

Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to conduct an exploratory study of the Macau Internet market.

Internet, also called “information super highway”, emerged in 1969. The original idea of the Internet was for military and research purpose. It was not opened to the public before 1991. Users of the Internet during this period were all working for research institutions. After the commercialization of the Internet, anyone can use it.

Many types of services are provided on the Internet. The most well-known to the public is electronic mail (e-mail). It is more convenient for people to communicate with others by using electronic mail than by postal mail. In recent years, World Wide Web (WWW) is another most popular application on the Internet. By using the World Wide Web (WWW) home page, people or companies can distribute information in multimedia format, such as sound, graphs, pictures, movies, etc.

In-depth interviews have been conducted to all the Internet Service Providers/Information Service Providers in Macau and also with three World Wide Web home page institutional users. In addition, a survey has been undertaken to study the individual Internet users.

It was found that Companhia de Telecomunicacoes de Macau S.A.R.L. (C.T.M.) was the strongest Internet Service Provider/Information Service Provider in Macau. It was because C.T.M. was given the monopoly in the telecommunication industry. In addition, only C.T.M. got the leased line which was a pre-requisite in order to be an Internet Service Provider. The other two Internet Service Providers could only get temporary licenses for doing their business. In this case, C.T.M. had more advantages while compared with its competitors.

On the other hand, World Wide Web was found to be used by some companies in Macau as a promotional tool. Since the World Wide Web home page had just been

used for a short time by the users, they could not evaluate the actual effects from their home pages. Most of them try to promote their images. However, they all held positive attitudes to the World Wide Web home page.

Regarding the individual Internet users, since they were not easy to reach, University students had been taken as the sample. In general, most of them had heard about the Internet before and more than half of the sample were using it. The most popular applications were electronic mail (e-mail) and World Wide Web (WWW). Moreover, those students said that they were likely to use Internet after their graduation and they were likely to join the commercial service providers.

From the study, the Internet in Macau is in an introductory stage and the awareness is quite low. Internet Service Providers need to put more efforts to let the public know what it is. Moreover, the Macau government has to make the laws more clear to facilitate its development. In this way, it can make the competitive environment more healthy for existing and potential entrants. Of course, the speed of the network connection is a very important factor to the Internet. On the whole, this industry will have a bright future if the present problems can be solved.