

# Net companies will have to reach a broader market to survive

By Tina Bhole

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Only 6% of the world's population is actually online which includes email facility only, or; web presence AND email facility combined. Amazingly enough though, only 0.16% of the world's population are advanced, with the ability to establish their own web presence. If the Internet use remains this minimal then the results will remain minimal, not a good plan for this new medium's survival.

Internet technology companies have turned in on themselves they are so focused on introverted growth that they have missed real opportunities. Managements are chasing growth rates based on last years sales, looking to the past where looking to the future and at the present would be more use. The technology industry needs to employ more realistic goals, such as: "How do we get more of the world's population to use Internet specific devices?".

Internet Technology companies should take notice of how many people are using their products as a percentage of the Global population. Technology companies would do better to set a goal for themselves, for example, to get 20% of the world's population connected to the Internet within the next 10 years. The result would be a larger market to trade in, with greater business opportunities.

Internet related technology companies may wonder why the Internet presence percentage is so low. These may be few of the present barriers:

Too much complexity in new innovative programs,

Systems and networks are too slow, maybe still in the hands of non-fully Internet sympathetic telecommunications and media companies,

Software, systems, programs and applications don't fully work; released too early with too many bugs,

Data is at risk of being lost, stolen or corrupted with no real guarantee of safety,

International financial barriers still preventing real trade; banks and other financial institutions will not get off the "side-lines" and help, preferring to wait and watch.

Can tech companies understand that there is no point in adding new features and functions to pre-existing bugged applications, just to satisfy 6% of the world's population. If they were asked, it is likely the 6% would prefer better first versions, ensuring confidence in products, applications and networks; with the results being that more people will feel comfortable using the Internet.

Technology companies need to focus their efforts on creating a broader market, at the moment companies are fighting over existing marketplaces and growth is slow and getting stale. The Internet is in danger of becoming an introverted industry, focused on itself and its present predicaments.

With signs of the Internet recovering its media-alleged "loss of face", it would now be the time for Internet technology related companies, to seize the moment and plan for simplicity, quality and future growth.

A suggestion might be aimed at the worlds largest Internet companies as they probably have more to lose, are probably the major players caught up in the introverted growth. Research. If the question was asked, "why are only 6% of the worlds population online in one way or another?". It might benefit Internet leaders to explore the 14% or so that are onlookers, waiting to see what comes next, or if the Net will get easier, or safer. Don't waste resources on the fight to retain the same net savvy customers, work out the problems preventing the 'onlookers' from becoming 'onliners'.

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