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OSC Media Aid: Brazil -- Internet Media Environment Profile

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The number of Brazilians using the Internet has increased dramatically since 2000. Internet access remains predominantly in developed, urban areas, where Internet cafes -- frequented mainly by Brazilians from lower socio-economic groups -- "connect" nearly half of all users. Brazilian users most frequently access social media, especially social networking sites (SNS) like Orkut*, a Google-owned site comparable to* Facebook*, and* Twitter*. Facebook has tried to challenge* Orkut's *market dominance, with mixed results. Blogging is also a popular form of Internet communication, while* YouTube *is the most widely used video website.*

Internet, Personal Computer Penetration Low, Rapidly Increasing

Internet penetration, a measure of a population's overall Internet use, and personal computer ownership have grown rapidly in Brazil over the last decade, but both rates remain relatively low compared to those in developed nations.[a] Although the number of personal computers has risen, Internet cafes -- or LAN (Local Area Network) houses, as they are called in Brazil -- remain a vital means of Internet access for Brazil's large, underprivileged population.[b]

- According to the digital marketing intelligence company *comScore*, there are about 73 million Internet users in Brazil, or about 37% of the population (Cited by *Teleco*, May 2010; *Internet World Stats*, 31 December 2009).[1] [2] This represents a dramatic increase since 2000, when Internet penetration was only 3%.[c] Household Internet access increased from 20% in 2008 to 27% in 2009 (NIC, 6 April 2009).[3] Sixty-six percent of household Internet access is through broadband connections (NIC, 6 April 2009).[4]
- A study by the government-sponsored Network Information Center (NIC) showed that personal computer ownership grew by 7% in 2009 to include 36% of households, the greatest one-year increase on record (*NIC*, 6 April 2009).[5] Getulio Vargas Foundation, a government research institute, estimates that there will be 100 million personal computers in use by 2012 (*O Globo*, 26 May 2009).[6] Nevertheless, the NIC predicts that high Internet service provider costs relative to per capita income will cause household Internet access to lag behind computer ownership (*NIC*, 6 April 2009).[7]
- LAN houses are popular Internet access points, primarily located in "favelas," the poorest urban areas (*Publius Project*, 21 September 2009; BBC Brasil, 17 March).[8] [9] These sites provide Internet access to more than 45% of "connected" Brazilians and up to 60% in impoverished areas, according to government data (*IDRC*, 30 April 2009; *CETIC*, September/November 2009).[10] [11]

Brazilians Among World's Highest Users of Social Networking Sites

Brazilians are among the world's most active SNS users. *Orkut* dominates the Brazilian SNS market, but rival *Facebook* has made some minor inroads.

- Ibope Intelligence, the Brazilian Institute of Public Opinion and Statistics, reported that Brazilians boast the 10th highest worldwide average of SNS users (*Folha de Sao Paulo* and *O Globo*, 23 July).[12] [13] Nearly 60% of Brazilian Internet users actively visit SNSs, while Ibope indicates that 20% more of those surveyed plan to access an SNS "in the near future" (*Global Web Index*; *Folha de Sao Paulo* and *O Globo*, 23 July).[14] [15] [16]
- *Orkut* is Brazil's most popular social network (*O Globo*, 9 July).[17] Over 20 million Brazilians use *Orkut*, constituting 50% of *Orkut* users worldwide (*Advertising Age*, 14 June; *Orkut*, 30 June).[18] [19] The site is so popular that some emerging media analysts claim that it "played a fundamental role in popularizing the Internet in Brazil" (DMLcentral, 13 November 2009).[20]
- Although *Facebook* activity in Brazil increased by 66% between January and June 2009, the site still has only about five million Brazilian users (*IDG Now*, 4 August 2009; *Inside Facebook,* 14 July).[21] [22] *Facebook*'s creator announced that Brazil was one of the next candidates to have official company representation, according to local press reports (*Folha de Sao Paulo* and *O Estado de Sao Paulo*, 4 August 2009).[23] [24]

Orkut's Popularity in Brazil

Orkut is a free, Google-owned social networking site designed to allow users to meet new friends while maintaining existing relationships. Launched on 22 January 2004, the site was named after the Google employee who created it, Orkut Buyukkokten (*Orkut-News*, 5 November 2009).[25]

Americans dominated *Orkut* until 2004, but Brazilians rapidly supplanted them as the dominant users when they invited friends to join the invitation-only site, which became "synonymous with the Internet" in Brazil (*DMLcentral*, 13 November 2009).[26] *Orkut*'s popularity in Brazil prompted *Google* to relocate the site's headquarters to Belo Horizonte in 2008 (*O Estado*, 7 August 2008).[27]

Increased Use of *Twitter, YouTube*, Blogs in Brazil

Brazilians' heavy use of *Twitter* influences the site's "trending" daily topics. Emulating worldwide patterns, Brazilian Internet users are also frequent visitors of *YouTube* and increasingly use internationally popular blogging platforms such as *Blogger* and *WordPress.*

Twitter

- *Twitter* appears to be the most heavily used micro-blogging service in Brazil (*E.Life*, October 2009).[28] BBC Brasil reports that the country is the world's fourth largest source of the 140-character messages known as "tweets" (5 July).[29] Portuguese is the third most used language on *Twitter* (BBC Brasil, 5 July).[30]
- According to digital communications professor Elizabeth Saad at the University of Sao Paulo, one fourth of Brazilian *Twitter* users reportedly are college educated and "seem to represent the intellectual elite"(joseagripino.com, 11 July 2009).[31]
- Brazilian tweeters' heavy volume of activity has influenced the highest "trending" daily topics on *Twitter*. Within recent months, Brazilians popularized such topics as the death of a famous Brazilian actress's son, and online protests against a US actor's disparaging remarks about Brazil (*Terra*, 21 July; *Folha*, 23 July).[32] [33]

YouTube

- As of October 2009, *YouTube* is the third most heavily used SNS in Brazil after *Orkut* and *Twitter* (*E.Life*, October 2009).[34]
- *YouTube* also is the most popular video website in Brazil, mimicking international trends (*E.Life*, October 2009; *comScore*, 15 June).[35] [36] The Brazilian television network Rede Globo has a popular online video portal whose usage rates have doubled since 2009 (*comScore*, 15 June).[37]
- Many Brazilian *YouTube* videos have "gone viral" -- becoming intensely popular through Internet sharing -- and have gained attention in mainstream national media. For example, newspapers recently reported on a *YouTube* video promoting the presidential candidacy of the ruling Workers' Party's Dilma Rousseff (*O Estado*, 29 July; *Folha* and *O Globo*, 15 July).[38] [39] [40] This video has spawned other popular *YouTube* videos ridiculing her (*O Globo*, 30 July).[41]

Blogosphere

- Brazil has the fourth highest percentage of bloggers in the world and leads Latin America in blog visitations (*Sysomos*, June; *comScore*, 15 June).[42] [43]
- As of November 2009, the popular blogging platforms *Blogger* and *WordPress* were among the top 25 most visited domain names in Brazil (*comScore*, 12 November 2009).[44]

Appendix: Brazil Internet Use Statistics, User Profiles

Note: The following information is based on a survey conducted by the Brazilian Center for Information and Communication Technology. The survey consisted of interviews with 21,498 respondents over the age of 10, including 3,144 from rural areas. The margin of error is 0.7%. Figures from 2005 to 2007 include information for urban areas only.

Number of Users With Internet Access at Home, at Work[45]

Month Year	Active users	People with Internet access
Mar 2009	25.457	38.231
Jun 2009	33.166	44.452
Sep 2009	35.503	46.646
Dec 2009	36.577	46.804
Jan 2010	36.858	46.804
Feb 2010	36.701	46.986
Mar 2010	37.925	46.986
Apr 2010	36.636	46.986
May 2010	37.282	46.986

Distribution of Users Accessing Internet at Home According to Connection Speed [46]

Internet speed for active users	Jan 2010	Apr 2010
Up to 128 kilobits per second (kbps)	15.6%	13.2%
128 to 512 kbps	29.1%	28.6%
512 kbps to 2 Megabits (Mb)	41.35	43.8%
2 Mb to 8 Mb	9.8%	10.3%

Over 8 Mb	3.1%	3.1%
Unidentified	1.2%	0.9%
Total Active Users	-	28.697*

* Totals only reflect home Internet usage

Internet Users by Monthly Income[47]

Income Bracket	Household Sampling National Survey 2005	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Up to $265	-	4%	5%	12%	10%	16%
$266 to $530	12%	8%	11%	21%	22%	30%
$531 to $795	25%	15%	20%	38%	37%	46%
$796 to $1,325	42%	26%	34%	51%	52%	61%
$1,326 to $2,650	55%	55%	59%	68%	65%	72%
$2,651 or more	21%	24%	28%	34%	81%	79%

Internet User by Social Class[48]

Social Class	2008	2009
A > US $45,000	89%	85%
B > US $13,500	68%	72%
C > US $5,000	38%	42%
D/E < US $5,000	13%	14%

Internet Users by Educational Level[49]

Educational level	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Illiterate/pre-school	3%	4%	7%	7%	9%
Elementary	13%	22%	29%	30%	36%
Middle School	41%	42%	51%	53%	60%
High School	80%	82%	78%	83%	87%

Internet Users by Gender[50]

Gender	Household Sampling National Survey 2005	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Male	21%	28%	30%	37%	36%	41%
Female	20%	22%	26%	32%	32%	38%

Frequency of Internet Use[51]

	Household					

Frequency of use	Sampling National Survey 2005	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
At least once a day	36.3%	40%	46%	53%	53%	58%
At least once a week	47.3%	40%	38%	34%	35%	30%
At least once a month	11.7%	14%	12%	10%	10%	9%
Less than once a month	3.1%	6%	4%	3%	2%	3%

Type of Internet Connection at Home[52]

Type of connection	Household Sampling National Survey 2005	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Dial-up access**	52.1%	65%	49%	42%	31%	20%
Broadband access**	41.2%	22%	40%	50%	58%	66%
Other	-	9%	2%	1%	1%	6%

** In the "Household Sampling National Survey 2005" category, the percentages only represent dial-up and broadband. 6.7% were using both dial-up and broadband access.

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[a] Internet penetration rates presented in this report are compiled from measurements of usage at private residences, companies, schools and universities, libraries, Internet cafes, and any other locales that offer access.

[b] Refer to the appendix for detailed charts on Brazil Internet use statistics.

[c] For more information see the 29 March OSC Analysis, **Information Environment Profile: Brazil** (LAF20100330053001).

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