



NATIONAL COMPUTER BOARD

ICT Outlook 2002

**ICT Penetration within the Mauritian
Society**

February 2003



Note:

The findings in the survey report are those of the National Computer Board. Readers, are however, kindly invited to note that differences of opinion may arise as regard to interpretations and conclusion expressed herein. We welcome constructive critical comments.



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1. Preface

The National Computer Board (NCB) is pleased to present its latest survey report "The ICT Penetration within the Mauritian Society". The data collection initiated in June 2002 and aimed to assess the scope and usage of information technology in Mauritian households having telephone connectivity.

According to the results of this survey both home computer ownership and home Internet connection of Mauritian households having telephone connectivity have increased to attain 29.4% and 23.8% respectively. As far as on-line shopping is concerned, a gradual progress has been observed since our last survey in 2000.

The recent developments in the ICT sector namely, the coming into operation of the Southern Africa Far East (SAFE) optical fibre cable, the construction of the cyber city, E-Government, the liberalisation of the telecommunications sector and other private sector initiatives, are indeed providing the right ingredients to enable Mauritius withstand the numerous challenges in the ICT sector.

This survey publication has been made possible with the support of the Call Services Limited (CSL) and the Central Statistics Office (CSO) and all households which participated in providing the requested information. I would like to assure the respondents that their individual survey returns have been kept confidential and only aggregated data have been tabulated for analysis and preparing report. On behalf of the NCB I wish to thank all individuals for their cooperation.

It is hoped that the data and information in this report published will prove valuable to decision makers, planners and researchers.

**National Computer Board
February 2003**



2. Executive Summary

This study on the household usage of Information & Communications Technology (ICT) consisted of a survey of a sample of 2,000 households having telephone connectivity in the Island of Mauritius.

The aim of the survey was to assess the scope and usage of Information & Communications Technology in Mauritian households having telephone connectivity. The survey focused on ICT penetration and usage within the Mauritian Society. A structured questionnaire was used to conduct interviews of Mauritian households having telephone connectivity in June / July 2002. According to the survey, the installation of personal computers (PC) and Internet connections are becoming increasingly common among households having telephone connectivity.

The main findings of the survey are as follows:

- Computer ownership in Mauritian households having telephone connectivity stood at 29.4% in June 2002.
- In the rural areas computer ownership has increased from 18% in 2000 to 27% in 2002. Furthermore, the proportion of rural and urban household to own a computer was as follows:

<i>Urban</i>	31%
<i>Rural</i>	27%

- There has been a marked increase in Internet penetration with 23.8% of households having telephone connectivity reporting having access to Internet in June 2002 compared to 12% in September 2000.
- Internet penetration among households having telephone connectivity & owning computers has registered an increase from 58% in year 2000 to 81.1% in 2002.



- It has been observed that although males have a tendency to surf more on the net than females yet this gap has considerably declined since year 2000.

Year	Male	Female
2000	72%	28%
2002	57%	43%

- More households having telephone connectivity have one e-mail account in 2002 (13%) compared to year 2000 (11%).
- Internet access and usage have increased in lower income group.

Income Group (Rs)	2000	2002
20 001 - 30 000	28%	39%
More than 30 000	55%	55%

- Main reasons for Internet usage are:

Email/Chat	66%
Entertainment	29%
Online Banking	7%
Discussions Group	5%
Job Search	1%

- On-line purchases have increased from 1% in year 2000 to 2.2% in 2002.



3. Introduction

The National Computer Board with the support of the Call Services Ltd (CSL) and the Central Statistics Office (CSO), conducted a survey from a random sample of 2000 households having a telephone connectivity with the aim of assessing the scope and usage of Information Technology in the Mauritian society. This report is the third, which gives a picture of trends in Mauritians' access to new technologies.

3.1 Objectives

The main objectives of the study were to assess:

- computer ownership of Mauritian households having telephone connectivity,
- the usage of computers by Mauritian households having telephone connectivity,
- the scope of Internet access by Mauritian households having telephone connectivity and,
- the scope and extent of e-commerce related activities by Mauritian households having telephone connectivity.

3.2 Methodology

3.2.1 *Sample*

According to the 2000 Housing Census conducted by the CSO, there are currently 297,800 households in Mauritius spreading between urban and rural areas in the ratio of 45 % & 55 % respectively.

For the purpose of this survey exercise, a list of residential telephone subscribers that was made available by the CSL was used. This represented around 80 % of Mauritian households (238,240).



As in the previous survey conducted in year 2000, the list of subscribers was split based on the ratio of 9:11 between urban and rural. Random substitution of households having telephone connectivity was also followed in 'no response' cases in order to minimise the margins of error.

3.2.2 Data Collection

During the survey process, it was the head of the household having telephone or the member most knowledgeable in ICT who was interviewed according to a structured questionnaire.

3.2.3 Sampling Error

Estimates worked out from household survey data are inevitably subject to sampling error since they are based on information collected from only a sample of households having telephone connectivity rather than from all households having telephone connectivity.

3.2.4 Survey Team

The survey team consisted of the National Computer Board and Call Services Ltd.

The tasks of each member of the team were as follows:

- The NCB was responsible for the design of the questionnaire, the analysis of the survey result and writing of the report,
- The CSL was responsible for data collection and data entry.

The CSO provided useful advice on the questionnaire design and writing of the survey report.



4. Computer Ownership

4.1 Computer Ownership

4.1.1 Overall

The sample consisted of households having telephone connectivity coming from both urban and rural areas with a slightly higher percentage (55.6%) from the former region. During the period 63% of the households having telephone connectivity were deriving income in the range of Rs 2,000 to Rs 10,000.

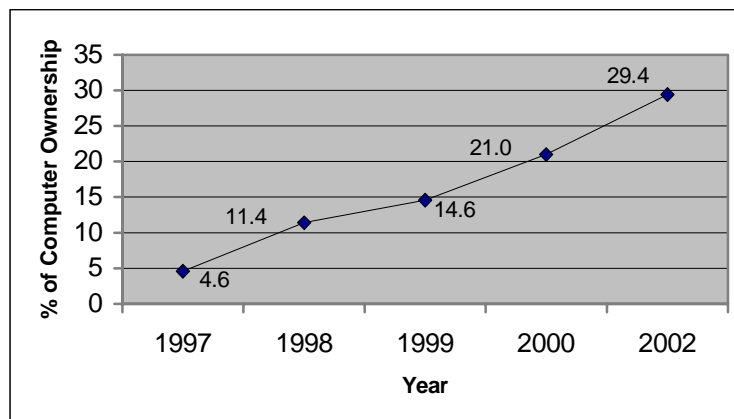
Among the households having telephone connectivity surveyed, 39.6% of the members were knowledgeable in ICT.

It was also found that the ICT skills of all household members range from

- Certificate (6.8%),
- Diploma (0.3%),
- Degrees (0.8%),
- Masters (1.1%),
- Computer proficiency at their workplace (4.2%),
- Able to use computers but without having any qualifications in ICT (26.4%).

The survey results confirmed that computer ownership in Mauritian households having telephone connectivity is increasing year after year and stood at 29.4% at the time of the survey in June 2002 compared to 21% in October 2000. The trend in computer ownership is shown in figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Growth in computer ownership





It is good to note that according to a survey (CMPHS) of 6,300 households (6,075 in the Island of Mauritius and 225 in the Island of Rodrigues) carried out by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) during the period January to December 2001, households having computer facilities represented around 13%. Among those households having telephone connectivity, 17.2% had computer facilities at home. The definition of household and the methodology used by the CSO is different from the definition and methodology used in this survey.

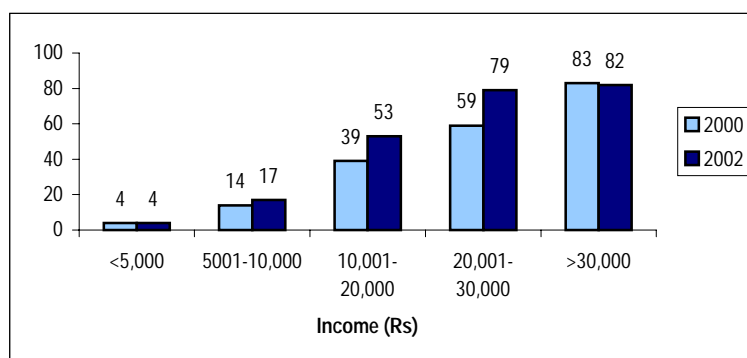
The Development Bank of Mauritius (DBM) and the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund (SILWF) are offering facilities to households to acquire computers. Households are also becoming more aware of the potential of the ICT sector especially as the country moves towards becoming a cyber island.

There is also a good degree of competition in the computer sales market so much so that each competitor tries to attract potential buyers at the level of the package offered in terms of softwares and accessories, after sales service and on price. All these developments are leading factors pushing households to be more digitally included.

4.1.2 Computer ownership by total household monthly income

The bar chart below compares computer ownership by households of different classes of monthly income over the period October 2000 to June 2002.

Figure 2: Computer ownership by income



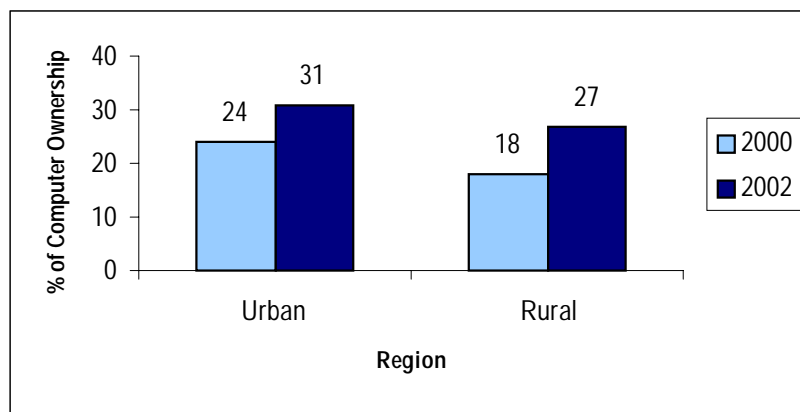


From figure 2, it can be seen that computer ownership varies with the level of income. In both years, computer ownership is more consequent for households having telephone connectivity earning more than Rs 30,000 monthly. However, there has been a change since year 2000 as households having telephone connectivity and having computers is also increasing in lower income brackets implying a gradual move towards computer ownership.

4.1.3 Computer ownership by region

Figure 3 below shows the distribution of computer ownership by region.

Figure 3: Computer ownership by region



There has been a significant improvement in computer ownership in both urban and rural areas and the gap is also narrowing with time. In the rural areas computer ownership has increased from 18% in 2000 to 27% in 2002.

4.2 Features of computers owned

4.2.1 Hardware

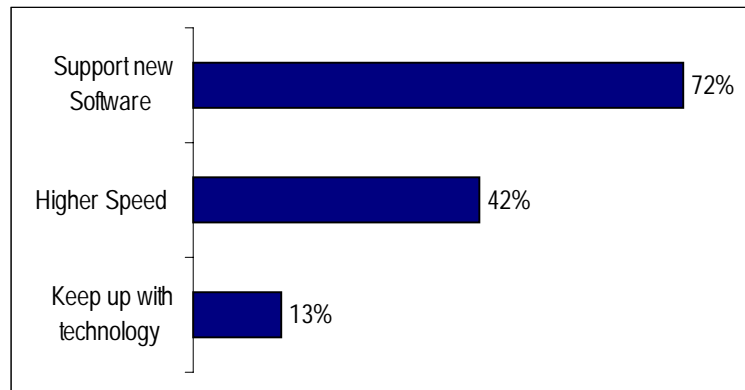
About 87% of households having telephone connectivity and owning a computer have Pentiums and the remainder owns older generation computers like 486 or below.



Intention to upgrade

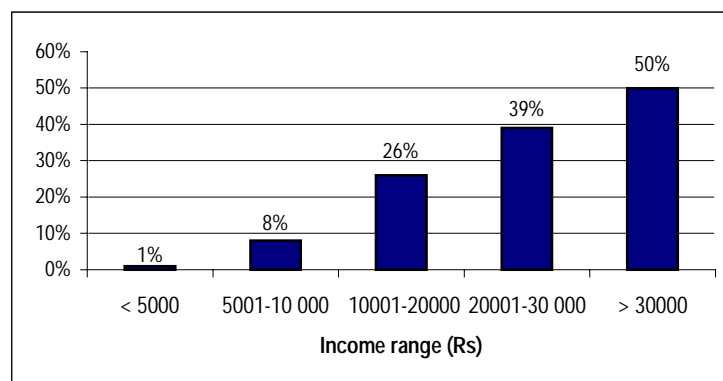
Households having telephone connectivity and owning computer also wish to upgrade their PCs and 49% among them intend to do so in the near future. The reasons to upgrade are given in the figure below:

Figure 4: Intention to upgrade



The main reason put forward for their intention to upgrade their PCs is the need to support new software. The need for higher speed and keeping up with technology are other reasons given but are of lesser importance.

Figure 5: Intention to upgrade by income group



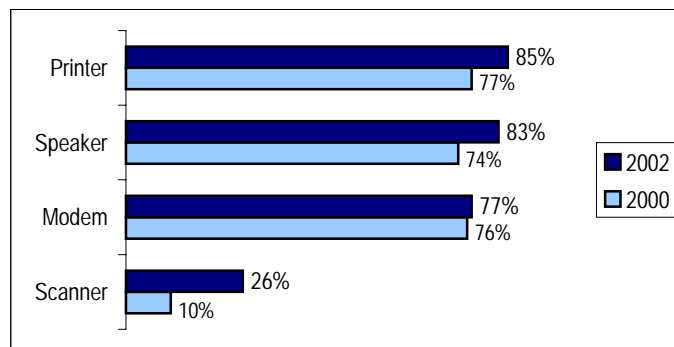
From the above figure, it can be seen that the intention to upgrade computers increases with the level of income.



4.2.2 Peripherals

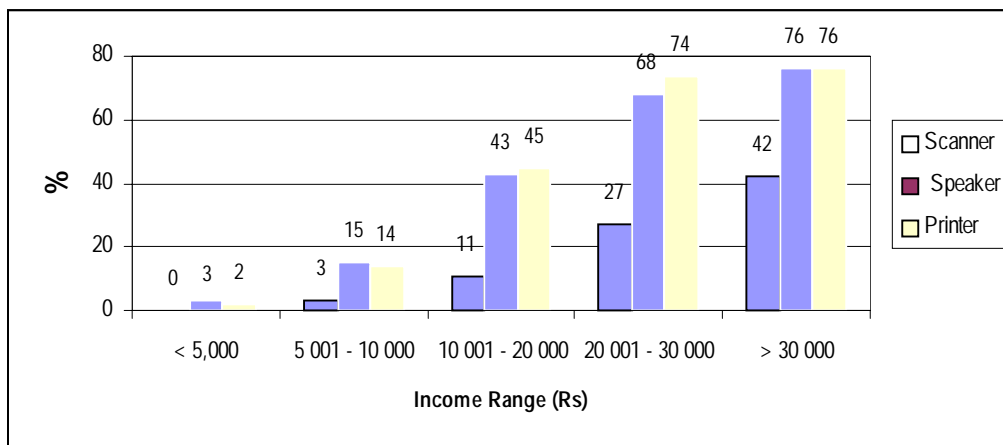
The common peripherals used by households having telephone connectivity and owning computers were printers (85%) and speakers (83%) whilst scanner and plotters are used to a lesser extent. In addition, most (77.2%) of the households having telephone connectivity reported to have a modem connected to their PCs.

Figure 6: Percentage of households owning peripherals



There is evidence that households having telephone connectivity and having computers are gradually using other peripherals also like the scanner. Only 1% of households having telephone connectivity own plotters.

Figure 7: Ownership of peripherals by income group



The figure above shows that printers and speakers are the most common peripherals in all classes of income. In the higher income groups, the level of ownership of printers and speakers are similar.



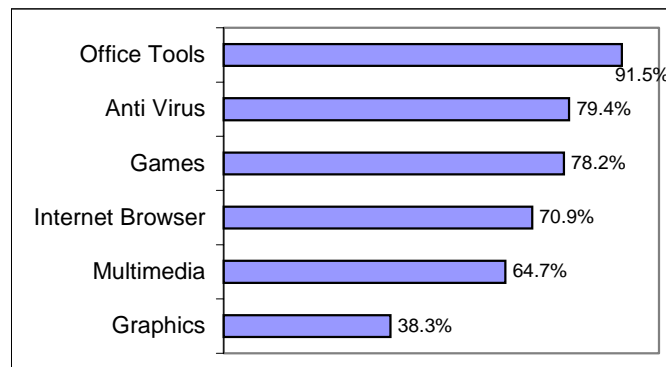
Mode of Payment

During the survey period, it has been found that 53% of the households having telephone connectivity have purchased their computers by cash and around 44% through loans.

4.2.3 Software

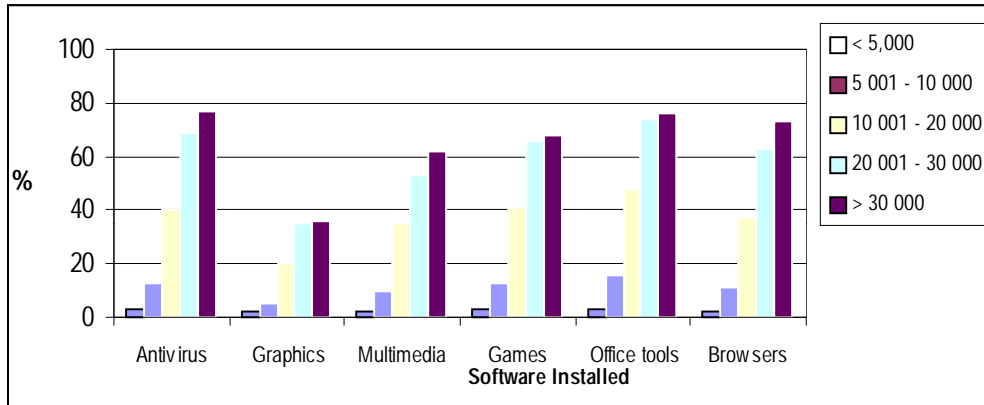
It was observed that the main operating system installed in households having telephone connectivity is Microsoft Windows. The softwares mostly installed are shown in the figure below:

Figure 8: Main applications used



Office tools (91.5%), Antivirus (79.4%) and Games (78.2%) were the three main categories of softwares used by household members. Multimedia is now found on the 5th position being less preferred than games and Internet browsers.

Figure 9: Software installed by income group



It can be observed from the figure above that a higher percentage of the upper income groups have installed the common software used.

It was reported that 48.2% of households having telephone connectivity upgrade their anti-virus softwares over a period of a year.

4.3 Maintenance

Around 63% of the households having telephone connectivity reported to ensure maintenance of their PCs at their supplier while 16% of them replied never to have resorted to maintenance services at all. Three quarter of the households having telephone connectivity and having computers confirmed their satisfaction as to their after-sales service provided by ICT suppliers.

4.4 Household without computer

From the survey results, it was noted that the percentage of households having telephone connectivity without a computer has declined from 79% in year 2000 to 70.6% in 2002. The main reason put forward by households having telephone connectivity for not owning a computer is its availability at work which according to them reduces such a necessity at home.



4.5 Intention to purchase a computer

Around 60% of households having telephone connectivity who do not own a computer have indicated that they would purchase one in the very short term (1 to 2 years). Among those who intend to purchase a computer, 86.6% would buy Pentiums and indicated also that they would do so from local ICT suppliers (98.1%).

Most of the potential buyers of computers lie in the lower income groups and in rural areas (60%).

Intention to purchase computer by income

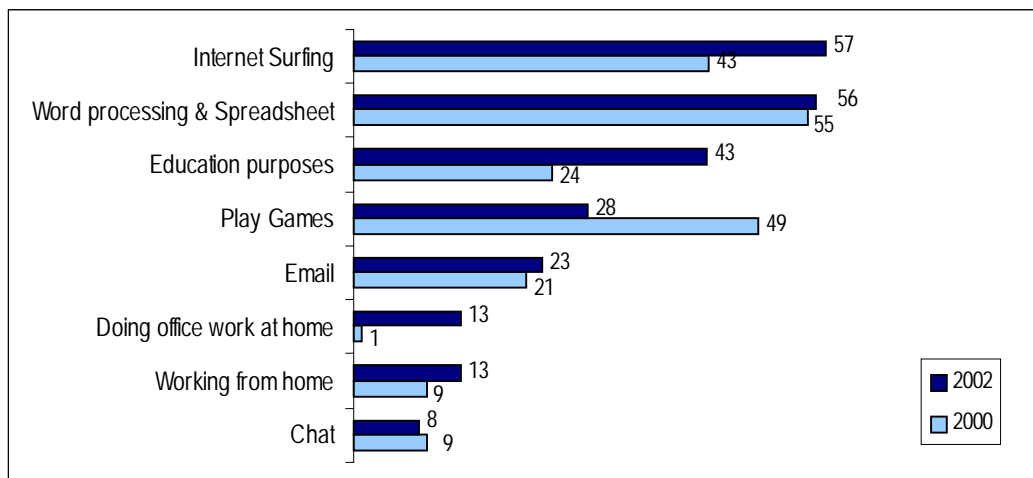
Income group	%
Less than Rs 5,000	40
Between Rs 5 001 & Rs 10 000	56
Between Rs 10 001 & Rs 20 000	37
Between Rs 20 001 & Rs 30 000	16
More than Rs 30 000	8

5. Usage of computers at home

5.1 Types of computer usage

The figure below shows how household members use their computers. It appears that word processing, Internet surfing and education rank among the first three main uses.

Figure 10: Types of computer usage



In 2002, the use of computers for Internet surfing and education purposes has increased considerably whereas playing games on computers has decreased. Use of computers for Internet surfing has overtaken word-processing in 2002.

5.2 Number of hours spent on computer

No. of hours spent on computer

	Less than 1 hr	1 to 5 hrs	6 to 10 hrs
Word -processing	38%	30%	9%
Game	52%	34%	7%
Internet/Email	42%	37%	8%
Job-related tasks	25%	38%	14%
Education	17%	50%	33%

Game (52%) is the most common activity on computer used for less than one hour by computer users and education (50%) for one to five hours.



5.3 Profile of home computer users

This section describes the profile of home computer users.

5.3.1 Profile of computer users by sex

The table below shows the distribution of computer users between males and females among the population of computer users.

Sex	2000	2002
Male	69%	57%
Female	31%	43%

Note that the percentage has been computed among computer users only.

It is observed from the above table that the gender gap in computer users has decreased so much so that there is almost equity between genders.

5.3.2 Growth in males & females computer users

Sex	2000	2002
Male	14%	21%
Female	11%	17%

It can be seen from the table above that among the population of males (which includes both male computer and non computer users), 21% are computer users. Both male and female computer users have registered an increase of 7% and 6% respectively.

5.3.3 Profile of computer users by age group

The table below shows the profile of computer users by age groups.

Age Group	2000	2002
Below 12 years	9%	11%
12 - 20 years	34%	28%
21 - 29 years	17%	19%
30 - 39 years	17%	17%
40 - 49 years	16%	15%
50 - 59 years	6%	7%
60 years and above	1%	3%

The percentage has been computed among computer users only.



5.3.4 Growth in computer users among different age groups

Age Group	2000	2002
Below 12 years	11%	13%
12 - 20 years	22%	37%
21 - 29 years	15%	24%
30 - 39 years	12%	19%
40 - 49 years	10%	17%
50 - 59 years	8%	12%
60 years and above	2%	5%

It is observed that among people in the age bracket 12-20 years, 37% are computer users. There has been a general growth in number of computer users in all age categories. The growth rates were highest in the the age groups 12 – 20, which consists mostly of students and age group 21 - 29 years (students and early workforce).

5.3.5 Computer User Profile by highest educational level attained

Highest Educational level attained	2000	2002
Primary or below	10%	10%
Secondary	68%	63%
Certificate	2%	2%
Diploma	3%	1%
Degree & above	17%	24%

The percentage has been computed among computer users only.

5.3.6 Growth in computer users within each type of educational qualification attained

Highest Educational level attained	2000	2002
Primary or below	3%	5%
Secondary	16%	24%
Certificate	33%	49%
Diploma	50%	67%
Degree & above	54%	66%

The table above shows that among people that have studied till diploma level, 67% are computer users. There is a general increase in the use of computer in all classes. It is also found that the use of computer increases with the level of education attained.



5.3.7 Computer usage by type of activity

The table below shows the breakdown of computer usage as per type of activity.

Activity status	2000	2002
Workplace	51%	53%
Studies	42%	37%
Household duties	4%	5%
Retired	2%	2%
Unemployed	1%	3%

The percentage has been computed among computer users only.

It is confirmed from the table above that the majority of computer users are students and people who work.

5.3.8 Growth of computer usage among each type of activity

Activity status	2000	2002
Workplace	13%	22%
Studies	23%	33%
Household duties	3%	6%
Retired	3%	5%
Unemployed	7%	20%

It can be seen from the table above that among people who work, 22% make use of computers at their workplace. The percentage of computer use among the unemployed has shown a considerable increase though there has been an increase in other categories also.

Better-educated adults are more likely to use and become familiar with computers (available at work or through their school experiences).

6. Internet Access

The Internet cannot be considered as a luxury item today but rather a resource used by many as can be gauged with the rapidly rising computer ownership and Internet access as well. Overall, the findings in this report show that there has been tremendous progress in just about 24 months time with a marked increase in Internet penetration with 23.8% of households having telephone connectivity reporting having access in June 2002 compared to 12% in September 2000.

The proportion of households having telephone connectivity and owning computer that are connected to the Internet has registered a sharp increase from 58% in year 2000 to 81.1% in 2002.

6.1 Households connected to the Internet

A substantial percentage of households having telephone connectivity (47.8%) found that the Internet speed is rather average and the majority (80%) accesses the Internet through dial-up lines.

6.1.1 Internet connection by region

The proportion of households having telephone connectivity connected to the Internet is 14% and 18% in year 2002 compared to 6% and 7% in year 2000 in rural and urban areas respectively.

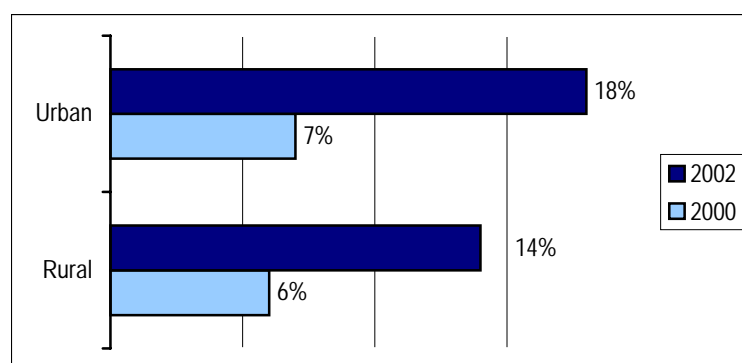


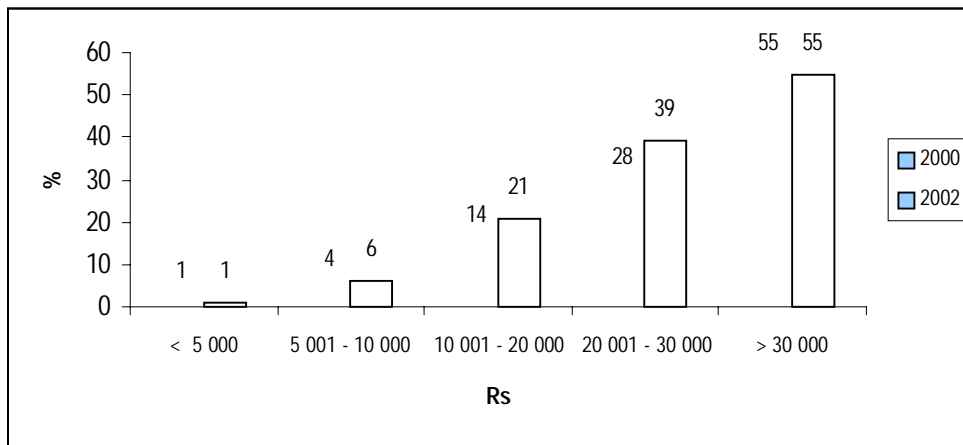
Figure 11: Households connected to the Internet by region



6.1.2 Internet access by monthly income

The relationship between Internet access and income levels is worth examining more closely.

Figure 12: Internet access by monthly income



A general increase has been observed across all income groups. Households having telephone connectivity and having monthly income in the range of Rs 10,000 – 20,000 and Rs 20,000 – 30,000 have experienced a significant increase in Internet access and usage.

It is found that the level of Internet access remains the same as that of year 2000 in the highest and lowest income groups.

6.2 Profile of users accessing the Internet from home

The main factors for Internet usage are household income, age, educational attainment and activity status.

6.2.1 Internet access from home by sex

The table below shows the distribution of Internet users between males and females.

Sex	2000	2002
Male	72%	57%
Female	28%	43%



The percentage has been computed among the Internet users population in the sample. Over the last 2 years, women has raised their Internet use rates fast enough to close the gap with men.

6.2.2 Growth of Internet access from home among males & females

Sex	2000	2002
Male	9%	16%
Female	6%	13%

It can be seen from the table above that among the males, 16% are Internet users. It has been observed that although males have a tendency to surf more on the net than females yet this gap has considerably declined since year 2000. Both sex groups have made roughly the same gains over the last 2 years in Internet use.

6.2.3 Internet access from home by age group

The table below shows the distribution of Internet usage among different age groups.

Age Group	2000	2002
Below 12 years	4%	5%
12 - 20 years	31%	28%
21 - 29 years	17%	21%
30 - 39 years	17%	18%
40 - 49 years	20%	17%
50 - 59 years	8%	7%
60 years and above	3%	4%

The percentage has been computed among Internet users only. Young children and adults 60 years & above had the lowest Internet use rate in 2000 and 2002 and the smallest increase in use since 2000.

6.2.4 Growth in Internet use by age group

Age Group	2000	2002
Below 12 years	3%	5%
12 - 20 years	12%	28%
21 - 29 years	8%	19%
30 - 39 years	7%	15%
40 - 49 years	8%	14%
50 - 59 years	6%	10%
60 years and above	3%	5%



The table above shows that in the age group below 12 years, 5% have access to Internet.

More people at all ages are using the Internet. The table above, however, also illustrates that although Internet use increases across the board, Internet use rates are not equal across all age groups. Internet use rate is the highest among youths (age 12-20 years) and picked up from 12% in year 2000 to 28% in year 2002.

6.2.5 Internet access by educational level

The table below shows the distribution according to highest qualification attained among Internet users.

Highest Educational level attained	2000	2002
Primary or below	7%	5%
Secondary	66%	62%
Certificate	2%	2%
Diploma/Post Diploma	2%	2%
Degree & above	23%	29%

The percentage has been computed among Internet users only.

Household members with degree and above have made the highest gain in Internet access.

6.2.6 Growth in Internet access among users according to their educational level

Highest Educational level attained	2000	2002
Primary or below	1%	2%
Secondary	9%	18%
Certificate	27%	41%
Diploma	20%	63%
Degree & Above	42%	61%

The table above shows that among diploma holders in the survey, 63% reported having access to Internet. In both 2000 and 2002, Internet use rose with higher levels of education. People whose highest level of education is a diploma or higher have maximum Internet use.



6.2.7 Internet access from home by type of activity

The table below shows the breakdown of Internet access as per type of activity among Internet users.

Activity status	2000	2002
Workplace	56%	56%
Studies	34%	32%
Household duties	6%	5%
Retired	3%	3%
Unemployed	1%	4%

Note that majority of users access Internet at the workplace.

6.2.8 Growth in Internet access from home among each type of activity

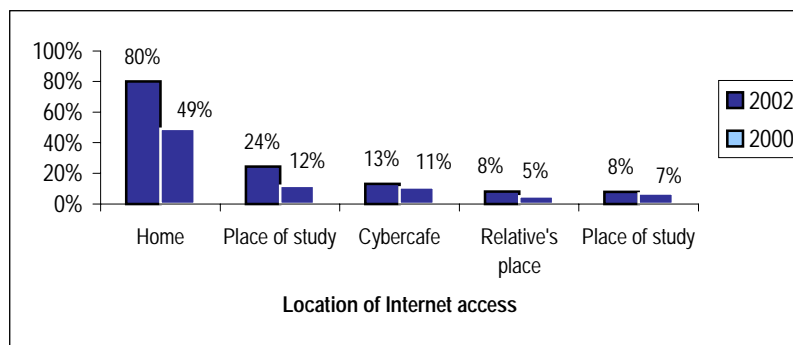
Activity status	2000	2002
Workplace	9%	18%
Studies	11%	22%
Household duties	2%	4%
Retired	4%	5%
Unemployed	3%	17%

It can be seen from the table above that among students, 22% reported having access to Internet. There has been a sharp increase in Internet usage by the unemployed. Students and the working group have also made considerable growth in Internet access.

6.3 Other locations of Internet access

There are several locations where Internet users access the Internet though home is the main access point and these are shown in the figure below:

Figure 13: Location of Internet access





The two most common places where individuals access the Internet are at home followed by their place of work consistent with year 2000.

6.3.1 Use of Internet from outside the home

Cyber café: 51% of users getting online through Cyber cafés lie in the age group 12 – 20 years and 29% in the range 21 – 29 years. Men (62%) access the Internet more than women (38%) from Cyber cafés.

Place of work: 27% of people accessing Internet at their place of work lie in the age group 21 – 29 years, 34% in the age group 30 – 39 years and 24% in the range 40 – 49 years. A high percentage of males (64%) access the Internet from their place of work compared to females (36%).

Educational Institution: 60% of people accessing the Internet from their educational institution lie in the age group 12 – 20 years and 30% in the age group 21 – 29 years. 58% of males and 42% of females access Internet from their educational institution.

Activity status by types of websites visited

	Government	Tourism	News	Health	Leisure	Education	ICT	Culture	Sport
Employed	49%	53%	54%	51%	51%	52%	51%	53%	56%
Studies	28%	22%	22%	25%	25%	23%	23%	24%	20%
Household duties	13%	16%	12%	12%	13%	12%	13%	13%	13%
Retired	8%	8%	9%	8%	7%	10%	8%	6%	8%
Unemployed	1%	1%	3%	3%	3%	3%	4%	4%	4%

The table above confirms the trend depicted in section 6.2.7. that the working group mostly use the Internet.

However, the percentage of the working category that goes online to check news, sports and any other activities is about the same, around 50%.

6.3.2 Location of Internet access by income range

It has been observed that households having telephone connectivity in higher income brackets access the Internet mostly at home and at their place of work. As we refer to households having telephone connectivity in other income ranges, places like cyber café, place of work and even relative places are quite common locations for accessing the Internet.



Location of Internet access by income range

Income range (Rs)	Home	Cybercafe	Office	Place of study	Relative's place
Under 5 000	36%	16%	8%	18%	20%
5 000-10 000	50%	14%	15%	8%	12%
10 000-20 000	60%	12%	17%	6%	5%
20 000-30 000	66%	4%	21%	3%	5%
Above 30 000	69%	5%	22%	4%	1%

While individuals in all income groups access the Internet, its use rate is superior in higher income brackets.

The main reasons for Internet usage reported by household members have been:

Email/Chat	66%
Entertainment	29%
Online Banking	7%
Discussion Groups	5%
Job Search	1%

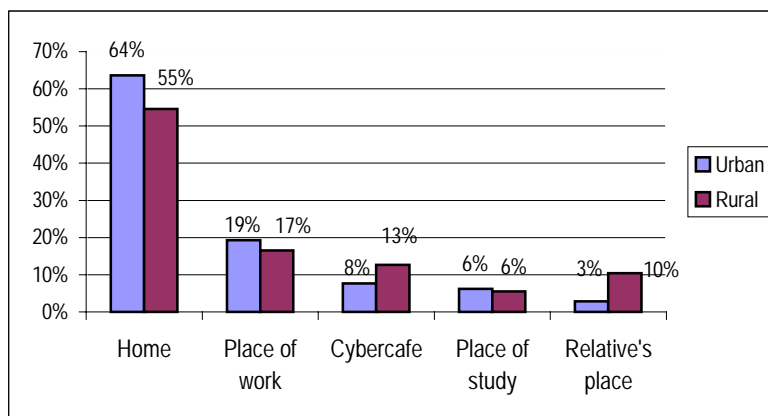
E-mail remains the Internet's most widely used application – 66% of Internet users reported using e-mail.

Mostly youths in the age groups 12 – 20 years (31%) & 21 – 29 years (25%) use the Internet for email and chat.

6.3.3 Internet access of users by region at different locations

In the figure below, it can be seen that the majority of Internet users surf on the net mostly at home whilst the place of work comes in the second position.

Figure 14: Internet access of users by region at different locations





Most of the households having telephone connectivity have single e-mail accounts and only a small percentage have two e-mail accounts. However, more households having telephone connectivity have e-mails now as compared to year 2000. The percentage of household members having e-mail account is shown below:

Figure 15: Number of e-mail accounts

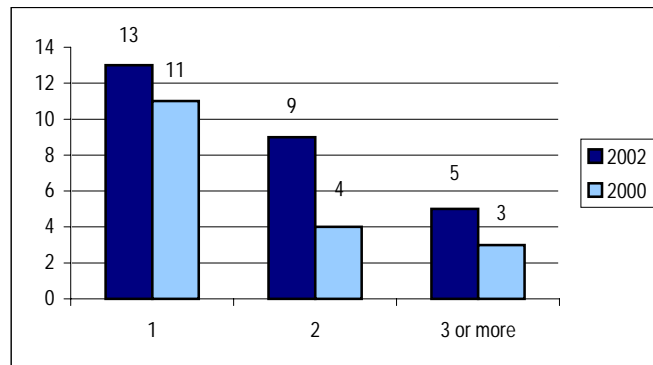
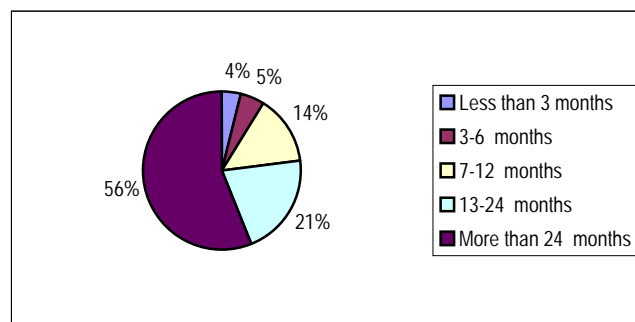


Figure 16: Experience with Internet



A substantial percentage (56%) of people have been accessing the Internet for more than 2 years.

6.4 E-Commerce

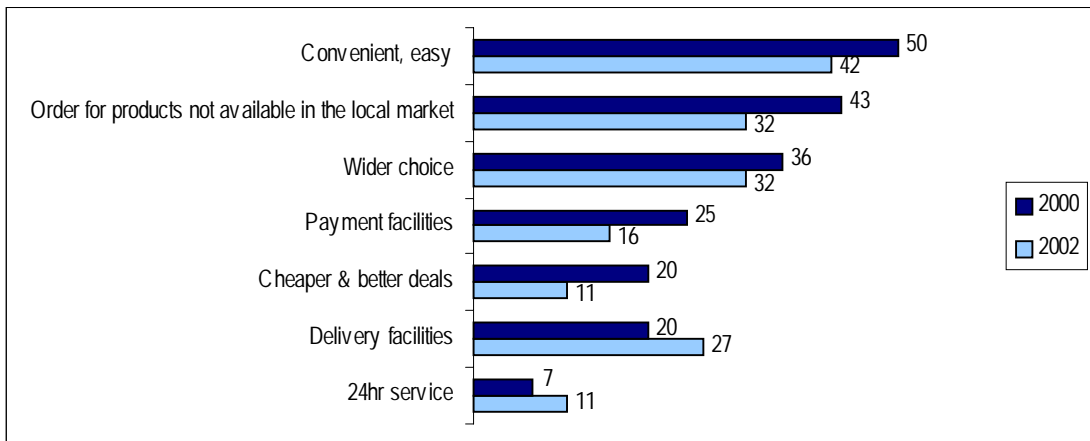
On-line purchases are gradually picking up as the percentage of households having telephone connectivity and who are transacting through the Internet has increased from 1% in year 2000 to 2.2% in 2002. The percentage of members connected to the Internet and conducting transaction was 6.8% in June 2002 indicating that shopping on-line is becoming popular among Mauritian households having telephone connectivity.



6.4.1 Main reasons for shopping through the Internet

The main reasons for shopping through the net are depicted in the figure below:

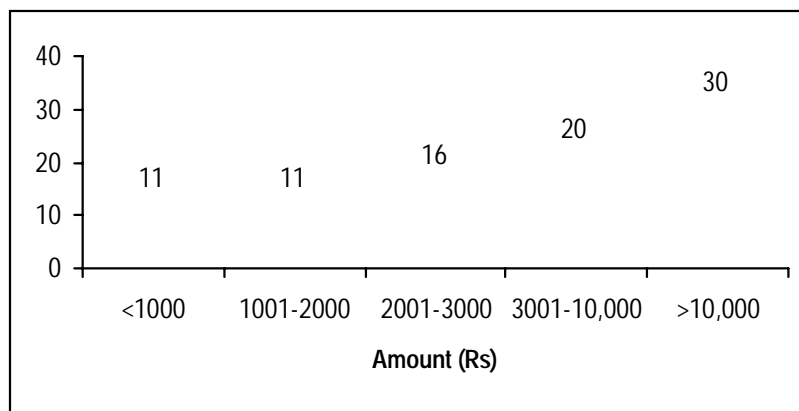
Figure 17: Main reasons for shopping through the Internet



While households having telephone connectivity in general finds it a convenient, easy and less time consuming way to transact on the net yet it appears that preferring this route is more justified on the basis of the 24-hour service and the delivery facilities available. Among those households having telephone connectivity transacting on the net, around 46% have conducted more than 3 purchases.

6.4.2 Amount spent on-line from Jan 01 – Dec 01

Figure 18: Amount spent on-line



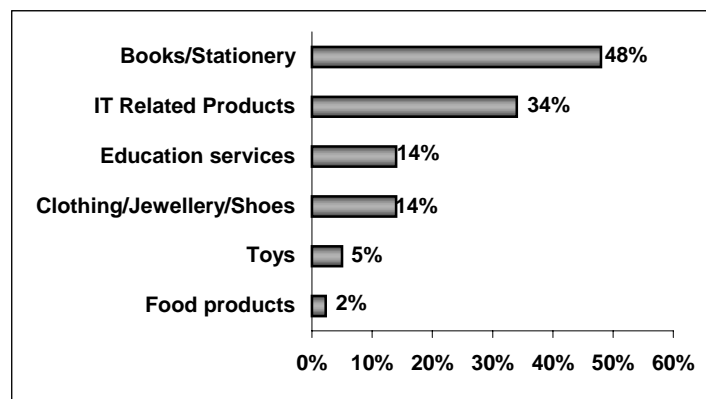


Also from figure 18, it can be deduced that households having telephone connectivity are spending significantly by transacting on the Internet. In fact, around 30% (13 households) of them have spent more than Rs 10,000 and 20% (9 households) among them have purchased goods amounting to a value between Rs 3,001-10,000 in 2002.

6.4.3 Products and services bought online

The two most common items purchased over the Internet have been books and stationery and ICT related products. Households having telephone connectivity have also purchased new items on the net like toys (5 %) and food products (2%).

Figure 19: Products and services bought on-line

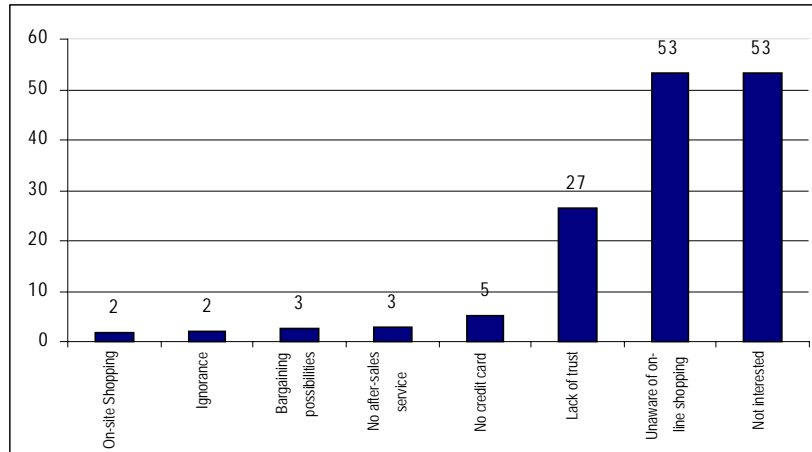


6.4.4 Reasons for not shopping on-line

A still good proportion of households having telephone connectivity have not transacted on the Internet and the main reason reported has been ignorance about shopping on-line procedures and lack of interest.



Figure 20: Reasons for not shopping on-line



6.5 Households without Internet connection

6.5.1 Reasons for not having home Internet access

Around 19% of households having telephone connectivity & computer reported not connected to the Internet. A number of factors are critical in influencing an individual’s decision to go online, key amongst these are lack of equipment, interest and cost. During the survey, households having telephone connectivity provided a number of reasons for not accessing the Internet at home (See Figure below). The main reason put forward for not having Internet access was not having the appropriate equipment.

Figure 21: Reasons for not having home Internet access



However, around 59% of this group reported to subscribe to the Internet in the short term. In fact, within two years from now 72% of them indicated to subscribe to the Internet.



7. Conclusion

A Look Ahead ...

The results of this survey have demonstrated that there has been significant progress in computer ownership and home Internet access among Mauritian households having telephone connectivity and home Internet connection to attain current levels of 29.4% and 23.8% respectively.

It has been observed that word processing & spreadsheet, Internet surfing, playing games are the three main areas of usage by households having telephone connectivity and owning computers. Household members use the Internet mostly for e-mail/chat and entertainment purposes.

It is good to note that Internet access and usage have increased in lower income brackets. On-line shopping has also increased since 2000, with now around 2.2% of households having telephone connectivity transacting on the Net.

The way forward for Mauritius is to become gradually a fully wired and ICT literate nation. With an aim to fulfill this objective, the National Computer Board has accomplished a number of activities in view to promote the accelerated diffusion of ICT in every socio-economic sphere of Mauritius. Each year the National Computer Board organizes Infotech, the ICT exhibition and conference event, which aims at promoting awareness and disseminating information about the latest developments in the applications of ICT. The event has witnessed a constant growth over the last five years both in number of exhibitors and visitors are an illustration of a growing interest in this area.

In order to become an ICT literate nation, the population must be aware about how to use a computer, the benefits they can obtain from making use of ICT and how ICT



will change their life in the future. In this context, the National Computer Board has adopted a pro-active strategy to provide ICT training facilities to the door step of the Mauritian society. The National Computer Board operates two IT Coaches, equipped multimedia computers, which are used to promote ICT awareness and spread ICT Culture even in the most remote areas of Mauritius. To date, the IT Coach has delivered ICT awareness courses to over 19,300 people in Mauritius. Over the last six years, the National Computer Board has organised IT Competitions with the aim of promoting IT skills among secondary level students.

Through its activities of ICT Culture promotion, the National Computer Board is disseminating information to the general public about the potential of ICT and how they can harness ICT for a better quality of life. It is expected that when people are better informed about the potential of ICT and have been trained on its use, they will be more confident in making use of the incentives offered by government to own a computer.