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TELECOMMUNICATIONS TODAY REPORT 6:  
INTERNET ACTIVITY AND CONTENT

# Australians changing the way they use the internet

## Telecommunications Today Report 6: Internet Activity and Content

Household take-up of faster internet services and time spent online are both increasing, showing that the internet is becoming an essential part of the day-to-day life of Australians.

*Telecommunications Today Report 6: Internet Activity and Content*, released by ACMA on 22 October, examines consumer adoption of the internet and its impact on the growth of the digital economy in Australia.

At least 73 per cent of Australian households were connected to the internet at the end of June 2008, an increase of 41 per cent since March 2003. A growth in this period of the number of broadband households and a decrease in dial-up households points to substitution from dial-up to broadband internet connections.

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Similarly, an increasing proportion of users reporting 'heavy' internet use (8+ times per week) corresponds to a reduction in medium and light users.

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most common uses of the internet by Australians in all age groups. Age is a determining factor in the activities consumers choose to perform online. Email is the most common application across all age groups. Streaming videos and banking online feature in the top five activities of all age groups, and participating in auctions features in the top 10 of each. Just over half (54 per cent) of those accessing the internet in the quarter ending March 2008 bought a product online.

'One of the main changes to consumer behaviour as a result of the internet is the willingness of

consumers to engage in commerce online,' said Chris Chapman, ACMA Chairman. 'Paying bills, airline ticket purchases and accommodation bookings have become some of the most popular activities on the internet.

'The internet has also become a significant

social medium with the majority of internet users nominating email and socialising as activities they perform online. Changes to social interaction have been identified with a large number of internet users participating and using social networking sites, instant messaging, blogs and VoIP as communication tools.'

The study also examined the influence of factors on internet use, such as sex, location (metropolitan/non-metropolitan area), type of internet connection, education and income range. While there is no single profile of a heavy internet user, households in metropolitan areas with a broadband connection, and users aged between 18 and 34 with higher levels of education and on higher incomes are more likely to be heavy internet users. Males are also more likely than females to be heavy internet users.

Since the development of the internet, traditional forms of entertainment and accessing information are being used less, while new activities, such as downloading videos, podcasts, music and television, and using search tools and general browsing, have become common in Australian households.