THE “DIGITAL DIVIDE” IN GREECE

Introduction

1. This room document presents the results from a recent research project on the information society in Greece. The research was an initiative of the e-business Forum (www.ebusinessforum.gr), a public-private initiative that is funded by the Operational Programme for the Information Society (OPIS, www.infosociety.gr).

Research Targets

2. The main targets of the research are:

- Exploration of the diffusion and usage of PCs, Internet and mobile telephony in Greece and mapping of current situation.
- Mapping of digital divide
- Internet usage in education and business sector, key-areas for the development of the digital economy and the information society in Greece

Methodology

3. The research was based on the largest sample ever used in Greece for ICT issues, (6,095 people over 15 years old). The sample was multi-dimensional and representative, covering all major geographical areas of Greece (in comparison, results from the Eurobarometer are based on a sample of 2000 people over 15 years old).

Main Conclusions

The main conclusions can be summarised as follows:

4. One out of two people uses a mobile phone, one out of five has a PC and one out of ten uses the Internet.

5. The percentage of Internet users surpassed 10% of the population (over 15 years old) during the first semester of 2001 while it is expected to exceed 12% by the end of the year (international projections placed Greece at this level by the end of 2004).

6. During one semester, Greece gained 3 percentage points regarding Internet use. This is the result of the remarkably high annual growth rate of internet users which for the current year is estimated to exceed 60% against 33% of the last year.

7. An important fact is the high ICT penetration among the ages 15-24 (one out of two young people today has a PC and one out of four uses the Internet).
8. Despite the progress, Greece is still lagging compared to the EU average concerning PC and Internet use, while the percentage of mobile telephony usage approaches the EU average.

9. Assuming the same growth rate Greece will reach 50% of Internet users by 2004 matching the expected 66% of EU average at that date. Taking under consideration the possibilities created by the use of 3rd generation mobile telephony the expected convergence could be achieved even sooner.

10. There are great regional differences in the PC and Internet use.

11. Education level represents a definitive factor in PC and Internet use (the percentage of PC and Internet use among people with higher education reaches to 50% while this proportion drops to 2% for people with basic education).

12. This significant percentage of people with basic level education (37%) from which 86% is over 45 years old indicates that there is an important barrier regarding the use of PC and Internet.

Research results on the digital divide in Greece

14. The digital divide indicators for social groups of different demographic characteristics in Greece are larger than those in the EU. Further work will be undertaken in the next months, based on the results of this research on the development of internet usage on SMEs.

15. The digital divide was calculated with the following methodology for every specific group of characteristics: “dividing the difference of the highest and the lowest internet penetration with the average penetration of the whole group”. Four groups were chosen based on income, age, population and location.

17. The main conclusion deriving from the following graphs is that the digital divide in Greece is especially important when it comes to income and age. The digital divide is also higher when compared with the EU (EU statistics from Eurobarometer – June 2001) for all groups but not regarding the population (active / non active).

15. Internet Use / Digital Divide Indicators - Age (highest/lowest: 19-24/>55)

16. Internet Use / Digital Divide Indicators - Population (Active/Not Active)

17. Internet Use / Digital Divide Indicators - Geographical (Urban/Rural)