



Research Shows E-Mail Influences Consumer Purchasing Decisions

E-mail Most Trusted Information Source, Following Word of Mouth

Hong Kong — January 15, 2007 — Microsoft Corp today announced new Microsoft® Digital Advertising Solutions research that demonstrates that e-mail is a key point of influence for consumer purchasing decisions. The study, conducted by MetrixLab on behalf of Microsoft, demonstrates to advertisers that e-mail offers significant opportunities for brands to connect with a targeted consumer audience at a key point of influence. In addition, research from Universal McCann¹ highlights that e-mail services are the most trusted forms of communication, second only to word of mouth, and outperforming more traditional communication channels such as TV, radio, and outdoor and cinema advertising.

The Microsoft Digital Advertising Solutions and MetrixLab study was conducted across five international markets: Brazil, China, France, UK and US. The findings demonstrate that key life decisions are strongly influenced by conversations within Windows Live™ Mail and MSN® Hotmail®, one of the world's largest web-based e-mail services, with over 260 million active accounts worldwide:²

- Throughout the survey population, 76 per cent of male and 81 per cent of female participants discuss **social arrangements**, such as what films, concerts or events to see or where to eat, when using Windows Live Mail or MSN Hotmail.³ In China however, more men planned for their social activities, with 59 per cent, whereas 46 per cent of Chinese women used e-mail.
- Forty-one per cent of men across the five international markets discuss **financial services** purchases via e-mail. In China alone, the percentage of men discussing financial services online was discovered to amount to 59 per cent.

- Seventy-seven per cent of women surveyed discuss **travel** plans. China came very close to the result average, with 79 per cent of women using e-mail to talk about travel arrangements.
- As a whole, sixty-one per cent of survey respondents discuss their **education** options before making plans, a rate lower when compared against respondents from China alone, with 73 per cent. Seventy-one per cent of Chinese 18-to-35-year-olds discuss their **career** in e-mail, same as the average across the five markets.

In addition, 45 per cent of frequent online users state that e-mail is their primary form of communication.⁴ As a result, word of mouth and peer recommendations made via e-mail are the strongest influencers in China when consumers are considering making a purchase:

- Seventy-five per cent of Chinese respondents discuss **music** on Windows Live Mail or MSN Hotmail prior to purchase.
- Sixty-one per cent of Chinese men discuss **cars** via e-mail prior to purchasing.
- Seventy-eight per cent of men and 71 per cent of women in China discuss **electronics and gadgets** prior to purchasing.
- In China, 69 per cent of men and 61 per cent of women talk about **mobile phone** purchases on e-mail before purchase.
- Seventy-four per cent of women and 59 per cent of men exchange their ideas on clothes and accessories purchases on emails (in China).

“The findings of this research reinforce that Windows Live Mail and MSN Hotmail, with their extensive global reach, are important places in which consumers are discussing their purchase decisions with friends and family. Consequently, they can be used effectively by marketers to place their brands in front of consumers at this key point of influence,” said Celia Fan, Regional Media Analyst, Asia Pacific, Greater China & Japan at Microsoft Digital Advertising Solutions.

The research was conducted in late 2006. Further information can be found at <http://www.advertising.microsoft.com>.

- Ends -

¹ Universal McCann, "We Are All Media Owners Now," Europe, March 2006

² MSN internal data, June 2006

³ Windows Live Mail and MSN Hotmail research, September 2006

⁴ Universal McCann, "We Are All Media Owners Now"

About the Windows Live Mail Beta Research Survey

The Ad Aspects Research was conducted by MetrixLab on behalf of Microsoft Digital Advertising Solutions in five countries: Brazil, China, France, the UK and the US. A total of 14,878 respondents aged 18 to 65 who have used e-mail (including Hotmail and Windows Live Mail) for over one month were interviewed. Fieldwork was conducted between August and September 2006.

About Microsoft Digital Advertising Solutions

Microsoft Digital Advertising Solutions is a robust set of global advertising products and services designed to effectively connect advertisers with their target audiences across multiple digital touch points. Advertisers can actively engage with their consumers through a suite of high-impact advertising products and platforms, reaching a global audience of more than 465 million unique users per month across the MSN network, as well as millions more through Windows Live, Xbox, Microsoft Office and Live Search. Advertisers can feel confident they will achieve measurable results through groundbreaking research, advertising innovation, strategic planning and excellence in execution. More information about Microsoft Digital Advertising Solutions is available at <http://advertising.microsoft.com>.

About MSN and Windows Live

MSN attracts more than 465 million unique users worldwide per month. With localised versions available globally in 42 markets and 21 languages, MSN is a world leader in delivering compelling programmed content experiences to consumers and online advertising opportunities to businesses worldwide. Windows Live™, a new set of personal internet services and software, is designed to bring together in one place all the relationships, information and interests people care about most, with enhanced safety and security features across their PC, devices and the web. MSN and Windows Live will be offered alongside each other as complementary services. Some Windows Live services entered an early beta phase on Nov. 1, 2005; these and future beta updates can be found at <http://ideas.live.com>. MSN is located on the web at <http://www.msn.com>. MSN® worldwide sites are located at <http://www.msn.com/worldwide.aspx>

About Microsoft

Founded in 1975, Microsoft (Nasdaq "MSFT") is the worldwide leader in software, services and solutions that help people and businesses realise their full potential.

Microsoft, Windows Live, Xbox and MSN are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corp. in the United States and/or other countries.

The names of actual companies and products mentioned herein may be the trademarks of their respective owners.

This material is for informational purposes only. Microsoft Corp disclaims all warranties and conditions with regard to use of the material for other purposes. Microsoft Corp shall not, at any time, be liable for any special, direct, indirect or consequential damages, whether in an action of contract, negligence or other action arising out of or in connection with the use or performance of the material. Nothing herein should be construed as constituting any kind of warranty.

Microsoft, Windows Live, MSN, Hotmail and Xbox are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corp in the US and/or other countries.

The names of actual companies and products mentioned herein may be the trademarks of their respective owners.

For more information please contact:

Research Shows E-Mail Influences Consumer Purchasing Decisions

Azmar Sukandar
Regional Trade PR Manager
Email: azmars@microsoft.com
Tel: +852 2804-4271
Mobile: +852 9537-2987

Matt Collette
Edelman
Email: matt.collette@edelman.com
Tel: +852 2837-4743
Mobile: +852 9194-6258