



Quarterly Index

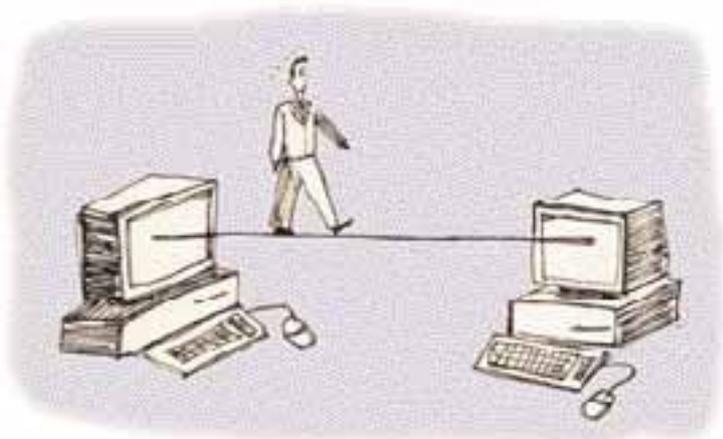
WHO'S USING THE INTERNET FOR HEALTH INFORMATION

Some interesting statistics from the Berger Population Monitor: One in five Canadians over age 15 say they have used the Internet within the past six months for "anything related to health." Another 15% of survey respondents indicate they have obtained Internet health information indirectly from friends or family. This suggests a full one-third of Canadians have gotten health information from the Internet in the past six months. Those who use the Internet directly say they log on about twice a month looking for health-related information. (More recent *Monitor* data, still being analyzed, indicates these percentages have increased over the past six months.)

Also interesting to note is that even though Internet surfing has tended to be a male-dominated, pastime, in the case of health information, Canadian women are just as likely to use the Web as are men.

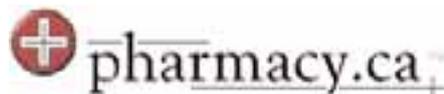
WHAT ARE PEOPLE LOOKING FOR?

According to the survey, the two most often-reported reasons for using the Internet were to find information on specific mental or physical illnesses and general well-being. The next most commonly researched areas were medical and natural health products (NHPs).



WHERE ARE THEY FINDING IT?

The majority of people said they began searches through one of the general purpose sites or portals such as AOL or Yahoo (53%). The next most commonly sought out sites were those specializing in health and sites of disease organizations (40%). The third level of interest was in sites from pharmaceutical companies, Health Canada and provincial governments.



WHAT DO THEY DO WITH WHAT THEY'VE LEARNED?

One thing people don't seem to be doing is discussing what they've learned with their physicians. In fact, seven out of 10 direct and indirect Internet users said they did not intend to talk about it with their doctors. And, this response is similar for both men and women – even though women tend to be much more forthcoming with their physicians. About one in four people who use the Internet said their doctors have encouraged them to search the net for information.

However, and perhaps most important of all, was the finding that more than half of respondents (56%) reported that they have never talked to their doctors about using the Internet to find information, nor have their doctors ever talked to them about Internet use. This suggests that there is a significant number of Canadians using the Internet directly or indirectly to find health information ... their doctors don't seem to know about it. This seems to be another example of consumer autonomy in the the health sector.

Data supplied by *The Berger Monitor Highlight Report*, and based on results from the October 1999 survey administered by Environics Research Group among 2,526 Canadians 15 years of age and older.

Topics in *The Berger Monitor*, which continues *The Canada Health Monitor* surveys of health issues in Canada, are prepared in consultation with The Hay Health Care Consulting Group. For more information contact: Earl Berger, Managing Director by telephone at 416 815-6405 or email at Earl_Berger@haygroup.com