

SECTION THREE INTERNET

Some definitions

Host: An Internet host is a computer connected to the Internet that can both access and be accessed, i.e. deliver information.

Internet: The Internet is a global network of networks enabling computers of all kinds to directly and transparently communicate and share services throughout much of the world (see Chapter 11). Because the Internet is an enormously valuable enabling device for so many people and organizations, it also constitutes a shared global resource of information, knowledge, and means of collaboration, and co-operation among countless diverse communities (Internet Society [www.isoc.org]).

Subscriber: Someone who is paying for dial-up or leased line access to the Internet.

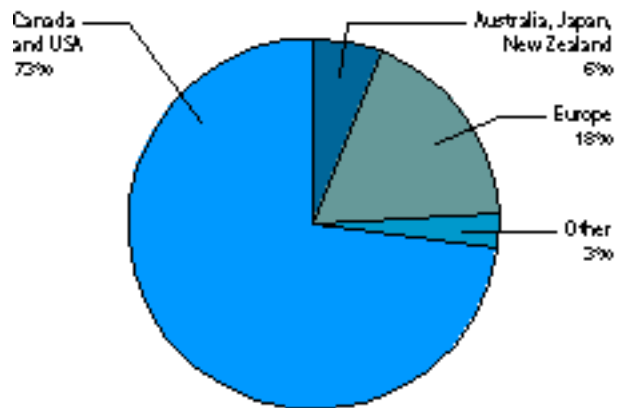
User: This is an indicator in which the lack of definition limits usefulness. A user could be someone who has used Internet once, someone who has used the Internet at least once during a certain period, or someone who uses it every day.

Who is connected to Internet?

Geographically

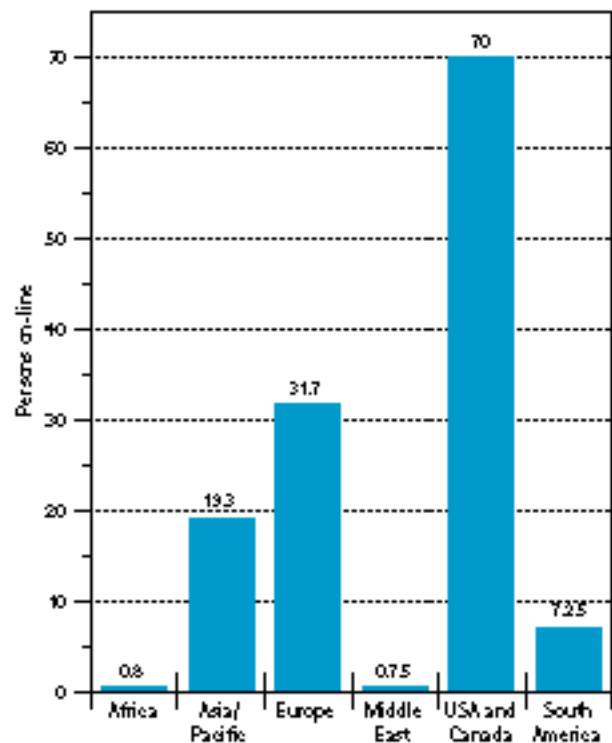
In global terms, which means asking which countries are connected, the answer is simple: almost all countries. According to the ITU (Dec. 1998) only three countries did not have any access, locally or otherwise, to the Internet: Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iraq and Tokelau, the two former by choice and the latter due to its size. This does not mean, however, that access possibilities are equal. There are great disparities between high- and low-income regions.

Figure A.1 → Distribution of Internet hosts, July 1998



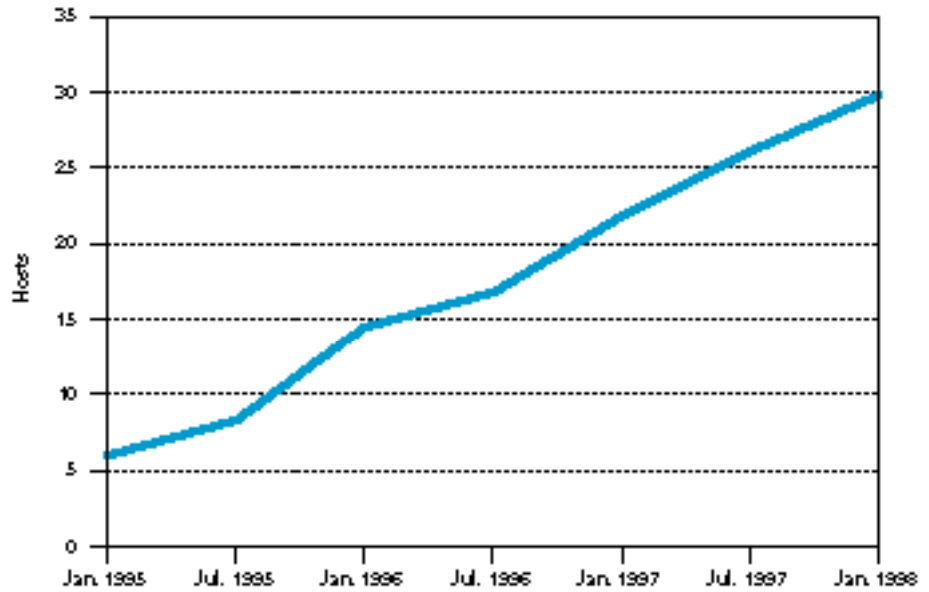
Source: Adapted from RIPE (www.ripe.net).

Figure A.2 → Estimated number of persons on-line, in millions, August 1998



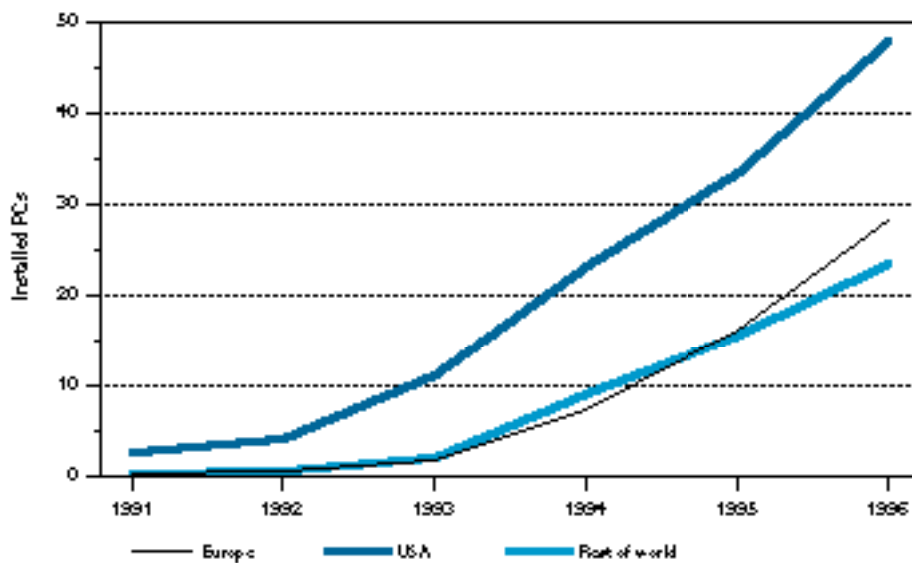
Source: Various; compiled by Nua Internet Surveys, 1998.

Figure A.3 → Estimated number of hosts, in millions, 1995–1998



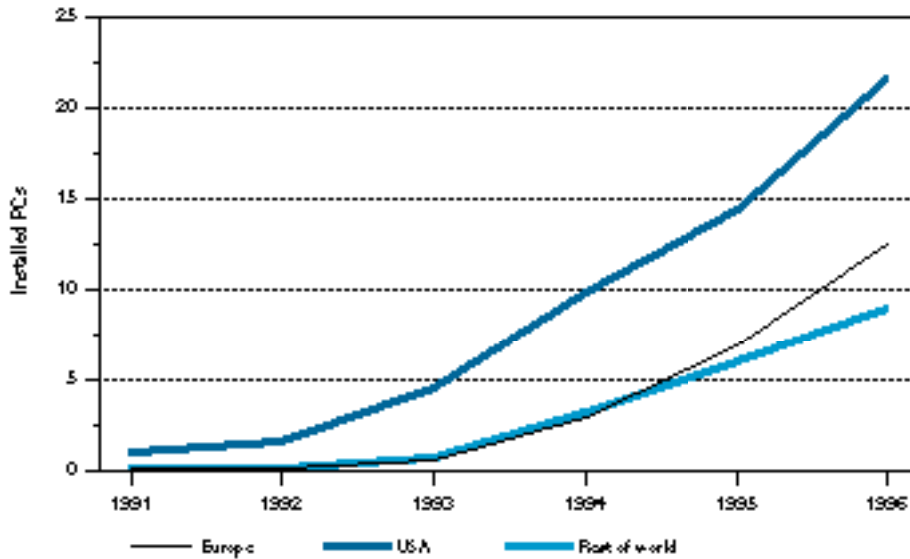
Source: Network Wizards (www.nw.com).

Figure A.4 → Total number of installed PCs, home and professional, in millions, 1991–1996



Source: GkF, Inteco/BIPE Conseil.

Figure A.5 → Total number of installed home PCs, in millions, 1991–1996



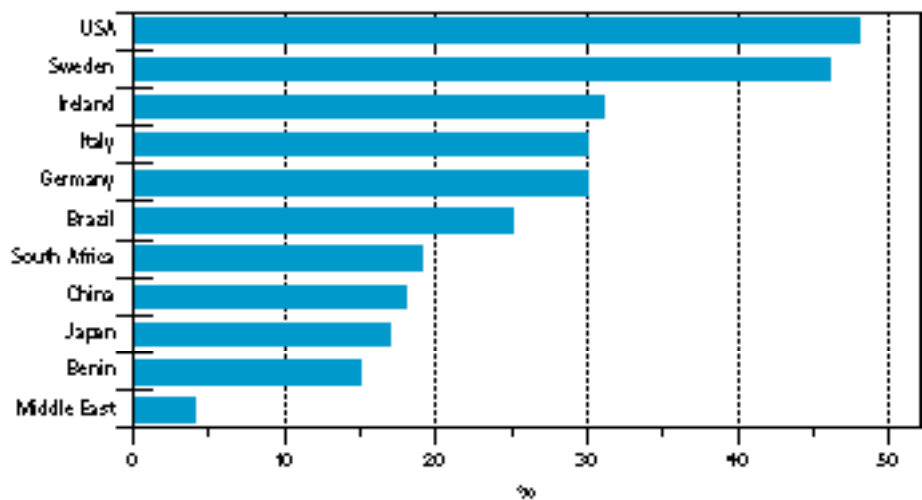
Source: GfK, Inteco/BIPE Conseil.

Gender differences in Internet use

Internet use is largely male dominated, but to a varying degree from country to country. According to the ITU, 'Women have a number of disadvantages compared to men that inhibit their accessibility of the Internet. Multiple demands as both homemakers and workers gives women less time to both access and acquire the experience and knowledge for successfully using Internet.' Furthermore, girls make up only a

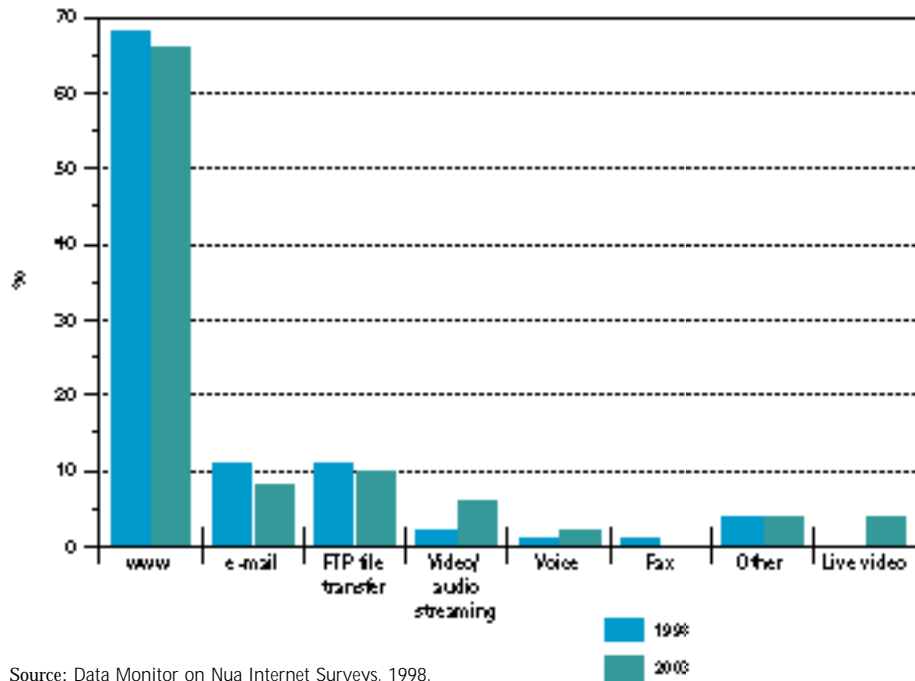
small percentage of students in computer science classes. Girls are significantly more likely than boys to enroll in clerical and data-entry classes, while boys are more likely to enroll in advanced computer science and graphics courses. Girls use computers less often outside of school, with the result that boys enter the classroom with more prior experience of computers than girls (American Association of University Women (AAUW), 1998).

Figure A.6 → Estimated percentage of female Internet users for selected countries, 1998



Source: Compiled from various sources (available at www.nua.ie/surveys/index.cgi).

Figure A.7 → Estimated percentage distribution of traffic on the Internet, 1998, and forecast for 2003



Source: Data Monitor on Nua Internet Surveys, 1998.