01.7 Society and cultural change

"Economic analyses and historical evidence show that technological change is a factor that stimulates growth. The impact of the Information Society (IS) on growth will be significant and positive".[1] Nevertheless, the emergence of the IS will depend on social acceptability, the capacity to react and flexibility of companies, and the measures that governments and administrative bodies make available in order to achieve an appropriate transition.

"Society and Cultural change" encompasses aspects related with the culture of social change and caused by the impact of the IS, and these will provide a response to the new ways in which we live and coexist, to the new ways in which we work and spend our leisure time, and to the new relations between governors and citizens. In this respect, the protagonist is social change, rather than technology.

Therefore, the objective to be achieved in this context is to consolidate in our society tools that are related with the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), in order to strengthen social cohesion, promote equality, enhance the quality of life and improve interaction between political forces and the citizen. In short, the new Digital Society introduces and demands new forms with respect to how we communicate, work, interrelate and participate in society.

The following provisional indicators of the position in Catalonia have been proposed:
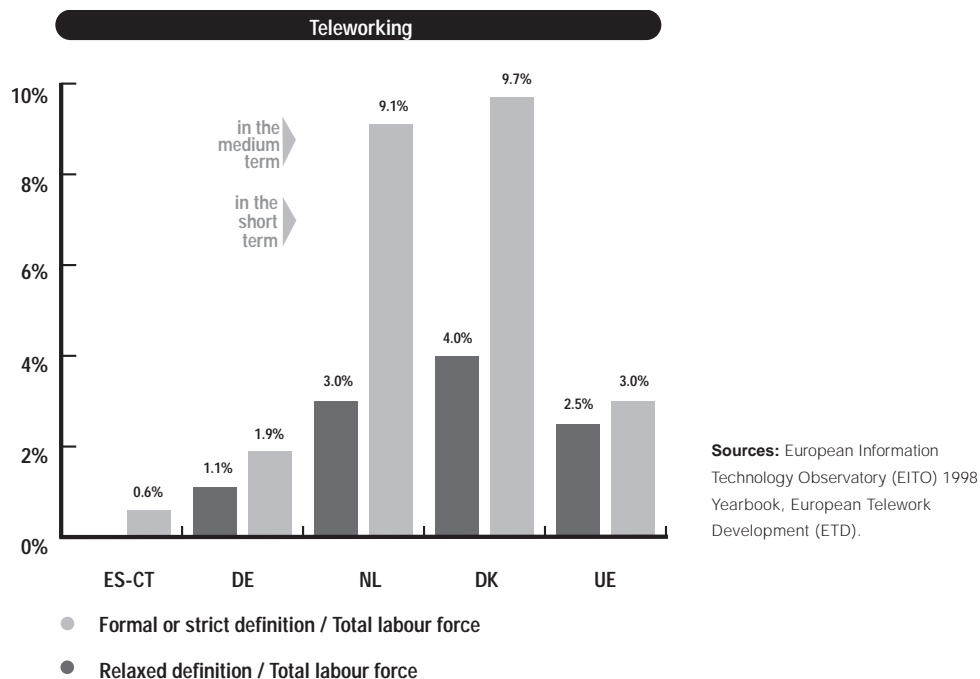
01.7.1 **Teleworking: new forms of work,** *as an indicator of the development of the new forms of work in a society deemed to be advanced in terms of its use of ICT.*

01.7.2 **Civic networks,** *as an indicator of the new way in which people communicate and interrelate, and of associative activity.*

1. Forum Information Society June 1996. Quotation in Working Party 1 on "*The Impact on the Economy and Employment*"

01.7.1 Teleworking: new forms of work

Teleworking is work based on the use of the new technologies of the Information Society, most importantly, telecommunications. Essentially, it is working while not being tied to a specific place. The definition of "Teleworking" ranges from its strictest sense, in which the worker is a "telecommuter" and works from home all the time, to looser definitions, where "teleworking" means working away from the employer's centre one or two days a week, or even combining teleworking support points (telecottages) with the employer's centre. In short, teleworking is about using the opportunities provided by telecommunications to work *when* and *where* it is best.

Figures vary considerably depending on how Teleworking is defined (e.g. in Denmark and Holland work away from the centre of employment on any day of the week is classed as Teleworking [in a broad sense]). On the other hand, independent studies made by consultants can vary considerably from one to the other and with respect to the information provided by the countries themselves.

Teleworking

in the medium term

in the short term

	ES-CT	DE	NL	DK	UE
	0.6%	1.1% / 1.9%	3.0% / 9.1%	4.0% / 9.7%	2.5% / 3.0%

● Formal or strict definition / Total labour force

● Relaxed definition / Total labour force

Sources: European Information Technology Observatory (EITO) 1998 Yearbook, European Telework Development (ETD).

01.7.2 Civic networks: electronic communication between citizens

The ICT offer members of a community new ways in which to communicate and interrelate, facilitating the exchange of information, documents and opinions, and encouraging interaction between members with similar interests, regardless of where they may be located or when they are available.

The civic networks are directly inspired by the motto: "Think globally and act locally", since the use of the Internet to create communities at a global level has developed to strengthen communities at a local level.

At present, there are a number of initiatives in progress in Catalonia, ranging from networks that have evolved from the Internet Centres created by the Town and City Councils (as in the case of the Town Councils of Sta. Cristina d'Aro, Callús or Sant Cugat, for example) to enterprising civic initiatives that have resulted in some 15 civic networks: TINET, Ravalnet, Nousbarrisnet, Xarxa3, Cornellà-net, Gracianet, Santandreunet, BCNet, Vallesnet, etc.

The civic networks are phenomena that are currently having a dynamic effect on the use of the Internet and strengthening the democratic potential of the network. Only time will tell to what extent the correlation between civic networks, accessibility to the population and utility of services is an indicator of cultural change, or whether it will become an indicator that is assimilated as the Internet expands.

Explanation of acronyms

AECE　　　　Asociación de Expertos Contables y Tributarios de España (Spanish Association of Accounting and Tax Experts)

AIMC-EGM　　Estudio general de Medios llevado a cabo por la Asociación para la investigación de los medios de comunicación (General Media study completed by the Association for media research)

ANIEL　　　　Asociación Nacional de Industrias Electrónicas (National Association of Electronic Industries)

ASCRI　　　　Asociación Española de Capital Riesgo (Spanish Venture Capital Association)

ASIMELEC　　Asociación Española de Importadores de Productos Electrónicos (Spanish Association of Importers of Electronics Products)

COTEC　　　　A Spanish foundation for technical innovation

CSI　　　　　Commissionat per la Societat de la Informació (Commissioner's Office for the Information Society)

DBK　　　　　A company that produces sectoral ranking lists

EGM　　　　　Estudio general de Medios (General Media study)

EHTO　　　　European Health Telematics Observatory

EITO　　　　European Information Technology Observatory

ESIS-IPSO　　European Survey of Information Society - Information Society Project Office

IDESCAT　　　Institut d'Estadística de Catalunya (Catalan Institute of Statistics)

MINER　　　　Ministerio de Industria y Energía (Ministry of Industry and Energy)

NUA   The number one resource for online statistics and trend analysis

OECD   Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

PIE   Programa d'Informàtica Educativa (Educational Computing Programme)

SEDISI   Asociación de Empresas de Tecnología de la Información (Spanish Association of Information Technology Companies)

SIAL   Servei d'Informació d'Administració Local (Local Administration Information Service)

XUPH   Xarxa d'Utilització Pública Hospitalària (Network of Hospitals for Use within the Public Health Service)

ISO international country codes

Norma ISO 3166-1 Part I: Country codes	Germany	**DE**
	Australia	**AU**
	Austria	**AT**
Norma ISO 3166-2 Part II: Subdivision country codes	Belgium	**BE**
	Canada	**CA**
	Catalonia	**CT**
	Denmark	**DK**
	Spain	**ES**
	United States of America	**US**
	Finland	**FI**
	France	**FR**
	Ireland	**IE**
	Italy	**IT**
	Japan	**JP**
	Norway	**NO**
	Holland	**NL**
	Portugal	**PT**
	United Kingdom	**GB**
	Sweden	**SE**
	Switzerland	**CH**