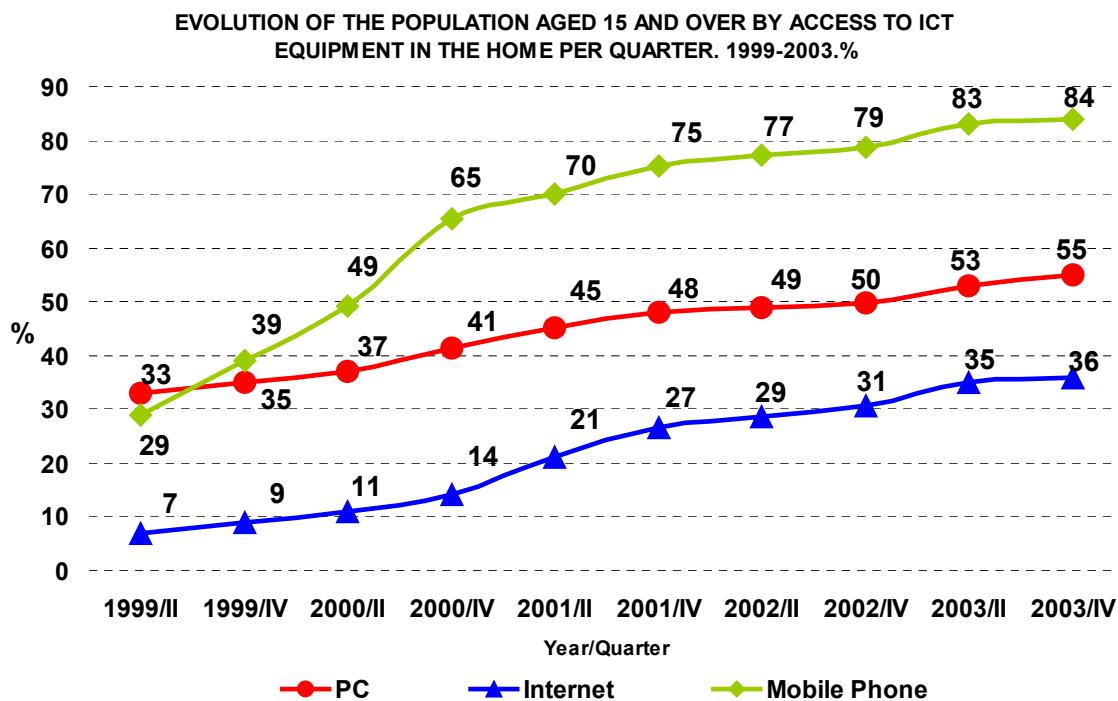


In the second half of 2003 there was a 4% rise in the number of people with access to the Internet in their home

The growth in mobile telephones per household showed signs of levelling off, with a mere 0.4% increase in the last six months of 2003.

According to data obtained by Eustat in the 4th quarter of 2003 for the Information Society and the Family Survey, 25,500 more people had gained access to the Internet in their houses, 4% more than in the 2nd quarter of the year. The number of people aged 15 or over with access to a personal computer also grew by 30,100, or 3.1%. This growth brings the rate of penetration to 54.9% for PCs and 36.4% for home access to the Internet.

Taking the 4th quarter of 2002 as a reference point, the growth in numbers of personal computers for the year was 10% and connections to the Internet 17%.



Source: EUSTAT

Five out of every six people aged 15 or over – 83,7%- possess a mobile telephone for their own personal use

The growth in numbers of mobile telephones among families showed signs of levelling off, with a mere 0.4% increase in the last quarter of 2003. Over the year growth was 6%, clearly showing the loss of momentum to be in the last six months. It must be stressed that at present five out of six people aged 15 or over - 83,7%- possess a mobile telephone for their own personal use.

The penetration rate of the presence of the Internet in the home grew point two per cent in Gipuzkoa and in Bizkaia, giving the former the highest percentage of 39.4% and the latter 35.3%. In Álava, the rate of 33.5% of the population with access to the Internet, the lowest in the Autonomous Community, showed no change with respect to the 2nd quarter.

The 'digital gap' for women and those people with a lower level of education is closing

The gap between the sexes as regards the digital world closed in comparison to the 2nd quarter, since the distance between men and women with access to the Internet reduced by 1.6 per cent. The rate for males aged 15 or over in the 4th quarter of 2003 was 37.9% and for females it was 34.9%.

Inequality as regards access to ICT for those with a lower level of education compared to those with higher studies was also reduced (1.8 per cent less). Even so, the rate for the former group was 21.4% and among the population with university education it was 58.7%. Over the year the rate for those with a lower level of studies grew twice that of the group with higher studies: 6.7 per cent for the former and 3.4 for the latter.

There was also an improvement as regards the availability of PCs for people with a lower level of education - a 7.1 per cent increase in relation to the 4th quarter of 2002- whereas for those with higher education, the increase was a mere 1.8 per cent. In this respect the gap between the two groups was 44.5 per cent.

10,000 more Internet users in the last six months

Despite the increase in connections to the Internet in the home, the number of people who gained access to the Net in the last three months of 2003 increased by only 9,900, or 1.7%. Almost one in three people aged 15 or over (32.2%), a total of 582,100, are currently users.

Taking the figures from the 4th quarter of 2002 as a point of comparison, the number of Internet users grew 6.6%, so it could be said that evolution lost momentum in the second half of the year.

Gipuzkoa continues to have the highest rate of Internet users, 34.3%, followed by Álava with 32.4%, while Bizkaia is still below the average for the Autonomous Community with 30.9%.

The number of Internet users in Bizkaia grew by only 1.4% over 2003, compared to 11.8% in Gipuzkoa and 15.2% in Álava

Álava was the province with the most dynamic growth in numbers of Internet users in 2003 with a 15.2% increase, followed by Gipuzkoa with 11.8%. Growth for the year in Bizkaia was a mere 1.4%. The average rise for the A.C. of the Basque Country was 6.6%.

The largest rise in the number of Internet users was among the sector of the population in work: 23,800 (6.8%) more in the last six months. Over the whole of the year the increase was 11.6%.

Alternative places of access to the Internet make up lost ground

Figures for the 4th quarter show that the access to the Internet in the home has fallen in the last six months –9,700 less people-, although this is still the favourite place for 67.5% of users. Figures for use of the Internet at the place of work (43%) and study (18.8%) remained stable.

There was an important recovery –an increase of 25.6%- in the number of connections made in other locations, such as libraries, civic centres or cyber cafés, etc. However, this still did not reach the levels of late 2002, when these alternative places were used by 16.4% of users, compared to the current 12.3%.

The number of Internet users making purchases over the net fell by 25%

The number of Internet users making any kind of purchase over the net in the last three months fell by 24.8%, going from 81,900 users in the 2nd quarter of 2003 to 61,600 in the 4th quarter of the same year. The lack of comparable data from the 4th quarter of 2002 prevents us knowing whether this is due to a seasonal decrease or a general trend.

Travel reservations, – 31% of purchases over the Internet- books –15.7%- and sports clothing and material –12.7%- are the most widely sought e-trade products, excluding those purchased by companies or institutions.

SURVEY ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY (ESI-FAMILIES)

	4th quarter 2003		Variation on 2nd quarter 2003		Variation on same quarter the previous year	
	Thousands	%	Thousands	* DIF. P.P.	Thousands	* DIF. P.P.
HOUSEHOLD EQUIPMENT						
FAMILIES	738,0	100,0				
PC	340,6	46,2	10,1	1,3	4,8	0,6
Mobile phone	554,4	75,1	5,7	0,5	12,7	1,5
Internet	227,3	30,8	10,3	1,3	16,8	2,2
With children	192,9	43,4	7,3	1,1	19,6	4,1
With sole partner	21,2	16,0	2,2	2,1	-3,1	-0,2
Of sole individuals	13,2	8,2	0,8	0,5	0,3	-0,7
POPULATION AGED 15 AND OVER	1806,0	100,0				
PC	992,0	54,9	30,1	1,7	90,7	5,1
Internet	656,9	36,4	25,5	1,5	98,7	5,5
Pay TV	130,7	7,2	-38,6	-2,2	-79,2	-4,4
Video	1448,1	80,2	6,9	0,5	25,2	1,5
Mobile Phone	1511,8	83,7	5,8	0,4	86,6	4,9
INTERNET USERS	582,1	32,2	9,9	0,6	36,0	2,0
Men	316,0	36,1	7,3	0,9	18,0	2,1
Women	266,1	28,6	2,7	0,4	18,0	2,0
Álava	81,7	32,4	5,0	1,9	10,8	4,2
Bizkaia	301,6	30,9	2,3	0,3	4,1	0,5
Gipuzkoa	198,7	34,3	2,5	0,5	21,0	3,6
15-24 years	160,7	70,9	-11,1	-1,3	-4,0	1,8
25-34 years	175,6	51,7	11,5	2,7	11,4	3,6
35-44 years	141,4	43,2	7,7	2,7	22,7	7,1
45-54 years	72,1	24,9	3,6	1,4	2,5	0,7
55-64 years	25,4	10,6	-1,2	-1,1	1,3	0,3
65 and over	7,0	1,8	-0,5	-0,1	2,2	0,5
Students	146,9	85,3	-18,3	1,6	-1,4	1,5
Employed	373,0	41,9	23,8	2,1	39,3	3,6
Inactive and unemployed	62,3	8,4	4,6	0,5	-1,8	0,0
Access at home	392,8	67,5	-9,7	-2,9	28,1	0,7
Access at place of work	250,5	43,0	3,8	-0,1	19,9	0,8
Access at place of study	109,4	18,8	-2,2	-0,7	-6,1	-2,3
Access elsewhere	71,6	12,3	14,6	2,3	-18,2	-4,1
Surf in Basque	72,9	12,5	2,9	0,3	-9,7	-2,6
Surf in Spanish	579,0	99,5	13,3	0,6	34,4	-0,2
Surf in English	142,6	24,5	9,7	1,3	-55,5	-11,8
Have purchased on the Internet	61,6	10,6	-20,3	-3,7	-36,4	-7,3
Average length of last connection	57,5 minutes		-0,9 minutes		-1,6 minutes	

* DIF. P.P. = Difference in percentage points

Source: EUSTAT
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