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Angus Reid Group is one of North America's largest market and opinion research companies, serving over 1,200 clients via its 11 offices and with annual research sales of \$65 million. Established in 1979 by Dr. Angus Reid, the company undertakes global research on behalf of private, public and not-for-profit organizations in over 50 countries. As well, Angus Reid Group is the international media agency of record for The Economist and CNN International.

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While much of the time spent on the Internet at work is business-related, Canadian employees are spending an average of about 2 hours a week surfing the web for personal reasons, new research from the Angus Reid Group shows.

The study shows that just over one-third (34%) of Canadian adults have Internet access at work, up from an estimated 29% recorded during the same time period last year. And, of this group, 78% have used the Internet at work for personal reasons. Internet users at work spend an average of 8 hours online per week, and of that average, at least 26% of that time is spent for personal reasons according to the results of the Angus Reid Group online survey conducted among 1,089 web users in May.

“We believe this is the first survey of its kind in Canada, one that really uncovers Internet usage and behaviours at work in more depth than any other study,” said Steve Mossop, a Senior Vice-President and leader of Angus Reid’s Canadian Internet practice.

“And what we found, among other things, is that employees are using the web at work for much the same reasons they use the web at home: e-mail, information updates, comparison shopping, and financial transactions.”

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Personal Web Surfing At Work



(n=470, ever use work Internet for personal use)

“In a way, these results are not surprising,” Mossop says. “Many consumer-based websites have their peak traffic during the daytime. Part of the reason for this is accessibility. If you spend a good part of your day in front of a computer, it is convenient to surf the web at work. Secondly, it’s bandwidth. People are frustrated with home Internet access speeds, and access speeds at work are typically a lot higher.”

Human resource departments within Canadian organizations seem to have fallen behind when it comes to having company policies in place regarding Internet usage at work. Only 33% of those with Internet access at work report that their company has such a policy. Yet the majority (64%) of Canadians feel that employers are within their rights to monitor employee’s e-mails and Internet usage. (For comparisons with the U.S. see http://www.angusreid.com/media/content/displaypr.cfm?id_to_view=1023)

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Adds Mossop: "This new generation of web-savvy employees has created a new human resources and company policy issue that decision-makers will need to grapple with. What is remarkable is the potential loss of human productivity associated with work-related personal Internet usage—in our estimates, close to 800 million hours will be spent at work this year surfing the Net for personal use¹. Clearly, companies and governments need to think long and hard about developing guidelines and policies to deal with this phenomenon."

NOT ALL FUN AND GAMES

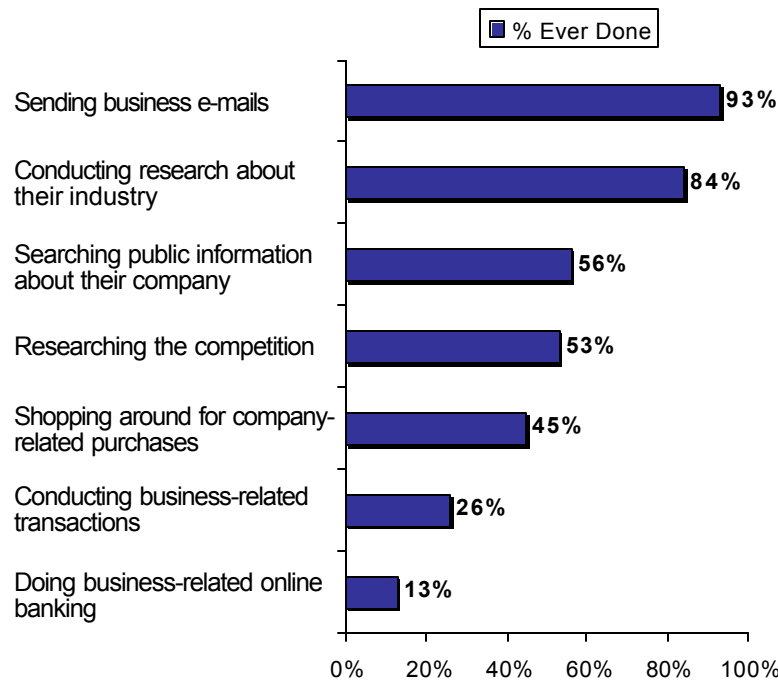
It's not all fun and games though, the study shows. The majority of Internet time spent online at work is business-related. Of those with work Internet access, nearly all (94%) have used the Internet for business purposes, and they use it three times as long for business reasons (6 hours a week) than for personal use (2.1 hours per week). Business-related Internet usage comprises about 16% of an average Canadian's work week.

E-mailing is the most prominent business-related use of the Internet—93% of those who use the Internet at work indicate that they send work-related e-mails. Conducting research about their industry (84%) is the second most popular activity, and slightly more than one-half search for public information about their company (56%) and research the competition (53%). Less than one-half shop around for company-related purchases (45%) or actually conduct business-related transactions online (26%). Far fewer conduct business-related online banking (13%).

"The Internet has made significant in-roads in the business environment in a very short period of time," says Mossop. "Business-related usage of the Net is not confined to a small group of online buyers in the purchasing department—it has impacted the very way Canadians go about their work, from inter-personal communications, competitive intelligence, industry research, as well as purchasing."

¹ 22,500,000 adults in Canada x 34% with work access = 7,650,000 x 8 hours surfing/week = 61200,000 x 26% for personal reasons = 15,912,000 hours/week x 49 weeks = 779,688,000 million hours per year.

Business Web Surfing At Work



(n=581, ever use work Internet for business use)

In comparison to the United States, Canadians are much more likely than Americans to integrate the Internet into their working lives. A slightly larger proportion of Americans use the Internet at work relative to Canadians (43% compared to 34%). However, a larger proportion of Canadians who have Internet access at work have ever used the Internet for personal use (78% versus 46%²). This appears to be driven by the fact that Canadians are far more likely to send personal e-mails at work (86% compared to 55% of Americans) and handle their online banking at work (32% vs. 14%).

(See http://www.angusreid.com/media/content/displaypr.cfm?id_to_view=1031)

Overall, Canadians seem to be more open to having their employer monitor their Internet usage--64% of Canadians say that it is okay compared to 57% of Americans. Part of the reason for the differences in personal usage at work is that 51% of Americans with work access say their company has a policy regarding personal usage of the Internet at work compared to only 33% of Canadians.

² Internet usage at work poses challenge for employers—let your employees “surf and learn” or limit their freedom. May 19, 2000. *Angus Reid Group*.

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The “Canadian Inter@ctive Reid Report” is the largest, most comprehensive and authoritative source of its kind about quarterly Internet trends in Canada. The results are based on two separate data collection instruments. In the first, 1,000 web users from Angus Reid Group’s Canadian Internet Panel are surveyed online. Panelists are chosen through random telephone surveys conducted on an ongoing basis across Canada. Results are complemented by a further 1,500 interviews via telephone with Canadian adults in order to verify results of the panel and track issues among non-Internet users.

These data are statistically weighted to reflect the population proportions of regular online users by length of access to the Internet and online expertise, regional distribution, as well as demographics such as gender, age and income. Our panelists represent approximately 11.4 million Canadian adult Internet users who are online for one hour a week or more (there are a total of 14.4 million adults who have Internet access—but not everyone can be classified as a regular user).

With a national sample of 1,000 and 1,500 (for each component), one can say with 95% certainty that the overall results are within a maximum of ± 3.1 percentage points of what they would have been had the entire population of Canada’s regular online users been surveyed. The margin of error will be larger for sub-groupings of the survey population.

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