



Trends in Internet Usage & its Social Effects in Saudi Arabia

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- The Internet has positive and negative impact on various aspects of our life, as it the fastest growing electronic technology.
- With respect to social effects, it is a controversial topic whether it is a boon or a bane to the society, especially in Saudi Arabia where use of Internet is in its initial stages.
- To find out the trends in usage of Internet and its social effects in Saudi Arabia, a survey was conducted using a web-based online questionnaire.
- Sampling frame used was the on-line population of Saudi Arabia.
- The results obtained from this survey are analyzed in this talk.



- Internet is providing a new medium of information, entertainment and socialization (in addition to several others)
- The great danger is that, as new technologies develop, our society could become divided between the information rich and the information poor. This is what is known as digital-divide.
- Related issues include questions about
 - children and access to on-line material
 - potential on-line threats to personal privacy
 - the effects of the Internet on family involvement and social organizations
 - gender differences in use and access
 - credit card security, and
 - the effects of on-line sales on traditional retailing

on (Contd)



- There have been studies and surveys on the Internet's use and its effect on individuals, societies, education and businesses.
- Most of these studies are specific for a particular region, which is understandable, as the complete study or survey for all regions is a huge undertaking.
- After the introduction of Internet in Saudi Arabia, there was a need to conduct such a study that can eventually help in correlating a large number of factors involved.
- This is first of its kind in Saudi Arabia.

Internet Status in Saudi Arabia



- In Saudi Arabia, public access to Internet was allowed in April 1997.
- After a slow initial start, Internet subscription and use increased rapidly.
- The estimated number of Internet users in April 2001 was 690,000, which rose to 900,000 users in December 2001.
- The latest figure shows that there are approximately 1.1 million users in Saudi Arabia (July 2002).

Methodology



- Our research is to conduct a Web based survey and its eventual analysis.
- This goal is usually best achieved by creating a questionnaire and collecting its responses for analysis.
- Survey research is usually considered an appropriate technique when enough general information is known or can be collected from different sources to formulate specific questions.
- In this talk, results of two years of study, (data collection and analysis) are presented.
- Findings about the Internet users in Saudi Arabia, gender effects on use and Internet use on social life of users and education are reported.

our Survey



- We will try to address issues such as
 - Internet users in Saudi Arabia
 - Place of accessing the Internet
 - Online activities
 - Gender differences in Internet usage
- We will see
 - Social impact of Internet
 - Activities effected by the use of Internet
 - Concern of privacy of information
 - Factors considered important for Internet users

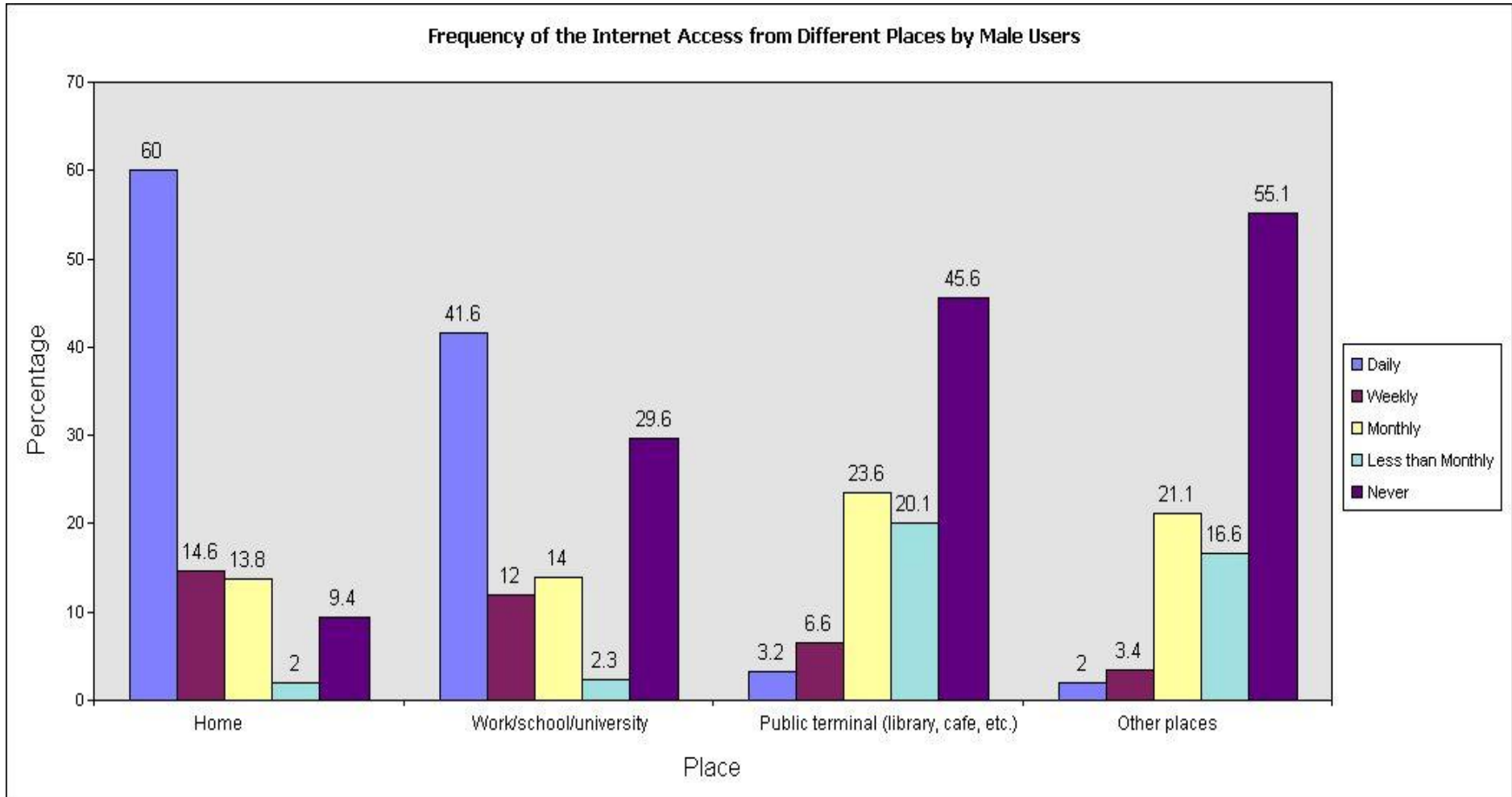
Users in Saudi Arabia



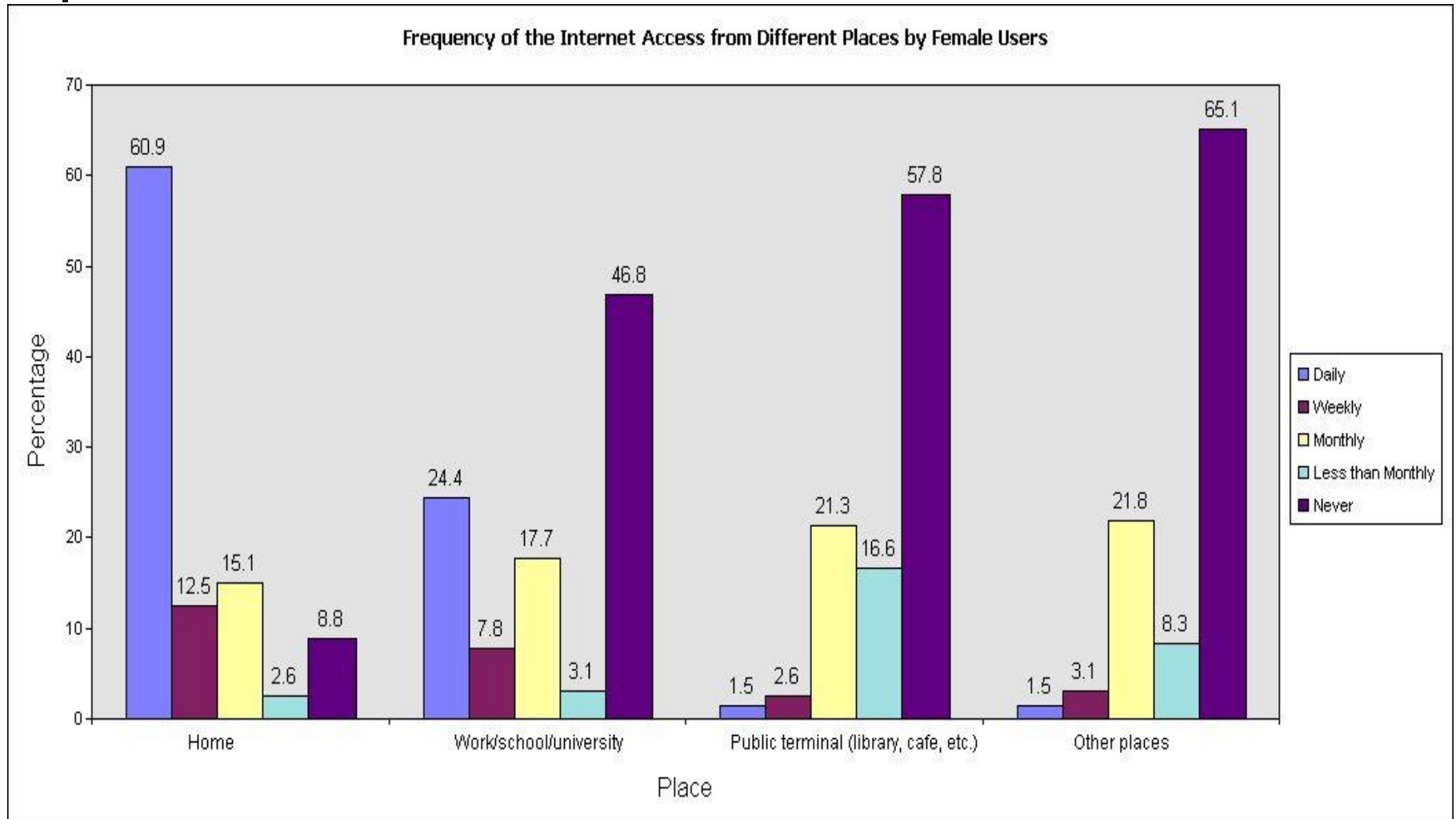
- Young generation in the age group 16 to 25 is likely to use the Internet.
- Almost 80% of the respondents were in the age group of 16 to 35 years.
- Men are more likely to have access to Internet than the women. Almost 85% of the respondents were men.
- Majority of the Internet users are college (38%) and high school (27%) graduates.
- Almost 80% of the respondents live in major cities of the country while little over 4% live in rural areas.
- Almost 51% of the respondents or their spouses pay for the Internet connection and 40% access it from their educational institutes. Gender affects the mode of payment for Internet access.



Accessed from (Males)



Accessed from (Females)



the Internet



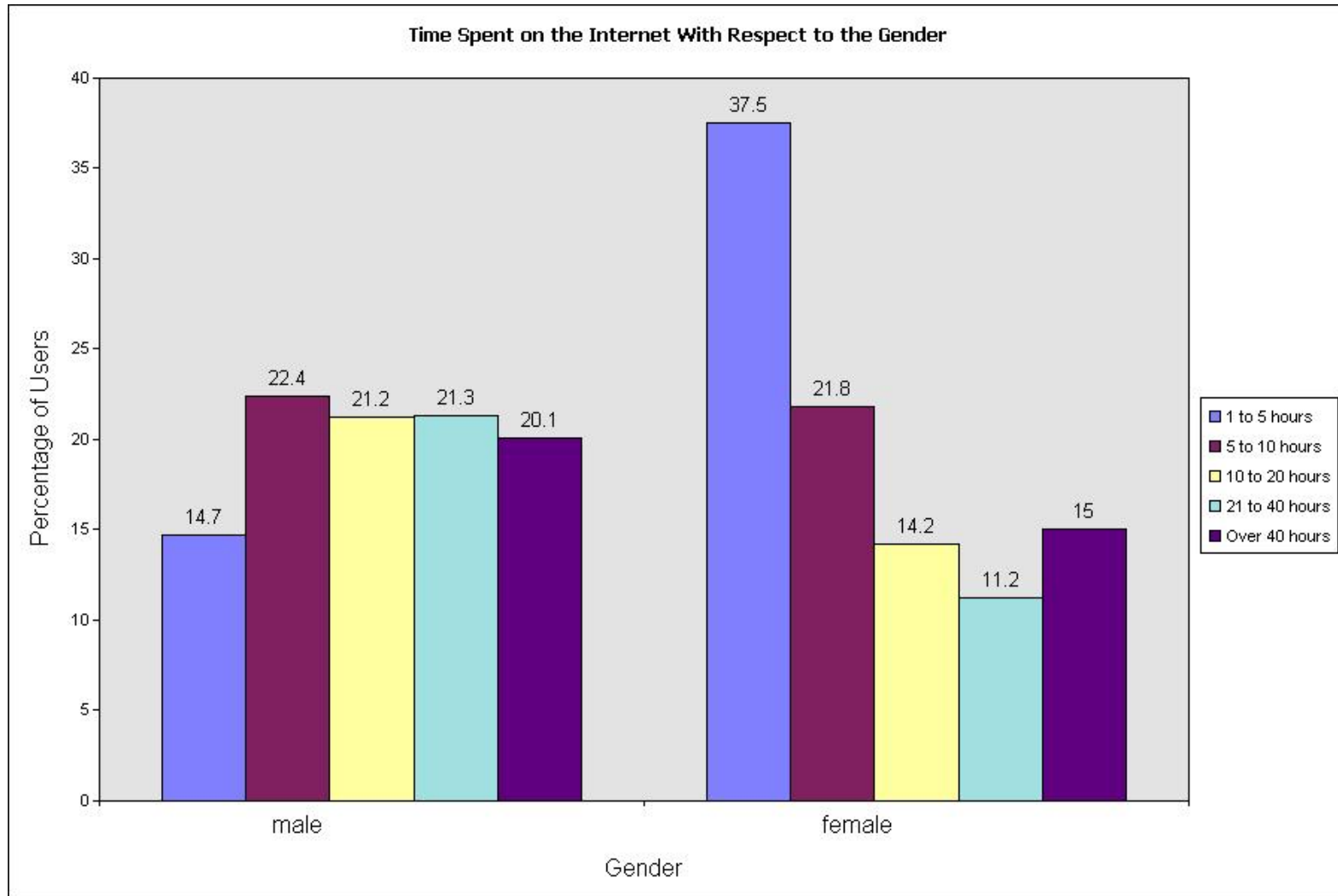
- Majority of the regular users access the Internet from their homes.
- The pattern (for accessing the Internet) of both sexes is almost identical when it comes to Internet access from home.
- However, in educational institutes, male users have more opportunities to use the Internet than the female users.
- This trend is also seen in case of other public facilities like Internet Cafés and Libraries.
- Majority of the users are new to the Internet. Our survey also confirms this fact. Almost 3-quarters of the respondents have been using the Internet for less than 6 years.



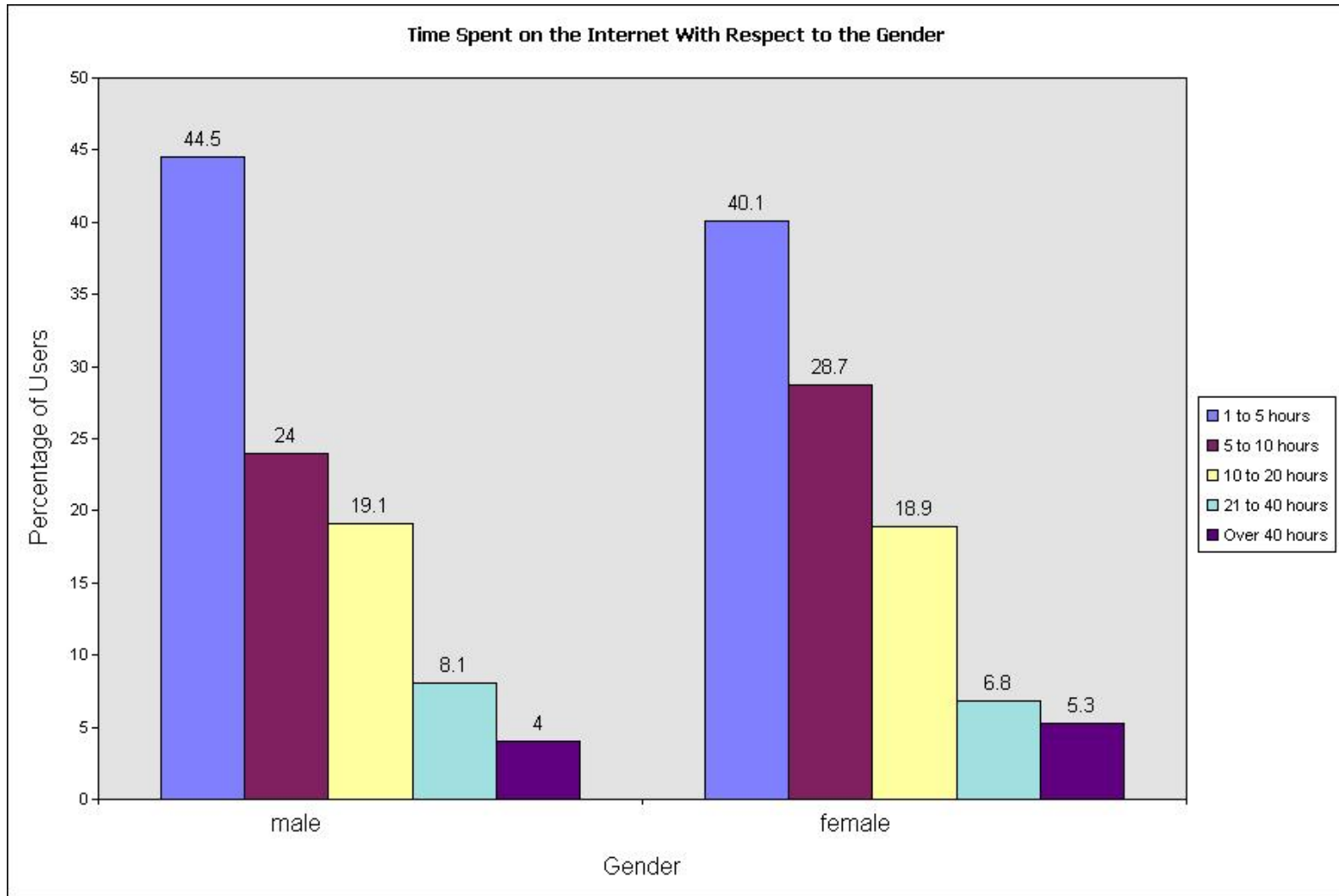
Users do online?

- Accessing news is the single most sought after regular activity. Almost 43% of the respondents review news daily.
- In terms of on-line search, majority of the users prefer to search for computer software and hardware information.
- On-line chat is the third most sought-after use of the Internet followed by using on-line telephone calls and listening to radio broadcast.
- In case of multi-media on-line services, streaming audio (47%) and Internet phone (45.4%) are most popular services, followed by Usenet, Listserv and Discussion Forums (41%).

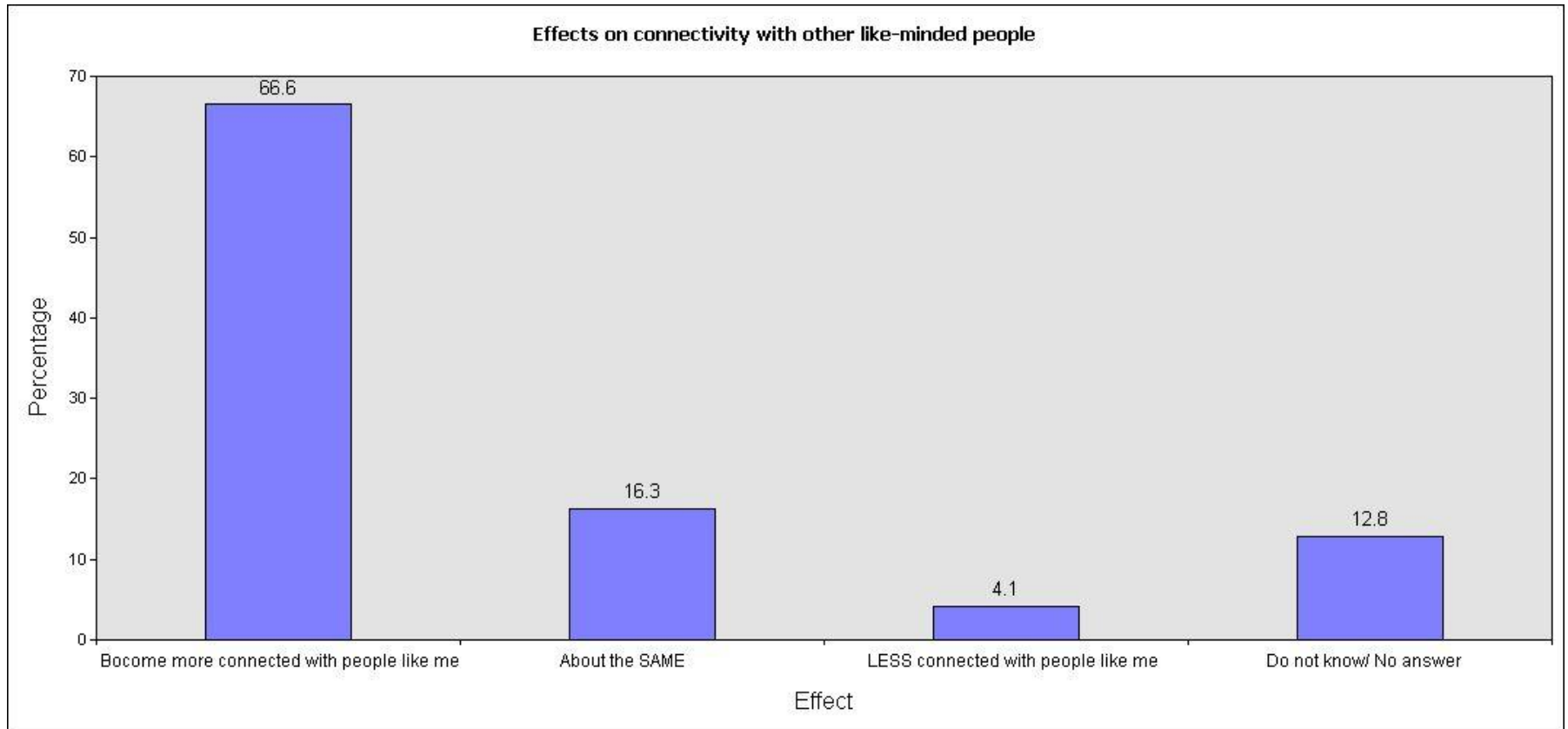
Differences in Internet Usage for work



Differences in Internet usage for fun/leisure

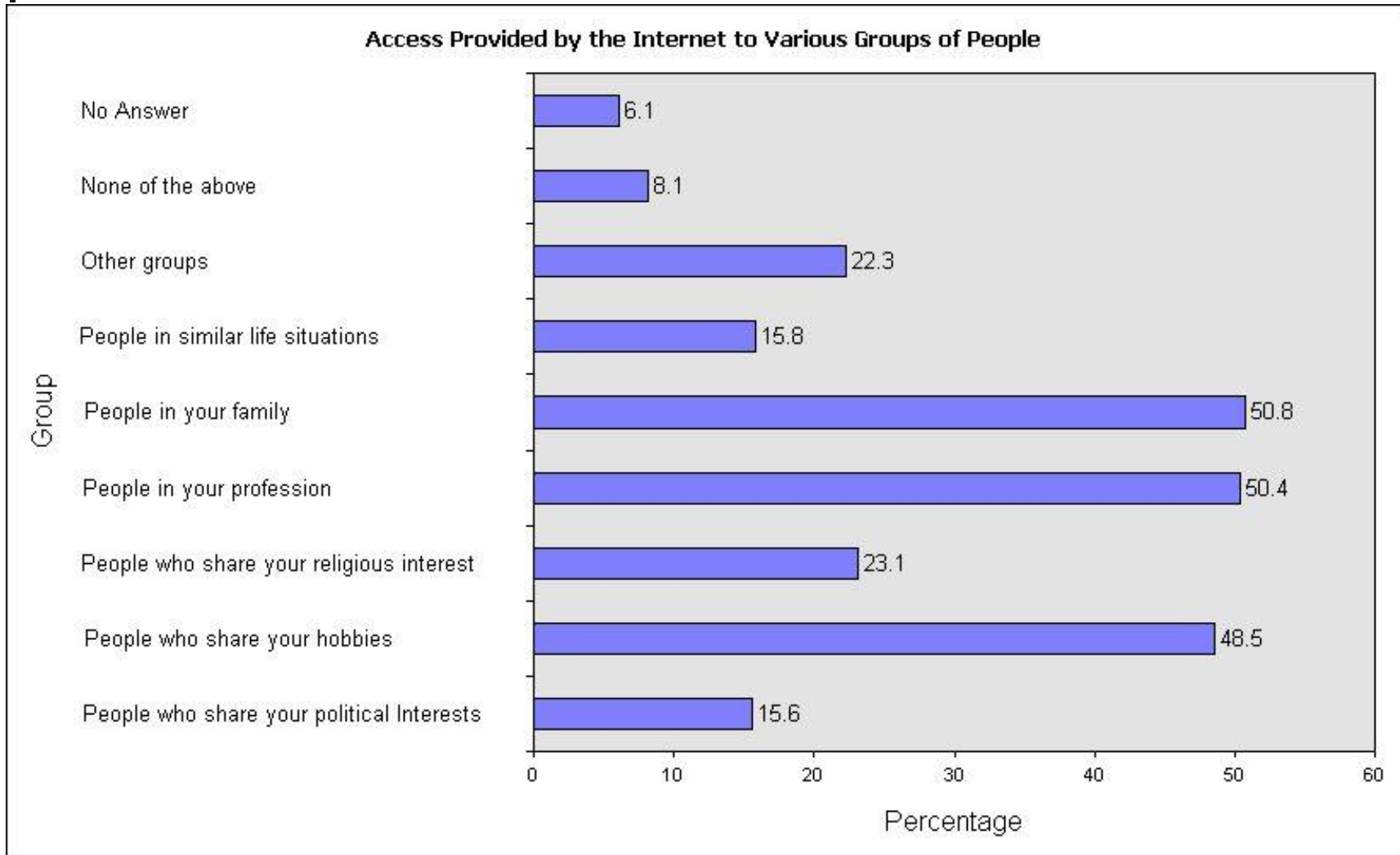


Impact of Internet





Impact of Internet



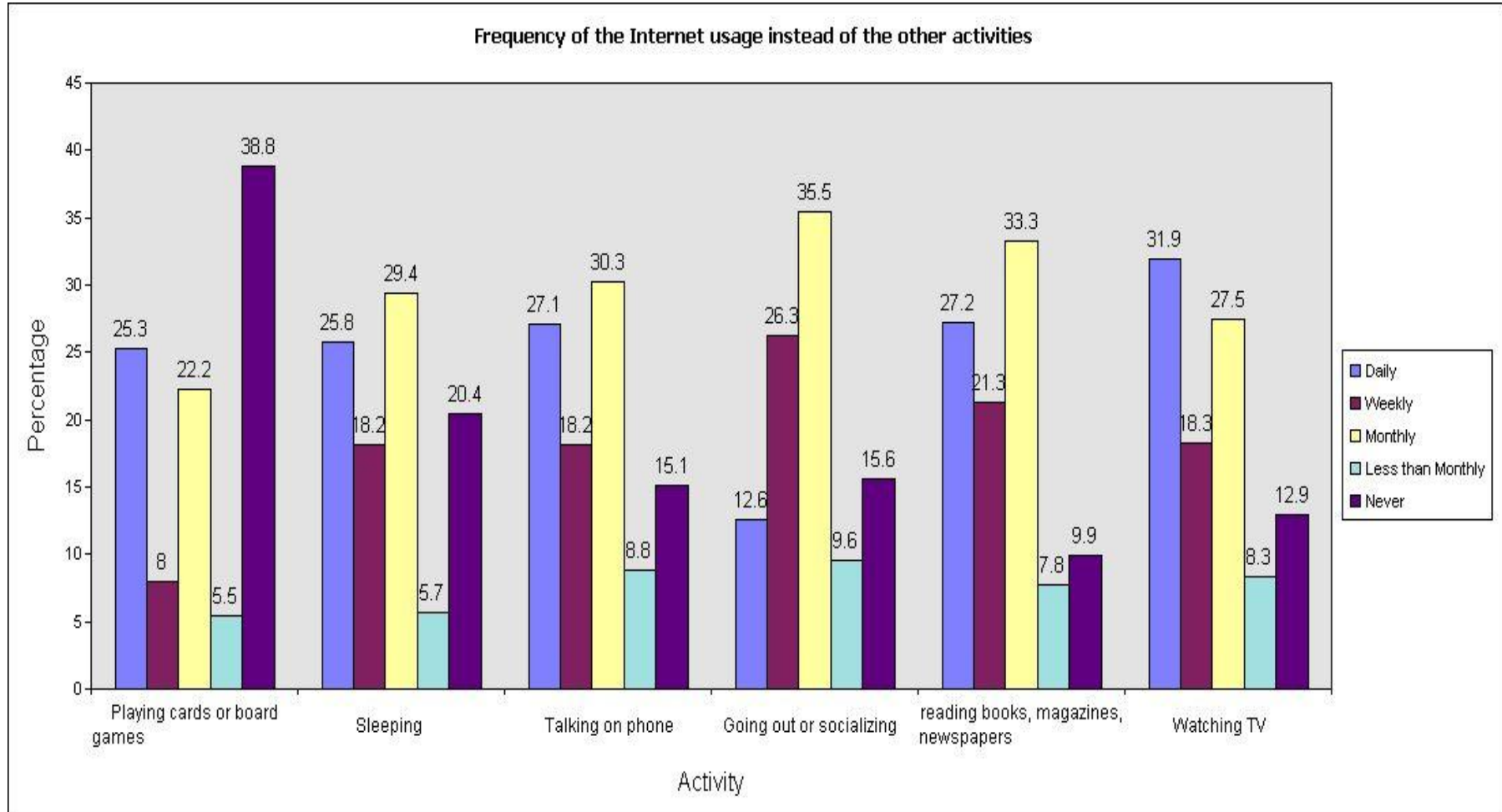
Impact of Internet



- It was found that generally Internet is helping people to be more connected to like-minded people. Almost 67% of the respondents agree with this argument. Only 4% of the respondents feel otherwise.
- A large number of respondents consider that Internet has helped them to be more connected to their family members. Next they feel that Internet is helpful for connecting people with identical professions and hobbies.
- This kind of evidence shows that developments in information and communication technologies are not simply dehumanizing. They have the potential to bring about new social relations.



sed instead of...

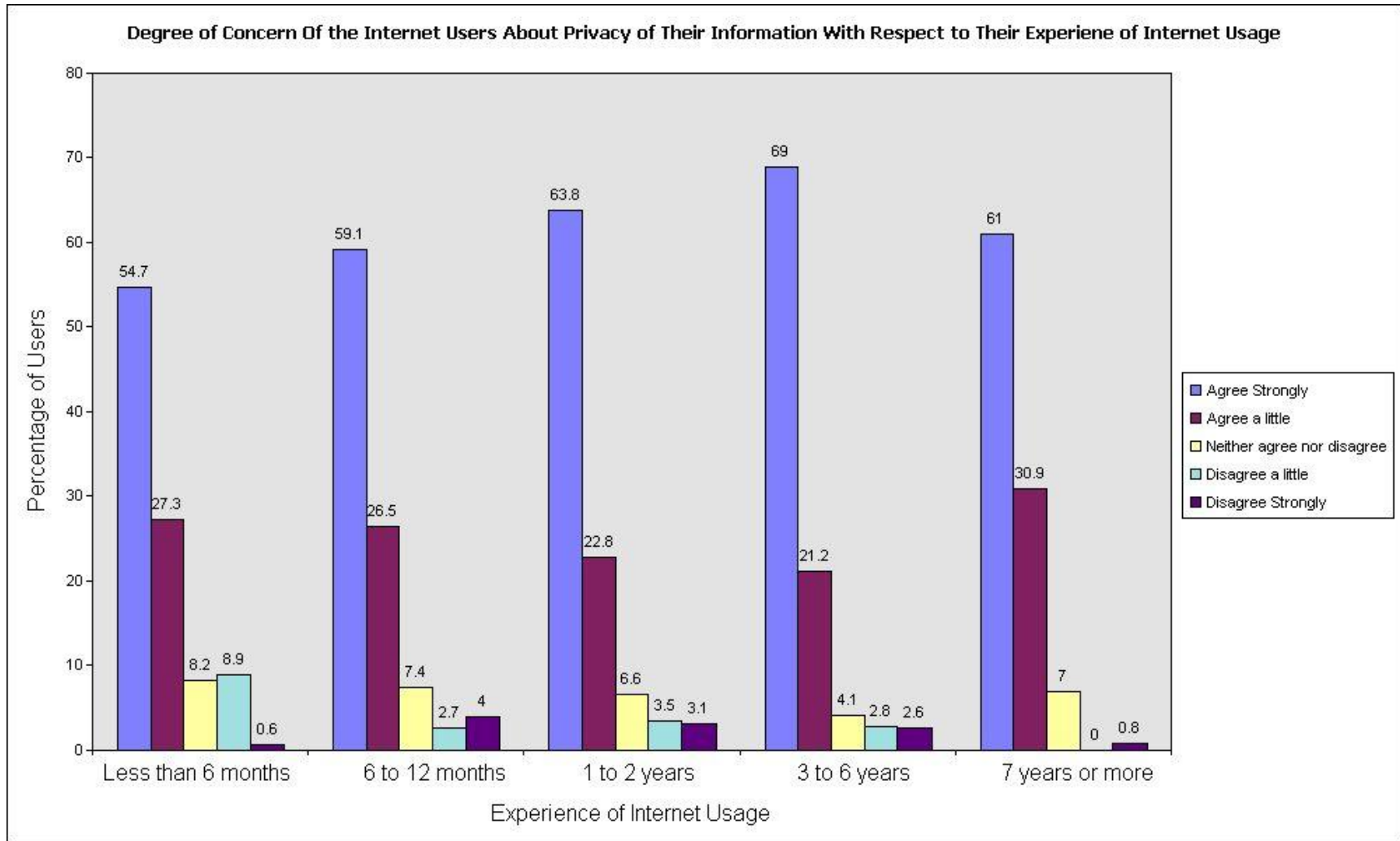


sed instead of...



- Internet usage has affected other social and personal patterns of behavior.
- Users sacrifice other activities for the sake of Internet use.
- The most adversely affected daily activity is watching TV. Almost 32% of the respondents feel that they prefer Internet use to watching TV.
- Reading books and talking on phone are other daily activities affected by the Internet use.
- Surprisingly a large number of respondents feel that they do not sacrifice playing cards (38.8%).

Experience on concern of privacy



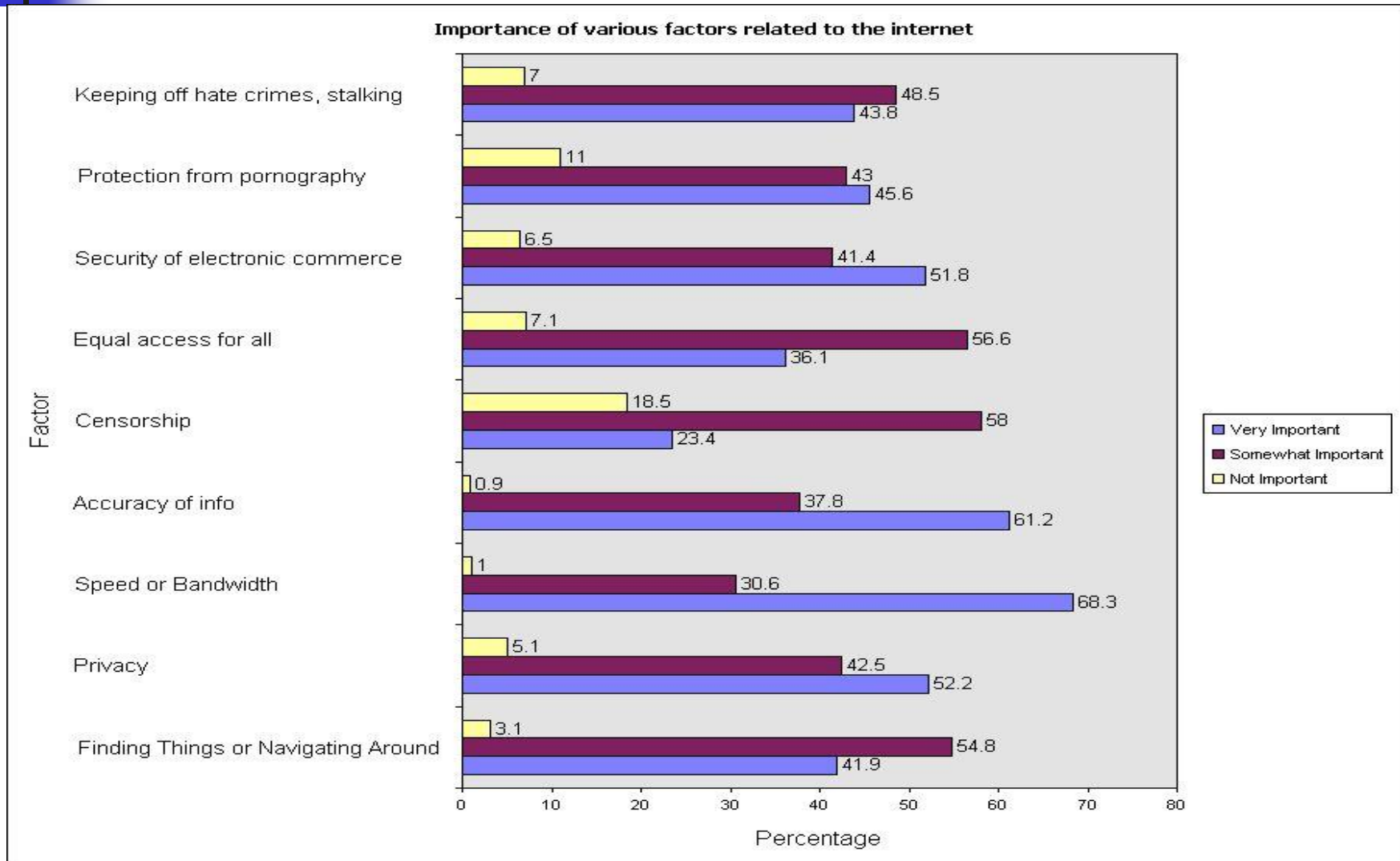
of privacy of information



- Majority of the respondents are seriously concerned about privacy of their information (64%) and almost two-third of the respondents want to hide their identity while visiting web sites.
- The more experienced users are, the more they are concerned about the privacy of information.



factors for Internet users



factors for Internet users



- According to the responses we received, the highest number users give high importance to the Internet speed (68%).
- Following this, users give importance to accuracy of information (61%), followed by privacy and security (50% each).
- Under the category of “not important”, censorship factor got the highest points (18%).



- We have presented our results of an on-line survey on the use and effect of Internet in Saudi Arabia.
- In Saudi Arabia, men are more likely to have access to Internet than women.
- Majority of the Internet users are college and high school graduates and a large portion is concentrated in three major cities.
- Majority of the users pay the cost of the Internet connection and regular users access it from home.
- A large number of occasional users prefer public facilities.



- Majority of the Internet users in Saudi Arabia are new to this medium.
- More experienced users spend more time on-line than the new users.
- Men spend more time on-line for work related activities while women spend more time for fun related activities.
- This medium is helping people to be more connected to like-minded people, in particular family members, people in the same profession and people sharing similar hobbies.
- Internet use affects other social and personal patterns of behavior, in particular watching TV, reading books and talking on phone.

gments



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