



## INTERNET USE CONTINUES TO CLIMB IN MOST MARKETS

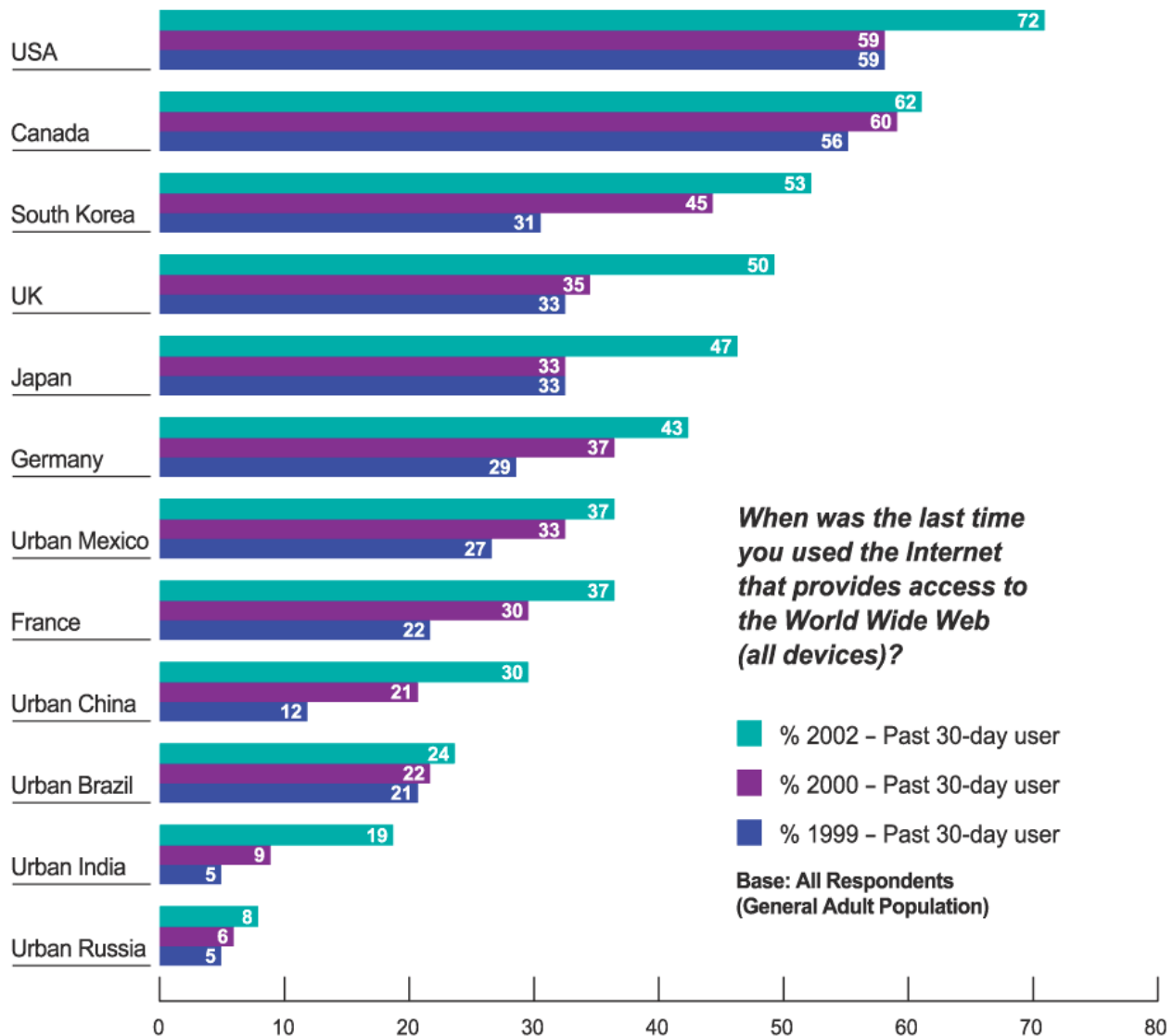
*Web access not just routine, but essential, Ipsos-Reid study shows*

**New York, NY, December 10, 2002**—As the investment community continues to be skeptical of Internet-related stocks, the Internet is nonetheless growing quickly in places like South Korea, the U.K., and Japan. But the most surprising growth has occurred in the U.S.—where Internet usage is already the highest in the world. This, according to *The Face of the Web*, the annual study of Internet trends by global marketing research firm Ipsos-Reid, which has been tracking Internet awareness and usage around the world since 1999. The latest findings—based on interviews in 12 countries with more than 6,600 adults, including 2,900 active Internet users—reflect Internet usage last spring in the wake of the global economic downturn.

The United States continues to have the highest level of Internet use among the 12 countries surveyed. Some 72% of American adults reported having gone online at least once in the previous 30 days. (See chart below.) Moreover, the U.S. experienced notable growth in Internet usage this year, especially compared to the modest expansion rate of the Internet in this country in the past. A large contingent of the general adult population came online in 2002.

“The Internet is in advanced stages of growth in the U.S. and is becoming a necessity to many of the few adult Americans who had resisted going online before,” said Brian Cruikshank, an author of the study and leader of the company’s technology practice. “Because it’s all around us, being used in so many ways—from communications to transactions to entertainment—it’s become a central way that we navigate our lives,” he continued. “Add to that increased broadband access along with peripheral devices such as digital cameras and MP3 Players that easily integrate with the home PC, and online users have even more ways to integrate Internet use into everyday life.”

## Global Internet Usage: 1999-2002



Source: Ipsos-Reid *The Face of the Web 2002*

Internet use in Canada, while in strong second place, has not grown in the past two years. Sixty-two percent of Canadian adults reported having gone online at least once in the previous 30 days. Growth is also relatively slow in urban Brazil and moderate in urban Mexico compared to other markets.

South Korea, the United Kingdom, Japan, Germany and France all showed significant percentage-point increases in the last two years. While their populations still trailed Americans' widespread acceptance of the medium, these results are very strong given the economic times and slower growth we've seen in past years in these countries. Also encouraging is that urban dwellers in China and India are increasingly venturing online. In three years, usage has doubled in urban China, and tripled in urban India (the urban Indian sample does not include members of the lowest socio-economic classes).

"In markets such as South Korea, the United Kingdom and Japan, where approximately half of the adult population is going online, a critical mass of users is fast approaching the state reached in North America in the late 90s, when Internet use broke out into the mass market," noted Cruikshank. Of the general trend toward growth, he cited lower PC and ISP prices along with increased access options in less developed markets as contributing factors.

### **About Ipsos-Reid**

Ipsos-Reid has been tracking public opinion and consumer behavior around the world for more than 20 years and has become a leading provider of global public opinion and market research to private, public, and not-for-profit organizations in over 50 countries. With more than 1,300 staff in 11 cities, Ipsos-Reid offers clients a full line of custom, syndicated, omnibus, and online research products and services. It is known for its line of Express opinion polls, the World Monitor online reporting service of global consumer trends, and The Face of the Web, the most comprehensive study of global Internet usage and trends. It is a member of Paris-based Ipsos Group, ranked among the Top 10 research groups in the world.

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