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culture studies

PRACTICES AND USERS

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Cultural practice and internet usage

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Foreword

The cultural media cannot be unaware of the fact that fifty percent of French citizens now have access to a high-speed internet connection. The new use of a section of the* ICT survey *carried out by INSEE gives an initial overview of the relationships between cultural and digital practices from which various lessons may be learned: on the whole, these practices tend to go hand in hand rather than replacing each other, with the exception of television; they increase in accordance with the same factors (age, education, earnings, etc), and the cumulative principle prevails in both cases. Moreover, we are seeing a number of different groups forming within the French population. Firstly, an online population with little involvement in traditional or digital culture. A population engaged in very frequent youth practices, particularly when it comes to communication, yet which is ill-versed in traditional cultural practices. Older citizens are involved both in traditional and digital cultural practices.

Until now, the overall structure of cultural practice does not seem to have been radically altered, but how it will look once those born into the digital age enter adulthood, and today's adults enter old age remains to be seen…

P. C.

The rapid pace of internet development means our lifestyles and consumer behaviour patterns are undergoing a sea change, due to the very fact of its "multi-purpose" nature: we can access works from the distant past alongside television and radio programmes, we can broadcast and share our own images, text and music, conduct spoken and written correspondence, and carry out even the most mundane day-to-day tasks.

Almost half of households have a home internet connection; this, combined with the effects of digitization, constitutes a genuine challenge to the traditional approach to cultural practice, as the categories and boundaries by which we have previously defined cultural activities are being fairly radically questioned. Indeed, this spreading digital culture is, to a certain extent, rendering the traditional cultural divisions or fields obsolete as images, texts and music are often interlinked, the amateur/professional divide is becoming blurred, and those cultural activities which previously were generally closely linked to physical media or places, (*e.g.* television in the home, works of art in cultural institutions, etc.), are now seeing their very foundations shifting. To cite just a few examples, a few years ago, *i.e.* before digitization and the widespread availability of portable devices (microphones, telephones, MP3 players, etc.), listening to music was limited to playing records and cassettes at home, reading limited to books and the press, television programmes to the set in the sitting room, paintings to museums, etc. However it is now rare that any cultural or media activity can be easily reduced to a simple "activity = material or medium + location" equation.

Hence some problems have arisen with statistics-gathering methods, made all the more tricky due to the difficulties encountered in changing its classification systems and setting up reliable, long-term measurement systems whilst internet usages still continue to evolve rapidly.

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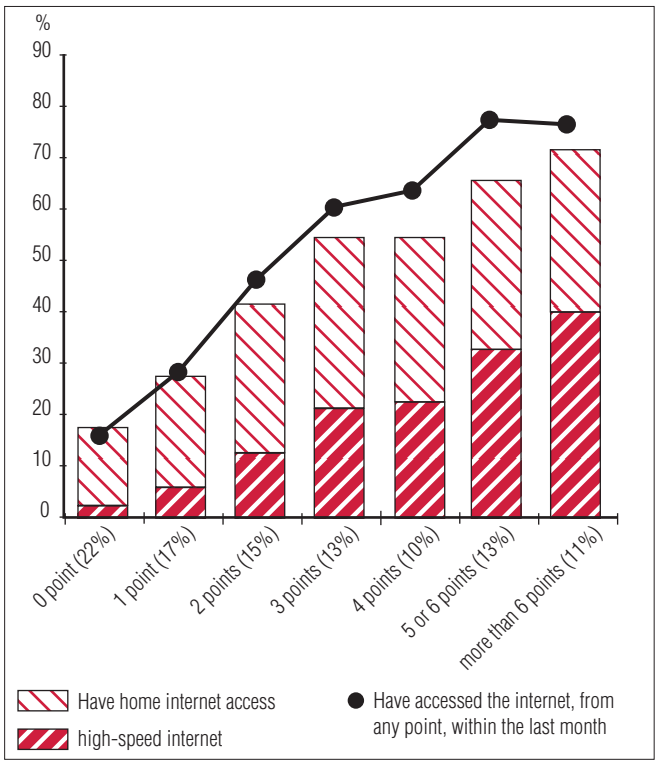
This problem persists, whilst the media continue to relentlessly raise the profile of the digital revolution, with a "natural" tendency to over-exaggerate some fringe phenomena, implying that their continued distribution trends are inevitable, or else they present them as completely innovative due to a lack of historical perspective. Moreover, the image which we have of the uses of this new «multipurpose media» is often partial or distorted, and it is now very difficult to gauge exactly how significant these cultural practices and their evolution really are, and thus to anticipate their impact on "traditional[1]" cultural and media practices.

The work for which we hereby present the main results[2] offers an analysis of the links which are currently being forged between new and old ways of accessing art and culture. In an attempt to both understand how internet uses are being integrated into the cultural domains which pre-existed them and the ways in which they can contribute to their transformation, this report aims to throw some new light on the broad shape of the restructuring which is currently underway.

Graph 1 – Internet access and overall levels of cultural practices



Source: DEPS

USAGE INCREASES WITH CULTURAL ACTIVITY LEVELS…

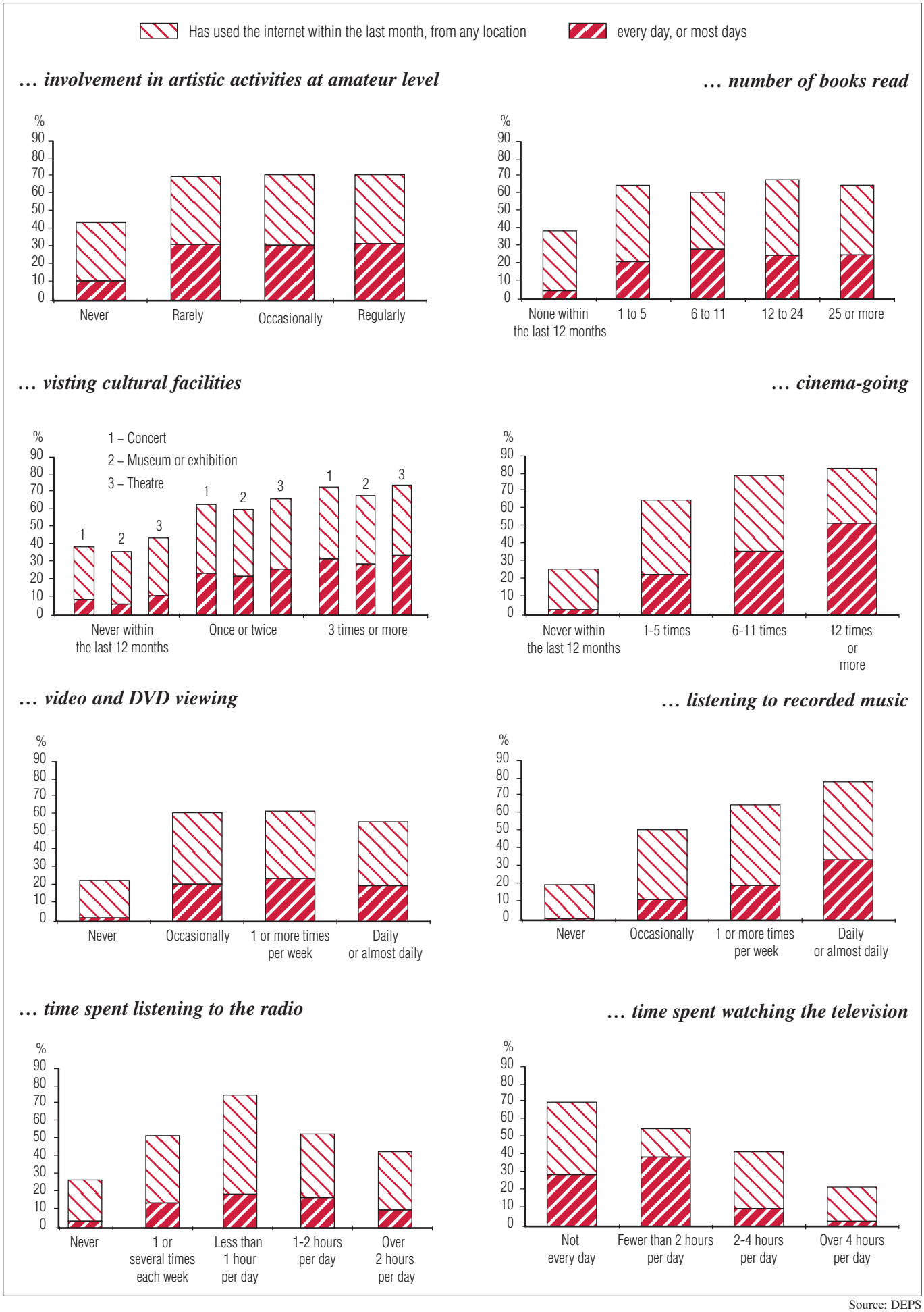
Our initial observation is that, amongst the French population, one's likelihood of using the internet increases in line with one's general level of participation in cultural activities. Graph 1 illustrates this very clearly: home internet access, and usage over the past month, wherever one's point of access (home, work, public place, etc), increases in proportion with the composite indicator score for activities such as book reading, visiting cultural facilities (cinemas, theatres, concert halls and exhibitions) and involvement in artistic activities[3] at amateur level.

If, however, we then examine the figures for involvement in the individual traditional cultural activities which go to make up this composite figure, we see that their relationship with internet usage varies greatly (see Graphs 2). Thus, for book-reading or involvement in artistic activities at amateur level, those who do not engage in these activities are far more likely to have never had any contact with the internet, but how often one engages in these activities has little influence; so, for instance, the likelihood of being an active internet user is more or less the same whether one reads rarely (1 to 5 books a year) or frequently (25 books a year or more). On the other hand, in the case of visiting cultural facilities, the number of internet users increases in direct proportion with the number of visits, whether this be to theatres, concerts, museums or exhibitions; the link is even more clear with regard to cinema visits: 83% of those who go at least once a month are internet users (61% are daily users), as compared with 64% of those who went between one and five times.

Moreover, it is worth noting that those who use the internet for non-professional reasons are far

1. For the sake of convenience, throughout the rest of this text, we will use the term "traditional" without inverted commas, to designate cultural and media activities which existed before the advent of the internet.
2. The data presented here are taken from the variable section of INSEE's ongoing survey into household living conditions (*Enquête permanente sur les conditions de vie des ménages, EPCV*), entitled « Technologies de l'information et de la communication » which was published in October 2005 and was based on a survey group of 5603 individuals representative of the metropolitan population aged 15 and over. It is based on data which have not been subject to analysis. To see the main results of this survey, see Yves FRYDEL, « Internet au quotidien: un Français sur quatre », *Insee Première*, nº 1076, mai 2006 (www.insee.fr/fr/ffc/ipweb/ip1076/ip1076.htm).
3. This composite figure, representing overall engagement in traditional cultural practices, was based on six cultural activities: book-reading, involvement in artistic activities at amateur level, and visiting cinemas, theatres, concert halls and museums. For each of these activities, a score of 0 is accorded to those who have not engaged in such activity within the last 12 months, 1 for those engaging rarely or occasionally and 2 for those engaging regularly. Consequently, the maximum possible score is 12 points.

Graphs 2 – Internet usage in terms of…



Source: DEPS

more likely to go to the cinema than to stay at home and watch videos and DVDs, which reveals one of the more singular features of this new media: whilst used largely at home (the use of mobile devices still remains limited), it appears to have greater links with the "going out culture" prevalent amongst the younger, more highly educated sections of the population, those for whom leisure activities tend to be oriented outside of the home and towards socialising with friends.

... AND FALLS IN ACCORDANCE WITH TELEVISION VIEWING LEVELS

Although there is a proportional relationship between increased internet use and frequency of listening to recorded music, similar to that for cinema-going, the same does not go for radio and television. It is amongst those who regularly listen to music but for short periods of time (less than one hour/day) and those who watch little television that we see most internet users; indeed, the proportion of internet users falls in direct proportion with increasing time spent in front of the television, whereas, as previously mentioned, it tends to increase for all other cultural and media practices.

On the basis of this initial analysis, we may then conclude that within the French population internet usage seems to be a domestic activity closely linked with a manifest interest in the arts and culture in general, in contrast with television, where viewing time diminishes as involvement in cultural activities increases. This just goes to show the extent to which these two media operate at different levels and involve audiences with different expectations; moreover it is hard to see them as being in direct competition, even though a certain amount of competition of course exists, particularly in terms of leisure time allocation, not to mention advertising revenues.

It is hard to determine with any certainty the nature of the link observed between an interest in traditional cultural activities and internet activity. It seems reasonable to suppose that an interest in the former leads to the latter as it has long been established that a cumulative principle brings it into the cultural domain: the "cultured public", *i.e.* those expressing the greatest interest in art and culture, and who attend cultural events and spaces more regularly, tend to seize upon any innovation which allows them to explore new ideas and interests or develop existing pursuits, and this is clearly how many of them have discovered the internet. However it also seems reasonable to suggest that the very "nature" of this new tool encourages discovery, heightens interest, leads to the discovery of previously unknown activities or domains, in short, that it can contribute to an increased interest in culture. In other words, regular internet use may result from an existing interest in culture whilst also causing an increased interest in it. Only longitudinal studies which have analysed internet users' cultural activities before and after their adoption of this technology could clarify this issue, but let it suffice to say that, across the French population, the internet users who appear most active have a very similar profile to that of the "cultured public".

THE PROFILE OF INTERNET USERS AND INTEREST IN CULTURE

We are already aware of the main factors influencing internet access[4], and the figures in the first column of Table 1 (see opposite) clearly reflect these. The groups most likely to have a home internet connection are: men; the younger generation (those aged between 15-24 show the highest adoption rates, and households with children or adolescents are more likely to have an internet connection); those with higher incomes; those with higher educational qualifications; those living in the Paris area.

These same factors also generally lie behind the frequency and diversity of use: having adopted this technology, men are more likely to be users, as are the young, those with higher educational qualifications, and those who live alone. What is commonly referred to as the "digital divide" is also evident at usage level.

The profile of 16% of non-users living in a home with an internet connection is, overall, very close to that of those who do not have an internet connection: they are more likely to be male and even more likely to be females over the age of 45 with a low level of educational qualification; there are slightly fewer of these non-users in homes with a high-speed connection, but scarcely so (14%), which indicates that, over and above inequalities of internet adoption and access, issues of identity and cognition may prove to be stumbling blocks when it comes to taking an interest in this new domestic tool.

4. See Régis BIGOT, *La diffusion des technologies de l'information dans la société française,* Crédoc, novembre 2006.

Moreover, responses to the question of what respondents would miss the most if they could no longer use a computer indicate that a number of them have no real interest in the internet. For example, 12% of broadband users responded "nothing" or "nothing in particular"; again these tend to be those aged 45 and over, and those with lower educational qualifications (see Table 2, p. 48).

Table 1 – Factors determining internet adoption and usage

	Proportion with home internet access	Difference in relation to the overall value (ref[1])		Proportion of those who have used the internet within the last month	Difference in relation to the overall value (ref[2])	
Total for those aged 15 and over	**43**			**84**		
Gender						
Male	45	1.4	***	87	1.8	***
Female	41	ref		81	ref	
Age						
15-24	62	1.5	***	98	2.5	***
25-34	53	0.8		97	1.9	**
35-44	56	ref		86	ref	
45-54	51	1.1		71	0.4	***
55-64	33	0.6	***	68	0.3	***
65 or over	10	0.2	***	51	0.1	***
Educational qualification						
No degree or CEP[3]	16	0.5	***	55	0.5	***
BEPC, CAP, BEP[4]	44	ref		79	ref	
Baccalauréat or equivalent	56	1.6	***	91	1.6	***
Higher than *baccalauréat*	73	2.7	***	94	2.7	***
Standard of living						
1st quartile	25	0.7	***	79	0.8	
2nd quartile	37	ref		81	ref	
3rd quartile	48	1.3	***	86	1.1	
4th quartile	62	2.0	***	86	0.7	**
Size of urban unit						
Rural municipality	37	1.0		82	0.9	
UU with a population of 100,000 or below	38	ref		84	ref	
UU with a population of over 100,000	45	1.2	**	82	0.9	
Paris and its suburbs	58	1.8	***	86	1.3	
Domestic situation						
Single	19	0.2	***	92	2.7	***
One-parent family	35	0.4	***	84	0.9	
Couple without children	31	0.5	***	81	1.9	***
Couple with at least one child	61	ref		84	ref	
Other household type	39	0.6	***	72	1.0	
Level of involvement in cultural life						
0-1 point	22	0.5	***	68	0.6	***
2-3 points	54	ref		84	ref	
4-5 points	63	1.2	**	90	1.6	**
6 or more points	70	1.7	***	91	1.6	**

1. Logistic regression on whether or not one has a domestic internet connection (based on a survey sample group of 5 603 individuals aged 15 and over).
2. Logistic regression on whether or not one has used one's domestic internet connection (based on a survey sample group of 2124 individuals who have a domestic internet connection).
3. CEP: *Certificat d'études primaires* (certificate of primary education)
4. BEPC: *Brevet d'études du premier cycle* (secondary education certificate, ≈GCSE (UK))
   CAP: *Certificat d'aptitude professionnelle* (technical school certificate)
   BEP: *Brevet d'études professionnelles* (vocational studies certificate)

To interpret this table: 45% of men have a home internet connection compared with 41% of women. Results of logistic regression (odds-ratios shown in the "Difference…" column) show that, *ceteris paribus*, men are 1.4 times more likely to be connected. Moreover, 87% of men who are connected have used the internet within the last month, as compared with 81% of women, and, once they have an internet connection, men are 1.8 times more likely to be active internet users. Figures followed by *** are significant at 1%, those followed by ** at 5%.

Source: DEPS

Table 1 recalls the information illustrated in Graph 1 (p. 44), *i.e.* interest in the internet is closely linked with traditional cultural practices, as much in terms of adoption as usage. It remains to be seen whether this relationship is merely explained by the fact that they are both determined by social factors or whether the fact of being part of the "cultured public" actually increases, in a given situation, one's likelihood of becoming an internet user. This is what we have demanded of a *ceteris paribus*-type analysis, in which we have sought to control the impact of the main socio-demographic variables which may influence one's relationship with the internet.

The results confirm the determining role of age, income and education, and, to a lesser extent, gender on both internet adoption and use; being a cohabiting couple with children or resident of Paris are only determining factors in internet adoption. Above all, the results show that the extent of one's interest in culture clearly has a tremendous influence "in and of itself" on both internet adoption and usage. Thus, for example, if we take an individual member of what is referred to as the "cultured public" (scoring 6 or over on the overall score for involvement in traditional cultural practices, see note 3, p. 40, above), their likelihood of having an internet connection is 1.7 times higher than that of another person within the same gender, age, standard of living, education, place of residence and domestic situation bracket whose cultural activity involvement score is only average (2 or 3 points on the same scale); and for those with equivalent adoption levels, their chances of being an active internet user is 1.6 times higher.

A COMBINATION OF THREE SETS OF FACTORS

Ultimately, it would seem that the spread of the internet depends largely on a combination of three sets of factors, which firstly affect adoption levels before affecting frequency and diversity of use.

- Being young, or, more specifically, being part of the younger generation appears to be a distinct advantage: those aged 15-24 are more likely to have access to an internet connection and to use it frequently. This should come as no surprise, as the young are "by nature" driven to get their hands on technological innovations and are often encouraged to invest in this new medium by parents who are keen to "tear them away" from the lure of the television. More generally, the results reveal three different generational attitudes to the internet which are largely related to their age at the time of its emergence: those aged 25 and under, vast numbers of whom have taken to this new means of entertainment and accessing information which appeared before they had reached adulthood; those aged 25-55 who have also integrated it into their leisure activities in fairly large numbers: this was facilitated for many by being introduced to it through work or their children; finally, there are those of retirement age who have largely remained at a remove from the adoption process.
- Levels of economic and particularly socio-cultural resources still have a significant influence, even though the digital divide has started to diminish over the last few years. Having a higher income obviously helps remove the cost barrier to adopting this technology, and having higher educational attainments favours accessing and, moreover, adopting the internet's diverse functionalities. Thus there are a number of factors which go towards explaining why those in management jobs and higher intellectual professions use the internet more than any other socio-professional groups in their spare time: they are more likely to use this technology in the course of their professional lives and thus transfer this acquired knowledge over into their leisure time; they also tend to engage in more "active" and diverse leisure pursuits than the average person, whilst having skills and credentials which encourage a diverse and proficient use of the opportunities available through this new "multipurpose media".
- Finally, a high level of traditional cultural practices constitutes, *ceteris paribus*, an important asset, as it generally leads to an understanding of the internet as a tool through which cultural works and information can be accessed, and which can enhance and expand one's cultural world. Having a *hobby,* interest or even simply being curious about culture in general or a specific activity is "in and of itself" for certain age and socio-cultural groups, a factor which favours not only the adoption but also the use of these technologies, particularly in the older generation.

We can measure the effects of these three sets of factors by looking at the profiles of those internet users who make the most of the opportunities which the internet has to offer: 33% of high-speed internet users whose online behaviour is most diversified (at least ten usages out of the 23 listed in the questionnaire) are often men, generally young, with a graduate or post-graduate level qualification and with a high level of involvement in cultural practices.

The cumulative principle predominates usage

In order to summarise the behaviour patterns of internet users[5], an analysis was made of their responses to questions regarding the 23 different uses identified in the survey, the results of which are represented in a simplified format in Graph 3 (see p. 46).

The first section of the factorial design shows the cumulative nature of usage, opposing those who use it as a "multipurpose media", usually daily, with those whose usage is both less frequent and less diverse. If the nature of this opposition is usual (the cumulative principle often predominates the areas of leisure time activities and cultural consumption), its unusual emphasis should be noted: no one usage is shown in opposition to the others, they are all correlated positively.

Occasional users are not characterised by any specific usage, rather by the fact that they don't do what all the others do, *i.e.* email correspondence and online research (these uses are the ones closest to the intersection of the axes in Graph 3). They only make limited use of the possibilities which the internet offers, and moreover they do so less systematically than regular internet users: they don't do anything the regular users don't, and engage less often (if ever) in that which they do do.

Diversity of use is therefore closely linked with frequency: those who log on every day engage in more diverse activities than those who log in less often. This may seem logical but it is not insignificant, as one might well imagine that those with a very specific interest or hobby might make intensive use of one particular internet feature to the exclusion of all the other opportunities this medium has to offer.

Moreover, the graph reveals that daily internet usage is not always associated with long log-in periods. Those who spend the most time at their computers (15 hours or more per week) tend to favour online gaming, communication (instant messaging, forums and chatrooms) and downloading programmes[6]. Time spent on the web in fact depends much more on the types of activity in which one engages: one may well log on daily to send emails, read newspapers or check one's bank account without this taking up much time, unlike gaming or visiting chatrooms or forums, which, as we have seen, are activities associated with users who spend a lot of time in front of their computers.

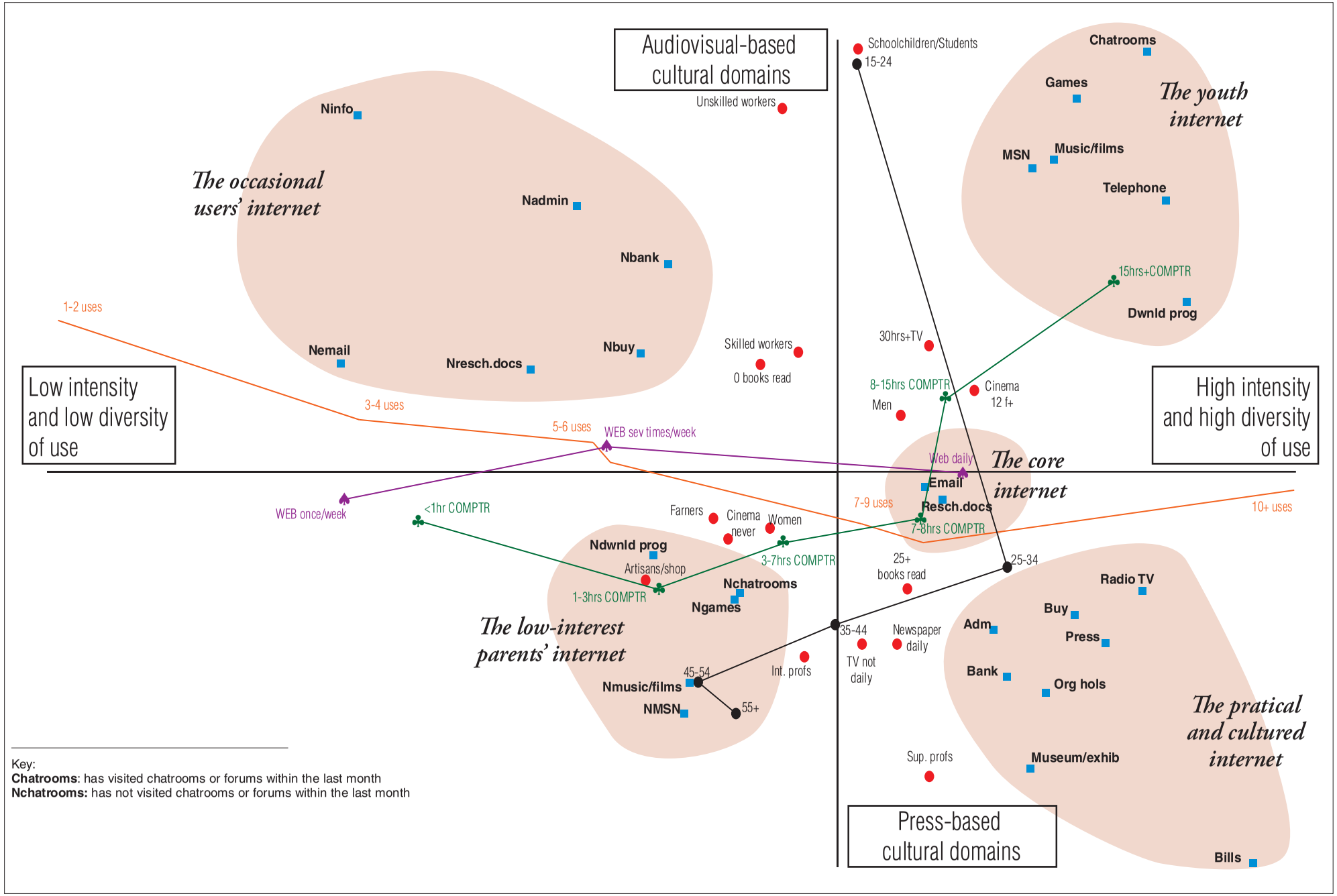
The vertical axis relates mainly to behaviour specific to young internet users. This group is very keen on functionalities relating to interpersonal communication (instant messaging, chatrooms and forums), as well as games, music and films; they are less keen on those relating to managing day-to-day issues (they are behind when it comes to all those uses in the lower right hand quadrant of Graph 3). Moreover, on the one hand they contrast with those other internet users who go online daily but who are at a different stage in life in which therefore these uses are more common[7]; on the other hand they also contrast with all of those (often their parents or grandparents) who have a less committed and less diverse relationship with the internet. The unique and defining characteristics of the online behaviour of 15 to 24-year-olds relates both to the traditional behaviour patterns associated with this age group (the importance of games and interpersonal communication based around socialising with friends, and at the same time low priority given to organising one's material needs), and to the generation of which they are part, whose cultural environment is largely based around music and images.

It is worth noting that cultural uses of the internet, far from being homogenous, appear to be somewhat polarised: music- and film-related usages are situated in the upper right quadrant and those relating to the press and visits to museums and exhibitions online appear in the lower right hand quadrant, alongside management of everyday affairs. Listening to/viewing or downloading music or films and visiting museums and exhibitions online are in fact the two areas of use on the list with the lowest correlation[8]: engaging in one of the two does has no effect on one's likelihood of engaging in the other.

In actual fact, online behavioural patterns are very much rooted in pre-digital cultural practices

5. To counteract the possible influence of connection type, the analysis was conducted solely amongst those users with a high speed internet connection who have logged on for non-work-related reasons at least once within the last month, *i.e.* 27% of the survey group.
6. It should also be noted that the point indicating the downloading of programmes is very close to that for "15 hours or more" in Graph 3: downloading programmes is the most typical activity for those (generally male) users who spend most time in front of their computer.
7. If we compare the behaviour of internet users aged 15-24 with those in the age bracket immediately above them (25-34), the most significant differences between them are observed in the following areas: visiting chatrooms or forums (38% compared with 17%), playing or downloading games (41% compared with 23%), using instant messaging (73% compared with 49%) and listening, watching, or downloading music or films (67% compared with 43%). On the other hand, the younger group is well behind in its rates of purchasing goods and services (31% compared with 58%) and checking bank accounts (30% compared with 65%).
8. It is worth noting that visiting museums and exhibitions is the only usage on the list which increases with the users'age.

Graph 3 – Internet users'activities*



Key:
Chatrooms: has visited chatrooms or forums within the last month
Nchatrooms: has not visited chatrooms or forums within the last month

Source: DEPS

* Factor analysis conducted on the 23 internet uses identified in the survey was based on the 1357 individuals within the sample group who had a high-speed home internet connection and who had used the internet within the last month.
The axes representing the first two factors here respectively cover 17.4% and 11.4% of overall information. Only the most statistically significant uses and non-uses have been included in this graph, and the variables most representative of the profiles of internet users and traditional cultural activities have been plotted (red dots).

and serve to reinforce the central opposition which has been in place since the 1980s between those cultural spheres which are based either around the audiovisual (music, cinema, television) and which are characteristic of the younger generations, and those cultural spheres based around printed matter[9].

Thus, on the basis of an initial analysis, the uses of the internet appear to revolve around three main areas:

– the exchanging of emails, information and documentation constitute what could be called the "core internet". These three functions are used by the vast majority of internet users, even those who only log on occasionally. Thus for instance 55% of those who had connected at least once a week within the last month did so to research information on goods and services, whilst 43% were conducting documentary research;
– the uses grouped in the upper right quadrant of Graph 3 are those central to much of youth culture. If they have characteristics specific to those aged 15-25, without taking into account the effects of generation and life cycle position, they do not necessarily apply to all young people: game-playing is a predominantly male activity and involves those with lower educational qualifications, as is listening to or downloading music or films; those who live alone or in one-parent families are more likely, *ceteris paribus*, to engage in instant messaging and even more likely to spend time in chatrooms or forums;
– uses linked to organising everyday affairs (administration, banking, holiday planning, purchasing of goods and services etc), are grouped in the lower right quadrant and are largely activities favoured by middle-aged individuals from privileged backgrounds with a keen involvement in culture, all of which factors mean free time is scarce. From this point of view, reading newspapers and magazines online, and, to a lesser extent, visiting museums and exhibitions online is consistent with this mode of use.

Imagining the pre-digital era

Internet users'responses to the question of what they would miss if they no longer had a computer have also shown themselves to be entirely consistent with the results of the factor analysis (see Table 2, p. 48).

So whilst 12% of internet users with a high-speed connection made the unprompted response "nothing in particular", stating that they could manage perfectly well without a computer, 14% claimed the opposite, saying "everything" and refusing to single out any specific function, thereby confirming the multiple and simultaneous nature of internet usage, indicating that its multi-functionality is indeed one of the determining factors in its success.

Moreover, the results confirm that those features on which users are most keen are communication (25%) and information research (20%), which make up almost half of all responses.

Overall, responses do not vary much relative to the usual socio-demographic criteria or involvement in cultural life, although several previously-observed general trends stand out: men are more likely to respond that they would miss "everything" and to cite games and culture (music and photography), whereas women are more likely to mention information research, and even more likely to cite communication, which is not unexpected given that women attach greater importance to interpersonal relations and were, before the advent of the internet, responsible for the greater proportion of telephone and written correspondence within families[10]; the oldest group of internet users (aged 65 and over) place greater importance on organising practical matters; finally, the tendency to favour cultural usages seems to be largely independent of the level of involvement in traditional cultural practices.

Those with the highest levels of involvement in traditional cultural practices are more conspicuous by the frequency and diversity of their online behaviour (and are less likely to respond "nothing in particular") than by the importance they place upon cultural uses: their single greatest distinguishing feature is the importance they place upon communication, as evidenced by their online behaviour patterns and those functions to which they claim to be most attached.

Indeed, if we list the online activities of these members of the "cultured public" (11% of the overall population, or 20% of internet users with a composite indicator score of 6 or above as outlined in note 3, p. 40), the diversity of their usages is clearly evident: they engage in everything more than the average person, with the exception of online gaming and using instant messaging, in which regard they lag slightly behind other internet users.

9. See Olivier Donnat, *Les Français face à la culture,* Paris, La Découverte, 1994.
10. See Louis Quéré and Zbigniew Smoreda (sous la dir. de), *Le sexe au téléphone*, *Réseaux*, nº 103, 2000.

Table 2 – If you could no longer use a computer, what would you miss the most?

Survey group: 1357 individuals with a high-speed home internet connection and who have used the internet within the last month

	Nothing in particular	Everything	Work, study	Practical matters	Information research	Communication	Games	Culture (music, photos, video, etc.)
Total aged 15 and over	**12**	**14**	**4**	**12**	**20**	**25**	**5**	**8**
Gender								
Male	12	16	4	12	17	21	7	10
Female	11	12	4	13	22	29	2	6
Age								
15-24	4	11	3	6	15	38	9	14
25-34	10	16	3	12	23	20	5	9
35-44	15	13	6	17	24	17	3	5
45-54	23	14	5	14	18	19	2	4
55-64	13	17	5	14	19	26	1	5
65 and over	16	12	0	26	21	17	4	5
Education*								
No qualifications, CEP[1]	25	20	5	10	15	12	9	5
BEPC[2]	20	17	5	6	16	24	4	7
CAP[3]	14	0	15	18	17	6	10	
Baccalauréat or equivalent	13	15	3	17	22	17	2	11
2 years of higher education	16	13	6	14	20	19	6	6
Honours-postgraduate qualification	6	15	6	16	21	28	2	5
Domestic situation								
Single	8	14	6	11	19	27	4	11
One-parent family	6	15	3	8	17	31	10	10
Couple without children	12	14	3	17	22	21	3	8
Couple with at least one child	13	14	4	12	19	26	4	8
Other household type	10	14	5	17	22	14	11	4
Level of involvement in cultural life								
0 point	34	12	6	11	10	9	7	9
1 point	23	12	5	13	16	13	7	10
2 points	17	10	2	17	18	20	6	9
3 points	17	13	7	11	17	21	7	6
4 points	10	13	5	17	18	20	7	9
5 or 6 points	11	14	7	12	18	23	3	11
7 points and above	10	13	5	15	18	25	3	9

*Excluding schoolchildren/students
1. CEP: *Certificat d'études primaries* (certificate of primary education)
2. BEPC: *Brevet d'études du premier cycle* (secondary education certificate, ≈GCSE (UK))
3. CAP: *Certificat d'aptitude professionnelle* (technical school certificate)

Source: DEPS

In everything else, they lead the way for cultural usage such as reading the press or visiting museums/exhibitions online, as well as for methods of communication (email) and dealing with practical everyday matters such as paying bills online or purchasing goods and services online, whether cultural or not. So, for example, involvement in cultural life seems to be more closely related to the purchasing of holidays than the purchase of books, music or films.

This is not surprising when you consider that, within the French population, those who have a keen interest in culture are often those with a higher level of commitment to their professional life,

greater extra-familial social activities and leisure activities based outside of the home (not forgetting of course that for instance sport and culture generally go hand in hand[11], as do tourism and frequency of visits to cultural facilities). All these elements tend to eat into one's available free time and are likely to encourage such users to see the internet as, above all, a way of saving time which might be spent having to travel about or of carrying out several activities at once: in short, as a time-saving device.

We therefore conclude that whilst the cultured public may often be informed internet users they do not necessarily prefer cultural usages when online. As most of them were already adults by the time the internet came into people's homes, their computer-based activities have simply gradually entered their cultural habits in a complementary rather than a substitutional manner. But what will become of the generations who are currently spawning the "youth internet", and whose cultural lives are largely being constructed on the basis of digital culture? More specifically, we should be asking whether those links which we currently see between the "practical and cultured" internet and the print-based culture of adult internet users might not gradually weaken over time. ■

11. See Lara Muller, « Pratiques sportives et activités culturelles vont souvent de pair », *Insee Première*, n° 1008, mars 2005.