From the Global Reach estimates one can calculate linguistic diversity indices for the global population of Internet users; these values are presented in Figure 5. Because the composition of the “other” language group is left unexplained in the Global Reach data, we have calculated minimum and maximum values for the index, based on the assumption of “other” representing a single language (the minimum diversity) or a uniform distribution across 6,000 languages (the maximum diversity). It is striking that although there are initially large gains in the diversity index from 1996 to 1999, linguistic diversity appears to be leveling off after 2000, in spite of the exponential growth of many of the languages. Additionally, the 2003-2005 projections continue this leveling trend; the projected increase in the number of Chinese speakers, because it is so large, actually mitigates the increase in diversity. The end result is a linguistic diversity index between that of a typical African country, and the North American and European regional indexes combined. This is perhaps not surprising, given that Internet hosts remain concentrated in North America and Europe. Yet Internet linguistic diversity is nowhere near as large as the index of any other region or of the world as a whole. Hence, contrary to popular belief, the Internet cannot be said to embrace linguistic diversity in this sense.

**Figure 5. Estimated diversity of Internet users**

![Graph showing diversity of Internet users from 1996 to 2005](image)

Source: Global Reach.