

3. COMPETING IN THE WORLD ECONOMY

3.11. Internet access and use by businesses

The Internet is a tool which enables businesses to reach large numbers of new customers every day. Small and medium-sized enterprises can now advertise and reach customers on a scale that just a few years ago was possible for only a handful of large corporations. Broadband access to the Internet is therefore an important way to compete in the global economy.

Business use of the Internet has become fairly standard practice in most OECD countries. Increasingly, businesses use broadband platforms to connect to the Internet. The share of businesses that use broadband in all businesses with ten or more employees ranges from 46% in Mexico to 99% in Iceland. In Iceland, Korea, Canada, France, Spain, Finland, Belgium and New Zealand, over 90% of businesses have a broadband connection. The OECD average is 83%.

In a majority of OECD countries, over half of businesses have their own website. The share of businesses with their own website in all businesses with ten or more employees ranges from 46% in Portugal to 89% in Japan, with an OECD average of 69%. At 85% or higher, Japan, Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands have the highest proportion of businesses with their own website.

Official data on access to and use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) by businesses are relatively scarce outside the OECD area, as the surveys to collect these data can be expensive to undertake and this is generally not a priority in developing countries. Supported by the work of the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development (see “Going further” at right), the list of economies undertaking such surveys is set to grow in the coming years.

Most non-OECD economies for which data on Internet access by business are available report broadband penetration rates lower than those in OECD countries, although the figures presented here are certainly not representative of all developing countries.

Comparing ICT use by businesses

To improve data comparability, OECD countries agreed in 2001 on a model survey on ICT use by businesses. In order to maintain comparability and relevance of information, the model survey was revised in 2005.

The questionnaire is composed of self-contained modules which can be used either in their totality or as separate modules in specific national surveys. The model survey is intended to provide guidance for measuring ICT use (including e-commerce), and participating countries are encouraged to use it as a core part of their survey development work.

While the model survey has contributed to the use of common methodologies, concepts and data items across OECD countries, there is still some variation. The OECD has attempted to standardise data where possible; the main area of standardisation is the use of a common size cut-off. Most countries provide data based on a size cut-off of 10 or more employees. Because larger businesses are generally more likely to use ICT, penetration rates for countries that include businesses with fewer than 10 employees and those that do not would not otherwise be comparable. Several countries are unable to apply the common cut-off (Japan, Mexico, New Zealand and Switzerland). Their ICT use rates are therefore less comparable than those of other countries.

Sources

OECD, ICT Database, 2009.

Eurostat, Community Survey on ICT Usage in Enterprises, 2008.

UNCTAD, E-business database May 2009.

Going further

OECD (2009), “Guide to Measuring the Information Society 2009”, www.oecd.org/sti/measuring-infoeconomy/guide.

Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development, www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/partnership/.

Figure notes

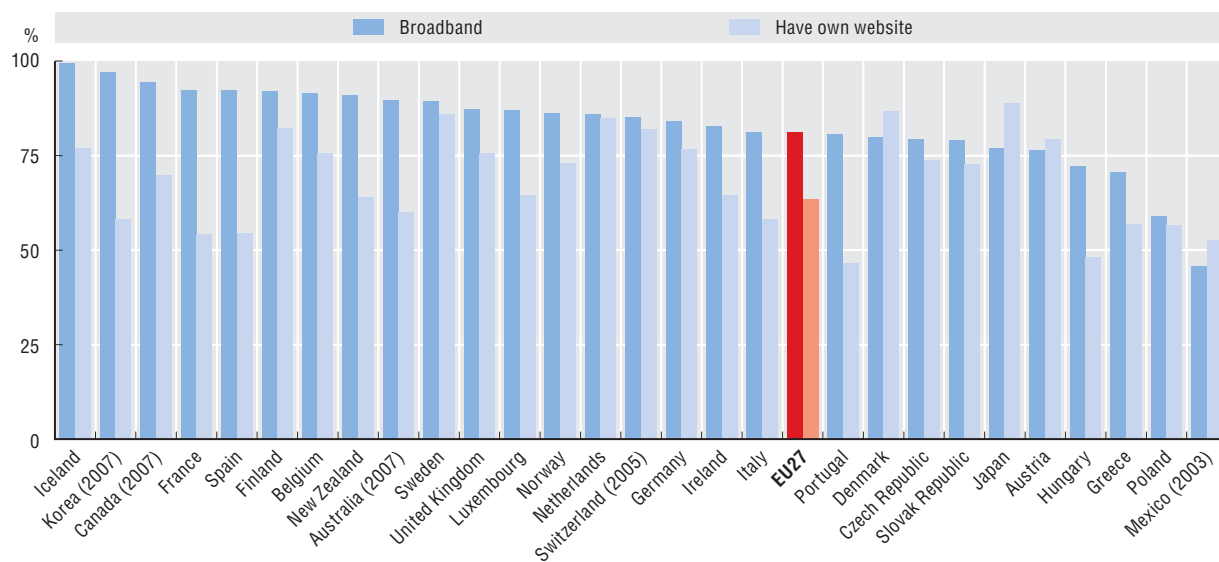
For Australia, website includes a presence on another entity’s website.

For Japan, businesses with 100 or more employees. For Mexico, businesses with 50 or more employees. For New Zealand, businesses with 6 or more employees and with a turnover greater than NZD 30 000. For Switzerland, businesses with 5 or more employees.

Broadband: download speeds equal to or faster than 256 kbit/s. Size cut-off: Brazil (9+), China (size unknown), Colombia (0+), Thailand (1+). For Hong Kong, China, establishments instead of enterprises. For Egypt, the sample was not extrapolated to the target population.

Business use of broadband and websites, 2008

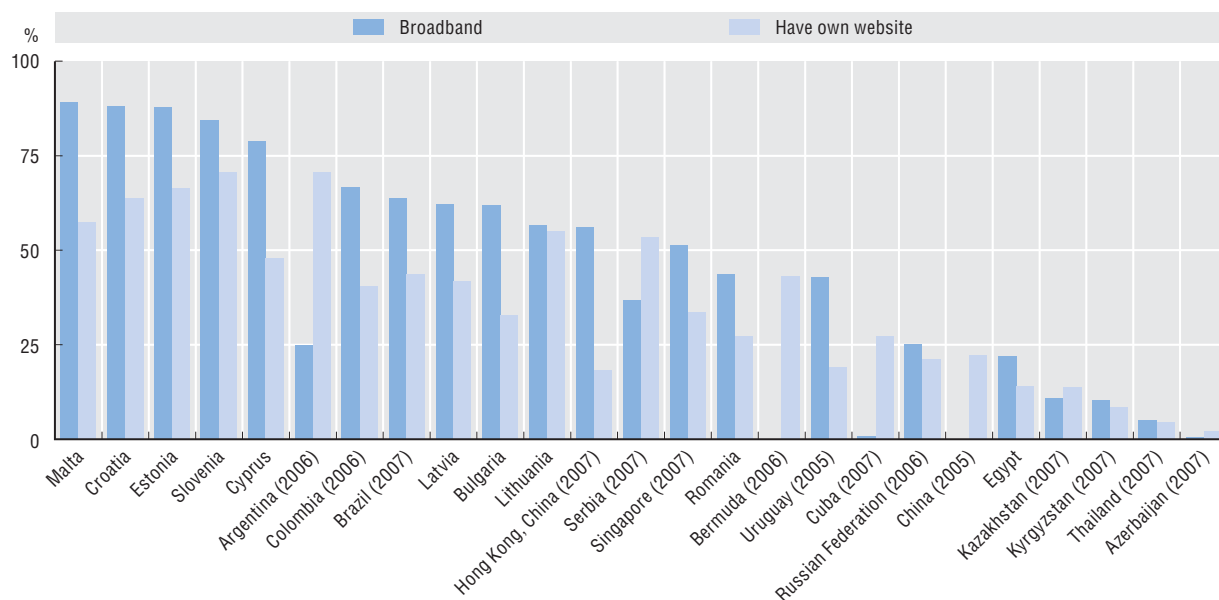
Percentage of businesses with ten or more employees



StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/745454340233>

Business use of broadband and websites in non-OECD economies, 2008

Percentage of businesses with ten or more employees



StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/745457261215>



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