

# Information Society Technologies Estonia 1999

## Information Society Developments in Estonia

### Telephone systems

At the end of 1998 there were 476 000 fixed telephone lines in use in Estonia (33 telephone numbers per 100 inhabitants).

By a concession agreement signed in December 1992 between the Government of the Republic of Estonia and Estonian Telephone Company Ltd., the period of limited competition with respect to the basic services (local, national and international switched fixed voice telephonic services, telex and telegraphic services) is granted to the Estonian Telephone until the January 1, 2001. After that date full liberalisation of Estonian telecommunication market is expected.



By today, the number of mobile phone users in Estonia has grown up to 350 000 - that is, almost every 4th person in Estonia owns a mobile phone. The number of clients is divided between 3 operators: Estonian Mobile Telephone Co. (230 000 clients), Radiolinja Estonia (70 000 clients) and Q-GSM (50 000 clients).

### Computers and data communications

The turnover of telecommunication operators was EUR 210 million and the size of the market of computer services was EUR 33 million (1998).

The total number of computer users is 400 thousand (37% of population, 15-74 years old) and about 6 inhabitants out of 100 have a computer at home. The number of regular Internet users is estimated to be 90 000 (1998) - 62 inhabitants out of 1000.

According to RIPE host count from October 18th 1999, there are 28031 Internet hosts in Estonia (i.e. 19.4 hosts per 1000 of population). The ratio is very high compared to other Central and Eastern European countries.

Access to the Internet is also available via Public Internet Access Points (PIAP's, facilities where everybody can use the basic computer and Internet services free of charge). Since 1997, more than 70 PIAP's have been established. Together with Tiger Tour, an important annual road-show showing information and communication technologies and its application areas to wider public, the network of PIAP's has increased the awareness level Estonian inhabitants concerning ICT.

### Information Society Projects

According to the European Survey of Information Society there are 50-60 information society projects (innovative projects that use data processing and telecommunications technologies to support innovative methods of communication between members of society for a wide range of purposes) in operation, underway or planned at the present moment.

When analysing IS Projects, the most interesting and encouraging aspects are:

- The emphasis of IS projects on general education and public sector in a way reflects Estonia's values and the extensive work that has been done to carry out the "Principles of Estonian Information Policy" that have been approved by the Parliament (Riigikogu) and that have gathered wide support.
- The amount of IS projects on a national scale (about 50%) refers to the natural advantage of a small country in innovation - it is easier and less costly to initiate and carry out projects covering the whole country, influencing/directing thereby the developments of Estonian information society.

**Phone +372 7300 329, fax +372 7 300 336, e-mail: [ist99@ibs.ee](mailto:ist99@ibs.ee),  
[www.esis.ee/](http://www.esis.ee/)**

## **Information Society Technologies Estonia 1999**

- Projects in public administration play an important role in shaping the modern informational infrastructure in the Estonian public sector and this is why the work that has been done so far deserves mentioning.
- The scarcity of projects in the industrial sector reflects the current situation of Estonia's developing economy:
- Small companies cannot yet finance IS projects.
- The rapid growth of software industry and the limited supply of top-level professionals turn IS development projects into an everyday innovational work inside the company.
- First projects in the E-commerce sector are a clear sign of the rapid development of the field also in Estonia. The pace of development and the founding and growth of the projects will definitely be supported by the developing competition in the Estonian telecommunications market.
- There are interesting projects both in the Estonian and European scale in the fields of production, health care and technological R&D.

For more information please visit the European Survey of Information Society web-site <http://www.esis.ee>.