



'Teachers & the Internet'

November 2000

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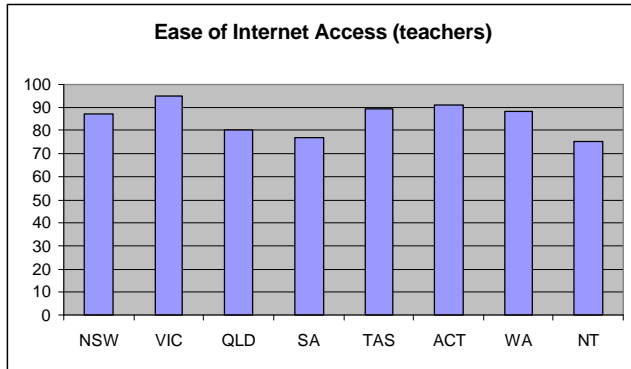
In December 1999 Schoolsnet Australia commissioned AC Nielsen to undertake national research into the use of Information Technology with Australian teachers in K-12 schools. The research incorporated primary and secondary and primary/secondary schools, also across sector, including Government, Catholic and Independent. Consideration was also given to metropolitan, rural and regional.

A total of 1014 interviews with teachers were conducted at schools around Australia.

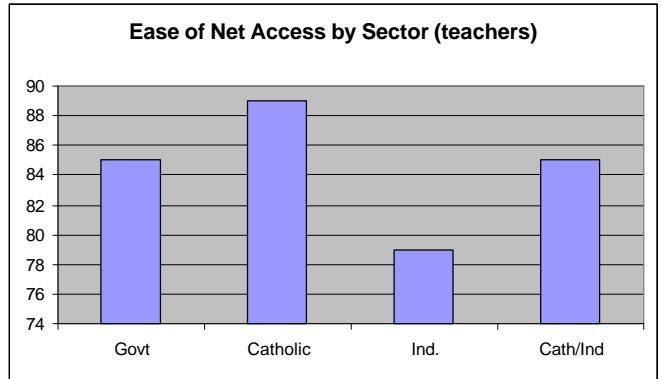
STATE	SCHOOLS	TEACHERS
NSW	38	127
VIC	26	123
QLD	24	125
SA	39	131
TAS	27	131
ACT	28	125
WA	31	125
NT	31	127
National Total	244	1014

The following are notes and analyses taken from the research data as provided by AC Nielsen.

Rate of Internet access at 98%.

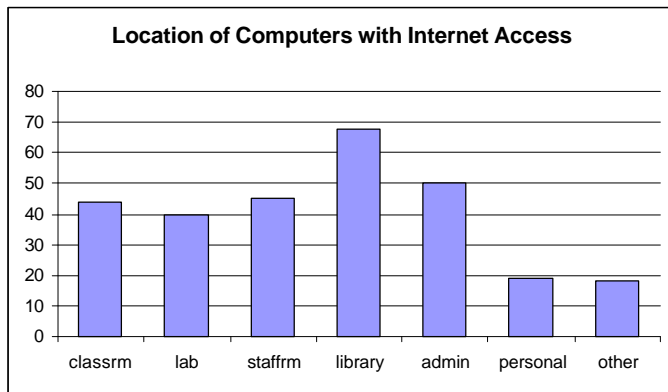


Ease of access at 85%



In terms of sector, 85% of government schools found it easy to access the Net, in contrast with 89% of Catholic schools and 79% for Independents. As expected, metropolitan led rural and regional in terms of ease of access.

Location of Access



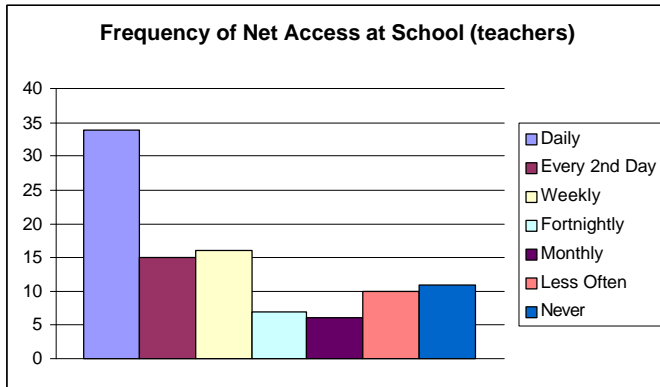
The surprise with this result is reflected in the lower levels of access in the classroom, as compared with the Library and Admin office. It posits that schools to date have viewed Internet access as a library resource tool, rather than that related to professional use, ie classroom, and personal use.

Analysis of this at a sectoral level reveals that in Independent schools, the most common location for computers with

access was in the laboratory (54%), as compared with laboratory access in Government schools (36%). This is most likely due to the history of implementation of the Internet into schools nationally, whereby the Independent sector had greater access to resources, thus able to purchase infrastructure and required support at an earlier time than that of the Government schools. Early educational psychologists posited that the most appropriate place for integration of IT into the curriculum was within a laboratory situation, which allowed for enhanced classroom management for teachers and constructivist learning for students. This trend was then later given further consideration with other theorists arguing that IT required integration into the curriculum within a classroom environment.

Government schools arriving later to the implementation of Internet and IT infrastructure therefore implemented within the classroom (48%) over the laboratory (36%) model. For example, in Victoria, 68% of computers with Internet access are in the classroom, as opposed to 38% in a laboratory. There is, still however, a high level of Internet availability within Government school libraries. This can also be explained in that schools also conduct lessons within school library classrooms, with the teacher-librarian traditionally responsible for integration and delivery of IT-based curriculum.

Frequency of Use at School



41% of Victorian teachers use the Internet at school on a daily basis.

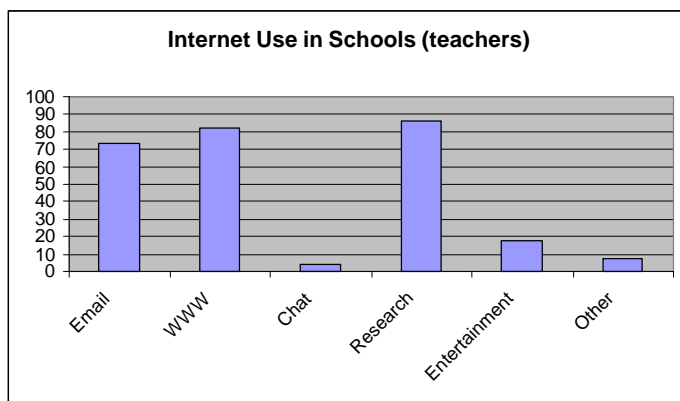
On a national level this compares with 34% of usage on a daily basis. This results in 65% of teachers nationally accessing the Internet on a daily to weekly basis.

On a primary versus secondary breakdown, it is clear that there is a

higher frequency of use in secondary schools (39%) in comparison with primary schools (30%). It would be expected that the reason for the difference lies in the fact that secondary schools are better resourced than primary schools in general.

Use of the Internet At School

The most used aspect of the Internet in schools is research (86%) which reflects the profession's recognition of the Internet as a research tool which acts to support their pedagogy.

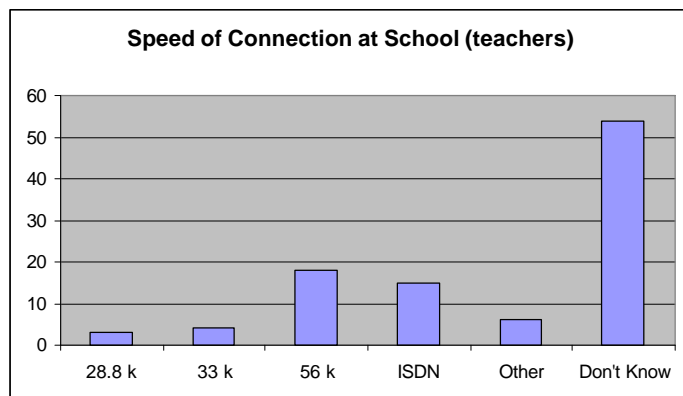


The research supports Schoolsnet's recognition that teachers find chat rooms or the functionality of chat of very little use within the school or classroom environment (7%)

nationally. Typically chat sessions or chat functionality requires real time communication between teachers and/or classes, a difficult project to undertake given school timetables and resource requirements to undertake such projects.

This is also reflected in the high use of email (73%) by teachers, a tool able to be used as required with minimal professional development or infrastructure required. Within the research it was also revealed that 34% of the profession used email at school on a daily basis, with 13% using it at least every second day. Only 4% of the profession have not yet used email.

In comparison WWW usage is used by 15% of teachers daily, therefore, 54% of the teaching profession would access the WWW at least weekly.



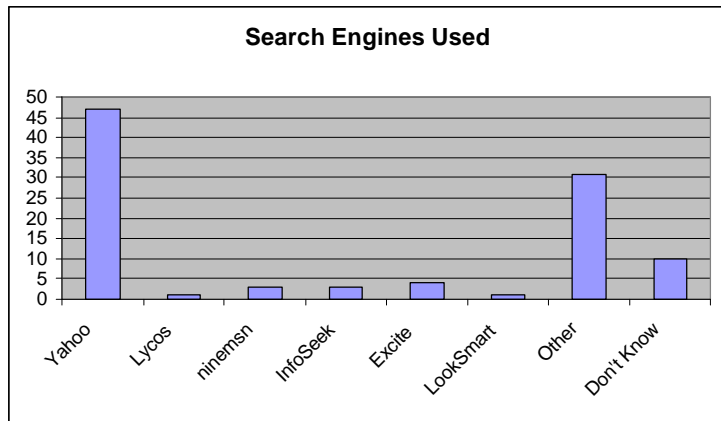
Speed of Connection

Of those teachers surveyed 33% had a 56K connection or higher to the Internet from school. This awareness does not vary greatly by state, sector or primary and secondary. Although there is a slight variation within the Catholic sector with 28% of those surveyed citing a 56K modem connection.

Search Engines Used

To qualify the research parameters relating to this particular question, it was decided that Internet groups other than the immediate search engines, would be tested within the national research, including content providers and niche search engines.

Again a breakdown by state, sector, primary and secondary, does not vary these results greatly.



Use of the Internet for Publishing.

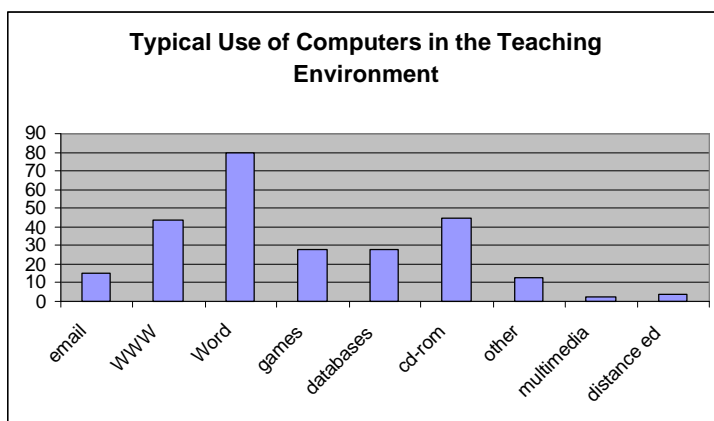
Of those surveyed 30% have yet to utilize the Internet for publishing work, professional or personal. Further, 44% have never tried to utilize the Internet for this means, and only 7% would have done so in the last week. Schoolsnet has recognized in the last two years the trend within the profession and schools of the benefits of placing curriculum resources and school resources in general, online, so as to be made available to others as required. Within the school environment, the movement to online resourcing represents significant cost savings in a time of increased economic pressures on the whole education sector. Therefore there is currently an imperative upon teachers (as the curriculum leaders within schools) to publish online. However, there are barriers to entry for many teachers, primarily they are those relating to lack of appropriate professional development and training, together with a time requirement to develop and/or adapt resources for the online environment.

Of those surveyed 28% had produced a web page (page 133).

Use the Internet for Personal Reasons

50% of those surveyed would use the Internet for personal reasons, and 50% of those surveyed would not. There is no great variation across state, sectoral or primary and secondary breakdowns. However, the teaching profession has come under a great deal of media scrutiny upon its usage of the Internet within the school environment. It is highly likely that this group would be sensitive to questions relating to personal usage of the Internet.

Use of Computers in the Teaching Environment



84% use computers in the teaching environment, versus 16% currently not using computers. A further breakdown was then undertaken into computer usage within the school, beyond the Internet itself.

Within those surveyed there was cross-over in terms of multimedia, educational programs/distance education, cd-rom and WWW.

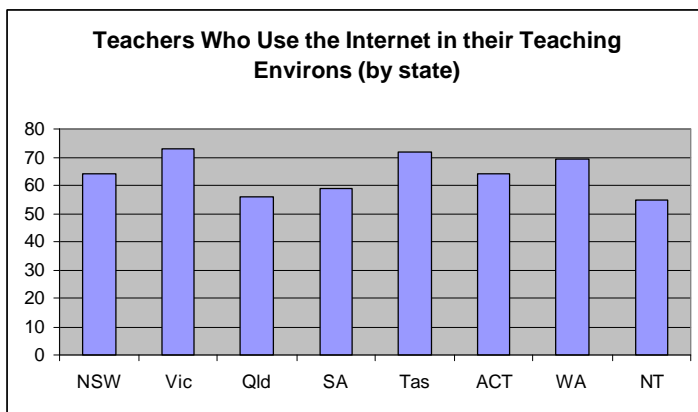
A further state-based breakdown reveals that the highest use of email in the teaching environment is NSW (18%), use of WWW is in Vic (52%).

As would be expected 55% of secondary schools utilized the WWW in their teaching environment, compared with 35% in primary schools. Email did not differ in usage between these two groups.

Sectorally, the Catholics had the highest usage of email (18%) and the highest usage of the WWW (50%) as compared with the Government sector (43%).

NB: Other typical areas of use in the teaching environment surveyed included: Teaching IT/learning to use computer/keyboard/typing skills/learning software (3%); spreadsheets/Excel (6%); Powerpoint (2%); Publishing/desktop publishing (5%); research (5%).

Do You Use the Internet in your Teaching Environment?



Possibly one of the most significant questions for Schoolsnet was answered with a resounding yes, 64% of teachers surveyed said they do use the Internet in their teaching environment.

There was variation between primary and secondary as would be expected due to resourcing issues. 75% of secondary schools use the Internet in their teaching environment, as

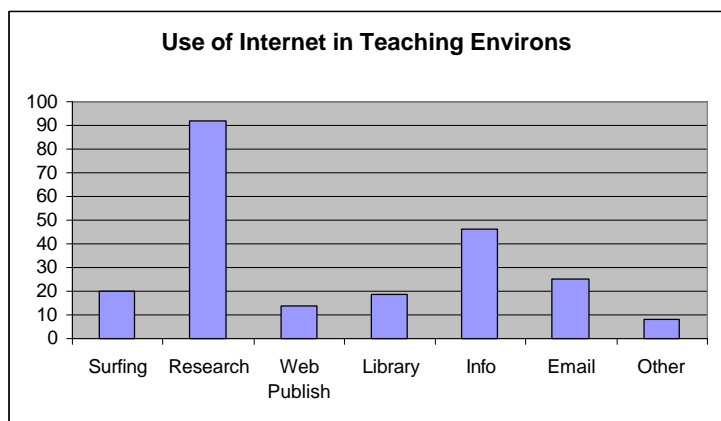
compared with 57% of primary schools.

Sectorally, the greatest disparity falls between the Government and Catholic sectors (67-68%) compared with Independent schools (46%) utilizing the Internet in their teaching environment.

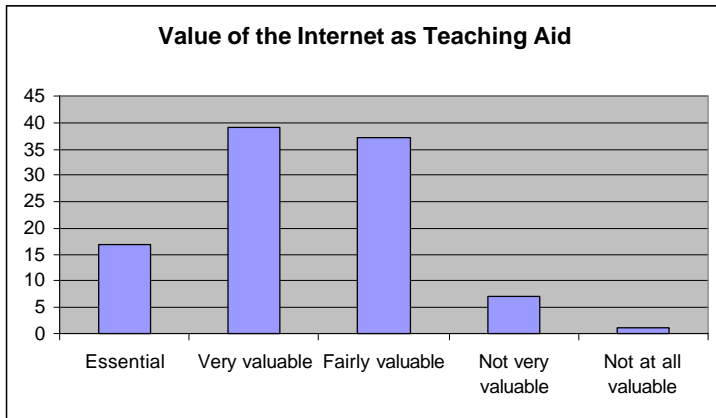
What do you use the Internet for in your teaching environment?

There were no great variations here, with a few exceptions. In Victoria 6% of teachers use the Internet for web publishing, compared with 24% of teachers in NSW.

Sectorally, 20% of Independent schools utilize the Internet for web publishing, as compared with 11% of Catholic schools and 14% of Government schools.



Value of the Internet as a Teaching Aid



This data is significant in supporting Schoolsnet's premise to the education market of the value of the Internet to the teaching profession, schools and for students' learning outcomes.

As a total 93% of teachers nationally believe the Internet to be an essential and valuable teaching aid.

Internet Access at Home

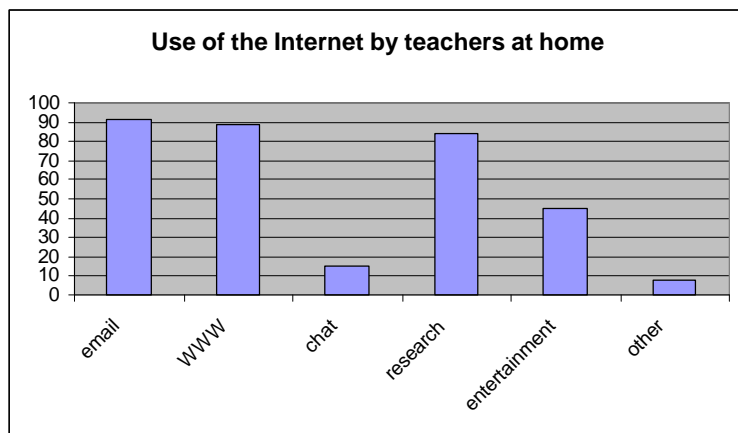
Perhaps one of the most surprising (and pleasing) results to come out of the national research is the level of Internet access that teachers have at home. 61% of teachers nationally have Internet access at home. This compares with the national average of households connected to the Internet at 23% (ABS, August 1999).

This is further represented in the use of the Internet at home by this group as 84% of this group with home access use it at least weekly (36% use it daily).

Of those with home access, the following breakdown is provided in terms of usage.

It can be observed that use of chat facilities by teachers at home is at least double (15%) than that of school (7%).

Further that the data reveals that WWW usage at home by teachers is fairly high (72%), which compares with use within the teaching environment (44%).



Proficiency

The level of proficiency of this group using the Internet was also required for testing. The majority of teachers had used the Internet for 2-2.5 years (19%). Significantly 18% had used the Internet for 4-7 years. Secondly that the lowest time using the Internet was in the smallest time parameter, 6 months (6%).

Also significant is the data which reveals that 70% of teachers consider themselves to be fairly proficient or proficient on the Internet. This contrasts with the qualitative focus groups with those teachers who had high levels of proficiency, where the perception revealed that teachers believe that 'other' teachers are not proficient enough.

On a state-by-state basis, teachers in Victoria believed they had the highest proficiency (40%), closely followed by those in Tasmania (35%). This would bear up given that Tasmania was one of the earliest states to adopt the Internet as a distance education model.

There are no great variations between primary and secondary in terms of proficiency, nor are there sectorally.

Professional Services on the Internet

The following data reflects those teachers who were quite or very interested in the following tools and content services being made available to them on the Internet.

- Accessing a teacher database online (say a teachers' list of who's who) 90%
- Obtaining lesson templates with worksheets you could use offline. 44%
- Easy ways to publish online 78%
- Participating in online forums personally or professionally 36%
- Starting up a discussion forum of your own 11%
- Obtaining online support 55%
- Being able to discuss professional issues with an expert 65%
- Obtaining subject resources 88%
- Obtaining state-specific resources 75%
- Online tutorials 49%
- Professional development 68%
- Reading and sharing online reviews of books and software 47%

Analysis of this data reflects Schoolsnet's understanding of the profession seeking as much technical and resource support as possible online.

Personal Services on the Internet

- Lifestyle information 31%
- News and current affairs 47%
- Education news 62%
- Sport 28%
- Obtaining weather information 24%
- Horoscopes 5%
- Recipes/menu plans 16%
- Information on theatre, movies & entertainment 31%

Interest in Purchasing Over the Internet

Of those surveyed the majority agreed there was interest to purchase online (53%). This did not vary greatly across the states. There was a higher level of interest from the secondary schools (57%) versus the primary (45%) and not surprisingly a greater level of interest from the rural sector (56%) versus metropolitan (52%).

This data was further broken down to test various areas of interest for items to purchase online as follows.

Of the national group of teachers surveyed 59% were willing to purchase for their school online. There was no great variation across the states, however there was a higher level of interest from secondary schools (63%) versus primary (56%).

Interestingly, the Government schools expressed the highest level of interest (61%) as compared with the Catholic schools (55%). This figure is significant given the higher levels of access available to teachers in Catholic schools.

There was no great differentiation between metropolitan, regional and rural in this data.

Significantly perhaps, the greatest variation occurs in gender, males (67%), females (54%). This is an important consideration given that 70% of teachers are female, and the primary household purchaser is female.