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The internet and other computer networks and their use by European enterprises to do eBusiness

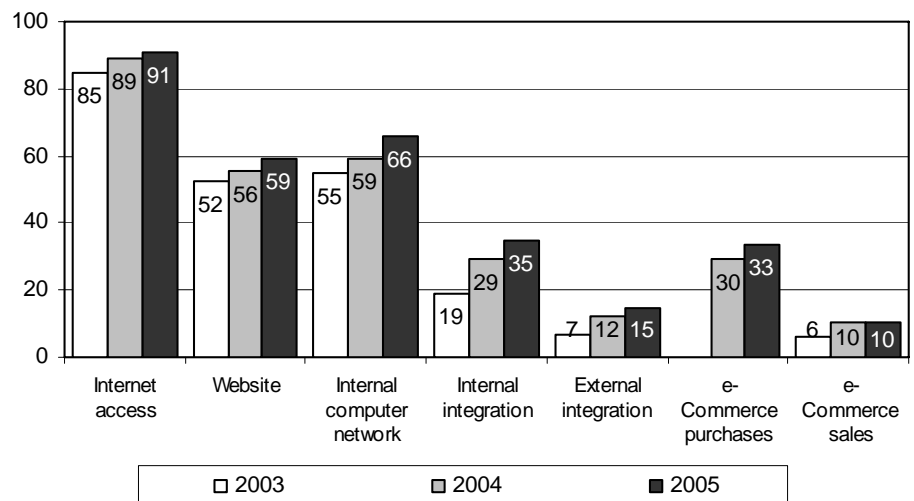
The increased use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) has had a radical impact on the way we live - nowhere more so than in our enterprises. We now talk about a new 'e-Economy', encompassing all the different ways that the new technology affects how we earn and spend money and organise business.

Transactions are called 'electronic', and thus fall into the categories of e-business or e-commerce, if at least one step in each phase is performed electronically. The term 'e-business' not only describes external communication and transaction functions, but also relates to flows of information within the company, i.e. between departments, subsidiaries and branches; 'e-commerce' refers to external transactions in goods and services

e-Business highlights

- For European enterprises with 10 or more persons employed, internet connectivity is reaching saturation, but when it comes to interactive websites there is still room for improvement.
- Using computer networks to make purchases is a reality for one fourth of the enterprises, and one in ten make online sales.
- The use of internal computer networks and intranets is progressing well, but there is still scope for doing better, especially among smaller enterprises (with 10 to 49 persons employed).
- Integration by automation or automatic linking of business processes is best implemented in the distributive trade sector, where 45% of enterprises integrate internally and 23% do so externally with other enterprises.
- The difference between smaller enterprises and large enterprises is greater for more advanced applications of ICTs. The percentage of enterprises with internet access ranges from 90% to 99% between small and large enterprises but from 31% to 68% when it comes to integration of business processes.
- The use of ICTs by enterprises has grown steadily in the last two years for several technologies. Even internet access, reaching saturation, still increased by 2 percentage points, from 89% to 91% (Figure 1).

Figure 1 – Percentages of enterprises adopting several technologies (2005) – EU25



Source: Eurostat, Community survey on ICT usage and e-commerce in enterprises
Notes: (i) Enterprises with 10 or more persons employed. (ii) EU25 aggregate not including FR, as data is not available.

Internet connectivity reaching saturation, but still room for growth in website services

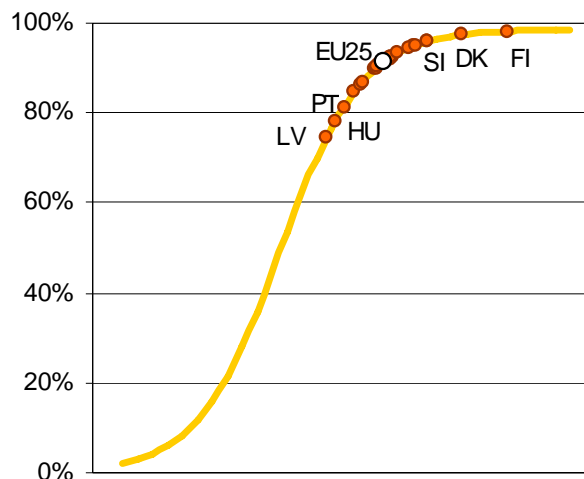
Electronic business (or e-business) involves the use of computer networks by enterprises to do their day-to-day business. On the path to the adoption of e-business, connectivity is the first step and also a precondition for all potential benefits of the use of computer networks.

The prominence of the internet among all computer networks is evident, because of its size in terms of the number of persons and enterprises it connects and its worldwide scope. Internet access is therefore fundamental for enterprises to start benefiting from the Information Society.

The penetration of technology and innovations in general is believed to follow an S-shaped curve, where adoption levels progress slowly in the beginning, then start accelerating and finally slow down to a halt as they approach saturation point.

Figure 2 shows that for most EU Member States internet adoption is approaching saturation point. Overall, for the EU, by the beginning of 2005, 91% of enterprises with 10 or more persons employed had internet access. This percentage ranged from 98% in Finland and 97% in Denmark to 75% in Latvia.

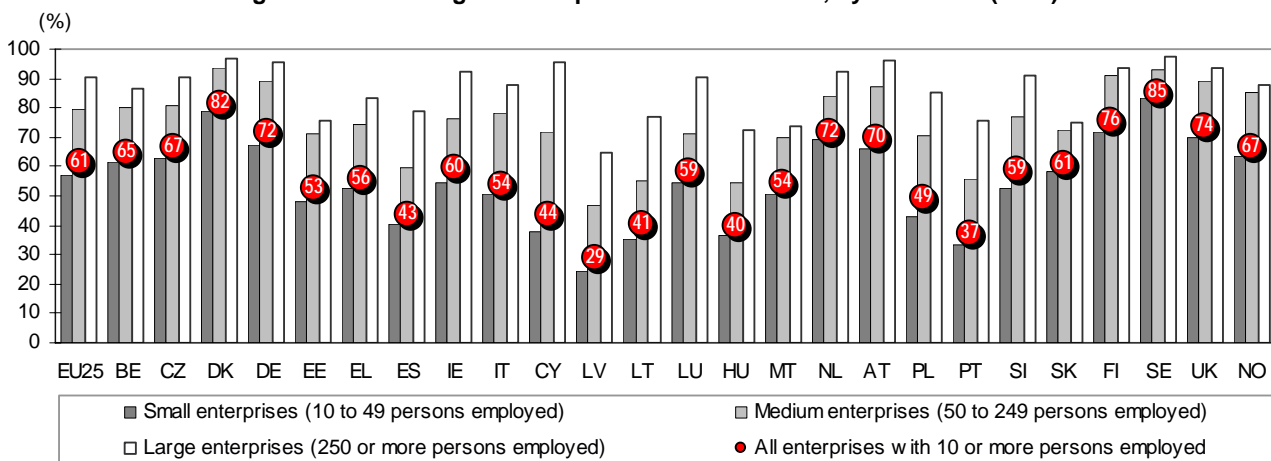
Figure 2 – Enterprises with Internet access (2005)



Source: Eurostat, Community survey on ICT usage and e-commerce in enterprises. Notes: Enterprises with 10 or more persons employed.

Most Member States are in a zone of the S-curve where adoption rates start to decelerate, a sign that internet access is reaching saturation. Nevertheless, some Member States still have progress to make until they reach the 98% of the leader country.

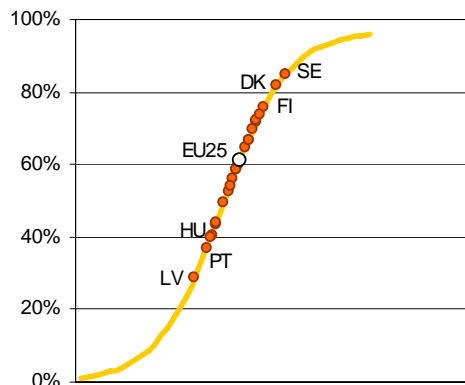
Figure 3 – Percentage of enterprises with a web-site, by size class (2005)



Source: Eurostat, Community survey on ICT usage and e-commerce in enterprises

Notes: (i) Enterprises with 10 or more persons employed. (ii) EU25 aggregate not including FR, as data is not available.

Figure 4 – Enterprises with a web-site (2005)



The use of a website by enterprises is a step forward in e-business, as it involves a more active role than just having an internet connection, independently of its use.

The overall percentage of enterprises in the EU with a website is 61%, but notably higher for larger enterprises, with 90% for large and 79% for medium-sized enterprises.

The same analysis of adoption levels for the existence of a website shows that all Member States appear to be in the fast progressing phase of the technology (Figure 4). Even leader countries Sweden and Denmark seem to be still in this zone of the S-shaped adoption curve.

It appears then that some progress can be expected in the adoption of websites. This is especially true for smaller enterprises, as for large ones the rate already ranges between 65% (Latvia) and 97% (Sweden and Denmark).

Source: Eurostat, Community survey on ICT usage and e-commerce in enterprises. Notes: Enterprises with 10 or more persons employed.

Almost one quarter of all enterprises is using computer networks for purchases, and one in ten make online sales

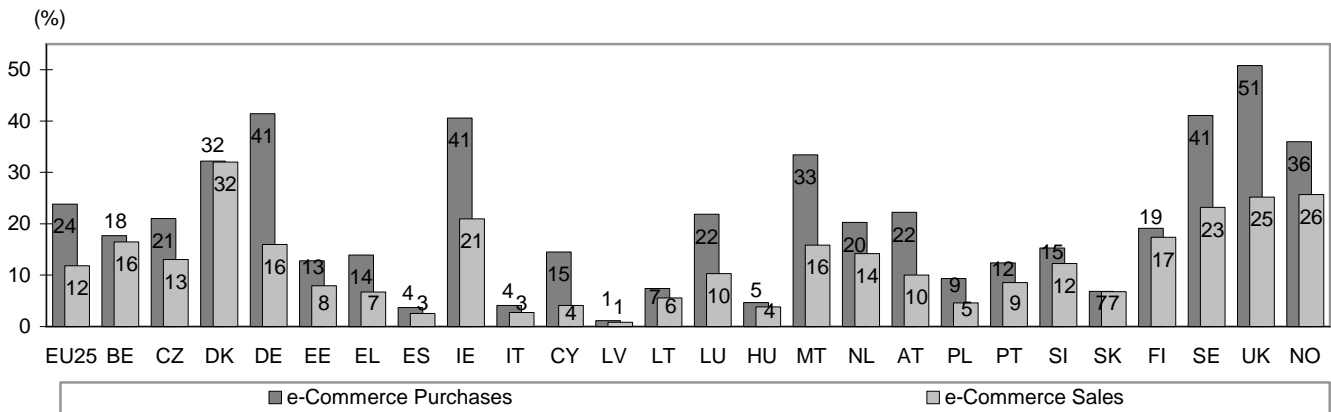
Internet and websites are not enough for e-business. Enterprises need to use more of the technological potential in order to reap all the benefits.

When it comes to using the internet and other external computer connections for doing business, the most prominent activity is e-commerce. e-Commerce consists in using computer networks for sending and receiving orders, independently of how the product is delivered and of how the payment is made.

The percentage of enterprises which placed orders via computer networks was particularly high in the UK, where half of the enterprises did so during 2004 (Figure 5). Germany, Ireland and Sweden followed, all with 41%. Overall, 24% of enterprises in the EU were making purchases online.

When looking at online sales, there is a marked difference. Only 12% of enterprises engaged in that activity. Adoption of online sales can be more complex than purchases, as it can entail a new business model for the enterprise.

Figure 5 –Enterprises having placed (purchases) or received (sales) orders via Internet or other computer networks (2005)



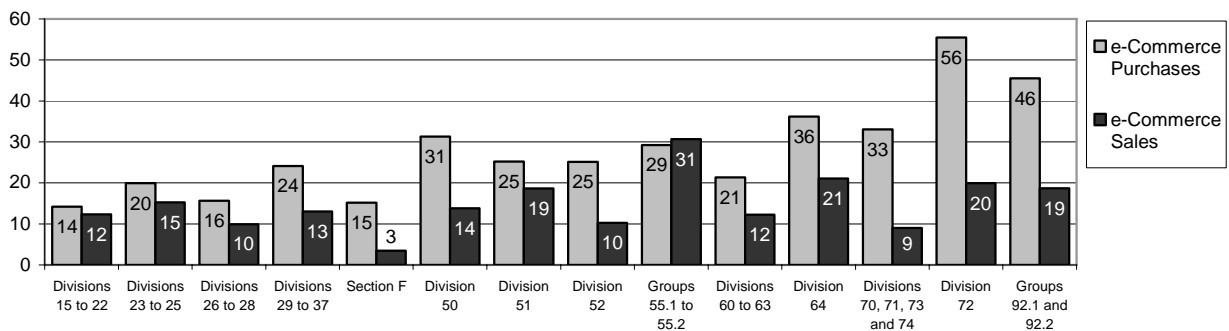
Source: Eurostat, Community survey on ICT usage and e-commerce in enterprises.

Notes: (i) Purchases and sales refer to orders placed during the previous calendar year, i.e., 2004. (ii) EU25 aggregate not including FR, as data is not available.

Figure 6 below shows that the sectoral patterns for purchases and sales are different. The online sales business model is more frequently used for hotels and other provision of short-stay accommodation, with almost one third of enterprises adopting it. On the other hand

online sales were particularly less frequent in the construction sector (3%). Online purchases, for their part, were more common among enterprises in the services sector, notably for computer and related activities (56%), while in manufacturing the overall percentage was 18%.

Figure 6 – Enterprises having placed (purchases) or received (sales) orders via Internet or other computer networks, by economic activity (NACE Rev. 1.1) (2005), EU-25



Source: Eurostat, Community survey on ICT usage and e-commerce in enterprises.

Notes: (i) Purchases and sales refer to orders placed during the previous calendar year, i.e., 2004. (ii) EU25 aggregate not including FR, as data is not available.

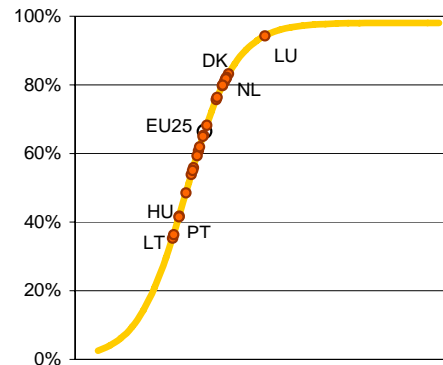
Economic activities (NACE Rev 1.1)		
Divisions 15 to 22	Manufacture of products based on: food, beverages, tobacco, textile, leather, wood, pulp and paper; publishing and printing	Division 50
Divisions 23 to 25	Manufacture of coke, refined petroleum products, chemical products, man-made fibres, rubber and plastics	Sale, maintenance and repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles; retail sale of automotive fuel
Divisions 26 to 28	Manufacture of other non-metallic mineral products, basic metals and fabricated metal products	Division 51
Divisions 29 to 37	Manufacture of machinery and electrical, optical and transport equipment and other manufacturing n.e.c.	Wholesale trade and commission trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles
Section F	Construction	Division 52
		Retail trade and repair of personal and household goods
		Groups 55.1 to 55.2
		Hotels and other provision of short-stay accommodation
		Divisions 60 to 63
		Transport and storage
		Division 64
		Post and telecommunications
		Divisions 70, 71, 73 and 74
		Real estate, renting and business activities except computer activities
		Division 72
		Computer and related activities
		Groups 92.1 and 92.2
		Motion picture, video, radio and television activities

The use of internal computer networks and Intranets can still increase in smaller enterprises

The benefits of the use of ICTs by enterprises in running their business go beyond making purchases or sales online. The use of computer networks internally in the enterprise is believed to yield potential gains in efficiency and productivity. The adoption of internal computer networks is a first step towards the computer integration of business processes.

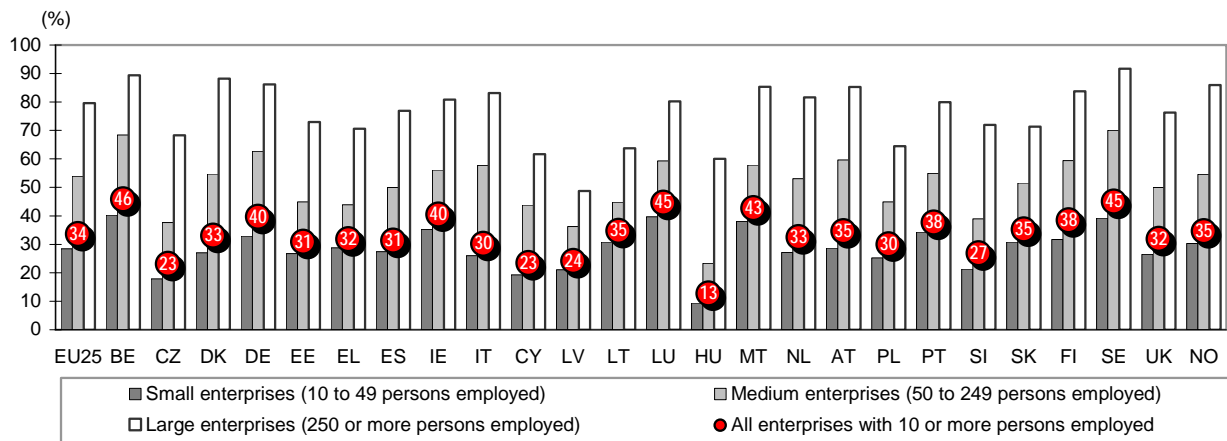
Analysis of the adoption curve for Local Area Networks (LANs; Figure 7) indicates that, apart from Luxembourg (94%), all EU Member States are in the fast growing zone of the curve. This reflects the fact that adoption levels are still low among small enterprises (60%); as for medium-sized and large enterprises the percentages already reach 85% and 95% respectively. The overall adoption level of LANs in the EU is 65%.

Figure 7 – Enterprises with a Local Area Network (2005)



Source: Eurostat, Community survey on ICT usage and e-commerce in enterprises.
Notes: Enterprises with 10 or more persons employed.

Figure 8 – Percentage of enterprises with an Intranet, by size class (2005)



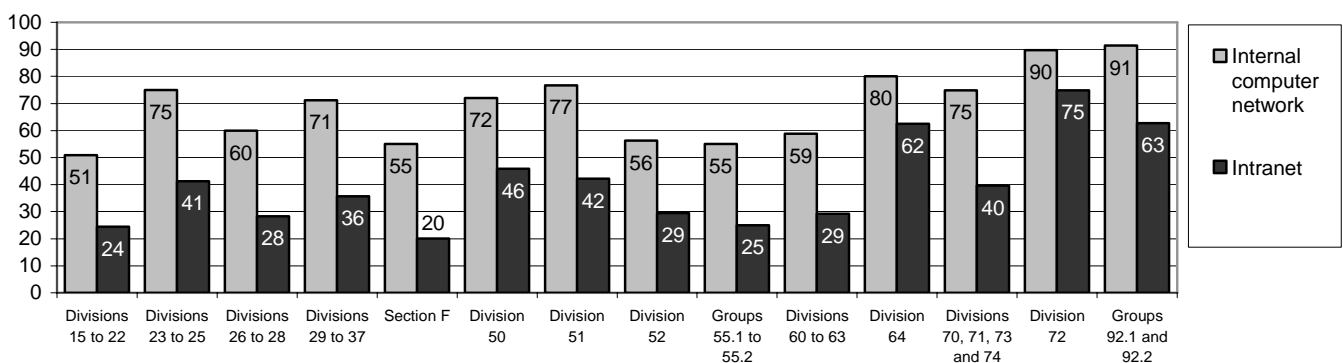
Source: Eurostat, Community survey on ICT usage and e-commerce in enterprises.
Notes: (i) Enterprises with 10 or more persons employed. (ii) EU25 aggregate not including FR, as data is not available.

An intranet is a specific application of the internal computer network which serves as a communication tool within the enterprise. As such, it can be regarded as a next step in the use of the internal computer network as e-business.

Around one third of enterprises in the EU use an intranet, ranging from 13% in Hungary to 46% in Belgium. This is half of those which have an internal computer network.

The sectoral pattern for the adoption of LANs and intranets are not very different. The use of these technologies is particularly frequent among enterprises engaged in services activities. In the motion picture, video, radio and television sector, the rate is 91% of enterprises for LANs and 63% for intranets, while in the business services sector, it reaches 77% and 45% respectively.

Figure 9 – Percentage of enterprises with LAN and Intranet, by economic activity (NACE Rev. 1.1) (2005), EU-25



Source: Eurostat, Community survey on ICT usage and e-commerce in enterprises.
Notes: (i) Enterprises with 10 or more persons employed. (ii) EU25 aggregate not including FR, as data is not available.

Integration of business processes is better implemented in the distributive trades sector

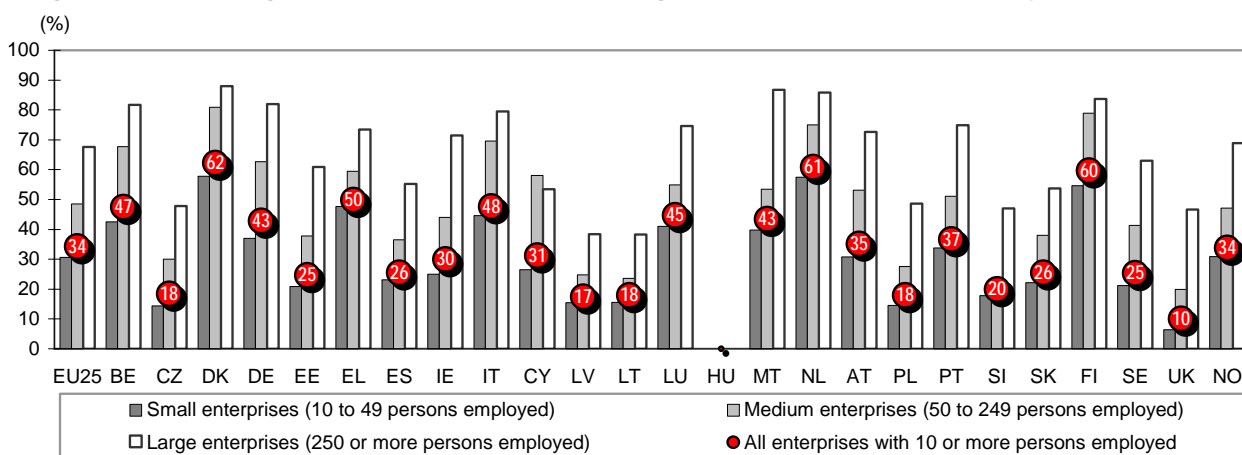
One of the most important applications of computer networks is to integrate business processes. Such integration potentially streamlines and boosts the efficiency of the enterprise. There are several ways in which business processes can be integrated. One of them is the automation or automatic linking of different processes, information systems or business functions of the enterprise. In order to measure internal integration of business processes (business processes within the enterprise, as opposed to external integration, where several enterprises are involved), the Community survey measures automatic linking between computer systems to manage orders (placed or received) and three other internal systems: re-ordering of replacement supplies; invoicing and payment; and management of production,

logistics or service operations. Figure 10 below shows the results of this indicator.

Around one third of enterprises in the EU automatically link their computer system to manage orders with at least one of the three systems mentioned above. Member States with particularly good figures for this indicator are Denmark (62%), the Netherlands (61%) and Finland (60%).

However, there are marked differences between enterprises of different sizes: 68% of large enterprises in the EU integrate internally, while less than half of small firms are doing so.

Figure 10 – Percentage of enterprises with internal integration of business processes, by size class (2005)



Source: Eurostat, Community survey on ICT usage and e-commerce in enterprises.

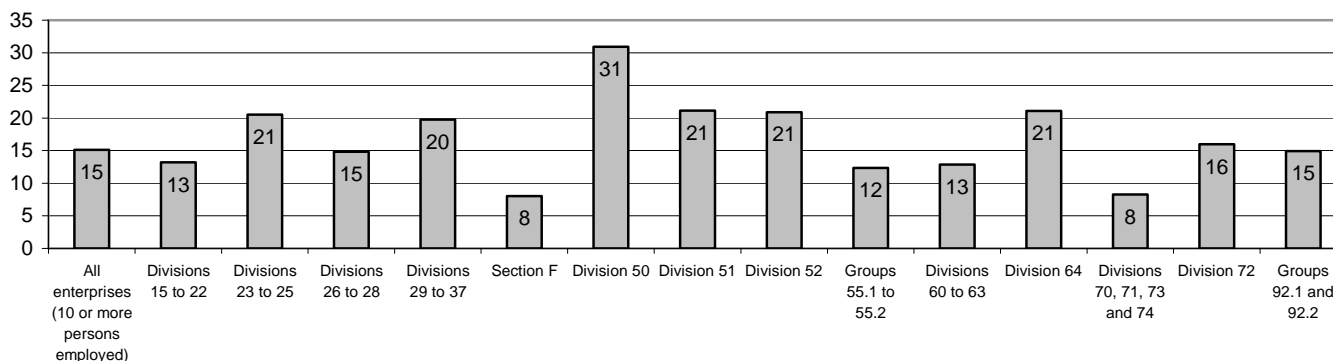
Notes: (i) Internal integration of business processes refer to the automatic linking between a computer system for managing orders and one of the following internal systems: re-ordering of replacement supplies; invoicing and payment; management of production, logistics or service operations. (ii) Enterprises with 10 or more persons employed. (iii) EU25 aggregate not including FR, as data is not available.

In order to measure the integration of business processes between different enterprises, an indicator was developed based on the automatic linking of a computer system to manage orders with suppliers' or customers' business systems. The percentage of enterprises in the EU which integrate in this way was 15% in 2005. As in the case of internal integration this figure is higher for larger

businesses: 14% for small, 20% for medium-sized and 34% for large enterprises.

External integration is particularly frequent among enterprises in the distributive trades sector, especially in the sale, maintenance and repair of vehicles, where the percentage of enterprises integrating with other enterprises is twice as high as the average.

Figure 11 – Percentage of enterprises with external integration of business processes, by economic activity (NACE Rev. 1.1) (2005), EU-25



Source: Eurostat, Community survey on ICT usage and e-commerce in enterprises.

Notes: (i) External integration of business processes refer to the automatic linking between a computer system for managing orders and a supplier's or customer's business system (ii) Enterprises with 10 or more persons employed. (iii) EU25 aggregate not including FR, as data is not available.

Table 1 – Enterprises use of ICT's (2005)

(as a percentage of the total number of enterprises with 10 or more persons employed)

	EU25	BE	CZ	DK	DE	EE	EL	ES	IE	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK	NO	
All enterprises with 10 or more persons employed																											
Internal computer network	65	82	66	83	81	42	68	61	56	49	80	59	35	94	41	71	82	54	55	36	76	62	82	80	65	76	
Intranet	34	46	23	33	40	31	32	31	40	30	23	24	35	45	13	43	33	35	30	38	27	35	38	45	32	35	
Internet access	91	95	92	97	94	90	92	90	92	92	85	75	86	92	78	90	91	95	87	81	96	92	98	96	90	93	
Website	61	65	67	82	72	53	56	43	60	54	44	29	41	59	40	54	72	70	49	37	59	61	76	85	74	67	
e-commerce purchases	24	18	21	32	41	13	14	4	41	4	15	1	7	22	5	33	20	22	9	12	15	7	19	41	51	36	
e-commerce sales	12	16	13	32	16	8	7	3	21	3	4	1	6	10	4	16	14	10	5	9	12	7	17	23	25	26	
Internal integration	34	47	18	62	43	25	50	26	30	48	31	17	18	45	:	43	61	35	18	37	20	26	60	25	10	34	
External integration	15	14	4	23	16	4	19	8	13	31	5	4	6	16	1	19	18	15	6	27	9	9	17	8	9	13	
Small enterprises (with between 10 and 49 persons employed)																											
Internal computer network	60	79	60	80	77	36	66	57	49	45	77	55	30	93	34	67	80	49	48	33	71	57	78	77	60	74	
Intranet	28	40	18	27	33	27	29	27	35	26	19	21	31	40	9	38	27	29	25	34	21	31	32	39	26	30	
Internet access	90	94	91	97	93	88	90	89	90	91	82	71	83	91	74	87	89	94	84	78	95	91	98	95	88	92	
Website	57	61	63	79	67	48	52	40	54	51	38	24	35	54	36	50	69	66	43	33	52	58	72	83	70	64	
e-commerce purchases	22	17	21	32	40	13	13	4	39	4	14	1	8	21	4	33	19	22	9	12	14	7	18	40	48	34	
e-commerce sales	10	14	12	31	14	7	6	2	18	2	2	1	6	9	4	14	12	9	4	7	10	6	15	21	22	24	
Internal integration	31	43	14	58	37	21	48	23	25	45	26	15	16	41	:	40	57	31	15	34	18	22	55	21	6	31	
External integration	14	13	3	21	14	3	18	7	11	29	3	3	6	15	1	18	17	14	5	25	8	8	16	7	7	12	
Medium enterprises (with between 50 and 249 persons employed)																											
Internal computer network	85	95	87	95	95	64	81	78	78	76	98	79	49	99	77	88	93	77	80	54	90	82	95	95	85	91	
Intranet	54	68	38	55	63	45	44	50	56	58	44	36	45	59	23	58	53	60	45	55	39	52	59	70	50	55	
Internet access	98	99	98	100	99	96	98	96	98	98	99	93	98	98	100	98	96	99	98	98	98	98	99	100	99	98	
Website	79	80	81	93	89	71	75	59	77	78	72	47	55	71	55	70	84	87	71	56	77	73	91	93	89	85	
e-commerce purchases	29	19	22	34	47	13	19	3	44	6	19	2	6	25	6	35	24	23	11	10	16	7	21	45	59	45	
e-commerce sales	18	24	17	36	22	11	10	5	30	4	14	1	5	13	4	17	23	15	6	14	15	8	23	32	36	32	
Internal integration	49	68	30	81	63	38	59	37	44	70	58	25	24	55	:	53	75	53	28	51	22	38	79	41	20	47	
External integration	20	21	6	27	22	9	23	13	17	47	14	6	8	18	1	20	23	19	8	39	10	11	20	12	15	18	
Large enterprises (with between 250 or more persons employed)																											
Internal computer network	95	98	97	99	99	89	91	90	97	91	96	92	80	100	94	103	98	95	96	90	96	91	98	98	93	99	
Intranet	80	89	68	88	86	73	71	77	81	83	62	49	64	80	60	85	82	85	65	80	72	71	84	92	76	86	
Internet access	99	98	100	100	99	95	100	98	100	99	100	98	100	100	99	103	97	100	99	100	100	98	100	100	100	100	
Website	90	86	90	97	95	76	83	79	92	88	96	65	77	90	72	74	92	96	85	75	91	75	93	97	94	88	
e-commerce purchases	40	33	25	43	52	17	25	7	60	15	20	1	8	29	8	29	34	34	11	23	26	9	34	57	72	55	
e-commerce sales	31	38	22	48	40	21	15	15	43	13	29	1	3	18	6	52	29	31	14	22	36	12	37	45	45	47	
Internal integration	68	82	48	88	82	61	73	55	71	80	53	38	38	75	:	87	86	73	49	75	47	54	84	63	47	69	
External integration	34	35	12	46	40	15	34	26	42	57	11	10	7	28	2	31	37	39	17	61	26	21	36	29	31	30	
Manufacturing (Section D of NACE)																											
Internal computer network	61	82	65	:	77	37	63	60	60	47	68	52	34	96	40	66	83	55	48	:	79	57	86	83	66	81	
Intranet	30	40	23	:	33	29	27	28	45	28	11	19	33	53	12	40	33	34	26	31	27	32	39	42	33	28	
Internet access	91	95	91	:	94	89	89	90	96	91	78	70	84	95	77	87	93	93	85	77	97	92	100	96	95	95	
Website	62	69	66	:	72	53	55	47	67	59	35	26	40	54	40	46	76	73	52	:	62	59	86	86	78	76	
e-commerce purchases	18	15	18	:	38	10	11	2	42	2	12	0	3	25	4	30	17	18	7	:	13	5	:	35	50	33	
e-commerce sales	12	20	14	:	18	7	4	4	28	2	0	1	4	9	5	12	18	12	5	:	12	7	:	25	37	27	
Internal integration	39	56	21	:	45	23	50	30	35	54	24	15	16	56	:	38	68	40	19	:	22	25	73	33	10	38	
External integration	16	13	4	:	15	4	19	8	10	33	1	2	5	15	1	16	15	10	4	:	8	7	:	7	8	10	
Distributive trade (Section G of NACE)																											
Internal computer network	68	82	72	:	82	44	74	69	50	57	59	37	92	46	73	87	56	58	:	:	81	65	83	82	63	71	
Intranet	38	54	24	:	43	34	36	42	34	38	29	25	35	44	13	43	36	42	32	:	:	36	44	56	30	43	
Internet access	91	94	91	:	93	91	94	94	89	94	88	73	86	88	76	91	89	95	87	93	99	94	98	97	83	89	
Website	61	65	65	:	72	54	55	49	46	56	33	28	39	56	38	51	70	70	44	:	64	61	76	88	68	57	
e-commerce purchases	26	23	20	:	45	19	15	6	41	7	17	1	13	26	8	40	21	26	14	:	:	6	28	45	44	33	
e-commerce sales	15	18	13	:	21	9	5	3	18	3	2	1	8	11	4	11	16	12	5	:	16	10	:	29	29	30	
Internal integration	45	58	25	:	53	34	59	41	39	60	39	22	23	64	:	52	80	59	24	56	:	36	74	42	16	48	
External integration	23	24	7	:	27	8	24	14	22	43	6	4	8	26	1	27	29	33	9	:	:	17	32	16	17	21	
Transport and telecommunications (Section I of NACE)																											
Internal computer network	60	68	58	:	74	39	76	58	53	42	81	60	28	96	42	80	73	40	61	:	:	59	74	64	52	70	
Intranet	31	32	21	:	37	31	29	34	41	27	48	26	31	43	17	59	29	21	37	:	29	34	31	27	29	29	
Internet access	90	90	92	:	93	89	92	91	89	85	81	77	86	92	84	94	88	90	91	93	96	94	92	87	93	94	
Website	54	47	59	:	55	49	45	46	67	43	57	26	33	56	40	62	62	59	55	:	:	57	57	73	65	62	
e-commerce purchases	22	15	23	:	37	10	8	3	37	5	18	1	8	15	3	30	15	15	9	:	:	6	:	30	50	34	
e-commerce sales	13	21	16	:	18	10	8	1	29	3	8	1	6	17	2	26	21	7	8	:	17	4	18	19	21	22	
Internal integration	32	38	15	:	41	23	41	31	33	32																	

➤ ESSENTIAL INFORMATION – METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

Abbreviations

EU or EU-25 (European Union);

BE (Belgium), CZ (Czech Republic), DK (Denmark), DE (Germany), EE (Estonia), EL (Greece), ES (Spain), FR (France), IE (Ireland), IT (Italy), CY (Cyprus), LV (Latvia), LT (Lithuania), LU (Luxembourg), HU (Hungary), MT (Malta), NL (Netherlands), AT (Austria), PL (Poland), PT (Portugal), SI (Slovenia), SK (Slovakia), FI (Finland), SE (Sweden), UK (United Kingdom); BG (Bulgaria), RO (Romania); IS (Iceland), NO (Norway).

Symbols

“:” confidential, or unavailable

Aggregation of results

An EU-25 aggregate is only calculated if the available countries represent at least 55% of the number of Member States and at least 60% of the EU population.

Data source

The source of the statistical information used in this SiF is the Community survey on ICT usage and e-Commerce in enterprises.

The Community survey is a network of surveys conducted nationally by the National Statistical Institutes of the EU Member-States, that follow a common European methodology defined in collaboration between Eurostat and the NSI's in the Working-Group on Information Society Statistics.

Community Survey on ICT usage and E-commerce in enterprises (2005)

Survey period: in general, the first quarter of 2005.

Sample size: 117 000 enterprises.

Scope: enterprises with 10 or more persons employed in selected activities (see below).

Activity coverage: enterprises classified in the following sections and groups of the NACE Rev. 1.1 classification: section D (manufacturing); section F (construction); section G (distributive trades); groups 55.1 and 55.2 of section H (hotels and accommodation); section I (transport, storage and communication); section K (real estate, renting and business activities) and groups 92.1 and 92.2 of section O (motion picture, video, radio and television activities).

For a full overview of NACE, see RAMON, Eurostat's classification server: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/ramon>.

Accuracy of the results

The sampling design and the resulting sample size are defined in order to be appropriate for obtaining accurate, reliable and representative results on the survey characteristics and the breakdowns.

This objective is to be achieved for the overall proportions as well as for the proportions relating to the different subgroups of the population. The estimated coefficient of variation (or relative standard error) should not exceed 2% for the overall proportions and should not exceed 5% for the proportions relating to the different subgroups of the population. This means that the real correct value should, on average in 95% of the cases, be inside the interval of the given value minus or plus 2% (or 5%) of the given value.

Definitions

LAN (Local Area Network) - A network for communication between computers confined to a single building or in closely located group of buildings, permitting users to exchange data, share a common printer or master a common computer, etc.

Intranet - An internal company communications network using Internet protocol allowing communications within an organisation.

Web site - Location on the World Wide Web identified by a Web address. Collection of Web files on a particular subject that includes a beginning file called a home page. Information is encoded with specific languages (Hypertext mark-up language (HTML), XML, Java) readable with a Web browser.

Electronic commerce (e-commerce) - Transactions conducted over Internet Protocol-based networks and over other computer-mediated networks. The goods and services are ordered over those networks, but the payment and the ultimate delivery of the good or service may be conducted on or off-line. Orders received via telephone, facsimile, or manually typed e-mails are not counted as electronic commerce.

References

For further information on the methodology of the Community surveys, see Eurostat's *Methodological Manual for statistics on the Information Society* (available from the Eurostat website).

More statistics on the Information Society and additional methodological information on the surveys can be found in NewCronos.

For specific sectoral analysis on the use of ICT by enterprises and e-business, see also e-Business W@tch from the European commission – DG Enterprise and Industry: <http://www.ebusiness-watch.org/>

Further information:

Data: [EUROSTAT Website/Home page/Industry, trade and services/Population and social conditions/Science and technology/Data](#)

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 - 📁 Industry, trade and services - horizontal view
 - 📁 Information society statistics
 - 📁 Policy indicators
 - 📁 Structural Indicators
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