30 years of the World Wide Web

To mark the 30th anniversary of the World Wide Web, Cisco quizzed over 11,000 survey respondents from across Europe, the Middle East and Africa (including 1,000 from South Africa) and they shared what the Web has made possible for them today, and what they hope it will make possible for future generations.

Whilst the web has delivered many 'firsts', from the first website (info.cern.ch in 1990) and the first online takeaway order of pizza in 1994, to the first internet connection in space in 2010, people's ambitions for the internet's future overwhelmingly highlight what it can make possible for society.

Enabling 'better access to education' tops the list of South African respondents' aspirations for the future of the internet (83%). This figure is far higher than any other country surveyed.

The average across the 13 countries surveyed for enabling 'better access to education' was 63%.

Notable findings specific to South Africa were:

- Enabling 'better healthcare' was also high (69%). Only Poland was slightly higher (71%)
- More than any other country, South Africa wants the internet to be a platform for social/political change (50%).
- South Africa ranked highest across the markets surveyed for 'the internet allowed people to work in different ways' (74%) and be more productive (69%).
- Respondents from South Africa placed the greatest emphasis on the value of the internet in the past 30 years 'as a means of connecting people' (56%), 'allowing new ways of learning' (46 %), 'career opportunities' (39%) and 'giving opportunities for new business startups' (30%).

"Cisco has built, and continues to build, the internet as we know it today. In South Africa, we are dedicated to build networks and bring technology solutions that address citizens' needs. But we also see beyond technology: in education for instance, Cisco committed to training 10 million people worldwide for jobs in the digital economy over the next five years, including one million in Africa. Through Cisco's Networking Academy, over 62,000 South African students (29% of whom are female) have been trained with technical skills so far," says Clayton Naidoo, Cisco's general manager for sub-Saharan Africa.

Other key findings

Based on the survey of respondents across 13 countries in Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA), the findings showcase the enormous impact that the World Wide Web, as the largest application on the internet, has had in connecting people and information, over the last 30 years.

- **The last 30 years**: The number one thing the internet has made possible for consumers is to 'stay up-to-date and informed' (74%) followed by 'entertainment' (71%) and to 'stay in touch with family and friends' (70%).

- The entertainment industry (39%) is seen as the primary beneficiary of technological advances to-date, followed by the finance industry (31%).

- **The next 30 years**: Better access to education is the number one thing respondents want the internet to make possible over the next 30 years (63%) followed by better access to healthcare (57%).

- When asked which industries will benefit most from technological advancements, the top choice was 'healthcare' (34%) followed by 'education' (32%).

- **Most positive impact**: 'Connecting people' (39%), 'enhanced communication' (35%) and 'new ways of learning' (35%) are seen as the top three ways in which the web has benefited society to-date.

- **We can't live without it**: Over a third (39%) of people can't imagine being able to function in their personal lives without the internet.

"We live in a hyper-connected world. By 2022, we are going to see more traffic crossing global networks than in the entire history of the internet combined. This traffic comes from all of us, and increasingly, our machines. The survey shows the impact that the World Wide Web and the internet has had on our lives, and what people expect for the future. To realise that potential, organisations – be it in healthcare, education, or any other industry - must be able to understand the power of connections and securely extract value from them. In addition, they need to manage the complexity that comes with the explosion of connecting people, places, ideas and things across a network," said Wendy Mars, SVP, Cisco