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“ Environmental problems that are primarily the results of heavy industrial practices could be partially solved with development of [the] ICT sector and transition of Slovenia to a knowledge-based society.”

*-Professor of computer science,  
Slovenia*

“ The taxes are too high and compensations are too low for IT companies in Slovenia.”

*-President, Slovenian IT company*

Slovenia has made progress toward reaching European Union (EU) standards and has shown a commitment to transform itself into an information-based economy. This progress makes Slovenia a top candidate for the first round of EU accession. Slovenia ranks twenty-ninth overall in Readiness for the Networked World, with the Czech Republic and Hungary its closest peers. Slovenia has one of the best infrastructures among the former Yugoslavian states (Ranking in Information Infrastructure micro-index: 36) and is a regional leader in Internet connectivity and ICT education. One of the major challenges Slovenia faces in its transition is extending affordable network access to its entire population.

Slovenia's national telecommunications infrastructure is somewhat comparable to that of Western Europe. Analog networks were fully replaced by digital switches and fiber-optic cables by the end of 2000. Slovenia has high levels of mobile penetration and teledensity, and many observers feel that Slovenia also holds great promise for wireless Internet access.

Liberalization of the ISP market in January 2001 led to healthy competition, and there are now more than forty ISPs. Slovenia exceeds the average PC penetration for European countries. Relatively low telephone call costs have allowed the Internet to spread quickly. There is a gradual move toward integrating ICT into all sectors of the national economy. Slovenian academic institutions have used network technologies to interconnect with each other and other universities across Europe, and a number of multinational ICT companies have founded operations in the country (Ranking in Business and Economic Environment micro-index: 26).

Higher education is one of the Slovenian government's top priorities (Ranking in Social Capital micro-index: 19), and the government has publicly committed to invest in youth for the digital age. All schools have PC labs with Internet access, and Informatics is a required course in the national curriculum<sup>1</sup> (Ranking in Internet Access in Schools: 20). Though there is still a lack of ICT specialists in the country and insufficient educational material on the Web, distance learning programs are beginning to address this problem and may contribute to expediting national development in Slovenia. The University of Maribor recently started the Development of the Technology-Supported Distance Education Initiative, and some municipalities have started projects to install informats in remote locations.

The Ministry of Information Society recently submitted requests to the European Commission to implement the following programs: Interchange of Data between Administrations, European Digital Content for Global Network, and Promoting Safer Use of the Internet. B2C and B2B e-commerce are growing as more companies and people go online (Ranking in e-Commerce micro-index: 38), and e-government has increased public services via electronic access (Ranking in e-Government micro-index: 38). The new e-Business and e-Signature Act (June 2000) allows the government and citizens to use electronic means for official interactions. In addition, in May 2001, a telecommunications act was enacted that is in line with EU standards and will regulate competition in the Slovenian telecommunications market.<sup>2</sup>

## Key Facts

Population	1,986,000
Rural population (% of total population) 1999	49.66 %
GDP per capita (PPP)	US\$17,127
Global Competitiveness Index Ranking, 2001–2002	31
UNDP Human Development Index Ranking, 2001 (adjusted to GTR sample)	26
Main telephone lines per 100 inhabitants	37.79
Telephone faults per 100 main telephone lines	NA
Internet hosts per 10,000 inhabitants	110.11
Personal computers per 100 inhabitants	25.18
Piracy rate	61.00 %
Percent of PCs connected to Internet	4.71 %
Internet users per host	10.61
Internet users per 100 inhabitants	12.57
Cell phone subscribers per 100 inhabitants	54.66
Average monthly cost for 20 hours of Internet access	US\$17.51

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