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Global Internet Population Grows An Average of Four Percent Year-Over-Year

U.S. Records Largest Increase in Number of People Online

580 Million People Now Have Internet Access, According to Nielsen//NetRatings' Global Internet Trends Survey

NEW YORK – February 20, 2003 – Nielsen//NetRatings, the global standard for Internet audience measurement and analysis, shows that 11 major Internet markets experienced a four percent average increase in online population growth between Q4 2001 and Q4 2002. Comprising the largest Web population among all countries measured, the U.S. posted the greatest increase in the number of adults online in the same period, according to the Nielsen//NetRatings Fourth Quarter 2002 Global Internet Trends Report.

“Nearly 10 million people over the age of 16 gained Internet access in the U.S. between the end of 2001 and the end of 2002, significantly more than in the other 10 markets studied,” said Richard Goosey, international chief of measurement science, Nielsen//NetRatings (see Table 1). “As a percentage of population, this number only represents a three percent increase for the U.S., whereas Spain experienced an increase of 22 percent of its population online for the same year.

Table 1. Number and Percent of People with Current Internet Access, Any Location

Number of People 16+ with current Internet Access, Any Location* (in millions)				% People 16+ with current Internet Access, Any Location**			
Country	Q4 2001	Q4 2002	Change	Country	Q4 2001	Q4 2002	Change
U.S.	158.9	168.6	9.7	Spain	32	54	22
Spain	10.1	17.0	6.9	UK	62	68	6
Germany	38.7	41.8	3.1	Italy	50	56	6
UK	28.0	30.4	2.4	Germany	59	63	4
Italy	23.0	25.3	2.3	U.S.	76	79	3
Brazil	17.6	19.7	2.1	Netherlands	70	73	3
France	21.9	23.0	1.1	France	52	54	2
Netherlands	8.7	9.2	0.5	Brazil	43	45	2
Sweden	6.0	6.1	0.1	Sweden	84	85	1
Hong Kong	4.1	4.0	(0.1)	Hong Kong	73	70	(3)
Australia	11.1	10.5	(0.6)	Australia	76	72	(4)

*Among population aged 2+ in all households

**Among population 16+ in households with fixed line telephone(s), in millions

Source: Nielsen//NetRatings Global Internet Trends Q4 2002

“Germany, the UK and Italy are now well established as having the largest Internet populations in Europe,” Goosey continued. “Of the countries covered in this report, Germany (35.6 million), the United Kingdom (29 million) and Italy (22.7 million) have the largest number of people outside the U.S. with Internet access via a home PC, together accounting for more than half (54 percent) of the total for all 10 countries (160.6 million) outside the U.S.

“Sweden, Hong Kong, the Netherlands and Australia appear to be the most mature Internet markets, clearly leading across key statistics such as: the percentage of people that own or lease a home PC (all 63 percent+), and high Internet connection rates (all 81 percent+) for those who have a PC in their home,” he said.

“The Q4 Global Internet Trends Report points to Spain as the next great Internet market,” Goosey said. “In addition to the largest increase in percent of population with Internet access, Spain also had the biggest percentage increase in most of the Internet activities undertaken among surfers in the past six months, with a six percent increase in sending and receiving email, a five percent increase in looking at audio-visual content and a nine percent increase in chat room participation.

Moreover, Spain now has the highest rate of instant message usage (49 percent) and chat room participation (44 percent) across all countries.”

The Nielsen//NetRatings report also found that Brazil displays enormous potential for future growth, as an additional 18 percent of the telephone household population there plans to acquire Internet access in the next 12 months.

Global Internet Access

Globally, the number of people with access to the Internet via a home PC increased from 563 million people in Quarter 3, 2002 to 580 million in Q4 2002 (see Table 2). The U.S. has largest Internet population, accounting for 29 percent of the global access universe, followed by Europe with 23 percent, Asia & the Pacific with 13 percent, and Latin America with 2 percent. Markets not under Nielsen//NetRatings measurement account for the remaining 33 percent.

Table 2. Total Number of People 2+ with Internet Access via Home PC

	Number of People with Internet Access (in Millions)	% of World's Internet Population
US	168.1	29
Europe	135.3	23
Asia & Pacific	75.5	13
Latin America	14.3	2
Rest of World	186.8	33
Total	580	100

Source: Nielsen//NetRatings Global Internet Trends Q4 2002

Europe covers: France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom

Asia & Pacific covers: Australia, Hong Kong, Japan

Latin America covers Brazil

Rest of World is based on countries not under Nielsen//NetRatings measurement at end of Q4 2002.

The findings are from the Nielsen//NetRatings Global Internet Trends service, a quarterly subscription service reporting information on worldwide Internet access and usage trends. The Q4 Global Internet Trends report is drawn from surveys conducted in October 2002 using consistent research methodology. The Q4 Global Internet Trends Report focuses on the Internet penetration and usage in Australia, Brazil, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the UK, with additional global universe data for the U.S., Japan and Switzerland.

About Nielsen//NetRatings

Nielsen//NetRatings is the global standard for Internet audience measurement and analysis and is the industry's premier source for online advertising intelligence with its NetView, AdRelevance, @Plan and WebRF services. Covering 70 percent of the world's Internet usage, the Nielsen//NetRatings services offer syndicated Internet and digital media ratings reports and custom-tailored data to help companies gain valuable insight into their business. For more information, please visit www.nielsen-netratings.com.

Editor's Note: Please source all data to Nielsen//NetRatings.

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