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Coverage  
United Kingdom

## More businesses are buying over the Internet

### 2003 e-commerce survey of business: ICT usage

Twenty-nine per cent of businesses bought goods and services over the Internet in 2003, markedly up from 13 per cent in 2002, according to new experimental statistics from the annual e-commerce survey, published today by the Office for National Statistics (see Background Note 1).

The 2003 survey reaffirmed that larger businesses have greater Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) usage, but the use of ICT is typically growing faster among smaller businesses. This partly reflects the earlier investment in ICT by larger businesses.

#### Other key findings of the survey include:

- Five per cent of businesses used the Internet for sales in 2003 compared to four per cent in 2002 (see Background Note 1).
- The percentage of businesses with Internet access increased from 59 per cent in 2002 to 62 per cent in 2003. The increase in the percentage of businesses with Internet access was largest for small businesses (those with fewer than 50 employees).
- The number of people with access to the Internet at work rose from 6.5 million at the end of 2002, to 7.1 million at the end of 2003.
- One in four businesses used broadband as the primary method of Internet connection at the end of 2003, a rise from one in seven in 2002.
- Thirty-one per cent of businesses reported having a website in 2003, compared to 29 per cent in 2002.
- Seventy per cent of businesses used personal computers in 2003.
- The number of businesses using the Internet to interact with public authorities rose from 18 per cent in 2002 to 19

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per cent in 2003.

#### BACKGROUND NOTES

1. These estimates relate to businesses classified to the non-financial sector.
2. The article is available free on the National Statistics website:  
[www.statistics.gov.uk/Statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=6645](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/Statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=6645)
3. A further report, covering the value of the e-commerce activities of businesses, will be published later this month.
4. Some 12,000 firms were questioned on ICT usage in the survey, now in its fourth year.
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