

Internet and India

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India seems to have finally crossed an important milestone in its quest to conquer the internet skies. The country's internet log book 2000 now has over 1 million subscribers (and more than 3.7 million users)! We have certainly come a long way. Besides, there are projections that put the number of internet users at a mammoth 100 million, with around 23 million by December 31, 2003.

While these statistics might appear a bit modest (we're still lagging behind China, Japan, Taiwan), a recent survey by Nasscom (National Association of Software and service companies) revealed that there is a pending demand of an additional 1 million internet connections at the current costs. The good news is that with improvements in bandwidth and penetration of internet, the user base in India will be poised for a huge expansion.

The Nasscom survey came up with interesting findings, that the massive jump in the number of internet subscribers from a lowly 1.7 lakh subscribers in Nov. 1998 to over 10 lakh subscribers by June 30, 2000. Govt. has played a big role in this initiatives. Initiatives such as the liberalisation of the ISP policy and the entry of the independent private service providers into the frame. The Nasscom survey, which was conducted over 68 cities and towns (e. g. 92% of total internet user) has also indicated the following —

- More than 200 cities and towns in India are on the net.
- More than 80 private ISPs would be fully operational by March 31, 2001. At least 12 private

international gateway for Internet are expected over the same period.

- over 81 percent of the PCS sold during financial year 1999-2000 for need to access internet.
- More than 86 percent of the top 100 corporate said internet and e-comm were on integral part of their corporate strategy for next year. Over the next few years, the number of internet connections in the country will rise manifold because of Govt. decision to enhance bandwidth, increase IT penetration and further liberalise the telecom policy. It has revealed that while 36 percent of the world's population is on net, India with 3.7 million users accounts for a mere 0.37 percent.

Internet Access Group Div. in India

Teenagers	20 to 24 yrs.	25 - 39 yrs	40 - 45 yr.	Over 55 yrs
12 %	49 %	28%	8%	3%

MEN	WOMEN
77% using internet	Rest access internet

Professional/Corporate segment : Uses internet 43%

Student Community : 38%

Housewives segment : 4%

Internet : What's the use?

The internet is beginning to mean many things to many people. While to some, it's a sea of information, to other it's a crucial marketing channel, as also a key platform for business.

- 59.2 % users tap the net for information.
- 11.3 % use it as medium of education.
- 8.2 % users login in for entertainment.

- E-mail – the most popular net activity.
- 23 % use it for downloading/uploading software.

The ministry of HRD has set up a working group on “IT FOR MASSES” aimed at establishment of 1 million IT Kiosks, 100 million internet connections by 2008, free for all in basic telephone service and adoption of e-governance norms by Govt.

The working group recommended —

- Setting up IT education infrastructure in 60,000 schools at a cost of Rs. 3000/- crore

over next 5 years, 10% provided by central Govt.

- Allocated 5% of Budget by centre and State Govt. for spreading IT among masses. Nation-wide IT year so as to spread infotech awareness.
- Setting up of an Administrative Re-engineering commission at the National level.

Internet should become the very key agenda for the Govt. The new slogan for Govt. of India should be “Roti, Kapada, Makan, Bijli or internet”.

*There is a tide in the affairs
of men
Which, taken at the flood
leads on to fortune;
omitted, all the voyage
of their life
Is bound in shallows and
in miseries*

Julius Ceasar
— Shakespeare