

**USE OF THE INTERNET
BY HOUSEHOLDERS**

AUSTRALIA

EMBARGO: 11:30AM (CANBERRA TIME) FRI 16 FEB 2001

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- For further information about these and related statistics, contact John Ovington on Canberra 02 6252 5189, or the National Information Service on 1300 135 070.

NOTES

ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION	This publication presents statistics about the extent of computer and Internet access in Australia. It also presents a profile of adult users at home, work and other locations.
ABOUT THE SURVEY	The survey was conducted during November 2000, collecting information from 3,200 adults randomly selected from private households. Households in remote and sparsely settled parts of Australia are excluded from the survey.
ACCURACY OF ESTIMATES OF MOVEMENT	Users are advised to take care when comparing the data shown in this publication with similar data in previous issues of <i>Use of the Internet by Householders, Australia</i> (Cat. no. 8147.0). Some of the data items have high standard errors, so observed differences may be the result of sampling error. Users comparing data in this publication with data from earlier releases should refer to paragraphs 10 and 11 of the Explanatory Notes.
PUBLICATION RELEASES	Data from the quarterly surveys have been released via the publication <i>Use of the Internet by Householders</i> (Cat. no. 8147.0). This publication is available for each quarter from May 1998 to November 2000. In addition, the publication <i>Household Use of Information Technology, Australia</i> (Cat. no. 8146.0) is available for 1998 and 1999, with data for 2000 due for release in May 2001. This annual publication presents results based upon data consolidated from the four quarterly surveys of each year. This consolidation allows detail for smaller target groups to be presented, such as estimates at State and Territory level.
END OF THE QUARTERLY DATA SERIES	The November quarter 2000 was the final quarterly Household Use of Information Technology survey to be conducted by the ABS. The Population Survey Monitor (PSM), through which the data was collected, has ceased. The ABS is currently developing an annual survey vehicle to replace the existing PSM series.
SYMBOLS AND OTHER USAGES	ABS Australian Bureau of Statistics ATM Automatic Teller Machine EFTPOS Electronic Funds Transfer at Point of Sale TAFE Tertiary and Further Education * estimates have a relative standard error between 25% and 50% ** estimates have a relative standard error of 50% or more — nil or rounded to zero n.a not available

Dennis Trewin
Australian Statistician

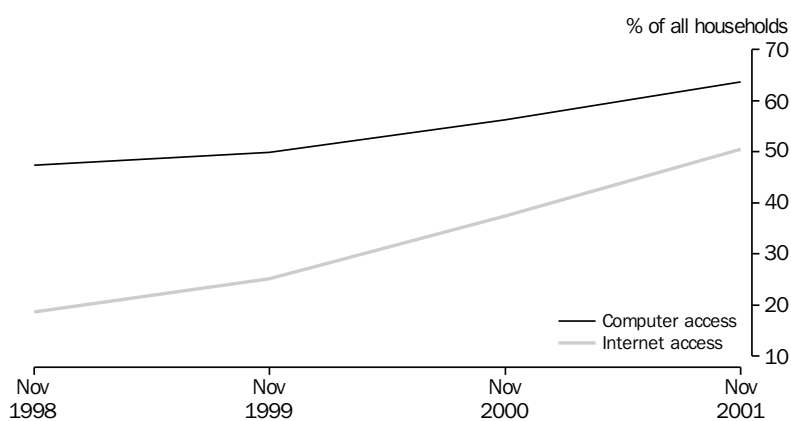
MAIN FEATURES

HOUSEHOLD ACCESS TO COMPUTERS AND THE INTERNET

By November 2000 well over half (56%) of the households in Australia, or 4.0 million households, had access to a computer at home. The number of households with access to the Internet at home rose to 2.7 million, or 37% of all Australian households.

The following graph indicates the increase in the proportion of households with access to a computer or the Internet at home. Included is an estimate for November 2001, based upon the reported intentions of those households without home access at November 2000. While the proportion of households with home access continues to rise for both computers and the Internet, the difference is decreasing.

1 HOUSEHOLD COMPUTER AND INTERNET ACCESS



2 HOUSEHOLD ACCESS TO COMPUTERS OR THE INTERNET(a)

	<i>Households with access to a computer at home</i>			<i>Households with access to the Internet at home</i>		
	<i>November 1998</i>	<i>November 1999</i>	<i>November 2000</i>	<i>November 1998</i>	<i>November 1999</i>	<i>November 2000</i>
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Household income						
\$0-\$49,999	34	33	37	10	12	21
\$50,000 or more	69	71	77	34	43	57
Households						
With children under 18 years	67	69	74	25	35	48
Without children under 18 years	36	39	46	15	20	32
Region						
Metropolitan areas	50	53	59	22	30	40
Other areas	43	44	52	13	17	32
Total	47	50	56	19	25	37

(a) Proportions are of all households in each category.

HOUSEHOLD ACCESS TO
COMPUTERS AND THE
INTERNET *continued*

Differences in the level of access can be seen when groups of households with distinct characteristics are compared. By November 2000:

- Households with higher incomes were more likely to have access to a computer or the Internet at home. Households with incomes of \$50,000 or more were twice as likely to have access to a computer at home than households with incomes under \$50,000 (77% compared to 37%) and nearly three times as likely to have access to the Internet at home (57% compared to 21%).
- Households with children under 18 years were more likely to have access than households without children under 18 years. Although 46% of households without children under 18 years had access to a computer at home, the proportion of households with children under 18 years that had access was considerably higher (74%). Similarly for home Internet access, 32% of households without children under 18 years had access compared to 48% of households with children under 18 years.
- Households in metropolitan areas were more likely than households in other areas to have access at home. Well over half (59%) of the households in metropolitan areas had access to a computer at home compared to 52% of households outside metropolitan areas. While nearly a third (32%) of households outside metropolitan areas had access to the Internet at home, 40% of households in metropolitan areas had home Internet access.

FREQUENCY OF
HOUSEHOLD COMPUTER
AND INTERNET USE

Over half (56%) of the households with access to a computer at home used it daily. A high proportion (91%) of households used their home computer at least once a week. Households with Internet access tended to use their home computer more frequently than households without Internet access. Households with home Internet access were twice as likely as households without home Internet access to use their home computer daily (68% compared to 31%).

For households with access to the Internet, 45% accessed the Internet daily, while a very high proportion (93%) accessed the Internet at least once a week.

3 FREQUENCY OF HOUSEHOLD COMPUTER USE AND INTERNET ACCESS

<i>Frequency of computer use</i>	<i>Computer use(a)</i>	<i>Internet access(b)</i>
	%	%
Daily	56	45
2-6 times a week	28	39
Once a week	7	9
Once every 2 weeks	2	2
Once every month or less	5	4
Not used	2	—
Total	100	100

(a) Proportions are of all households with access to a computer at home, November 2000.

(b) Proportions are of all households with access to the Internet at home, November 2000.

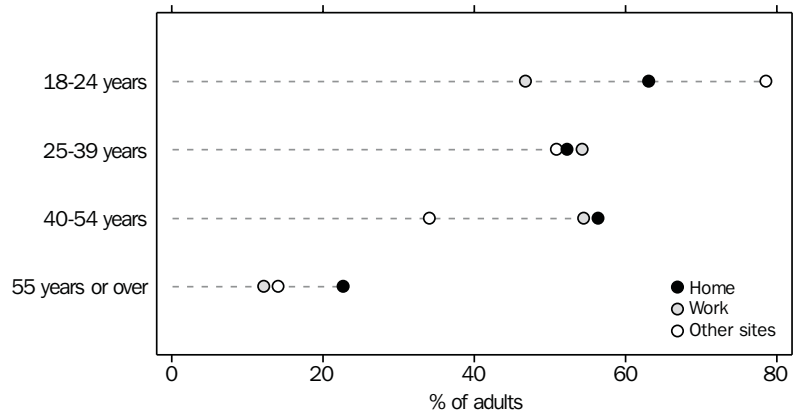
CHARACTERISTICS OF ADULT COMPUTER USERS

Two thirds (66%) of the adults in Australia, or 9.2m adults, used a computer during the 12 months to November 2000. The most popular site of use was at home (47% of all adults). Work was the next popular site of use (42% of all adults) while 40% of all adults used a computer at sites other than home or work. The most popular of these sites were a neighbour, friend or relative's home (21% of all adults), library (15% of all adults) and TAFE or other tertiary institution (12% of all adults).

Differences in the likelihood that an adult is a computer user can be seen when the characteristics of the adult or the site of use are compared. During the 12 months to November 2000:

- Adults aged 55 or over were far less likely to have used a computer than adults aged 18 to 54. Only 32% of adults aged 55 or over had used a computer compared to 72% of adults aged 40 to 54, 81% of adults aged 25 to 39 and 88% of adults aged 18 to 24. For adults aged 55 or over the most popular site of use was home. Home or work were the most popular sites of use for adults aged 40 to 54, while adults aged 25 to 39 favoured no particular site. Adults aged 18 to 24 were more likely to have used a computer at sites other than home or work.
- There was virtually no difference in the likelihood that adult males had used a computer compared to adult females (67% compared to 65%).
- Adults who were employed were more than twice as likely as those who were not employed to have used a computer (82% compared to 38%). Even at home, employed adults were twice as likely as unemployed adults to have used a computer (58% compared to 27%).
- Adults with incomes of \$40,000 or more were far more likely to have used a computer than adults with incomes under \$40,000 (89% compared to 59%). Both at home and work, there were large differences in the likelihood that an adult had used a computer between these two income groups.
- Adults residing in metropolitan areas were only slightly more likely to have used a computer than adults residing outside metropolitan areas (68% compared to 63%). The largest difference occurred in computer use at work. In metropolitan areas 44% of adults had used a computer at work compared to 38% of adults outside metropolitan areas.

4 ADULT COMPUTER USE, BY AGE—November 2000



5 ADULT COMPUTER USE BY SITE(a)(b)(c)

	Home	Work	Other	Any site
	%	%	%	%
Age				
18-24 years	63	47	79	88
25-39 years	52	54	51	81
40-54 years	56	55	34	72
55 years or over	23	12	14	32
Sex				
Males	49	44	40	67
Females	45	40	39	65
Employment status				
Employed	58	62	47	82
Not employed	27	—	26	38
Income				
\$0-\$39,999	40	30	38	59
\$40,000 or more	65	77	46	89
Region				
Metropolitan areas	48	44	40	68
Other areas	44	38	40	63
Total	47	42	40	66

(a) Computer used during the 12 months to November 2000.

(b) Proportions are of all adults in each category.

(c) Adults can nominate more than one site if applicable.

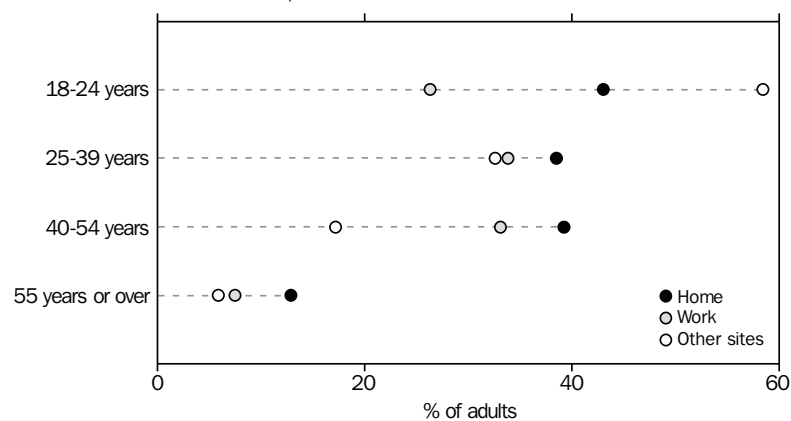
CHARACTERISTICS OF ADULT INTERNET USERS

In the 12 months to November 2000, half (50%) of the adults in Australia, or 6.9m adults, accessed the Internet. Almost a third (32%) of all adults accessed the Internet at home while a quarter (25%) accessed the Internet at work. Also 24% of all adults accessed the Internet at sites other than home or work. The most popular of these sites were a neighbour, friend or relative's home (14% of all adults), TAFE or other tertiary institution (7% of all adults) and library (6% of all adults).

Differences in the likelihood that an adult is an Internet user can be seen when the characteristics of the adult or the site of access are compared. During the 12 months to November 2000:

- The likelihood that an adult was an Internet user decreased as age increased. Of the adults aged 18 to 24, 74% were Internet users compared to 64% of adults aged 25 to 39 and 52% of adults aged 40 to 54. Only 19% of adults aged 55 or over were Internet users. Adults aged 18 to 24 were more likely to access the Internet at sites other than home or work, while home was the most popular site of access for adults in the other age groups.
- Adult males were slightly more likely than adult females to have been Internet users (53% compared to 47%).
- Adults who were employed were more than twice as likely as those who were not employed to have been Internet users (63% compared to 25%). Home (40%) and work (38%) were the most popular sites of access for adults who were employed. Adults who were not employed were slightly more likely to have accessed the Internet at home (19%) than at other sites (14%).
- Adults with incomes of \$40,000 or more were far more likely to have been Internet users than adults with incomes under \$40,000 (75% compared to 41%). Work (55%) and home (48%) were the most popular sites of access for adults with incomes of \$40,000 or more, while home (26%) and other sites (23%) were the most popular sites of access for adults with incomes under \$40,000.
- Adults residing in metropolitan areas were more likely to have accessed the Internet than adults residing outside metropolitan areas (52% compared to 44%). Home was the most popular site of access, regardless of location. In metropolitan areas 35% of adults had accessed the Internet at home while outside metropolitan areas 28% of adults had accessed the Internet at home.

6 ADULT INTERNET ACCESS, BY AGE—November 2000



7 ADULT INTERNET ACCESS, BY SITE(a)(b)(c)

	Home %	Work %	Other %	Any site %
Age				
18-24 years	43	26	58	74
25-39 years	38	34	33	64
40-54 years	39	33	17	52
55 years or over	13	8	6	19
Sex				
Males	35	28	27	53
Females	29	23	22	47
Employment status				
Employed	40	38	30	63
Not employed	19	—	14	25
Income				
\$0-\$39,999	26	15	23	41
\$40,000 or more	48	55	32	75
Region				
Metropolitan areas	35	28	26	52
Other areas	28	21	21	44
Total	32	25	24	50

(a) Internet accessed during the 12 months to November 2000.

(b) Proportions are of all adults in each category.

(c) Adults can nominate more than one site if applicable.

FREQUENCY OF ADULT
COMPUTER AND INTERNET
USE

A high proportion of adults (84%) who used a computer at home did so at least once a week. At work, adults who used a computer were even more likely (92%) to use it at least once a week. At sites other than home or work, one third (32%) of adults who used a computer did so at least once a week while 58% used it only once a month or less often.

Similar patterns of use were seen among Internet users. At home, 85% of adults who accessed the Internet did so at least once a week and 79% of adults who accessed the Internet at work did so at least once a week. At other sites, only 30% of adults who accessed the Internet did so at least once a week while 58% of adults who accessed the Internet at these sites did so only once a month or less often.

8 FREQUENCY OF ADULT COMPUTER USE AND INTERNET ACCESS

<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Site(a)</i>		
	<i>At home</i>	<i>At work</i>	<i>At other sites</i>
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
COMPUTER USE(b)			
Daily	32	(c)70	6
2-6 times a week	40	17	11
Once a week	12	5	15
Once every 2 weeks	6	2	8
Once a month or less	10	6	58
Total	100	100	100
INTERNET ACCESS(d)			
Daily	29	(c)47	4
2-6 times a week	40	21	13
Once a week	16	11	13
Once every 2 weeks	6	7	11
Once a month or less	10	14	58
Total	100	100	100

(a) Adults can nominate more than one site if applicable.

(b) Proportions are of all adults using a computer at a particular site, November 2000.

(c) Will include adults who do not work 7 days each week.

(d) Proportions are of all adults accessing the Internet at a particular site, November 2000.

ADULTS MAKING SELECTED ELECTRONIC TRANSACTIONS

Only a small proportion of the adult population used the Internet to access government services (12% of all adults) or to pay bills or transfer funds (13% of all adults). In comparison, almost half the adult population (49%) used the telephone to pay bills or transfer funds, two thirds (67%) used EFTPOS and three out of every four adults (74%) used ATMs.

9 ADULTS MAKING SELECTED ELECTRONIC TRANSACTIONS(a)

	%
Accessed the Internet to use government services(b)	12
Paid bills or transferred funds via the Internet(c)	13
Paid bills or transferred funds via telephone(c)	49
Paid bills or withdrew funds via EFTPOS(c)	67
Transferred or withdrew funds via ATM(c)	74

(a) Proportions are of all adults.

(b) Period covers the 12 months to November 2000.

(c) Period covers the 3 months to November 2000.

ADULTS WORKING FROM HOME

At November 2000, 7% of employed adults had an agreement with their employer to work from home on an ongoing basis. On average, these adults spent just over one quarter of their total working hours actually working from home.

To enable them to work from home, over a third (37%) could access their employer's computer system via a modem and almost one third (32%) had use of a portable PC. Well over a third (40%) took home information related to their work on floppy disks or CDs. Although 44% reported using a mobile phone to work from home, only 5% reported this as the only form of technology that enabled them to work from home. One in every six adults working from home (16%) did not use any of the technologies listed in Table 10 to work from home.

10 ADULTS WORKING FROM HOME

	%
Have an agreement with employer to work from home on an ongoing basis(a)	7
Technologies that allow employee to work from home(b)	
Access to employer's computer system at home via a modem	37
Use of portable PC (either personal or employer provided)	32
Use of floppy disks/CD ROMS containing work related information	40
Mobile phone	44

(a) Proportions are of all employed adults.

(b) Proportions are of all employed adults who have an agreement to work from home on an ongoing basis.

INTERNET SHOPPING FOR
PRIVATE USE

In the 12 months to November 2000, one in every ten (10%) Australian adults purchased or ordered goods or services for their own private use via the Internet. These adults will be referred to as Internet shoppers. Overall 1,335,000 adults were Internet shoppers during the 12 months to November 2000, an increase of 532,000 adults on the November 1999 estimate of 803,000 adults.

Differences among Internet shoppers in the 12 months to November 2000 included:

- Adults aged 55 years or over were unlikely to have been Internet shoppers (4%).
- Adult males were almost twice as likely as adult females to have been Internet shoppers (13% compared to 7%).
- Employed adults were three times more likely to have been Internet shoppers than unemployed adults (13% compared to 4%).
- Adults with incomes of \$40,000 or more were far more likely to have been Internet shoppers than adults with incomes under \$40,000 (21% compared to 6%).
- Adults in metropolitan areas were nearly twice as likely to have been Internet shoppers than adults in other areas (11% compared to 6%).

11 CHARACTERISTICS OF ADULT INTERNET SHOPPERS(a)(b)

	<i>Internet shoppers</i>	<i>Internet users</i>
	%	%
<i>Age</i>		
18–24 years	11	74
25–39 years	14	64
40–54 years	10	52
55 years or over	4	19
<i>Sex</i>		
Males	13	53
Females	7	47
<i>Employment status</i>		
Employed	13	63
Not employed	4	25
<i>Income</i>		
\$0–\$39,999	6	41
\$40,000 or more	21	75
<i>Region</i>		
Metropolitan areas	11	52
Other areas	6	44
Total	10	50

(a) Proportions are of all adults in each category.

(b) Adults purchased or ordered goods and services for their private use during the 12 months to November 2000.

Features of the purchases and orders made over the Internet in the 12 months to November 2000 included:

- Books and magazines (36% of all Internet shoppers) and music (20% of all Internet shoppers) were the most popular types of goods or services that were purchased or ordered.
- One third (33%) of all Internet shoppers purchased or ordered on five or more occasions.
- Two thirds of Internet shoppers (67%) spent less than \$500 over the year to November 2000. However 18% of Internet shoppers spent over \$1000 during that time.
- Four out of every five (82%) Internet shoppers paid for all or part of their purchase/order online by giving their credit card details.
- Half (52%) of the Internet shoppers purchased or ordered goods or services only from Australia while almost one quarter (23%) purchased or ordered only from overseas.

12 CHARACTERISTICS OF INTERNET PURCHASES AND ORDERS(a)

	%
Location of purchase/order	
Australia only	52
Overseas only	23
Both Australia & Overseas	22
Number of occasions on which purchase/order made	
One	26
Two to four	41
Five or more	33
Value of purchases/orders	
\$0-\$100	26
\$101-\$500	41
\$501-\$1000	12
\$1001 or more	18
Don't know	*3
Paid online for good and services	82
Type of goods/services purchased/ordered	
Books or magazines	36
Music	20
Computer software	18
Entertainment or tickets to entertainment	16
Holidays	13
Clothing or shoes	12
Food and groceries	11
Computer hardware	10
Other goods/services	35

(a) Proportions are of all adults having purchased or ordered goods or services for private use via the Internet during the 12 months to November 2000.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

POPULATION SURVEY MONITOR

1 The Population Survey Monitor was a quarterly household survey of approximately 3200 private households throughout Australia. During 2000, the Population Survey Monitor carried questions about the use of information technology (IT). In each household, an adult (person aged 18 or over) was selected at random to complete the survey. A trained interviewer conducted a personal interview with the selected adult to obtain information relating to both the household's and the selected adult's use of IT.

SCOPE AND COVERAGE

2 All usual residents in private households were included in the scope of the PSM. However, households in sparsely settled and Indigenous areas were excluded from the survey. The exclusion of persons in these households has only a minor impact on the aggregate estimates produced for individual States and Territories. The exception is the Northern Territory where such persons account for approximately 20% of the population.

HOUSEHOLD DATA

3 In addition to gathering data on the use of IT, the survey collected data on the characteristics of the household. These characteristics include:

- household income;
- household family classifications;
- State and Territory; and
- region (metropolitan or ex-metropolitan).

PERSONAL DATA

4 The survey also collected data on the characteristics of the randomly selected adult, namely:

- age;
- gender;
- highest educational qualification;
- income;
- labour force status; and
- occupation.

DEFINITION OF HOUSEHOLD

5 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 those 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.

DEFINITION OF METROPOLITAN

6 Refers to capital city statistical divisions. These delimit an area which is stable for general statistical purposes. The boundary is defined to contain anticipated development of the city for a period of 20 years. They contain more than just the urban centre, and represent the city in the wider sense.

ACCURACY OF DATA

7 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 difference is given by the standard error (SE), 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 SE from the figure that would have been obtained if all households had been included in the survey, and about 19 chances in 20 that the difference will be less than two SEs.

8 The SEs for some statistics are relatively high and users are advised to exercise caution in interpreting these statistics. Estimates with SEs of 25% or more have been marked with an asterisk. The following table of SEs relate to estimates of the number of households and estimates of the number of adults.

1a EXPLANATORY NOTES

Size of estimate '000	Standard error for persons 18+			Standard error for households		
	Nov 1998	Nov 1999	Nov 2000	Nov 1998	Nov 1999	Nov 2000
5	. .	4.6	4.6	3.3	3.6	3.6
10	6.9	7.0	7.1	4.7	5.1	5.1
20	9.8	10.5	10.5	6.7	7.3	7.3
50	15.1	17.0	17.0	9.9	11.3	11.3
100	20.8	23.8	23.8	13.3	15.5	15.5
200	27.9	32.4	32.4	17.8	20.9	20.9
500	40.4	46.6	46.6	25.2	30.2	30.2
800	48.4	55.1	55.2	29.5	35.0	35.0
1 000	53.0	59.5	59.5	32.3	39.2	39.2
1 500	60.0	67.7	67.7	37.1	43.4	43.4
2 000	68.2	73.8	73.8	41.8	50.1	50.1
5 000	—	94.1	94.1	—	67.7	67.7

EXAMPLE USING THE STANDARD ERROR TABLE

9 Consider the estimate of the number of adults who purchased or ordered goods and services for private use via the Internet in the 12 months to November 2000. The estimate of 1,335,000 adults has a standard error around 65,000. This means there are about two chances in three that the true value (ie. the value that would have been obtained from a complete census) is within the range 1,270,000 to 1,400,000 adults. There are about 19 chances in 20 that the true value is in the range 1,205,000 to 1,465,000 adults.

COMPARING DATA OVER
TIME

10 Users are advised to take care when comparing the data from this publication to similar data from previous issues. High standard errors for estimates of movements may mean that an apparent difference between figures is not actually significant. An approximate value for the standard error (SE) of the difference between two estimates (x-y) may be calculated by the following formula:

$$SE(x - y) = \sqrt{[SE(x)]^2 + [SE(y)]^2}$$

11 For example, the increase in the number of adults between November 1999 and November 2000 who were Internet shoppers is 532,000. The standard error on this movement is about 85,000. Therefore we can say that there are 2 chances in 3 that the true value is within the range 447,000 to 617,000 and 19 chances in 20 that the true value is in the range 362,000 to 702,000. If the range does not include the value zero, the movement can be considered to be statistically significant.

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:

Household Use of Information Technology, Australia, (Cat. no. 8146.0)
1998 and 1999 issues

Use of the Internet by Householders, Australia, (Cat. no. 8147.0) February, May, August, November 1999, and February, May and August 2000 issues

Use of Information Technology on Farms, Australia, 1998-99
(Cat. no. 8150.0)

Information Technology, Australia, 1998-99 (Cat. no. 8126.0)

Business Use of Information Technology, Australia, 1999-2000
(Cat. no. 8129.0)

Government Use of Information Technology, 1997-98 (Cat. no. 8119.0)

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 John Ovington on Canberra 02 6252 5189 or email john.ovington@abs.gov.au.

FOR MORE INFORMATION...

- INTERNET* **www.abs.gov.au** the ABS web site is the best place to start for access to summary data from our latest publications, information about the ABS, advice about upcoming releases, our catalogue, and Australia Now—a statistical profile.
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