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28 May 01

■ Islands of ecommerce

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A report from Singapore on ecommerce and business connectivity. And online transactions by small business in Canada.

■ Singapore study

A report from the Infocomm Development Authority ([IDA](#)) of Singapore, the counterpart of Australia's National Office for the Information Economy and Australian Communications Authority, says that 98.7% of all companies in Singapore now have internet access. It projects that B2B trading will be worth S\$109 billion (US\$59.89b) this year, with B2C to reach S\$2.75b.

The Survey on E-Commerce 2000 was jointly conducted by the IDA and the Singapore Department of Statistics under the provisions of the Statistics Act.

The study aimed to gauge the development and performance of the "e-Commerce industry" in Singapore. It was launched in May 2000 with a survey that covered 9,000 companies, stratified by industry sector and representative of the island's businesses as a whole. Government agencies and businesses were excluded from the sample. IDA reports that the survey response rate was over 90%.

■ key findings

The value of B2B in Singapore increased from S\$5.67 billion in 1998 to S\$40b in 1999 and to (est) S\$92b in 2000. IDA projects B2B sales of S\$109b (US\$59.89b) in 2001, with most sales occurring in closed networks. The three leading sectors last year were finance & banking, wholesale & retail distribution and manufacturing. B2B procurement increased from S\$5.44b in 1998 to an estimated S\$17.9b last year, with projected growth to S\$25b in 2001.

The value of export ecommerce trade is increasing at a faster rate than domestic sales and will overtake the internal market in 2001. That is in line with the structure of Singapore's economy. The main partners for B2B were Malaysia, Indonesia, Taiwan, China, South Korea and Japan. Over 50% of the surveyed companies reported more than 50 transactions per month.

The value of B2C - dominated by overseas consumers - increased from S\$36m in 1998 to S\$200m in 1999. Sales in 2000 were an estimated S\$1.17B in 2000, projected to reach S\$2.75b this year.

Leading sectors were finance & banking, real estate, hotels & restaurants. Most B2C sales involved consumers from Malaysia, Thailand, USA and Japan. Over 20% of companies registered 50 or more transactions per month.

98% of surveyed companies have access to Internet with the commonly used application being online sales and purchases; online government services and software downloads. 43% of the online businesses commenced their ecommerce activity in 1999. 10% of the island's top companies engage in ecommerce, compared to only 4% in 1999.

Revenue from internet infrastructure services increased from S\$124m in 1998 to an estimated S\$618m in 2000 but is slowing, with growth to a projected S\$763m this year. Application services have increased from S\$234m in 1998 to an estimated S\$567m in 2000. That figure is projected to double this year, to S\$1.2b in 2001.

■ SMEs in Canada

SES Research, a private body, reports ([PDF](#)) that online transactions by small businesses in Canada increased by almost C\$540 million in the past year.

Over three-quarters of small businesses in Canada have internet access, a slight increase in the past year. The number of businesses that bought or sold online remained static at 40%. Total online transactions by small firms increased, reaching C\$1.3 billion.

C\$720 million of that figure involved online purchases, with C\$590 sales by small firms.

SES suggests that 97% of the online businesses use email and 73% conduct research online. 51% have a site to promote their business.

Points of reference in considering the figures are the Statistics Canada report [discussed](#) last year and the latest Australian Bureau of Statistics [report](#), which suggested that four out of five Australian businesses use computers, one in six have web sites and three out of five periodically use the net.

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