

PICTURE – Priests’ ICT Use in their Religious Experience

ARGENTINA REPORT

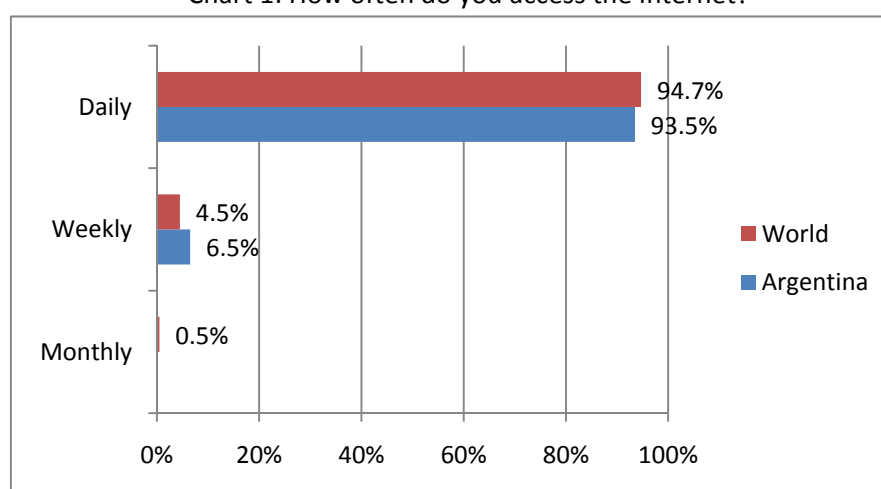
Research description: PICTURE studies the usages of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), and of the Internet in particular, by the priests of the Catholic Church all over the world. PICTURE was conducted by NewMinE – New Media in Education, and by webatelier.net laboratories of the Università della Svizzera italiana (Lugano, Switzerland), in collaboration with the School of Church Communications of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross (Rome), and was supported by the Congregation for the Clergy. PICTURE does not intend to answer the question: how many priests do use ICTs? The research aims instead to offer a picture of which are the religious activities done by priests online, and which are their attitudes toward digital technologies. PICTURE studies only priests who access the internet, who are named in this report “ePriests”.

Main results: Respondents to the questionnaire were 4’992, namely 1.2% of the total number of priests in the world (source: Congregation for the Clergy, 2007): 6.6% of the questionnaires were filled in on paper (328) and 93.4% online (4’664). Respondents come from 117 countries, spread across all the continents: 54.6% from Europe, 37.3% from the Americas, 3.9% from Asia, 2.6% from Africa and 1.6% from Oceania. The percentage of respondents from Europe, Americas and Oceania is higher than the percentage of priests present in those areas, while Asia and Africa are slightly under-represented; in order to balance this difference, the data have been weighted. The answers from Argentina (considered in this report) are 139, 2.4% of the priests in this area (5’900, ref: Congregation for the Clergy, 2007).

DEMOGRAPHICS					
PICTURE WORLD DATA			PICTURE ARGENTINA DATA		
N. ePriests	4’992		N. ePriests (Argentina):	139	
Age mean	48 years old	22.9% religious 77.1% secular	Age mean	47 years old	20.6% religious 79.4% secular
Priesthood years mean	20 years	Religious: 21 years Secular: 19 years	Priesthood years mean	18 years	Religious: 19 years Secular: 17 years

OWNERSHIP AND FREQUENCY OF ICT’S USE

Chart 1: How often do you access the Internet?



Comments:

93.5% of the ePriests in Argentina access the Internet on a daily basis, with a percentage slightly lower than the world average (94.7%). 73.4% possess a laptop and 74.1% a desktop computer. The access to other mobile technologies ranges from 89.9% of mobile phones, to 63.3% of digital cameras, 38.1% of mp3 players and 28.8% of other handheld devices (palm, etc).

KEY ACTIVITIES OF THE PRIESTLY MISSION

Homilies (preaching):

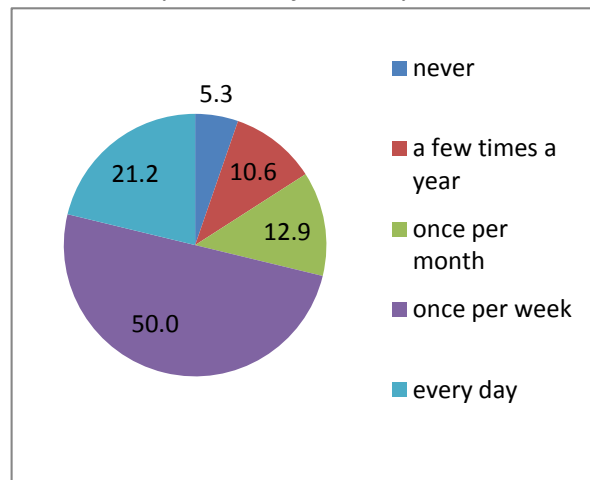
Comments:

The Internet is a highly valued resource to prepare preaching activities for ePriests in Argentina. 71.2% of them search online for homily materials at least once per week (much higher than the worldwide average of 61.4%).

53.5% of the ePriests in Argentina consider using the Internet as *useful* or *very useful* for a better preparation of homilies; only 4.7% do not consider it useful *at all* for this purpose.

Chart 2:

How often do you search for homily material online?

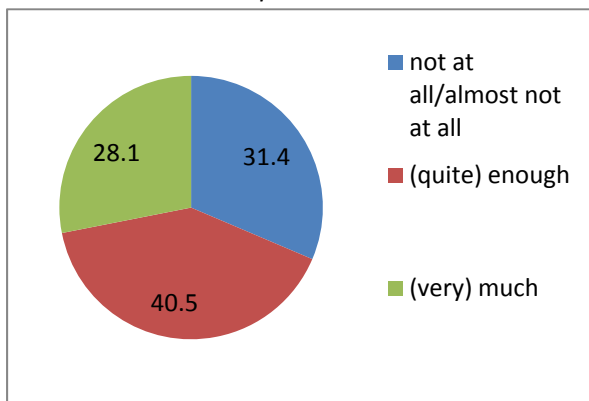


(Data are presented in percentages)

Spiritual advice:

Chart 3:

How useful do you consider the Internet for offering spiritual advice?



(Data are presented in percentages)

Comments:

The percentage of ePriests who consider the Internet almost *not useful* or *not at all useful* for offering spiritual advice reaches 31.4% in Argentina (in the world this percentage grows up to 38.6%). Only 28.1% consider it *useful* or *very useful* for this purpose.

Conversely, ePriests in Argentina see the Internet as *useful* or *very useful* for finding data (86.6% of the respondents), for reading about current events (82.1%) or for research/study purposes (74.4%). Furthermore, 62.3% of the respondents in Argentina consider the Internet as *useful* or *very useful* to support parish activities.

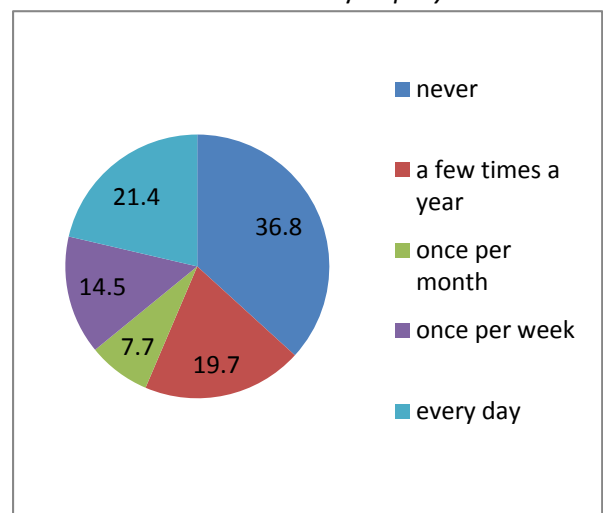
Praying:

Comments:

36.8% of the respondents in Argentina never use the Internet to pray online (this refers mainly to the Liturgy of the Hours loaded and accessed through a portable device), but 35.9% of them do it at least once a week (21.4% of which everyday).

As for their level of appreciation of the Internet for praying, 38.1% do not consider it useful *at all* (in contrast to only 31.9% worldwide) and only 8.0% consider it *very useful* for the purpose (compared to the 9.4% worldwide).

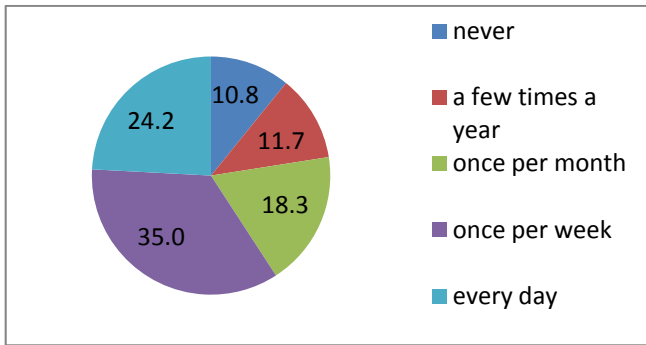
Chart 4: How often do you pray online?



(Data are presented in percentages)

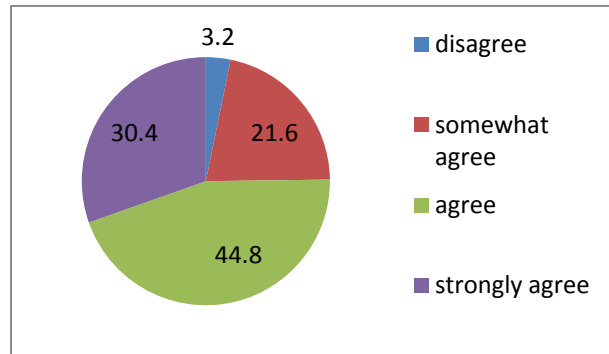
FORMATION

Chart 5:
How often do you *study* online?



(Data are presented in percentages)

Chart 6:
How much do you agree with the statement *technology enables the improvement of the formation of priests?*



(Data are presented in percentages)

Comments:

24.2% of ePriests in Argentina study online approximately every day (worldwide: 26.0%) and 35.0% do so approximately once per week (worldwide: 34.1%). Only 10.8% never study online. These percentages suggest that ePriests in Argentina use the Internet slightly less than the world average for study purpose.

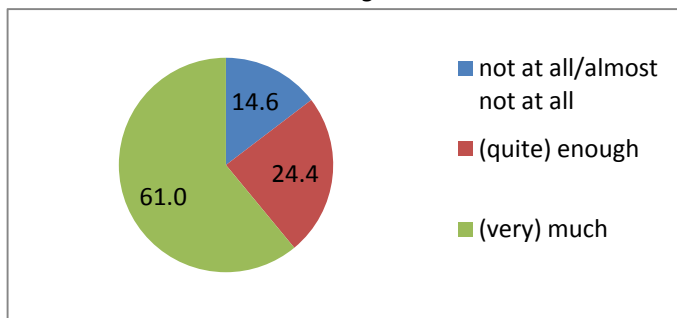
44.8% of the ePriests *agree* with the statement that “technology enables the improvement of the formation of priests”, and 30.4% even *strongly agree* with this statement. In this case, respondents seem to appreciate ICTs more than the world average (40.6% and 23.8% respectively).

Requested about their appreciation for the most useful instruments to learn something new, 21.8% of the ePriests in Argentina prefer to use search engines and 17.9% prefer to attend personalized training (in the world average reading books and magazines is preferred over personalized training). Moreover, 4.5% of the ePriests in Argentina prefer to use online education, and 4.2% social networks.

ENCULTURATION OF FAITH

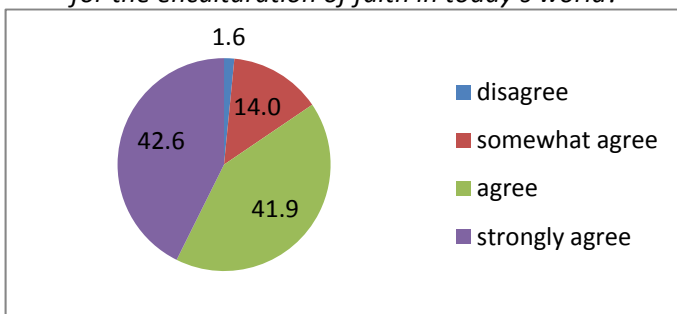
Chart 7:

How useful do you consider the Internet for *spreading the Christian message*?



(Data are presented in percentages)

How much do you agree with the statement *new technologies allow for the enculturation of faith in today’s world?*



(Data are presented in percentages)

Comments:

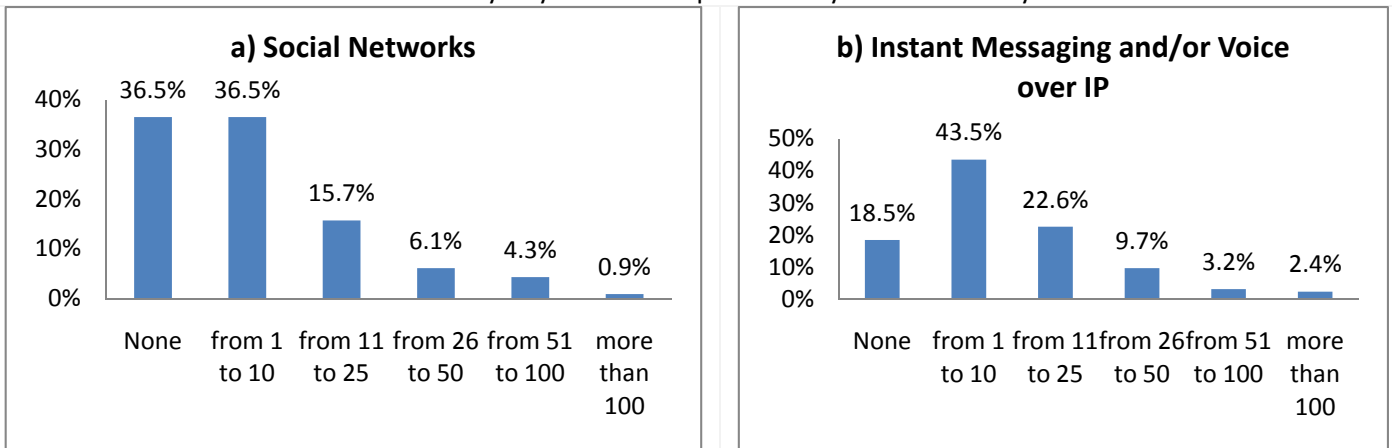
61.0% of the ePriests in Argentina consider the Internet as *useful* or *very useful* to present or spread the Christian message (world: 52.5%). 14.6% of them consider the Internet *not useful* or *almost not useful* for this purpose (world: 17.5%).

84.5% of the ePriests in Argentina *agree* or *strongly agree* that “new technologies allow for the enculturation of faith in today’s world”, with a higher percentage than the world’s one (72.9%).

Also, 82.4% of ePriests in Argentina *agree* or *strongly agree* that “technology allows for the better evangelization of young people” (world: 75.1%), and 55.5% that “digital technologies make it possible to better evangelize people”. Moreover, 44.0% also *agree* or *strongly agree* that “the Christian message doesn’t get to the elderly through technology” (world: 34.3%).

COMMUNICATION AND SOCIALIZATION IN THE ‘DIGITAL CONTINENT’

Chart 9: With how many of your brother priests are you in contact by means of ...?



Comments:

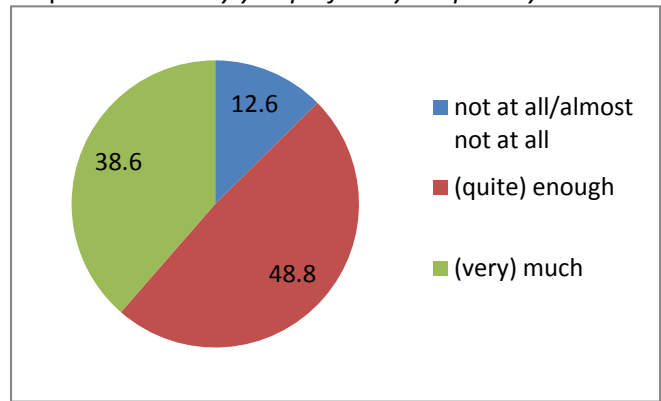
71.9% of the ePriests in Argentina consider using the Internet for communication with other people as *useful* or *very useful* (in contrast to the average of 79.1% in the worldwide data). Like in the rest of the world, also in Argentina ePriests seem to be less inclined to use social networks: though 29.3% of them access social networks on a daily basis and 22.4% once a week (worldwide: 26.4% and 17.6% respectively), 35.3% never access them. 36.5% of the ePriests in Argentina are in contact with 1 to 10 of their brother priests through social networks, and 0.9% declares to be in contact with more than 100 brother priests; however, 36.5% do not use social networks for getting in touch with other priests. Also, 43.5% of them is in contact with 1 to 10 of their brother priests through Instant Messaging or VoIP, while 18.5% are not in contact with any of their brother priests through these tools.

CONCLUSION

Comments:

38.6% of the ePriests in Argentina consider that the use of digital technologies has improved much or very much (values 4 and 5) the way they perform their priestly mission (worldwide: 41.6%); 48.8% of them do not perceive big improvements (values 2 and 3), and only 12.6% see very small or no improvements at all (values 0 and 1; worldwide: 12.2%). Indeed, while 14.5% of the ePriests in Argentina *agree* or *strongly agree* that “the dangers of technology are greater than the opportunities it offers”, 25.8% of them disagree with this statement. Therefore, it seems that ePriests in Argentina have a positive perception of the opportunities offered by ICTs, although their use of them is often slightly lower than the world average.

Chart 10: How much has the use of digital technologies improved the way you perform your priestly mission?



(Data are presented in percentages)

Methodology:

The research was meant to collect the testimony of 1% of Catholic priests, considered proportionately in the countries where priests perform their pastoral activity. The collection of questionnaires began on November 15th, 2009 and ended on February 28th, 2010. The questionnaire, available in seven languages (English, French, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish and German), was compiled both online and on paper. In order to ensure the widest possible distribution, the questionnaire was diffused in several ways: all the Bishops Conferences of the world were contacted, both via email and ordinary mail; all the dioceses of the 50 countries with the largest number of priests and the largest religious orders were contacted by e-mail as well. The questionnaire was also advertised through several catholic news agencies. To prevent errors and frauds, the research was publicized only through Catholic agencies and the incoming traffic to the web page of the research was constantly monitored; in addition, although the questionnaire was anonymous, many priests left their names and contact data. An important *caveat*: PICTURE does not intend to answer the question: *how many priests do use ICTs?* The research aims instead to offer a picture of which are the religious activities done by priests online, and which are their attitudes toward digital technologies. PICTURE studies only priests who access the internet, who are named in this report “ePriests”. Percentages offered are calculated only from the effective answers and do not consider those who did not respond.