

***HIGHLIGHTS ON THE
COMMUNITY ACCESS OF
ETHIOPIA***

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Background

Ethiopia is one of the least developed countries in Africa. It is located in the Eastern part of Africa and has a population of about 70 million (2004). The history of telecommunication services in Ethiopia goes back to the 1890's, but it remained at rudimentary stage until recently. Moreover, the teledensity for fixed telephone is also very low (0.7).

Ethiopian Telecommunication Corporation (ETC) is a state owned operator responsible for initiating construction, operation, maintenance and expansion of telecommunication services. On the other hand, down stream activities such as Internet services, Telephone resale and maintenance of cables are open for private participation.

The Ethiopian Telecommunication Agency (ETA) is the regulatory organ established in 1997 to promote the development of high quality, efficient, reliable and affordable telecommunication services.

Internet service came into use in January 1997. Mobile telephone service was launched in 1999 and the service as well as the business has picked up quickly. There is no well completed research conducted in the area of internet service users in the Country. However, an attempt has been made to compile data from sources like the Ethiopian Telecommunication Corporation, Central Statistics Authority and Ethiopian Telecommunication Agency.

At present, ETC has around 13,115 internet subscribers and 9 internet subscription center throughout the country. Out of the 13,115 subscribers, 27% of them belong to Government Offices while 9% are owned by Non Government Organizations. The remaining 27% belongs to Business organizations, and hence 342 internet cafes are run by private businesses. The Internet Service Providers are mainly in the capital city, Addis Ababa, whose population is about 3 million. According to a preliminary assessment study, on average 14 users visit each internet cafe every day. Hence, it can be assumed that 4,788 people have access to all the internet cafes every day.

The Higher Education (Universities, Colleges and Institutes run by Government) have their own internet network and they provide free access to 76,000 (CSA report) students enrolled in these institutions in 2002/03.

Since last year, the Government of Ethiopia has engaged in an intense project which aims at the creation of a national ICTs system and infrastructure that would support the flow of information at all levels of the economic and social structures step by step. Priority has been given to education health, agricultural research and government administration offices. Subsequently, 594 Weredas*, 500 high Schools and 32 Agricultural Research Institutes have been provided with Internet Service in 2004.

Detailed data/ information on community access indicators are given in Tables 1, 2 and 3.

*Wereda is the second hierarchy of the Regional government administration, with a population size of about 140,000.

Table 1: UNIVERSAL SERVICE

(as of June 30/2004)

Indicator	Number of units	% share to population
Radio	11,340,000*	18
Television	1,260,000*	2
Telephone:		
▪ fixed	484,685	0.7
▪ mobile	155,534	0.22
▪ Fixed and mobile	640,219	0.91
Computer	data not available	data not available
Internet access	difficult to aggregate	difficult to aggregate
Pay TV	data not available	data not available

Source: Ethiopian Telecommunication Corporation, Central Statistics Authority.

Note: Format modified to fit available data

*Figure for the Year 2000(Population 63 million)

Remark:

- All figures include Offices, Industries and Households.

Table 2: Internet Subscribers Distribution in the major towns of Ethiopia
(Total number of customers as of July 2004)

NAME OF THE TOWNS	POPULATION (NO)	INTERNET SUBSCRIBERS (NO)	%
Addis Ababa	2,805,000	11,081	0.4
Makele	154,698	366	0.24
Dire Dawa	258,906	378	0.15
Dessie	3,512	134	3.86
Jimma	144,748	126	0.09
Baher Dar	152,787	370	0.24
Shashemene	84,800	392	0.46
Nekemth	76,926	65	0.08
Nazreth	208,116	203	0.09
Total	3,889,493	13,115	0.34

Source: Central Statistical Office, Ethiopian Telecommunication Corporation

Table 3: Internet cafes by Administrative Region**(as of August 2004)**

Name of Administrative region	POPULATION (N°)	Internet café (N°)	%
Amhara	18,143,000	22	0.0012
Oromiya	25,098,000	24	0.0009
Southern Nation Nationalities and people's	14,085,000	8	0.00006
Tigray	4,113,000	3	0.00073
Dire Dawa	370,000	7	0.0019
Harari	185,000	5	0.0027
Affar	1,330,000	2	0.0015
Somali	4,109,000	2	0.00048
Addis Ababa	2,805,000	267	0.0095
Gambella	185,000	2	0.0024

Source: Central Statistics Office & Ethiopian Telecommunication Agency.