

E-mail's a morning thing. Proven.



By [Tim Wyatt-Gunning](#)

21 Sep 2015

If your work largely consists of e-mailing then the data suggests you're slacking off in the afternoon. South African e-mail traffic peaks at 9 am and then declines gradually at first and then precipitously after 3pm. Hopefully, this means that you're diligently doing other essential work tasks late in the day rather than ducking early or idling about on social media.

We can trace these internet trends by analysing the percentages of our system usage at Webafrica but don't panic about privacy invasion - we can only see the type of traffic travelling through our system, not the individual content.



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Here are the facts

Email traffic goes from a score of 0.65% of all internet usage at 6am to 1.54% at 7am. It then doubles again to 3.35% at 8am (which seems to be the time when most people arrive at work) and then hits the peak of 3.81% by 9am.

From then on, once we've answered all of our overnight mails, we start to do other things and there's a steady decline to 3.23% at 3pm down to 1.35% at 5pm. By 6pm it's 0.93%, below what it was at 7am.

What about our web browsing habits?

Serious browsing of the web seems to only start when we get home with no bosses to look over our shoulders. There is a significant jump in usage from 6pm which climbs every hour until 10pm and then starts dropping off as we go to bed with a low point of usage at 4am.

We're not just browsing, we're downloading

Our download traffic is pretty consistent throughout the day until we get home and then "boom!" - it rises sharply from 6pm until a peak just after midnight, only returning to normal levels when we get to work the next morning.

Video usage in particular - streaming the likes of YouTube and Netflix - occupies very nearly 30% of all our traffic at its peak of 9pm. There is plenty of video traffic right through the night and we only hit the lowest point of video consumption at 6am.

How do we know all this?

We provide internet access for 30,000 South Africans, many of whom are businesses, so we think this data is pretty representative of connected South Africans as a whole.

Not to worry - we don't spy on what our customers are doing online. We can't see what websites you're visiting but we do see what kind of thing you are doing on the internet throughout the day (i.e. whether you are just browsing, watching videos, downloading or emailing) because we manage our network accordingly. Different categories have different needs, for example video eats up a lot of our network because we need to give it to you right now, as crystal clear as possible, whereas a download is a download and doesn't require the same quality and speed of delivery. The only thing being affected is the speed of the download.

ABOUT TIM WYATT-GUNNING

Tim graduated from Cambridge in 1992, was a banker in London for 4 years, before getting involved in the European telecommunications industry in 1996 with LDL. In 1999, he moved to South Africa to set up Storm Telecom. For 9 years Tim co-ran Storm, driving it to revenues of over R250m with over 6000 business customers across the country, until it was bought by Vox Telecom in January 2008 for R360m. Tim joined Webafrica as CEO in October 2011.

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