

**Internet Use in Hong Kong: the 2006 Annual Survey Report**  
**(February 2007)**

The Centre for Communication Research  
City University of Hong Kong

**PART I. EXPLANATORY NOTES**

1. **Internet Users:** The term is defined in two ways for in the current study: the first is the version by the World Internet Project (WIP), which was worded as “are you using the Internet?” (hereafter “WIP definition”), and the second is the version by the China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC), which was worded as “use of the Internet at least one hour on average per week” (“CNNIC definition”). The WIP definition has been used in the six previous annual surveys in Hong Kong, which allows comparisons of the results from the current survey with those from the 2000-2005 surveys. The CNNIC definition has been added since 2002, which allows comparisons between Hong Kong and mainland China. If any of the data reported here are cited, please indicate the particular definition used because the two definitions have produced slight differences.
2. **Networked Computers:** the term refers to the desktop and notebook computers at home that were connected to the Internet. Other Internet-ready handheld devices, such as PDAs or mobile phones, are not included.
3. The survey was funded by the Centre for Communication Research at City University of Hong Kong and implemented by Professor Jonathan Zhu. The report, however, doesn't represent any viewpoint of City University of Hong Kong. All the data were collected up to February 15, 2007.

**PART II. SURVEY FINDINGS**

**A. Overview of Internet growth in Hong Kong**

**a. Number of Internet Homes**

Table 5.1 Internet Homes

Total Homes (000)	Online Home PCs (000)	Dialup Homes (000)	Broadband Homes* (000)
2,310	1,820	110	1,700
% of Total Homes	79%	5%	74%
% of Internet Homes	100%	6%	94%

\* “Broadband Homes” refers to those using ADSL or cable modem to connect to the Internet, excluding those using ISDN (treated as “Dialup Homes”) or mobile phones to go online.

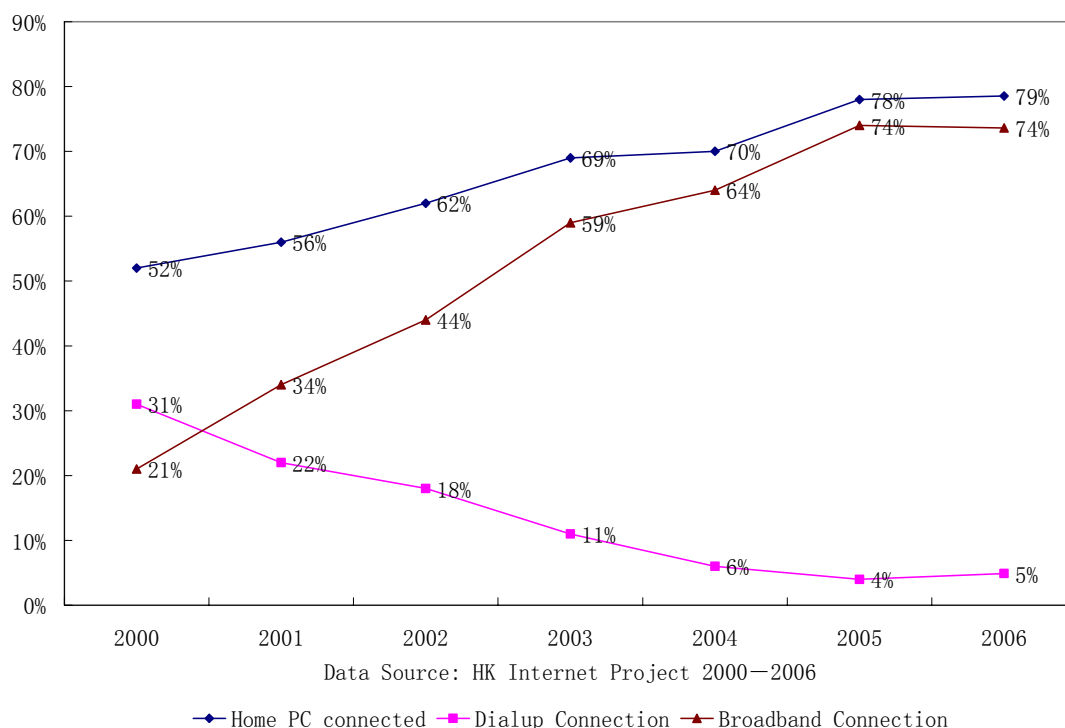


Figure 5.1 Internet Connection at Home in Hong Kong

**b. Number of Internet Users**

1. By the CNNIC definition, there are 4.07 million Internet users in Hong Kong, who account for 62% of the corresponding population (i.e., 6.58 mil regular residents) between age of 6 and 84. With sampling error considered, the actual number of Internet users may vary from 3.96 millions

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to 4.19 millions.

2. By the WIP definition, there are 3.33 mil Internet users in Hong Kong, who account for 63% of the corresponding population (i.e., 5.31 mil regular residents) between age of 18 and 74. With sampling error considered, the actual number of Internet users may vary from 3.24 millions to 3.42 millions.

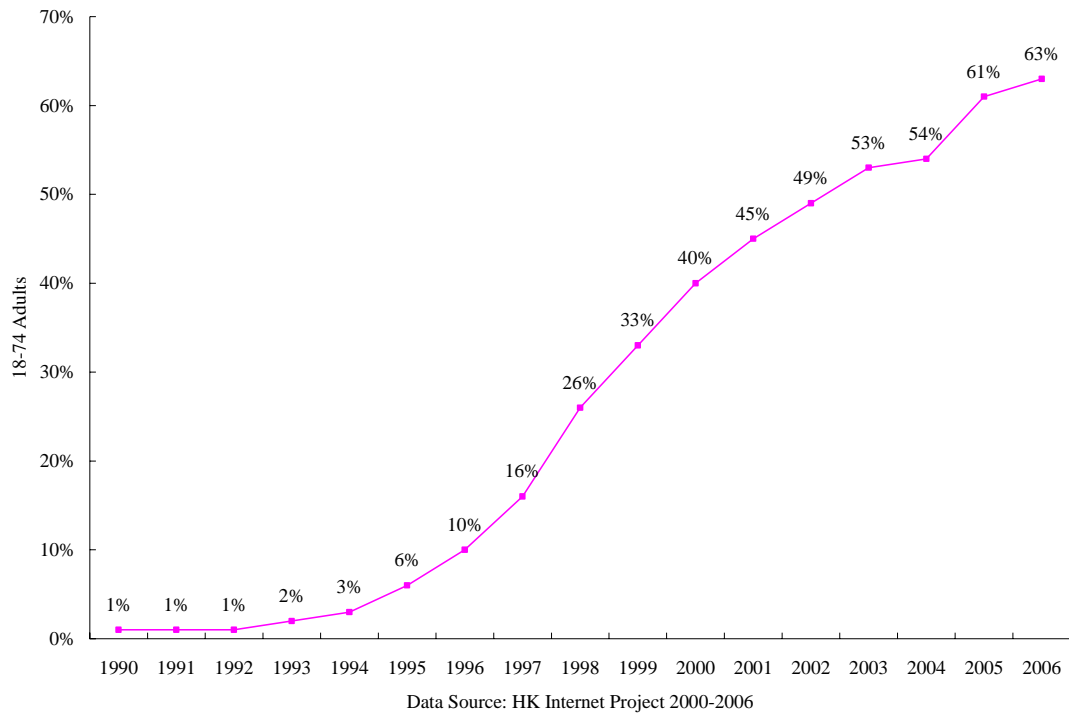


Figure 5.2 Annual Growth of Internet Users in Hong Kong (WIP Definition)

## B. Behaviors and Perceptions of Internet Users

Note: the term “Internet users” in this section refers to those defined by the CNNIC definition (i.e., 6-84 years old), unless indicated as “WIP definition” (18-74 years old). The questions with “\*” are adopted from the offline survey of CNNIC whereas the questions without “\*” are specifically designed for the Hong Kong survey.

### a. Individual Characteristics

\*1. Sex Distribution: Of the Internet users, 51.5% are male and 48.5%. Trends in the sex distribution of Internet users from 2000 to 2006 are shown in Table 5.2 and Figure 5.3.

Table 5.2 Sex Distribution of Internet Users

	2000.12	2001.12	2002.12	2003.12	2004.12	2005.12	2006.12
<b>Composition of the Users</b>							
Male	53%	54%	55%	53%	50%	51%	52%
Female	47%	46%	45%	47%	50%	49%	48%
<b>Penetration in the Population</b>							
Male	44%	50%	53%	54%	57%	66%	69%
Female	38%	39%	42%	43%	51%	57%	57%

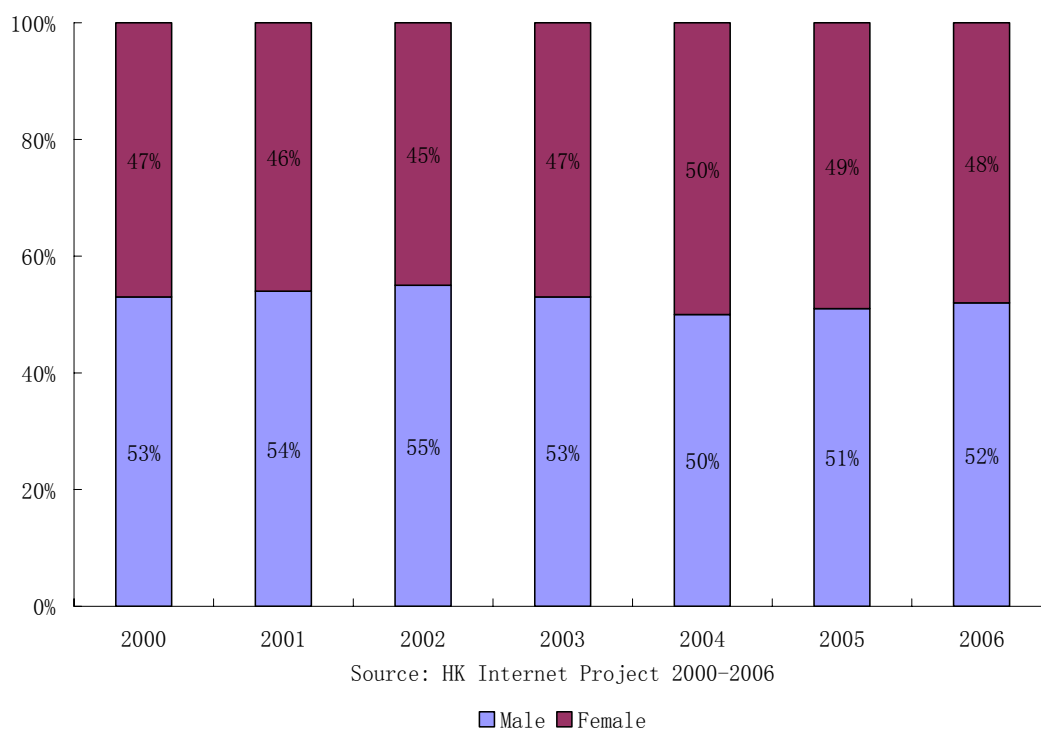


Figure 5.3 Sex Distribution of Internet Users in Hong Kong

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In terms of penetration rate, male users account for 69% of the corresponding male population in Hong Kong whereas female users account for 57% of the corresponding female population. There is a difference of 12% between the sexes, which is similar to the findings from the six previous annual surveys.

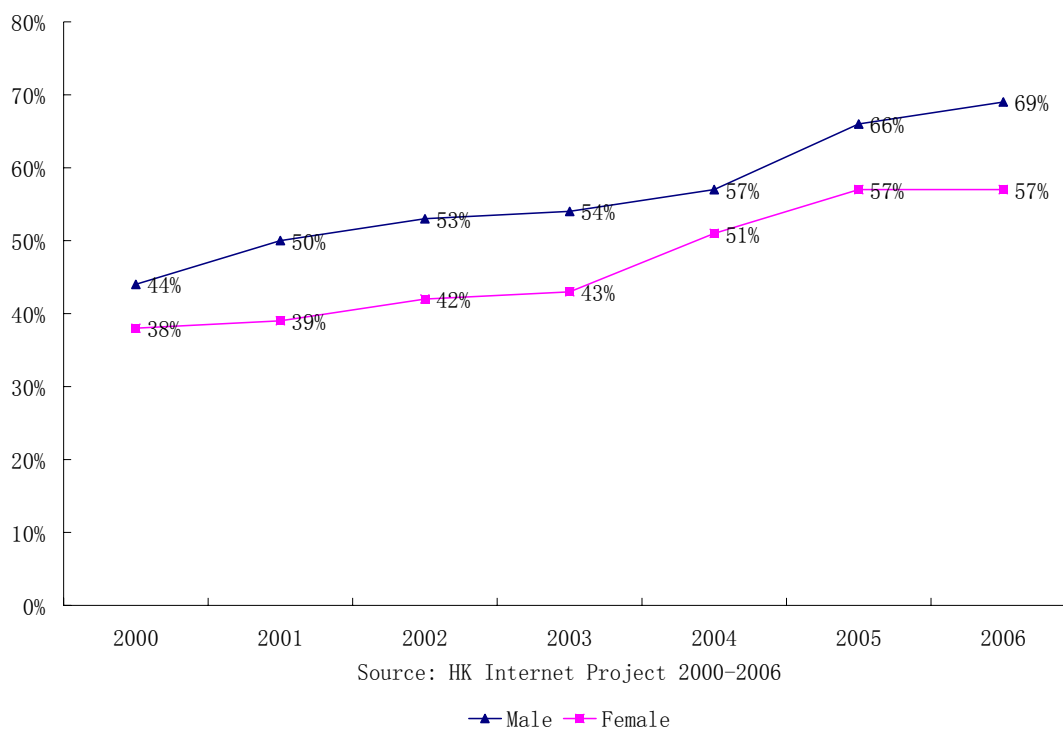


Figure 5.4 Penetration of the Internet by Genders

\*2. Age Distribution: As shown in the first row of Table 5.3 and Figure 5.4.

Table 5.3 Age Distribution of Internet Users

	<b>Below 18</b>	<b>18~24</b>	<b>25~30</b>	<b>31~35</b>	<b>36~40</b>	<b>41~50</b>	<b>51~60</b>	<b>Above 61</b>
Composition of the Users	20%	15%	14%	11%	12%	19%	6%	2%
Penetration in the Population	93%	99%	86%	90%	75%	58%	30%	9%

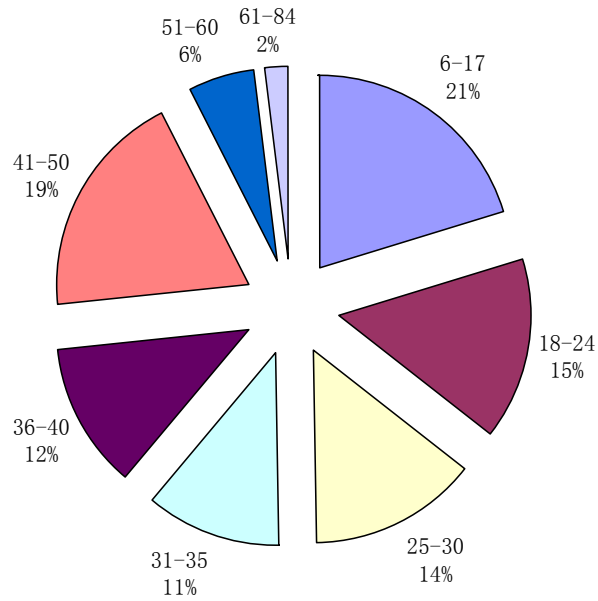


Figure 5.5 Age Distribution of Internet Users in Hong Kong

As shown in the second row of Table 5.3 and Figure 5.6, the penetration rate of Internet users in the population declines as age goes up, especially among those at 50s and older, of whom only 30% and 9% use the Internet, respectively. However, as compared with 2005, there is a substantial growth in Internet users among the old population (e.g., the penetration rate was 20% for those at 51-60 and 7% for those at 61-84).

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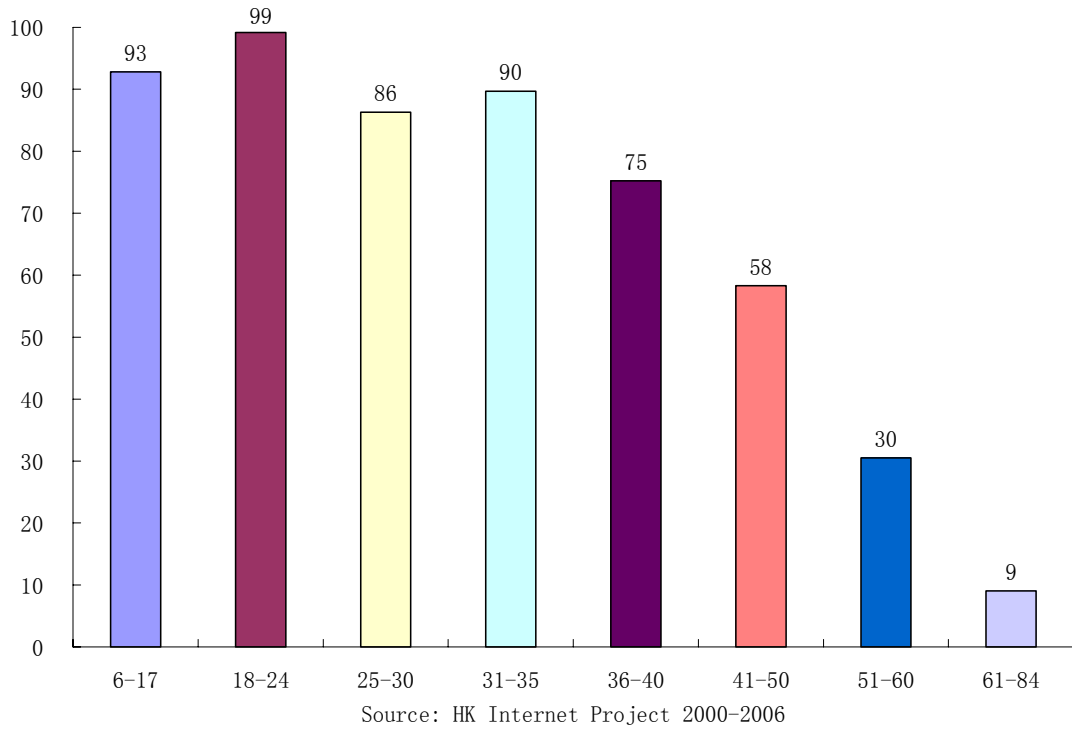


Figure 6.6 Penetration in the Population by Age

\*3. Marital Status: Of the users of all ages (6-84), 55% are unmarried (including singles, divorced and widows) and 45% married. Among the adults between 18 and 74 (i.e., WIP definition), the ratio between unmarried and married is 44% vs. 56%, as shown in Table 5.4 and Figure 5.7.

Table 5.4 Marital Status of Internet Users (WIP Definition)

	2000.12	2001.12	2002.12	2003.12	2004.12	2005.12	2006.12
<b>Composition of the Users</b>							
Married	49%	53%	52%	52%	51%	53%	56%
Unmarried	51%	47%	48%	48%	49%	47%	44%
<b>Penetration in the Population</b>							
Married	30%	36%	36%	37%	42%	50%	52%
Unmarried	65%	61%	64%	67%	74%	86%	86%

## Internet Use in China (2007/1)

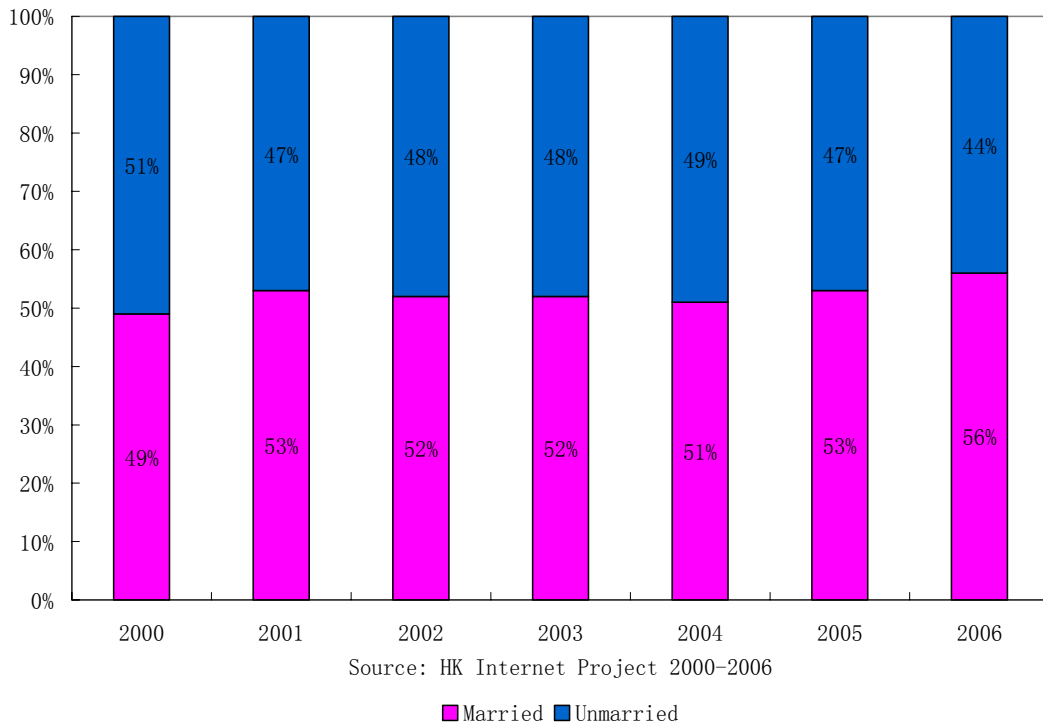


Figure 5.7 Marital Statuses of Adult Users (WIP Definition)

As shown in the second row of Table 5.4 and Figure 5.8, The penetration rate of Internet users in the unmarried population (including single, divorced, and widows) is more than 30% higher than that in the married population, which is consistent with the six previous annual surveys.

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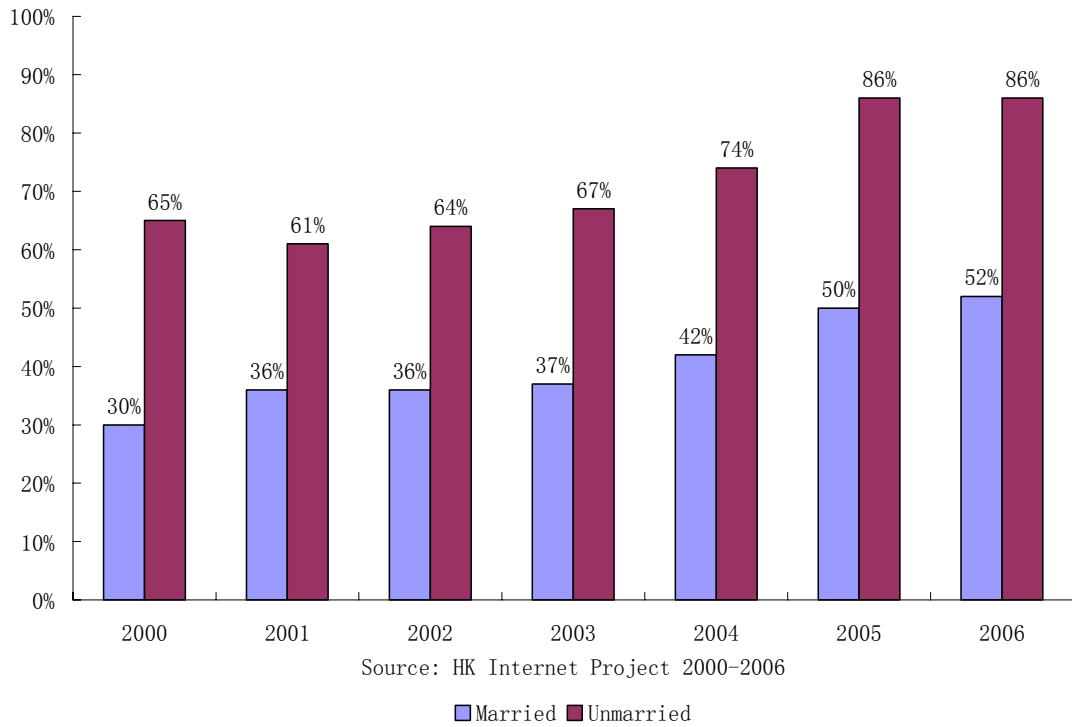


Figure 5.8 Penetration of the Internet among Adults in Different Marital Status

\*4. Education Levels of Internet Users: as shown in the first row of Table 5.5 and Figure 5.9.

Table 5.5 Education Levels of Internet Users

	Middle School or less	High/Technical School	Associate Degrees	University Degree	Postgraduate Degree
Composition of the Users	57%	9%	11%	19%	4%
Penetration in the Population	54%	83%	85%	91%	93%

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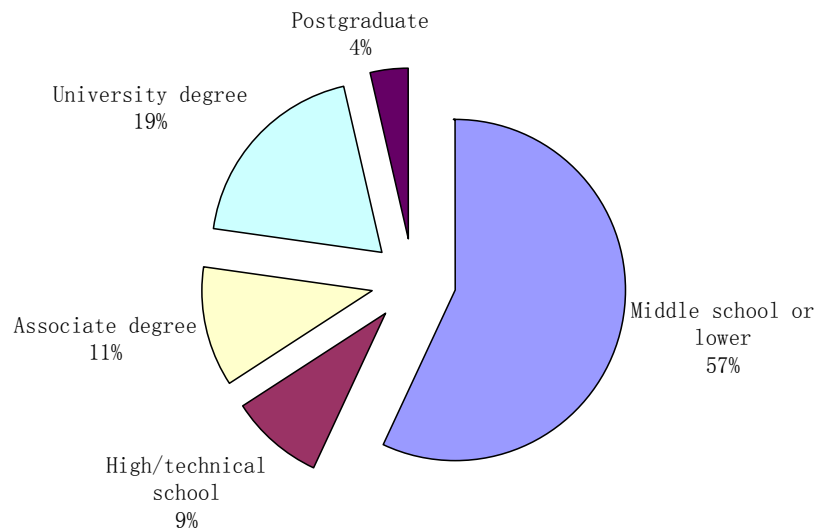


Figure 5.9 Distribution of Educational degrees of the Internet Users

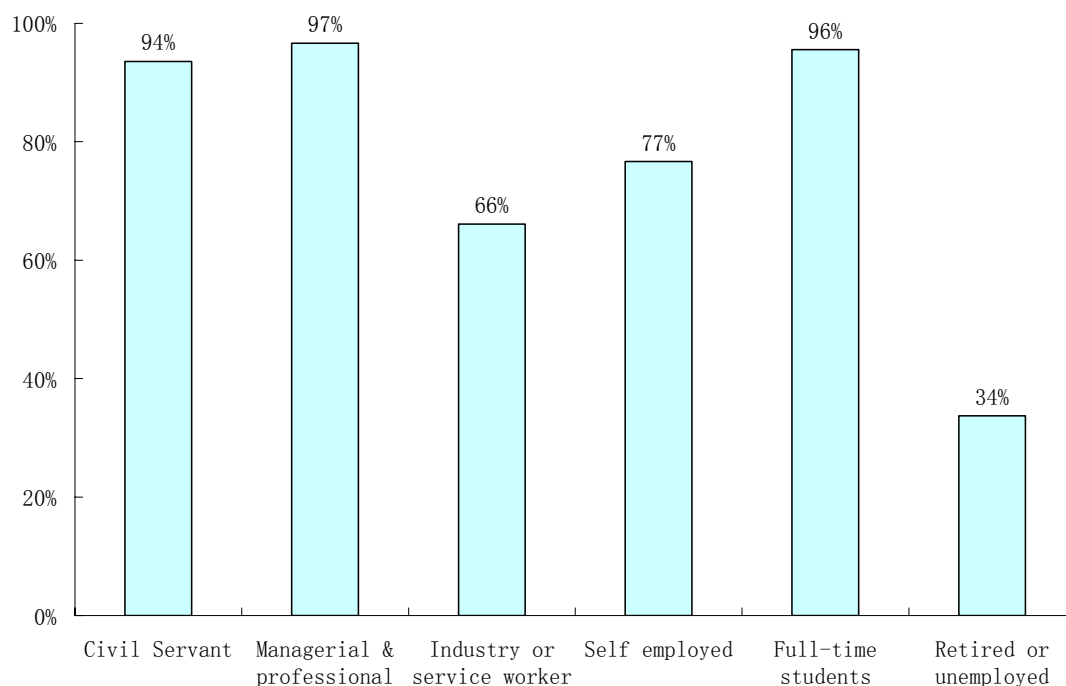
\*5. Occupational Distribution: as shown in the first row of Table 5.6.

Table 5.6 Occupational Distribution of Internet Users

	Civil Servants	Managerial and Professional	Worker & Shop Assistant	Self Employed	Students	Retired & Unemployed	Others
Composition of the Users	4%	15%	27%	3%	32%	19%	4%
Penetration in the Population	94%	97%	66%	77%	96%	34%	94%

In terms of penetration rate, almost everyone in students, civil servants, managerial or other professionals uses the Internet. The rate among workers and self-employed is also quite high. It is still quite low among those unemployed or retired, however.

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Source: HK Internet Project 2000-2006

Figure 5.10 Penetration of the Internet by Occupation

\*6. Family Income: as shown in the first row of Table 5.7.

Table 5.7 Family Income Distribution of Internet Users

	<HK\$10K	HK\$10~20K	HK\$20~30K	HK\$30~40K	>HK\$40K
Composition of the Users	14%	30%	22%	13%	21%
Penetration in the Population	36%	62%	79%	80%	86%

In terms of penetration, there is little difference among the middle and upper income groups. However, the penetration rate in the lowest income group (i.e., HK\$10,000 or less) is significantly below anyone else.

## Internet Use in China (2007/1)

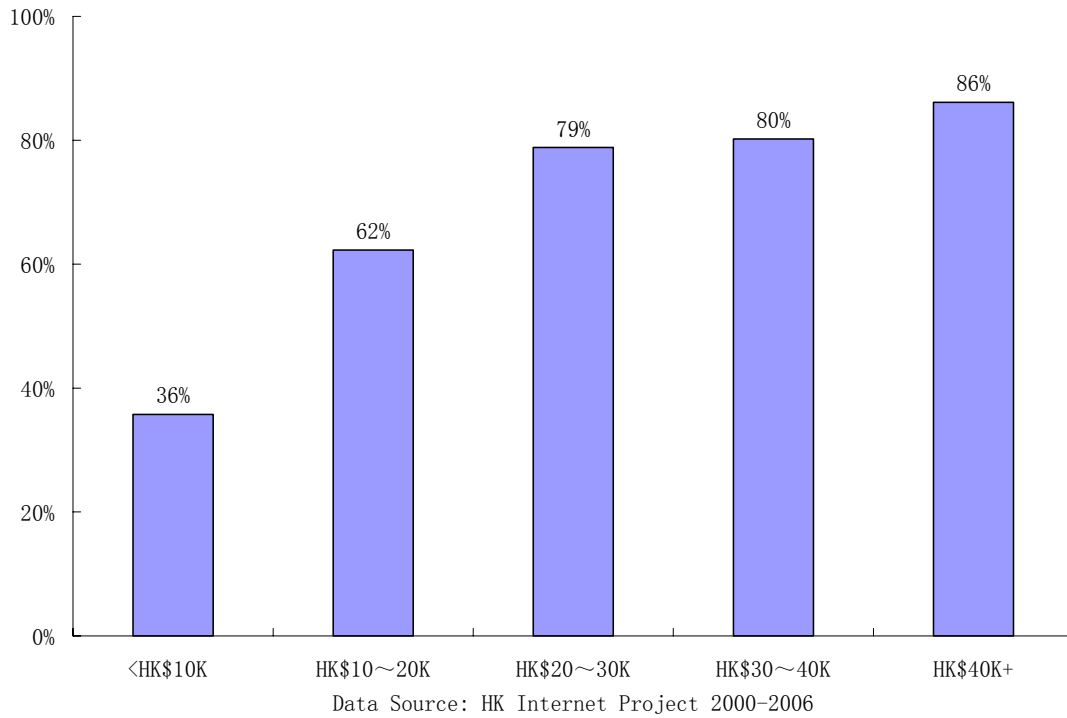


Figure 5.11 Penetration of the Internet by Family Income

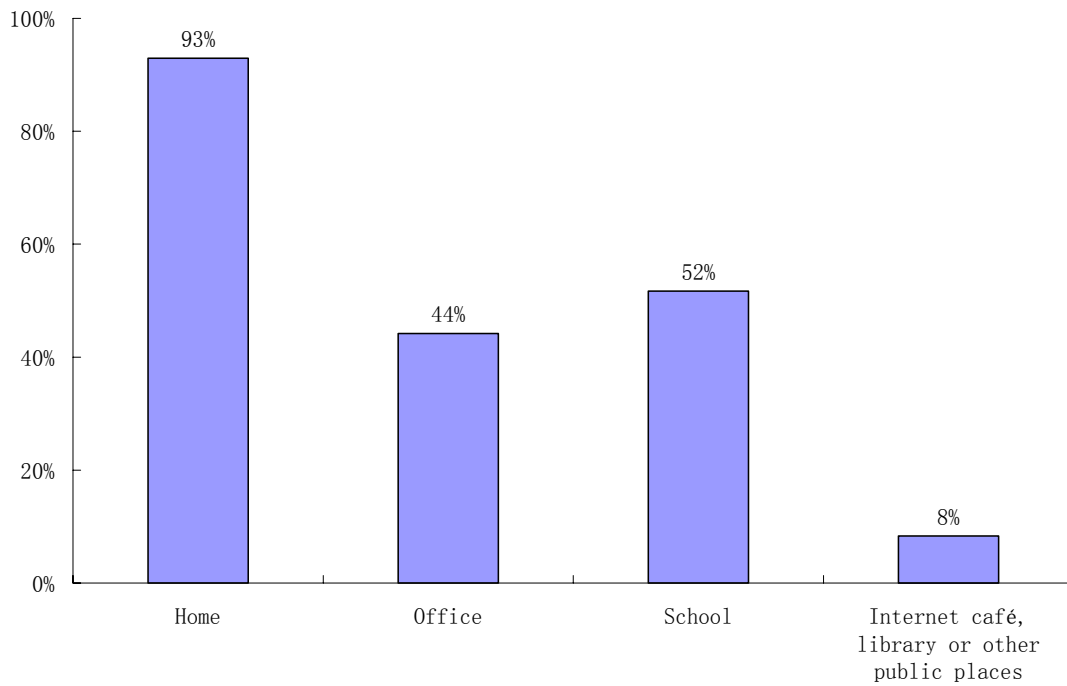
### b. Internet Usage and Online Behavior

\*1. Places to get online (multiple selections allowed):

Table 5.6 Where Users Go Online

<b>Home</b>	<b>Office (non-students)</b>	<b>School (students)</b>	<b>Internet Café, Library &amp; Other Public Places</b>
93%	44%	52%	8%

## Internet Use in China (2007/1)



Source: HK Internet Project 2000-2006

Figure 5.12 Where Users Go Online

### \*3. Online History

▪ 2 years or fewer	10%
▪ 2~4 years	13%
▪ 5~7 years	29%
▪ 7 years or more	49%

\*4. Methods of Internet Connection (multiple selections permitted): Changes in wireless connection is shown in Figure 5.14.

▪ Telephone dialup	5%
▪ Broadband	89%
▪ Cable Modem	3%
▪ Wireless (including WLAN, GPRS, WAP, EDGE, 3G)	8%
▪ Don't know	7%

## Internet Use in China (2007/1)

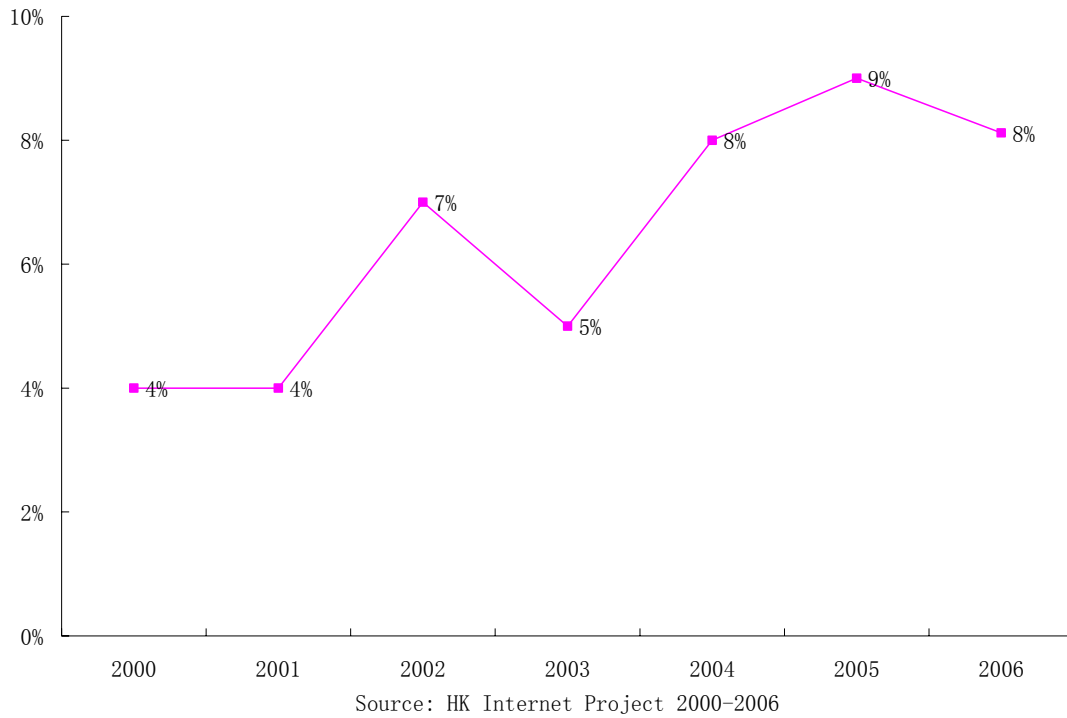


Figure 5.14 Changes in Wireless Connection to the Internet

\*5. Average hours of Internet use per week: 15.1 hours/user

\*6. Time of the day using the Internet (multiple selections permitted):

Table 5.8 Daily Cycle of Online Activities

<b>1:00</b>	<b>2:00</b>	<b>3:00</b>	<b>4:00</b>	<b>5:00</b>	<b>6:00</b>
14%	9%	5%	2%	2%	1%
<b>7:00</b>	<b>8:00</b>	<b>9:00</b>	<b>10:00</b>	<b>11:00</b>	<b>12:00</b>
1%	2%	5%	17%	20%	16%
<b>13:00</b>	<b>14:00</b>	<b>15:00</b>	<b>16:00</b>	<b>17:00</b>	<b>18:00</b>
17%	18%	21%	23%	25%	21%
<b>19:00</b>	<b>20:00</b>	<b>21:00</b>	<b>22:00</b>	<b>23:00</b>	<b>24:00</b>
20%	25%	34%	39%	35%	28%

## Internet Use in China (2007/1)

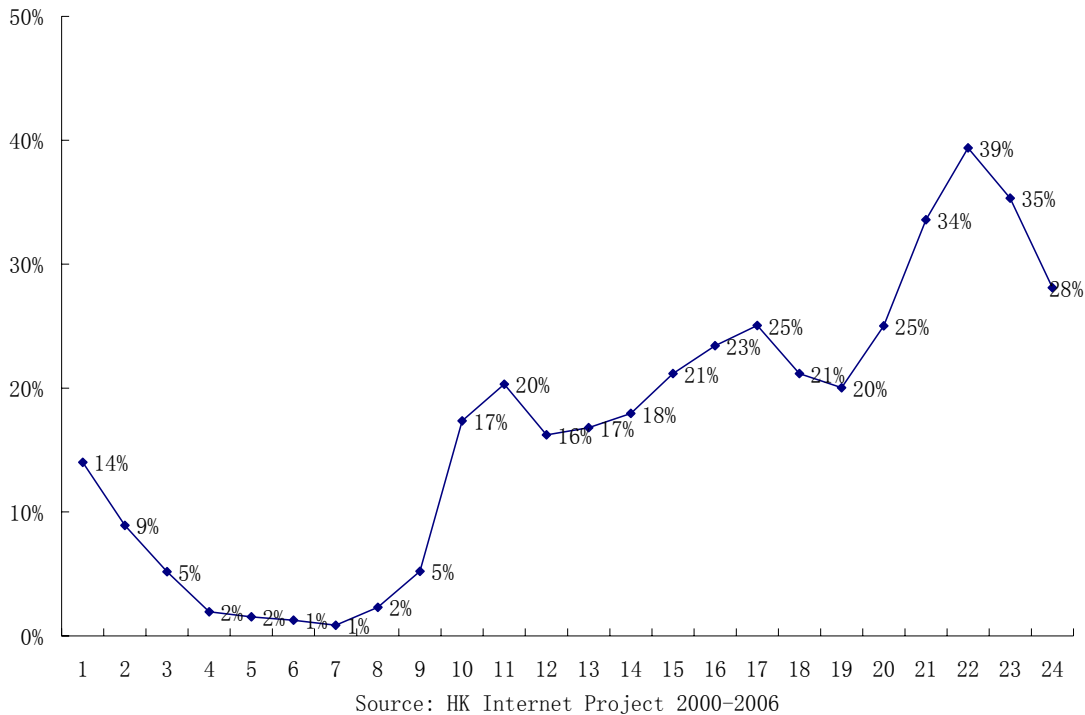


Figure 5.15 Time Distribution of Internet Use in the 24-hour Cycle

\*7. Average number of E-mail accounts: 2.1/user

Of which, number of free E-mail accounts: 1.8/user

\*8. Average number of junk E-mail messages received per week: 28.5/user

\*9. Primary purposes for Internet use (single selection permitted):

▪ Information acquisition	55.4%
▪ Leisure and entertainment	19.5%
▪ Communication (e.g., e-mail, IM、SMS、 chat, etc.)	10.3%
▪ Study	8.4%
▪ Others	2.7%
▪ Online banking, trading, payment, etc.	2.6%
▪ Getting free resources (e.g., free e-mail accounts, storage space, downloadable materials)	0.6%
▪ Making friends	0.3%
▪ Online shopping	0.3%

\*10. The most frequently services used (multiple selections permitted):

▪ Webpage browse	50%
▪ E-mail	23%

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▪ Online chat (e.g., MSN, ICQ, Yahoo Messenger, chat room, etc.)	21%
▪ Search Engines	21%
▪ Online games	17%
▪ News groups	11%
▪ Multimedia entertainment (e.g., movies, music, radio, Flash, etc.)	9%
▪ Online education	7%
▪ Others	7%
▪ Online banking	6%
▪ BBS forums, communities, discussion groups	4%
▪ Online shopping or payment	3%
▪ Software download	2%
▪ Online job	1%
▪ Alumni association websites	0%
▪ Internet phony	0%
▪ Ticket/hotel reservation	0%
▪ Short Message Services	0%
▪ Video conferencing	0%

11. Selling or buying anything through online auction sites within the last 12 months:

▪ Yes:	12%
▪ No:	88%
▪ No:	89%
▪ Once or twice:	4%
▪ Three to five times	4%
▪ Six times or more	3%

\*12. Goods or services purchased within the last 12 months (multiple selections permitted):

▪ Leisure and entertainment products (e.g., movie tickets, sports tickets)	24%
▪ Computers or parts	17%
▪ Books	13%
▪ Cloths	9%
▪ Houseware or art crafts	8%
▪ Health products	6%
▪ Food	5%
▪ Others	5%
▪ Home appliances	3%
▪ Traveling (air/train tickets, hotels)	1%

13. Average hours per week on six major activities online: change trends shown in Figure 5.16

- Reading online news: 1.7 hours/user
- Receiving/sending E-mails: 2.4 hours/user
- Participating in online chatting or discussions: 2.1 hours/user
- Search for work/study-related information: 3.3 hours/user
- Search for personal hobby information: 2.4 hours/user
- Playing online games or entertainment: 1.8 hours/user

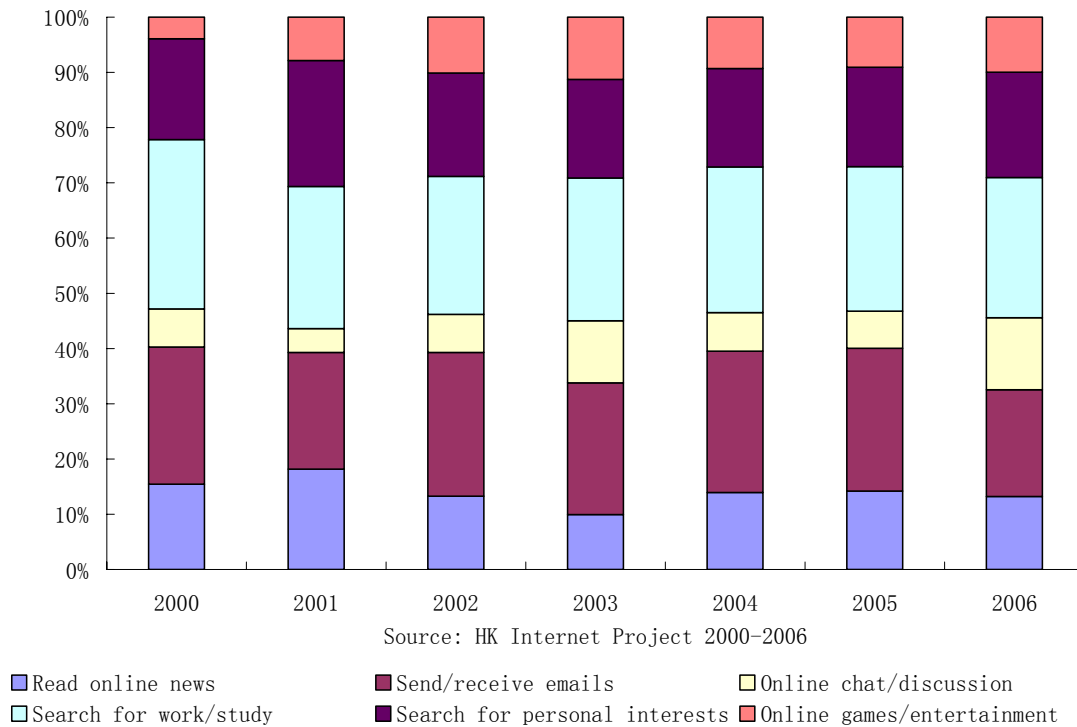


Figure 5.16 Share of Online Time by Six Major Activities (18-74 adults)

14. Average share of time spent on websites in different languages: trends of change shown in Figure 5.17.

- Chinese websites in Hong Kong: 56%
- Non-Chinese websites in Hong Kong: 9%
- Chinese websites overseas: 18%
- Non-Chinese websites overseas: 17%

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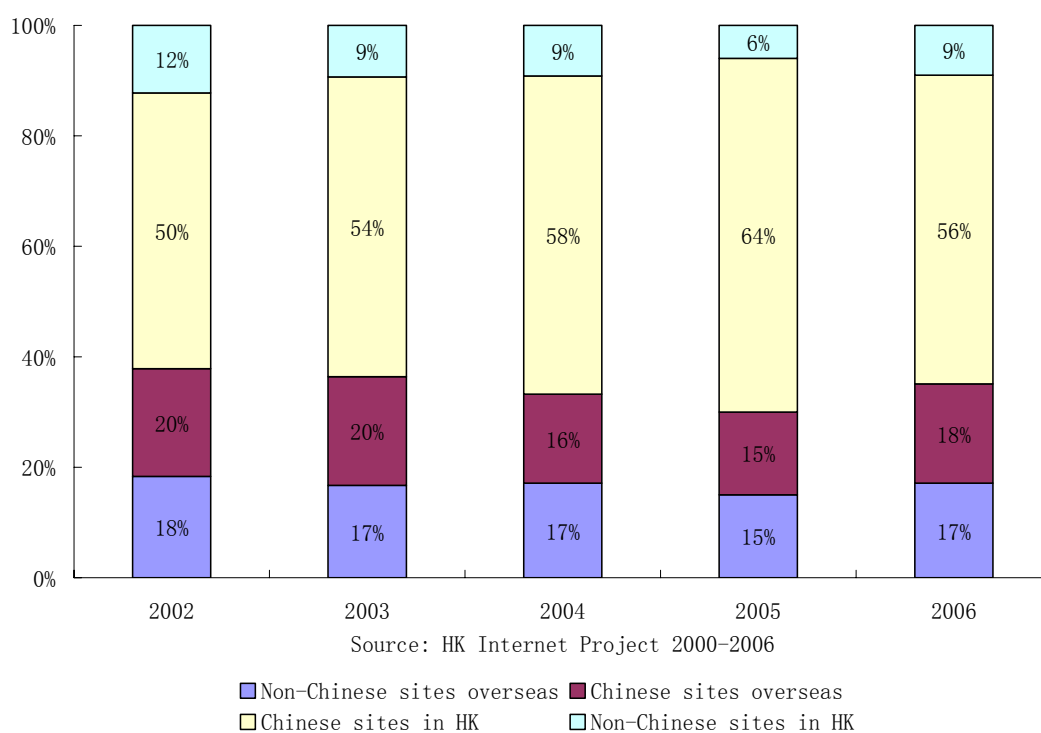


Figure 5.17 Distribution of Online Time by Website Languages

15. Security problems encountered through using the Internet in the last 12 months (multiple selections permitted):

	2005	2006
▪ Computer virus, trojan or worm resulting in harm (e.g. loss of information or time)	38%	38%
▪ Fraudulent payment (credit or debit) card use	1.4%	1.8%
▪ Abuse of personal information sent on the Internet (e.g. unauthorised use)	5%	4%

16. Use of Web 2.0 services (multiple answers permitted):

Used ICQ, MSN and other instant messenger software	64%
Browsed other people's photo sharing sites	49%
Voted online polls	37%
Participated in online friends sites	24%
Owned a blog	22%
Visited Wiki sites	22%

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Used BT, Emule and other P2P software tools	20%
Owned a photo sharing website	18%
Posted comments at online news sites	13%
Posted comments at BBS forums	13%
Used RSS readers	5%
Provided news leads to media	2%
Used Podcast	2%
Wrote articles for Wiki sites	1%

### c. Internet Non-Users in Hong Kong

\*1. Reasons for not using the Internet (multiple selections permitted):

▪ Don't know how to use/Fear of or confused by Internet technology	59.1%
▪ No computer/no telephone line/computer without modem/computer not good enough	16.4%
▪ No interest	15.2%
▪ Too old/young, health problems	13.8%
▪ Language problem/Don't know English T	9.4%
▪ Too busy to have time	8.3%
▪ Feel the Internet useless/no such need	7.6%
▪ Other difficulties	6.2%
▪ No particular difficulty	3.1%
▪ Too expensive	1.7%
▪ Don't know	1.3%
▪ Frequent interruption, busy signals, difficult to login	0.8%
▪ Too many viruses	0.6%
▪ Concerns about breach of privacy	0.5%
▪ Worry about bad influences on children	0.3%
▪ Too scarce of useful websites/information	0.0%
▪ Transmission speed too slow	0.0%
▪ Concerns about online security	0.0%

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### \*2. Date planned to use the Internet:

▪ Within 1 month	2%
▪ Within 1-3 months	4%
▪ Within 3-6 months	4%
▪ Within 6-12 months	2%
▪ 1 year or later	1%
▪ Don't know/can't predict	7%
▪ Don't plan to use the Internet at all	80%

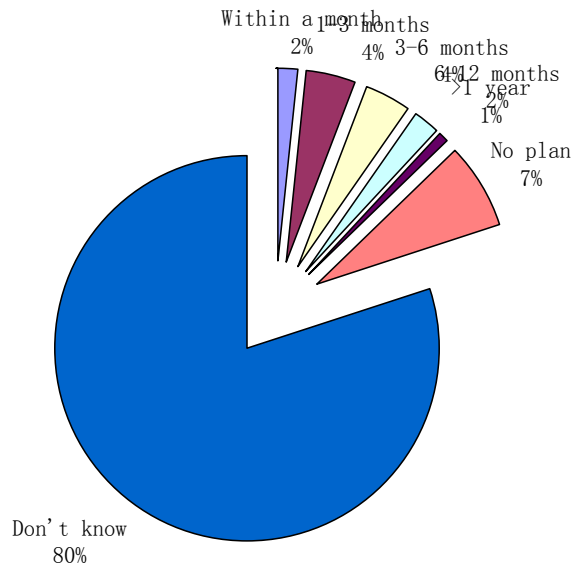


Figure 5.18 Planned Date to Use the Internet by Non-Users

3. By WIP definition, the proportion of adult population (18-74) in Hong Kong for Internet users has grown from 40% in 2000 to 45% in 2001, 49% in 2002, 53% in 2003, 54% in 2004, 60% in 2005 and 63% in 2006, at the annual growth rate of 7.9%; meanwhile, the proportion for non-users has declined from 60% in 2000 to 55% in 2001, 51% in 2002, 47% in 2003, 46% in 2004, 40% in 2005 and 37% in 2006, at the annual reduction rate of 7.7%. Figure 6.19 shows this trend.

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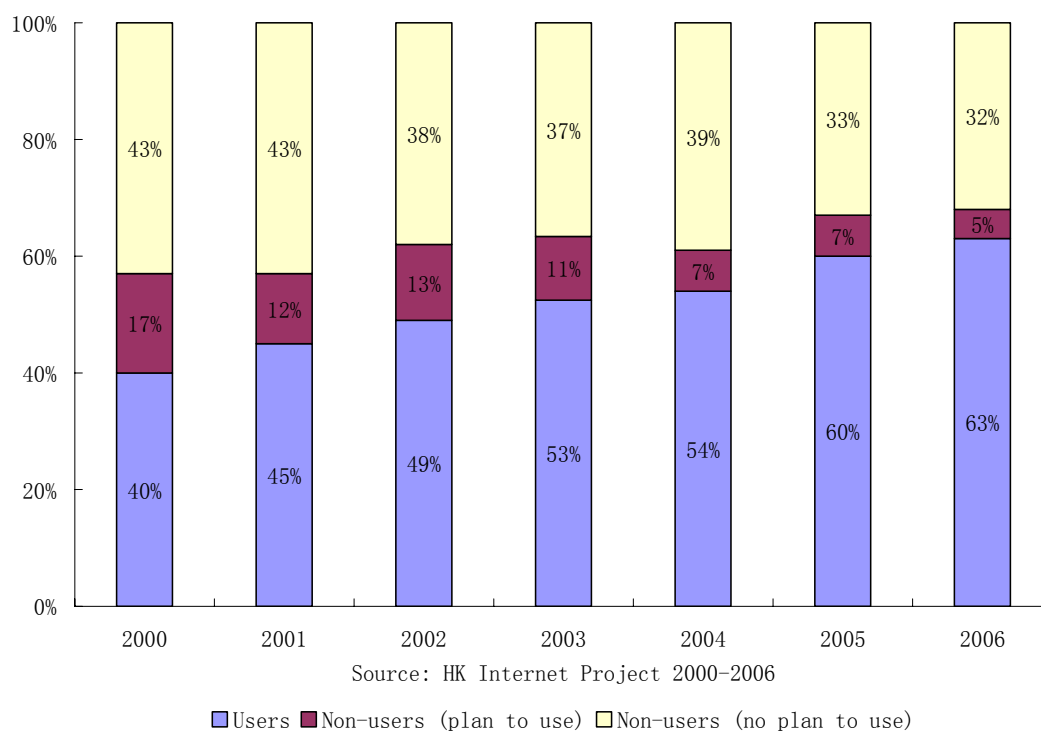


Figure 5.19 Ratio between Users and Non-Users in Hong Kong (WIP Definition)

### \*4. Situations encountered by non-users as a result of not using the Internet:

Table 5.9 Impact on Non-Users due to Not Using the Internet

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Frequently
▪ Embarrassed	80%	5%	9%	6%
▪ Encouraged by others to use the Internet	55%	11%	24%	11%
▪ Excluded from the circle of friends	92%	5%	2%	2%
▪ Disadvantaged in hiring, promotion, payraise, or applying for schools	94%	1%	3%	2%
▪ Complain by others for difficulty to contact you	97%	2%	1%	0%

### d. Perceptions of the Internet by Both User and Non-Users

#### \*1. Do you trust the Internet:

Table 5.10 Trust on the Internet

	Users	Non-Users	Total
▪ Fully distrust	1%	3%	2%

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▪ Somewhat distrust	11%	8%	10%
▪ Partly trust, partly distrust	43%	31%	39%
▪ Somewhat trust	35%	28%	32%
▪ Full trust	10%	7%	9%
▪ Don't know/hard to say	1%	23%	9%

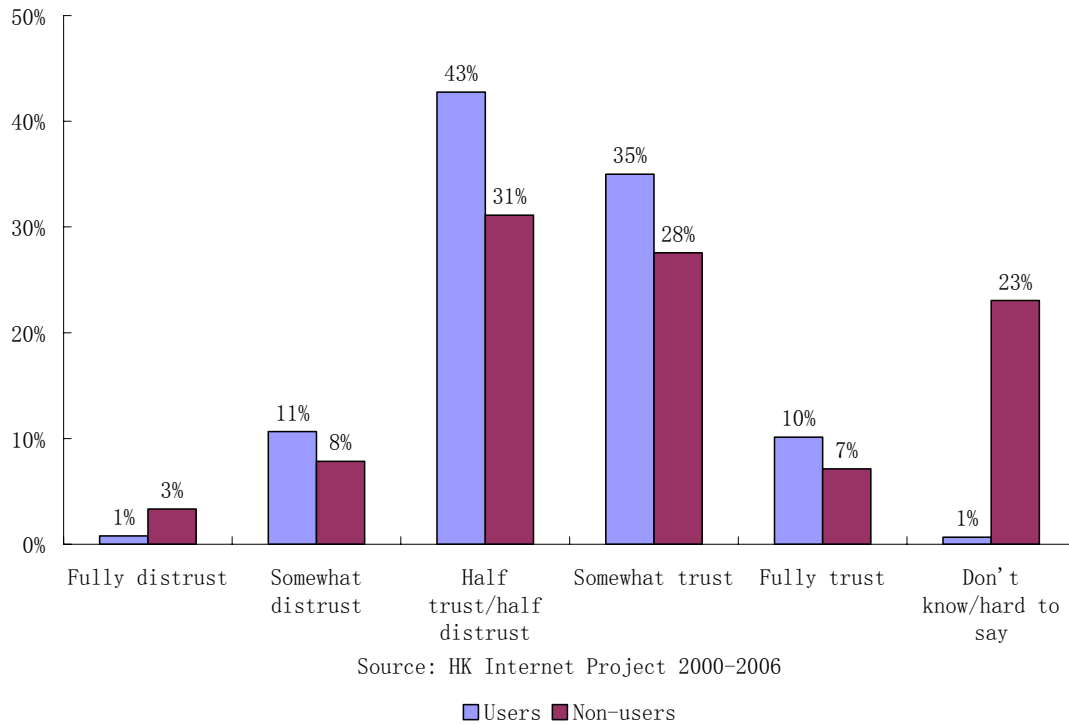


Figure 5.20 Comparison in Trust on the Internet between Uses and Non-Users

\*2. Importance of the Internet in life, work/work:

Table 5.13 Evaluations of the Importance of the Internet

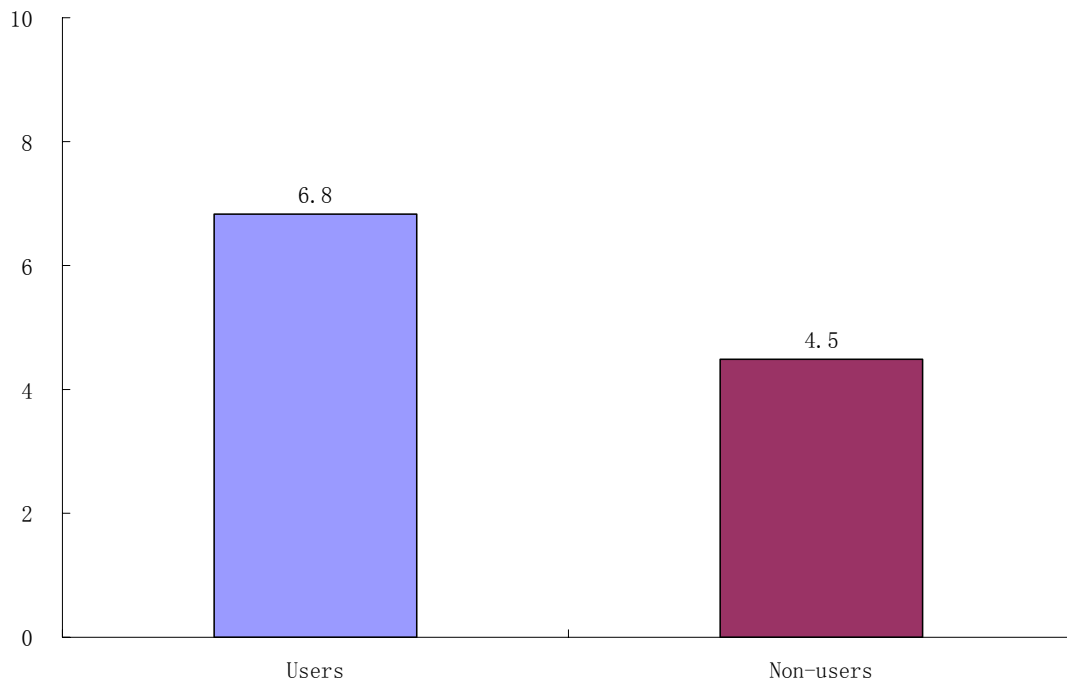
	Users	Non-Users	Total
▪ Highly important	35%	5%	24%
▪ Somewhat important	38%	15%	30%
▪ Partly important, partly unimportant	18%	41%	26%
▪ Somewhat unimportant	8%	18%	11%
▪ Highly unimportant	1%	14%	5%
▪ Don't know/Hard to say	0%	8%	3%

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3. If the Internet disappeared one day, would you miss it very much (10 points) or not at all (1 point): 43% of the users would miss the Internet very much (8-10 points) whereas 9% of them would not miss it (1-3 points); in contrast, 18% of the non-users would miss the Internet but 39% would not. See Table 6.14 and Figure 6.21.

Table 6.14 How much would you miss the Internet

	Users	Non-Users	Total
Little (1~3 points)	9%	39%	19%
Half and half (4~7 points)	49%	43%	47%
Very much (8~10 points)	43%	18%	34%



Source: HK Internet Project 2000-2006

Figure 6.21 Comparison on Missing the Internet between Users and Non-Users

## **II. Survey Methodology of Hong Kong Internet Project (HKIP)**

### **A. Study Population**

There are two target populations for the current study: the first is those regular residents between 6 and 84 years old who speak Chinese (including Cantonese, Putonghua and other dialects) and live in Hong Kong with a residential phone line, which is consistent with the study population of CNNIC surveys; the second is the 18-74 segment of the first population, which is in line with the World Internet Project (WIP) practice and had been used continuously in our annual surveys from 2000 to 2005. The former makes it possible to compare with CNNIC surveys whereas the latter enables comparisons with our previous surveys in 2000-2005.

### **B. Sampling Method**

**Sample Size:** 1,187 residents were successfully interviewed in the survey, resulting in a sample size comparable to each provincial sample in CNNIC survey. The sample size gives a sampling error of 2.8% at the 95% confidence level.

**Sampling Procedure:** as in the four previous surveys, random digital dialing (RDD) method was used to generate the sample. First, over 10,000 telephone numbers were randomly created by a computerized program. Those numbers were contacted. When proven to be a residential number, a person between 6 and 84, speaking Chinese, regularly living the residence, with the last birthday among other qualified members, was selected for interview. If no one was at the contacted telephone number, the chosen individual was not at home or unavailable for interview, the same phone number/individual was called back up to five times at different times of different days.

**Survey Response Rate:** calculated by Response Rate Formulae 3 (RR3) of the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) (for details for

[http://www.aapor.org/default.asp?page=survey\\_methods/standards\\_and\\_best\\_practices/standard\\_definitions#response](http://www.aapor.org/default.asp?page=survey_methods/standards_and_best_practices/standard_definitions#response)), the response rate of the current survey is 30%, which is similar to the previous surveys in 2000-2005 (i.e., 38%、35%、36%、33%、41% and 33%, respectively).

**Weighting Method:** Before analyzed, the data were weighted against Hong Kong Population Census Estimates, December 2006, in terms of cross-distribution of age and sex. Consequently, the distribution of sex and age of the current sample resembles that of the population.

**Data Cleaning:** A series of average figures have been reported above, such as average online time per user, average number of E-mail accounts, and average number of E-mail messages received and sent. As widely known, average figures are vulnerable to extremely large or small values in the data. We have therefore followed the customary practice in data processing: excluding extreme values (defined as larger than 3 standard deviations from the mean in either direction). Averages calculated from the adjusted data are generally about 10-50% smaller than the averages of the original data, which is closer to the parameters of the population.