

PICTURE – Priests’ ICT Use in their Religious Experience

CANADA REPORT

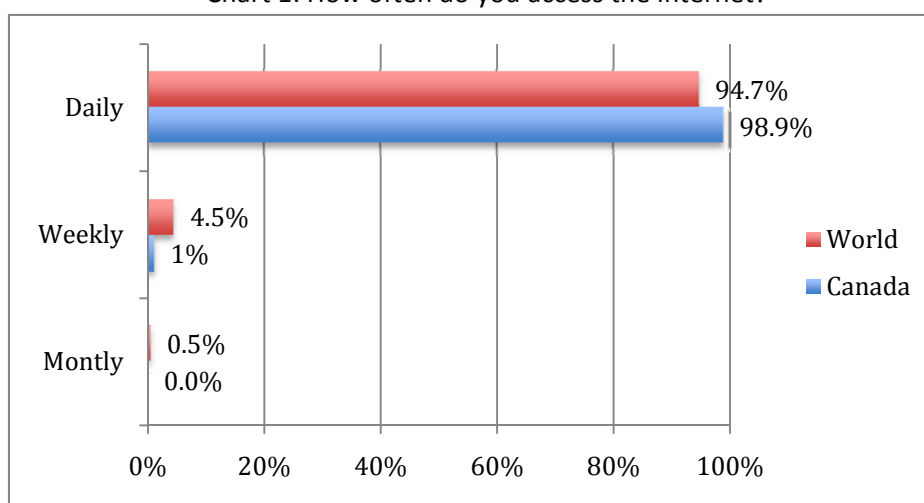
Research description: PICTURE studies the usages of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), and of the Internet in particular, by the priests of the Catholic Church all over the world. PICTURE was conducted by NewMinE – New Media in Education, and by webatelier.net laboratories of the Università 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 Canada (considered in this report) are 91, 1.1% of the priests in this area (8’421, ref: Congregation for the Clergy, 2007).

DEMOGRAPHICS					
PICTURE WORLD DATA			PICTURE CANADA DATA		
N. ePriests	4’992		N. ePriests (Canada):	91	
Age mean	48 years old	22.9% religious 77.1% secular	Age mean	57 years old	33.7% religious 66.3% secular
Priesthood years mean	20 years	Religious: 21 years Secular: 19 years	Priesthood years mean	27 years	Religious: 26 years Secular: 27 years

OWNERSHIP AND FREQUENCY OF ICT’S USE

Chart 1: How often do you access the Internet?



Comments:

98.9% of the ePriests in Canada access the Internet on a daily basis, with a percentage even higher than the world average (94.7%). 69.2% of them possess a laptop and 84.6% a desktop computer (worldwide: 82.8% and 81.2%, respectively). The access to other mobile technologies ranges from 65.9% of mobile phones, to 58.2% of digital cameras, 40.7% of mp3 players and 18.7% of other handheld devices (palm, etc). All these data are considerably lower than the worldwide percentages: 90.6% (mobile), 73.1% (digital camera), 44.0% (mp3), and 25.7% (handheld).

KEY ACTIVITIES OF THE PRIESTLY MISSION

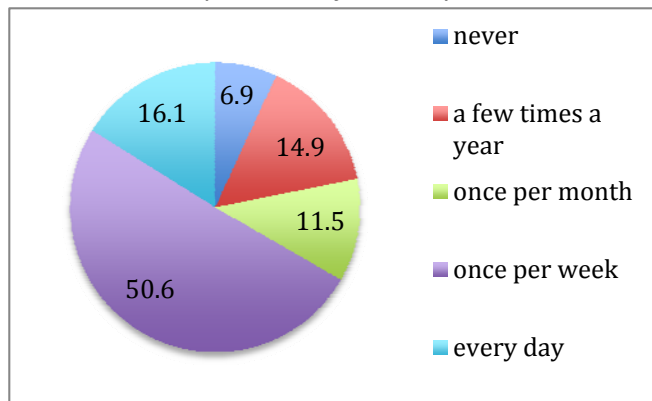
Homilies (preaching):

Comments:

The Internet is a highly valued resource to prepare preaching activities. 50.6% of the respondents from Canada search online for homily materials once per week, and 16.1% do it every day, while worldwide percentages are just 46.7% and 14.7%, respectively. 56.8% of the ePriests consider using the Internet as *useful* or *very useful* for a better preparation of homilies; only 4.5% do not consider it useful at all for this purpose.

Chart 2:

How often do you search for homily material online?

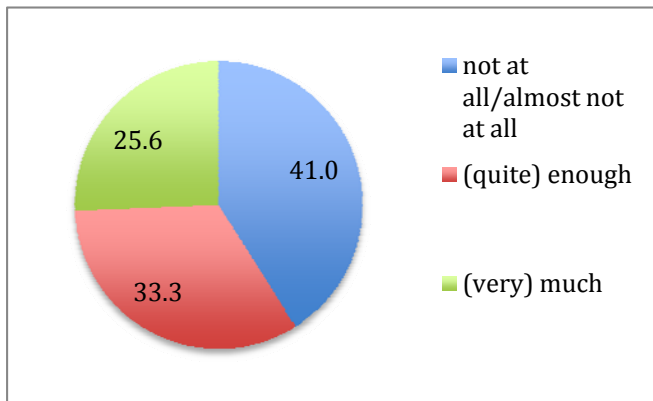


(Data are presented in percentages)

Spiritual advice:

Chart 3:

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



(Data are presented in percentages)

Comments:

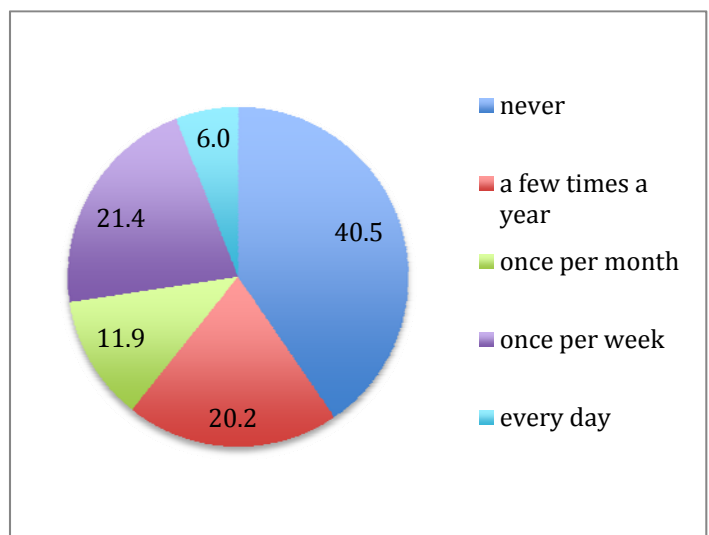
The percentage of ePriests who consider the Internet almost *not useful* or *not at all useful* for offering spiritual advice reaches 41.0% in Canada. Only 25.6% consider it *useful* or *very useful* for this purpose (worldwide: 38.6% and 26.7%, respectively). Conversely, ePriests in Canada see the Internet as *useful* or *very useful* for finding data (86.9%), for reading about current events (78.1%) or for research/study purposes (74.7%). Furthermore, 51.2% of the respondents in Canada consider the Internet as *useful* or *very useful* to support parish activities (the percentage rises up to 60.6% worldwide).

Praying:

Comments:

40.5% of the respondents never use the Internet to pray online (this refers mainly to the Liturgy of the Hours loaded and accessed through a portable device), but 27.4% of them do it at least once a week (worldwide averages are 35.7% and 35.9%, respectively). As for their level of appreciation of the Internet for praying, 23.8% do not consider it useful at all and only 2.8% consider it very useful for the purpose (worldwide: 31.9% and 9.4%, respectively).

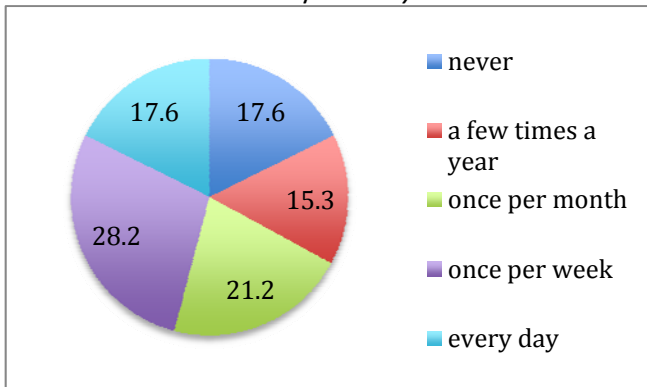
Chart 4: How often do you pray online?



(Data are presented in percentages)

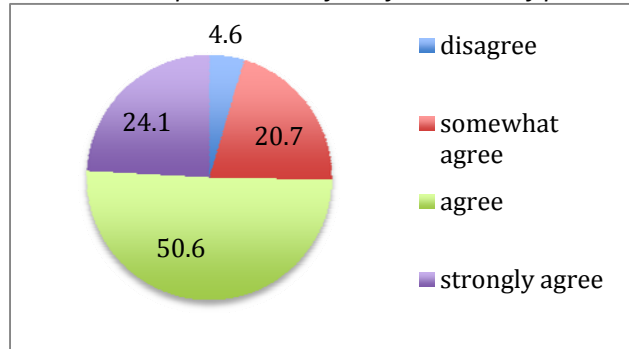
FORMATION

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:

17.6% of ePriests in Canada study online approximately every day and 28.2% do so approximately once per week. Only 17.6% never study online. These percentages suggest that ePriests in Canada use the Internet for study purpose less than the world average (26.0% every day, 34.1% once per week, and 9.4% never).

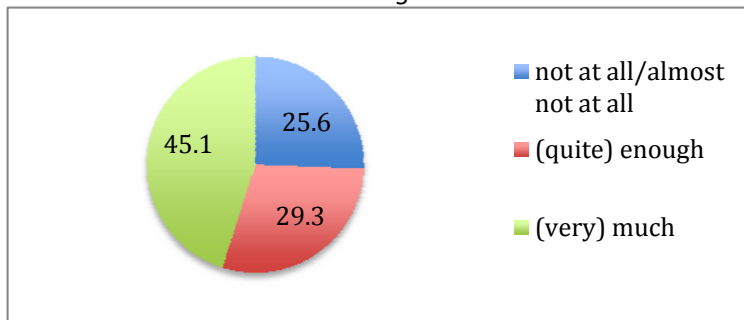
50.6% of the ePriests *agree* with the statement that “technology enables the improvement of the formation of priests”, and 24.1% even *strongly agree* with this statement. In this case, respondents from Canada seem to appreciate ICTs more than the world average (40.6% and 23.8%, respectively).

Requested about their appreciation for the most useful instruments to learn something new, 27.2% of the ePriests prefer to use search engines (more than the world average of 20.4%) and 16.3% prefer to attend lessons in the classroom (in the world average reading books and magazines is preferred over lessons in the classroom). 5.9% prefer to use online education, and 3.4% social networks.

ENCULTURATION OF FAITH

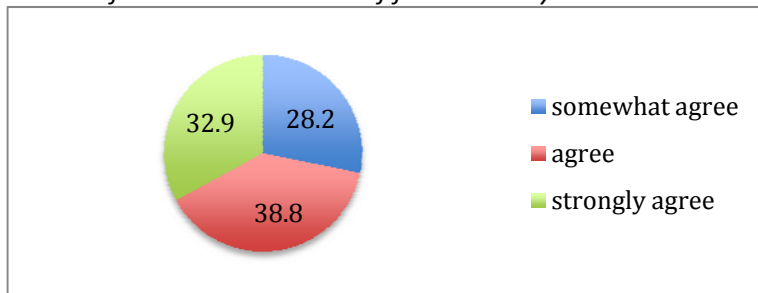
Chart 7:

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:

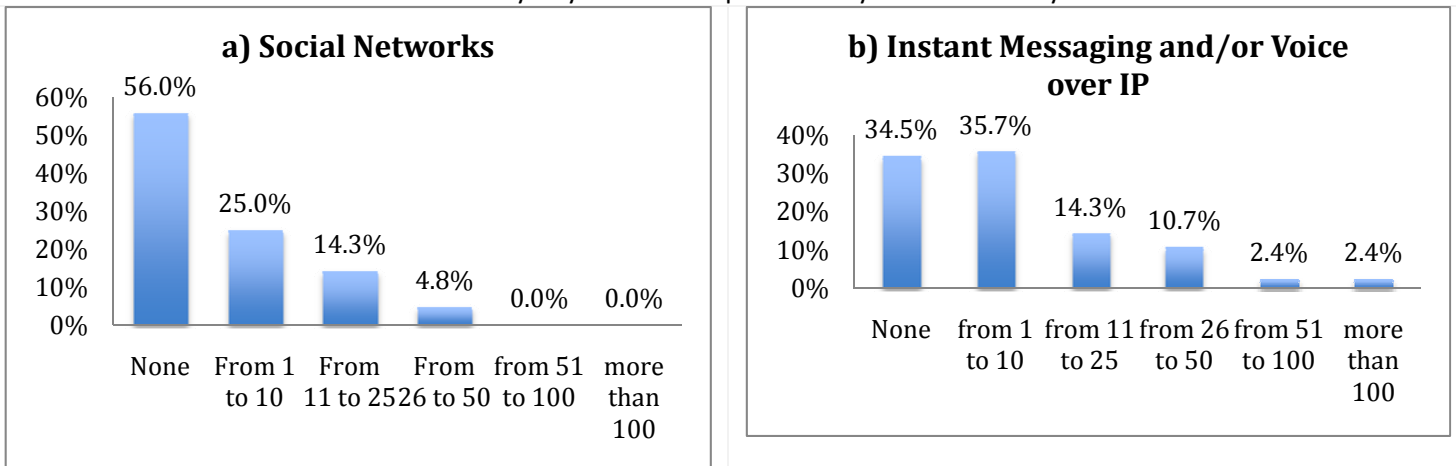
45.1% of the ePriests from Canada consider the Internet *useful* or *very useful* to present or spread the Christian message (less than the world average: 52.5%). 25.6% consider the Internet *not useful* or *almost not useful* for this purpose, in much higher average with respect to the world percentage (17.5%).

Moreover, most of the Canadian ePriests (71.7%) agree or strongly agree that “new technologies allow for the enculturation of faith in today’s world” (worldwide: 72.9%).

79.3% of the ePriests from Canada agree or strongly agree that “technology allows for the better evangelization of young people” (worldwide: 75.1%), and 66.6% that “digital technologies make it possible to better evangelize people” (worldwide: 56.8%). Furthermore, 34.4% also agree or strongly agree that the Christian message doesn’t get to the elderly through technology, similarly to world average.

COMMUNICATION AND SOCIALIZATION IN THE ‘DIGITAL CONTINENT’

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



Comments:

91.9% of the ePriests in Canada consider using the Internet for communicating with other people as *useful* or *very useful* (higher than the world average of 79.1%). On the contrary, they seem to be less inclined to use social networks: although 17.1% access social networks on a daily basis and 9.8% once a week (worldwide: 26.4% and 17.6%, respectively), 54.9% never access them (much higher than world average: 35.3%). When using social networks, 25.0% of Canadian ePriests are in contact with 1 to 10 of their brother priests (worldwide: 29.8%); nonetheless, the majority (56.0%) do not use social networks for getting in touch with other priests (worldwide: 41.0%). Also, 35.7% of ePriests in Canada is in contact with 1 to 10 of their brother priests through Instant Messaging or VoIP, while 34.5% are not in contact with any of their brother priests through these means (worldwide: 36.3% and 26.4%, respectively).

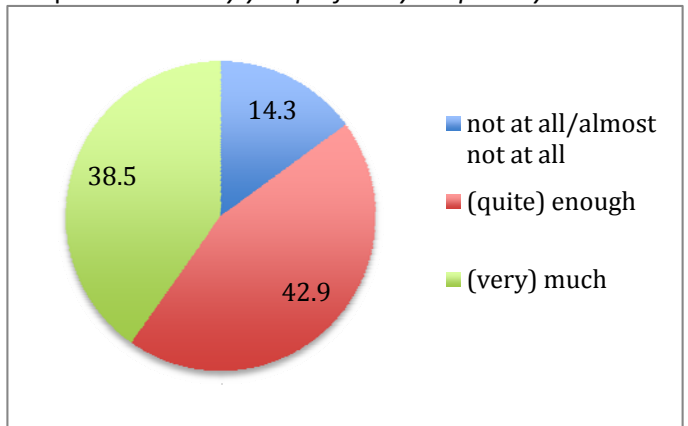
CONCLUSION

Comments:

38.5% of the ePriests in Canada think that 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%); 42.9% do not perceive big improvements (values 2 and 3), and only 14.3% see very small or no improvements at all (values 0 and 1).

Indeed, while 16.5% of the ePriests agree or strongly agree that “the dangers of technology are greater than the opportunities it offers”, 43.5% disagree with it. Therefore, although the general perception of the opportunities offered by ICTs is positive among Canadian ePriests, it is often less positive than in the rest of the world.

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.