

# **The Evolving E-Business Landscape in Ontario**



## **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 seventh 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

## The current environment

The Internet continues to be seen as an effective avenue for doing business with other companies.

A growing number of Ontario businesses feel broadband Internet access and e-business strategies are very important for their company's overall success. A much smaller proportion of businesses place the same level of importance on e-commerce.

## Implementing e-services

The proportion of Ontario businesses with e-business strategies has remained largely stable over the past few years. Those without an e-business strategy report that they are unlikely to implement one in the near future.

A majority of Ontario companies report that e-business strategies have met their expectations, up since 2007. The perceived benefits of e-business strategies have also increased over the past few years.

## Technology usage

Internet usage continues to grow: more than 9 in 10 Ontario businesses now report that their company uses the Internet.

Results also reveal continued use of high-speed Internet access: over 8 in 10 Ontario businesses say they have high-speed access.

Those few businesses without high-speed Internet access continue to point to lack of availability as the main barrier.

The number of Ontario companies with a website is unchanged from last year.

## The e-marketplace

Results reveal that the proportion of Ontario businesses buying online is steadily increasing: currently 3 in 4 indicate they use the Internet to purchase goods and services.

There has been little change in the proportion of businesses saying they offer their goods to be purchased online.

The proportion of Ontario companies that indicate they use Internet banking is down slightly since 2007, but a clear majority of Ontario businesses say they bank online (and this is up significantly since the beginning of the decade).

## Government online services

Websites still dominate as the "starting point" to find information: a growing majority of businesses continue to turn to government websites to begin their searches for information about government programs and services.

Online channels continue to be the preferred service channel when interacting with governments, while preference for telephone continues to decline.



