„Mapping the digital future”

Hungarian Society and the Internet

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THE WORLD INTERNET PROJECT AND THE INFORMATION REVOLUTION

History is not a kind host. It often fails to inform us of historic changes, battles and revolutions in time -- us who, either active or passive, have to undergo the whole process. Sometimes because of the whirl of circumstances we can’t even see the actual procedures, as Fabrizio Del Dongo was at a loss to realize while wandering among troops of infantry and cavalier that the battle he had just fought was the battle of Waterloo, which had changed the history of Europe. In some respect, this is true for Information Revolution as well. Though the media, many public figures and organizations attempt to address the diverse relations of this change, the importance of the Internet remains unclear to the public. We are living in a time of revolutionary changes nowadays, and this revolution has only begun.

Nearly ten years ago, Tim Berners-Lee completed his program that gave birth to the World Wide Web. It took another two years for 22-year-old student Marc Andreessen and his partners to develop MOSAIC -- the Internet information browser that attracted and opened the portals of the World Wide Web for outsider’s use as well. Needless to say, the Internet has since made a stunning career. Still, it will do us well to recall some data.

The World Wide Web is the fastest spreading technological innovation in the history of mankind. A UN report says that “never has a single innovation managed to gain 50 million users as fast as the WWW,” and the Internet continues to expand. For instance, in the first quarter of 2000, in the U.S. alone, more than 5 million Internet users had been registered. At that time, this meant that about 55,000 persons per day, 2,289 per hour and 38 per minute were becoming ‘Netizens’, i.e. Internet citizens.

The amount of information available on the Internet is growing radically. Some 550 billion documents were accessible on the Net in 2000. In addition to this, 7.3 million new web pages are being launched daily. Despite the economic crisis that is encumbering many Internet companies, the content of the Internet has been growing fast. In our day, 93% of the information generated annually worldwide is digitalized.

Parallel to this expansion, the media has been directing greater attention to the Internet. The Internet was, in a way, an unknown concept for audiences in the middle of the 1980s. For instance, the word “Internet” had appeared less than 350 times annually in all forms of American media, including daily newspapers, magazines and TV channels. By 1995, the number of references to the Internet was a mere 70,944. Yet, in 1997, references from the same sources indicated the number to have risen to 219,866, then 529,343 in 1999, and in the first three quarters of year 2000, it crossed the threshold to 700,000.

No matter how imposing the data seem, the true importance of the Internet remains under appreciated. The Internet is not only a source of information or a mere medium, as the traditional television. Through interactivity it changes the way we handle our businesses, jobs,
contacts, studies, even becomes part of our games and dreams; in other words, the Internet has changed our lives.

Moreover, this revolutionary change is taking place now, and not in the near, nor in the far, future. Although this change is taking place in our daily activities, not everyone is participating in it or benefiting from it. Rather, what we can see is that the Internet and information technology have become a new effective factor in the overall structure and are gaining more significance in the interpretation of both global inequality and social differences.

Hence, in the new millennium, in the age of globalisation, it is a fundamental national interest to make the new information technology that defines our competitiveness not only available but also useful as an intelligible tool for as many social groups as possible. It should do more than reach one intellectual level. Upon conclusion of the 20th century, which brought us so much pain and devastation, we can risk stating: to be successful in the 21st century, Hungary must travel along the most effective route. Doing this will compel us to use the innovations of the Information Revolution.

We cannot see the end of the road now but wherever it leads, our starting position seems unflattering. According to the Hungarian World Internet Project data from Fall 2001, 17% of the Hungarian population use some form of the Internet, with home access at 5%. The Information Age provides a historic chance for Hungary to come abreast. The chance is upon us either to rise or falter.

In order to live up to this truly historic challenge, we have to be able to build up a successful strategy. It is inevitable that we gain a systematic, comprehensive knowledge concerning the impact of the use of the Internet, its expansion and its social and social-psychological effects. The Hungarian World Internet Project is designed to serve this goal: to create an accurate database that is accessible to everyone and suitable for international analysis and comprehensive studies.
**What Is the World Internet Project?**

The World Internet Project (WIP) is an international research program that was created and organized to comprehensively study the social impact of the Internet. The UCLA Center for Communications Policy and NTU School of Communications Studies, Singapore, initiated it in the summer of 1999.

WIP researchers believe that the Internet will transform our social, cultural and economic lives and will surpass, in its significance, the most influential of media of the past 50 years - television. World Internet Project researchers asserted from the beginning that these effects will require globally compatible scientific surveys that apply a common methodology.

Research in the field of Information Societies has been characterized by analyses of growth rates and regional diversity. Such a research, completed by international organizations, mostly represents a collection of raw statistics allows enable sophisticated analysis on the social and cultural impact of the Internet.

Furthermore, international and local companies have begun to request surveys and reports on specific questions in connection with the information society. These reports, however, usually reflect particular themes that are useful for internal reference by companies, and are motivated by business strategies so they are often not available for scientific researchers and a greater audience.

It is obvious that, the systematic queries that should discover the social consequences of Internet use are missing from the circle of research.

WIP researchers are convinced that the changes the Internet expansion is causing in various fields of social life are of growing significance. How might the new medium affect social relations, types of communication, political activity, the world of jobs and entertainment?

It is also significant to point out that these are the phenomena of an accelerating process under constant development. That is why we need research that will follow the course of events in the long run, instead of research that attempts to record momentary information.

We believe also that besides the consideration of a wide range of social effects, incidents should be explored with scientific thoroughness at a relatively early stage of the expansion within WIP. Thus, we can better understand the conditions occurring prior to the expansion of the technology and the causal relations of the changes consequently, and not subsequently as a postscript. Professor Jeffrey Cole, head of the American research project points out on several occasions that the WIP’s inquiry will bridge a significant gap in media theory. Unfortunately, it is an examination that failed to be brought forth before the end of the 1940s, during the expansion of television. Consequently, in the absence of the comparison with the
world without television, we have only our intuitions about the cultural and social effects of the television.

The expansion of the Internet, though at different rates and degrees, has become a worldwide phenomenon with a global effect. Hence, from the very beginning WIP began collecting information and national analyses for an international comparative study regarding the effects of the Internet on various fields of our social life. One of the initial goals is to urge the participation of an increasing number of regions from around the world by inviting cooperation from new partners.

Thus, the World Internet Project is the first international program on the international scene that prioritises the needs and expectations mentioned above. On the basis of these ideas, the project’s importance lies in the following four characteristics:

• Examination of the social impact of the Internet

Besides aiming to fulfill the goals of previous research, such as exploring the level of expansion and growth rates, the World Internet Project also strives to produce a comprehensive interpretation of the effects of Internet use on attitude, value, and behavior variables.

• Coverage of both Internet users and non-users

Contrary to recent research primarily focusing on users, WIP’s significant initiative, among others, aims at examining non-users as well. This makes it feasible to examine the crosswalks between the groups of users and non-users, and the dynamics of these changes. Moreover, it enables the full analysis of attitudes between and within the two groups and reasons for the “absence” of non-users can be discovered.

• Longitudinal research

WIP avoids employing a singular approach in its inquiries. Instead, it attempts to map the general social impacts of the Internet. For this reason, we have developed what we call the longitudinal research project. This is a ten-year project that consists of an annually updated, panel-like survey. Every year, we will ask the same selection of people to complete the survey. This will enable us to discover what short and long-term effects Internet use has had on the life of the households. We will explore also the opinions, habits, and relations of the people who have become users either at the beginning or during the survey. WIP-analyses should create new strategies to deal with the fundamental questions and problems of business, government and politics.

• International comparison
The project is an international comparative survey, and represents a picture of the changes related to the World Wide Web in different countries and regions. The surveys distributed to every nation, ask questions related to the “general social feeling”, assumptions associated with electronic technologies and the Internet. Therefore, comparisons within these fields can be constructed as well. Since among the general questions the survey includes country specific questions and themes, researchers who are interested in particular countries can satisfy their individual interests on a number of specific topics. Research teams involved in the World Internet Project share their experiences, conclusions and results, regularly at annual conferences.

Currently, fourteen countries are participating in the World Internet Project. Before the manuscript deadline, the following countries had joined the survey: Italy, Japan, Singapore, Taiwan, South-Korea, Sweden, China, Australia, Germany, Great Britain, France, Finland, India and Brazil.
THE IMPORTANCE OF THE WIP IN HUNGARY

In 2001, after the initial contact and the mutual orientation, Hungary joined the circle of countries involved in the World Internet Project.

In Hungary, the personalities of the economy, the national government, local governments and the civic sphere all have a considerable hunger for data. For them every detail on national improvement and developments associated with the Internet is of interest. Throughout the years, many survey results have generated increasingly reliable data.

The earlier demonstrated analyses presented in the subjects of the Internet expansion and the Information Society are, however, relevant to the Hungarian surveys as well. In Hungary, too, systematic timeline data are scarce. Research tends to focus on particular elements of certain subjects. A majority of the surveys are ordered by market organizations and primarily concentrate on the users (or the consumers). This limits the scope of research projects. Long-term research is also missing. Specifically, in producing surveys that are able to demonstrate trends of coherence as opposed to recording snapshots.

We hope that the Hungarian WIP survey will solve these problems, and that our results are of interest to many sectors. The systematized, comprehensive data proposed by this survey can serve as a basis for determining governmental priorities and strategies and for continually revising them. Furthermore, the people in the business and service sectors will have the opportunity to develop product planning and customer service ideas.

Within WIP, we rendered an international comparative survey about a phenomenon that is regarded as a relatively new development not only here, in Hungary, but all around the world. The Hungarian survey serves as a model and its results may be of special importance for the region, since of the post communist countries in Central-Eastern Europe, only Hungary has the joined the program so far.

We also attach importance to building up research teams and communities with grounding on the basis of WIP-research. After a certain period, databases will be open to the public and inquiring researchers will be able to use them freely. Then the range of complete, published, studies will promote greater understanding of the information within these subject areas.

The Hungarian WIP survey is longitudinal and is in panel form, similarly to the trend of other partner countries. The length of the survey is 10 years, during which the same core group would complete the questionnaire every year. We do not expect the survey panel’s composition to change, though we anticipate modifying our survey questionnaire. Since the technological background of the Internet has been, and is, changing constantly and rapidly, new questions will reflect this progress.
In addition, the experiences of the annual evaluations together with the exchange of experience and information among international partners may also lead to slight or more significant modifications of the questionnaire.

Hungary is represented in the WIP by the joint research groups of the Social Research Institute, and the BME-UNESCO Information Society and Trend Research Center. Directors of the scientific research are Tibor Dessewffy (ITTK) and Zoltán Fábián (TÁRKI Rt.).
FINDINGS OF THE HUNGARIAN WORLD INTERNET PROJECT’S
INITIAL SURVEY. SUMMARY.

Personal Computers in the Home

• 22% of Hungarian households have at least one personal computer. 3% of households have two or more computers. This means that 27% of Hungarian population over the age of 14 have a computer at home.

Land Line Phones

• 76% of the population over 14 live in households that are containing land line phones.

The Expansion and Location of Internet Use

• 17% of the Hungarian population over the age of 14 use the Internet on a regular basis.

• In Hungary, access to the Internet is primarily provided by schools and workplaces. 13% of the population use the Internet at the school or at the workplace, while only 5% use it at home.

Habits of Internet Use

• The most popular Internet activity is e-mailing: 19% of users send or receive e-mails at least once a day; 26% of users use this service more than once a week.

• Searching and information gathering for school or work related material are activities users often choose, as opposed to pursuing personal goals or using the net for pleasure, which seems to be less widespread.

• Chatting appears to be relatively less popular amongst Hungarian Internet users. 50% of users never chat on the net. Out of chat users, only 23% use this service on a regular basis.

• Joining forums and using online banking services is also rare among Hungarian Internet users: only 14 or 15% of the users undertake such activities on a regular basis.
Reasons for Non-Use

• When asking non-users why they never use the net, 44% indicate the absence of computer as their main reason.

• 37% of non-users disregard the Internet because they are “not interested” in it.

• 22% say that the Internet is too expensive for them, while 16% explain their reason for not using the Internet is the absence of access.

• A mere 0.3 and 0.1%, respectively, of those surveyed never go online because of pornographic materials and other contents unsuitable for children.

The Intent of Joining Internet Users

• 10% of non-users do not expect to become regular Internet-users in the following year.

Views on E-mail

• Among the respondents, the reputation of e-mail is generally positive. The majority feels that dealing with e-mails does not take much of their time. Additionally, they regard e-mail as useful if it enables them to communicate with those otherwise unreachable.

Online Purchasing

• 6% of Hungarian Internet-users have made a purchase via the Internet, out of which 1.6% buy online at least once a month.

• 40% of online purchasers are very concerned about providing credit card details, only a quarter of them see no risk in online shopping.

Has the Expansion of New Technologies Made the World a Better Place?

• 66% of respondents believe that the expansion of new technologies, such as mobile phones and the Internet, makes the world a better place. Only 10% believe the opposite.

Suppositions in Connection with the Internet

• In general, respondents consider that the information available on the Internet is reliable.

• In Hungary both users and non-users strongly agree with the assertion that a vast range of content available on the Internet is not for children’s eyes.

• They also are of a concurrent opinion that the use of Internet saves us time.

• In response to the statement that the lack of Internet access is a disadvantage, both users and non-users moderately agree with it.
The Internet and Other Media

• Despite its growing importance, the Internet ranks only fifth behind books, newspapers, television and radio, both if it is used as a source of information or as entertainment.

Internet and the Family

• Of those who live in households equipped with Internet, 85% have never experienced negligence by family members who use the Internet.

• Those parents whose children are often online do not think that the Internet can threaten school performance or takes too much of their time away.
**THE HUNGARIAN POPULATION AND THE INTERNET,**

2001: THE COMPLETE RESULTS

**Access**

WIP-researchers, as an initial step, attempted to answer the following question: How widespread is the use of information communication tools, e.g. personal computers or landline phones, throughout the population? At present, this factor, together with the cost of the Internet, mainly determines the extent of Internet expansion.

**Who Uses Computers?**

Over one fifth (22%) of Hungarian households have at least one personal computer. In 3% of households more than one personal computer is in use.

![How many computers do you have?](image)

How many computers do you have?  
Households equipped with computers (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>None</th>
<th>One</th>
<th>Two and more</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>78%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In recent years, the number of households equipped with a computer showed a dynamic growth:
The number of households with computers is bigger in the region of Budapest (30%) and in Western Hungary (24%) than in the Eastern Hungarian regions (14-17%).

*The number of households with personal computers (%)*

Currently, the presence of computers in households depends on incomes. While in the first four income-categories we find 14-18% access rates, the top fifth shows a 28% access rate. Thus, the difference between the 20% of households with the highest income and the 80% of households with lower income is crucial.
If we consider the question in light of persons instead of households, we will find that 27% of the Hungarian population have computers at home, though within this group, education still varies to a great extent.

The number of households with computers among people with basic and vocational education is below average. Consequently, they must live in households that have no Internet access.

The proportion of people with personal computers according to education

The age of respondents is also a significant factor. The average age of households with computers (37 years) is exactly ten years less than of those (47 years) with no computer at home. The highest number (52%) of households with computers is in the Age Group 14-17. This is followed by Age Group 40-49 (39%) who is the generation of parents of the previous Age Group. The proportion of computers in Age Group 50-59 is slightly under the average (24%). Within people over 60 only 6% of households have computers.

The social disadvantages of the Gypsy population can be traced when examining their computer access. Only 5% of the respondents who were indicated as “Gipsy” by the questioners live in households with computer, contrary to the 28% of “Not Gipsy” majority.

The expansion of computers is not very likely to cease, since 8% of the households without a computer have indicated that they are intending to purchase a computer in the following 12 months.

**Land Line Phones**

In respect to the Internet use, we thought it relevant to ask whether households have land line phones. In our day, home access is based on this condition as well.

In Hungary, three quarters of the households have land line phones, but this differs to a great degree in particular regions. In the Southern Plain region, 61% of the households have landlines, while in the Western region, over the Danube, 83% have land line phones.
Households with Land Line Phone (by percentage)

- Southern Plain: 61%
- Northern Plain: 69%
- Northern Hungary: 79%
- Southern Transdanubia: 74%
- Western Transdanubia: 83%
- Central Transdanubia: 72%
- Central Hungary: 82%

Source: TÁRKI-WIP 2001.09
INTERNET USE

According to a WIP survey, 17% of the Hungarian population use the Internet with certain regularity. Among these, men are more involved in spending time on the Internet: 20% of them use the net. The proportion of women shows only 15%.

International trends collide with that of Hungarian findings. The higher the education level one has achieved, the more likely it is that he or she uses the Internet. Almost half (45%) of people with College/University Degrees use the net.

*Education and Internet Use*

![Bar Chart]

There is a relevant correspondence between Internet use and Age: the older the respondents are, they are the less likely to use the Internet. In Age Group 14-17, the Internet use is typical (69%), while over the age of 60 there is almost no one (1%) who uses the net.

In Hungary, primarily workplaces and schools provide Internet access. 13% of the population use the Internet at workplaces or at schools; only 5% connect to the net at home.
Age and Internet Use

Where the Internet is Used and its proportions

Source: TÁRKI WIP 2001.09
The expansion of the Internet grows in direct ratio to the size of towns; the bigger a town gets, the more likely its citizens are to use the Internet. The proportion of home access indicates a direct ratio as well to the size of the town, up until Budapest, where 13% of the households have Internet access.

*The Size of Settlement and Access*

If we consider the present day condition of Budapest as the future of less improved regions, we can see that tendency shows the growth of home access. Since the average of home Internet access barely reaches 5%, the same in the Capital shows 13%.

Households of four persons are the most likely to use the Internet at home. 27% of households of four persons in Budapest have home access, while households of one or two persons in smaller towns basically never use the Internet.
The proportion of Internet access according to the type of settlement and the size of the households (%)

Besides registering the fact and the proportions of Internet use in different social groups, the survey also examined the types and frequency of services used.
The most frequent web activity is e-mailing. Almost one-fifth of the users use the e-mail on a daily bases, or more than once a day. Almost half of all the users use e-mail at least once a week.

Searching for and gathering information for work or study are also typical Internet activities.

Internet use for a personal purpose or pleasure is not that widespread. Slightly more than one-quarter of users who are online on a regular basis, or at least once a week, do it for pleasure. The same proportions are true for Internet entertainment (games, music) too.

The interactive, real-time net conversation, i.e., online chatting, is a less popular activity. Half of the respondents never chat on the net; the majority does it less than once a week.

Only 14% of the respondents take part in forums and news groups at least once a week.

Only 12% of users have ever applied bank transactions and transfers through the net. Of those who have, very few do so on a weekly basis.
**Reasons for Non-Use**

The most frequent obstacle to the use of the Internet is the absence of access to computers. Almost 40-50% of the respondents of various social groups indicated this as a main factor.

Of technical problems, this is the most significant, though the cost of the Internet can be considered a technical problem as well. Almost one-fifth of the respondents say that the Internet is too expensive.

Other possible reasons for non-use are views and attitudes related to the Internet. Within these, there is a dominant issue: almost two-fifths of non-users simply ignore the Internet because “they don’t care about the Internet.”

Another frequently cited reason for non-use is the absence of technical knowledge and skills.

![Reasons for Non-Use](image)

The majority of respondents, who are non-users because of the absence of computer access, are unlikely to become an Internet user in the near future. Only 12% of them planned to purchase a computer within a year.
With lack of comparative national data, we ought to have a look at the American survey of WIP 2000, where the reasons for non-use are quite similar to the Hungarian reasons. The only striking difference is that the consideration of the cost of the Internet is not as withholding in the United States as in Hungary. Only 9% of the American users indicated the cost of Internet as a withholding factor, whereas in Hungary it is 22%.
THE INTENT OF JOINING INTERNET USERS

Concerning the reasons above, we can understand those who are reluctant to become Internet users in the near future. Nine-tenth of non-users say “it is not likely at all” that they would become users within the year. Eight% think they are “likely”, two% say “very likely” to access the Internet on a regular base.

Likelihood of becoming an Internet user

It can be seen that the actual likelihood of becoming a ‘netizen’ within a year is greater within the younger generation, especially among youngsters ages 14-17. Half of age group 14-17 (47%), and 15-16% of those in age group 18-39 are likely to become Internet users in the following 12 months, unlike age group 60 and over. In the older generation, growth of net use is highly unlikely.

Proportion of those who intent to join the group of Internet Users in twelve months
(within the group of Non-Users)

Source: TÁRKI-WIP 2001.09
**Electronic Mailing**

On a weekly average, e-mail users send 6.36 e-mails related to work, and 5.9 e-mails related to private affairs. They receive 9.9 work e-mails and 9.3 private e-mails. These data indicate the balance between private and work related mailing.

Men send and receive more e-mails, both work and private, than women. Besides, the number of e-mails received at work among people in the active age group shows a radical expansion from the younger towards the older generation. People ages 50-59 receive twice as many work e-mails as age group 30-39.

The reputation of e-mail among respondents is generally positive. The majority feels that dealing with e-mails does not take much of their time. Generally, they regard e-mail useful in as much as it enables communication with those otherwise unreachable. One-fourth of e-mail users are certain that it is more likely for them to keep the contact with those who also have an e-mail address than with those who do not, and an additional 20% believe more or less the same. However, only 4% of e-mail users are bothered if someone does not have an e-mail address; an additional 7% are of a neutral opinion and the majority simply does not care about it.

*Relation to E-mails*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Absolutely</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with E-mails takes too much time</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More likely to keep contact with someone who has E-mail</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail provides a means of communication with people who are rejected otherwise</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bothered if someone does not have E-mail</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**ONLINE PURCHASING**

On the basis of our survey it shows that there is no significant e-business activity amongst Hungarian population. This is understandable since only 17% of the population are Internet users, of which slightly more than 6% buy goods or services online with a certain regularity.

Half of the Internet users have no idea about online prices. Interestingly, people who are aware of the prices believe that online prices are similar to offline retail prices. Another 17% think online purchasing is less expensive than retail prices, and only one-fourth think it is more expensive. Hence, this factor has not proved to be a withholding factor of online purchasing.

Nonetheless, credit card security can prove to be an issue. About 40% of online shoppers feel insecure about credit card security, only one-fourth of them use cards without reservation. However, there are other ways of payment beside credit cards. On the basis of survey data, the majority of online shoppers pay on delivery or in other ways, only one-fifth use credit cards.
VIEWS ABOUT THE INTERNET

Has the Internet Made the World a Better Place?

Views related to the Internet can be as important as the “raw” facts of its use. Hence, within the WIP survey we also directed questions to certain beliefs, assumptions about the Internet.

The population considers the expansion of the Internet and other information communication technologies, e.g. mobile phones as positive. Only a narrow minority observes the changes with pessimism.

The impact of new technologies on the world: opinion poll by percent

Approximately 70% of men and 63% of women believe that new technologies have made the world a better place. The same tendency is relevant to age group 18-29 (76%), while the older generation, 59 or over (18%), and pensioners (17%) demonstrate negative opinions about new technologies.

Hungarian opinions are, in particular, optimistic compared to the American data. According to 17% of non-users, 7% of users in the U.S. the world is getting worse, while 37% consider it neither better nor worse. In total, Hungarians’ expectations are more optimistic and less skeptic towards new information technologies than those in America.


Regard of new technologies among Internet users and non-users -
The United States* and Hungary (%)

![Chart showing the regard of new technologies among Internet users and non-users in the United States and Hungary.](chart)

*USA WIP 2000

The Reliability of Information

On the whole, people in general consider Internet content rather reliable, only a small% think it is totally unreliable; while 13% of Internet non-users consider only a small amount of information on the Internet reliable. More than two-fifths of them (42%) think half of the information reliable, and around 45% believe the majority of information reliable. In light of this, it is understandable that Internet users demonstrate greater confidence. Within this group only 6% think that only a lesser part of Internet information is reliable. Contrary to this, more than one-third (37%) consider half of the information reliable and three-fifths of them (57%) consider most of the information on the net reliable.
“How great a part of the information on the Internet is reliable and accurate?”

*Answers by percentage*

The previously demonstrated relative Hungarian optimism towards new technologies can be most observed among non-users. 45% of Hungarian and 32% of American non-users having no experience with the Internet, consider the majority of information reliable.

**Beliefs about the Internet**

Relying on the WIP survey we asked seven questions that explore beliefs and personal views about the Internet among Hungarian citizens.

In Hungary, the majority of respondents agree that the Internet contains inappropriate content harmful to children. In Hungary, in the U.S. and in Sweden, both users and non-users indicated 4 on the 5-grade satisfaction scale that covers the following assessment: “Children can get plenty of inappropriate information through the Internet.” There was a mutual agreement though, in believing that the Internet saves time.
Paradox as it may seem, more non-users consider Internet as a threat to personal data than users. American users are more anxious about the security of their personal data than Hungarians.

It is obvious that Internet users feel less behind than non-users. It is similarly natural that non-users are more likely to agree with the observation: Internet does not mean too much.
**THE INTERNET AND OTHER MEDIA**

Both the Hungarian and the American WIP surveys found that Internet users consider print media, i.e. books, magazines, dailies, and the Internet itself important information sources to a greater extent than non-users. The latter would choose radio and television.

The proportion of those who consider the above media as information sources “(very) important” within the groups of users and non-users: 2001 Hungary and 2000 USA

![Bar chart showing the percentage of users and non-users considering different media sources as "very" important in 2001 Hungary and 2000 USA.]

* USA 2000 WIP, 16 or over

In spite of the emergence and expansion of new multimedia technologies, Internet remains a textual medium; its use requires high literacy level. This is especially true when we use the net to get information, but in the case of entertainment we can draw the same picture.
The proportion of those who consider the above media as “(very) important” in light of entertainment within the groups of users and non-users.

* Respondents 16 and over
INTERNET USE, THE FAMILY AND SOCIAL RELATIONS

The Internet Use and the Changes in Family Relations

The majority of the respondents have never felt ignored in their families because of the Internet. In our day, television isolates family members from each other more often than the Internet does.

US WIP surveys show a similar tendency: TV is in more cases (37%) the cause of family tension than the Internet (25%).

Online Contacts

The potential of making friends via Internet expanded the system of human relations. 36% of the respondents have an acquaintance whom they met through the net. Such relations usually remain Internet relations, though sometimes new online friends will come together in person as well. 39% of the respondents have online friends out of whom 19% have never met them in person, 4% met everyone of them in person. The remaining 13% have both some acquaintances they have met in person and some they have not.

Children and the Internet

Due to the low case number of children with home access the question of Children and the Internet in the WIP database requires careful analysis. Altogether 68 persons affirmed that children under 18 have Internet access at home as well.
On the basis of the small amount of data we can note that children are forbidden to use the Internet (23%) or watch Television (25%) as a way of punishment. However, parents do not consider the Internet harmful to school grades: they tend to find that the grades of children with home access either remain as they were or improve: 6% showed improvement, 94% remained on the same level of grades.

The parents whose children use the Internet at home do not consider the Internet as “bad” as the Television. While 51% of the parents think their children spend too much time watching TV, yet only 16% consider the duration of Internet use too long. Contrary to this, 8% encourage their children to spend even more time on the net; and three-quarters (76%) are satisfied with the average length of their children’s Internet use.

*Parents’ opinion of children’s Internet use*
**Hungarian WIP Research 2001. Final Comments**

The Hungarian survey of the World Internet Project 2001 can be primarily considered as a status report. The survey demonstrates Hungarian experiences related to information society with the help of data that are suitable for international comparison.

The result of our research makes it possible for us to interpret future social changes in relation to the Internet. And though the development of digital technologies will certainly surprise us, with the help of the WIP a new scientific research has been launched and will guarantee more comprehensive knowledge concerning this fast changing field.

Following the initial ground work, our questionnaire was finalized in Summer 2001. The National gathering data took place in September 2001. For this, we held 5,032 face-to-face interviews with respondents aged 14 or over.

At the first stage of the sampling process, we made 9 settlement strata. Out of these, we randomly selected those towns that are in the sample. During the second stage, we fixed the strata samples according to the proportion of the population in the given settlement.

Then we fixed this number of persons according to the proportion of the population of given towns. Thus, every adult with a permanent address in the sample location had an equal chance to be in the sample. The names and addresses of specific persons were selected randomly from the data of Ministry of Internal Affairs, Data Registering, Processing and Election Office.

The sample, by means of the proper weighing methods, represents the entirety of the Hungarian households and Hungarian citizens, aged 14 or over.

Fieldwork took place between August 30 and September 19, 2001. A total of 269 questioners worked at 160 different settlements. During the survey, two different questionnaires had been completed. The “basic questionnaire” took 36 minutes and the “Internet” questionnaire took 15 minutes. Computer after work was completed by October 5. In the original sample, there were 8,679 respondents. The proportion of answers was 58%, which is similar to the usual data of other personal questionnaire surveys. Questioners had to contact the person in the sample three times (in three different times during the day) before they could cancel the interview.

According to the perspectives above, the 5,032 cases of our weighted database represents 8,282,114 persons, age 14 or over, and 3,820,876 Hungarian households.

The access-expansion data of the 2001 Hungarian WIP survey do not include the accumulation of the last three months, which according to some estimation, reaches 20%. That is primarily due both to the Office of Information Government Commissioner the ‘PC-
program for 20,000 teachers and public employees launched by and to the rallying home Internet market. What is certain is that the results of the 2002 data gathering will clearly reflect the growth of Internet access rate and the alterations in the structure of habits and attitudes of Internet users.