



Statistics Netherlands

Press release

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Greatest users of the Internet are men, young people, and highly educated people

Men, young people and highly educated people search the Internet more often than women, older people and less well-educated people. The Internet is mainly used for searches of specific information; few people buy through the Internet. Only a minority of the population is afraid they won't be able to keep up with computer developments in the future, according to a joint study of Statistics Netherlands and the SCP.

Inequality on the electronic highway

Nearly 6 in 10 inhabitants of the Netherlands aged over 12 search the Internet at least once a month. Two thirds of all men and almost half of all women are online at least once a month. There are ten times as many Internet users among the under 25-age bracket as there are among the 65 plus population. Twice as many highly educated people use the Internet as less well-educated persons.

Internet used as a source of information, but not as retail outlet

When the Internet is used for private purposes, it is mainly used to search for specific information and for e-mail. Chatting is most popular among 12 to 18-year-olds. Almost 6 in 10 'chat', which hardly anyone over 65 does.

Almost a quarter of the population over 12 had ever privately bought or ordered anything through the Internet by the end of 2001. The main reasons people give for *not* buying through the Internet was that people did not feel the need to, or that they prefer to buy products that they can see in the store first. Only 1 in 7 people indicated that lack of safety had anything to do with the reason why they were not buying through the Internet.

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Older people scared of digital developments

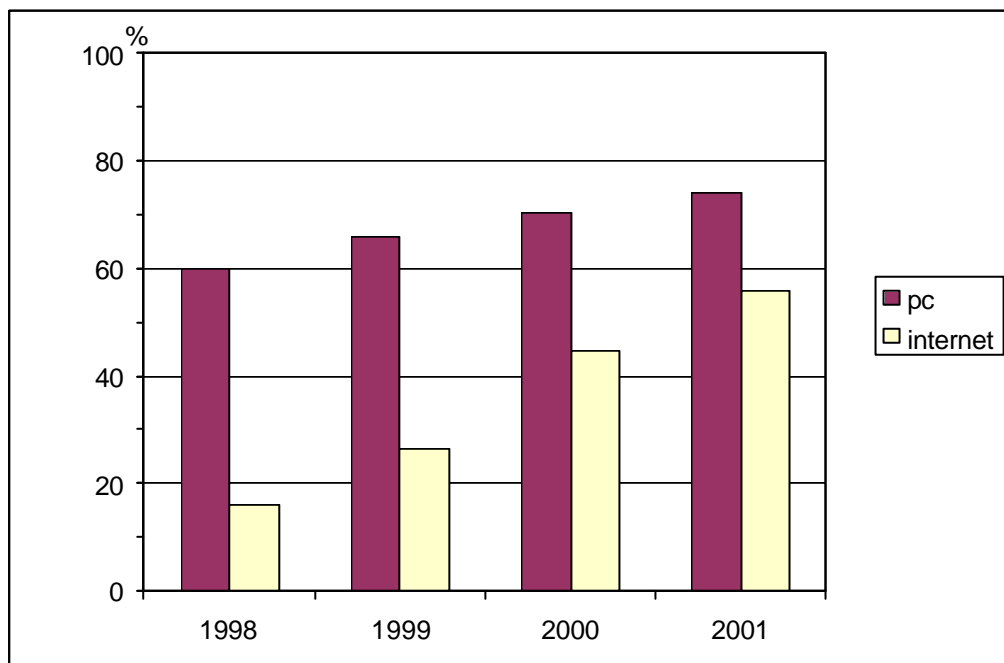
About 1 in 5 people over 15 is scared to be left out in the future because of all the new computer developments. This is not so much true for people under 24, but very much so for people over 65, namely for over a third of the latter.

PC ownership and Internet access continue to increase substantially

In 2001 three quarters of all inhabitants of the Netherlands had one or more personal computers at home. Computer ownership increased from 60% in 1998 to 74% in 2001. The number of people who can access the Internet through a PC at home has more than tripled in those three years, from 16 to 56%. These figures come from a survey that Statistics Netherlands has been doing since 1998.

The personal computer is no longer the only way to access the Internet, it can also be done through a cell phone. Still the computer is by far the most important means used to gain access to the Internet. The normal analogue telephone is the most popular access mode, with 6 in 10 Internet connections at the end of 2001. Faster connections such as ISDN or cable are not used as widely.

Graph 1: Persons with a pc and Internet access at home, 1998-2001



Source: Statistics Netherlands

Table 1: pc and Internet use by sex age and level of education, November 2001

	Use in previous four weeks %	
	PC	The Internet
Total	68	57
Sex:		
Men	76	67
Women	61	48
Age:		
12-17	96	86
18-24	94	89
25-34	86	74
35-44	81	68
45-54	69	55
55-64	46	32
Over 65	16	9
Highest education level completed:		
Elementary school	48	36
Lower vocational	47	35
Lower secondary general	74	63
Higher vocational/secondary	74	63
College, University	89	79

Sources: CBS-SCP, Pilot study on ICT