

# THE INTERNET & THE WEB: BUSINESS TOOL

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## The Internet

The Internet is a valuable tool, allowing Webfocused companies to profit in the future. Remember, the Web, with currently 150 million users, is still young. Eventually, it will have a billion users, 850 million of whom are not on-line yet. Broadband technology will revolutionize the Internet by providing far speedier connections. Cable and phone companies will spend tens of billions of dollars over

the next few years on new equipment to upgrade infrastructure and provide customers with cable or DSL modems.

On-line growth means the Internet scope constantly changes. Nearly 40% of home on-line users report they have been using the Web for only 6 months or less 60% stated they have been using it for the last year. International Data Corp. forecasts by 2002 60% of the home on-line users will be new users.

A report released by Killen & Associates reveals companies who adopt electronic billing systems can expect to save up to \$8 billion by 2001. The report says electronic billing will cut costs on postage and paper, processing, and customer service. The report predicts the amount of bills being presented electronically by U.S. businesses will reach 8% in 2000, and increase to 34% by 2005.

Changing on-line population is broadening beyond the young, wealthy, urban male. The percentage of women on-line is increasing from 43% in 1997, to 48% in 1998. On-line buyers are more engaged by the Internet as a whole, are more price sensitive, are heavier users of news and information, and are concerned about easier navigation on the Net.

## E-Commerce

Over 6 million U.S. households made their first purchase on the Internet last year reports Forrester Research. For the millions who decided to shop on-line for the holiday season the choice was get into the car to fight 5,000 people for the mall's 4,000 parking spaces or point their browser at a web store and send their credit card number over the Internet. While we're waiting for SET, shopping over the Internet with SSL is safe now.

A new series of research reports from International Data Corp, businesses who do not provide an e-commerce customer channel, risk losing market share to their competitors. Companies must serve their customers on-line or their competitors will. Merchants can no longer ignore the impact of the growing on-line population. As the percentage of PC households accessing the Internet increases, e-commerce also grows exponentially.

## Web Design

Retail Shopping Report reveals retail revenues from on-line shopping worldwide, totaling \$1.8 billion in 1997, will increase by 784% over the next 4 years; \$4.5 billion by year-end 1998; \$35.3 billion by 2002. eMarketer reports, "This year's on-line shopping sales will top \$4.5 billion, piling in comparison to the business-to-business side of e-commerce which will reach \$15.9 billion by year's end. It will also be dwarfed by consumer-oriented catalogs which sold over 551 trillion last year, 10 times the amount sold on-line to consumers."

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