

CANADIANS WITH INTERNET ACCESS AT WORK SPEND 1.6 BILLION HOURS A YEAR SURFING THE NET FOR PERSONAL REASONS

38% of Canadians with Internet access from work spend an average of 4.5 hours per week surfing for personal reasons, double the number from 2000



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Vancouver, BC, April 9, 2003, 8am PST – A new Ipsos-Reid study shows that Canadian adults who use the Internet at work are spending four and a half hours surfing the Web for personal reasons during a typical week, more than double the number of hours spent in 2000.

The study found that 38% of Canadian adults have Internet access at work, which is up slightly from 34% in 2000. Among those with Internet access at work, 88% admit to using the Internet at work for personal reasons, which is up from 78% in 2000. The average number of hours spent online while at work has nearly doubled (15 hours compared to 8 hours in 2000), while the share of time being spent online for personal reasons is up only slightly from 2000 (29% vs. 26%). Based on 50 workweeks in the year, Canadian adults are now spending 1.6 billion hours online for personal reasons while they are at work.¹

“The Internet has made significant inroads into the workplace despite the dot-com implosion, but part of that increase is driven by Canadians who love to use the Internet for their own personal reasons, said Steve Mossop, a Senior Vice President at Ipsos-Reid’s Vancouver office. “Part of this is fuelled by high-speed connectivity in the workplace, and the other is the blurring of the lines between work and home on activities such as using personal email and surfing the Net for news, banking and online shopping.”

¹ Calculations based on the Canadian adult population of 24,347,892 X 85% who spend at least an hour online per week X 38% who have Internet Access at work X 88% who ever use the Internet at work for personal reasons X 4.5 hrs/wk. X 50 weeks (rounded).

Human resource departments across the country have scrambled to step up their efforts to implement company policies with respect to Internet usage at work. Over one-half of Canadians with access at work (57%) say that their workplace has a policy regarding personal Internet use, which is up substantially from 33% in 2000. Also, the vast majority (67%) feel that employers are within their rights to monitor employee's emails and Internet usage, which is consistent with attitudes in 2000.

NOT ALL FUN AND GAMES

Despite the large number of personal hours, the majority (71%) of Internet time spent online at work is business-related (10.8 hours). Extrapolated over a 40-hour workweek, 27% of the typical workweek is being spent using the Internet for business purposes, an increase from 16% in 2000.

Emailing is the most prominent business-related use of the Internet—88% of those who use the Internet at work indicate that they send work-related emails. Conducting research about their industry (73%) is the second most popular activity, and about half search for public information about their company (47%) while 45% research the competition. A slightly lower percentage (43%) shop around for company-related purchases while only 27% are conducting business-related transactions online. Far fewer conduct business-related online banking (11%).

"Although it can be argued that Internet access at work can be measured by the significant loss of human productivity because of personal surfing, the Internet is also continuing to make significant strides as valuable workplace tool," said 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."

*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 Ipsos-Reid'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 1,000*

interviews via telephone with Canadian adults in order to verify results of the panel, and track issues among non-Internet users. Telephone interviews for this release were conducted between December 27, 2002 and January 7, 2003, while the online data was collected between January 3 and 8, 2003. These data are statistically weighted to reflect the population proportions of regular online users by online expertise and regional distribution. Our panelists represent approximately 15.2 million Canadian adult Internet users who are online for one hour a week or more (there are a total of 18.3 million adults who have Internet access).

With a national sample of 1,000 (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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