

## **THE INTERNET IS SHAPING THE WAY IN WHICH CANADIAN FAMILIES LIVE AND WORK TOGETHER**

### **RBC study examines the Internet's impact on Canadian families and small business owners**

**TORONTO, January 23, 2002** – An RBC Financial Group/Ipsos Reid study released today suggests that Canadian families are making major lifestyle changes in response to the wave of new communications technologies entering their homes.

The survey, conducted by Ipsos-Reid for RBC, was designed to achieve an understanding of how families and small business owners are balancing the new demands and opportunities of home and work life in the context of technological change.

"The personal computer has become the nerve centre of the new online home," said Martin Stevens, director, eCommerce at RBC Financial Group. "The PC and the Internet are redefining how Canadians approach many aspects of their lives including shopping, banking, commuting, family activities, home design and communications."

In fact, Canadian online families have become so enamored with the versatility of their PCs that the majority (51 per cent) would choose it over a telephone or television if stuck on a deserted island. And it's not just the adults that find it handy. With the average family spending more than 32 hours online per week, more than 40 per cent of parents said they have had to negotiate with their kids to get on the computer.

Canadian families have also discovered that surfing the Internet is a good way to spend time together, with 39 per cent of parents saying they sometimes go online with their kids, and 12 per cent saying they always go online with their kids. That's probably a good thing given that 56 per cent of parents admit that they have learned at least some of what they know about the Internet from their children.

**-more-**

### **Survey Highlights**

- Almost half of Canadian Internet-using families have more than one computer.
- The average family spends more than 1,600 hours online per year (more than 32 hours per week).
- 59 per cent of adults with a home Internet connection have purchased an item directly online.
- 57 per cent of parents have guidelines about how and when the computer is to be used; 48 per cent say they place curfews on their kids' Internet usage.
- 20 per cent of all families with home Internet access have computers that have been networked to others within the home.
- 48% of parents admit their kids have at least some influence on the purchase of new technology for the household.

### **If you were stuck on a deserted island, what would you take with you?**

The survey of 750 online parents with children under 18 living at home shows that Canadian families even seem to prefer surfing the Internet to channel surfing. Half of respondents (51 per cent) said that if stuck on a deserted island for a month they would prefer to have a computer with Internet access rather than a television – with only 21 per cent choosing a telephone and 12 per cent choosing a television.

### **The New Online Family**

Parents are finding that as there are more and more things for their kids to do on the computer and online, they are having to create new rules and restrictions for how and when their kids use the computer. Over half of parents (57 per cent) have guidelines about when and how the computer is to be used and 48 per cent say they place time limits or curfews on their kids' Internet usage. 41 per cent say that they have had to negotiate computer or Internet time in the household.

-3-

When it comes to learning about technology, some parents (48 per cent) find that they are ahead of their kids while others (56 per cent) admit that they have learned at least some of what they know about the Internet from their children.

### **The New Online Home**

Canadian families are finding that new technology has affected not only their family relationships, but how their homes are set up to accommodate new technologies. Just over one-in-three parents (37 per cent) say that they have redesigned, reconfigured or renovated a portion of their living space to accommodate their computer(s).

Home area networks (HANs) have also become much more prevalent with 43 per cent of families with two more computers in the home having turned to networking the PCs together, in order to share peripherals such as a colour printer, a scanner or high-speed Internet connection.

### **Balancing Work and Family in the Online Household**

The growth of the Internet and the emergence of new technologies has made the balance between work and family life much easier for many Canadian families. 72 per cent of the parents surveyed agreed that telecommuting allows them to spend more time with their family.

Many household chores that used to require leaving the house can now be done online. Over half of parents with a home Internet connection have purchased an item directly online (59 per cent) and 57 per cent have conducted online banking transactions. Over half of parents (58 per cent) also agree that banking or shopping online has allowed them to spend more time at home with their kids.

-more-

For more detailed survey results, please visit: [www.rbc.com/newsroom](http://www.rbc.com/newsroom)

### **About RBC Financial Group (change to technology boiler)**

Royal Bank of Canada (TSE, NYSE: RY) uses the initials RBC as a prefix for its businesses and operating subsidiaries, which operate under the master brand name of RBC Financial Group. Royal Bank of Canada is Canada's largest financial institution as measured by market capitalization and assets, and is one of North America's leading diversified financial services companies. It provides personal and commercial banking, wealth management services, insurance, corporate and investment banking, and transaction processing services on a global basis. The company employs 58,000 people who serve more than 12 million personal, business and public sector customers in North America and in some 30 countries around the world. For more information, please visit [www.rbc.com](http://www.rbc.com).

**- 30 -**

### **For more information contact:**

Beja Rodeck, RBC Financial Group media relations, 416-974-5506