

Foreword

Why this study?

In April 1999, the United States Internet Council released our first "State of the Internet" report to summarize key trends in the development of a social, political, and economic communications revolution that has emerged on the world stage in just a few years.

When President Bill Clinton took office in January 1993, most Americans outside of government and academic circles were completely unaware of the Internet as it then existed. Perhaps fewer than 90,000 people worldwide used the net at that time on a regular basis.

In the summer of 2000, industry monitors estimate more than 300 million people worldwide are using the net on a frequent basis for business, research, shopping, personal correspondence, social interactions, entertainment, listening to radio, and communications and information-sharing functions of every description.

The number of people using this still-young medium has grown in a geometric progression. The current online population is more than 3,000 times the number of people who were online just seven years ago.

Five years from now, some industry estimates predict that the number of users worldwide will pass the one-billion mark, with more than 700 million users living outside of North America. Already, users who speak English as their primary language constitute only a little more than half of all persons using the net. Those who speak English as a second language and the number of web sites hosted in the U.S. are two factors that will continue to support the dominance of English on the Internet for a few more years to come. Nevertheless, the trend noted in our 1999 report to more non-English web sites and content, along with more sites hosted outside English-speaking countries, continues to be a prominent feature in this year's analysis.

For these reasons, this year's report contains far more information about global trends and emerging Internet markets in Europe, Africa, and Asia and the Pacific Rim. While the net continues to be heavily influenced by American use and culture, the diversity of net users continues last year's trends in every way.

This summer, for the first time, women using the net have surpassed men in the United States. Racial, economic, and other manifestations of what was called the "digital divide" in our 1999 report continue to show that the diversity of users is accelerating.

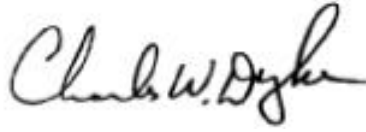
Our last section, "Looking Forward," presents some of our recommendations for both government policy and self-regulatory frameworks that are being developed by industry.

In this regard, it is useful and important for officials in government and users of the Internet alike to recognize that just as the net is changing the way we live our lives, it will also fundamentally challenge and change how we govern.

Those nations, states, corporations, and citizens who adapt to the net's constant innovation will continue to thrive.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'W.C. Myers', with a stylized, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

William C. Myers
Chief Executive Officer
United States Internet Council

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Charles W. Dyke', written in a cursive style.

Charles W. Dyke
President and CEO
International Technology
& Trade Associates, Inc.