



The Daily

Statistics Canada

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Study: Our lives in digital times

Digital technology did not create "the paperless society" that many had predicted, at least not yet, but it does have people communicating more than ever, according to a new assessment of the impact of information and communications technologies (ICTs).

The study, published today in the *Connectedness Series*, examines some of the expected outcomes expressed about the widespread use of ICTs in everyday life when these technologies were introduced, and shows that some of them have so far not materialized.

It finds that some of the key outcomes of ICTs are manifested in shifting behavioural patterns, including communication and spending. For example, patterns of communication are changing and people are talking on the phone and using email more than they ever have.

The arrival of the personal computer gave much talk to the "paperless office". However, between 1983 and 2003, consumption of paper for printing and writing alone more than doubled, according to the study, entitled "Our lives in digital times".

In addition, professional travel has most likely increased during a period when the Internet and videoconferencing technology were taking-off, while e-commerce sales do not justify fears about the demise of traditional retail.

Total private sector sales over the Internet more than quadrupled between 2001 and 2004, while still only accounting for about 1% of total sales. Meanwhile, the number of retailers, retail space and retail employment have all increased.

Similarly, volumes of postal mail have been rising, although the composition of mail has changed, and couriers and local messengers are proliferating. This is the case even as Internet usage and e-mail are high in Canada.

One extremely visible outcome of ICTs is that the information society is a "talkative society". People have never spoken on the telephone more, and particularly at a time when they also send and receive massive amounts of e-mail and other electronic communications.

As people communicate more and in different ways, they are choosing to expand their associations, moving from geographically-defined communities to communities of interest. They are also willing to pay for their choices.

The study shows that ICT spending is on the rise, with substitutions taking place in favour of newer ICTs, such as the Internet, and against older ones, such as wireline telecommunications.

Between 1997 and 2003, average household spending on computer equipment and supplies rose

from \$299 to \$326, which was even more significant given that computer prices were falling during this period.

In addition, the willingness of people to pay can also be seen by the fact that many low-income households choose to spend a relatively higher proportion of their income on ICTs. This is because a substantial amount of ICT-related expenses are fixed, such as the price of basic telephone and cable services or Internet connections.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers, including related surveys, 2722, 3508, 4225, 4432 and 4505.

The article "Our lives in digital times" is now available as part of the *Connectedness Series* (56F0004MIE2006014, free). From the *Publications* page, under *Free Internet publications*, choose *Communications*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Heidi Ertl (613-951-1891; heidi.ertl@statcan.ca) or Ben Veenhof (613-951-5067; ben.veenhof@statcan.ca), Science, Innovation and Electronic Information Division. ■

Steel primary forms, weekly data

Week ending November 4, 2006 (preliminary)

Steel primary forms production for the week ending November 4 totaled 287 577 metric tonnes, up 4.9% from 274 055 tonnes a week earlier and up 9.1% from 263 633 tonnes in the same week of 2005.

The year-to-date total as of November 4 was 13 334 115 tonnes, up 2.6% from 12 999 580 tonnes in the same period of 2005.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2131.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact the dissemination officer (toll-free 1-866-873-8789; 613-951-9497; manufact@statcan.ca), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

Population of businesses with employees

Third quarter 2006

There were 1,073,000 Canadian businesses with employees in the third quarter, up slightly from

the second quarter and 2.1% higher compared to 1,068,000 during the same quarter last year.

Alberta posted the largest increase (+1.1%) compared with the previous quarter, followed by British Columbia (+0.8%), Ontario (+0.6%) and Quebec (+0.4%), while the Atlantic provinces and the territories had fewer Canadian businesses with employees.

The Atlantic provinces, Nunavut and the Northwest Territories had fewer Canadian businesses with employees compared with the third quarter of 2005, while the remaining provinces and Yukon posted increases.

Available on CANSIM: table 178-0001.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 1105.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Muriel Ngombo (613-951-0015; fax: 613-951-6274; muriel.ngombo@statcan.ca), Business Register Division. ■

New products

Connectedness Series: "Our lives in digital times",
Vol. 2006, no. 14
Catalogue number 56F0004MIE2006014
(free).

Imports by Commodity, September 2006, Vol. 63,
no. 9
Catalogue number 65-007-XCB (\$40/\$387).

Imports by Commodity, September 2006, Vol. 63,
no. 9
Catalogue number 65-007-XPB (\$84/\$828).

All prices are in Canadian dollars and exclude sales tax. Additional shipping charges apply for delivery outside Canada.

Catalogue numbers with an -XWE, -XIB or an -XIE extension are Internet versions; those with -XMB or -XME are microfiche; -XPB or -XPE are paper versions; -XDB or -XDE are electronic versions on diskette; -XCB or -XCE are electronic versions on compact disc and -XBB or -XBE a database.

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Thursday, June 5, 1997
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MAJOR RELEASES

- **Urban transit, 1996** 2
Despite the emphasis on taking urban transit, Canadians are still to leap and leap. In 1996, total Canadian took an average of about 45 trips on some form of urban transit, the lowest level in the past 25 years.
- **Productivity, hourly compensation and unit labour cost, 1996** 4
Growth in productivity among Canadian businesses was relatively weak again in 1996, accompanied by sluggish gains in employment and slow economic growth during the year.

OTHER RELEASES

- **Imported Index, May 1997** 3
- **Short-term Expectations Survey** 8
- **Steel primary forms, week ending May 31, 1997** 12
- **Egg production, April 1997** 12

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Release dates: November 14 to 17, 2006

(Release dates are subject to change.)

Release date	Title	Reference period
15	Monthly Survey of Manufacturing	September 2006
15	New motor vehicle sales	September 2006
16	Canada's international transactions in securities	September 2006
16	Changes in Employment Survey	January 1995 to September 1998
17	Registered apprenticeship training	2004
