

Commercialization of Internet Service

Introduction

A cultural transition has clearly taken place on the Internet. Even in the past several months, there has been a staggering increase in the number of commercial sites on the Net. In the past several years, Internet usage has expanded from almost exclusively academic and military interests to encompass a much broader scope. The average user demographic as reported by the GVV Center is undeniably tempting: 31 year-old male professional earning \$65,000 a year. These stats are rapidly diversifying, however, as current online services begin to offer Internet access. The Net is fast becoming a more visible factor in our society. Magazines such as Newsweek contain weekly "cyberspace" sections, while popular television shows like the Simpsons boast their own web sites. The effects on the medium have so far been mixed. The Internet is still developing as a means of communication, and the original network was not designed with the interests of corporate retailers in mind. Some have chosen to exploit the weaknesses of systems such as Usenet in the name of business. Others have made genuinely useful services available in exchange for prominent advertising. The driving force behind these cultural transitions has been the World-Wide Web, introducing a much more graphical, esthetically pleasing means of conveying information to the average user. Future developments such as the adaptation of HTML 3.0 will undoubtedly add momentum to the change. The advent of secure electronic money and URL content labeling will also have a sizable effect on the business climate of the Net. There are many factors driving cultural change on the Internet.