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Googling not gardening – Australian retirees go online

Australian retirees have embraced the internet, spending an average of one hour every day, or seven hours each week, online, according to the 2007 AXA Retirement Scope study released today.

The AXA study of over 11,000 people from 16 countries, which explores international retirement trends, found Australian retirees are second only to their counterparts in the United States when it comes to the amount of time spent online each week.

Interestingly, Australian retirees have increased their time on the internet by 40 per cent, spending two hours more online than last year, when they were ranked among the least active internet users of all countries surveyed.

“The research indicates that over the last year Australian retirees have really adopted the internet as a tool to conduct their everyday tasks,” AXA’s General Manager Sales and Marketing, **Adrian Emery** explained.

“Australian retirees are recognising the benefits of the internet, and preferring to google rather than garden these days,” Mr Emery said.

The study showed more than half of all Australian retirees now have home internet access, a statistic that doesn’t surprise behavioural scientist and social expert, **Dr Stephen Juan**.

“As the internet is now more accessible and user-friendly, Australians are becoming technologically advanced, and are increasingly logging on to keep in touch with the world,” Dr Juan said.

Emailing, searching for information and banking are the main reasons Australian retirees log on, with 75 per cent of retired internet users using email and internet chat functions to keep up relationships with their children and grandchildren.

The AXA Retirement Scope study showed 75 per cent of retired internet users email their children regularly, with the majority aged 65 and over. Whereas only 30 per cent of working Australians send their parents emails.

“Working Australians spend so much of their day at their desks and on their computers, that when it comes to things like maintaining family relationships, this research says they prefer to talk on the telephone, rather than typing out conversation,” Dr Juan said.

Eight in ten working Australians have internet access at home, spending eight hours each week of their personal time online.

“Certainly as a result of having busier schedules, working Australians are looking for easier and faster ways to get things done,” Dr Juan said.

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The research found 96 per cent of Australian workers surf the net for information, the highest proportion in the world, while 92 per cent use it to email friends and 63 per cent do their banking online.

Other reasons working Australians log on include reading the news, to purchase travel tickets and meet new people.

“Thanks to the rapid development of technology and the subsequent breakdown of traditional forms of communication, the internet is now our ‘postie’, the ‘neighbourhood barbeque’ and our ‘set of encyclopaedias’,” Dr Juan said.

But overall Australians are still behind when it comes to using more recent internet innovations such as blogs, chatting and online shopping.

“Even though Australians are turning to the World Wide Web for many activities, we still enjoy doing certain things face-to-face, like shopping and spending time with family and friends,” he said.

Overall, Australians are keen consumers of technology, with almost nine out of ten working Australians owning a mobile phone, and a similar number owning a personal computer. Seven out of ten working Australians own a digital camera.

The AXA Retirement Scope is a major benchmark study on retirement, measuring expectations and experiences of retirement in Australia and internationally.



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Other Key Findings:

- Australians are taking charge of their financial futures; 34 per cent of working Australians now have a good idea of what their projected retirement income will be.
- Seventy per cent of working Australians have already started to prepare for their retirement. And are doing so at an average age of 31 years old.
- We're feeling good – 85 per cent of all Australians are feeling healthy.
- The great Australian dream of owning your own home is a reality for most Australians, with two thirds of working Australians and four out of five retirees owning their own home.
- Almost all Australians are happy – less than one in ten working Australians reported to being 'not really happy' or 'not happy at all'.

- ENDS -

For more information, a copy of the full AXA Retirement Scope report or to arrange an interview with Adrian Emery or Dr Stephen Juan, please contact:

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With A\$82.34 billion funds under management and administration (as at 31 December 2006) AXA Australia is a leading provider of wealth management and financial protection products and services through brands including Australian Casualty & Life, ipac and Summit.

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