



# **HOUSEHOLD USE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

AUSTRALIA

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## NOTES

### ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

This publication is the fourth of its type focusing on the use of information technology (IT) in private households.

### ABOUT THE SURVEY

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) plans to conduct four similar surveys over four quarters of 1998, each with a sample size of about 3,300 households. The main reason for this is to increase the effective sample size to a total of approximately 13,000 taken over the 12 month period. Analysis based on the 13,000 observations will produce a more reliable result than any of the individual surveys especially where analysis is focused on small target groups. In particular, data will become available classified by State.

### Reliability of statistics

In this publication, data in respect of computer use by individuals has been derived in two ways. First, estimates for adult computer or Internet users are based on data reported in respect of a randomly selected adult member of each household. Second, a subset of data for the population five years and over is obtained (either directly or from the randomly selected adult) for up to five frequent computer users in each household. Estimates based on these separate samples will differ.

Most of the statistics presented in this publication relate to the households or individuals frequently using a computer (once a week or more). Some tables, however, relate to all computer users regardless of their frequency of use. The tables are footnoted to avoid confusion.

In particular, users should note that the statistics in this publication on person's use of the Internet relate to those persons frequently using a computer at home. Statistics in the ABS publication *Use of the Internet by Householders, Australia, February 1998* (Cat. no. 8147.0), released on 28 May 1998, relate to all persons aged 18 years and over regardless of the frequency of their computer use.

### SYMBOLS AND OTHER USAGES

ABS Australian Bureau of Statistics

PSM Population Survey Monitor

TAFE Technical and Further Education

\* estimates have a relative standard error of greater than 25%

— nil or rounded to zero

W. McLennan  
Australian Statistician

## MAIN FEATURES

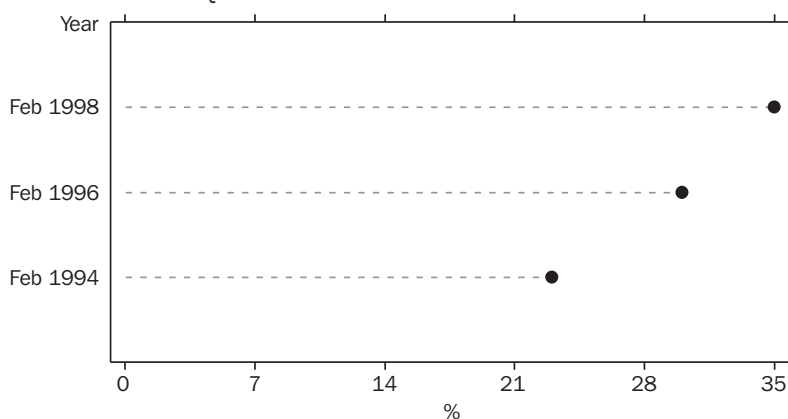
### COMPUTER USE BY HOUSEHOLDS

At February 1998 there were nearly 2.9 million households in Australia with a computer. This was 42% of all households in Australia. More than 2.4 million of the households with a computer used the computer frequently (defined as once a week or more).

#### Growth in computer use

The proportion of households frequently using a computer was 35% at February 1998. This compares with 30% at February 1996 and 23% at February 1994.

HOUSEHOLDS FREQUENTLY USING A COMPUTER



#### Frequency of computer use

Of the households with a computer 47% reported using the computer daily, 28% 2–6 times a week and 8% once a week. Just over 4% of these households reported not using their computer at all.

#### Intentions to purchase

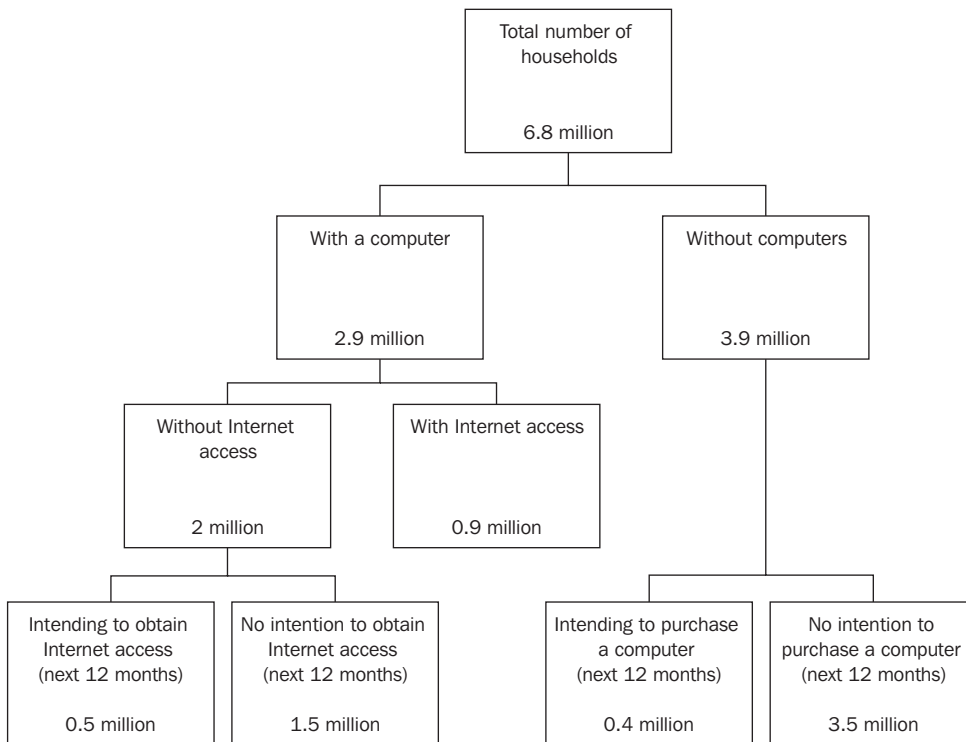
Of the 4 million households without computers 400,000 reported intending to purchase a computer in the next 12 months from February 1998. If these expectations are realised then by February 1999 the number of households with a computer will reach 3.4 million.

Of households with computers, 700,000 reported that they intended to upgrade their computers by February 1999.

#### Internet use

At February 1998 more than 850,000 households had access to the Internet (13% of all households). Of the 2 million households with a computer and no Internet access from home, 470,000 reported intending to obtain home Internet access by February 1999.

## COMPUTER PENETRATION IN AUSTRALIAN HOUSEHOLDS



Barriers to the uptake of computers and the Internet

Cost (30%) and lack of interest (29%) were the most frequently reported reason for households with computers not having Internet access. The same two reasons also applied for households not having computers. More than 55% of these households reported lack of interest or no use for computers as the main reason while 26% reported cost. The number of households reporting cost as the main reason had declined by 28% since February 1996.

Home computer capacity

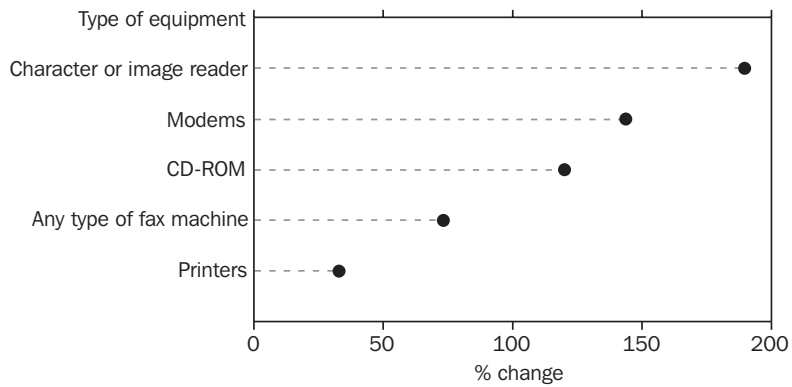
There is a clear trend to acquire greater computer capacity. The increase in computer uptake occurred with computers with greater processing and memory capacity. There was a general decline in numbers of computers owned or being paid for with processing capacity below a 486 and memory capacity below 16 megabytes.

Use of computer peripherals and communication technologies

There were considerable increases in peripheral and communication technology usage between February 1996 and February 1998. For peripheral technologies the most dramatic increase occurred for character or image readers (up by 190%) and modems (up by 144%). For communication technologies the largest increase in ownership occurred for voice mail services (up by 173%) and cordless phone ownership (up by 119%).

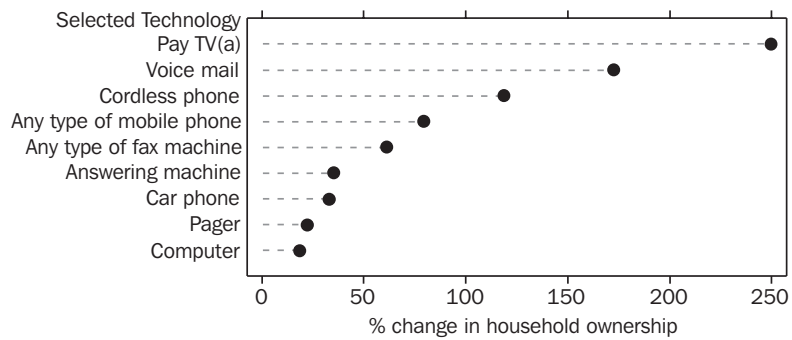
Access to Pay TV increased by 250% since February 1996.

PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN THE USE OF PERIPHERAL IT BY HOUSEHOLDS(a)



(a) Relates to households frequently using a computer at home.

CHANGE IN THE OWNERSHIP OF SELECTED COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES



(a) Pay TV services are not widely available in all areas of Australia

PERSONS FREQUENTLY USING A COMPUTER AT HOME

Within the 2.4 million households frequently using a computer there were 5.1 million Australians aged five years and over who frequently used a computer at home. This was an increase of 31% since February 1996. In terms of activities undertaken via the home computer, playing computer games (3 million persons) was still the most popular activity followed by learning/study activities (2.8 million persons).

Internet based activities had the highest increase, growing rapidly by 258% from just over 300,000 persons aged five years and over at February 1996 to 1.1 million persons at February 1998. The proportions of persons frequently using a computer and accessing the Internet from home at February 1998 for age groups were:

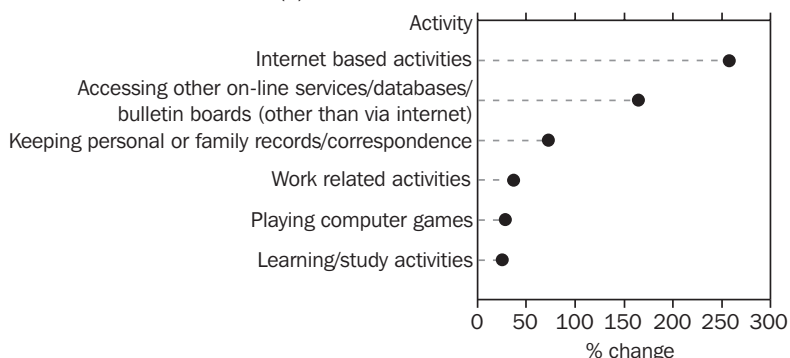
- 5–17 year olds—7%;
- 18–24 year olds—9%;
- 25–39 year olds—9%;
- 40–54 year olds—7%; and
- 55 years and over—2%.

PERSONS FREQUENTLY USING A COMPUTER AT HOME *continued*

Counts of persons using the Internet presented in this publication relate to persons frequently using a computer at home. They differ from those in the Australian Bureau of Statistics' publication *Use of the Internet by Householders, Australia, February 1998* (Cat. no. 8147.0) because those statistics related to all users of the Internet.

The activity 'accessing other on-line services/databases,' had the second highest level of increase with 165%. The following graph compares the level of increase for home computer activities from February 1996 to February 1998.

PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN HOME COMPUTER ACTIVITY BY PERSONS AGED 5 YEARS AND OVER(a)



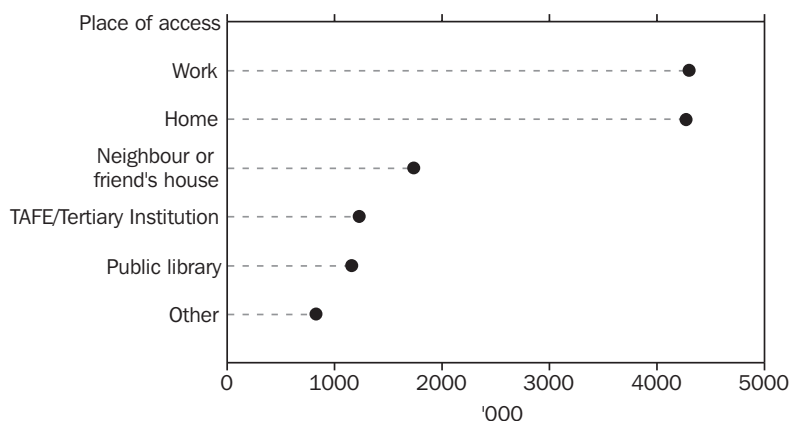
(a) Relates to persons aged five years and over frequently using a computer at home.

Persons aged 18 years and over accessing a computer from any site

In total 7.5 million persons aged 18 years and over accessed a computer in the 12 months to February 1998. Of these persons 76% frequently used a computer.

The survey also measured the use of computers at sites outside the home for persons aged 18 years and over. The most popular sites to access a computer are shown in the graph below.

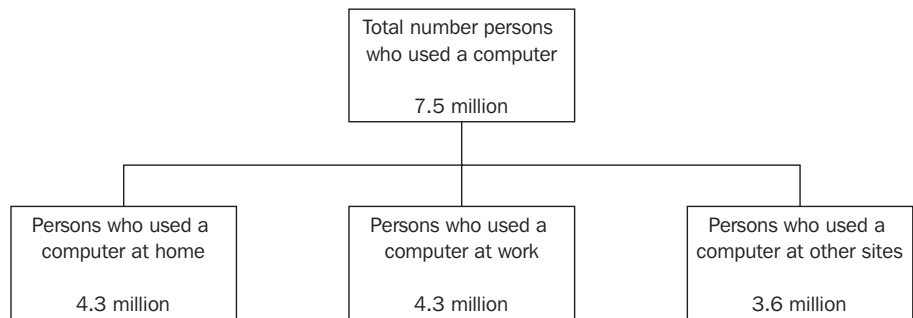
PERSONS ACCESSING COMPUTERS BY PLACE OF ACCESS



Persons aged 18 years and over accessing a computer from any site *continued*

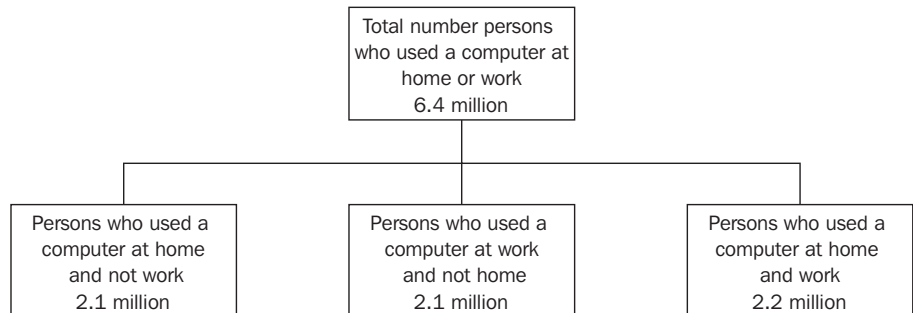
The two most frequently reported places to access a computer were work and home (each site with 4.3 million computer users 18 years and over). Of the 3.6 million persons accessing a computer from other locations just over 1.7 million persons reported accessing a computer from a neighbour or friend's house, the third most frequently reported place of access.

COMPUTER USE IN THE 12 MONTHS TO FEBRUARY 1998 BY PERSONS 18 YEARS AND OVER



More than 6 million persons 18 years and over used a computer from home or work. A third of these persons had access to a computer from both sites.

COMPUTER USE IN THE 12 MONTHS TO FEBRUARY 1998 BY PERSONS 18 YEARS AND OVER



WILLINGNESS TO ACCESS  
ON-LINE SERVICES FROM  
HOME

There were 7.7 million persons aged 18 years and over (57% of the total population aged 18 years and over) who were interested in accessing on-line services from home at February 1998. For specific services the increase in interest from February 1996 was:

- 13% for on-line shopping; and
- 16% for on-line banking.

In the 1998 Household surveys questions on accessing on-line education services and on-line Government information services or on-line form lodgement services were asked for the first time. The results from the February 1998 survey showed that:

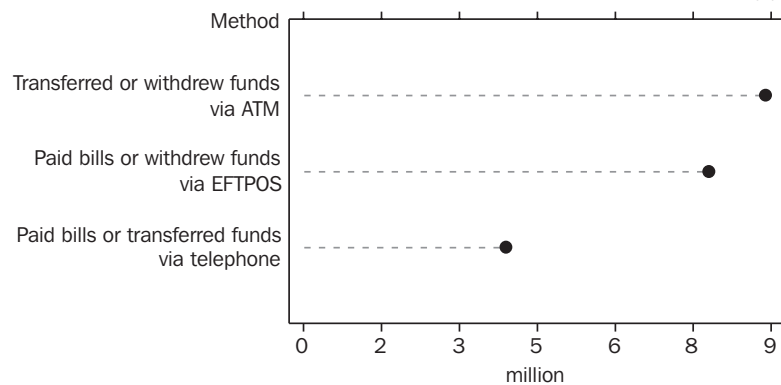
- 46% of persons aged 18 years and over were interested in accessing on-line educational services from home; and
- 40% were interested in accessing on-line government information or form lodgement services.

ELECTRONIC TRANSACTIONS  
UNDERTAKEN

In the survey people aged 18 years and over were asked about electronic transactions undertaken in the three months to February 1998. Results from the February 1998 survey showed that:

- 8.9 million Australians had transferred or withdrawn funds via an ATM (66% of the total population);
- 7.8 million had paid bills or withdrawn funds via EFTPOS (58% of the total population); and
- 3.9 million had used a telephone to pay bills or transfer funds (29% of the total population).

TRANSACTIONS UNDERTAKEN BY PERSONS AGED 18 YEARS AND OVER(a)



(a) In the three months to February 1998.



ELECTRONIC TRANSACTIONS  
UNDERTAKEN *continued*

At a much smaller level of activity were transactions via the Internet and electronic kiosks:

- only 44,000 persons paid bills or transferred funds via the Internet;  
and
- only 69,000 paid bills or transferred funds via an electronic information kiosk.

The level of electronic transactions undertaken in the three months to February 1998 dropped off significantly with age.

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## COMPUTER USE

**Family type** More than 2.4 million households in February 1998 frequently used a computer, that is once a week or more, an increase of 23% from February 1996. Households of the type married couple with children still accounted for the majority of computer households.

**Region** Growth in home computer usage was similar for capital cities and the rest of Australia. However, use within capital cities continues to run at a higher rate than country areas.

### 1

#### HOUSEHOLDS FREQUENTLY USING A COMPUTER

	February 1994	February 1996	February 1998		Change from February 1996	
			'000	%	'000	%
<b>Family type</b>						
Married couple no children	216	343	374	22.3		9.0
Married couple with children	883	1 091	1 405	58.7		28.8
Single parent	104	180	155	29.4		-13.9
Single persons	121	147	175	11.9		19.0
Other	137	199	292	40.4		46.7
<b>Region</b>						
Capital cities	1 072	1 369	1 667	39.1		21.8
Rest of Australia	389	591	734	29.1		24.2
<b>Australia</b>	<b>1 460</b>	<b>1 960</b>	<b>2 401</b>	<b>35.4</b>		<b>22.5</b>

Frequency of use Of the 3 million households with a computer 83% used the computer once a week or more and 4% did not use the computer at all.

Nearly 47% use the computer daily and a further 28% use the computer up to six times a week.

## 2

### HOUSEHOLDS WITH COMPUTERS BY FREQUENCY OF USE

	Daily	2-6 times a week	Once a week	Once every two weeks	Once every month	Less than once every month	Not at all	Total
FAMILY TYPE								
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
Married couple no children	179	138	57	*22	*31	33	*21	481
Married couple with children	822	473	110	44	38	51	48	1 586
Single parent	81	62	*12	*6	*5	*9	*12	188
Single persons	91	54	*30	*15	*30	*18	*20	258
Other	178	85	*29	*8	35	*9	*23	367
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Married couple no children	37.3	28.6	11.8	*4.5	*6.5	6.9	*4.4	100.0
Married couple with children	51.8	29.8	7.0	2.8	2.4	3.2	3.0	100.0
Single parent	43.0	33.2	*6.5	*3.3	*2.9	*4.9	*6.4	100.0
Single persons	35.3	20.8	*11.7	*5.8	*11.6	*6.8	*7.7	100.0
Other	48.5	23.2	*7.8	*2.2	9.6	*2.6	*6.2	100.0
REGION								
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
Capital cities	933	546	187	73	110	71	51	1 972
Rest of Australia	418	266	51	*22	*29	48	73	908
<b>Australia</b>	<b>1 351</b>	<b>812</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>2 880</b>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Capital cities	47.3	27.7	9.5	3.7	5.6	3.6	2.6	100.0
Rest of Australia	46.0	29.3	5.6	*2.4	*3.2	5.5	8.1	100.0
<b>Australia</b>	<b>46.9</b>	<b>28.2</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Number of computers At February 1998 there were 3.3 million computers in households which frequently used a computer. This was a 34% increase in the number of computers since February 1996. Nearly 82% of computers in households were desktop personal computers and 17% were portable computers.

Almost 83% of the 3.3 million computers in households frequently using a computer were owned by a member of the household. A further 14% were owned by a registered home business or an employer.

### 3

#### NUMBER OF COMPUTERS USED IN HOUSEHOLDS(a)

	February 1994	February 1996	February 1998		Change from February 1996
			'000	%	
Type of computer					
Laptop, notebook or other portable computers	249	345	548	16.7	58.8
Desktop personal computers	1 413	1 988	2 682	81.6	34.9
Other computers	230	129	56	1.7	-56.6
Type of ownership					
Member of household	n.a.	1 952	2 716	82.7	39.1
A registered home business	n.a.	204	240	7.3	17.6
An employer	n.a.	219	229	7.0	4.6
Other	n.a.	84	92	2.8	9.5
Don't know	n.a.	*3	*9	*0.3	200.0
<b>Total number of computers</b>	<b>1 892</b>	<b>2 462</b>	<b>3 286</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>33.5</b>

(a) For households where a computer is frequently used.

Computer capacity There was a clear trend in the uptake of computers with increased processor and memory capacity. There was a decline in the number of households owning a computer with processor capacity of 486 or less and a decline in ownership of a computer with memory capacity of less than 16 megabytes.

## 4

### CAPACITY OF MOST POWERFUL COMPUTER OWNED OR PAID FOR(a)

	February 1996		February 1998	
	'000	'000	%	Change from February 1996 %
PROCESSOR CAPACITY				
Apple Power Macintosh	*26	85	3.9	226.9
Apple Macintosh	103	*17	*0.8	-83.5
IBM or IBM compatible 286	211	112	5.2	-46.9
IBM or IBM compatible 386	387	175	8.2	-54.8
IBM or IBM compatible 486	634	528	24.7	-16.7
IBM or IBM compatible Pentium	180	754	35.2	318.9
IBM or IBM compatible Pentium II	n.a.	171	8.0	n.a.
Other	174	111	5.2	-36.2
Don't know	94	190	8.9	102.1
MEMORY CAPACITY				
Less than 4 Mb	214	52	2.4	-75.7
4 to less than 8 Mb	464	199	9.3	-57.1
8 to less than 16 Mb	456	261	12.2	-42.8
16 to less than 32 Mb	139	391	18.2	181.3
32 to less than 64 Mb	48	346	16.2	620.8
64 Mb or more	58	251	11.7	332.8
Don't know	430	642	30.0	49.3
<b>Total number of households owning or paying for a computer(b)</b>	<b>1 808</b>	<b>2 142</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>18.5</b>

(a) Estimates in this table do not identify the market share of each computer but the capacity of the most powerful computer owned or paid for in each household.

(b) Relates only to the most powerful computer owned or paid for in each household frequently using a computer.

Expenditure on computer goods and services      More than 72% of households frequently using a computer at February 1998 had spent money on computer equipment or software in the previous 12 months. Of these households nearly 600,000 had spent more than \$1,000 (with half of these households spending more than \$3,000). Only 20% of households frequently using a computer had spent money on computer services such as training and maintenance during the same period.

## 5

### HOUSEHOLD EXPENDITURE ON IT IN THE 12 MONTHS TO FEBRUARY 1998(a)

	Number of households		Proportion of households with a computer	
	Computer equipment or software	Computer services	Computer equipment or software	Computer services
	'000	'000	%	%
Nil	666	1 926	27.7	80.2
\$1-\$100	265	193	11.0	8.1
\$101-\$250	307	111	12.8	4.6
\$251-\$500	316	74	13.1	3.1
\$501-\$1 000	188	38	7.8	1.6
More than \$1 000(b)	591	*12	24.6	*0.5
Don't know	68	47	2.8	1.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>2 401</b>	<b>2 401</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

(a) Relates to households frequently using a computer.

(b) This include 266,000 households which spent more than \$3,000 on computer equipment.

Time since last computer purchased      Nearly 29% of households had purchased or leased a computer in the 12 months before February 1998. A further 22% had purchased or leased the previous year.

## 6

### YEARS SINCE LAST COMPUTER PURCHASED OR LEASED(a)

Period since last purchase	February 1996		February 1998	
	'000	%	'000	%
Never	267	13.6	228	9.5
Less than 1 year	430	21.9	690	28.7
1 to less than 2 years	364	18.6	519	21.6
2 to less than 3 years	380	19.4	377	15.7
3 years to less than 4 years	232	11.8	262	10.9
More than 4 years	273	13.9	310	12.9
Don't know	*14	*0.7	*15	*0.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 960</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2 401</b>	<b>100.0</b>

(a) Relates to households frequently using a computer.

Intentions to purchase An estimated 1.1 million households indicated an intention to purchase or upgrade their computer in the 12 months following the survey. Of these, 700,000 were households which already had a computer and 400,000 did not have a computer. If this intention is realised, there will be about 3.4 million households with computers by February 1999.

The number of households intending to purchase or upgrade their computer was about 10% less than the figure recorded in the February 1996 survey.

Households made up of married couples with children accounted for half of the expected increase in computer penetration.

## 7

### HOUSEHOLDS INTENDING TO PURCHASE/UPGRADE A COMPUTER IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS(a)

<i>Family type</i>	<i>February 1994</i>	<i>February 1996</i>	<i>February 1998</i>		<i>Change from February 1996</i>	
			<i>'000</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>'000</i>	<i>%</i>
Married couple no children	142	189	165	9.9	-12.7	
Married couple with children	548	636	539	22.5	-15.3	
Single parent with children	98	107	75	14.1	-29.9	
Single person	127	126	159	10.9	26.2	
Other	129	170	162	22.4	-4.7	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 043</b>	<b>1 229</b>	<b>1 100</b>	<b>16.2</b>	<b>-10.5</b>	

(a) Relates to all households

Use of peripheral equipment There was a large growth in the uptake of each of the peripheral technologies measured in the survey by households frequently using a computer. Character or image readers had the highest percentage increase with 190%, followed by modems with 144% and CD-ROM equipment with 120%.

## 8

### USE OF PERIPHERAL IT EQUIPMENT BY HOUSEHOLDS WHICH FREQUENTLY USED A COMPUTER

<i>Peripheral equipment</i>	<i>February 1994</i>	<i>February 1996</i>	<i>February 1998</i>		<i>Change from February 1996</i>	
			<i>'000</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>'000</i>	<i>%</i>
Printers	1 164	1 615	2 147	89.4	32.9	
Character or image reader	92	134	388	16.2	189.6	
CD-ROM	183	810	1 782	74.2	120.0	
Modems	248	459	1 119	46.6	143.8	
Facsimile machine						
Dedicated Line	n.a.	146	247	10.3	69.2	
Phone or computer	n.a.	344	592	24.7	72.1	
Facsimile machine of any type	64	455	789	32.9	73.4	
Digitally versatile discs	n.a.	n.a.	171	7.1	n.a.	



Selected technologies	February 1998			Change from February 1996	
	February 1996				
	'000	'000	%		%
CAPITAL CITIES					
Computer	1 263	1 483	34.8		17.4
Facsimile on a dedicated line	126	236	5.5		87.3
Facsimile on other connection	309	488	11.4		57.9
Any type of facsimile machine	413	683	16.0		65.4
Mobile phone					
Digital	n.a.	1 497	35.1		n.a.
Analogue	n.a.	680	15.9		n.a.
Mobile phone unable to identify type	n.a.	*15	*0.4		n.a.
Any type of mobile phone	1 146	1 971	46.2		72.0
Car phone	181	252	5.9		39.2
Cordless phone	624	1 307	30.7		109.5
Answering machine	1 230	1 626	38.1		32.2
Pager	128	147	3.4		14.8
Voice mail	166	419	9.8		152.4
Pay TV(a)	169	488	11.4		188.8
Other	*20	n.a.	n.a.		n.a.
Fixed telephone connected	4 082	3 941	92.5		-3.5
REST OF AUSTRALIA					
Computer	545	659	26.1		20.9
Facsimile on a dedicated line	74	86	3.4		16.2
Facsimile on other connection	144	231	9.2		60.4
Any type of facsimile machine	201	306	12.1		52.2
Mobile phone					
Digital	n.a.	551	21.8		n.a.
Analogue	n.a.	400	15.8		n.a.
Mobile phone unable to identify type	n.a.	*21	*0.8		n.a.
Any type of mobile phone	458	903	35.7		97.2
Car phone	105	128	5.1		21.9
Cordless phone	266	637	25.2		139.5
Answering machine	459	655	25.9		42.7
Pager	*34	51	2.0		50.0
Voice mail	*30	118	4.7		293.3
Pay TV(a)	*32	216	8.5		575.0
Other	*15	n.a.	n.a.		n.a.
Fixed telephone connected	2 352	2 366	93.7		0.6
AUSTRALIA					
Computer	1 808	2 142	31.6		18.5
Facsimile on a dedicated line	200	321	4.7		60.5
Facsimile on other connection	453	719	10.6		58.7
Any type of facsimile machine	613	989	14.6		61.3
Mobile phone					
Digital	n.a.	2 047	30.2		n.a.
Analogue	n.a.	1 080	15.9		n.a.
Mobile phone unable to identify type	n.a.	37	0.5		n.a.
Any type of mobile phone	1 604	2 874	42.3		79.2
Car phone	286	380	5.6		32.9
Cordless phone	890	1 945	28.6		118.5
Answering machine	1 689	2 281	33.6		35.1
Pager	162	198	2.9		22.2
Voice mail	197	537	7.9		172.6
Pay TV(a)	201	703	10.4		249.8
Other	35	n.a.	n.a.		n.a.
Fixed telephone connected	6 434	6 307	92.9		-2.0

(a) Pay TV services are not widely available in all areas of Australia.

Barriers to frequently using a computer Nearly 35% of households reported that they did not use their computer more frequently because of its age, capacity or condition.

This proportion was similar for capital cities and country areas.

Use of a computer elsewhere was also a significant reason for households in capital cities (26%) but was not so significant for country areas.

## 10

### REASONS WHY HOUSEHOLD COMPUTER IS NOT USED MORE FREQUENTLY(a)

<i>Regions</i>	<i>The age capacity or condition of the computer</i>	<i>Use computer elsewhere</i>	<i>Change in household interest</i>	<i>Change in household structure</i>	<i>Change in work or study commitments</i>	<i>Other</i>
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
Capital cities	77	61	38	*1	38	66
Rest of Australia	56	*17	*22	*17	*21	48
<b>Australia</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>*18</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>114</b>
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Capital cities	33.2	26.4	16.6	0.6	16.4	28.7
Rest of Australia	37.0	*11.3	*14.6	*11.2	*14.0	31.3
<b>Australia</b>	<b>34.7</b>	<b>20.4</b>	<b>15.8</b>	<b>*4.8</b>	<b>15.4</b>	<b>29.7</b>

(a) Percentages are of all households using a computer once every month or less.

Main reason for not having a computer Households without computers gave 'no use for a computer' as the main reason for not having a computer (37%) and 26% gave 'costs are too high.' The number of households giving cost as the main reason declined by 28% since February 1996.

## 11

### MAIN REASON FOR HOUSEHOLDS NOT HAVING A COMPUTER

<i>Main reason for not having a computer</i>	<i>February 1996</i>		<i>February 1998</i>	
	<i>'000</i>	<i>'000</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Change from February 1996</i>
Costs are too high	1 434	1 030	26.4	-28.2
Lack of interest in computers	568	721	18.4	26.9
No one in household knows how to use a computer	227	262	6.7	15.4
No use for a computer	1 895	1 448	37.1	-23.6
Have access to a computer elsewhere	305	233	6.0	-23.6
Other	206	193	4.9	-6.3
Don't know	*19	*21	*0.5	10.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>4 654</b>	<b>3 908</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>-16.0</b>

Internet access More than 850,000 households had access to the Internet from home at February 1998. This was 13% of all households. Households of the type 'married couple with children' account for 54% of Internet households.

Region Nearly 16% of households in capital cities had access to the Internet compared with 7% for households in other areas.

Type of Internet service Nearly 100% of households with Internet access reported having email access. Just over 41% of households with access to the Internet reported that they had other Internet services.

## 12 HOUSEHOLDS ACCESSING THE INTERNET FROM HOME

	All households		Type of home Internet access(a)						
			Email			Other Internet services			
	'000	%	Yes %	No %	Don't know %	Yes %	No %	Don't know %	
<b>Family type</b>									
Married couple no children	133	8.0	100.0	—	—	46.0	37.6	16.4	
Married couple with children	460	19.2	94.0	4.0	1.9	38.2	49.5	12.3	
Single parent with children	39	7.4	100.0	—	—	39.2	48.1	12.7	
Single person	65	4.4	95.1	4.9	—	55.9	44.1	—	
Other	157	21.7	93.9	5.3	0.9	40.0	37.3	22.7	
<b>Household income</b>									
\$0-\$14 000	56	4.6	100.0	—	—	66.4	33.6	—	
\$14 001-\$27 000	60	5.3	100.0	—	—	69.1	22.2	8.7	
\$27 001-\$44 000	103	8.8	93.1	6.9	—	39.9	42.8	17.3	
\$44 001-\$66 000	153	14.2	92.0	5.4	2.5	36.0	51.2	12.8	
\$66 001+	301	27.0	99.8	0.2	—	41.2	49.6	9.2	
Not stated	181	17.2	88.7	7.7	3.6	29.0	44.1	26.9	
<b>Region</b>									
Capital cities	672	15.8	96.2	2.3	1.5	37.9	47.2	14.9	
Rest of Australia	182	7.2	91.9	8.2	—	53.1	36.4	10.5	
<b>Australia</b>	<b>854</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>95.3</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>41.1</b>	<b>44.9</b>	<b>14.0</b>	

(a) Percentages are of all households with access to the Internet.

Expenditure on Internet Around 75% of households with Internet access, where the cost of using the Internet was incurred by the household or home based business, spent \$500 or less on Internet services during the 12 months leading up to the survey. A further 11% incurred Internet costs in excess of \$500.

### 13 EXPENDITURE ON INTERNET SERVICES(a)

<i>Expenditure range</i>	<i>Number of households</i>		<i>Proportion of households with Internet access</i>
	<i>'000</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
Nil	47		6.7
\$1-\$100	163		23.3
\$101-\$250	229		32.6
\$251-\$500	133		19.0
\$501-\$1 000	51		7.2
Over \$1 000	*24		*3.5
Don't know	55		7.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>702</b>		<b>100.0</b>

(a) Percentages are of all households with Internet access where the household or the home based business incurs Internet costs.

Intentions to acquire Internet access Nearly 24% of households with a computer and no Internet access reported intending to acquire home Internet access by February 1999.

If this expectation is realised, the number of households with Internet access will exceed 1.3 million by February 1999.

### 14 INTENTIONS OF HOUSEHOLDS TO ACQUIRE INTERNET ACCESS IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS(a)

	<i>Yes</i>		<i>No</i>		<i>Don't know</i>	
	<i>'000</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>'000</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>'000</i>	<i>%</i>
FAMILY TYPE						
Married couple no children	70	20.1	231	66.5	47	13.4
Married couple with children	277	24.6	699	62.1	151	13.4
Single parent with children	*17	*11.7	116	77.7	*16	*10.7
Single person	52	27.1	123	63.4	*18	*9.5
Other	58	28.5	120	59.5	*24	*12.0
HOUSEHOLD INCOME						
\$0-\$14 000	*15	*13.2	79	69.5	*20	*17.3
\$14 001-\$27 000	45	19.0	157	65.4	37	15.6
\$27 001-\$44 000	77	18.1	314	74.4	*32	*7.5
\$44 001-\$66 000	112	23.9	289	61.4	70	14.8
\$66 001+	147	31.8	267	57.7	48	10.5
Not stated	77	25.0	183	59.2	49	15.8
REGION						
Capital cities	317	24.5	814	62.9	162	12.5
Rest of Australia	157	21.6	475	65.5	94	12.9
<b>Australia</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>23.5</b>	<b>1 289</b>	<b>63.9</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>12.7</b>

(a) Percentages are of all households with computers and no Internet access.

Barriers to Internet access Of the more than 2 million households with a computer but no Internet access from home:

- 30% reported cost as the main reason for not having Internet access;
- 29% reported lack of interest in the Internet;
- 10% reported poor computer capacity; and
- 7% gave the reason have 'adequate access outside home.'

## 15

### MAIN REASON WHY HOUSEHOLDS WITH COMPUTERS DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO THE INTERNET

	<i>Costs are too high</i>	<i>Lack of interest in Internet</i>	<i>Poor computer capacity</i>	<i>Adequate access outside the home</i>	<i>Other(a)</i>	<i>Don't know</i>	<i>Total</i>
FAMILY TYPE							
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
Married couple no children	81	120	43	*31	66	*6	348
Married couple with children	335	340	106	65	258	*23	1 127
Single parent with children	74	35	*13	*5	*22	—	149
Single person	57	38	*18	*27	49	*4	193
Other	56	50	*15	*11	61	*9	202
	%	%	%	%	%	—	%
Married couple no children	23.4	34.4	12.5	*8.9	19.0	*1.8	100.0
Married couple with children	29.8	30.1	9.4	5.7	22.9	*2.1	100.0
Single parent with children	49.6	23.4	*8.9	*3.4	*14.8	—	100.0
Single person	29.7	19.6	*9.4	*14.2	25.2	*2.0	100.0
Other	27.6	24.6	*7.5	*5.7	30.0	*4.6	100.0
HOUSEHOLD INCOME							
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
\$0-\$14 000	65	*20	*16	*2	*9	*2	114
\$14 001-\$27 000	98	68	*24	*2	41	*8	239
\$27 001-\$44 000	155	106	40	*29	82	*11	422
\$44 001-\$66 000	115	149	66	*30	106	*5	471
\$66 001+	99	143	37	55	124	*4	462
Not stated	72	96	*13	*22	94	*13	310
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
\$0-\$14 000	57.3	*17.6	*14.0	*1.4	*8.3	*1.4	100.0
\$14 001-\$27 000	41.0	28.3	*9.9	*0.7	16.9	*3.2	100.0
\$27 001-\$44 000	36.6	25.0	9.5	*6.9	19.3	*2.6	100.0
\$44 001-\$66 000	24.4	31.7	14.0	*6.3	22.6	*1.1	100.0
\$66 001+	21.4	31.0	8.0	11.9	26.8	*0.9	100.0
Not stated	23.2	31.0	*4.4	*7.2	30.3	*4.1	100.0
REGION							
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
Capital cities	383	376	109	102	286	36	1 293
Rest of Australia	221	205	87	37	169	*6	726
<b>Australia</b>	<b>604</b>	<b>582</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>455</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>2 019</b>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Capital cities	29.6	29.1	8.4	7.9	22.1	2.8	100.0
Rest of Australia	30.4	28.3	12.0	5.2	23.3	*0.8	100.0
<b>Australia</b>	<b>29.9</b>	<b>28.8</b>	<b>9.7</b>	<b>6.9</b>	<b>22.5</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>100.0</b>

(a) Includes privacy concerns, lack of confidence/skill with computer, poor opinion of the Internet, lack of access to ISP and inadequate telecommunications infrastructure.

Place of computer access Nearly 7.5 million persons aged 18 years and over accessed a computer in the 12 months to February 1998. This was 56% of all persons aged 18 years and over. Sites of access included:

- home—4.3 million;
- work—4.3 million;
- neighbour or friend's house—1.7 million;
- public library—1.2; and
- tertiary institution—1.2 million.

By age 18–24 year olds had the highest proportion of computer users with 79%; however, the largest number of users was in the 25–39 years category.

## 16

### PERSONS 18 YEARS AND OVER ACCESSING A COMPUTER IN THE 12 MONTHS TO FEBRUARY 1998

	Home	Work	School	TAFE/ tertiary institution	Public library	Shops/ stores/ telecafes	Community or voluntary organisation	Neighbour or friend's house	Other	Any site
<b>Males</b>										
Number ('000)	2 187	2 176	136	628	516	246	59	982	92	3 713
Proportion (%)	33.1	33.0	2.1	9.5	7.8	3.7	0.9	14.9	1.4	56.2
<b>Females</b>										
Number ('000)	2 083	2 119	278	602	639	191	102	752	97	3 760
Proportion (%)	30.6	31.1	1.1	8.8	9.4	2.8	1.5	11.0	1.4	55.2
<b>Persons</b>										
Number ('000)										
18–24 years	647	64	243	586	279	110	*28	476	*31	1 441
25–39 years	1 722	1 858	99	435	518	205	71	869	76	2 989
40–54 years	1 517	1 556	51	178	308	116	*25	310	53	2 366
55 years +	385	237	*20	*30	50	*6	37	79	*30	677
<b>Total</b>	<b>4 269</b>	<b>4 295</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>1 230</b>	<b>1 156</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>1 733</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>7 472</b>
Proportion (%)										
18–24 years	35.6	35.4	13.4	32.3	15.4	6.1	*1.6	26.2	*1.7	79.3
25–39 years	40.4	43.6	2.3	10.2	12.2	4.8	1.7	20.4	1.8	70.1
40–54 years	40.5	41.5	1.4	4.8	8.2	3.1	*0.7	8.3	1.4	63.1
55 years +	10.7	6.6	*0.6	*0.8	1.4	*0.2	1.0	2.2	*0.8	18.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>31.8</b>	<b>32.0</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>12.9</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>55.7</b>

Frequency of computer use Of the 4.3 million persons aged 18 years and over using a computer at home:

- 31% used the home computer daily;
- 33% used the home computer 2 to 6 times a week;
- 14% once a week; and
- 22% every two weeks or less.

Of the more than 6 million persons aged 18 years and over using a computer outside the home:

- 43% used a computer daily;
- 19% used a computer 2 to 6 times a week;
- 10% once a week; and
- 25% once every two weeks or less.

## 17

### FREQUENCY OF COMPUTER USE FOR PERSONS AGED 18 YEARS AND OVER

	Daily	2-6 times a week	Once a week	Once every two weeks	Once every month	Once every 3 months or less	Don't know	Total
PERSONS ACCESSING A COMPUTER FROM HOME								
Males								
Number ('000)	882	710	242	128	141	82	—	2 187
Proportion (%)	40.4	32.5	11.1	5.9	6.5	3.8	—	100.0
Females								
Number ('000)	454	701	355	125	297	150	—	2 083
Proportion (%)	21.8	33.6	17.1	6.0	14.3	7.2	—	100.0
Persons								
Number ('000)	1 336	1 411	597	253	438	233	—	4 269
Proportion (%)	31.3	33.1	14.0	5.9	10.3	5.5	—	100.0
PERSONS ACCESSING A COMPUTER OUTSIDE THE HOME								
Males								
Number ('000)	1 436	499	295	115	180	471	95	3 092
Proportion (%)	46.5	16.2	9.5	3.7	5.8	15.2	3.1	100.0
Females								
Number ('000)	1 209	659	301	120	173	472	91	3 025
Proportion (%)	40.0	21.8	10.0	4.0	5.7	15.6	3.0	100.0
Persons								
Number ('000)	2 646	1 158	596	235	353	944	186	6 117
Proportion (%)	43.3	18.9	9.8	3.8	5.8	15.4	3.0	100.0

Computer users The number of persons aged five years and over frequently using a computer from home increased by 31% since February 1996. Nearly 2.4 million females frequently used a computer at home at February 1998 compared with 2.7 million males. The number of females frequently using a computer at home increased by 41% compared with 24% for males.

# 18

## PERSONS FREQUENTLY USING A COMPUTER AT HOME(a)

	February 1996		February 1998		Change from February 1996	
	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
Males	2 207		2 728	32.7	521	23.6
Females	1 697		2 385	28.2	688	40.5
Persons						
5-17 years	1 386		1 724	50.9	338	24.4
18-24 years	446		639	35.1	193	43.3
25-39 years	941		1 310	30.7	369	39.2
40-54 years	913		1 145	30.5	232	25.4
55+ years	217		296	8.3	79	36.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 904</b>		<b>5 113</b>	<b>30.4</b>	<b>1 209</b>	<b>31.0</b>

(a) Percentages are of all persons aged five years and over.



Computer activities The most popular home computer activities for persons aged five years and over were:

- games—59%;
- learning/study activities—54%;
- work activities—38%;
- keeping personal or family records/correspondence—30%; and
- Internet based activities—22%.

Internet based activities had the highest level of increase (258% since February 1996).

## 19

### HOME COMPUTER ACTIVITIES OF PERSONS AGED 5 YEARS AND OVER(a)

	February 1996		February 1998	
	'000	'000	%	Change from February 1996 %
MALES				
Playing computer games	1 425	1 802	66.1	26.5
Learning/study activities	1 191	1 402	51.4	17.7
Work related activities	886	1 108	40.6	25.1
Keeping personal or family records/ correspondence	518	792	29.0	52.9
Internet based activities	207	737	27.0	256.0
Accessing other on-line services/databases/ bulletin boards (other than via Internet)	104	242	8.9	132.7
Other	124	82	3.0	-33.9
FEMALES				
Playing computer games	920	1 216	51.0	32.2
Learning/study activities	1 007	1 359	57.0	35.0
Work related activities	527	825	34.6	56.5
Keeping personal or family records/ correspondence	381	760	31.9	99.5
Internet based activities	106	382	16.0	260.4
Accessing other on-line services/databases/ bulletin boards (other than via Internet)	12	65	2.7	441.7
Other	138	76	3.2	-44.9
PERSONS				
Playing computer games	2 346	3 018	59.0	28.6
Learning/study activities	2 198	2 761	54.0	25.6
Work related activities	1 413	1 932	37.8	36.7
Keeping personal or family records/ correspondence	900	1 551	30.3	72.3
Internet based activities	313	1 119	21.9	257.5
Accessing other on-line services/databases/ bulletin boards (other than via Internet)	116	307	6.0	164.7
Other	263	157	3.1	-40.3

(a) Percentages are of all persons aged five years and over frequently using a computer at home

Source of computer training The most frequently reported source of computer training for computer users aged five years and over were:

- school—45%; and
- an employer—28%.

The category 'Other' included tutorials, friends, manuals and books.

Apart from the 'Other' category 'University' as a source of computer training had the greatest percentage increase over February 1996, 145%.

## 20

### SOURCE OF COMPUTER TRAINING FOR PERSONS AGED 5 YEARS AND OVER(a)

	February 1996		February 1998		Change since February 1996	
	'000	%	'000	%	%	%
MALES						
The equipment supplier	191		257	11.6		35
An employer	556		663	30.0		19
A commercial organisation	170		195	8.8		15
Primary or secondary school	777		934	42.3		20
TAFE	258		292	13.2		13
University	225		320	14.5		42
Adult community education course	94		77	3.5		-18
Other	631		1 192	53.9		89
FEMALES						
The equipment supplier	80		160	8.2		100
An employer	364		512	26.3		41
A commercial organisation	117		162	8.3		38
Primary or secondary school	650		946	48.5		46
TAFE	207		329	16.9		59
University	191		230	11.8		20
Adult community education course	85		135	6.9		59
Other	431		929	47.6		116
PERSONS						
The equipment supplier	271		417	10.0		54
An employer	920		1 175	28.2		28
A commercial organisation	287		357	8.6		24
Primary or secondary school	1 427		1 880	45.2		32
TAFE	465		621	14.9		34
University	225		551	13.2		145
Adult community education course	191		212	5.1		11
Other	416		2 121	51.0		410

(a) Percentages are of all persons aged five years and over frequently using a computer at home who undertook some form of computer training.

Computer competency Of the 5.7 million persons frequently using a computer from any site, 34% described their computer skills as competent, 26% reported adequate and 25% reported basic. As the years of computer use increased, computer users were more likely to report that their computer skills were adequate or competent.

## 21

### COMPUTER COMPETENCY OF PERSONS FREQUENTLY USING A COMPUTER(a)

Years of computer use	Basic		Adequate		Competent		Don't know		Total	
	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
<b>Males</b>										
Less than 1 year	70	90.9	*3	*3.7	*4	*5.4	—	—	78	100.0
1 year to less than 2 years	114	61.6	68	36.6	*3	*1.8	—	—	185	100.0
2 years to less than 5 years	333	51.8	188	29.2	123	19.1	—	—	643	100.0
5 years or more	280	17.9	403	25.8	878	56.2	—	—	1 560	100.0
Don't know	—	—	*7	*1.8	—	—	402	98.2	409	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>797</b>	<b>27.7</b>	<b>668</b>	<b>23.2</b>	<b>1 008</b>	<b>35.1</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>14.0</b>	<b>2 875</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Females</b>										
Less than 1 year	116	64.5	*26	*14.5	35	19.7	*2	*1.3	180	100.0
1 year to less than 2 years	102	41.3	83	33.5	62	25.3	—	—	247	100.0
2 years to less than 5 years	193	31.7	289	47.4	120	19.7	*7	*1.2	609	100.0
5 years or more	218	15.8	443	32.1	721	52.2	—	—	1 382	100.0
Don't know	—	—	—	—	—	—	442	100.0	442	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>629</b>	<b>22.0</b>	<b>841</b>	<b>29.4</b>	<b>938</b>	<b>32.8</b>	<b>451</b>	<b>15.8</b>	<b>2 860</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Persons</b>										
Less than 1 year	186	72.4	*29	*11.3	40	15.4	*2	*0.9	257	100.0
1 year to less than 2 years	216	50.0	150	34.8	66	15.2	—	—	432	100.0
2 years to less than 5 years	526	42.0	477	38.1	243	19.4	*7	*0.6	1 253	100.0
5 years or more	498	16.9	846	28.8	1 598	54.3	—	—	2 942	100.0
Don't know	—	—	*7	*0.9	—	—	844	99.2	851	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 426</b>	<b>24.9</b>	<b>1 509</b>	<b>26.3</b>	<b>1 946</b>	<b>33.9</b>	<b>853</b>	<b>14.9</b>	<b>5 735</b>	<b>100.0</b>

(a) Applies only to persons aged 18 years and over who used a computer frequently from any site.

Electronic transactions In the three months to February 1998:

- 8.9 million Australian 18 years and over transferred or withdrew funds via an ATM;
- 7.8 million withdrew funds or paid bills via EFTPOS;
- 3.9 million transferred funds or paid bills via the telephone; and
- only 69,000 and 44,000 paid bills or transferred funds via a kiosk or the Internet respectively.

As age increased people were less likely to undertake electronic transactions.

## 22

### ELECTRONIC TRANSACTIONS UNDERTAKEN BY PERSONS AGED 18 YEARS AND OVER(a)(b)

	<i>Paid bills or transferred funds via Internet</i>	<i>Paid bills or transferred funds via information kiosk</i>	<i>Paid bills or transferred funds via phone</i>	<i>Paid bills or withdrew funds via EFTPOS</i>	<i>Transferred or withdrew funds via ATM</i>
SEX					
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
Males	*32	*28	1 958	3 529	4 354
Females	*12	*41	1 971	4 226	4 504
	%	%	%	%	%
Males	*0.5	*0.4	29.7	53.5	65.9
Females	*0.2	*0.6	29.0	62.1	66.1
AGE					
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
18-24 years	—	*12	384	1 408	1 592
25-39 years	*12	*27	1 704	3 394	3 624
40-54 years	*32	*19	1 312	2 162	2 499
55+ years	—	*11	529	792	1 142
	%	%	%	%	%
18-24 years	—	*0.7	21.1	77.5	87.6
25-39 years	*0.3	*0.6	40.0	79.6	85.0
40-54 years	*0.9	*0.5	35.0	57.7	66.7
55+ years	—	*0.3	14.8	22.1	31.9
REGION					
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
Capital cities	*24	*36	2 787	5 111	5 849
Rest of Australia	*20	*33	1 143	2 644	3 009
<b>Australia</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>3 929</b>	<b>7 755</b>	<b>8 858</b>
	%	%	%	%	%
Capital cities	*0.3	*0.4	32.3	59.2	67.7
Rest of Australia	*0.4	*0.7	23.9	55.4	63.0
<b>Australia</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>29.3</b>	<b>57.8</b>	<b>66.0</b>

(a) Period covers the 3 months to February 1998.

(b) Percentages are of all persons 18 years and over.

On-line services More than 24% of Australians aged 18 years and over showed an interest in accessing on-line shopping at February 1998.

Approximately 34% also expressed an interest in on-line banking. Nearly 46% expressed interest in educational services and 40% in accessing government information/forms lodgement services.

## 23

### INTEREST IN ACCESSING ON-LINE SERVICES FROM HOME BY PERSONS AGED 18 YEARS AND OVER

	<i>Shopping</i>	<i>Banking</i>	<i>Gambling</i>	<i>To access educational services</i>	<i>To access government information/forms lodgement</i>
SEX					
Number ('000)					
Males	1 858	2 407	332	3 076	2 956
Females	1 387	2 147	126	3 085	2 463
Proportion (%)					
Males	28.1	36.5	5.0	46.6	44.8
Females	20.4	31.5	1.9	45.3	36.2
AGE					
Number ('000)					
18-24 years	595	911	71	1 139	940
25-39 years	1 478	2 004	166	2 773	2 422
40-54 years	995	1 312	158	1 816	1 657
55+ years	176	327	62	434	401
Proportion (%)					
18-24 years	32.8	50.1	3.9	62.7	51.7
25-39 years	34.7	47.0	3.9	65.0	56.8
40-54 years	26.6	35.0	4.2	48.5	44.2
55+ years	4.9	9.1	1.7	12.1	11.2
REGION					
Number ('000)					
Capital cities	2 265	3 180	357	4 049	3 724
Rest of Australia	980	1 374	101	2 113	1 696
<b>Australia</b>	<b>3 244</b>	<b>4 554</b>	<b>458</b>	<b>6 161</b>	<b>5 419</b>
Proportion (%)					
Capital cities	26.2	36.8	4.1	46.9	43.1
Rest of Australia	20.5	28.8	2.1	44.2	35.5
<b>Australia</b>	<b>24.2</b>	<b>34.0</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>45.9</b>	<b>40.4</b>

On-line services *continued* The number of people expressing an interest in on-line shopping and banking increased steadily over the two years since February 1996. On the other hand the number of people expressing an interest in on-line gambling declined markedly by 36%.

## 24

### CHANGE IN INTEREST IN ON-LINE SERVICES BY PERSONS AGED 18 YEARS AND OVER

	February 1998			Change from February 1996
	February 1996			
	'000	'000	%	%
Shopping				
Males	1 429	1 858	28.1	30.0
Females	1 443	1 387	20.4	-3.9
<b>Persons</b>	<b>2 872</b>	<b>3 245</b>	<b>24.2</b>	<b>13.0</b>
Banking				
Males	1 971	2 407	36.5	22.1
Females	1 957	2 147	31.5	9.7
<b>Persons</b>	<b>3 928</b>	<b>4 554</b>	<b>34.0</b>	<b>16.0</b>
Gambling				
Males	504	332	5.0	-34.1
Females	195	126	1.9	-35.4
<b>Persons</b>	<b>699</b>	<b>458</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>-35.5</b>

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### POPULATION SURVEY MONITOR

1 During 1998, the Population Survey Monitor (PSM) will carry questions on the household use of Information Technology in its February, May, August and November surveys. Statistics presented in this publication are estimates from the February 1998 survey.

#### Scope and coverage

2 The survey covers rural and urban areas across all States and Territories of Australia, except sparsely settled areas. All person living in non-private dwellings are excluded. All usual residents in private households are included in the PSM.

### DATA COLLECTED

3 Data was collected on a number of topics relating to the use and ownership of information technology in the household:

- use and ownership of computers and use of peripheral information technologies;
- frequency of computer use;
- ownership of selected communication technologies, i.e. facsimile machines, mobile phones, car phones, cordless phones, answering machines, pagers, voice mail and pay TV;
- access to the Internet;
- expenditure on selected information technologies including Internet costs;
- intentions to acquire computers or Internet access;
- barriers to the use of computers and the Internet;
- main use of home computer equipment;
- time spent using computer equipment;
- source of computer training;
- computer competency;
- electronic transactions undertaken; and
- willingness to access on-line services.

Household data 4 In addition to gathering data on the use of IT, the survey collected the characteristics of the household. These characteristics are:

- number of persons aged 18 years and over in household;
- household income;
- household family classification;
- dwelling structure;
- nature of occupancy;
- region; and
- State.

5 Statistics relating to total households are based on 3,266 observations. As not all households have computers, statistics relating to households with computers are based on a subset of these households.

6 Data on personal computer usage was collected for up to five people aged five years and over in each household with a computer. This led to 2,800 observations of frequent household computer users and 616 home Internet users aged five years and over. Age and sex are the only demographic variables sought in respect of personal usage characteristics for the set of observations relating to frequent home computer users aged five years and over.

Persons data 7 Estimates for adult computer users (aged 18 years and over) were produced for a number of items (frequency of computer use, computer competency, use of computers outside the home and attitudes to on-line services). It is possible to classify these estimates of adult persons by the following characteristics:

- age;
- sex;
- marital status;
- birthplace;
- highest educational qualification;
- income;
- labour force status;
- occupation; and
- major activity of those people not in the labour force.

These estimates are based on the responses given by a randomly selected adult from each household in the survey. This led to 1032 observations of adult home computer users and 262 adult home Internet users.



HOUSEHOLD

8 A household is defined as a group of one or more persons in a private dwelling who consider themselves to be separate from other persons in the dwelling, and who make regular provision to take meals separately from other persons. Lodgers who receive accommodation and meals are not treated as separate households. A household may consist of any number of family and non-family members.

ACCURACY OF DATA

9 As the estimates in this publication are based on information obtained from a sample drawn from households in the surveyed population, the estimates are subject to sampling variability; that is, they may differ from the figures that would have been produced if all households in Australia had been included in the survey. One measure of the likely differences is given by the standard error, which indicates the extent to which an estimate might have varied by chance because only a sample of households was included. There are about two chances in three that a sample estimate will differ by less than one standard error from the figure that would have been obtained if all households had been included in the survey, and about nineteen chances in twenty that the difference will be less than two standard errors.

10 The standard errors for some statistics are relatively high and users are advised to exercise caution in interpreting these statistics. Estimates with standard errors of 25% or more had been footnoted. The following table of standard errors is for data on the number of households using selected information technology.

<i>Size of estimate</i>	<i>Standard error</i>
'000	'000
100	20
200	26
500	39
800	46
1 000	51
2 000	65

Example using the standard error table

11 Consider an estimate from the data of 1,119,000 persons aged five years and over who frequently used a home computer and who accessed the Internet from home. An estimate of 1,119,000 has a standard error of 51,000. This means there are about two chances in three that the true value (i.e. the value that would have been obtained from a complete census) is within the range 1,170,000 to 1,068,000. There are about 19 chances in 20 that the true value is in the range 1,221,000 to 1,017,000.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

12 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) publications draw extensively on information provided freely by individuals, businesses, governments and other organisations. Their continued cooperation is very much appreciated: without it, the wide range of statistics published by the ABS would not be available. Information received by the ABS is treated in strict confidence as required by the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*.

RELATED PUBLICATIONS

**13** Other ABS publications on the production and use of information technology and telecommunication goods and services in Australia are:

*Business Use of Information Technology, 1993–94* (Cat. no. 8129.0)

*Government Use of Information Technology, 1993–94* (Cat. no. 8119.0)

*Household Use of Information Technology, February 1998*  
(Cat. no. 8128.0)

*Household Use of Information Technology, Australia 1996*  
(Cat. no. 8146.0)

*Information Technology in Australia, 1995–96* (Cat. no. 8126.0)

*Information Technology, Australia, Preliminary, 1995–96*  
(Cat. no. 8143.0)

*Telecommunications Services, Australia 1996–97* (Cat. no. 8145.0)

*Use of the Internet by Householders, Australia, February 1998*  
(Cat. no. 8147.0)

AVAILABILITY OF  
UNPUBLISHED STATISTICS

**14** As well as statistics included in this publication, the ABS has a range of data on the use of selected information technologies in households. Inquiries about these statistics should be made by telephoning Joseph Di Gregorio on Canberra 02 6252 5609 or David McGeachie on Canberra 02 6252 5614.



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