



# Moral Panics Over the Internet

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# Moral Panic

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- disproportionate reaction
- threat to the moral order

## Questions:

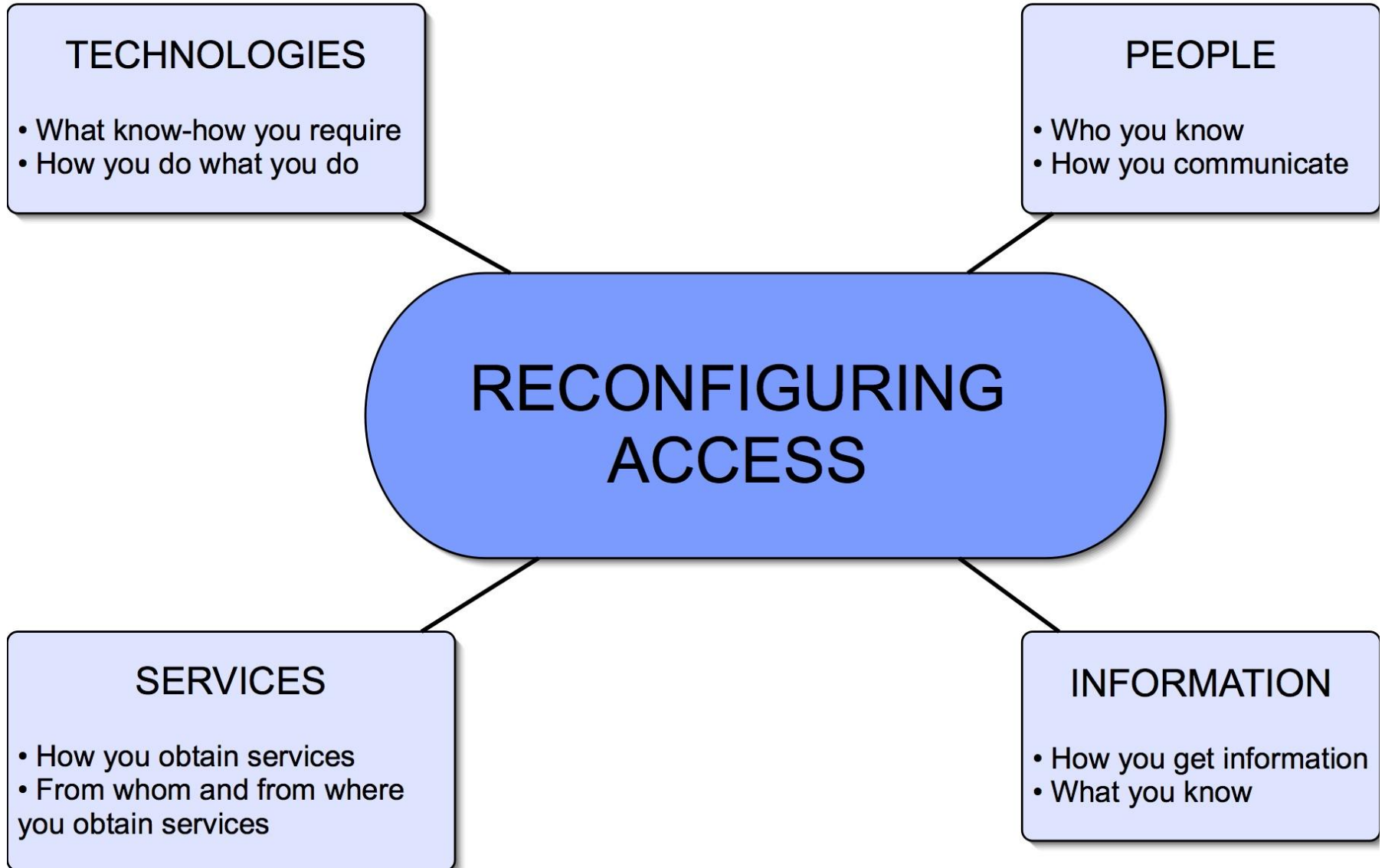
- Internet replacing Media?
- Overreaction?
- Why?
- So what? What impact?





- 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009
- Cross-sectional Surveys versus Panels
- Multi-Stage Probability Sample
- England, Scotland & Wales
- Respondents: 14 years and older
- Face-to-face Interviews, High Response Rates
- Sponsorship for 2009 from the British Library, Higher Education Funding Council for England, Ofcom, and Scottish and Southern Energy
- Component of World Internet Project (WIP)

# Figure 1-3: Reconfiguring Access





## The Fourth Estate



“[Edmund] Burke said there were Three Estates in Parliament; but, in the Reporters’ Gallery yonder, there sat a Fourth Estate more prominent far than they all. It is not a figure of speech, or witty saying; it is a literal fact – very momentous to us in these times.”

Thomas Carlyle (1831), *Heroes and Hero-Worship*, at [www.gutenberg.org.etext/1091](http://www.gutenberg.org.etext/1091)



# Feudal Estates into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

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Estates	Feudal	Modern
	Clergy	Public Intellectuals
	Nobility	Business, Industry and Economic Elites
	Commons	Government
'4 <sup>th</sup> Estate'	Press	Journalists and the Mass Media
	Mob	Mob



# The Fourth and Fifth Estates

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- Press in the 18th Century -- the 'Fourth Estate'
- Internet in the 21st -- enabling a Fifth Estate

Enabling people to network with other individuals and with information, services and technical resources in ways that support social accountability in business and industry, government, politics, and the media.



# The Social Order

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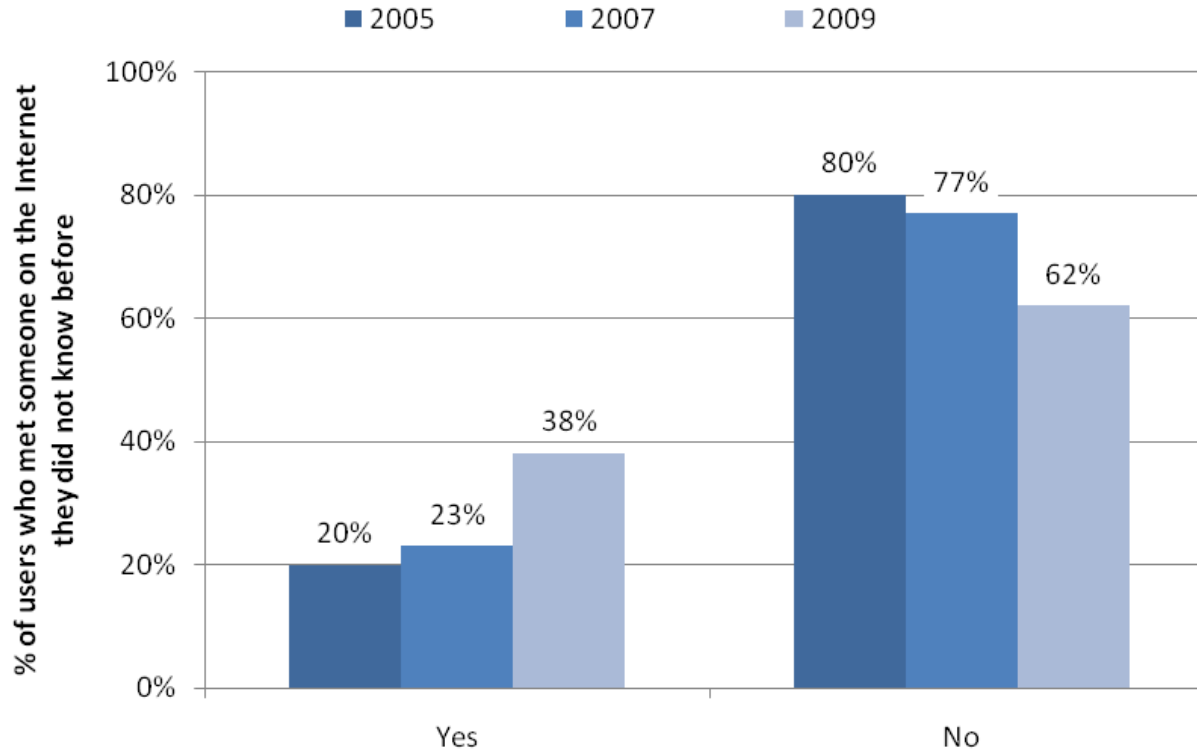
- Isolating Individuals?
- Substituting Virtual for Real Friendship?



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Current users. OxIS 2005: N=1,309; OxIS 2007: N=1,578; OxIS 2009: N=1,401  
Note. The question changed in 2009.



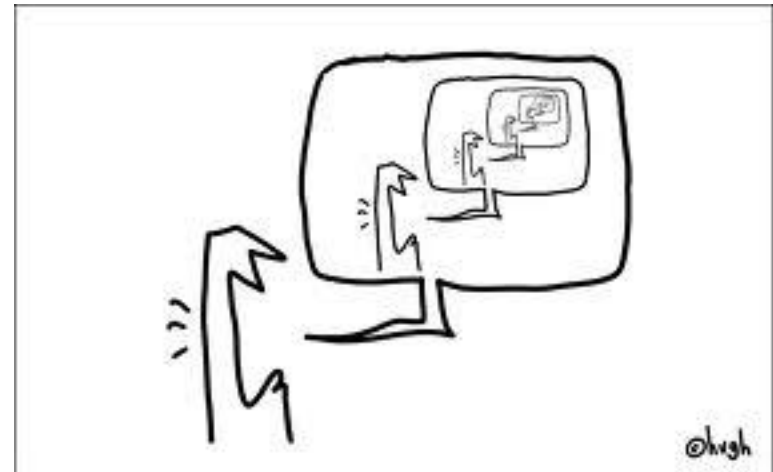
# The Information Order

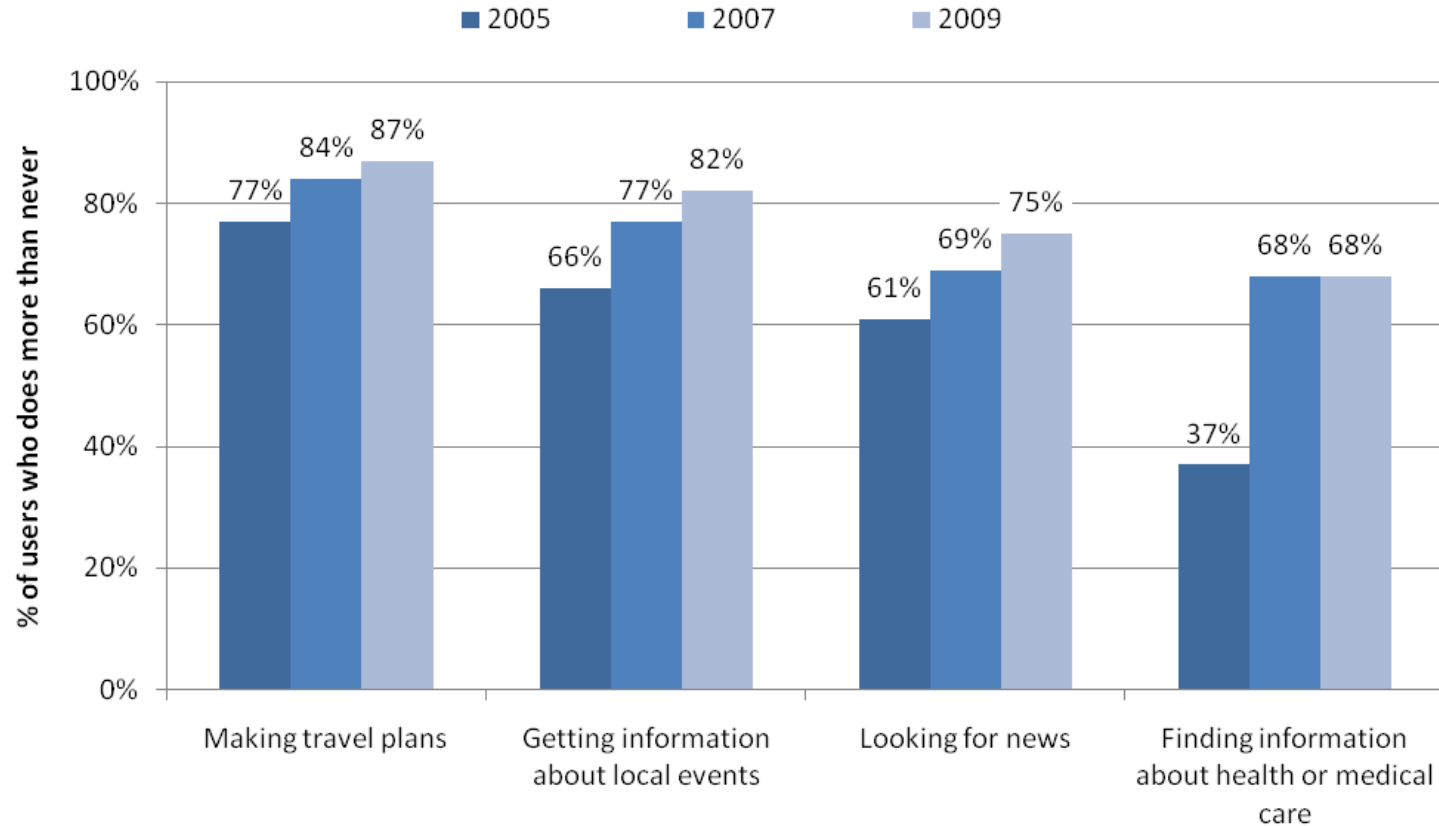
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- Diminishing the Quality of Information?
- My Daily Me – Personal Echo Chamber?
- Globalization Undermining Local Community?



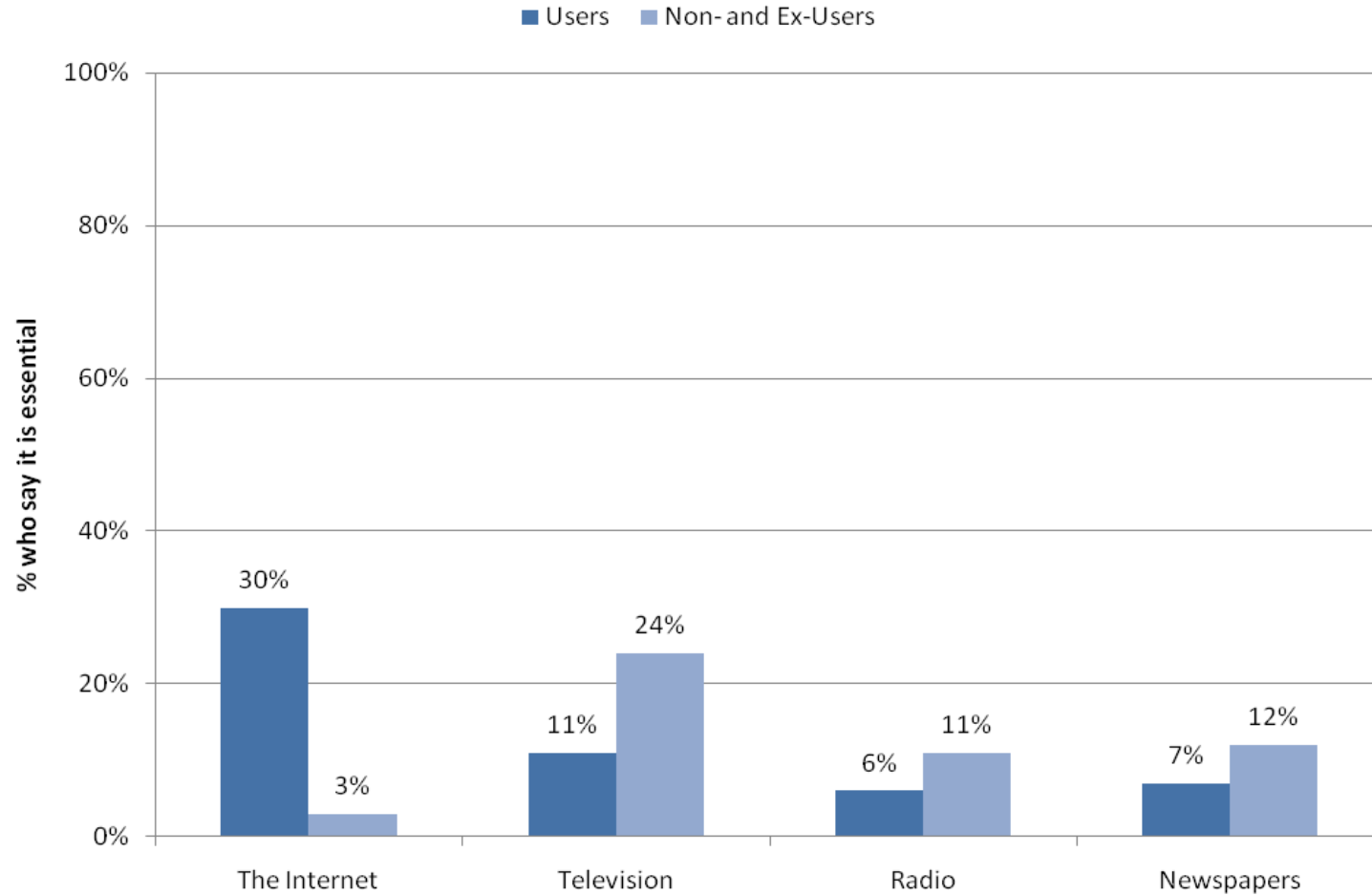
**WIKIPEDIA**  
*The Free Encyclopedia*



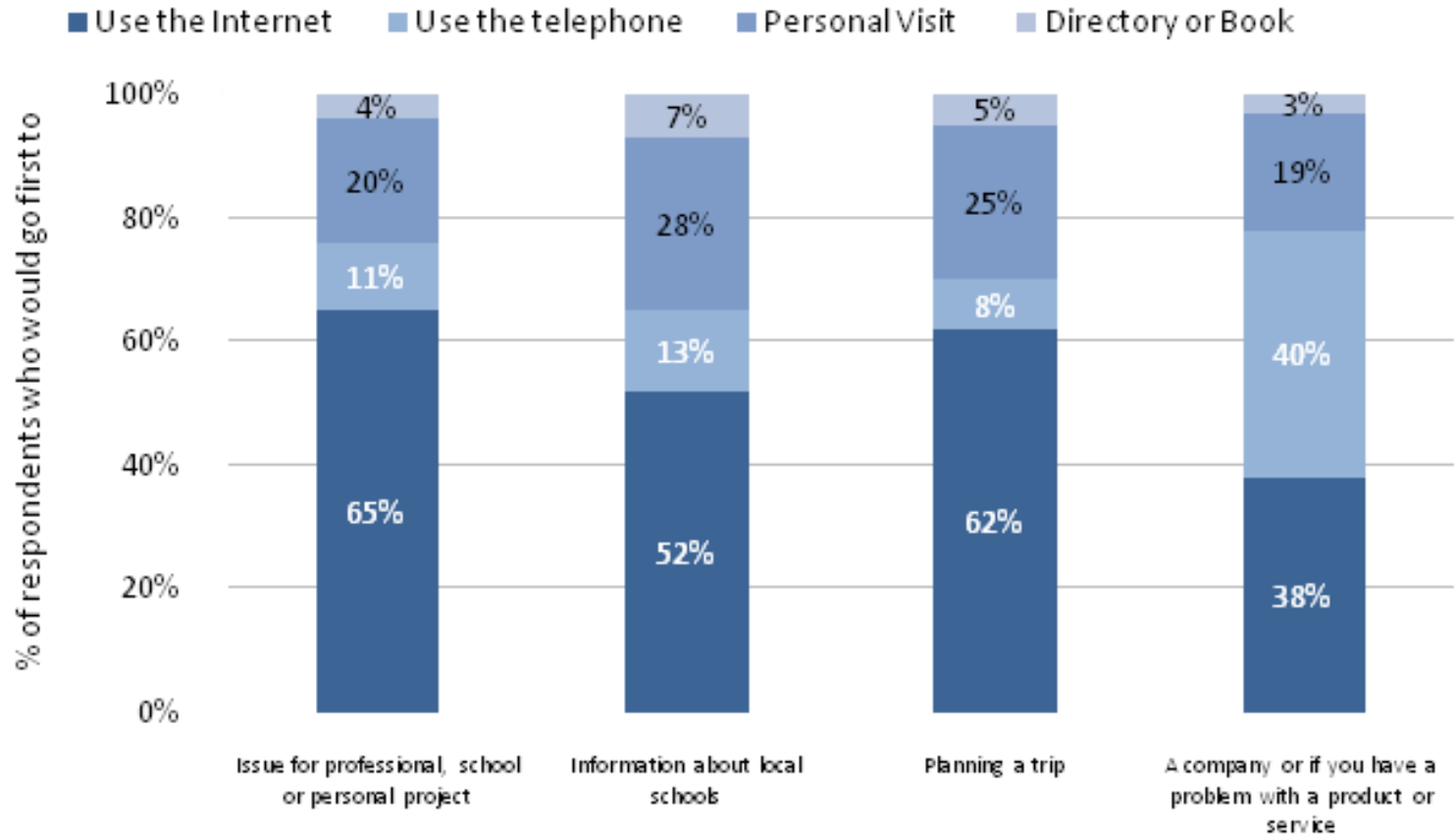


Current users. OxIS 2005: N=1,309; OxIS 2007: N=1,578; OxIS 2009: N=1,401

# Average Importance of Media for Information by Internet Users and Non-Users (QA2 by QH14)



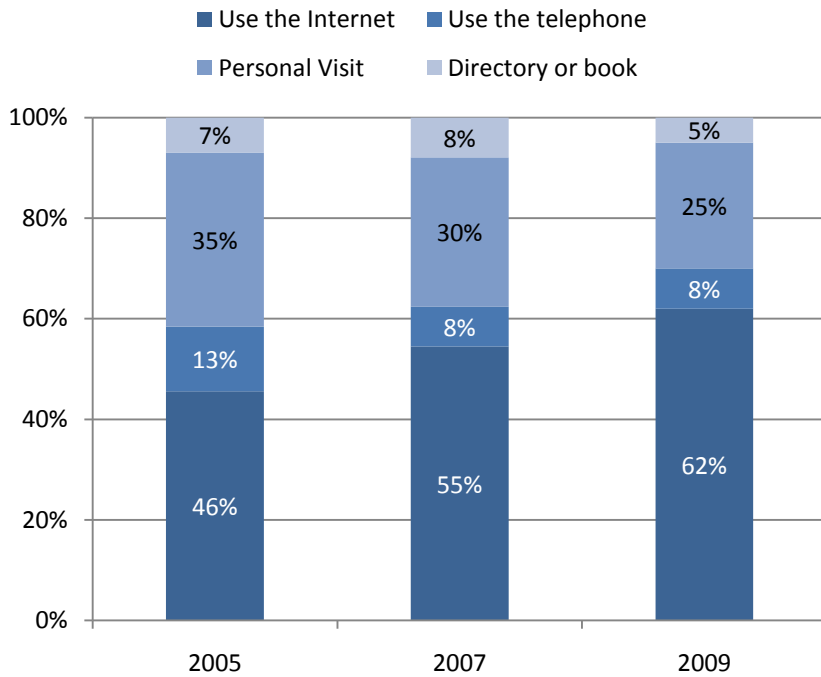
# Looking for Information on Different Media (QA1)



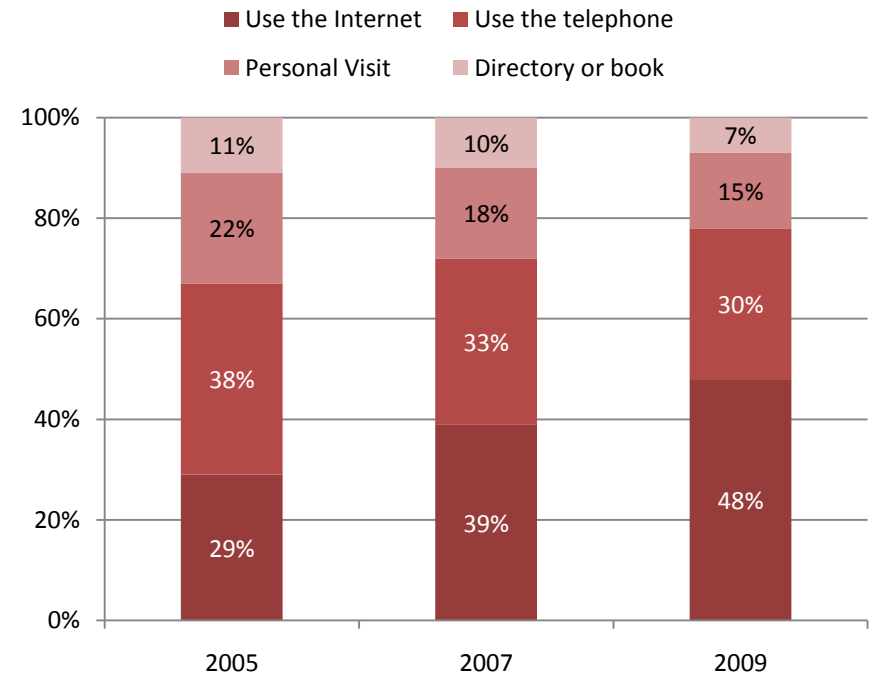
OxIS 2009: N=2,013



## Planning a trip

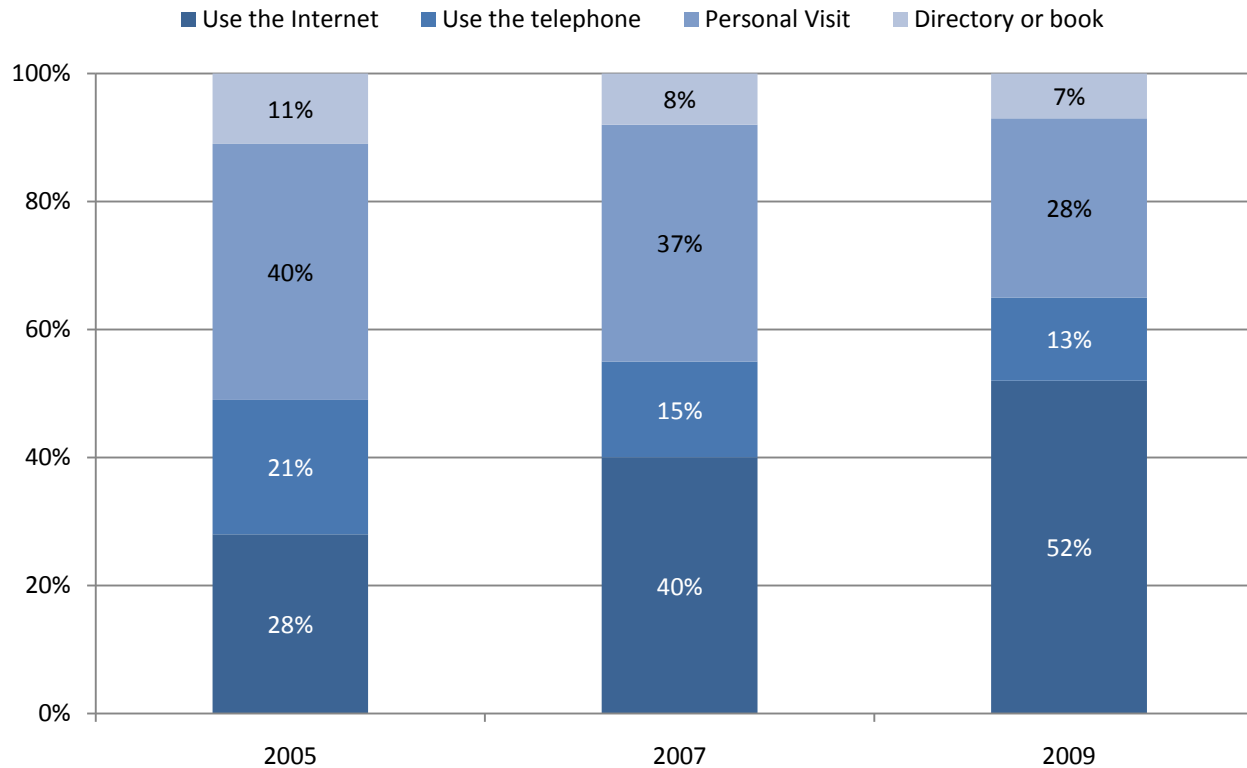


## Taxes

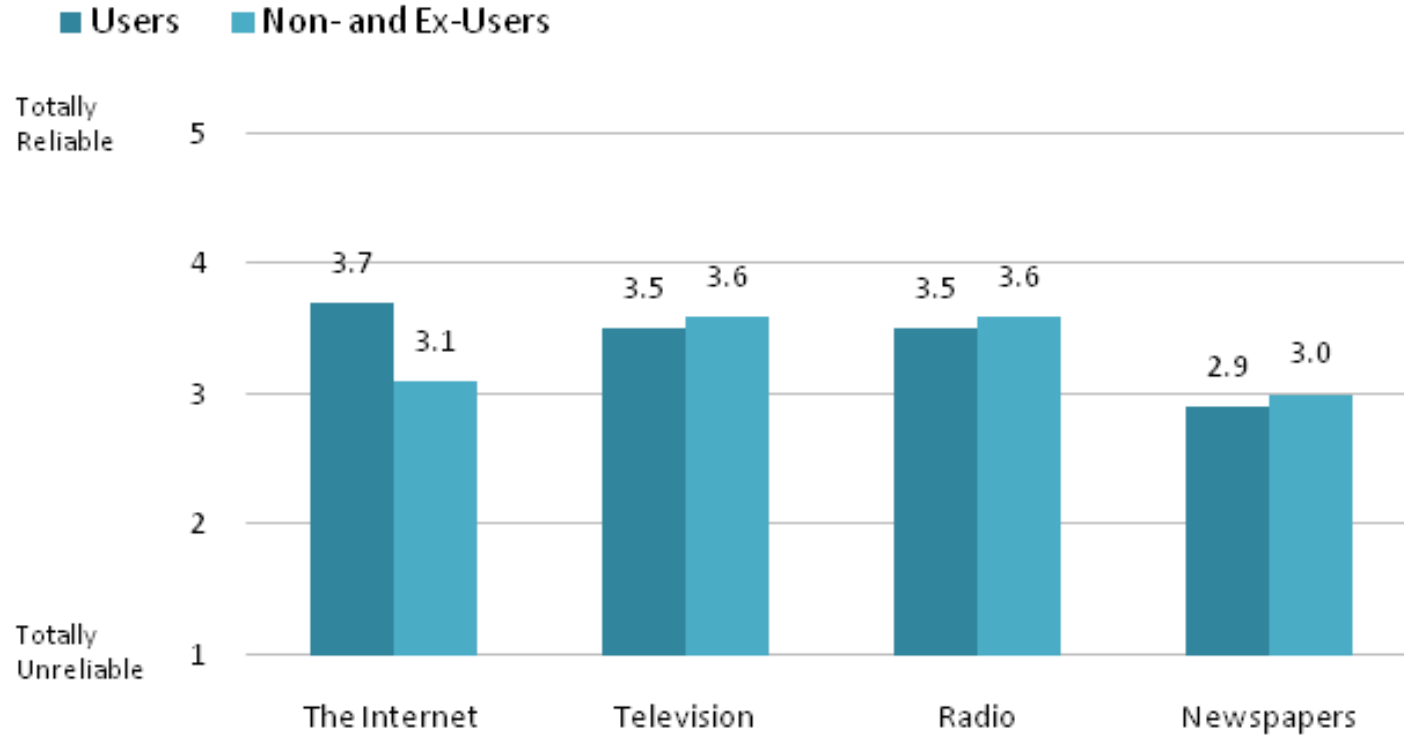




## Local schools

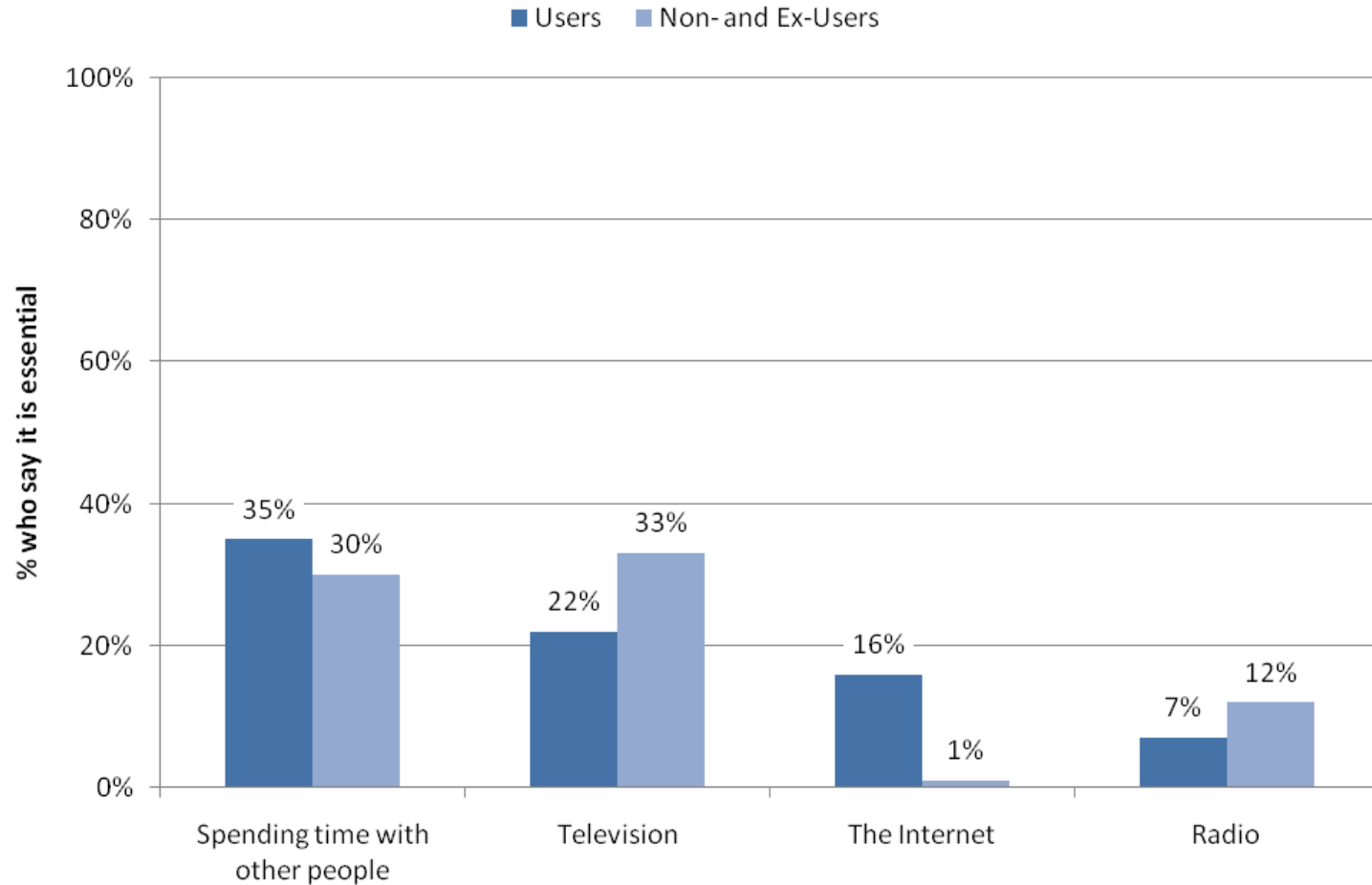


# Reliability of Information by Internet Users and Non-Users 2009 (QA4 by QH14)

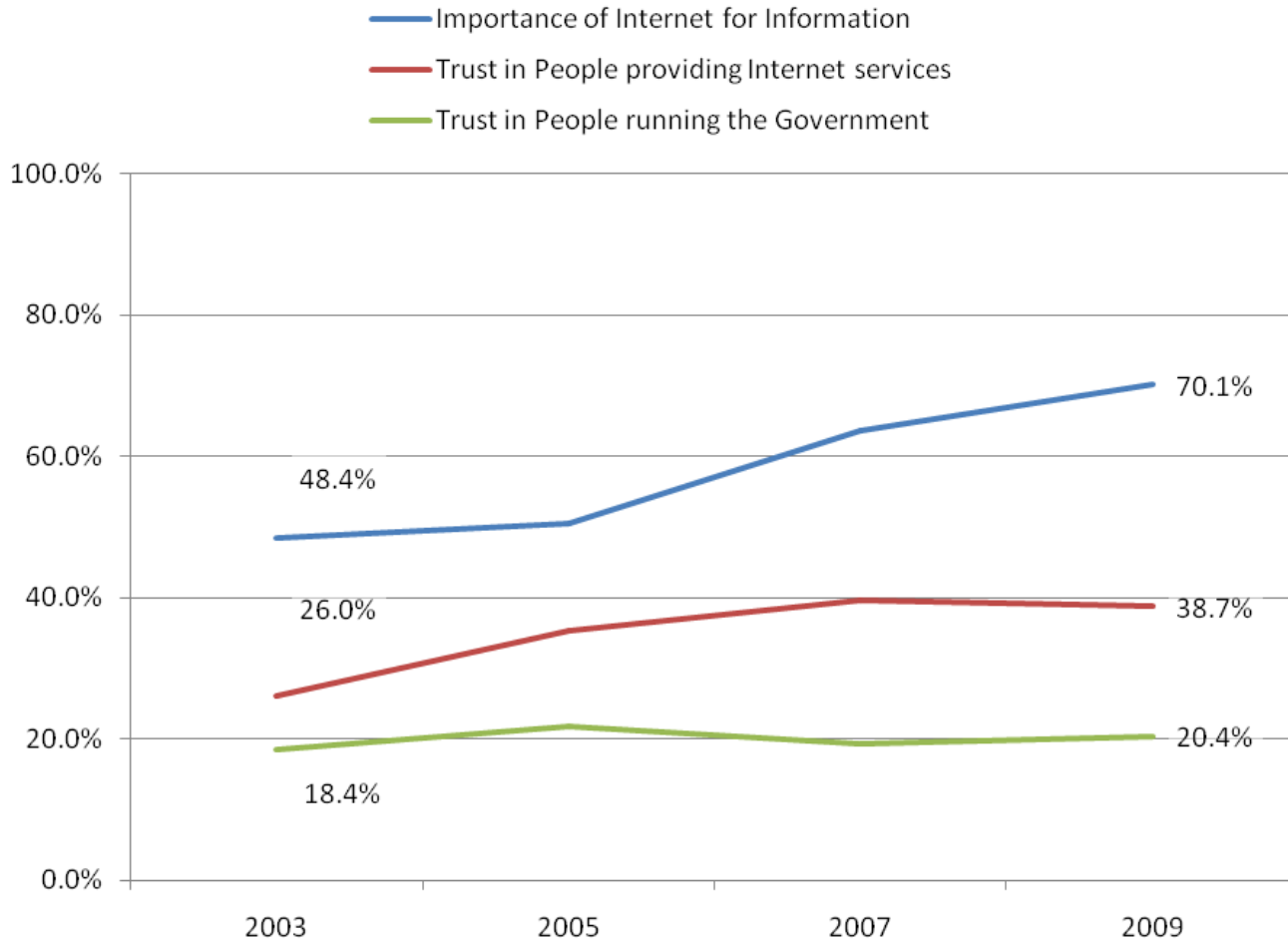




# Average Importance of Media for Entertainment by Internet Users and Non-Users (QA3 by QH14)



# Centrality of the Internet and Trust over Time



OxIS 2003: N=2,029; OxIS 2005: N=2,185; OxIS 2007 N=2,350. OxIS 2009: N=2,013



# Information Order: Privacy and Data Protection

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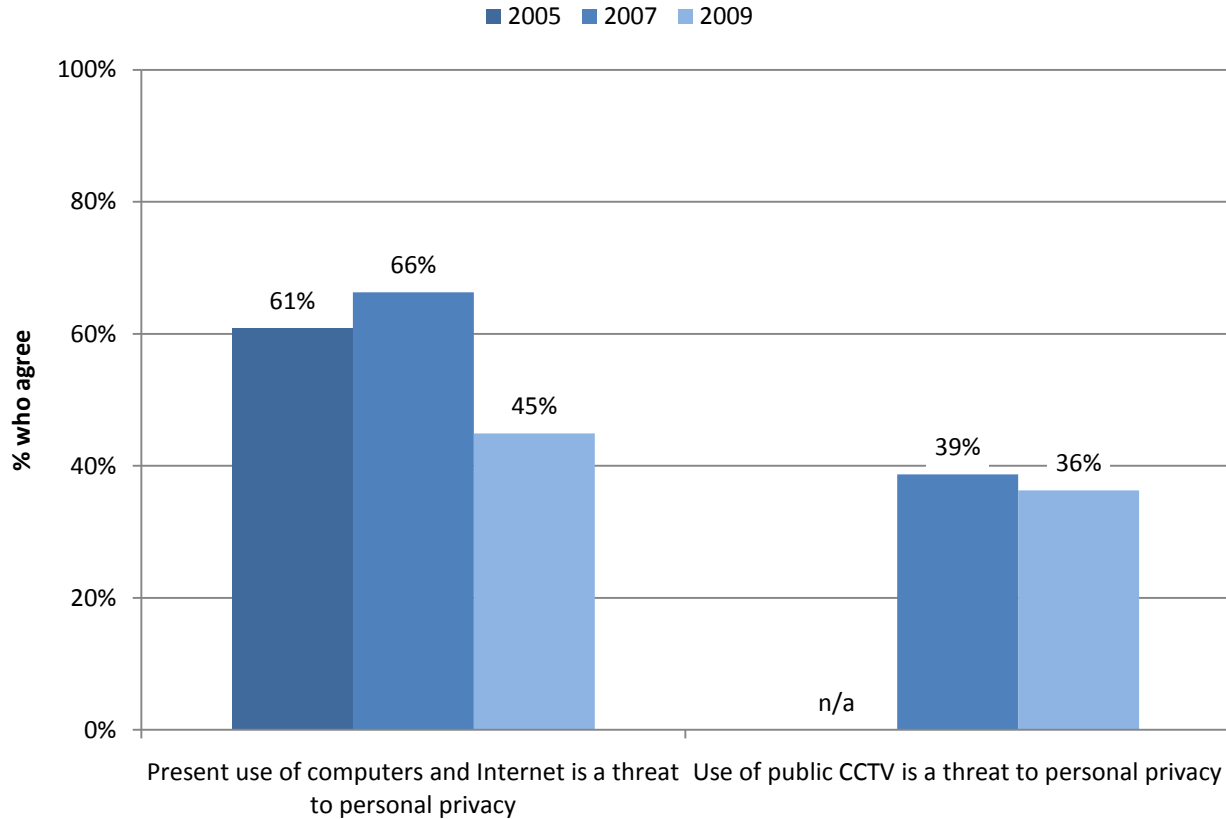
- ‘Privacy is dead, get over it.’ Scott McNealy
- Social Networking Eroding Privacy
- New Identities to Escape Embarrassing Posts
- Fumio Shimpo’s Video



**facebook**

Where privacy dies.

# Concerns over Privacy Online: 2005-09 (all Britons)



OxIS 2005: N=2,185; OxIS 2007 N=2,350; OxIS 2009: N=2,013



# The Information Order: Loss of Secrecy and Confidentiality

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- Surveillance and Google Street View
- Location Awareness
- WikiLeaks





# WikiLeaks

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Online Poll fielded on 4 December 2011:

‘Wikileaks: Do you think that the daily barrage of new revelations has far reaching consequences for global governance and humanity? Y/N’

***ATCA: Asymmetric Threats Contingency Alliance***

‘The first serious Infowar is now engaged. The field of battle is WikiLeaks. You are the troops,’  
Electronic Frontier Foundation co-founder John Perry Barlow said in a tweet reposted by WikiLeaks to its 300,000-odd followers ...’



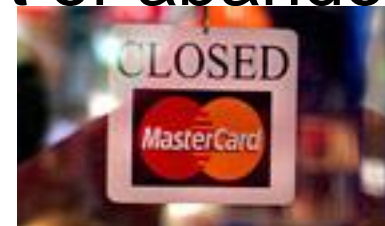




# WikiLeaks: Ethical Choice Points

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- Files Leaked by US Army Intelligence Analyst
- Source Identified by a Hacker
- Charges in Sweden Against Julian Assange
- Accepted, Redacted, and Distributed by WikiLeaks
- Accepted, Analysed, Redacted and Published by the Press (collaborating with WikiLeaks)
- Take Down Efforts (Denial of Service)
- Attacks on companies that support or abandon WikiLeaks, such as PayPal, Mastercard, Visa







# Many More Panics

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- Multitasking and Attention – or Holding Power
- Children and the Internet – Classroom Use
- Artificial Companions
- Access to Extremist Ideas –
- Inequality and Divides – or Education



# Why the Panic?

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- Deterministic Perspectives – Loss of Control
- New Technology – Experience Divides
- A New Order - Transformative
- Tipping Point – Becoming Essential
- Lack of Systematic Empirical Research
- Limits of Disciplines – Multi-disciplinary Issues

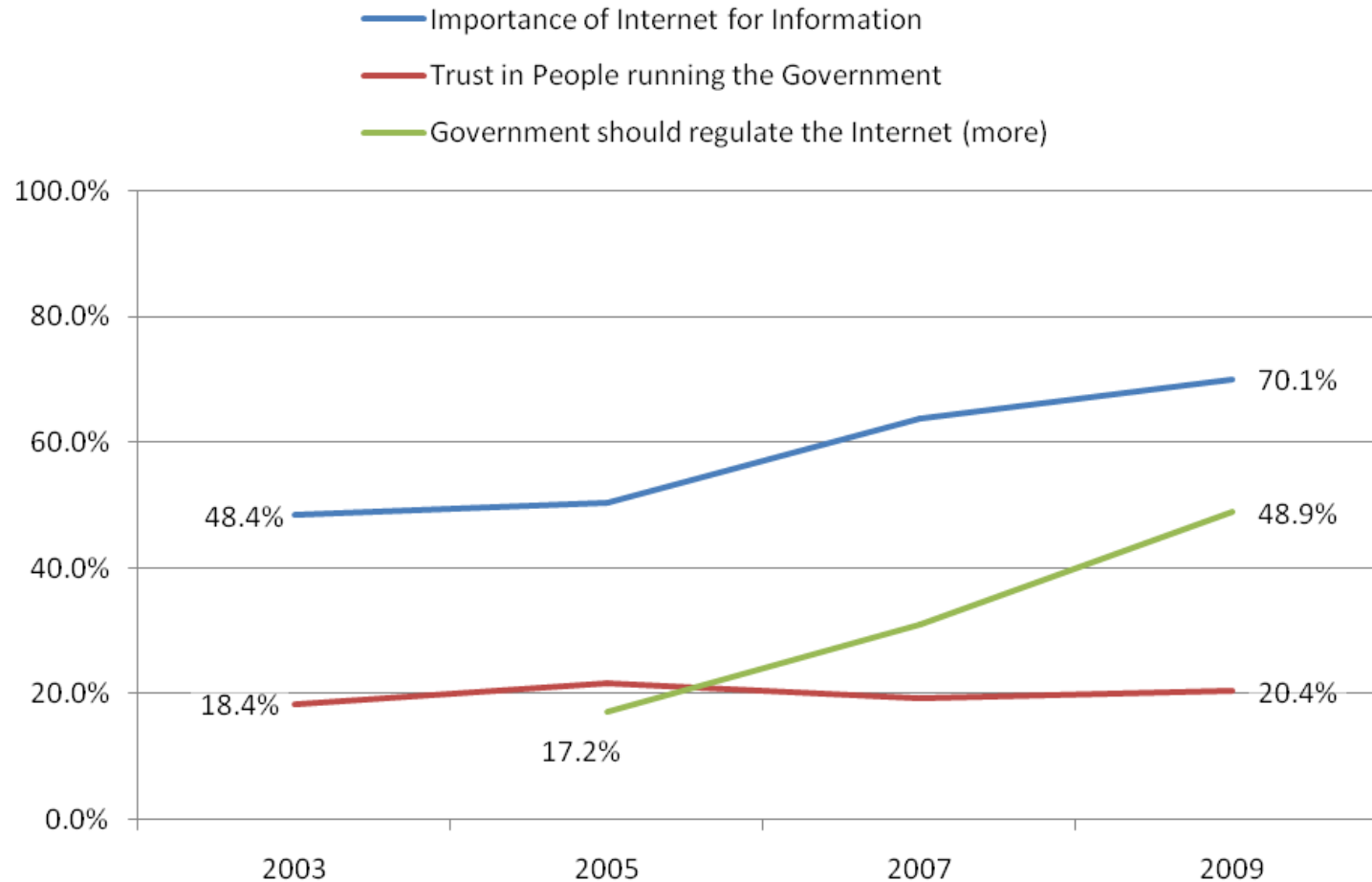


# What Difference Does It Make?

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- Undermine the Fifth Estate
- Chilling Effect on Freedom of Expression
- Undermine the Vitality of the Internet – feulling social, economic and political development
- Question Moral Panics, or Trivializing Tussles: Define Serious Issues for Research and Debate

# Centrality of the Internet, Trust in Government and Attitudes toward Internet Regulation over Time



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