

Information Technology – Uptake and Usage and the Communications Household

About the study

Launched in 1996, EKOS' Rethinking the Information Highway study grew out of a need to better understand how information technologies were reshaping the environment governments and companies were operating within.

Now in its eighth edition and more than 20 surveys later, the study is one of the largest and longest running studies in this area in Canada today. Given its big-picture focus on the full range of issues relating to technology usage, such as the interaction between traditional and electronic service delivery channels and privacy and security-related issues, Rethinking the Information Highway remains one of the most relied upon sources for senior decision makers who are tasked with guiding their organization through what continues to be a rapidly changing environment.

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Overview

Internet use in Canada

The overwhelming majority of Canadians have recently been online, with about 4 in 5 having used the Internet in the past three months. Younger Canadians continue to represent the highest usage group and seniors continue to represent the lowest usage group, however, Internet use is growing significantly among seniors.

Results also reveal that Internet users are becoming more experienced, and are spending more time online. Currently, over 8 in 10 users say they are online daily or almost daily, up from just over half in 2000.

Home Internet access

Findings suggest that access to the Internet is now mainstream for the overwhelming majority of Canadian households, with 4 in 5 reporting that they can connect online from home. Results also reveal that almost half of Canadians consider home PC and Internet access to be essential.

As Internet users become more experienced and the applications continue to evolve, high-speed Internet access is increasingly in demand. More than 2 in 3 Canadians now report having high-speed Internet access in their home.

Findings also reveal that the proportion of Canadian households with a wireless home network is up 19 points over the past two years.

New media technologies:

There is relatively little familiarity with new media technologies, with nearly half of Canadians saying they are not familiar with social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace, and videosharing sites like YouTube.

Canadians also express mixed views on the usefulness of new media technologies in helping governments communicate with Canadians.

The telephone marketplace

Cellphones:

A majority of Canadians say having access to cellular phone service is very important, with 1 in 4 saying it is essential.

However, very few Canadians say they are prepared to rely solely on their cellular phone.

Web-enabled devices:

Relatively few Canadians use web-enabled devices such as Palm, PDA, Blackberry or web-enabled telephones, and very few of these users are aware that the Government of Canada has a wireless portal.

