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هيئة الاتصالات وتقنية المعلومات  
Communications and Information Technology Commission



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**Communications and Information Technology Commission**

# **Internet Usage in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

## **Government Sector**

**The Second year ( 2008 ) Report .**

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# Internet Usage in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

**Background**

## 1.0 Background

**Communications and Information Technology Commission (CITC)** was established under the name of Saudi Communications Commission pursuant to the Council of Ministers Decision No. (74) Dated 5/3/1422H. The Commission was entrusted with new tasks related to information technology to become (Communications and Information Technology Commission) under the Council of Ministers Decision No. (123) dated 21/5/1424H and the name was changed to CITC. The Mission Statement of the Commission is to ***"Ensure the provision of universally available, high quality and affordable communication and information technology services"***

Internet service was officially made available in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1997. Internet is becoming an integral part of the Saudi Society and Economy. CITC wants to understand the Internet status and potential growth within the Kingdom. To this end, a comprehensive study covering a wide range of the Internet related indicators in Saudi Arabia was needed. Nielsen was entrusted to conduct the study in 2007. This year, 2008 the study has been repeated to assess the extent of changes that have occurred from 2007.

The study evaluates the current situation of Internet in Saudi Arabia. The study aims to identify the penetration levels, habits and usage patterns and the future potential of Internet in Saudi Arabia. It covers a wide range of information areas from infrastructure to satisfaction. It covers different types of users – individual users, home users, government agencies, educational institutes and corporate users. The research was designed, to ensure national representation. Further, the study would be repeated annually for a minimum of three times in order to measure progress and growth.

### Salient Features of the Research

- ▶ **National Representation**
- ▶ **Across Customer Types : Consumers, Corporate and Government**
- ▶ **Annual Tracking to measure progress**

This document details the findings of the survey carried out among **Government sector** in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

# Internet Usage in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

**Methodology /  
Sample Profile**

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## 2.0 Methodology

The detailed methodology report has been highlighted in the appendix of this report.

### 2.1 Research Design

- A quantitative research exercise was conducted.
- **505 interviews were conducted in 2008**
- Government department representatives across the country were interviewed.

### 2.2 Target Respondents

- Respondents interviewed for the survey were:
  - IT / Telecom managers or the officials who are responsible for such decisions.

### 2.3 Coverage and Sampling

- Interviews were conducted in all the provinces of Saudi Arabia.
- The sample for Government interviews was designed using the Yellow Pages Directory.

### 2.4 Research Instrument

- Interviews were conducted using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was translated into Arabic. Interviews were done in Arabic / English as convenient to the respondent.
- The questionnaires were a mix of close and open-ended questions.
- The length of the listing interview was around 10-15 minutes while the detailed interview was approximately 30-35 minutes long.

### 2.5 Quality Control

- Rigorous quality controls were followed at both the field and data processing levels. A minimum of 25% of the questionnaire were back checked by the Field Supervisors and Field Managers.
- At the data processing stage, questionnaire which were not filled in properly were rejected and only after ensuring 100% cleaned data were considered for the analysis.
- For details on the Quality Control standards please refer to the CITC Inception Report Section 6 and 7.

### 3.0 Sample Profile

In total, 505 Government offices were contacted for the purpose of this research. The following provinces were covered in the sample.

Exhibit 3.1 Sample Composition by Provinces

	2007	2008
Base: All respondents	441	505
<b>Central Region</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>30%</b>
Riyadh Province	23%	<b>21%</b>
Qassim Province	12%	9%
<b>Western Region</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>27%</b>
Makkah Province	17%	17%
Madinah Province	4%	10%
<b>Eastern Region</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Southern Region</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>17%</b>
Assir Province	8%	9%
Others	8%	8%
<b>Northern Region</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>16%</b>

The information will be analyzed on the base of the number of offices in the various provinces / regions.

Majority of the departments contacted in the sample have more than five branches in the various provinces, while 18% of the departments do not have branches in the Kingdom other than the head office.

# Internet Usage in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

## Detailed Findings



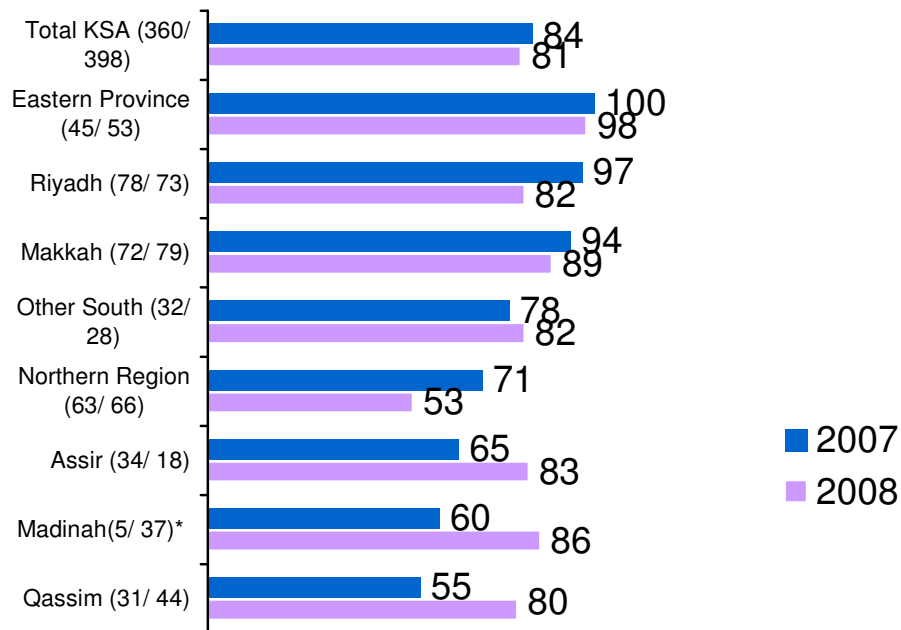
## 4.0 Infrastructure & Investments

### 4.1 Computer Penetration

Although the penetration of computers in the head offices of Government departments is nearly universal, amongst branch offices the figure is lower at 81%, which is a decline from 84% in 2007.

The penetration varies by provinces with the larger provinces having a higher penetration.

Exhibit 4.1 Computer Penetration in branch offices by Province



Note: \* Base too small to analyze

Computer penetration: % of government establishments owning a computer even if it's only one computer.

Calculation: No. of employees / No. of computer x % of computer used by students

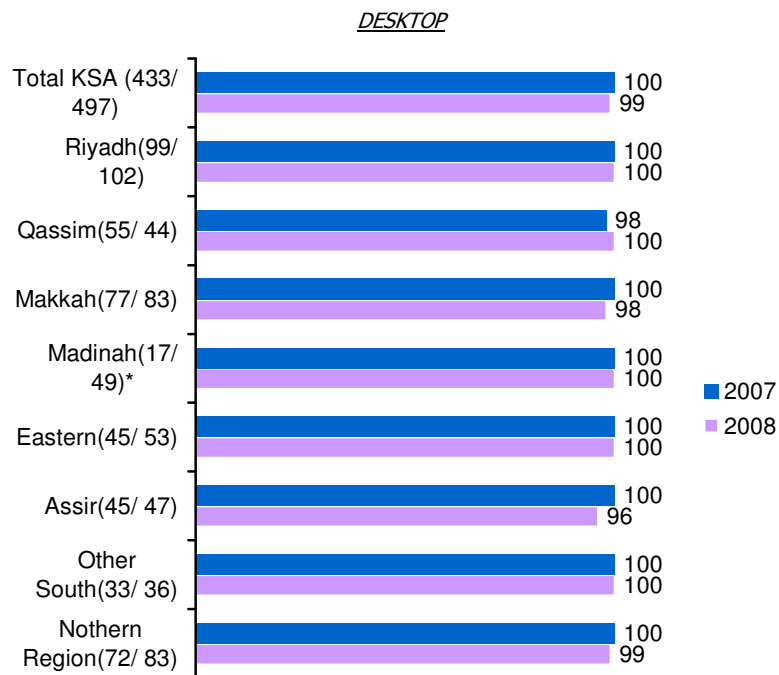
**Almost universal penetration (99%) of desktops in Government departments.**

**Computer devices used are mainly branded.**

## 4.2 Devices

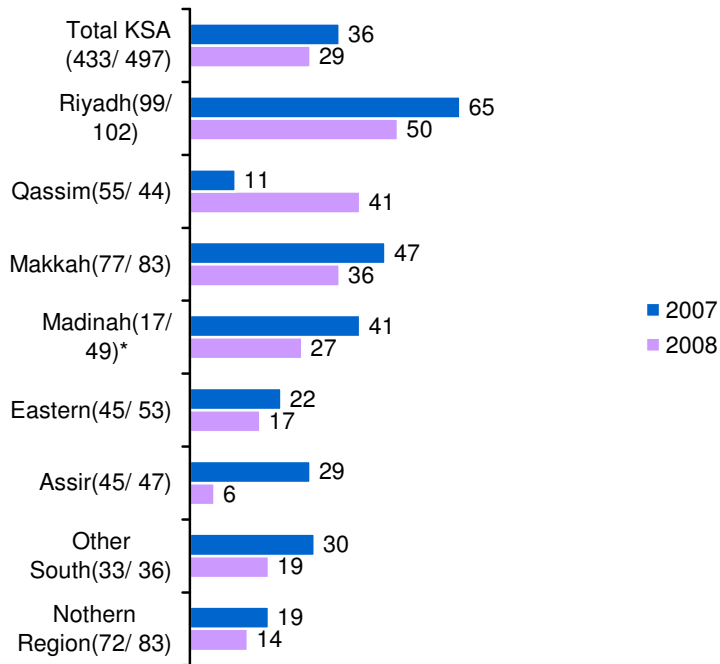
Desktop is the most widely used computer device, with full penetration. However, the penetration of laptops has decreased year on year from 36% to 29% in 2008. PDA's usage is minimal with 2% penetration only.

Exhibit 4.2 Computer devices by Province



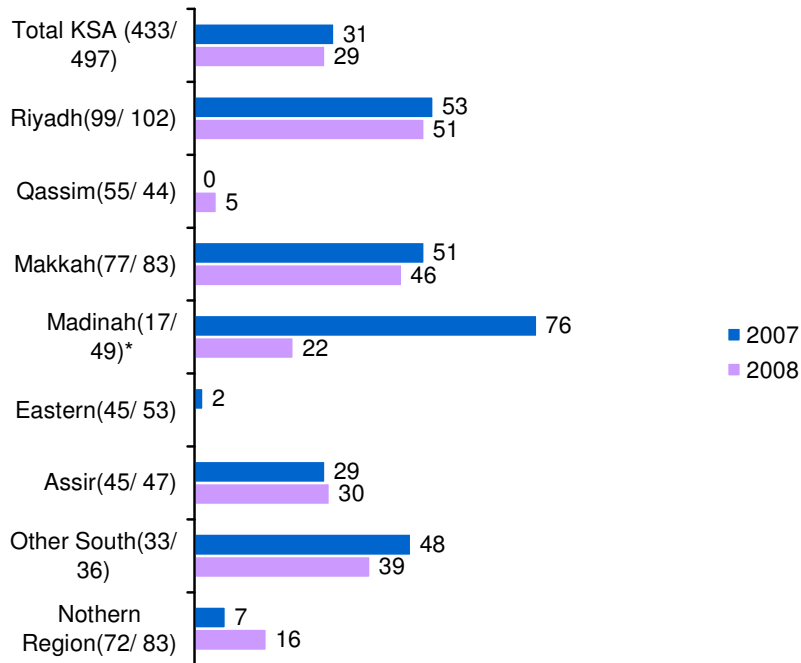
Base : All Departments which use Computer Devices Note: \* Base too small to analyze

LAPTOP



Base : All Departments which use Computer Devices Note: \* Base too small to analyze

SERVER



Base : All Departments which use Computer Devices Note: \* Base too small to analyze

92% of all computer devices used are branded. 100% of PDA's owned are branded, while 98% of laptops and 90% of desktops.

#### 4.3 Depth of usage

There has been a role reversal with regards to computer devices within head office and branches. Each head office, on an average has 117 computer devices, a decrease from 2007 where there was an average of 166 computers. While each branch has an average of 150 computers compared to 115 computers in the previous year.

However the density of computers owned is higher in the Head Office (52%) with computer devices being provided to a higher proportion of employees as compared to the branches (46%).

Exhibit 4.3 Percentage of Employees Provided with Computer Devices

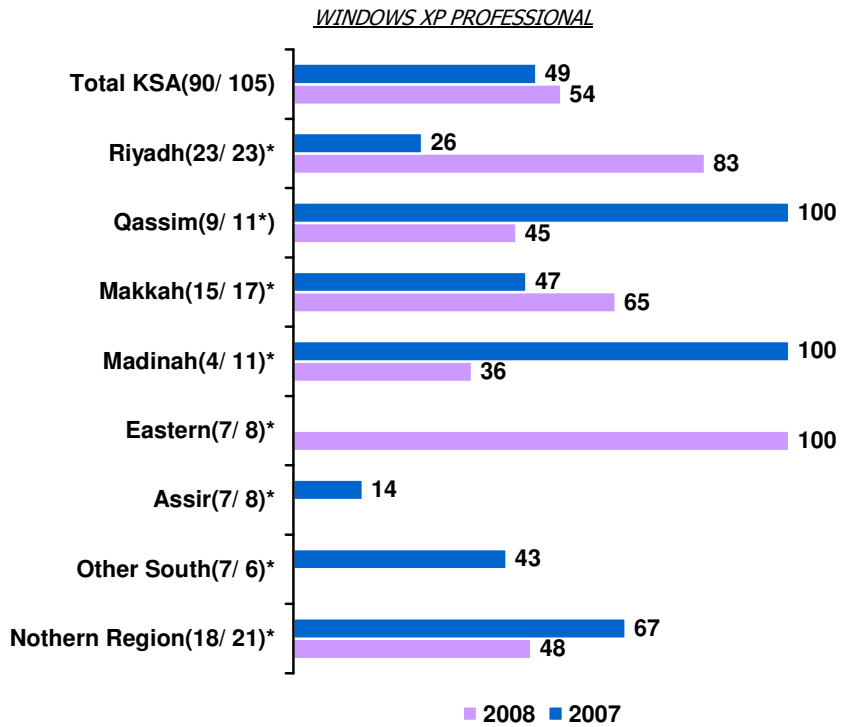
	HEAD OFFICE		BRANCH OFFICE	
	2007	2008	2007	2008
<i>Base: All departments which use Computer</i>	89	104	60	74
<b>% of Employees</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>46%</b>

#### 4.4 Operating Systems

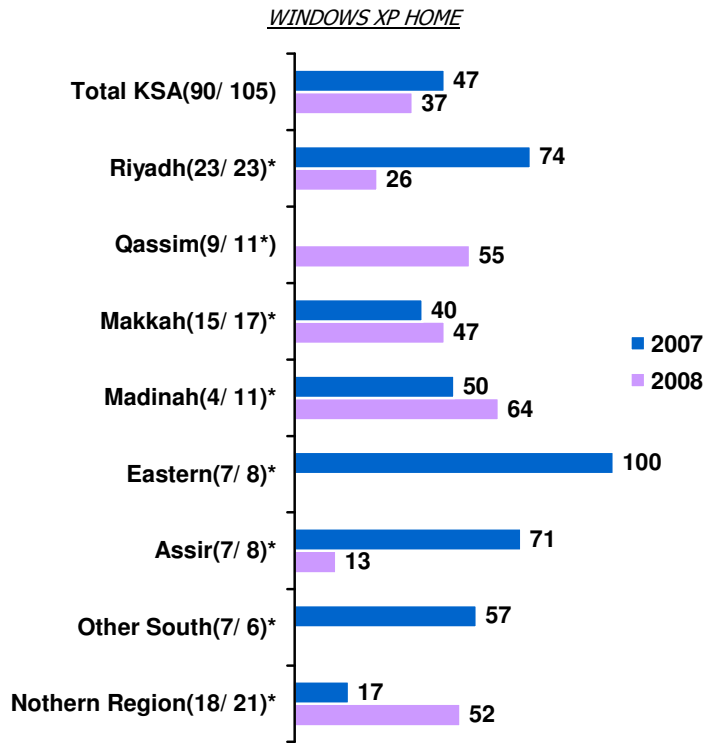
Microsoft is the most dominant operating system in the Government departments. Windows XP Professional being the most popular choice, with many changing from Microsoft Home in 2007. Other operating systems like Macintosh and Linux have negligible usage.

The awareness of 'Open Source' applications is moderate (20%).

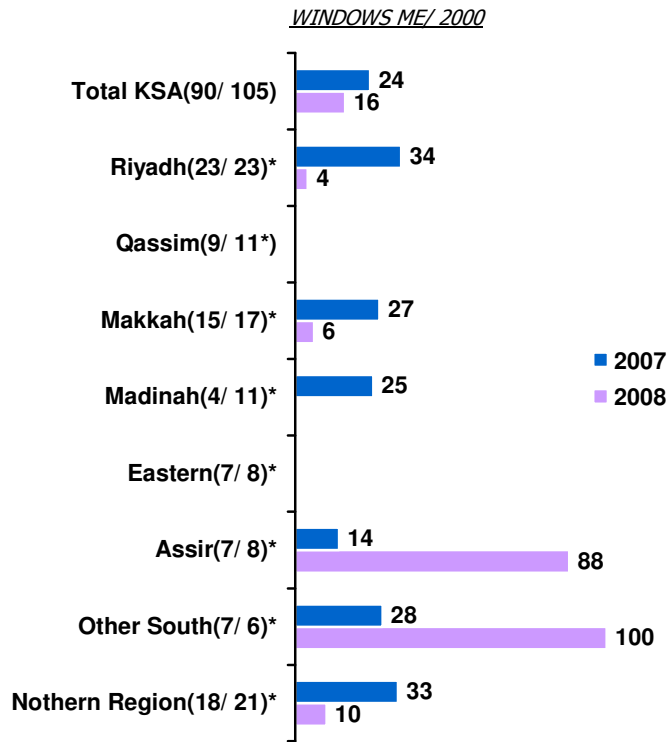
Exhibit 4.4 Operating systems used by Province



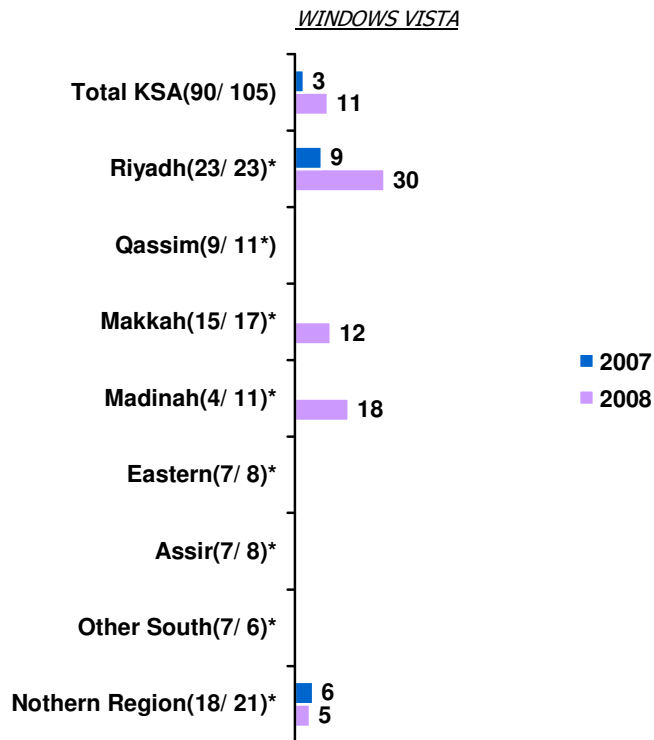
Base : All Departments which use Computer Devices Note: \* Base too small to analyze



Base : All Departments which use Computer Devices



Base : All Departments which use Computer Devices



Base : All Departments which use Computer Devices

English only operating systems are not popular within Government organizations in Saudi Arabia, with 0% choosing this service. 56% choose Arabic only, while 44% choose Arabic and English.

Employees and administrative staff largely prefer Arabic while almost half of the management staff (43%) show a preference for English as the language for the operating system.

#### 4.5 Investments

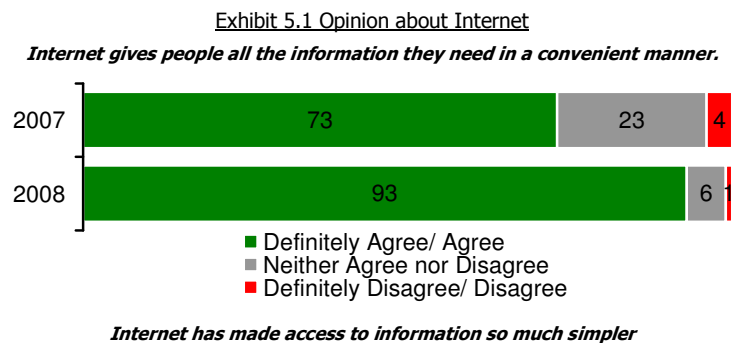
In a year, a department in the Kingdom spends on an average of about 3182 SR on hardware, software maintenance and training. This has increased from 2007 where the average spend was 2423 SR. The IT spends in the Government departments are inline with large corporate entities.

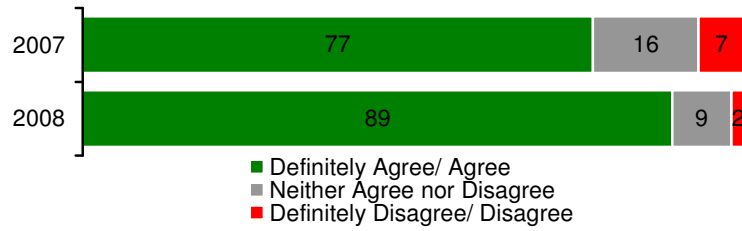
Almost half (47%) of the Government entities do not provide IT training, this is an increase from 42% in 2007. However, for those who do provide training, MS Office and Database training is the most popular.

**IT Training is still not a common practice in departments**

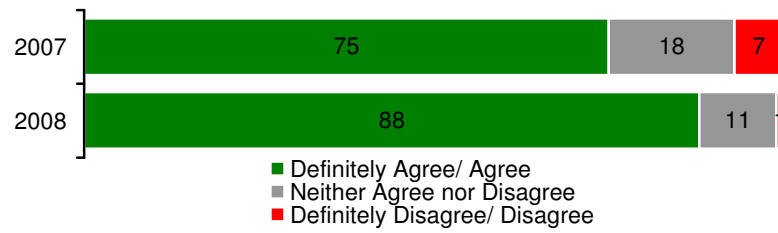
#### 5.0 Opinion about Internet

Perceptions of the internet have greatly improved since 2007. Perceptions have increased regarding the ease and convenient manner of accessing data. It is also believed to be a medium that is critical for the next generation. While negative perceptions of the internet are decreasing among Government bodies.

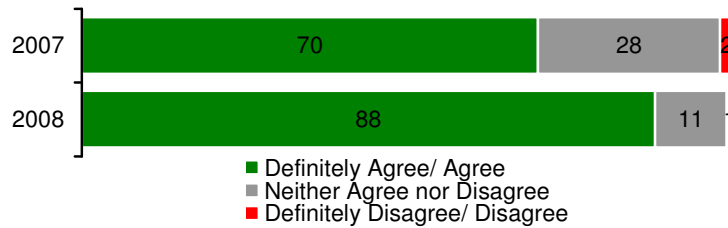




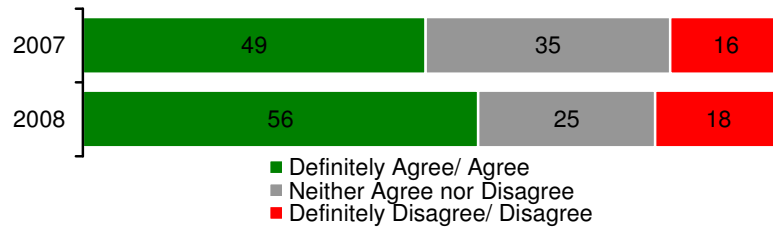
*It is very critical to have access to the Internet as this is the medium of today's generation*



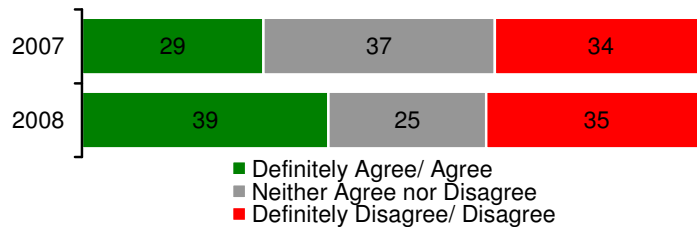
*This is the medium which will keep people abreast with all the up-to-date information*



*Internet is the best way for people to express themselves*

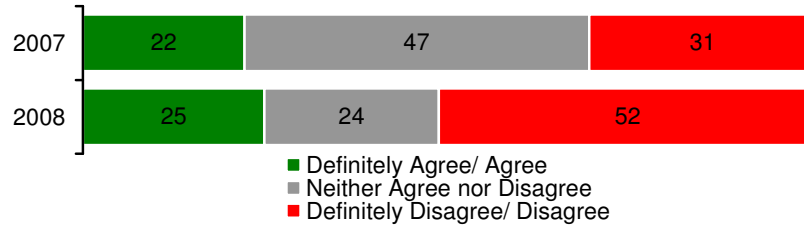


*Internet makes people less sociable*

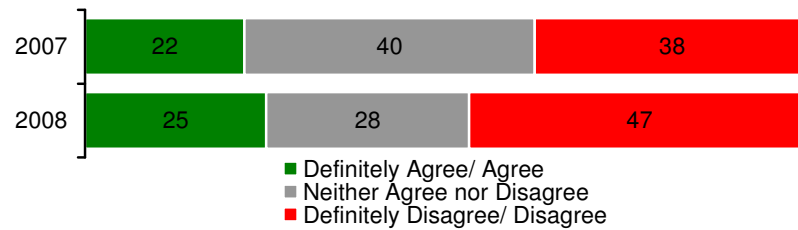




*Internet embeds wrong ideas and concepts into the mind of the new generation*



*Internet is not good as it has a lot of immoral content*



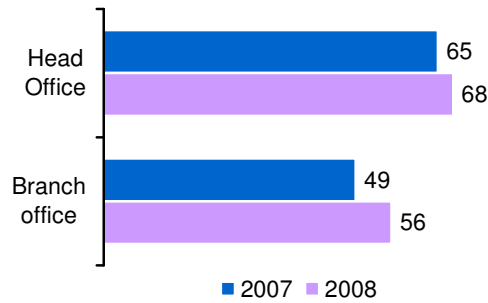
**Almost all IT managers across departments in the Kingdom are convinced that internet provides information in a convenient and simple way.**

## 6.0 Internet Usage

### 6.1 Internet Penetration

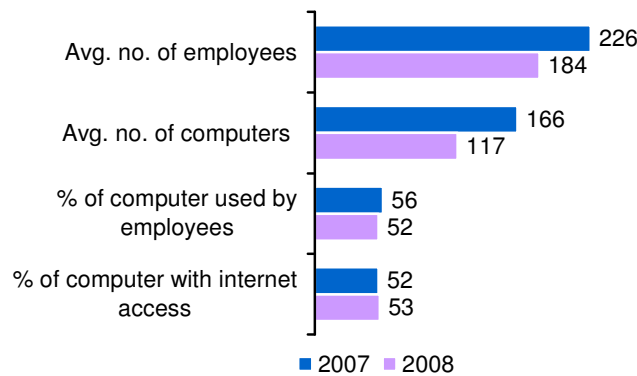
The penetration of internet connection amongst Government departments in Kingdom is 68%, with its usage being lowest in Asir and Jizan province at 28% and 29% respectively.

Exhibit 6.1 Internet Penetration by office type



Base : All respondents (441/ 505)

Exhibit 6.1B Internet access



## 6.2 Barriers to using Internet

The lack of identified need for internet is the key barrier mentioned for internet adoption in the departments. *'It is not available'* and *'Not necessary for work'* are the key reasons mentioned for not using internet.

## 6.3 Type of connection

The broadband connection is most popular type of internet connection and has increased in usage since 2007. 78% of departments use broadband internet. The bandwidth of 512 kb/sec and 1 Mb/sec in broadband connection is most popular. No difference seen between head offices and branch offices.

The dial-up connection, Wireless, Satellite and ISDN lines are used by very few.

Exhibit 6.3 Types of Internet Connections

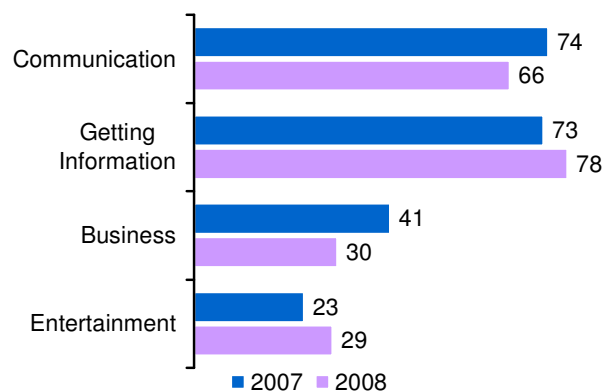
	HEAD OFFICE		BRANCH OFFICE	
	2007	2008	2007	2008
<i>Base: All departments using Internet</i>	288	345	178	222
<b>Dial-up</b>	16%	6%	21%	5%
<b>DSL/ Broadband</b>	69%	80%	70%	79%
<b>Others</b>	17%	26%	6%	22%

There has been a decrease in dial up connection from 16% in 2007 to just 6% in 2008.

#### 6.4 Online Activities

The most popular online activity for Government bodies is to gather information (78%) on such things as goods, services, and other government organizations, and secondly to communicate (66%) with others by writing and receiving emails, forums, blogs and chatting.

Exhibit 6.4 Online Activities



*Base: All Internet Users (66/ 73)*

**Departments in the Kingdom have only a moderate internet Penetration. This is also true for branch offices**

### 6.5 Browser

By far the most popular internet browser amongst Government organizations in Saudi Arabia is Microsoft Windows Internet Explorer with 99% opting for this service, while just 1% use Opera.

### 6.6 Mobile Internet

The mobile internet usage in Government departments in the Kingdom is increasing, however very slowly, from 5% in 2007 to 14% in 2008. 19% of respondents interviewed were not even aware of mobile internet connection.

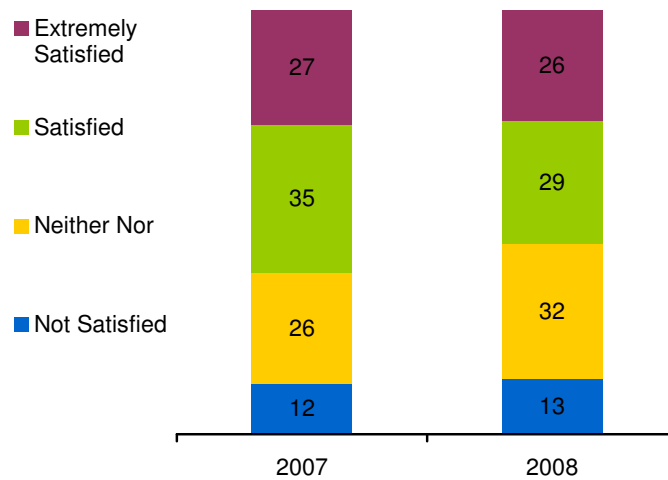
**Evolved services like  
Mobile Internet are yet to  
make an impact on the  
Saudi Government  
Departments**

## 7.0 Internet Satisfaction and Concerns

### 7.1 Satisfaction

Satisfaction levels have decreased slightly in 2008 from 2007. Those who use dial-up are the least satisfied with the service they receive.

Exhibit 7.1 Satisfaction



Base: All Broadband subscribers (49/ 58)

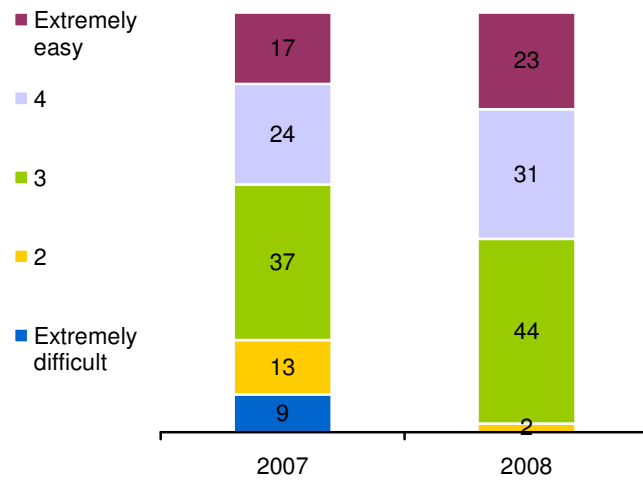
The '*Slow speed*' and '*Interruptions*' are the main reasons for dissatisfaction with the service they receive.

*\*The norm for top 2 box score (extremely satisfied + somewhat satisfied) in Saudi Arabia is 70% as the acquiescence bias in the kingdom is high due to gratitude factor (cultural reasons). Source: Nielsen Studies conducted in KSA.*

## 7.2 Ease of subscribing

Sourcing a new broadband connection in Kingdom is becoming slightly easier compared with 2007, where Government organizations found it difficult to source a new broadband connection.

Exhibit 7.2 Ease of subscribing

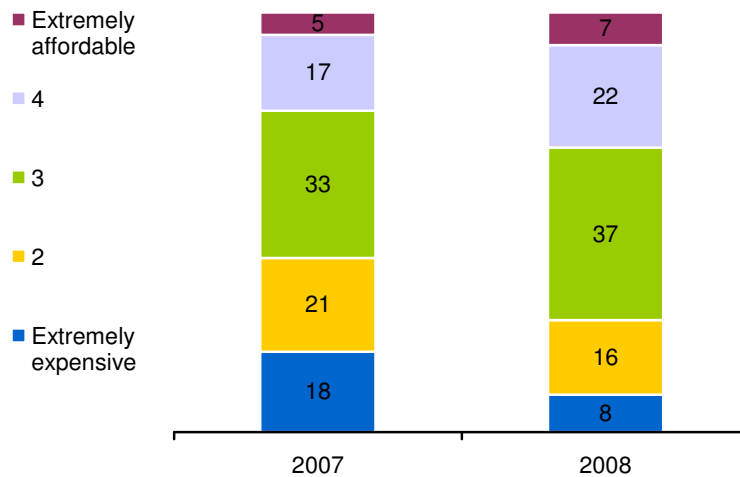


Base: All departments using Broadband Internet (46/ 52)

### 7.3 Cost Perceptions

Internet connection in KSA is becoming more affordable, compared to 2007 where 40% claimed internet connection to be expensive. 29% of respondents in 2008 perceive internet connection to be extremely affordable.

Exhibit 7.3 Cost Perceptions

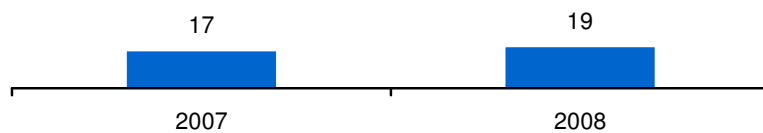


Base: All departments using Internet (66/73)

### 7.4 Concerns

Information filtering is becoming more of a concern compared to 2007, a slight rise from 17% to 19% are concerned by filtering in 2008.

Exhibit 7.4 Proportion of those concerned with Filtering



Base: All departments using Internet (66/73)

SPAM email is another area of concern for internet users. On an average, one out of three of those with an internet connection receives SPAM mails. And it is a major concern as on average 18% of daily emails are SPAM.

## 8.0 Websites and e-commerce

### 8.1 Websites

Six out of every ten Government departments with an internet connection have their own website. Less than 10% of the websites are hosted only in English. The majority of websites are hosted in both English and Arabic (52%) a shift from Arabic only in 2007.

Exhibit 8.1 Language of Website

	2007	2008
Base: Those who have websites	40	44
Arabic	45%	41%
English	10%	7%
Both English and Arabic	45%	52%

Website is predominantly used to provide information about the department and the type of services offered. Some of the other popular services offered include news / events and web mail. Other advanced services like webinar / e-conferencing are relatively less popular.

Exhibit 8.2 Services offered on the website

	2007	2008
Base: Those who have websites	40	44
Information about department	95%	82%
Information on types of services offered	-	75%
News	68%	57%
Contact information	55%	41%
Web mail	48%	45%
Events	45%	45%
Webinar/ e-conferencing	8%	5%

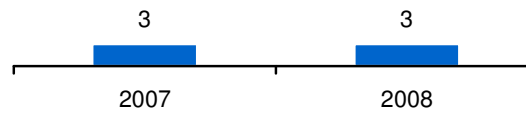


There is an even split amongst those websites hosted internally and externally, with large Government organizations opting to host their site internally (72%).

## 8.2 E-commerce

The majority of Government organizations in Saudi Arabia do not implement E-Commerce, with just 3% doing so.

Exhibit 8.2 Practice e-commerce



Base: All qualified respondents (91/ 110)

# Internet Usage in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

## Conclusions & Recommendations

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## 9.0 Conclusions

All Government departments in Kingdom are largely computerized. 19% of the branch offices contacted do not use computers, which is a decrease from 14% in 2007. These were mainly from Northern Region and Qassim provinces. All the head offices are computerized.

Similar trends are observed for Internet usage. 68% of the head offices use internet as compared to 56% of the branch offices. Internet usage is lower in Asir and Baha provinces.

Desktops are used universally; while contemporary computer devices like laptops (29%) and servers (29%) are decreasing in penetration since 2007. Use of PDAs though, is still very limited.

Windows is the most used operating system. With a shift in the past year from Home to the Professional package. Arabic or English and Arabic OS are the most popular. English only OS are not used at all by Government Organizations.

Nearly half of the government department does not provide any training (47%). Amongst those who provide training they are largely provided for MS Office, database management and accounting packages.

Most decision-making officials perceive Internet to provide information in simple and convenient manner. Internet is also seen as a medium critical for the next generation.

The key barrier to adoption of internet is 'no perceived need' and 'Non-availability'.

Information sourcing and communicating are the most popular activities undertaken by Government departments.

Among those using internet, Broadband is used by most departments. Dial-up internet is relatively less popular. Most Internet users in general are quite satisfied with the performance except those using dial-up connections. The main concerns raised were 'Slow Speed' and 'Interruptions'.

SPAM email is another area of concern with one out of three using internet receiving SPAM mails. On average 18% of daily emails received are SPAM.

Previous concerns held in 2007 with regards to the ease of subscribing to the internet are slightly decreasing. Internet is also perceived to be less expensive than in the past.

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Websites are quite popular with 6 out of 10 departments with internet connection having their own websites. E-Commerce usage is still very low.

## 10.0 Summary (Key Figures)

### Related to Computers

		2007	2008
Penetration of computers in branch offices		84%	81%
Type of PC (among organisations which use computer devices)	Desktop	100%	99%
	Laptop	36%	29%
	Server	31%	29%
Operating system usage (among organisations which use computer devices)	Windows XP Professional	49%	54%
	Windows XP Home	47%	37%
	Windows ME/ 2000	24%	16%
	Windows Vista	3%	11%
Language of the operating system (among organisations which use computer devices)	Arabic	100%	56%
	English & Arabic	33%	44%
Investments on IT	Average per organization (annually)	SR 10,774	SR 14,447.55

### Related to Internet

		2007		2008	
Proportion of organisations who use the internet		Head office -65%		Head office – 68%	
		Branch office -49%		Branch office – 56%	
Type of internet connection		Head office	Branch Office	Head office	Branch Office
	Dial-up	16%	21%	6%	5%
	DSL/Broadband	69%	70%	80%	79%
	Others	17%	6%	26%	22%
Online Activities	Communication	74%		66%	
	Getting information	73%		78%	
	Business	41%		30%	
	Entertainment	23%		29%	
Web browser usage (among organisations which use computer devices)	Internet Explorer	100%		99%	
Use of mobile internet		5%		14%	
Satisfaction with Internet Services (among organisations which use computer devices)	Satisfied	62%		55%	
	Dissatisfied	12%		14%	
Perception on Internet cost	Expensive	39%		24%	
	Affordable	22%		29%	

