



## FACT SHEET #2

### IT Use – World and Asia

#### Overview

- Nearly 1 billion people around the world are now online. Worldwide **Internet usage** has grown by 146.2% cent over the past five years. Most users are in Asia, Europe and North America.
- Seven Asia-Pacific nations are in the top 20 countries for numbers of Internet users, three - China, Japan, and India – in the top five.
- Asia leads the world in the numbers of people now on the Internet with more than 300 million users, or 34% of all the world's online users.
- But that's still only 8.4% of the total population across the Asian continent. So there's enormous room for Internet expansion, particularly among the vast populations of China and the Indian sub-continent.
- There are now an estimated 1.5 billion **mobile phone** users worldwide, expected to grow to 2 billion by 2007. By 2005 the global mobile market was worth US\$800 billion. High global growth rates are stabilizing just below 20% per annum. Most of this growth is in developing countries, especially in Africa and Asia.
- Asia has the world's largest mobile phone market, China, with 265 million users. Significant proportions of the populations of Taiwan, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, South Korea and Thailand have at least one mobile phone. Mobile subscriptions are booming in Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Pakistan and Vietnam with huge potential for expansion.
- **Children and young people** are already leading users of the Internet and mobile phones across the world. As young people aged under-18 commonly make up about half the populations of countries in Asia, Africa and the Middle East, they are likely to account much of the massive expansion of Internet usage in coming years. And they are most likely to use mobile phones, rather than fixed line connections, for their Internet access and other interactive communications.
- A 2003 Nielsen/NetRatings survey of eight European countries found more than 13 million teenagers – especially the under-12s – flocking to the Internet, up one third in a year.

**Sources:** Internet World Statistics for March 2005 @ [www.internetworldstats.com](http://www.internetworldstats.com) and Paul Budde Communications reports from 2004 and 2005 @ [www.budde.com.au](http://www.budde.com.au)

- A 2004 National Electronics and Computer Technology Centre survey in Thailand found that more than half the country's Internet users were aged 15-24, with another 10% aged 6-14. With only 12% of the Thai population online, young people can be expected to account for a large proportion of growth in future.

## By Country

There are few reliable statistics on Internet and mobile phone use by children and young people in the Asia region. These are general figures for each country.

**Bangladesh** has an estimated 243,000 Internet users, up 143% in the past five years. That's still only 0.2 % of the population with Internet access. This is likely to change dramatically in coming years, with mobile phone use almost doubling annually over the last two to three years. If the government continues to deregulate and to license more mobile phone operators, Bangladesh is expected to have about 10 million mobile subscribers by 2006.

Only 0.2% of the **Cambodian** population, or 35,000 people, are Internet users – although that's up 483.3 % on five years ago. Internet use has been hampered by poor infrastructure and high dialup costs. The future of Internet access is likely to lie with Cambodia's flourishing mobile market - more than 600,000 mobile phone users compared with just 40,000 fixed lines.

With an estimated 94 million people online, **China** is the second largest Web population in the world behind the United States and ahead of Japan. It's the fastest growing Internet market in Asia and is predicted to be worth US\$27 billion by 2006, or a fifth of the Asian telecommunications market. China's online population already accounts for nearly a third of the world's Internet users, but that's still only about 7% of the country's total population. China is the largest mobile phone market in the world – around 265 million Chinese, or one in five, having a mobile phone.

**Hong Kong** has nearly 5 million Internet users, up 113% in the past five years, or about 70% of the total population. Its mobile phone market is close to saturation point for the adult population of 5.9 million.

**India** has more than 39 million Internet users – that's 13% of the world's Web population, but only 3.6% of India's population. In 2004, there were 189 operational ISPs in the country, but 10% of the ISPs have 90% of the subscribers. India has huge potential for Internet growth through its 42 million fixed line subscribers, its booming mobile phone market and the growing popularity of cyber cafes. An estimated 60% of users regularly get on the Internet via the country's 9,000 cyber cafes.

**Indonesia** has more than 15 million Internet users, up 665% in the past five years, to account for 7% of the country's population. The enormous Internet potential is matched by its booming mobile phone market.

**Japan** is the world's third largest Internet market with an estimated 68 million subscribers, up nearly 44% in the past five years. More than half Japan's population is online – that's more than a fifth of the worldwide Web population, accounting for more than a fifth of the world's Web population. Japan is also one of the highest users of broadband and wireless Internet in the world. Built-in cameras and 3G Internet services are driving Japan's mobile phone market. By March 2004, Japan had almost 82 million mobile subscribers – surpassing fixed line subscriptions - with over 16.5 million signed up for 3G services.

**Sources:** Internet World Statistics for March 2005 @ [www.internetworldstats.com](http://www.internetworldstats.com) and Paul Budde Communications reports from 2004 and 2005 @ [www.budde.com.au](http://www.budde.com.au)

**Malaysia's** 9.5 million Internet users account for just over a third of its population, up 157% on five years ago. Almost half of the 25 million people in Malaysia have a mobile phone, and that's growing strongly.

**Mongolia** has seen an explosion in its mobile market since 2001 with a big jump in numbers of subscribers. There are an estimated 142,800 Internet subscribers, or nearly 6% of the population, up 376.0 % in five years.

Despite a 1000% growth rate over the past five years, **Pakistan** has a very low Internet user population of around 1.5 million, or around 1% of the population. There remains huge potential for expansion in both the Internet and mobile phone markets. The 3.3 million mobile subscribers by the end of 2003 only represented 2% of the population.

The **Philippines** has just under 8 million Internet subscribers, or about 9% of its population. That's risen by 300% over the past five years. The number of mobile subscribers has grown at nearly twice that rate, racing past the number of fixed-line telephone subscribers to reach 22 million by late 2003. Filipinos have fallen in love with SMS and send around 150 million text messages every day.

**South Korea** is the third largest mobile phone market in Asia, topping the 35 million subscriber mark in March 2004. About three-quarters of the population carry at least one mobile phone. South Korea has nearly 32 million Internet users - about two-thirds of its population and 10% of worldwide Web users. Over 80% of all homes with Internet access the network via a high-speed broadband connection.

**Taiwan** has the world's highest percentage of mobile phone users and is moving energetically into the next 3G generation of mobile services. More than half Taiwan's population is online – with more than 12 million Internet subscribers – and more than 13% of subscribers use broadband.

**Thailand** is embracing the Internet and mobile phones enthusiastically after a slow start. By March 2004, there were more than 22 million mobile phone subscribers (nearly 40% of the population) and nearly 12 million Internet users (12%). A national survey in 2004 found that more than half Thailand's Internet users were aged 15-24, with another 10% aged 6-14.

**Vietnam's** 5.3 million Internet users comprise about 6% of the population, with numbers up more than 2500% over the past five years. Vietnam's mobile phone market is also growing strongly.

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