



**Global TGI Barometer**  
**September 2008**  
**Issue 35: More Surfers Catching the Online Wave**

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All around the world millions of people are sidestepping traditional boundaries and living limitlessly through the Internet. No longer are people restricted by geography, government, culture or high costs as they use the internet to enhance their lifestyles. With the merge of physical and digital living, many are becoming comfortable with and even dependant on the Internet for work and pleasure.

But how connected are we really? How useful is the internet to people around the world? Is the online activity really changing the way people live offline, and if so, how is everyone adapting? Using the latest data from TGI, we take a deeper look at global reactions to the Internet.

### **Adopting and adapting the Internet**

In 1991, Tim Berners-Lee, a CERN computer scientist, invented the World Wide Web to provide easy access to digital information. It wasn't long before people began to access the Web in large numbers, generating tremendous excitement, debate and speculation. While some were lost in discussion, a few countries, the early adopters, wasted no time and jumped online headfirst. As a result, people in these countries quickly adapted the Web to suit their needs and their lives are now strongly influenced by what is happening online. As Internet pioneers, these early adopters are also setting technological standards for those countries catching their first online waves.

South Korea is considered one of the most connected countries in the world; Global TGI data shows that 85% of Koreans are Internet users. This widespread adoption of the Web was aided by the large broadband network that covers most households in the country, making it easy for Koreans to go online at high speeds (90% of Korean Internet users subscribe to broadband). As a result, online activity and services are booming, from gaming and shopping to personal banking. While Internet services are thriving in other parts of the world as well, Korea is solid leader for online marketplace activity with a staggering 48% of Koreans acknowledging having already experienced the magic of Internet shopping. In fact, 34% always search the Internet for information about any of products they plan on buying, both on and offline.

It is expected that many countries will eventually adopt and adapt to the Internet as Korea has done, but for different reasons some have waited before diving in. While 28% of Italians, for example, have connected to the Internet from home in the last 3 months, the number of those who surf the Web on a daily basis has doubled in the last 3 years. Most Italians, however, 88% to be sure, still prefer to buy their products in person. In comparison, 86% of Spaniards and 81% of French have yet to make that first, daring online purchase.

### **E-mail Everywhere**

People throughout the world are emailing friends, family and business colleagues more than ever. In Singapore, 54% of TGI respondents regularly send email, as do



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35% in Chile\*, 34% in Kuwait, 12% in Turkey, and 11% in Thailand. In Japan, mobile phone culture or “keitai culture” has spread to all age groups and people have become truly adept at mobile emailing. Global TGI data shows that 62% of all Japanese respondents are now regularly sending emails from their mobile handsets. In this respect, the United States and Western Europe are far behind, with only 4% of those surveyed using the email function on their mobile phones.

**Big Broadband Waves Bring More Surfers**

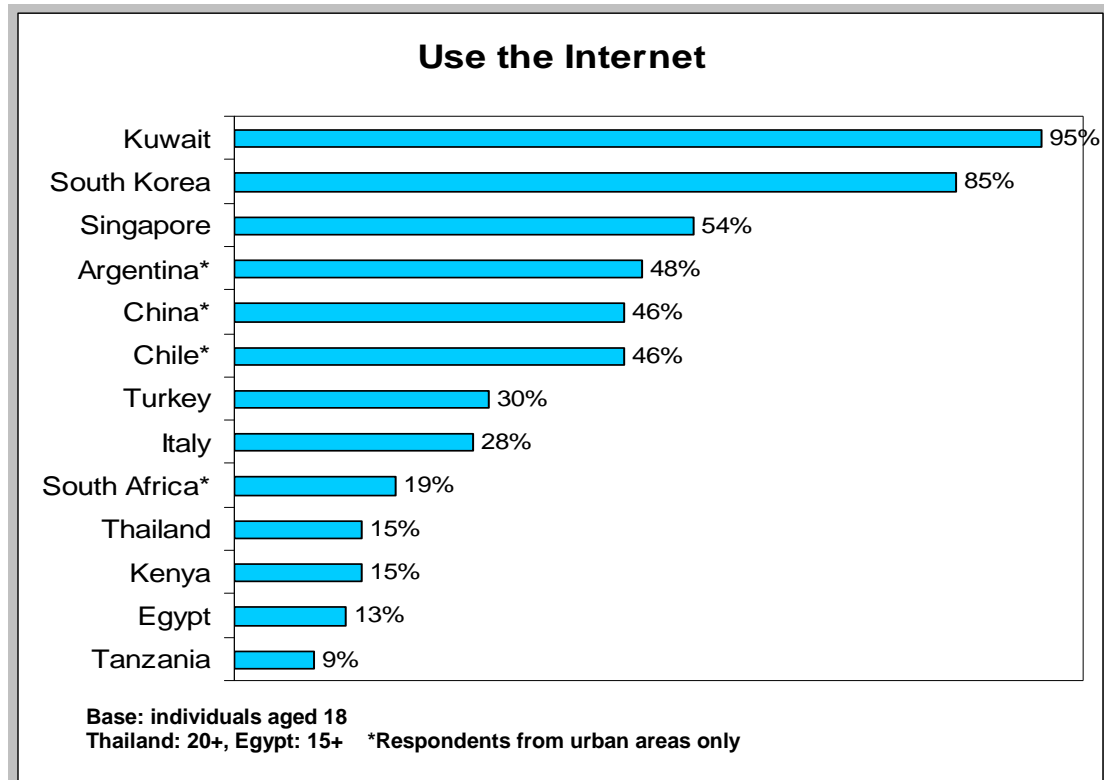
Latin America is a region where the internet has become popular through the spread of internet cafes and more recently, home internet access. Across the region, 42% of those surveyed claimed to have used the Internet in the last three months. Personal Internet subscriptions are increasing and 20% of respondents stated that they are now surfing the Web from their homes. Broadband access in particular is gaining popularity, with 15% of people surveyed enjoying the faster download speeds at home in 2007, up from 8% the year before.

Online shopping is not as common in Latin America as in other parts of the world, with only 4% of people in this region having made an internet purchase in the last 30 days. However, TGI data reveals that Latin Americans are embracing the Web and more are accessing the Internet at higher speeds than ever, indicating enormous growth potential for online marketplace activity in this region.

In the African region, one of the main objectives of telecommunications companies is achieving continent-wide networks. Determined African telecoms providers are now taking advantage of the advanced wireless technologies, such as WiBro (Wireless Broadband, now being developed in South Korea) and are aiming to achieve this goal within the coming years. Currently, 19% of TGI respondents in South Africa\* claim to have surfed the Web in the last 12 months, and 24% say they intend to do so in the next year. 15% of Kenyans are already online listening to music, doing business and finding employment opportunities, as are 9% of Tanzanians who enjoy visiting chat rooms, browsing sports sites and catching up on the latest news. Millions of people in Africa plan on using the Internet within the next year, 50% of Kenyans and 36% of Tanzanians for example, and telecoms providers are working against the clock to get the networks up and running.



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**Editors' Notes**

Global TGI is an international network of single-source consumer and media studies, available in over 50 countries worldwide. Used by brand owners, media owners and agencies, it measures consumers' product and brand usage, media consumption and attitudes, based on large samples - over 700,000 respondents annually worldwide. A typical survey will cover around 4,000 brands and 500 product categories.

The Global TGI network of studies is operated by KMR Group. KMR Group is part of Kantar, WPP's insight, information and consultancy division. For more information, visit [www.kmr-group.com](http://www.kmr-group.com).