

Companies in the A.C. of the Basque Country continue to improve their IT equipment in 2003

More than half of Basque companies with 10 or more employees have a Webpage.

The current edition of the Information Society in Companies Survey, carried out by Eustat, confirms the continued improvement in IT equipment in companies in the A.C. of the Basque Country at the beginning of 2003 and its widespread use by employees, in particular with regard to Internet access and the use of emails.

The Information Society Survey (ESI Companies), carried out by Eustat, for the third consecutive year, during the first quarter of 2003, is targeted at Basque companies from all activity sectors except the primary sector, and aims to find out information regarding their Information and Communication Technology Equipment (ICT), their use of the Internet and the importance of emails within the company. The survey is based on a questionnaire returned by 7,200 businesses situated in the A.C. of the Basque Country.

There is widespread use of the Internet and mobile phones both in large and small companies

In comparison to the previous year, there is a significant increase in Internet equipment in Basque companies, an increase of more than six percentage points. There is a similar increase of around five percentage points in access to computers, emails and mobile phones.

The Provincial data breakdown reveals higher increases in Alava with regard to Internet access and the possession of mobile phones, while Gipuzkoa registers the highest increase in PC's. Bizkaia registered the lowest increases in the aforementioned equipment.

**Table 1: CIT Equipment in companies by province.
Year 2003.**

	Personal Computer		E mail		Internet		Mobile telephone	
	%	Change*	%	Change*	%	Change*	%	Change*
A.C. Eusadi	57,9	4,3	39,8	5,8	42,7	6,2	63,8	4,4
Alava	63,6	3,7	42,3	7,2	46,1	7,3	68,7	7,2
Bizkaia	57,2	3,8	38,8	4,5	41,5	5,3	62,8	3,3
Gipuzkoa	56,7	5,1	40,3	7,2	43,2	7,1	63,4	4,9

* Difference in percentage points in comparison to the previous year.

Source: Eustat

With regard to the size of the companies, a variable that introduces a primary element of differentiation between them, the smaller ones (0-2 employees) still have the lowest level of equipment, email access being at around 30.8%, mobile phone possession at 61.7%, those with computers standing at 48.5% and 33.8% with Internet access. All of these figures are more than four percentage points higher than the previous year. By

comparison, the averages for companies employing more than 10 people are always above 80%, reaching 80.6% for mobile phones, 86.2% for email, 96.3% for computers and 86.7% for Internet access.

If the comparison is adjusted to take the number of employees into account, the differences are considerably reduced, due to, among other reasons, the faster progress in smaller companies and the fact that in larger companies only a small percentage of the employees have access to the company equipment. Thus, it can be seen that 43% of employees in small companies, 2 or fewer employees, use the computer compared to 55.2% in businesses with 10 or more employees, 28.4% have access to Internet compared to 38.0% in the group of larger companies and 25.2% use email compared to 40.8% in larger companies.

ADSL lines registered the highest growth among types of Internet connections, representing 40.3% of all connections at the beginning of 2003.

Internet access through ordinary telephone lines with a modem is still, despite a steady decline, the route used by the majority of Basque companies (49.3%). This decline is reflected in a 9.1 percentage point drop in conventional telephone line connection compared to last year. ISDN lines have also undergone a setback, falling 7.8 percentage points in the same period and standing at 15.3%. ADSL lines, on the other hand, are benefiting from the aforementioned decreases, showing a significant increase in use, as can be seen by the fact that they represent 40.3% of all connections in 2003, compared to 26.2% the previous year. Finally, other types of connections account for 4.8%.

This increase in the use of ADSL lines is yet more emphatic when considering companies with 10 or more employees, making this means of access the most popular in companies in this category with 58.4%, followed at a distance by modem connections (25.5%), ISDN lines (25.4%) and other lines (11.2%).

A notable difference can also be appreciated with regard to companies with a webpage, both those that have their own web, now 10%, and those with a webpage located with a server (4.5%), making a total of 14.5% of companies in the A.C. of Euskadi with a webpage.

Once again, if we consider the size of the company, it can be observed that of companies with 10 or more employees 35.5% have their own webpage, while 16.2% have a webpage located with a server. This reveals that more than half of this category of company (51.7%) has a webpage.

E-commerce still was still relatively significant in Basque companies in 2002.

Basque companies do not make great use of e-commerce as can be seen from the figures observed in the ESI-companies referred to in 2002. The proportion that make purchases or carry out sales online or by means of other electronic systems (EDI, Electronic Data Exchange), is still so low that the estimate is statistically insecure and implies a wide error margin.

Nevertheless, a slight growth in the percentage of businesses carrying out e-commerce can be noted, increasing from 3% in 2001 to 4.4% in 2002. The reason for

this increase is the rise in companies that buy through electronic methods, reaching 3.6% and to a lesser extent those who carry out sales using the same means, 1.3%.

An estimated 7,500 businesses carry out e-commerce in the A.C. of the Basque Country. Transactions made by these companies through this method account for 11.4% of their total purchases and 16.1% of total sales.

The sector breakdown places industrial sectors such as paper and graphic arts and industrial chemistry in the lead in the use of e-commerce, with just above 13% of these companies using e-commerce. Over 10% of companies in the sectors of electric material, rubber and plastic, transport material and machinery also use e-commerce. In the services sector, banking and insurance stand out with 11.2% of this category of companies using e-commerce.

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