



THE INSTITUTE OF CULTURE, DISCOURSE & COMMUNICATION



WORLD INTERNET PROJECT NEW ZEALAND

The Internet in New Zealand 2009

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Executive summary

The second World Internet Project NZ survey was conducted in August – September 2009. A sample of 1250 New Zealanders has been analysed for their use of and attitudes to the Internet.

Usage

Five sixths of New Zealanders use the Internet. Of the remainder, a third are ex-users and two thirds have never used the Internet. One fifth of users are online at home for at least 20 hours a week, but three fifths for less than 10 hours a week.

Digital divide

Five sixths of users with a connection at home have broadband, while the rest have dial-up. In general, the younger, wealthier and more urban people are, the more they tend to have broadband access. Younger people are more likely to belong to social networking sites such as Facebook. They also rate the Internet more highly as a source of information, entertainment and in overall importance for their everyday lives. Similarly, the more people earn, the more highly they rate their own ability to use the Internet. City dwellers are more likely than rural dwellers to have broadband, to rate their Internet ability highly and to belong to a social networking site. There is little difference between male and female usage of the Internet, for example in hours spent online, frequency of playing online games and user ability.

Rating the Internet

The Internet has become integral to the lives of many New Zealanders. Two thirds of users say it is important to their everyday lives and think it would be a problem if they lost access. Nearly two thirds of respondents rate the Internet as an important source of information, compared with half who so rate television, newspapers or other people. However, more users rate television as an important source of entertainment than rate the Internet.

Activities online

New Zealand users' involvement in the web is dynamic and multifaceted. About half post online messages, images or videos, while one in ten earn income from such activities. Other popular online activities are downloading music or videos, and playing games. A sixth of users are scanning for jobs on the Internet at least weekly. The Internet is also used frequently for transactions. At least weekly, over a half of users do online banking and a quarter pay bills online. At least monthly, a third of users buy something online and a sixth sell something. Half of students say the Internet is used as a teaching tool in their classes at least weekly.

Socialising

The Internet plays an important role in the social lives of New Zealanders. Four fifths of users check their email at least daily. Half the users are members of social networking sites (mostly Facebook and Bebo), and of those, nearly half participate at least daily. Just on a third use instant messaging and a quarter participate in multiplayer online games at least weekly. Nearly half of users report that the Internet has increased their contact with other New Zealanders, and more say it has increased their overall contact with family and friends. On the other hand, a quarter say it has decreased face-to-face family time. A quarter of users have made friends online, and more than half of those have gone on to meet such friends in person. For people with under-18s in their household, four fifths have rules governing online activities.