

Internet can cope with US and Europe lockdown surge: Nokia

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AI will serve to develop a network control system that not only detects and reacts to problems but can also predict and avoid them. Credit: CC0 Public Domain

Fears that internet networks could buckle after millions of people went into coronavirus lockdown have proven unfounded, according to a report released Thursday which details huge surges in streaming and video conferencing in Europe and the US.

Analysts at [network](#) equipment maker Nokia studied usage data from Nokia-supplied networks for the week of March 23, just after stringent restrictions were imposed across Europe and the United States to try and curb the spread of the new coronavirus.

Web traffic spiked by up to 50 percent immediately after millions of people were directed to stay at home, sparking fears that networks would not be able to cope with the surge.

But since then, "we have seen the stabilisation of peak demand, with manageable traffic growth," the report by Nokia's Deepfield analytics arm said.

Although [internet traffic](#) has increased across all regions, in particular as workers turn to data-heavy [video conferencing](#) apps, "networks seem to be handling these increases well".

Weekday online traffic surged in the mornings after the movement restrictions were imposed, but fluctuated less than before the lockdowns, report author Craig Labovitz said.

"There are no afternoon lags that were the result of the afternoon commutes from workplaces to homes," Labovitz said.

The video conferencing app Zoom—which has emerged as a favourite way for many workers, families and friends to stay in touch online—has seen its traffic increase as much as 700 percent on some US networks, the report said.

The other major growth area under lockdown conditions is video streaming, with newcomer Disney+ already responsible for up to 18 percent of video streaming traffic despite only launching in Europe on March 24.

However the report points out that Disney+ does not appear to have followed other video-on-demand services such as Netflix, YouTube and Amazon Prime, in reducing their streaming quality in Europe to allow for the increased usage without increasing bandwidth requirements.

This reduction may explain why weekend internet use showed little or no growth at peak usage times in most networks, the report said.

In some European markets, however, weekend [traffic](#) was up by 64 percent compared to the weekend of February 1, before the coronavirus crisis hit.

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