

**Exploratory study into the  
perceptions of knowledge  
sources and knowledge  
uses among students**

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# **Research method**

# Exploratory research

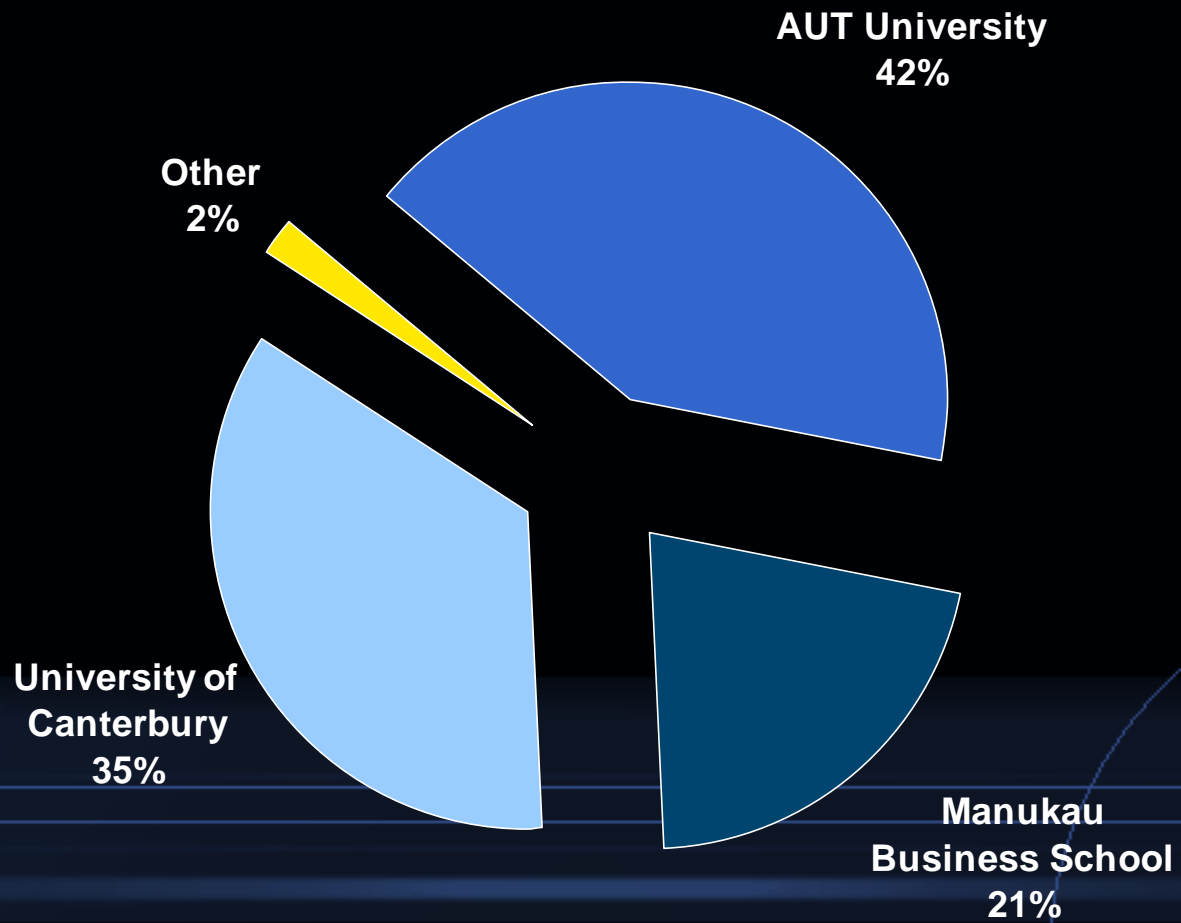
- Questionnaire survey
- Convenience sample – 100 respondents
- Participating researchers:
  - Dr Petra Theunissen (AUT University)
  - Dr Christopher Theunissen (Manukau Business School)
  - Dr Mary Allan (University of Canterbury)

# Analysis

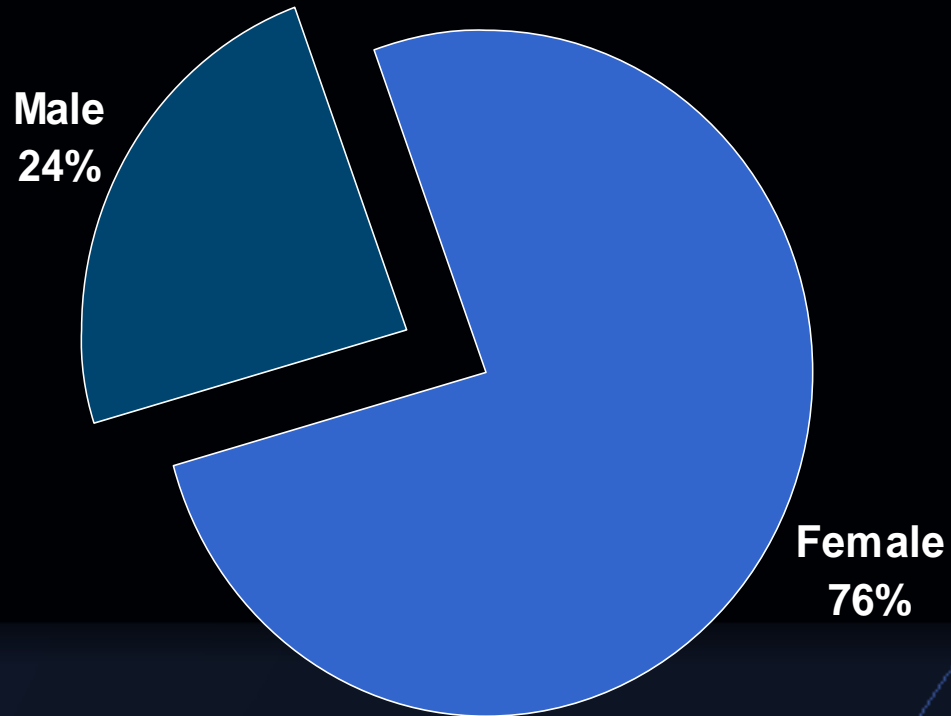
- SPSS package
- Combination of statistical methods:
  - Frequencies
  - Cross tabulation
  - Pearsons bivariate correlation coefficient
  - T-test
  - Principal component analysis (factor analysis)

# **Profile of respondents**

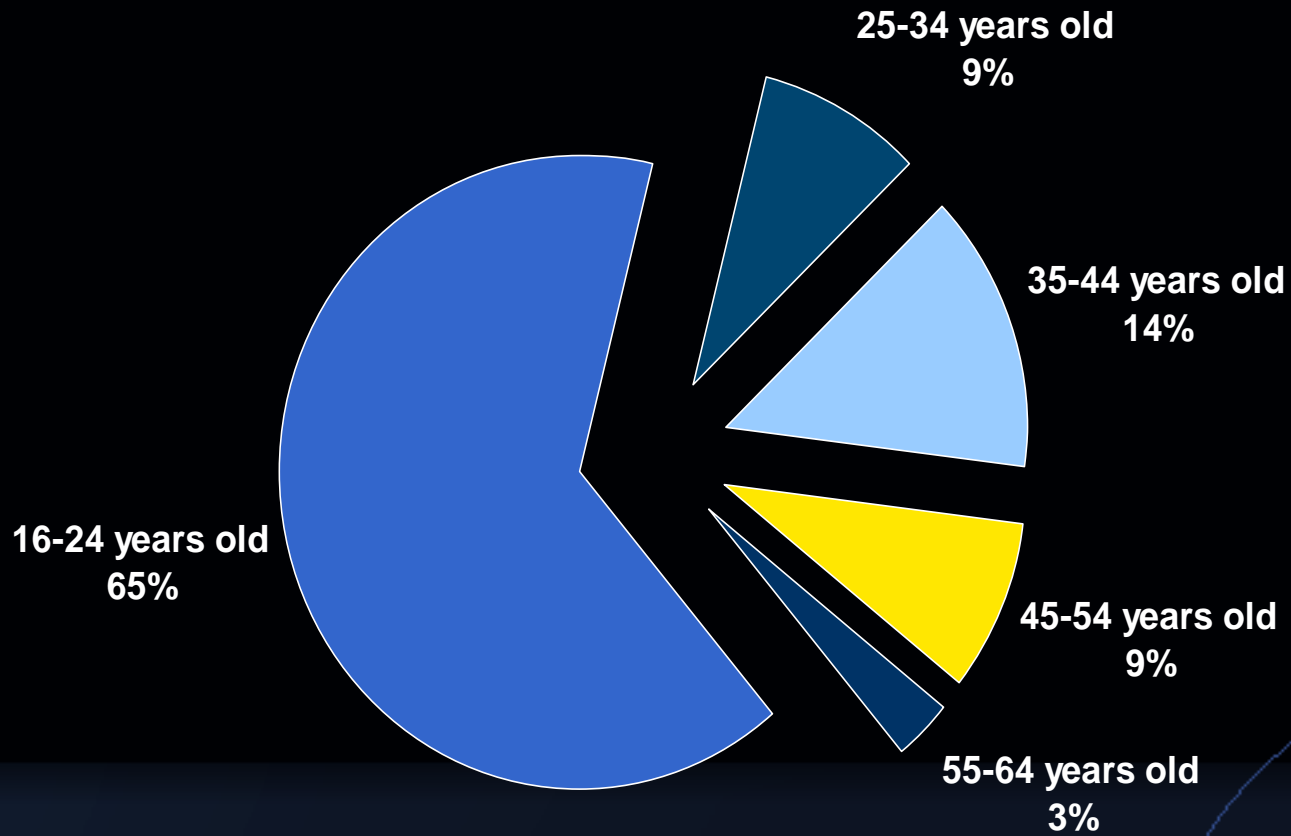
# Institution of study



# Gender distribution

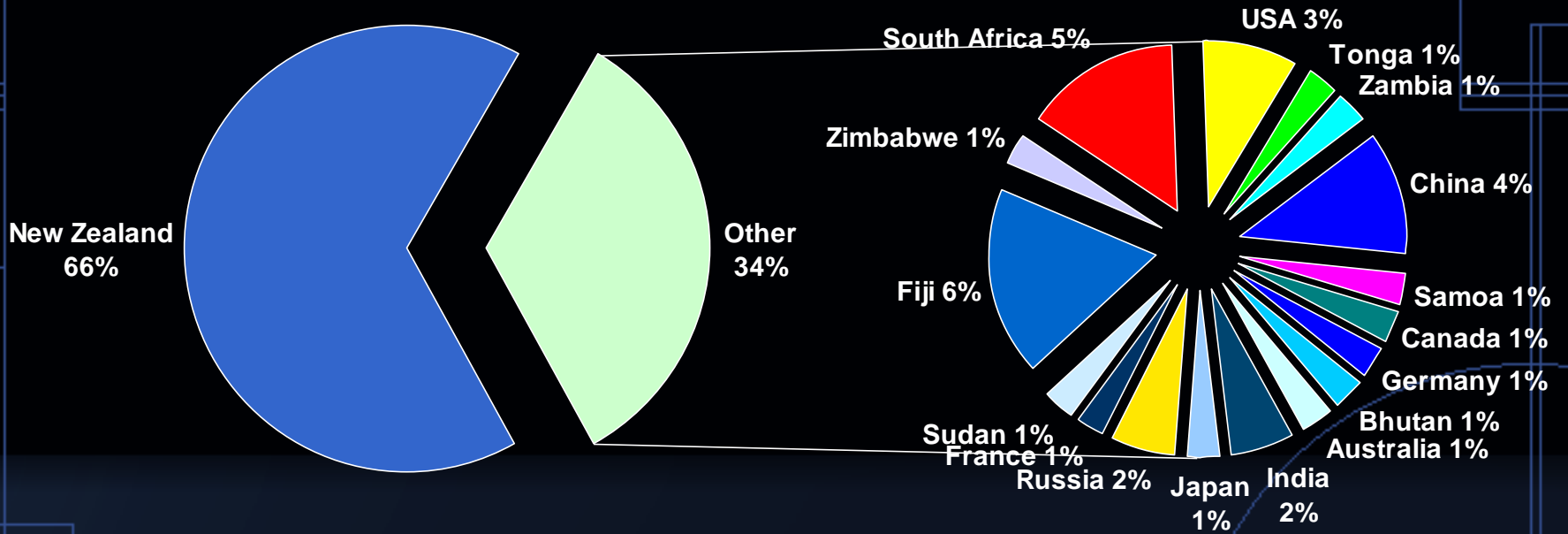


# Age groups



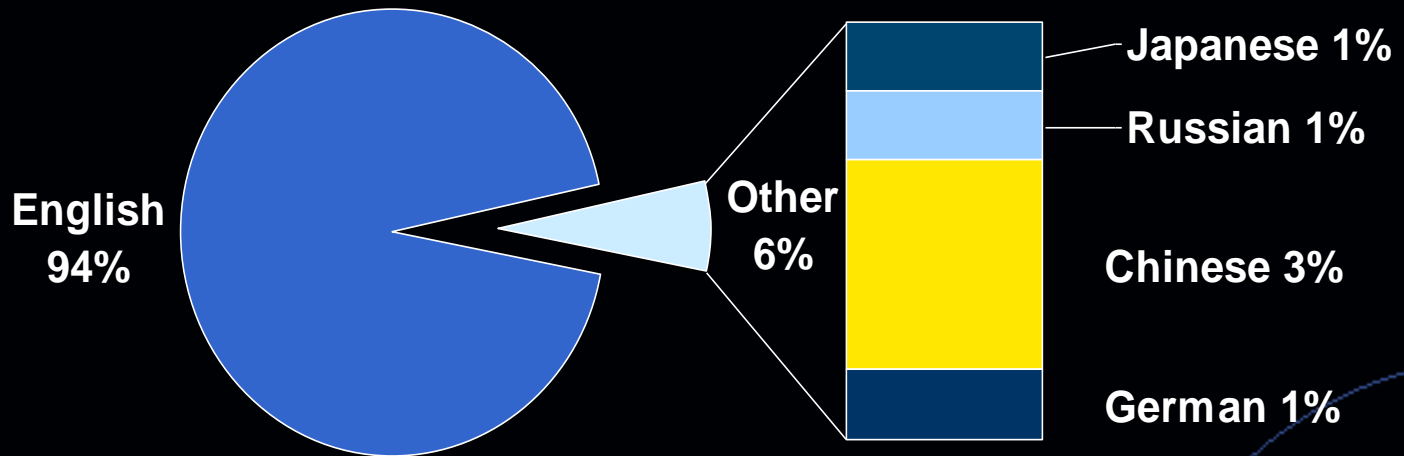


# Country of Birth

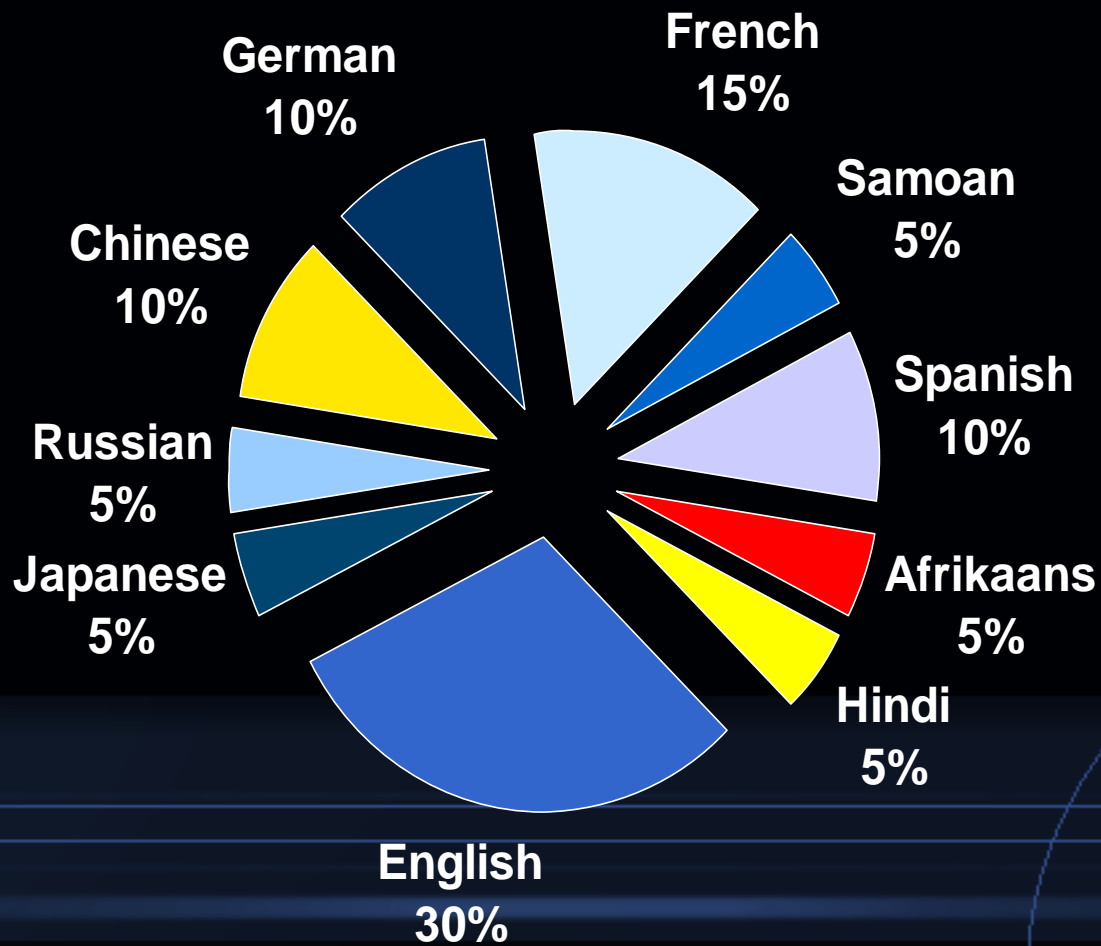


# Internet use

# Surfing the Internet: Language of choice



# Surfing the Internet: Second choice language



# Hours of Internet use (daily)

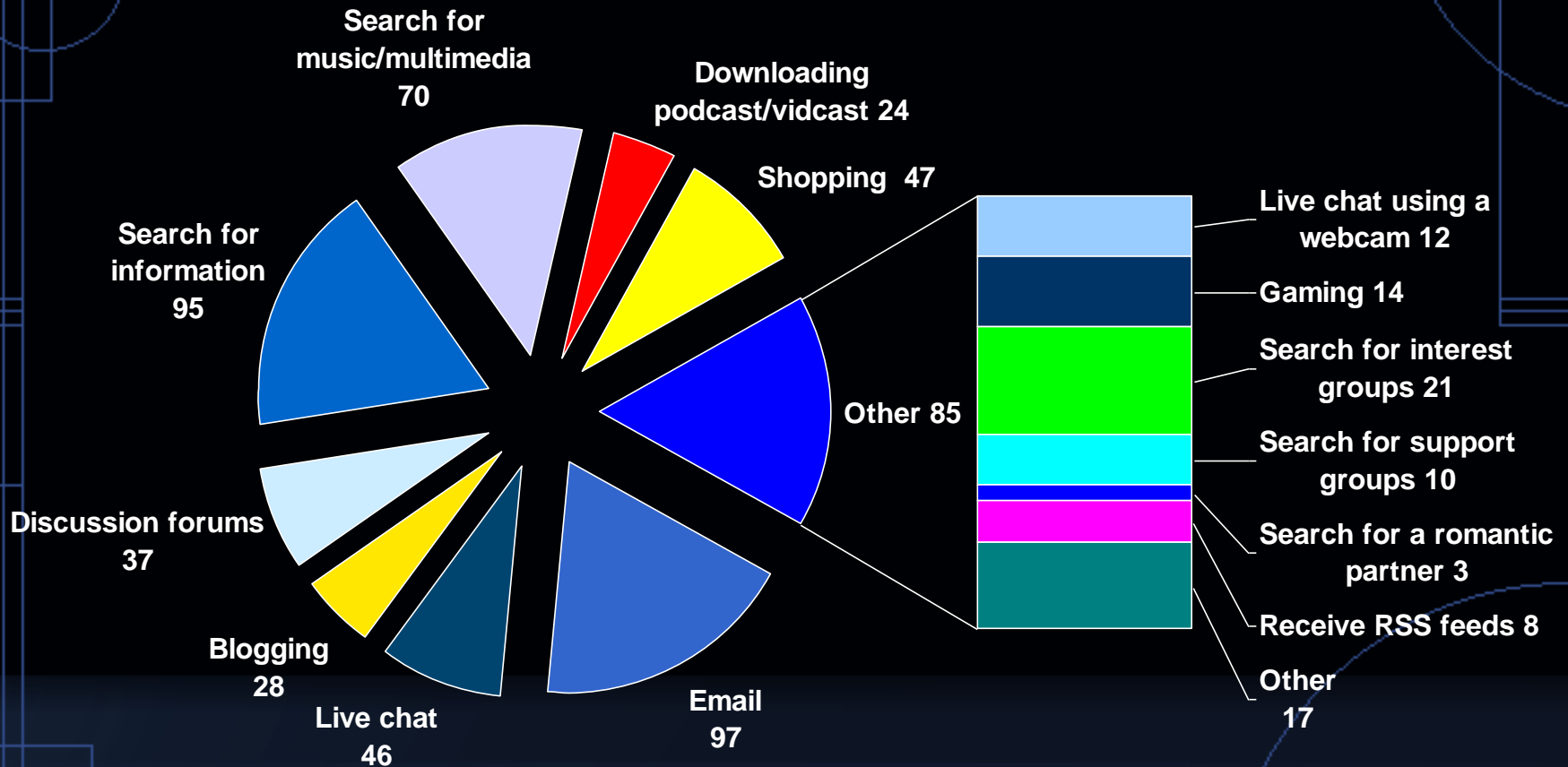


◆ Number of respondents

# Hours of surfing

- The more hours respondents spent on the Internet, the more likely they were to:
  - Perceive it as a place to exchange ideas
  - Perceive it as a social networking place
- Weak link between hours surfing the Internet and:
  - Gaming
  - Live chat using a webcam
- Both had a weak relationship with gender
- No significant correlation between hours and gender/age but aforementioned does imply some relationship – needs to be investigated further

# General Internet use



# Internet as a social network place

- Respondents who felt that the Internet was a place to exchange ideas were more likely to:
  - Perceive Internet as a place to meet people, and
  - It being a social networking place.
- Respondents who used the Internet for discussion forums on topics of interests:
  - Perceived the Internet as a place to exchange ideas (and thus a social networking place), and
  - Used it to search for interest groups & support groups.



# The Internet as a place to conduct business

- Respondents who perceived the Internet as a place to conduct business:
  - Perceived it as a place to shop (!)
  - Perceived it as a source of entertainment and information
  - Used the Internet for shopping.
- Gender and age had no impact on shopping online.

# **The Internet as a source of entertainment and information**

- If respondents perceived the Internet as a source of entertainment and information they were likely to
  - Use it for searching for (and downloading) multimedia and music, and
  - Use it to meet people (= social networking).
- Age played a role in perceiving the Internet as a source of entertainment.

# The impact of age

- Respondents over 35 years were *less likely* to:
  - Perceive the Internet as a source of entertainment (functional tool?)
  - Use the Internet for live chat (23% compared to 55% of those younger than 35)
  - Search for music and multimedia as well as podcasts.
- Respondents *over 25 years* rated *print* newspapers and magazines as more reliable.
- Respondents *under 25 years* rated *online* newspapers and magazines as more reliable.

# Impact of gender

- No *significant* correlations were found between gender and Internet use
- Weak correlations between gender and:
  - Using live chat with a webcam
  - Gaming.
- No discernible differences between male and female perceptions of the Internet
- Inconclusive: further research needed.

## **COMPONENT 1**

- Citing Wikipedia
- Citing wikipages
- Citing online newspaper/magazines
- Citing Google scholar
- Citing business sites

# **Principal component analysis of citing sources for academic work**

## **COMPONENT 2**

- Citing hard copy academic journals
- Citing online academic journals
- Citing educational/academic sites

## **COMPONENT 3**

- Citing podcasts/vidcasts
- Citing blogs
- Citing print newspaper/magazines

## COMPONENT 1

- Television
- Radio
- Internet website

## COMPONENT 2

- Blogs
- Podcasts/vidcasts
- Wikipedia

## COMPONENT 3

- Academic journals (online & hard copy)
- Print magazines/newspapers
- Online magazines/newspapers

## COMPONENT 4

- Family member
- Friend

**Principal component  
analysis for overall  
reliability of sources**

# Conclusions

- Generational shift in perceived reliability of “traditional” sources and “emerging” sources (social media)
- Generational shift in perception and use of the Internet

# Impact on teaching

- Tutors need to:
  - Familiarize themselves with current uses of Internet and knowledge sources
  - Be aware of the shift in perceptions
  - Adapt their teaching strategies
- Action research into current teaching strategies and methods?



# Impact on industry

- Channel reliability and effectiveness
- Greater divergence of age groups
- Convergence may make some channels obsolete (e.g. print media)
- Continued analysis & evaluation of target audiences and channel/message appropriateness needed – more so than before

# Further research

- The nature of the generational shift and impact on teaching and learning as well as communication-related industries.
- The existence of gender differences in using the Internet and impact on communication and society.
- The impact of social networking sites on communication and relationship-building.



**Thank you!**