

THE INTERNET IS CHANGING THE WAY CANADIANS SOCIALIZE

*Nearly Seven-In-Ten Online Canadians Use the Internet for
Social Activities*



Ipsos  **Reid**

Public Release Date: December 30, 2003

06:00am EST

Ipsos-Reid is Canada's leading marketing research and public affairs company in Canada, both in terms of size and reputation. It operates in seven cities and employs more than 300 researchers and support staff in Canada. It has the biggest network of telephone call centres, as well as the largest prerecruited household and online panels in Canada. Its Canadian marketing research and public affairs practices are staffed with seasoned research consultants with extensive industry-specific backgrounds offering the premier suite of research vehicles in Canada, including the Ipsos Trend Report, the leading source of public opinion in the country. Ipsos-Reid is a member of the Ipsos Group, a leading global survey-based marketing research group.

For copies of other news releases, please visit:
http://www.ipsos-reid.com/media/content/PRE_REL.cfm

© Ipsos-Reid Corporation

Vancouver • Calgary • Edmonton • Winnipeg • Toronto • Ottawa • Montreal

THE INTERNET IS CHANGING THE WAY CANADIANS SOCIALIZE

Nearly Seven-In-Ten Online Canadians Use the Internet for Social Activities

Vancouver, BC—Online Canadians, especially young online Canadians, are embracing the Internet as a way to meet new friends and stay in touch with old friends according to an Ipsos-Reid study. Almost seven-in-ten online Canadians (69%) have used the Internet for social interaction. This includes such activities as taking part in online chat, playing games with other people, using the Internet to contact someone they've lost touch with, participating in forums or bulletin board discussions, using online personals or dating services, or taking part in an online telephone call. Younger online Canadians are especially likely to use the Internet in their social lives. In fact, 82% of those 18–34 years of age have taken part in some form of online social activities. The study involved 1,000 telephone interviews with Canadian adults and 1,000 online interviews with Canadian Internet users in September and October.

Social Activities Done Online

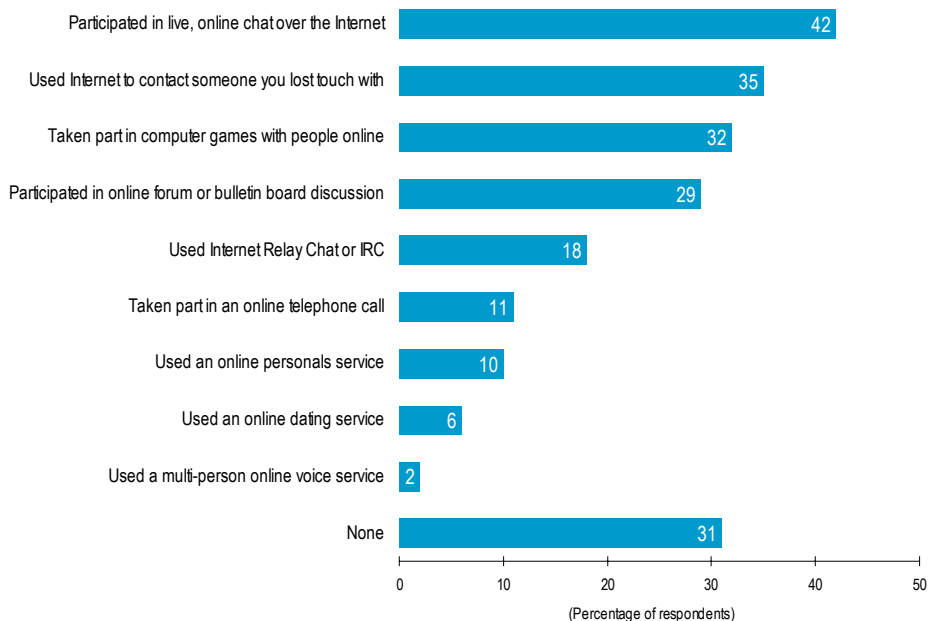
The research found that 42% of Canadian adults who have Internet access¹ have participated in live, online chat sessions on the Internet, the most common way to interact with other people online outside of email. And not only are many online Canadians using the Internet to meet new people, but many are using the power of the Internet to reach people from their past. More than one-third of online Canadians (35%) say they have used the Internet to contact someone they have lost touch with. The Internet is also very popular for social recreation with 32% saying they have taken part in computer games with other people online. Many Canadians are active in simple online discussions with others as well as 29% who say they have participated in an online forum or bulletin board discussion. Other social activities that online Canadians are using the Internet for include using Internet Relay Chat or IRC (18%), taking part in

¹ 73% of Canadian adults have Internet access from at least one location.

online telephone calls (11%), using an online personals service (10%) and using an online dating services (6%). For each of these activities, online Canadians 18–34 years of age are much more likely than older Canadians to take part. For example, 64% of those 18–34 have taken part in live online chat, while 50% have take part in online games. Among those 55 years of age or more, these figures are 31% and 21%, respectively.

Participation in Social Activities Online

n=1,000, Online Canadians



“I think we’re seeing a greater acceptance of the second generation of Internet activities,” said Rhys Gibb, Senior Research Manager of Ipsos-Reid. “The first generation of activities were individual and transactional in nature, such as buying or banking online, or just gathering information. The second generation of Internet activities are social, participative and integrated into the user’s lifestyle. There’s a clear movement towards much greater social acceptance of these of online social activities than we’ve seen in the past.”

The Role Of The Internet Is Significant For Many Online Canadians

Not only are many online Canadians actively using the Internet in their social lives, but the role of the Internet is perceived to be quite significant for many. In fact, 43% say that the Internet plays a very important (11%) or somewhat important (32%) role in their social life. This figure is higher amongst those 18–34 years of age as 50% say that it plays an important role in their social life.

Better Than A Blind Date?

Almost one-quarter of online Canadians (24%) have actually met a person offline that they first came to know online. This figure is significantly higher (41%) for 18–34 year olds. An intriguing aspect of the online social scene in Canada is that in some ways the Internet is perceived to have been more successful than a more traditional way of meeting people: the blind date. A full 14% of online Canadians have actually dated someone they first met online. In the majority of cases, the most recent person dated exceeded (39%) or met (29%) expectations. At the same time, 30% of online Canadians have ever been on a blind date. Of these people, just 21% (exceeded percentage) say that the most recent person they dated exceeded and only 28% met their expectations.

“These results show that the Internet is proving to be a more successful way to meet people than the blind date,” says Gibb. “The Internet allows people to get to know each other a little better before going on a date so that expectations are a little more realistic. It’s almost like having a virtual cup of coffee together before taking that scary first step of the first date.”

As with any activity, some people take online socializing to a greater extreme than others. In fact, 10% of all online Canadians say they plan their schedule around their Internet activities, while 6% say they occasionally cancel offline activities to take part in activities online.

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. The data was collected in September/October 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 million Canadian adult Internet users who are online for one hour a week or more (there are a total of 18 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.

Established in 1979, Ipsos-Reid is Canada’s leading market research and public opinion company. Its is best known for the Angus Reid Express Poll, the most widely quoted source of public opinion in the country. Founded by Dr. Angus Reid, Ipsos-Reid has conducted extensive market and social research in 80 countries and in 40 languages, and serves clients around the world through more than 300-professionals and 1,000 data collection staff in eleven offices. The company is a member of the Paris-based Ipsos Group, a leading global survey-based marketing research group.

- 30 -

For more information on this news release, please contact:

*Rhys Gibb
Senior Research Manager
Ipsos-Reid Corporation
604-257-3200
rhys.gibb@ipsos-reid.com*

For full tabular results, please visit our website at www.ipsos-reid.com. News releases are available at http://www.ipsos-reid.com/media/content/PRE_REL.cfm.