.1% for 65+) and on LLM platforms (5.1% for ages 18-29 versus 1.1% for 65+). Differences across most other content categories were comparatively modest.

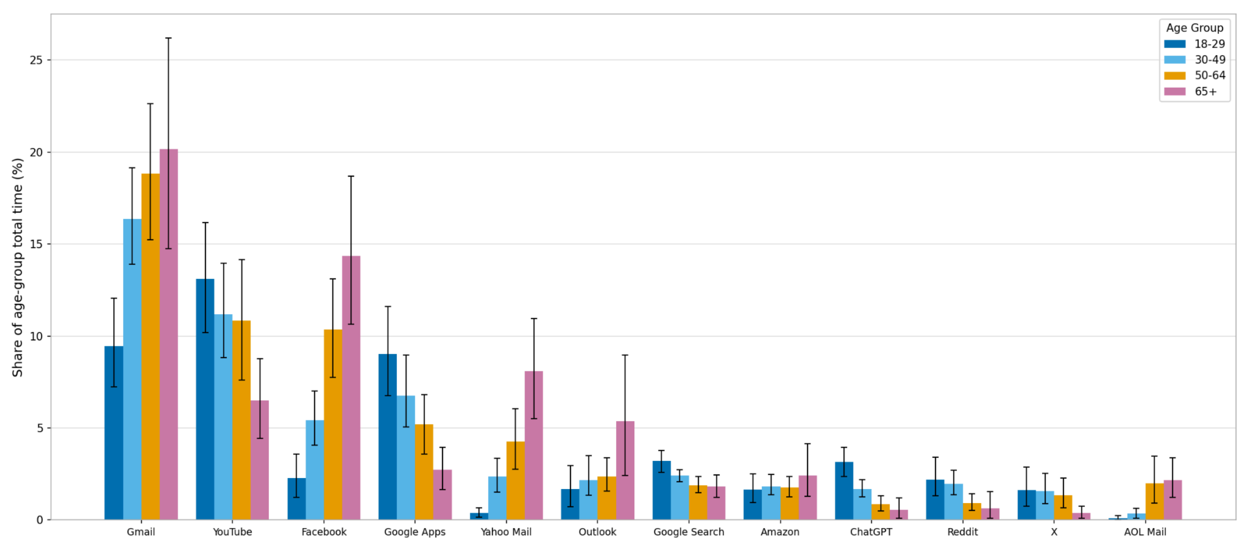

Figure 5*. Percentage of user time by platform and age group (June 2024 – December 2025). Top 12 platforms by hours.*

[3] These figures represent how different age groups allocate their desktop browsing time (measured as share of total time), not absolute hours spent online. The 65+ group spends the most time on desktop overall—3.22 hours per day compared to 1.79 for 18-29 year-olds (Appendix C). Younger users likely spend considerable time on mobile platforms not captured in these desktop data.

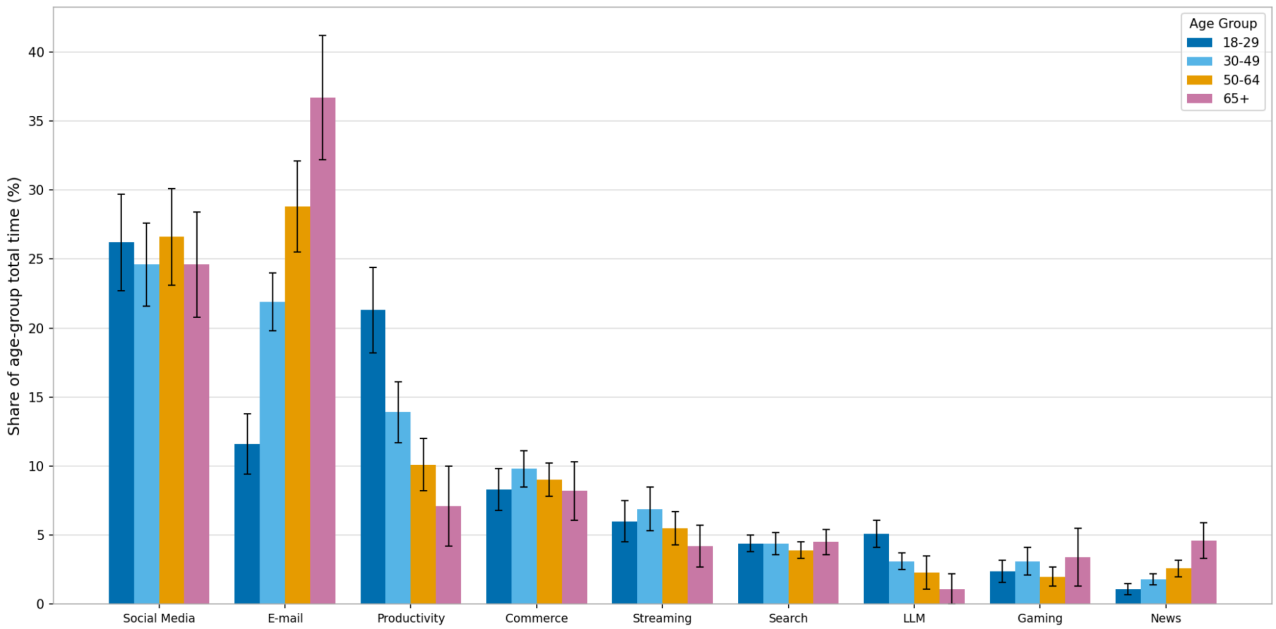

Figure 6. *Percentage of total online time spent in each category and age group (June 2024 – December 2025).*

3. Conclusion

Desktop browsing time concentrates on a remarkably small number of websites, platforms, and ultimately corporate owners. At every level of aggregation, the pattern holds: a handful of properties dominate while the vast majority of the web receives minimal attention. The average person spends more time on Gmail than on hundreds of thousands of other sites combined. Alphabet alone captures more than one-third of all observed desktop activity, and the top ten companies collectively account for the vast majority of where Americans spend their time online. This concentration has meaningful implications for how we understand the digital public sphere—who controls the infrastructure of online life, and how shifts in the policies or algorithms of a single company can reverberate across the broader information environment.

Beyond which sites people visit, how they allocate time across functional categories reveals what they're actually doing online. Social media and email dominate, but productivity tools, commerce, and entertainment platforms each capture substantial attention. The emergence of LLM platforms—ChatGPT and Gemini now register as measurable destinations in everyday browsing—represents a rapid shift in online human behavior, one that warrants continued tracking as these tools evolve.

Several limitations temper these conclusions. The NIO panel, while carefully weighted to approximate the U.S. adult internet-using population, relies on opt-in participation and the dataset used in this report captures desktop browsing only. Work-related devices, mobile browsing, internet use by minors, and incognito sessions remain outside the scope of observation. These data also exclude streaming on internet connected televisions, likely excluding the bulk of time spent on streaming services such as Netflix. These constraints suggest the estimates here are best understood as reflecting personal, non-workplace, desktop behavior rather than the totality of American internet use.

These findings also underscore the value of independent of platform, large-scale behavioral measurement of online activity. As the internet continues to evolve, with new platforms emerging, ownership structures shifting, and AI tools becoming embedded in everyday workflows, infrastructure like the NIO provides a critical foundation for understanding how attention, information, and influence flow through the digital environment.

Summary of data and methods

This study draws on behavioral browsing data collected through the National Internet Observatory (NIO), a large-scale research infrastructure funded by the National Science

Foundation. The NIO invites U.S. residents to participate in a scientific study of internet use, collecting data via a browser extension installed on participants' desktop or laptop computers. This involves a robust consent process, including a requirement that potential participants pass a quiz that demonstrates knowledge of the essential elements of the data collection. The extension captures browsing activity and transmits it securely to the Observatory, where it is made available to approved researchers through a privacy-preserving data access framework. Participants may additionally complete opt-in surveys on a range of topics, enabling linkage between behavioral data and self-reported demographic characteristics. We published an explanation of the ethical framework in Nature Computational Science.

The dataset analyzed in this report covers desktop browsing activity from June 2024 through December 2025. To measure active engagement, we relied on visit focus — a metric that records only the time a browser tab is actively foregrounded by the user. This approach captures where users are actively directing their attention, rather than time elapsed with a page passively loaded in the background. The full dataset comprised 53,243,995 total website visits. The initial sample consisted of 6,499 registered NIO users. We excluded 1,891 users based on the union of two exclusion criteria: browsing activity confined exclusively to survey websites and more than 90% of total browsing time spent on a single site. The final analytic sample comprised 4,608 users.

Weighting and Target Population

Because NIO participants are recruited through non-probability methods, raw panel data may not reflect the broader population without adjustment. We therefore applied base weights developed by the NIO team to align the sample with a defined target population: U.S. adults who (1) have access to the internet, and (2) access the internet on a device other than a mobile phone exclusively. This population was selected because NIO captures online participants only and because the current dataset is limited to desktop browsing activity. It represents approximately 85% of the U.S. adult population. Weights were calibrated to match this population on age, gender, educational attainment, and race/ethnicity. A future white paper will be released assessing the NIO sample against various benchmarks.

Classification of the URLs

We observed 344,753 unique websites across the study period. For the purposes of this report, websites were classified according to three frameworks.

The first framework organizes websites by platform. Many platforms span multiple websites (e.g., Outlook, with outlook.com and hotmail.com). For each of the main platforms, we collected all websites that fall under that platform and grouped them together.

The second framework organizes websites by corporate ownership, enabling an assessment of how user attention is concentrated across a small number of parent companies. Corporate groupings include Alphabet (e.g., Google Search, YouTube, Gmail, Google Drive), Meta (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger), Microsoft (e.g., Outlook, Bing, Office), Yahoo (e.g., Yahoo Mail), and additional companies as relevant.

The third framework groups websites by functional category (see Appendix B for details), allowing us to examine how time is distributed across types of online activity. The categories used include **Email** (e.g., Gmail, Yahoo Mail, Outlook), **Social Media** (e.g., Facebook, Instagram), **Productivity** (e.g., Google Docs, Slack), **Commerce** (e.g., Amazon, Target),

Streaming (e.g., Netflix, Spotify), **Search** (e.g., Google, Bing), **LLM tools** (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini), **News** (e.g., The New York Times, CNN), and **Gaming** (e.g., Roblox). Many websites serve multiple functions. For example, while YouTube acts as both a social media platform and a streaming service, it is categorized as Social Media in this framework. To calculate the time-share estimates reported throughout this report, we aggregated the total time spent on each website or category across all 4,608 users in the analytic sample and divided it by total time spent online across all users. All estimates are weighted unless otherwise noted. In addition, 169,698 websites were classified as "Other," representing sites that were difficult to categorize; this category is not displayed in the figures.

To quantify uncertainty arising from sample composition, we report 95% confidence intervals estimated via bootstrapping with 500 iterations. In each iteration, users were resampled with replacement and the weighted share of time spent on each website was recomputed. These intervals reflect the sensitivity of our estimates to the particular set of participants observed, rather than measurement error per se.

All behavioral data collected through opt-in panels are subject to a set of known limitations, several of which merit explicit acknowledgment.

Sample representativeness: NIO recruits participants through non-probability methods and compensates them for participation. Although reweighting procedures are applied to improve alignment with the target population, residual biases likely remain. One documented concern is the likely over-representation of Bing, which offers reward incentives for use; panels that compensate participants likely disproportionately attract individuals responsive to such incentives.

Incognito browsing: For privacy and ethical reasons, participants may opt out of data collection by browsing in incognito mode. The extent and patterning of this opt-out behavior may introduce systematic gaps in observed activity.

Work-related browsing: Participants were instructed not to install the browser extension on work computers. As a result, a substantial share of internet activity, particularly professional or institutional browsing, is not captured. The data should therefore be interpreted as reflecting personal browsing behavior rather than total internet use.

Age restriction: The NIO panel is limited to adults, which means aggregate traffic patterns in this study may not match population-level or platform-level statistics that include minors.

Many of these limitations are not unique to NIO; they apply broadly to consent-based online behavioral research, including commercial panel providers such as Nielsen and Comscore. Other, traffic-based metrics from industry, do not suffer from selection biases (these measures do present other issues with respect to interpretation). In the Appendix B, we offer comparisons to available industry benchmarks to contextualize our estimates.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Underlying Values for Figures

This appendix provides the underlying numerical values used to generate each figure in the main manuscript of the report. For each figure, we report the point estimate (share of user time) along with the 95% confidence interval estimated via bootstrapping. These tables are intended to support transparency and allow readers to reproduce or extend our analyses.

Platform	Share of total time (%)	Confidence Interval (low)	Confidence Interval (high)
Gmail	16.4	14.7	18.4
YouTube	10.4	9.2	11.8
Facebook	8.0	6.7	9.2
Google Apps	5.9	5.0	6.9
Yahoo Mail	3.7	2.9	4.6
Outlook	2.9	2.0	3.8
Google Search	2.3	2.1	2.6
Amazon	1.9	1.5	2.4
ChatGPT	1.5	1.3	1.8
Reddit	1.5	1.2	2.0
X	1.3	0.9	1.7
AOL Mail	1.1	0.7	1.5

Table A1. *Aggregate platform numbers corresponding to Figure 2.*

Platform	Age Group	Share of total time (%)	Confidence Interval (low)	Confidence Interval (high)
AOL Mail	18-29	0.1	0.0	0.2
AOL Mail	30-49	0.3	0.1	0.6
AOL Mail	50-64	2.0	0.9	3.5
AOL Mail	65+	2.2	1.2	3.4
Amazon	18-29	1.7	1.0	2.5
Amazon	30-49	1.8	1.4	2.5
Amazon	50-64	1.8	1.3	2.4
Amazon	65+	2.4	1.3	4.2

ChatGPT	18-29	3.2	2.4	3.9
ChatGPT	30-49	1.7	1.3	2.2
ChatGPT	50-64	0.8	0.5	1.3
ChatGPT	65+	0.5	0.1	1.2
Facebook	18-29	2.3	1.2	3.6
Facebook	30-49	5.4	4.1	7.0
Facebook	50-64	10.4	7.7	13.1
Facebook	65+	14.3	10.6	18.7
Gmail	18-29	9.4	7.3	12.0
Gmail	30-49	16.4	13.9	19.1
Gmail	50-64	18.8	15.2	22.6
Gmail	65+	20.2	14.7	26.2
Google Apps	18-29	9.0	6.7	11.6
Google Apps	30-49	6.8	5.0	9.0
Google Apps	50-64	5.2	3.6	6.8
Google Apps	65+	2.7	1.7	3.9
Google Search	18-29	3.2	2.6	3.8
Google Search	30-49	2.4	2.1	2.7
Google Search	50-64	1.9	1.5	2.4
Google Search	65+	1.8	1.2	2.5
Outlook	18-29	1.7	0.7	3.0
Outlook	30-49	2.2	1.3	3.5
Outlook	50-64	2.4	1.6	3.4
Outlook	65+	5.4	2.4	9.0
Reddit	18-29	2.2	1.3	3.4
Reddit	30-49	2.0	1.4	2.7
Reddit	50-64	0.9	0.5	1.4
Reddit	65+	0.6	0.1	1.5
X	18-29	1.6	0.8	2.9

X	30-49	1.6	0.9	2.5
X	50-64	1.3	0.7	2.3
X	65+	0.4	0.1	0.8
Yahoo Mail	18-29	0.4	0.1	0.7
Yahoo Mail	30-49	2.4	1.5	3.4
Yahoo Mail	50-64	4.3	2.8	6.1
Yahoo Mail	65+	8.1	5.5	11.0
YouTube	18-29	13.1	10.2	16.2
YouTube	30-49	11.2	8.8	14.0
YouTube	50-64	10.8	7.6	14.2

Table A2. *Age-group platform numbers corresponding to Figure 5.*

Corporation	**Share of total time (%)**	**Confidence Interval (low)**	**Confidence Interval (high)**
Alphabet	35.0	32.2	38.3
Meta	8.9	7.7	10.3
Microsoft	5.1	4.0	6.4
Yahoo	4.3	3.5	5.4
Amazon	3.0	2.3	3.6
OpenAI	1.5	1.3	1.8
Reddit	1.5	1.2	1.9
X	1.3	0.9	1.7
AOL	1.1	0.8	1.5
Netflix	0.8	0.6	1.0

Table A3. *Aggregate corporation numbers corresponding to Figure 3.*

Category	**Share of total time (%)**	**Confidence Interval (low)**	**Confidence Interval (high)**
Social Media	25.4	23.7	27.1
E-mail	24.8	23.2	26.4
Productivity	13	11.7	14.3
Commerce	8.9	8.1	9.7
Streaming	5.8	4.9	6.7

Search	4.3	3.8	4.8
LLM	2.9	2.5	3.3
Gaming	2.8	2.2	3.4
News	2.5	2.1	2.9

Table A4. *Aggregate category numbers corresponding to Figure 4.*

Category	**Age Group**	**Share of total time (%)**	**Confidence Interval (low)**	**Confidence Interval (high)**
Social Media	18-29	26.2	22.7	29.7
Social Media	30-49	24.6	21.6	27.6
Social Media	50-64	26.6	23.1	30.1
Social Media	65+	24.6	20.8	28.4
E-mail	18-29	11.6	9.4	13.8
E-mail	30-49	21.9	19.8	24
E-mail	50-64	28.8	25.5	32.1
E-mail	65+	36.7	32.2	41.2
Productivity	18-29	21.3	18.2	24.4
Productivity	30-49	13.9	11.7	16.1
Productivity	50-64	10.1	8.2	12
Productivity	65+	7.1	4.2	10
Commerce	18-29	8.3	6.8	9.8
Commerce	30-49	9.8	8.5	11.1
Commerce	50-64	9	7.8	10.2
Commerce	65+	8.2	6.1	10.3
Streaming	18-29	6	4.5	7.5
Streaming	30-49	6.9	5.3	8.5
Streaming	50-64	5.5	4.3	6.7
Streaming	65+	4.2	2.7	5.7
Search	18-29	4.4	3.8	5
Search	30-49	4.4	3.6	5.2
Search	50-64	3.9	3.3	4.5
Search	65+	4.5	3.6	5.4
LLM	18-29	5.1	4.1	6.1
LLM	30-49	3.1	2.5	3.7
LLM	50-64	2.3	1.1	3.5

LLM	65+	1.1	0	2.2
Gaming	18-29	2.4	1.6	3.2
Gaming	30-49	3.1	2.1	4.1
Gaming	50-64	2	1.3	2.7
Gaming	65+	3.4	1.3	5.5
News	18-29	1.1	0.7	1.5
News	30-49	1.8	1.4	2.2
News	50-64	2.6	2	3.2
News	65+	4.6	3.3	5.9

Table A5. *Age-group category numbers corresponding to Figure 6.*

Appendix B: Methods

Data and Participants

The National Internet Observatory (NIO) is a large research infrastructure funded by the National Science Foundation, which invites residents of the United States to participate in a scientific study to understand the role the internet plays in modern society. NIO operates in two steps: first, collecting data from participants on their online experiences via a browser extension installed on their desktop or laptop, which captures browsing activity and sends it securely to the Observatory; and second, providing privacy-preserving access to approved researchers to study internet behavior. Participants also have the option to complete surveys on a variety of topics, allowing behavioral data to be linked to demographic characteristics.

The data in this report cover desktop browsing activity from June 2024 through December 2025. To measure active browsing time, we used visit focus, which tracks only the time a user spends with a browser tab actively in the foreground. This approach is to measure where actively people are spending online rather than time a page is simply left open in the background. Across the full dataset, we recorded 53,243,995 total observations.

We began with 6,499 users in the NIO. We then filtered out 1,891 users who spent their time exclusively on survey websites, a pattern that indicates participation in online studies rather than representative everyday browsing behavior, and which has been documented in prior work on online panel behavior.[1] This left a final sample of 4,608 users.

Weighting and Target Population

Raw NIO data does not represent a broader population without adjustment, as the panel is recruited through non-probability methods. Accordingly, we applied a base set of weights calculated by the NIO team to make the sample representative of the target population. Our target population is U.S. adults who (1) have access to the internet, and (2) access the internet not only on mobile devices. This population was chosen because NIO captures online participants only, and because the current dataset covers desktop browsing exclusively. This population constitutes approximately 85% of the general U.S. adult population. Weights were calculated to match this population on demographic characteristics including age, gender, education, and race/ethnicity. We note that weighting does not guarantee that the sample is representative of this population. We present comparisons with some benchmarks below, and will issue a white paper in the future comparing NIO survey data to other, survey and administrative-based, benchmarks.

URL Classification

We observed 344,753 unique websites during the study period. For this report, we analyze these websites using three complementary frameworks.

The first framework organizes websites by platform. Many platforms span multiple websites (e.g., Outlook, with outlook.com and hotmail.com). For each of the main platforms, we collected all websites that fall under that platform and grouped them together. The platforms used in this report are Gmail, YouTube, Facebook, Google applications (Google Drive, Google Meet, etc.), Yahoo Mail, Outlook, Google Search, Amazon, ChatGPT, Reddit, X, and AOL Mail.

The second framework groups websites by corporate ownership, allowing us to assess how attention is concentrated across a small number of parent companies. The corporate groupings used in this report are Alphabet (including Google Search, YouTube, Gmail, Google Drive, and related properties), Meta (including Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Facebook Messenger), Microsoft (including Outlook, Bing, and LinkedIn), Yahoo (including Yahoo Mail and Yahoo Search), Amazon (including Amazon shopping and Twitch), OpenAI, Reddit, X, AOL, and Netflix.

The third framework groups websites by content category: Email, Social Media, Productivity, Commerce, Streaming, Search, LLM tools, News, and Games. We classified websites in two stages. First, we manually coded major websites within each category. Second, we used large language models to classify the remaining long-tail websites into these categories or as "Other." To validate this approach, we manually reviewed the top 100 classified websites to check for consequential classification errors.

To calculate the time percentages reported throughout this report, we computed the aggregate time spent on each website or category for the 4,608 users in our sample, then divided by the total time spent online across all users. To account for sample uncertainty, we report 95% confidence intervals calculated via bootstrapping with 500 iterations. In each iteration, users are resampled with replacement, and the share of time spent on each website is recomputed using weighted hours. These confidence intervals quantify how sensitive our estimates are to the particular set of participants in our sample. All figures are weighted unless otherwise noted.

Comparisons with other data sources

We compare our results with those from other internet trends data sources. These sources track visits, not time on page. In the table below, we compare our NIO visits and time on page results with other sources.

We find that by and large, our top domains align with the top domains in the other data sources.

Note that the comparisons are not one-to-one in the table. For example, none of the sources we compare to divide Google domains into different platforms (Gmail, search, etc.), and instead catch all under google.com or Google sites.

Data Source	**Metric**	**Time Period**	**Devices Included**	**Top Domains**
NIO	Visits	June 2024 - December 2025	Desktop	1. Gmail 2. Facebook 3. Youtube 4. Google applications 5. Google search 6. Bing 7. Yahoo Mail 8. Amazon 9. Reddit 10. Microsoft Outlook
NIO	Time	June 2024 - December 2025	Desktop	1. Gmail 2. Youtube 3. Facebook 4. Google applications

				5. Yahoo mail 6. Outlook 7. Google search 8. Amazon 9. ChatGPT 10. Reddit
Semrush	Visits	January 2026	Desktop + mobile	1. google.com 2. youtube.com 3. facebook.com 4. reddit.com 5. amazon.com 6. chatgpt.com 7. instagram.com 8. yahoo.com 9. wikipedia.org 10. x.com
SimilarWeb	Visits	December 2025 - February 2026	Desktop	1. google.com 2. youtube.com 3. facebook.com 4. bing.com 5. amazon.com
Comscore	Visits	February 2026	Desktop + mobile	1. Google sites 2. Facebook 3. Yahoo sites 4. Microsoft sites 5. Amazon sites 6. AOL, Inc.

Appendix C: Average Daily Desktop Consumption Overall and by Application Category Across Age Groups

Figure C1 presents the total average daily desktop hours for each demographic group. The 65+ age group exhibits the highest overall desktop activity, averaging 3.22 hours per day, followed by the 50–64 (1.81 hours) and 18–29 (1.79 hours) cohorts. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals, capturing the variability in usage patterns within each group.

Figure C2 illustrates the distribution of digital activity across nine functional categories, measured by monthly average usage hours. This metric is calculated by dividing the total hours spent within each category in a given month by the number of unique active users in that month for the respective age group, then averaging across all months in the study period. Error bars indicate the 95% confidence intervals derived from month-level variation. Notable patterns include significantly higher engagement in "E-mail" and "Social Media" among the 65+ cohort, while younger users (18–29) exhibit greater relative usage of "Productivity" and "LLM" (Large Language Model) tools—despite the older group's higher average daily usage overall.

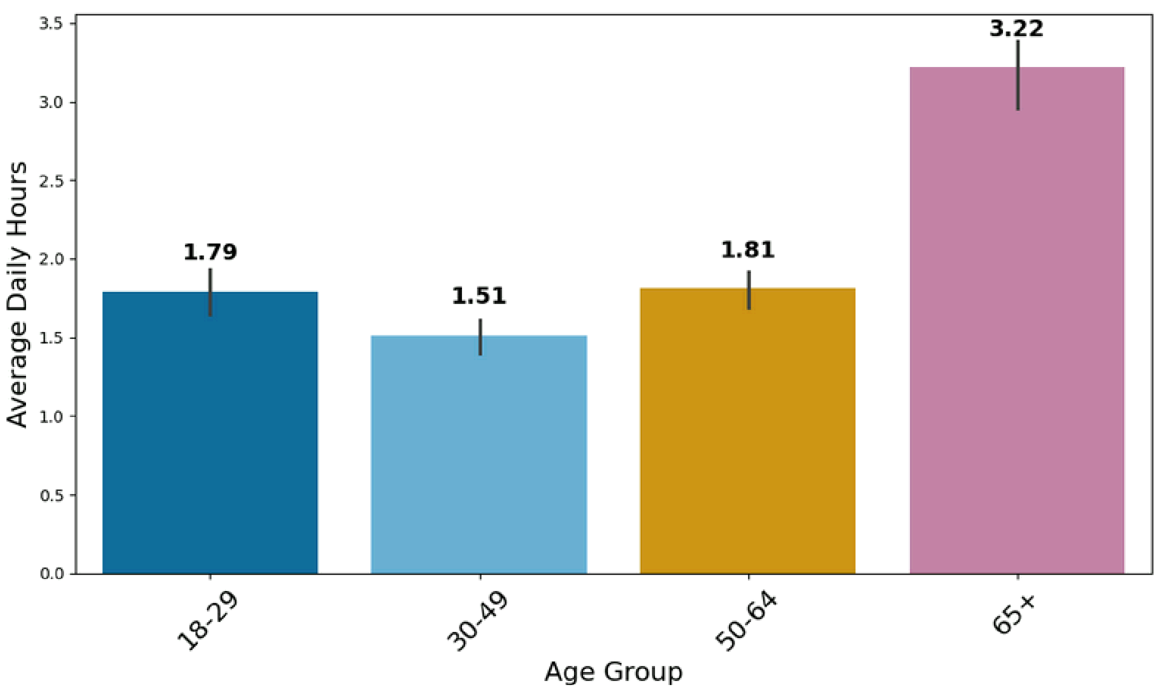

Figure C1: *The overall average desktop usage hour across age groups*

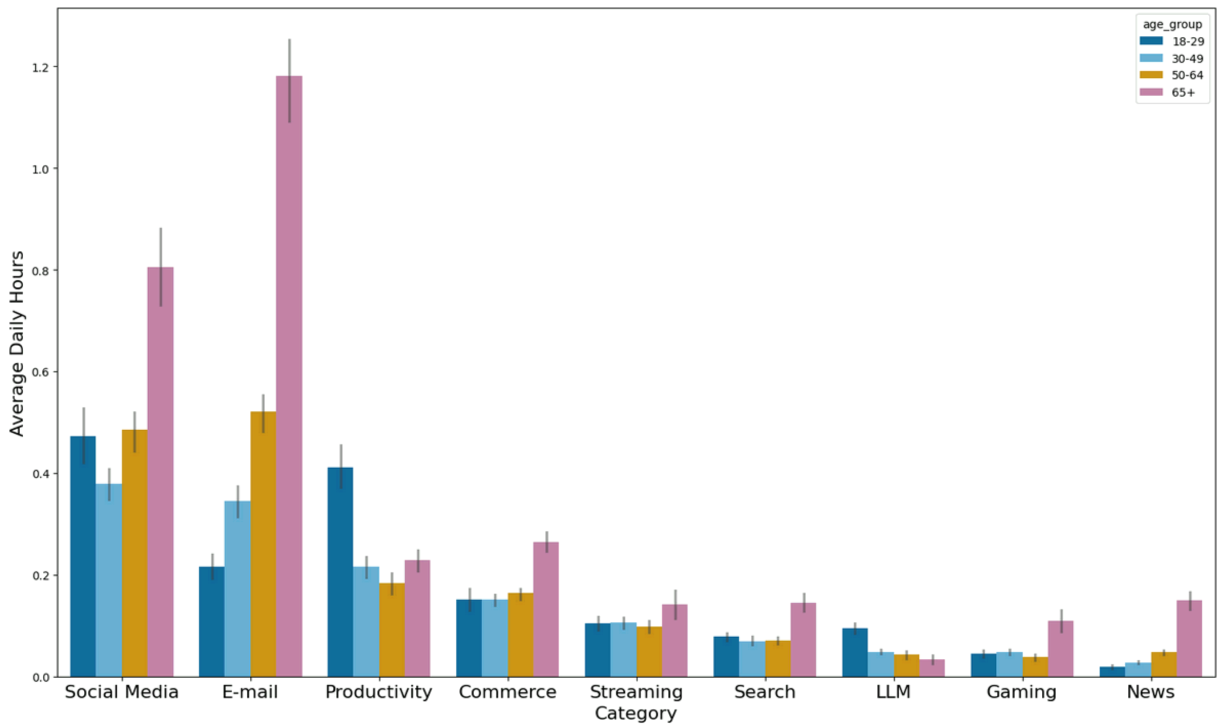

Figure C2: *The average desktop usage hours of each category across age groups.*