

South African online media casts a wider net

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Online media consumption continues to surge, according to the latest research released by Nielsen/Netratings on behalf of the Online Publishers Association (OPA) - the organisation that represents the major web publishers of South Africa.

Over 2.6 million South Africans on average per month accessed OPA member sites in Q3 2006, in comparison with 2.4 million in Q2. Total visitor figures (including those accessing South African sites from abroad) were 7.1 million in comparison with 6.7 million in Q2. These figures reflect a continued pattern of growth as the Internet becomes an increasingly mainstream media platform.

The ongoing research, gathered from visitors to OPA member sites, also shows a clear picture of the demographics of the online population in South Africa. The profile of local internet users remains relatively unchanged with the core user group being young, higher income, office workers.

Summary of South African online demographics:

Access strongest in the workplace

81% of all respondents to Netratings were in fulltime employment. 62% of visitors to the Internet did so from their workplace compared to only 27% from home, 6% from an educational establishment and 3% from an Internet café. 41% of respondents however did not have access to the Internet from home. The relatively low access rates from home reflect the high costs of Internet access for South African consumers, which the OPA suggest are way beneath their potential strength.

Urban user base

Online media consumption is strongest in urban areas: 27% of access takes place from Johannesburg, 12% from Pretoria, 16% from Cape Town and 6% from Durban with other larger cities also showing higher usage than other areas. Outside of SA's major cities the least reported access of online media was in the Northern Province and the Northern Cape, both accounting for 1% of total traffic each.

Young well educated and high income users

59% of web users are younger than 35: 18-24 year olds make up the largest age group (32%) followed by 25-29 year olds (17%) and 30-34 year olds (15%). Education levels are high with 79% having some further education and 34% having a degree or Post Graduate Degree. Income levels are also high with 39% of web users having an annual household income of over R150,000 and of these, 18% having an annual household income over R400,000.

The language of the net

English was the most commonly reported first language of Internet users (55% of respondents) followed by Afrikaans (26%). IsiZulu (5%) and IsiXhosa (4%) were the next most reported first languages, however they are both slowly on the increase, having both made up 3% of respondents each in October 2004.

The current online media audience, whilst a small proportion of the South African population has accounted for strong growth in online ad revenue (estimated at over R183 million* by the end of 2006) as advertisers are increasingly finding benefits in online campaigns.

"The continued local growth of online media is part of a significant global trend which has seen the rise of some powerful internet media brands. Whilst South Africa still has much to do to increase Internet penetration the latest statistics from Nielsen/Netratings shows a steadily growing core online audience of high income consumers. It is these consumers, along with the sharp targeting and measurability available online, that are fuelling the advertising revenue growth and helping to build successful online media businesses in South Africa," said Russell Hanly, Chairman of the OPA and CEO 24.com.

The OPA and Nielsen/Netratings release demographic information and web usage statistics on a quarterly basis. Demographic details are based on online surveys completed by over 37000 individuals in October 2007. Web usage statistics were measured between July and September 2007.

*According to research by Nielsen//NetRatings.

**According to recent research by World Wide Worx

Quarter 3, 2006, online usage figures (Total visitors)

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Quarter 3, 2006, online usage figures (Local visitors)

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Glossary	
Publisher	Owner of site/s
Site	Various sites belonging to Publisher
UB/Unique Browser	Unique visitor to site - counted once
PI/Page Impression	One visitor could register many impressions
Ave	Average for a certain period
Aggregate	Combined or total amount
Total	Data for the local/domestic/sa and international market combined
Local/Domestic	Data for the local/domestic/sa market only (excl. international users)

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