DE

**Project**:     **The Transformation of Political Mobilisation and Communication in European Public Spheres**

Project acronym:     Europub.com
Project website:     http://europub.wz-berlin.de

Funded by:     5th Framework Programme of the European Commission
Contract No.     HPSE-CT2000-00046
Work package:     WP 4 (Internet)
WP Coordinator:     Ruud Koopmans
Deliverable number:     **D 4.1**

Working paper     **Internet – a new potential for European political communication?**

Case report:     **Germany**

Author:     Ann Zimmermann
Date:     26 April 2002

# Table of contents

# 1    The Internet in Germany

In Germany, the Internet began to become accessible for the broader public by the market entrance of the world's largest online provider America Online (AOL) in 1995. The Deutsche Bundespost, later T-Online, and Compuserve had been offering Internet access for several years before 1995, but were not successful. Either the speed of the Internet connection was to slow (T-Online) or the points of access were limited to a few urban areas (Compuserve). Since data transfer was only possible at a very slow speed and prices were unattractive, the interest in the Internet of the population was increasing very slowly. In 1995, AOL started with 50 points of access and provided faster connections than its competitors. The standing charge came to 10 DM per month including two hours online. Every additional hour cost 6 DM. In that way AOL outdid the German competitors and brought about fast and broad acceptance. T-Online and Compuserve reacted to the challenge of the US company and improved the quality of their services. Within one year the Internet lost its status as a peripheral medium and developed more or less into a mass medium.[1]

## 1.1  Market size

A precise measurement of the distribution of the Internet is not possible, because of the variable infrastructure, the usage of open standards and especially because of the rapid development of nearly all technologies used to build the network.[2]

The most common indicators to measure the use and the market of the Internet in a country are the number of Internet hosts, websites by domain, Internet subscribers and especially data on E-commerce, distribution of secure servers by country and links to them.

The German Internet market in 2000 was characterised by:[3]
- 2 600 100 Internet hosts counted in October 2000. That corresponds to 31.7 hosts per 1 000 inhabitants.
- 1 607 192 websites were registered with the country code top level domain ".de" registered, i.e. 19.6 websites per 1 000 inhabitants. Compared with 1.6 websites per 1 000 inhabitants in 1998, that is a growth of about 577.4 %.
- 3 761 secure servers were counted in July 2000, and 28 772 secure links to the top level domain ".de".

The newest data available (represented by "www.netsizer.com") lists 39 140 60 Internet hosts in December 2002. That means that Germany has the fourth largest number of Internet hosts in the world after the USA, Japan and Canada, followed by the United Kingdom, Italy and the Netherlands. The number of websites with the top-level domain ".de" was 2 518 210.

---

[1] Rederer (2000: 32f.)
[2] Kubicek (1998: 55ff.)
[3] OECD (2001)

## 1.2 Internet Service Providers

Statements concerning the number of Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in Germany vary between 450 and 1250.[4] In Germany, ISPs are only notifiable if they are also offering telecommunication services. For that reason, as an example, the large number of local ISPs is not counted. In addition, there are no relevant official registrations of ISPs: neither by the Regulatory Authority for Telecommunication and Posts (Reg TP) nor by the Federal Statistical Office. One of the rare empirical surveys, conducted by the European Business School in Oestrich-Winkel (2000), assumes that there are about 2100 ISPs operating in Germany.[5]

Although the Regulatory Authority for Telecommunication and Posts (Reg TP) does not register the number of ISPs, it offers the number of subscribers of the largest ISPs. According to the annual report 2000, the three largest ISPs together had some 9.3 million subscribers at the end of the year 2000. The largest one was T-Online with 6.5 million users, followed by AOL with 2.6 million and Compuserve with 0.2 million subscribers.[6]

**ISPs subscribers in million**
(Source: Reg TP 2000)
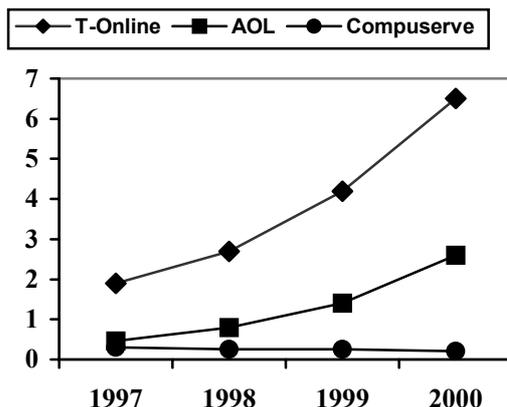


The growth in the number of subscribers between 1997 and 2000 is due not least to the fall in prices. 2000 saw a dramatic fall in user costs: prices for daytime calls fell by 50 % from 5 to 2.5 Pfennige per minute, and for evening calls by 35 % from 3.9 to 2.48 Pfennige per minute. Call prices for users registering with an ISP are even lower.[7]

With about 6.5 million subscribers T-Online is not only the leading ISP in Germany but also in Europe. T-Online is the online service of the Deutsche Telekom AG, the largest telecommunications network operator in Germany. T-Online has a market share of 50 % in Germany and about 37 % in Europe. 90 % of the turnover is made in Germany and 10 % in Austria and France. Expansion in 2000 brought T-Online into France (Club Internet), Spain (Ya.com), Portugal (Terravista) and Austria (T-Online.at). Since April 2000, T-Online is a joint-stock company.[8]

The second largest provider in Germany is US media giant AOL Time Warner with AOL Germany. AOL Time Warner is the world's largest Internet and media company and has about 25 million subscribers worldwide. AOL Germany is a part of the subsidiary AOL Europe. In 2001, AOL bought the 49.5 stake of AOL Europe from the German Bertelsmann company. Since 1997, the third largest ISP in Germany, Compuserve, is also owned by AOL.

While the Reg TP data only show the online-providers with the largest number of subscribers, the GfK-Monitor 7th wave provides an overview over the largest providers which are used in

---

[4] Elixmann / Metzler (2001:35)
[5] European Business School (2000)
[6] Regulierungsbehörde für Telekommunikation und Post (2001)
[7] Regulierungsbehörde für Telekommunikation und Post (2001:29f.)
[8] http://germany.internet.com

Germany to access the Internet, and not only the usage of the Internet per subscriber.[9] According to the results, the two largest providers are also T-Online used by  about 59 % of all users (14.2 million) and AOL with a stake of 36 % (8.7 million users) in the beginning of 2001. However, the third in the ISP raking above is Freenet, owned by the German Mobilcom company.

| Top German Internet Provider | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **ISP** | **Use** | **Subsidiary / Share** | **Country** |
| T-Online | 59 % | Deutsche Telekom AG | Germany |
| AOL | 36 % | AOL Time Warner Inc. | USA |
| Freenet (Mobilcom) | 15 % | Mobilcom | Germany |
| Yahoo Online | 13 % | Yahoo Inc. | USA |
| MSN | 8 % | Microsoft | USA |
| Comundo | 7 % | TerraLycos | USA |
| Planet Interkom/Viag | 6 % | British Telecom | UK |
| Arcor | 6 % | Vodafone | UK |
| Compuserve | 6 % | AOL Time Warner Inc. | USA |
| Source: GfK-Monitor 7th wave /  Elixmann/Metzler (2001: 81f.) | | | |

Although the Internet began to be used more widely when the American Provider AOL entered the market in 1995, today the German company T-Online has the biggest customer base. This is a development which can be observed in several European countries in regard of the historical telecommunications operators. However, the American ISPs still have a strong presence in the German Internet market.[10]

---

[9] GfK (2001)
[10] ESIS (2000: 49)

# 2 Internet usage

## 2.1 Technical infrastructure

Before describing the Internet access and usage in Germany one should take a glance at the existing technical infrastructure which enables individuals to use the Internet. These basic requirements for dial-up Internet access are telephone lines and personal computers.

| Internet usage: requirements (per 1 000 households, in per cent) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **1998** | **1999** | **2000** |
| **Personal Computer** | 39.8 | 44.9 | 47.9 |
| Notebook, Laptop | - | 4.9 | 5.5 |
| Personal Computer | - | 43.1 | 45.6 |
| **Modem** | 8.6 | 11.3 | 14.0 |
| **ISDN** | 4.2 | 5.2 | 7.7 |
| **Telephone** | - | 98.5 | 98.2 |
| Source: Federal Statistical Office  (http://www.destatis.de/basis/d/evs/budtab23.htm) | | | |

The data of the Federal Statistical Office show that the equipment needed for accessing the Internet increases constantly in private households in Germany. Between 1998 and 2000, the number of households equipped with a PC increased from 39.8 % to 47.9 %. It can be assumed that these PCs are increasingly used to access the Internet since a growing number of them is equipped with online tools. The number of modems for example increased from 8.6 % to 14 %.[11]

According to the GfK-Online-Monitor 7th wave, 62 % of German households owned a PC and 20 % a modem in 2001.[12]

It can be assumed that in 2001 more than half of the German population had access to computers in the private realm. In addition, people also use computers at work, school or university.

## 2.2 Access and usage

Most information about Internet access and utilization is based on polls and surveys, conducted generally by market research companies at the request of various institutions. Basically all these surveys show a steadily growing share of the population who access and use the Internet in Germany. However, comparing the results of some surveys significant differences between the studies are recognisable. A comparative analysis of several studies about online-usage in Germany available for 1998, conducted by Wingert, shows that there are five sources which may cause differences and incomparability:[13]

---

[11] Federal Statistical Office  (http://www.destatis.de/basis/d/evs/budtab23.htm)
[12] GfK (2001)
[13] Wingert (1998: 212)

- Population und sample
- Question (only access to online-equipment or also owner?)
- Does the question refer to the possibility or the actual usage?
- Definition of usage
- Social context of the interviewee and bias of the questioning method.

Results may also differ depending on whether the surveys are conducted offline (questionnaire, telephone interviews etc.) or online. As online surveys are often only based on the decision of the users to take part in the survey and not on a precise sample, there may be strong biases. Offline surveys are more often based on a representative sample. Another advantage of offline surveys is that it is also possible to ask people who do not have Internet access. That may provide interesting results concerning the reasons for non usage or barriers. However, a lot of the polls are conducted online. On the one hand, many queries refer only to the usage of the Internet, and on the other hand, this method is much cheaper.

As mentioned above, there are further problems with specifying the actual usage. There is no common definition of Internet use in the existing surveys. In some cases, use means a regular, in others an occasional activity.

This overview mainly refers to the ARD/ZDF-Online Survey 2001 and the GfK-Online Monitor 7th wave. Both are representative surveys and conducted offline by telephone interviews. The ARD/ZDF-Online Survey was conducted by the ARD/ZDF Working Group Multimedia between May and June 2001. The survey refers to the base of all German online users aged 14 and older and has a sample size of 1 000. Internet users are defined as people aged 14 and older who use online offers more or less regularly.[14]
The GfK-Online Monitor, 7th wave was conducted by the GfK Association for Consumption Research in December 2000 and January 2001. The population - represented by a sample size of 1 000 – is defined as all people in Germany, aged 14 to 69 and living in a private household with telephone. Internet users are defined as people aged 14 to 69, who use, at least occasionally, services of an ISP or the world wide web.[15]

According to the GfK-Online Monitor, 32,1 Million Germans aged 14 to 69 have access to the Internet at home or at other places in 2001. That means that theoretically 61.2 % of the Germans of that age group have the possibility to use the Internet. What about the actual usage?

**Internet usage**
(Source: ARD/ZDF Online-Survey 2001)
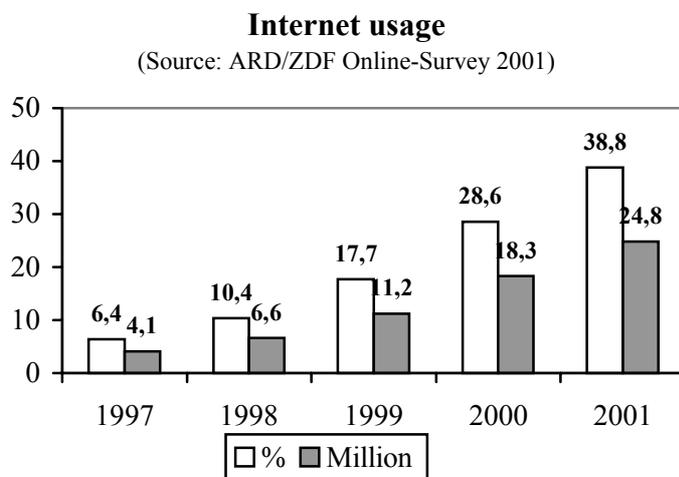


The GFK-Online Monitor found that 46 % of the population between 14 and 69 are online users. The ARD/ZDF-Online-Survey identified 38.8 % of the population aged 14 and older who use online offers more or less regularly. This means a six fold increase in the last four years in comparison with 6.4 % in 1997.

The ACTA survey 2001, conducted by

---

[14] ARD/ZDF-Projektgruppe Multimedia (2001a)
[15] GfK (2001)

the Allensbacher Institute, counts 20.33 Million people aged 14 to 64 as Internet users in 2001,[16] while the Eur.net 8 found that 27.6 million people used the Internet at least once in the last twelve months.[17]

As demonstrated, there are obvious deviations between the surveys. In summary, it can be assumed that in 2001 the factual Internet use in Germany was about 40 %. Regardless of different definitions and results, all surveys account for a steadily growing share of the population who uses the Internet in Germany.

The ARD/ZDF-Online-Survey shows that in 2001 nearly half of the Internet users (46 %) use the Internet at home. 22 % use it only at their workplace, university or school. The use from both, home and other places, is counted for 32 % of the users.
That means that in the last years there was a change of the place from where the Internet was predominantly used. In 1997 more than half of the users used the Internet only at work, while 27 % used it only at home. Since then, the Internet use at home has constantly increased in detriment to the use at work.
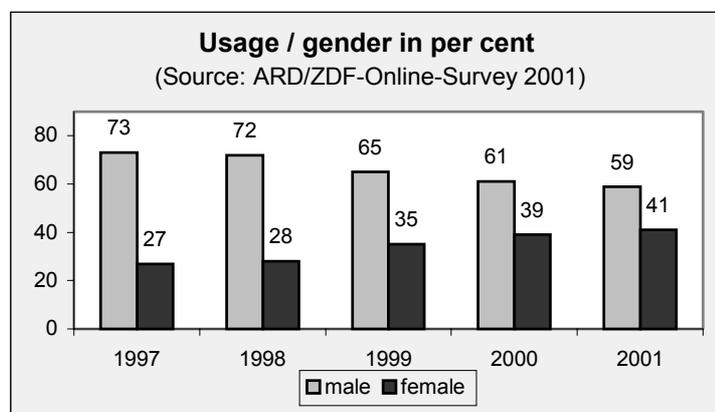The GFK-Online Monitor looked into Internet use from home and workplace and additionally distinguished the use at computers of friends and relatives, at public locations (Internet Cafes/department stores) and by mobile phone (WAP/Laptop). While similar to the ARD/ZDF-Online-Survey, most of the people use the Internet (30 %), there are 15 % of users who access the Internet at the homes of friends or relatives in 2001. Only 4 % make use of public locations like Internet Cafes, and accessing the Internet by mobile phone is also still very popular.

## 2.3 Demography

Most surveys indicate that the increase of Internet users in the last years comes along with a change in the social structure of the users. However, the question is if the Internet population is moving towards a representation of the general socio-demographic structure of society. It seems that there are still differences in Internet usage along socio-demographic variables like gender, age, educational qualification and income in Germany.

.
### 2.3.1 Gender

According to the ARD/ZDF-Online-Survey, 41 % of the Internet users are women and 59 % are men. The GfK-Online Monitor provides similar results with 42 % of female users. Both surveys state a continuous growth of the female share of Internet usage. But it can be assumed that in 2001 female users are still underrepresented, given the fact that 52 % of the



**Usage / gender in per cent**
(Source: ARD/ZDF-Online-Survey 2001)

| | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| male | 73 | 72 | 65 | 61 | 59 |
| female | 27 | 28 | 35 | 39 | 41 |

----

[16] Institut für Demoskopie Allenbach (2001)
[17] NFO Infratest (2001)

population are women.

## 2.3.2 Age

By comparing the overall size of the age groups in the population with the age structure of the Internet users in 2001, the GFK-Online-Survey shows that people aged 50 and older are still under-represented in regard to Internet usage. The 14 to 29 year-old people remain the most over-represented group.

**Age internet users / population in percent**
(Source: GFK-Online-Monitor 7th wave)
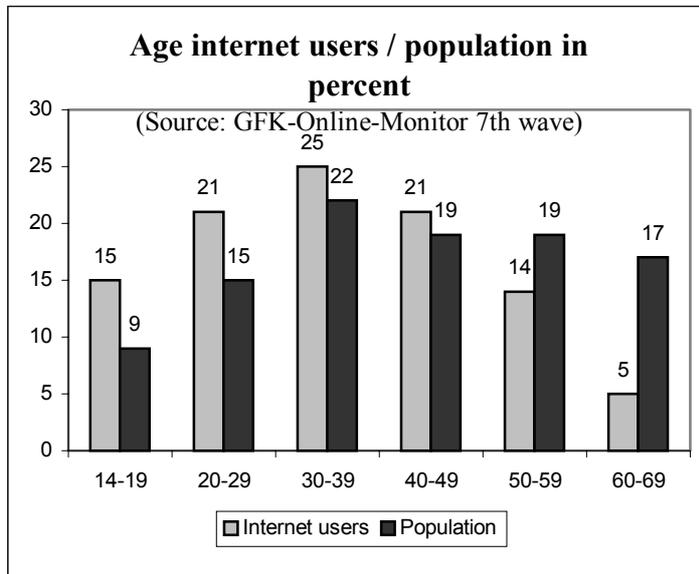


Similar results are provided by the ARD/ZDF Online-Survey. In 2001, two-third of the people aged 14 to 29 and about 50 % of the 30 to 49 aged are online users. Only every third person of the 50 to 59 aged uses the Internet. Among the 60 and older aged people, the level declines to 8.1 %. Looking at the development in the last years, the share of elderly people is constantly growing.
However, according to the results of both surveys Internet usage becomes less common as age increases.

**Internet usage in different age groups**
(Source: ARD/ZDF-Online Survey 2001)
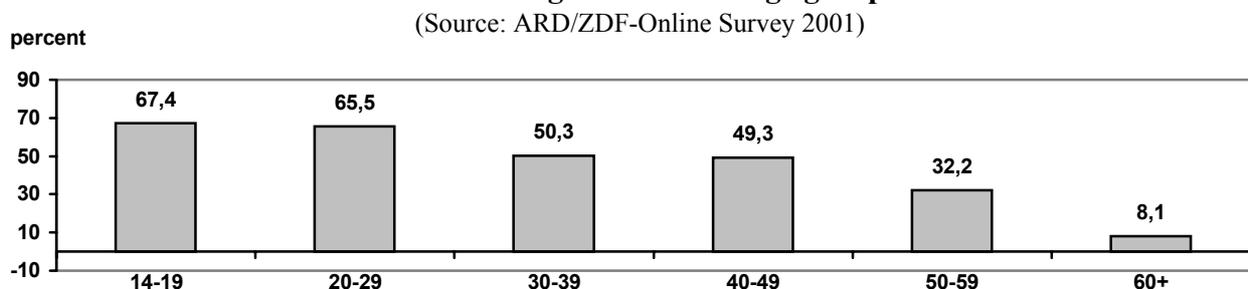


## 2.2.3 Educational qualification

The ARD/ZDF-Online Survey shows that the share of all of the main educational groups on the Internet usage has increased since 1997. However, the rates for every single group grew at different paces. People with secondary school qualification are the least likely group to be on the Internet. Their share within the Internet users only increased marginally during the last years, while the share of all other educational groups increased much faster. Within the group of people with A-level or university degree, about 60 % are Internet users in 2001. At the same time only 17.9 % of the secondary school graduates are using the Internet.

| Share of Internet users on the sections of population (per cent) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Educational level | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 |
| Secondary school | 1.3 | 2.9 | 4.9 | 7.5 | 17.9 |
| Secondary modern school | 5.9 | 7.5 | 15.7 | 31.4 | 45.4 |
| A-level | 8.6 | 25.8 | 50.9 | 79.2 | 60.2 |
| University | 15.0 | 25.8 | 62.5 | 86.0 | 60.7 |
| Source: ARD/ZDF-Online Survey 2001 / ARD/ZDF-Projektgruppe Multimedia (2001a) | | | | | |

Looking at the overall size of certain educational groups in comparison with data on the educational qualification of the Internet users from the GFK-Online Survey, one can see that the secondary school graduates are the most (and only) under-represented educational group within the Internet users. All the other groups have a greater share within the Internet users than in the population.

**Educational level population / Internet users in per cent**
(Source: GFK Online-Monitor, 7th wave)
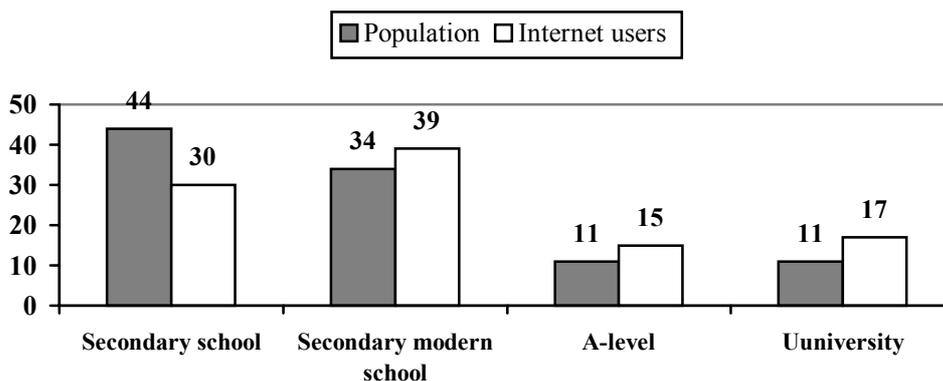


### 2.3.4 Income[18]

The findings of GFK Online-Monitor demonstrate that people with an income of DM 6000 and more are the largest group of the Internet users. As a result, they are the most over-represented group compared to their share within the population. People who have an income of 3000 DM or less are under-represented within the group of Internet users in 2001.

---

[18] According to Welling/Kubicek (2000:15) data about income and Internet utilization should not be over-interpreted: „Questions about income are critical, because, according to information of an GFK-employee, income questions account for survey failure rate around 20 per cent." Therefore these results should be read more as a tendency than as facts.

| Internet usage / Income (per cent) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Household Income** | **Internet user** | **Population** |
| 2000 DM and less | 5 | 8 |
| 2000 – 3000 DM | 9 | 15 |
| 3000 – 4000 DM | 15 | 21 |
| 4000 – 5000 DM | 20 | 19 |
| 5000 – 6000 DM | 17 | 14 |
| 6000 DM and more | 34 | 23 |
| Source: GFK Online-Monitor | | |

In summary, one can conclude that in German the largest group within the Internet users is aged between 20 and 49. Internet users are more likely to be higher educated than the average of the population. In regard of the income, the largest group within the Internet users live in a household with an income of 6000 DM and more. Still, there are more men online than women.

Concerning the obviously still valid dependency between Internet usage and socio-demographic variables, a discussion about the danger of a deepening "digital divide" has evolved in Germany.[19]

## 2.4 What do the Germans use the Internet for?

The Internet is primarily used as a medium of interaction and information. The most preferred offers are dealing with interpersonal communication or information providing.

According to the ARD/ZDF Online-Survey, about 80 % of the Germans use the Internet for communication by E-mail at least once a week. 59 % are searching for information on the Internet, while 51 % just surf. All other Internet services are used by less than 50 %, for example by 34 % who are looking for news.[20]

---

[19] Examples are Welling/Kubicek (2001) and Bootz/Hamilton (2000)
[20] ARD/ZDF-Projektgruppe Multimedia (2001a)

| Online offers used at least once a week (per cent) | |
|---|---|
| Sending and receiving E-Mails | 80 |
| Searching for specific information | 59 |
| Surfing on the Internet | 51 |
| Downloading files | 34 |
| News | 34 |
| Home banking | 31 |
| Information about economy and stock market | 31 |
| Information on computer and software | 27 |
| Current affairs in Germany and foreign countries | 27 |
| Sport news | 25 |
| Source: ARD/ZDF Online Survey 2001 / ARD/ZDF-Projektgruppe Multimedia (2001a) | |

In regard of the specific kinds of news people look for in the Internet, the GFK Online-Monitor distinguishes five main categories which are listed below. By taking into account that the people were asked which Internet service they use often or occasionally, nearly 50 % are interested in world news on the Internet, followed by political news, regional and local news.

| News categories looked for in the Internet (per cent) | |
|---|---|
| Current-affairs world news | 48.4 |
| Political news | 38.5 |
| Regional and local news | 36.1 |
| Sport news | 29.4 |
| News about prominence | 17.3 |
| Source: GFK-Online Monitor 7th wave 2000/2001 | |

Concerning the usage of online offers of the conventional media, the ARD/ZDF Online-Survey concludes that nowadays  the users expect television and radio channels to provide an online service. Nearly half of the Internet users visited at least once the homepage of an television channel. The online offer of a radio station was used by 26 %. Asked about what kind of information the users are interested in the websites of television and radio stations, the main interest is news (48 %), followed by news about Germany and foreign countries (43 %) and consumer information (41 %). [21]

In general, the website of a newspaper or a magazine is used at least once by 42 % of the Internet users. The online service of news magazines and regional newspapers are visited most. Computer magazines are read more often online than nation wide papers. Still,  nation wide papers play a much more important role than tabloids and TV programme guides.

---

[21] ARD/ZDF-Online-Survey 2001, page 393 - 394

| Usage of print media online offers (per cent) | |
|---|---|
| Newspaper/magazines in general | 42 |
| News magazine | 29 |
| Regional newspaper | 26 |
| Computer magazine | 21 |
| Nationwide newspaper | 18 |
| Tabloid | 7 |
| TV programme guide | 8 |
| Source: ARD/ZDF-Online Survey 2001 / ARD/ZDF- Projektgruppe (2001c) | |

Some of the German newspapers refused to offer an online edition for a long time. They were afraid of the so called "channel conflict", which may occur if an offline product is competing with the corresponding online product. To avoid a decrease of the circulation of the print issue, nationwide newspapers like the "Die Welt", "Bild" or the "Süddeutsche Zeitung" only provide a reduced version of the printed issue on the Internet. In contrast, the newsmagazines "Spiegel" and "Focus" offer on their websites supplementary services, by which they are reaching additional target groups.[22]

Today all the large nationwide newspapers have a more or less extensive website. The visits and page impressions of some of the well-known German nationwide newspaper in December 2001 are listed below. Visits count the external visitors of a website. Page impressions provide a measure of the use of single sites within an online offer. The page impression measurements are always higher than the counted visits of a website and provide a kind of intensity measure of the visits.[23]

| Nationwide newspaper websites (December 2001) | | |
|---|---|---|
| Newspaper | Visits | Page Impressions |
| Bild.de | 13.297.382 | 71.881.479 |
| Sueddeutsche.de | 3.821.657 | 12.016.831 |
| Welt online | 3.691.030 | 11.796.729 |
| Handelsblatt.com | 2.032.659 | 7.310.891 |
| FAZ.net | 1.707.886 | 7.314.813 |
| Frankfurter Rundschau | 654.796 | 2.756.076 |
| Taz, die Tageszeitung | 603.948 | 2.407.254 |
| Source: IVE (Informationsgemeinschaft zur Feststellung der Verbreitung von Werbeträgern e. V.) available: http://www.ivw.de/data/index.html / Newspaper analysed in the Europub.com project in bold type | | |

Hagen (1998) generally concludes that Internet and Online-Services have become an important part of mass media reporting. The conventional media are playing a central role as providers and users concerning the distribution of the Internet.[24]

---

[22] Accencure / Politik-digita.de (2001)
[23] Bieber (1999: 45)
[24] Hagen (1998: 7)

## 2.5  Non Users

While the characteristics of the Internet users are relatively well explored, the reasons for non using or barriers of access are hardly analysed. Two surveys which deal with this issue are the ARD/ZDF Offline-Survey 2001 and the "Verweigereratlas" conducted also in 2001 by eMind@emnid, the Internet research of TNS Emnid. Both are representative surveys and based on telephone interviews.

The ARD/ZDF Online-Survey shows that 61 % of the population do not use the Internet. 24 % of the "Offliners" say, they will surely or probably obtain an Internet access. "Probably not" is answered by 9 %, and 41 % say they will definitely not obtain an Internet access. Within the "Offliners", 89 % have never used the Internet, while 11 % used it in the past.[25]

The "Verweigereratlas" discovers that only 10.4 % of the people who do not use the Internet want to become users in the near future. Half of the non users (52.5 %) refuse to use the Internet in the future.[26]

As shown in both surveys, the share of people who refuse more or less strictly to use the Internet is much larger than the share of the people who plan to access the Internet in the near future. According to the ARD/ZDF Offline-Survey, the main reason why people think they do not need an Internet access is that TV, radio and newspapers are seen as a sufficient source of information (92 %). 81 % claim that they neither need the Internet professionally nor privately. The possibility to ask other persons for an Internet usage if necessary, is seen by 73 %. 69 % have no time for/or don't feel like using the Internet. 58 % have an Internet access through friends, while 53 % don't want an Internet access because they believe that the social contacts  would be neglected. 49 % think the costs are too high, and 38 % assume that Internet usage can be frustrating. 29 % of the "Offliners" generally refuse the Internet, and 27 % do not believe they are able to use it.

The "Verweigereratlas" analyses the demographical structure of the non users in detail.
According to the results, non users are more often women and persons aged 50 and older. Reflecting the results about usage, factors like age, education and income have an important influence on the non usage. The refusal of the Internet is increasing with age. However, more than one fifth of the 14 to 19 aged, more than one quarter of the 20 to 29 aged and even about one third of the 30 to 39 aged people refuse to use the Internet.
Nevertheless, the statement that the higher the formal educational qualification the more likely the people are to be Internet users is still valid. Nearly 80 % of people secondary school graduated without an apprenticeship refuse the Internet, and about 65 % of people secondary school graduates with an apprenticeship do so too. Within the group of higher-secondary school graduates without an A-level, 43 % are refusing the Internet, and about one quarter of the persons with a A-level or a university degree.
In respect of the income, a similar situation can be observed. The less the peoples' household income the more likely they are to be refusing the Internet. In addition the purpose to become an Internet user is conspicuous low within the group having the lowest household income, defined as less than 1000 DM.

---

[25] ARD/ZDF-Projektgruppe Multimedia (2001b)
[26] Emind@emnid (2001)

# 3 The Internet and political communication, interaction and participation

## 3.1 Political interest of Internet users

Regarding the possibilities the Internet may offer as a platform for political communication in the public sphere, it is interesting to look at the actual usage in the political sphere.

Hagen and Kamp (1999) explored the Internet usage of Germans with regard to political information and participation by analysing several surveys. In general they found out that Internet users are more open-minded and politically engaged persons with a higher innovation willingness than the average of the population. Nevertheless, political online contents play a secondary role for most of the users. Only one fourth of the Internet users is using the offer of news or political information on the Internet.

The most demanded political information are not from political institutions or actors but from the conventional media. In this way the political information retrieved online derives from the traditional sources, the mass media. Thus, it seems to be doubtful whether the Internet leads to an extended usage of information offered by the political actors themselves. In addition, the usage of the Internet for political information is usually not interactive, but mostly passive receptive - similar to the usage of the conventional media.

In summary, Hagen and Kamp (1999) confirm such voices which are sceptical in regard of an increasing political participation because of the possibilities offered by the Internet.

Concerning an averagely higher political interest of Internet users in comparison to non users, several surveys indicate similar results. Vowe and Emmer presented the first findings of their empirical research of the individual online usage in the political context at the "Jahrestagung der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Publizistik- und Kommunikationswissenschaft" in 2001.[27]

The political participation of the respondents was measured by several questions, for example the visit of party conventions (generally / in the last week / before the last elections) or whether the person spoke to a politician or ordered political information brochures.

The results show that in general, German Internet users are more politically active than people who do not use the Internet. They use the conventional participation possibilities more often than non users and additionally, they use the possibilities of participation offered by the Internet. 11.4 % of the Internet users ordered political information brochures at least once. In comparison, only 4.7 % of the non-users did so. 6.4 % of the Internet users ordered the material in the conventional way and 4.4 % used the Internet. 0.6 % of the Internet users used both possibilities of ordering.

A difference can also be noticed in regard of letters to the editor. The share of the Internet users is higher than the one of the non users. 8.4 % of the non users and 10.1 % of the users wrote a letter to the editor in the conventional way at least once. 27.4 % of the letters sent to the editor by Internet users were sent electronically.

The authors raise the question whether the stronger political engagement is caused by the Internet. They assume that Internet usage is not as important for political participation as the general political interest of a person. However, Internet usage is a self-contained factor which lowers the costs of participation (an e-mail is less work and cheaper than a letter) and provides more effective forms of political participation. At least, the respondents have the

---

[27] Steger (2001)

impression that the Internet makes it possible to speak to the politicians more directly and that it is easier to find like-minded people concerning a specific request.

## 3.2 The Internet performance of political actors

The Internet as a medium to mediate politics is relevant in Germany since 1997.[28] Most of the available surveys about the Internet performance of political actors in Germany are dealing with the exploration and evaluation of political party websites.

Today, all the important parties in Germany have their own website. Bieber (2001) shows that the political online offers of political parties passed a perennial product cycle from the beginning in 1995. He differentiates between four essential states of aggregation:

(1) The first online offers of political parties - the "digital brochures" - are mainly conceived as a "top-to-bottom" communication. New forms of communication functions are hardly provided, but provide an additional way to use the existing information and promotion material.

(2) The further development of "online-magazines" implies an increase of specific online media formats as thematic links and the communicational involvement of the users. Chats, discussion forums, guest lists and interactive "gimmicks", like games or polls, are offered. The information providing has adapted more and more to the form of media news coverage.

(3) "Virtual party headquarters" additionally include the party's internal communication. In the scope of the German federal elections in 1998, these high-performance Intranets were used for the first time intensively.

(4) These developments increasingly pave the way towards the offering of "political web-portals", which provide an all-round service, including costumer orientated services and a central access point to related Internet offers.[29]

For a general overview, the website "www.parteien.de" offers links to all German parties, which have an own website. Below the most important parties are listed by their domains and the opening date of the online performance.

| Virtual Party Headquarters | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Party** | **Domain** | **Opening** |
| **SPD** ( Social Democratic Party ) | www.spd.de | 19.08.1995 |
| **CDU** (Christian Democratic Union) | www.cdu.de | 17.10.1995 |
| **Bündnis 90/Die Grünen** (The Greens) | www.gruene.de | 29.11.1996 |
| **FDP** (Free Democratic Party) | www.liberale.de/www.fdp.de | 04.12.1995 |
| **PDS** (Party of Democratic Socialism) | www.pds-online.de | ca. April 1998 |
| Source: Bieber (2001a: 10,14) | | |

---

[28] Rederer (2000:509)
[29] Bieber (2001a)

All parties register an increasing number of visitors on their websites. Today, the digital offer is part of the standards of the communicative basic of political parties on every level of the political system.

| Visits of Party Headquarters (Pageviews) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 4/1999 | 4/2000 | 2001 |
| **SPD** | 403 542 | 351 049 | 957 108 (February) |
| **CDU** | 409 545 | 869 197 | 1 352 07 (January) |
| **Bündnis 90/Die Grünen** | 322 995 | 387 987 | 935 126 (March) |
| **FDP** | no answer | ca. 520 000 (June) | ca. 597 000 (March) |
| **PDS** | ca. 170 000 | 254 328 | 299 393 (March) |
| Source: Bieber (2001a: 11) | | | |

Rederer (2000) analysed in 1999 the websites of the most important German parties in regard of the general impression, value of information, communication offer, manipulating moments, party subdivisions and information willingness about their websites. Below the main results for the five most important parties (SPD, CDU, the Greens, FDP and PDS) are described. [30]

According to Rederer, the online performances of the political parties fulfilled the standards of electronic data processing and layout techniques reached at that time. The information level was high and communication opportunities like e-mail addresses, discussion forums, newsgroups and chats were offered in a broad extend. In regard of manipulative tendencies more differences between the parties occurred. While all parties were acting in a responsible way, the two largest parties, CDU and SPD, used the given possibilities much more than FDP, the Greens or the PDS. Only the websites of the SPD and CDU contained disparagements of the political opponents, inducements and "empty promises".

Rederer concludes that all democratic parties in Germany search for a direct access to the citizen by using the Internet. The Internet presence positively influences the parties' openness towards the public. The parties are open for critical and inconvenient discussions on their discussion forums and take them seriously, even if they are not decisive. The parties support the public discourse and offer a high level of political discussion culture. With their online work the political parties have made the Internet to a part of the political public sphere in Germany.

More critical are the conclusions of Welzel and Wieboldt (2001) concerning the political parties online performance in 2001. They explored the websites of the most important political parties in Germany with regard to seven factors: issues, service, interactivity, navigation, technique, design and editorial (reaction). Each website could have scored 150 points in all categories together. Some results are listed below.

---

[30] Rederer (2000)

| Online performance of political parties in Germany | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Categories** (max. score) | **CDU** | **SPD** | **Grüne** | **PDS** | **CSU** | **FDP** |
| **Issues (30)** | 24 | 23 | 26 | 15 | 16 | 13 |
| **Service** (30) | 20 | 18 | 14 | 17 | 17 | 18 |
| **Interactivity** (30) | 21 | 20 | 15 | 17 | 16 | 16 |
| **Navigation** (20) | 10 | 9 | 11 | 14 | 16 | 9 |
| **Technique** (15) | 9 | 10 | 11 | 11 | 7 | 7 |
| **Design** (15) | 10 | 12 | 13 | 9 | 12 | 10 |
| **Reaction** (10) | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 5 | 5 |
| **Total (150)** | 104 | 102 | 100 | 93 | 89 | 78 |
| Source: Welzel/Wiebold (2001: 98) | | | | | | |

In general, the authors attest all parties a professional web-performance. However, in the single categories they see some necessity for improvement.

Going into details, it is interesting to what extend the different political parties offer the opportunity of interaction. This point was analysed by investigating the providing of chat rooms, feedback forma, e-mail addresses, donation possibilities, forums, etc. The highest reachable score was 30. According to the results, none of the largest political parties in Germany is using the whole potential of political online interaction. In general the authors missed voting tools, comfortable newsletters or a well kept archive.

## 3.3  Internet strategies of political actors

More or less all relevant political and collective actors use the Internet as a platform for information, communication and partly for participation. However, as seen above, the most empirical analysed field is the online performance of political parties and the media. There are hardly analyses about the Internet usage of other political actors in Germany as citizens' groups, NGOs or unions. While a lot has been written about the possibilities offered by the Internet for these political actors in regard to communication, participation or mobilisation, the actual forms and extent of Internet usage by such groups is hardly analysed systematically.

Concerning the common structural features of political online communication of political parties, information is mostly offered in press releases, archives, newsletters, speeches, reports, links and guest books. The typical forms of online interaction used are discussion forums, political chats and online events. As a more or less direct exchange between citizen and political actors, discussion forums are still the most often used form within political online communication. Since 1998, online chats have been provided in addition. Online chats create a temporary and issue-focused public, often with the participation of prominent people. Such chats - with a pre-given place, time and topic and mainly specialized dialog partners - may contribute to strengthen responsive communication structures. New forms of political participation occurred in 2000. Online-events like the "Virtual Party Meeting" of the Greens in Baden-Württemberg (www.virtueller-parteitag.de) or the online offer of the FDP to conjointly work at the political objectives for the federal elections in 2002 are examples for a deepening of the interaction process.[31]

---

[31] Bieber (2001a: 16ff.)

The Internet is also used as a protest platform by several groups of society in Germany.
One of the most famous examples is the "Internetstreik" throughout Germany in January 1998. A large number of Internet users initiated an "online-free" Sunday to protest against exorbitant telephone charges. The action was coordinated by the non-profit association "Dark Breed". The association offered general information on its website "www.internetstreik.de", sent circular letters and wrote an open letter to Ron Sommer (chairman of the management board of the Deutsche Telekom AG). In the beginning of October 1998 there were several hundreds websites linked to the strikers. Until the end of the month about 500.000 people visited the website, 10 000 e-mails arrived and 6 000 Internet users joined the strike.[32]

In regard to the Internet strategies of political actors in general, the international provider of management and technology consulting services and solutions "Accenture" and the online policy magazine "Politik-digital" (2001) followed an interesting approach. They investigated about 300 websites of political actors in Germany in regard to the business models they are based on.[33] Business models known from eCommerce were transferred to political online communication. The often cited definition of a business model by Tom Malone (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) "What a company does and how it makes money" turns into "What a political player does and how he gains support."[34]

The intention of the different models transferred to political online offers are described in the following:[35]

- The model of *Marketplaces* distinguishes two forms: Vertical Marketplaces and Horizontal Marketplaces. In the business world, *Vertical Marketplaces* are specialized in a certain industry or product. In the political sphere, this model focuses on a policy field or a subject area. Thus, Vertical Marketplaces are motivated thematically. They are politically independent and have flexible structures, which may include different forms: from a loose network to an influential lobby group. Vertical Marketplaces can also (or additionally) be aimed to demarcate a political ideology. In this case they are politically dependent. In both cases the aim is the bundling of political interests. The bundling can be used to demonstrate an increased demand on a specific issue to effect adequate reactions by politicians. It can also be an aim to bundle the interests to secure and extend the permanent demand for political ideas.
  *Horizontal Marketplaces* are specialized in business processes, services or goods which are not limited to a certain industry. In the political world, this model is used to offer services or information that are not devoted to a certain policy field or ideology but to all kinds of aspects of a political issue. This is mainly what agencies do when they are specialized in political marketing and especially in online marketing of political institutions.

- *Direct Commerce* provides a direct dialogue between the actors participating in the political process. The advantages are that the communication with citizens, voters or members is immediate and can possibly be transformed in a direct form of influence or an immediate support. A weak point of this model is that it is not in line with the individual

---

[32] Bieber (2000a: 171)
[33] Accenture / Politik-digital (2001)
[34] Accenture / Politik-digital (2001: 4)
[35] The models of Portal, Auction/Reverse Auction and Collaborative Workflow are excluded because they are still playing a marginal role in regard to political online offers in Germany. For further information see: Accenture / Politik-digital (2001: 20)

needs of the citizens. It counts on the vision that the interest in the political actor itself is a sufficient reason to visit his website.

- The *Catalogue Aggregator* is a non valuing compilation of political information on a broad range of issues. The objective is to make the political market more transparent for the citizens in a intermediary way (e.g. media online offers). Problems may occur if the online offer is competing with a corresponding offline product. The so called "channel conflict" can cause that one offer lowers the market share of the other product.

- Political *Exchange* is used to bring political offers and potential voters together. The Exchange offers the opportunity for citizens to take a stand on certain topics. This is often used within the model of a Vertical Marketplace or as a complement to Direct Commerce. Political Exchanges are characterized by conducting votes on specific topics or petitions in real-time. However, the carriers of the websites often do not specify if the results will directly influence the decision.

In regard of interpreting the results it has to be taken into account that the websites of political actors can include several of the presented models.

The results show that 81 % of the examined groups use the model of Vertical Marketplace within their Internet performance. The NGOs rest upon the model solely, and among foundations it is also widely spread with 90 %. All citizens' groups and public-private-partnerships base their online performance on this model, and 84 % of the associations do so.

As mentioned above, the model of Horizontal Marketplace is mainly used by agencies which are specialized in political marketing. The difference is that these actors do not aim for a direct benefit but want to acquire potential customers.

Direct Commerce is primarily used by the traditional political actors like governmental institutions, members of the Bundestag, political parties or unions. These groups count on the direct commerce of their issues and personnel in 90 % of the cases.

The media mainly use the model of Catalogue Aggregator. The other political actors are often more interested in claiming a certain issue or mobilizing support than providing a neutral forum for different issues and points of view.
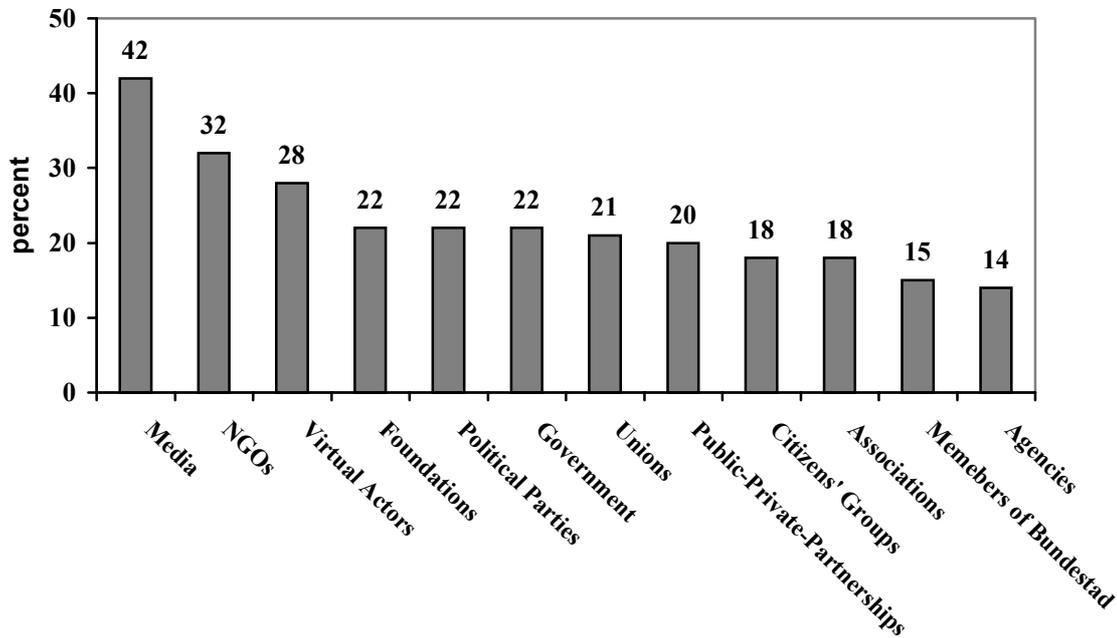
Only 5 % of the political actors in Germany use the Exchange model within their online performance. However, the appropriate functions such as online voting or petitions are used by a quarter of the NGOs and citizens' groups.

"Accenture" and "Politik-digital" explored in addition the Costumer-Relationship-Management (CRM) at the websites of the analysed political actors. The CRM is known from eCommerce. The intention was to rate the stage of maturity concerning the costumer relationship on the websites. The CRM Capability Model of Accenture is based on three central features which constitute the CRM-value:

1. Level of Customer Insights (knowledge about the costumer)
2. Level of Customer Offer (custom-made offers)
3. Level of Costumer Interaction

Correspondingly, it was analysed to what extent possibilities like personalizing web offers, sending newsletters, cookies, chats, discussion forums or online voting, are used on the websites. In addition, the usage of interactive contact possibilities was taken into account.

**Absolute CRM-Values of the political actors IT-performance
(maximum = 100%)**



Source: Accenture/Politik-digital (2001: 25)

As shown above, "Accenture" and "Politik-digital" found out that in Germany only a few of the political actors take advantage of all the possibilities and potentials the Internet offers. Innovative forms of political communication are hard to find, and online relationships to the citizens are at their very beginnings. At the moment "one-way" communication dominate and a web-based interactive communication hardly exists.

The possibilities of CRM are mainly used by the media. They use 42 % of the CRM possibilities. NGOs and virtual actors both use these possibilities by about 30 %. Political parties, government, public-private-partnerships, citizens´ groups, unions and associations only use about a fifth of the actual possibilities. Finally, members of the Bundestag use only 15 % of the possible CRM features, and agencies do so only by 14 %.

In regard to the single factor Customer Interaction, the media also reached the highest score with about 50 %, followed by the virtual actors. The government, unions, members of the Bundestag, foundations, political parties, citizens' groups, associations an private-public-partnerships use the instruments of costumer interaction by between 35 % and 45 %. NGOs (about 25 %) and the Agencies (about 10 %) use the features of costumer interaction the least.

# 4       The Internet politics of the government

## 4.1  The legal basis

The international and cross-border nature of the Internet means that it is often difficult to determine which laws apply. With the intention to create some kind of clarity, Germany was the first country to pass a law which regulates the free-wheeling global electronic space of the Internet in 1997: the so called "Information and Communication Service Act (IuKDG)" also known as "The Multi Media Law". Central objectives were to create a legal platform to deal with Internet crime and with conflicts arising from the use of the Internet.
Ever since the IuKDG is the legal framework of the new Information and Communication Services on the federal level in Germany.[36] There are also state (Länder) equivalents, and there is an agreement between the states called "Mediendieste-Staatsvertrag" or MDStV, also passed in 1997. The MDStV governs the delivery and content of media between the German states. Finally, Germany is subject to all of the particulars of the various EU agreements on areas such as data protection.

While some laws, as the multi media law or the law on digital signature, have been aimed specifically at the Internet, generally the same laws apply to the Internet as to other publishing media. The Internet is treated by the legislative body as just another branch of the media, where freedom of expression will be guaranteed. Censorship is prohibited by the German constitution, and that applies to the Internet as well.

An important issue in the context of Internet regulation is the liability for content transmitted over the Internet. The liability of the ISPs (Internet Service Providers) for the content of the websites they host is regulated in the IuKDG. According to Article 1 of the Teleservice Act (Teledienstgesetz) an Internet Service Provider is not liable for the content of websites it hosts. But online providers can be prosecuted for offering a venue for illegal content if they do so knowingly and if it would be technically possible and reasonable to prevent it (Article 1, §5).
In addition, the ISPs follow a voluntary and self-regulatory approach. Within the scope of the "Voluntary Self-Control of Multimedia Services" association ("Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle Multimedia-Dienstanbieter") the ISPs have mutually agreed upon their own code of conduct. They are obliged to avoid creating or knowingly carrying content that violates existing German state law. "For ISPs the issue is not only one of ethics, but also about problems surrounding the question of liability for content. (…) It has emerged in several cases, however, that German courts have obliged ISPs to ban a site if and when the ISP obtains knowledge of illegal content offered on it. A well-known case was that of the head of Compuserve's German arm, Mr. Somme, who was convicted in a trial in Munich and was held responsible for pornographic photographs of children that had been published on a site hosted by Compuserve."[37]

---

[36] The IuKDG is an article act. The first three acts content reorganisations: Act on the Utilization of Teleservices (Teledienstgesetz TDG), Act on Protection of Personal Data Used in Teleservices (Teledienstdatenschutz-gesetz) and the Act on Digital Signature (Signaturgesetz). The following six acts provide amendments of the Penal Code, the Administrative Offences Act, the youth protection act, copyright Act, the Price Indication Act and the Price Indication Ordinance. The whole text and further documents are available at "http//www.iid.de"
[37] Jansen (at: http://rights.apc.org/europe/germany/germany.htm)

An interesting point is that German courts tend to consider providers (and users) responsible for contents on pages they offered links to on their websites. This applies also if the connection with the offensive content consists not only in one link but in a series of links.[38]

In general law enforcement depends on close cooperation with ISPs in order to fight against Internet crime. On several occasions the German BKA (the Federal Police Agency) has invited Internet service providers, politicians, experts and members of law enforcement agencies to discuss ways of combating Internet crime, with the intention to promote a closer cooperation between ISPs and the police. An important meeting took place in February 2001. The main fields of Internet crime were identified as:

- circulation/ownership of child pornography
- publishing of right or left wing extremist content or xenophobic content
- economic crime and fraud in the field of e-commerce
- software piracy/issues of intellectual property rights
- drug and arms trafficking where the Internet is used a means for clandestine communication
- hacking into company networks/servers.

The meeting resulted in a joint declaration by the participants. They agreed in the need for a regular and confidential exchange of information between all parties involved. At the end they agreed upon the following measures:

- enhancing and deepening of contacts between ISPs, the federal police forces and the police forces of the states, including the setting up of contact offices for notifying crimes
- regular and event based meetings to optimize the flow of information
- a plan to establish a clearing house for Internet related information with the BKA.[39]

## 4.2  Decision making structures

Since the entry into force on 1 August 1996 of the telecommunications act TKG (*Telekommunikationsgesetz*), the competence for regulating the telecoms sector is held by the Regulatory Authority for Telecommunication and Posts, Reg TP (*Regulierungsbehörde für Telekommunikation und Post*).[40] This independent federal authority was created on the basis of the former federal ministry and federal agency for post and telecommunication (BMPT and BAPT) and is now in the portfolio of the federal ministry for economy. The main task of Reg TP, which became operational on 1 January 1998, is to foster liberalisation and deregulation of the post and telecoms market. For achieving this aim, the authority was given information and investigation rights as well as sanction rights. Its decisions can be challenged in court, but cannot be reviewed by the controlling institution (i.e. the ministry). Reg TP may decide to involve concerned businesses in the decision making process.

Besides the TKG, which regulates the competition aspect, the telecommunications sector is subject to two other main legal instruments: the federal act IuKDG (*Informations- und*

---

[38] For more details, see: http://www.bmck.com/ecommerce/hyperlinks.doc

[39] Jansen (at: http://rights.apc.org/europe/germany/germany.htm). Full text of this declaration at: http://www.bka.de/aktuell/agenda98/gemeinsame_e.html

[40] Http://www.regtp.de/.

*Telekommunikationsdienstegesetz des Bundes*) and the media service treaty between the German *Länder* MDStV (*Mediendienste - Staatsvertrag der Länder*).

For most of the electronic services in the information society, the stipulations of the general Act against restriction of competition (*Gesetz gegen Wettbewerbsbeschränkungen*) apply, a separate competition law is only necessary for the core telecoms market.

## 4.3 Governmental activities and initiatives

### 4.3.1 General policy on Information Society

In February 1996, the German Cabinet passed an action plan entitled "Info 2000: Germany's way to the Information Society". The report describes the current situation and focuses on setting priorities regarding policy measures and the allocation of responsibilities within the government. Essential objectives are further liberalisation in telecommunications and the creation of uniform national legal conditions for supply and use of Information and Communication technologies.

Germany instigated decisive changes to public policy during 1997 and1998 to ensure that it would be competitive on the way into the global Information Society. Major achievements during this period have included:

- opening up the telecommunications market since 1998
- the introduction of new multi-media services and end-user equipment
- the issuance of new laws and more than 500 telecommunications licences by the Regulatory Authority for Telecommunications and Postal Services
- reduction in telephone and Internet access costs.[41]

In the policy statement Chancellor Gerhard Schröder made upon assuming office in 1998, he emphasized the importance of today's new media and the information and communications sector as a crucial policy field for reducing unemployment. According to the government's view, unemployment can be successfully reduced only if Germany makes the transition from industrial society to information society as quickly as possible.

In 1999 the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology in co-operation with the Federal Ministry of Education and Research published a governmental action programme entitled "Innovation and jobs in the Information Society of the 21st Century". A budget of DM 3 billion of funding has been assigned for this programme which will run for a five-years period until 2005. Apart from these measures on the federal level, the state governments have started initiatives and support programmes on the Information Society.

The primary objectives of "Innovation and jobs in the Information Society of the 21st Century" are:[42]

1. Wider access to the new media and access for all groups

---

[41] Chatrie / Wright (2000)

[42] Federal Ministry of Education and Research/ Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology (1999): "Innovation and jobs in the Information Society of the 21st Century. Action Programme by the German Government." Bonn

2. Promoting multi-media technologies in education
3. Improving the legal framework to strengthen confidence and security
4. Creating innovative jobs – promoting new applications
5. Taking a leading position in technology and the infrastructure
6. Advancing state modernisation

Each aim is forced by numerous measures and initiatives. [43] One of them, for example, is the German government's ten-point program entitled "Internet for All", launched by Chancellor Gerhard Schröder in September 2000. The programme is based on the conviction that the transition to the information society will only be successful if all citizens have access to the new technologies. Therefore the main goal of this action plan is to enable all people to use modern information technology. In 2001, the government provided an overview of what has been achieved in the first year of the initiative.

The results are, for example: [44]

- In 2001, 98 per cent of the schools are connected to the Internet in comparison to 15 percent in 1998.
- For the development and widespread use of high-quality teaching and learning software, a program entitled "New Media in Education" was created with a budget of more than 600 million marks.
- Until the end of 2000, 54.000 career training opportunities were provided in the IT and media sectors.
- Since the program was initiated, 80.000 unemployed persons have obtained an Internet certificate. About 50 per cent of the participants were from the eastern German states and 60 per cent were women.

German governmental policies on enhancing women to use the Internet have been following a two-fold aim: firstly, unemployment is higher among women than among men and therefore training women in ICT is an instrument for improving their employability (in particular for mothers and elder women); secondly, training women in the use of ICT for private purposes is meant to prevent or reduce the gender specific digital divide.
This two-fold approach is applied by the joint action of the Federal ministry for Education and Research, the Federal Employment Agency, the most widespread women's magazine Brigitte, the Deutsche Telekom and a civil society group (*Verein Frauen geben Technik neue Impulse e.V.*), "Women on the net" (*Frauen ans Netz*)[45]. Since 1998, more than 100 000 women have participated in the Internet courses of this initiative. Further 13 000 women are expected to participate in spring 2002, when the initiative organises 1 450 courses in 137 cities. New approaches will be tested, such as offering child care during the lessons, and installing laptops in schools or libraries in order to reach women in small municipalities.

---

[43] For information about actions in detail and on related developments see: http://www.iid.de/aktionen/index.html
[44] The whole text is available under: http://eng.bundesregierung.de/frameset/index.jsp
[45] Http://www.frauen-ans-netz.de/

### 4.3.1  Policy on e-government

Another essential task of this programme is the German E-government initiative. The term E-government (Electronic Government) describes in a broad sense the use of new information and communication technologies (ICT) to support the working of governments and public administrations. Usually there are three main effects expected:

- better and more efficient services to business and to citizens
- greater efficiency and openness of government administration
- cost savings for the taxpayer

The German E-Government initiative "BundOnline 2005" (www.bundonline2005.de) launched by Chancellor Schröder in September 2000 is directed at a modern, efficient and citizen-friendly administration. With this initiative the Federal Government commits itself to provide online all central state services that can be placed on the Internet for the citizens, the business community, the federal and the local level until 2005.

The main issue of this action program is to develop and apply technical standards for a country's public sector that are as uniform as possible. The main instruments are: paying systems, digital signature, encryption and call centers. The online offer is planned to be provided in the sphere of all state levels and to ensure the relevant inter-changeability between the administrative levels to achieve interoperability and compatibility.

According to the TNS Emnid-Survey "Government Online 2001", 17 % of the Germans have used the Internet to access Government Online over the last twelve months, i.e. 47 % of the people who used the Internet within the last month. The Government Online offers are mainly used for information seeking (14 per cent). Transaction services, like using the Internet to pay for government services or products were used by 3 per cent of the Germans.

An important factor, which could be a barrier to use eGovernment is security: only 14 per cent of Germans consider that it is safe to use the Internet to provide the Government personal information, while 83 per cent consider it is unsafe.[46]

---

[46] Taylor Nelson Sofres (2001)

# References

Accencure/Politik-digital.de (2001): Von eBusiness zu ePolitics? Praxis und Potenzial von eBusiness-Modellen für die politische Kommunikation im Internet. Available: http://www.politik-digital.de/e-demokratie/forschung/accenture.shtml p. 14

ARD/ZDF-Projektgruppe Multimedia (2001a): ARD/ZDF-Online-Studie 2001: Internetnutzung stark zweckgebunden. IN: Media Perspektiven 8/2001, p.382-397

ARD/ZDF-Projektgruppe Multimedia (2001b) : ARD/ZDF-Offline-Studie 2001. Nichtnutzer von Online: Internet für den Alltag (noch) nicht wichtig. IN: Media Perspektiven 8/2001, p.398-409

ARD/ZDF-Projektgruppe Multimedia (2001c) : Schlussfolgerungen aus der ARD/ZDF-Online-Studie 2001. Information: Stellenwert des Internets im Kontext klassischer Medien. IN: Media Perspektiven 8/2001, p.410-422

Bieber, Christoph (2001a): Internet, Parteienkommunikation, Multimediapolitiker. Eine Einführung. IN: Bieber, Christoph Der Einfluss des Internet auf parteiinterne Kommunikations- und Organisationsprozesse, Bonn: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung 2001 (pdf) http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/fo-wirtschaft/01096.pdf

Bieber, Christoph (2001b) : Stellenwert von Online-Diskussionsforen für digitale Politikprozesse. Available: http://www.forum-informationsgesellschaft.de/extern/VorlagenDownload/Bieber.doc

Bootz and Hamilton (2000) : Digitale Spaltung in Deutschland. Ausgangssituation, Internationaler Vergleich, Handlungsempfehlungen.

Chatrie, Isabelle / Wright, Paul (2000): Public Strategies for the Information Society in the Member States of the EU. An ESIS report. Available: http://europa.eu.int/ISPO/docs/services/docs/2000/October/ESIS_IS_Strategies_en.pdf

Clemens, Detlev (1999): Netz-Kampagnen. Parteien und politische Informationslotsen in den Internet-Wahlkämpfen 1998 in Deutschland und den USA. IN: Klaus Kamps (Hrsg.): Elektronische Demokratie? Perspektiven politischer Partizipation.

Dowe, Christoph (2001): Politik im Netz: Online auf dem Weg zur Bundestagswahl? Available: http://www.sh-landtag.de/inet_u_demokratie/dowe_vortrag.pdf

Elixmann, Dieter / Metzler, Anette (2001) : Marktstruktur und Wettbewerb auf dem Markt für Internet-Zugangsdienste. Wissenschaftliches Institut für Kommunikationsdienste.

Emind@emnid (2001): Der Verweigereratlas. Basiserhebung. available: www.emnid.tnsofres.com/index1.html

ESIS (2000): Information Society indicators in the Member States of the European Union. Available: http://www.eu-esis.org/Basic/HomeBasic.htm

European Business School (2000): Internet/E-Commercew Gründungen in Deutschland, Segmentanalyse: Internet-Service-Provider. Diskussionspapier. Available: http://www.e-startup.org/files/ergebnis.htm

GfK AG (2001): GfK Online-Monitor, 7. Untersuchungswelle. Präsentation der zentralen Ergebnisse. Available: http://www.GfK.de/

Grajczyk, Andreas / Mende, Annette (2001) : ARD/ZDF-Offline-Studie 2001. Nichtnutzer von Online: Internet für den Alltag (noch) nicht wichtig. IN: Media Perspektiven 8/2001, p.398-3409

Hagen, Lutz M. (1998): Nutzung von Online-Medien zur politischen Information. Einführung und Überblick. IN: Hagen, Lutz M. (Hg.): Online-Medien als Quellen politischer Information. Westdeutscher Verlag

Hagen, Lutz M./ Kamps, Klaus (1999): Netz-Nutzer und Netz-Nutzung. Zur Rezeption politischer Informationen in Online-Medien. IN: Klaus Kamps (Hrsg.): Elektronische Demokratie? Perspektiven politischer Partizipation.

Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach (2001): ACTA 2001. Allensbacher Computer- und Telekommunikations-Analyse. Available:  http://www.acta-online.de

Jansen, Mattias: Internet Rights Country Report – Germany. Available: http://rights.apc.org/europe/germany/germany.htm

Kubicek, Herbert (1998): Das Internet 1995-2005. IN: Leggewie/Maar (Hg.): Internet und Politik. Von der Zuschauer zur Beteiligungsdemokratie.

Leggewie, Claus/Bieber, Christoph (2001): Interaktive Demokratie. Politische Online-Kommunikation und digitale Politikprozesse. IN: aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte B41-42/2001

NFO Infratest (2001): Euro.net 8. Der europäische Internet-Monitor – Untersuchungssteckbrief. Available: www.nfoeurope.com/euronet

OECD (2001): Communications Outlook. Information Society 2001

Rederer, Klaus (2000): Politik Online. Die politischen Parteien im Internet. Berlin

Regulierungsbehörde für Telekommunikation und Post (2001): Jahresbericht 2000. Marktbeobachtungen. Available: http://www.regtp.de

Steger, Fietke (2001):"'Elektronische Agora' und 'Digitale Spatlung'. Empirische Untersuchung der individuellen Online-Nutzung im politische Kontext" Available: http://www.politik-digital.de/e-demokratie/forschung/agora.shtml

Taylor Nelson Sofres Consultants (2001): Government Online 2001. A national perspective. Benchmarking Research Study. Available: www://emnid.tnsofres.com/press/GO-SummaryDeutschland.pdf

Welling, Stefan / Kubicek, Herbert (2001): Measure and Bridging the digital divide in Germany. IN: Internet@Future: Jahrbuch Telekommunikation und Gesellschaft 2001, auf CD-Rom erhältlich

Welzel, Carolin/Wieboldt, Sven (2001): Die Online-Angebote der Bundesparteien im Webtest. IN: Bieber, Christoph Der Einfluss des Internet auf parteiinterne Kommunikations- und Organisationsprozesse, Bonn: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung 2001 (pdf) http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/fo-wirtschaft/01096.pdf