# 02.7 Sociedad y Cambio Cultural

# 02.7.1 Description of the initiatives and actions

As we begin to experience the change from an Industrial Society to an Information Society, it could be argued that the correct use of Information Technologies is potentially a source of economic development and a factor that will increase employment and improve the quality of life in a more sustainable and unified environment. However, given that the Information Society offers the perspective of an unprecedented opening-up process, it should also be said that it may entail an uncontrolled access to information, communication and debate.

The initiatives orientated towards socio-cultural change imply a series of basic strategies, among which we might highlight the development of citizens' socio-economic and cultural networks. These may have a dual function: to promote local exchanges framed within the global society, and to bring the commitment to change on the part of the Government and institutions closer to society.

The objective behind the presence of Catalonia on the network is to provide and enhance the communication of Catalonia's experience and cultural and economic expertise. All the public interest institutions and organisations should gradually become participants in a cultural electronic network that offers citizens access to the services they require.

Another important strategy involves the adaptation and creation of a legal and economic framework, in order to encourage the change and the innovation that will stem from a new way of living, coexisting and working.

All this entails taking specific measures in co-ordination with other legislation, promoting wide respect for individual rights, and applying measures that will ensure the greatest possible fairness and sufficient flexibility with respect to the change in citizens' habits and behaviour.

In short, there are two basic initiatives to orientate the change: the bid to give Catalonia a solid presence on the network and promotion of a change in habits.

The presence of Catalonia on the network is a goal to be attained by working on two fronts: on the one hand, the presence of the Catalan language on the network must be guaranteed, and on the other hand, there is a need to ensure the high profile on the network of Catalan digital content of all kinds: business, services for the citizen, culture, civic expression, etc.

**These two initiatives are transversal in character and are therefore included among the initiatives established in the area entitled THE FRAMEWORK OF THE INFORMATION SOCIETY.**

The use of Internet and the computer is already a new habit for many people in Catalonia. The following graph shows a comparison with other countries.
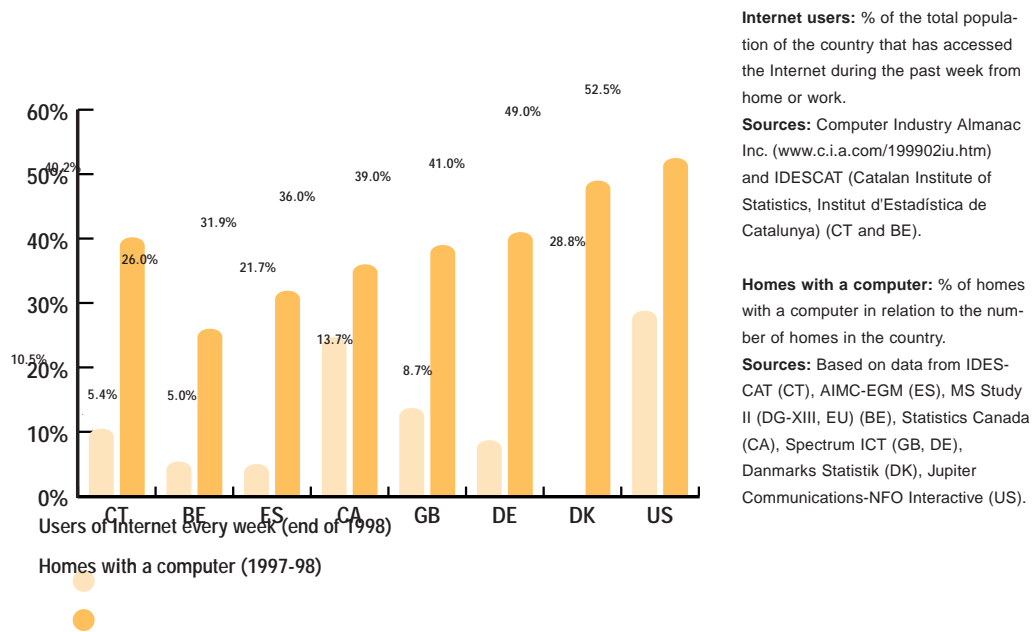


**Internet users:** % of the total population of the country that has accessed the Internet during the past week from home or work.
**Sources:** Computer Industry Almanac Inc. (www.c.i.a.com/199902iu.htm) and IDESCAT (Catalan Institute of Statistics, Institut d'Estadística de Catalunya) (CT and BE).

**Homes with a computer:** % of homes with a computer in relation to the number of homes in the country.
**Sources:** Based on data from IDES-CAT (CT), AIMC-EGM (ES), MS Study II (DG-XIII, EU) (BE), Statistics Canada (CA), Spectrum ICT (GB, DE), Danmarks Statistik (DK), Jupiter Communications-NFO Interactive (US).

Users of Internet every week (end of 1998)

Homes with a computer (1997-98)

**Figure 6.** The graph provides a point of reference regarding the penetration of Internet and computers in Catalonia as at December 1998. This is one of the indicators that should be taken into account when the success of the proposals and actions of the Plan are measured.

## Initiative 1

**Promotion of initiatives to encourage citizens' participation in the network and to improve access.**

The development of services offered to the citizen by the Administration should not widen the gap that exists between citizens that have a computer and those who do not. The availability of public access points and centres should make the Information Society accessible to the greatest number of people possible. This first initiative is complemented by Initiative 4 of this same area, which refers to Cultural Spaces and Teleworking, and Initiative 6 of the area INFRASTRUCTURES AND BASIC SERVICES, which anticipates the creation of 500 public points - mostly in libraries - for Internet access. In the case of the Internet Civic Centres, these will be specific areas where citizens can receive assistance and directly experience the Information Society Technologies. The centres will have a "tutor", who will be the main catalyst, and there will be further staff (eventually paid workers), who will be supported by volunteers.

The actions to be taken to consolidate the use of Internet are underpinned by three factors: physical and material support for the Internet Civic Centres and the citizens' networks, an incentive scheme offering awards for projects that foster social cohesion, and a policy to provide free e-mail.

**Actions:**
- Creation of support programmes for Internet Civic Centres and citizens' networks.
- Support for the creation of "virtual civic centres".
- Promotion of periodic Internet events: Internet-Festa, Net@days, Internet contests, etc.
- Provision of access to e-mail with a domain that corresponds to the geographical area (an aspect linked with the Charter of Citizens' Rights in the Information Society).
- Promotion of projects (products and services) that foster social cohesion. There are plans to create awards and to establish grants for this purpose.
- Provision of elements that will ensure the territorial and urban equilibrium of the Information Society, whereby deployment gives attention to underprivileged groups and geographical areas.
- Creation of an Information Society Observatory in Catalonia.

The Information Society Observatory is conceived as a body that will define the criteria to be employed in the constant evaluation of change, starting from a forum of reflection that will provide the tools and indicators of such change. It will also be responsible for fostering the creation of new Internet centres as areas that will encourage the development of social creativity.

**Agents:**

**Generalitat de Catalunya (CSI, Department of Social Welfare)**, LOCALRET, local entities and social organisations.

## Initiative 2

### Sensitisation of society.

The aim of this initiative is to convey the new forms of communicative expression, in order that all may become aware of the change. The policy of commitment hinges on a change of attitude in the relationship between the Administration and citizens, and a change in citizens' habits with respect to access and use of information and services on the Internet. The actions of this area will be co-ordinated with the actions of the EDUCATION AND TRAINING area, which make provision for continuous training to confront the change and training initiatives orientated towards finding employment.

In the Information Society hitherto unknown forms of communicating and living are coming to light, which demand an array of aptitudes and which are situated at the limits of various disciplines. In reaction to this, the Strategic Plan proposes to activate the synergies between the world of art, science and technology. The creation of a mixed museum-workshop centre with this idea in mind will be an emblematic initiative that will attract attention to the entire project.

The aim of the "Catalonia on the Network" museum-workshop centre is that it should become a tangible space that gives physical form to the phenomena of new communication, new interaction and multiple disciplines. In itself, the centre must be, at one and the same time, an experimental workshop, a training centre and a museum of the Information Society.

Success in promoting the demand for new services will only be achieved if citizens assimilate the premises of the change.

**Actions:**
- Publicity for Catalonia on the Network through the traditional communication media.
- Emblematic project: the "Catalonia on the Network" Museum-Workshop Centre.
- Fostering of multicultural creativity and attraction of new talent to the network.

**Agents:**

**CSI**, **LOCALRET**, CCRTV (Catalan Broadcasting Corporation), local entities, private agents.

## Initiative 3

**Promotion of Teledemocracy and citizens' rights.**

The modernisation of the computer systems of the Government and the Parliament is an instrument of growing importance, through which the greater efficiency of these institutions can be achieved. The opportunities for citizens to exercise their democratic rights must be adaptable to the changes in the forms of management, as these become more decentralised and more effective in the clarification of public decisions. Use of the electronic vote and the right of access to information are part of "The Charter of Citizens' Rights in the Information Society", to be defined in Initiative 3 of the area entitled ADMINISTRATION AND SERVICES FOR THE CITIZEN.

This initiative will foster the use of Internet for the dispatch of ideas and contributions to organisations that function democratically (co-operatives, associations, unions, etc.). Teledemocracy goes beyond the present possibilities of democracy, since the Internet provides the opportunity of listening to many people and it encourages the voice of minorities. Thanks to the network, virtual meetings can be staged, greater civic participation is ensured and associative practices are encouraged.

**Actions:**
- Fostering of democratic practices via Internet.
- Encouraging minorities to express themselves, whereby Catalonia may continue its tradition of being a land that welcomes all.
- Promotion of associative activity and new forms of social interaction by telematic means.

**Agents:**
**Generalitat de Catalunya (Autonomous Government of Catalonia)**, **Parliament** , local entities, associations, co-operatives and society as a whole.

## Initiative 4

### Support for teleworking.

The technological characteristics of today's society include socio-economic phenomena or "cultural changes" such as greater working freedom, the presence of new technologies and organisational change. Places of work are becoming increasingly more "multi-disciplinary", flexible and orientated towards teamwork and a dynamic working environment. In short, space is used more intensively, with a reduction in area (the paperless office), and there is greater recourse to outsourcing as a result of the increased use of mobile computers and telecommunications.

The actions that will provide the strongest support for the new way of life will be the projects involving the teleworking centres in the comarques (administrative divisions in Catalonia) and the "Workshop" schools, which open up new horizons for those who did not succeed at school.

Furthermore, teleworking is proposed as a means of social integration and as an environment that offers advantages for the handicapped.

**Actions:**
- Establishment of a network of centres that will provide support for citizens in the use of the Information Society technologies.
- Creation of pilot Teleworking Centres (10 per year).
- Workshop schools for "technical work" in Information Technologies for those seeking re-employment and for people who did not succeed at school.

The workshop schools of today will be transformed into "craft houses for the cities of the future". The Administration will support and promote initiatives in the field of employment that involve aspects related to teleworking. Likewise, the universities, within the framework of actions to create new business nurseries, will have a dynamic and supportive effect on teleworking. Therefore, the centres to provide support for teleworking will be of various kinds.

**Agents:**
**Department of Labour**, local entities, civic organisers, volunteers, associations, etc.

# 02.7.2 Chart summarising the initiatives and actions

| INITIATIVES | ACTIONS | AGENTS |
|---|---|---|
| **Initiative 1**<br><br>**Promotion of initiatives to encourage citizens' partici- pation in the network and to improve access** | • Creation of support programmes for Internet Civic Centres and citi- zens' networks.<br>• Support for the creation of "virtual civic centres".<br>• Promotion of periodic Internet events: Internet-Festa, Net@days, Internet contests, etc.<br>• Provision of universal access to e-mail with a domain that corres- ponds to the geographical area (an aspect linked with the Charter of Citizens' Rights in the Information Society).<br>• Promotion of projects that foster social cohesion. Creation of prizes and awards for ICT products and services.<br>• Provision of elements that will ensure the territorial and urban equi- librium of the Information Society.<br>• Creation of an Information Society Observatory in Catalonia. | Generalitat **(CSI, Department of Social Welfare…)**<br>**LOCALRET**<br>Local entities<br>Social organisations |
| **Initiative 2**<br><br>**Sensitisation of society** | • Publicity for Catalonia on the Network through the traditional com- munication media.<br>• Emblematic project: the "Catalonia on the Network" Museum- Workshop Centre.<br>• Fostering of multicultural creativity and attraction of new talent to the network. | **CSI**<br>**LOCALRET**<br>All of society<br>CCRTV |
| **Initiative 3**<br><br>**Promotion of Teledemocracy and citizens' rights** | • Fostering of democratic practices via Internet.<br>• Encouraging minorities to express themselves.<br>• Promotion of associative activity and new forms of social interaction by telematic means. | **Parliament**<br>**Generalitat de Catalunya**<br>Local entities<br>Associations and co-operatives |
| **Initiative 4**<br><br>**Support for teleworking** | • Establishment of a network of centres that will provide support for citi- zens in the use of the Information Society technologies.<br>• Creation of pilot Teleworking Centres (10 per year).<br>• Workshop schools for "technical work" in ICT for those seeking re- employment and for people who did not succeed at school. | **Department of Labour**<br>Department of Education<br>Civic organisers<br>Local entities |

# 02.7.3 Co-ordinator, moderators and members

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