



## **Digital Society**

### **The Digital Society in Germany – A comparison of six user groups**

#### **A study of the Initiative D21, realized by TNS Infratest**

#### **Abstract**

The study “The Digital Society in Germany” was carried out to analyse the spread and the use of digital media and technologies in the German population. Based on six predefined pillars of a digital society (infrastructure, competence, knowledge, intensity of use, diversity of use, attitude), the study “The Digital Society in Germany” defines six user groups of the German digital society which are homogeneous regarding their potential in, their use of and their attitudes towards digital technologies, and, at the same time distinguishable from each other.

The empiric part of the study was carried out in December 2009 by 1.014 Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews. The sample is representative.

The user groups are the following:

#### **Digital Outsider:**

This group is the largest one in Germany (about 35 percent of the population). People belonging to the “Digital Outsiders” group are comparatively old (average 62,5 years), outside the labour market and they generally have low household incomes. This user group is characterized by a small supply of digital infrastructure (computer, access to internet) combined with a negative attitude towards computer and internet use and little knowledge on digital issues.

#### **Casual User:**

One third of Germans are “Casual Users”: mostly they have access to a computer and the internet, but generally these are owned by other members in the household. The actual use of digital infrastructure is low, and the knowledge regarding digital issues is basic. Casual users are more often female and the average age lies at 41,9 years.



#### Business User:

“Business Users” (average age: 42,2 years) are characterized by a high proportion of employed persons who can access a very good digital infrastructure at their working place. Thus, they show an above average professional internet use. The private use in this group is comparably low. The Business Users’ digital knowledge is mostly concentrated on email, internet, text processing, etc. This group accounts for 10 percent of the German population.

#### Trend User:

11 percent of Germans are “Trend Users”. This user group shows the highest proportion of male users (78 percent) of pupils (13 percent). Most of the Trend Users live in households with three or more household members, the average age is second youngest (35,9 years) of all user groups. The access to a diverse digital infrastructure is very good; the knowledge about different issues and the internet use is high and wide-spread.

#### Digital Professionals:

“Digital Professionals” account for 12 percent of the German population. This group is characterized by an above average household income, as well as high proportions of employed persons and males. The average age is 36,1 years. The digital infrastructure and their competences are substantial. Digital Professionals use the computer for professional as well as for private issues, but not as extensive as Trend Users or the Digital Avant-Garde.

#### Digital Avant-Garde:

This group is the smallest (3 percent of the German population) and youngest of the six user groups (average: 30,5 years). The proportion of males, highly educated, working users, and singles is comparatively high. The digital infrastructure and knowledge is widespread; both the private and professional uses are extensive and involve almost all applications.