

Media release

**EMBARGO 6.00PM**

**Monday 28 July, 2008**

### **Social Impact of Internet in NZ - Results Released**

The first real picture of how New Zealanders are using the Internet can be seen with the release today of the World Internet Project New Zealand data produced by AUT University (to obtain copies of report see below).

Director of AUT's Institute of Culture, Discourse and Communication (ICDC) Professor Allan Bell, who led the study, said a number of fascinating insights emerged from the latest results which will provide a baseline for future surveys in tracking trends associated with the Internet.

The findings of the first ever comprehensive survey of nearly 1,500 New Zealanders about their Internet use gives an insight into how the technology affects their relationships with friends and family, what activities they are involved in such as learning, buying or socialising online, and how their Internet use relates to other media such as television, radio and newspaper for information and entertainment.

The World Internet Project, a longitudinal study which aims to track the trends of the Internet and its impact around the world by surveying both users and non-users, originated from the USC Annenberg Center for the Digital Future, a policy and research centre in the United States. It has involved 28 countries in its seven years of surveys such as the United Kingdom, China, Israel, Hong Kong, Italy, Germany, Iran, Sweden, Argentina, Canada and Chile and Australia. Such a survey enables cross-country comparisons of Internet use, which is invaluable for establishing how New Zealand is positioned globally with new media technology.

AUT University, with support from the National Library of New Zealand under the Government's Digital Strategy and from InternetNZ, conducted the country's first survey late last year. While preliminary findings were released in December the comprehensive findings which include variables such as gender, ethnicity, location, age and income have just become available.

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## Highlights of the New Zealand World Internet Project

The benchmark WIPNZ survey was conducted in September-October 2007. A sample of 1430 New Zealanders has been analysed for their use of and attitudes to the Internet.

- 78% of New Zealanders use the Internet. 6% are ex-users; 16% have never used it.
- 15% of users are online at home for at least 20 hours a week.
- In this sample, 66% of users with a connection at home have broadband, compared to 31% with dial-up. The younger, wealthier and more urban people are, the more broadband access they have.
- Internet usage is age-graded. The younger people are, the more likely they are to use it, the better their ability, the more important they rate it, the more they create content and socialize online.
- Higher household income clearly promotes greater Internet access, usage, ability and everyday reliance.
- Gender is mostly not a significant indicator of Internet usage and attitudes.
- Socialising is a major Internet use, especially among the young. 77% of users check their email every day. Every week 28% participate in social networking sites like MySpace or Facebook.
- Most users say the Internet has increased their contact with other people, especially overseas (65%), few believe there has been a decrease.
- The Internet has increased contact overall with friends (according to 64%) and with family (60%), but 22% say they now spend less time face-to-face with the family they live with.
- Concern about children's safety online is high. Over 80% of households with under-18s have rules for their Internet use.
- New Zealanders who use the Internet rely on it heavily. 61% think it would be a problem if they lost access, while only 2% think this would make life better.
- As a source of information, the Internet is rated important by more users (71%) than are family and friends (56%), newspapers or television (52%).

### For further information or interviews contact:

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Or **download the report** from the following link, from midnight 28 July: [www.wipnz.aut.ac.nz](http://www.wipnz.aut.ac.nz)