

Internet use in China jumps 25 percent

China had 137 million people online by the end of last year, up by almost a quarter from 2005, the China Internet Network Information Centre (CNNIC) said.

The number of Internet users rose by 23.4 percent to comprise 10.5 percent of the country's population, said the CNNIC report Tuesday.

The statistics were based on telephone sample surveys of 32,325 Chinese, and only those above the age of six and use the Internet for at least one hour a week on average were counted as users.

Online services like email, search engines, e-commerce, blogs, online news and games saw rapid development, while new technologies had brought new opportunities for the development of the Internet, Minister of Information Industry Wang Xudong said.

Broadband users exceeded 100 million for the first time to reach 104 million, or 75.9 percent of all Internet users. Another 17 million Chinese went online via mobile phones, accounting for 12.4 percent of the Internet population.

Most of the country's Internet users were male, accounting for 58.3 percent of the total. The report also showed a yawning disparity between the urban and rural areas, with Internet use in cities 6.5 times than that in the countryside.

A lack of knowledge of computers and the Internet as well as inadequate access to equipment and networks remained the main difficulties for those who failed to get online, according to the report.

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