

Information Technology in Sweden

Perhaps the world's most wired, most wireless and advanced IT nation

IN February 2000, Sweden was declared the world's leading IT nation by the US Based research company IDC, based on a four category division: information, Internet, computer and social infrastructure (including education), the surpassing the United States for the first time. The reasons why Sweden has been so successful as one of the world's most intensive. It users despite its location in Europe's most northerly corner and relatively small size, are many and complex - historically, economically and socially.

Among the historical reasons are Sweden's early use of telecommunications to compensate for a poor-quality road network and a slow, expensive transport system. As early as 1853, the Royal Electric Telegraph Board was established. At an early stage, there were knowledgeable engineers in Sweden who realised the potential of new technology. In 1876 Lars Magnus Ericsson started a workshop in Stockholm to repair telegraphic receivers. Today the company that he started is called Ericsson. It has operations in more than 130 countries and has grown into the world's second largest company in the telecom industry.

As elsewhere in the world, in Sweden mobile telephony accounts for almost all growth in the telecom field - in some contexts, Sweden is best known as Wireless Valley. Swe-

den is approaching a mobile phone penetration level of more than 57 percent of the population, and mobile phones are expected to exceed the number of fixed phones in the near future.

Investing in the past for the future

Because of their technical know-how, Swedish entrepreneurs and companies have proved skillful in developing products for the global market. It was realised, already 50 years ago that, if Sweden and Swedish companies were to be competitive, they must be international, and Sweden must invest in the latest technologies.

Among factors boding well for Sweden's success of being one of the absolute. It leaders are that traditional, classic investments in education, science, and general infrastructure have been combined with deregulation of telecoms, banking and other services, in order to lay the foundation for Sweden's economic expansion.

A relatively high level of education and the ability and willingness of the Swedes to embrace the new technology have also been factors contributing to Sweden's favourable IT and telecom growth. Users are the ones who really are driving developments in the IT and telecom fields. Swedes in general are inclined to embrace new technology, especially

if it simplifies their daily lives and the costs are considered reasonable. The public sector has also captured the Swedes' strong interest in the new technology. One example is the expansion of broadband systems and the Swedish Government's aim to ensure that in the near future, all Swedish households will gain access to the broadband services available in the market.

In addition, already at an early stage, government agencies and organisations in Sweden realised the potential of information technology in helping bringing about smoother, more efficient public administration. As an example of this, in 1998 Swedish tax laws were revised to allow employers to provide employees with computers for use at home without employees being taxed for it. This means that employers generally lease computers and then loan them to employees with an agreement on a gross wage deduction to pay for the computers during a specified period of use, normally three years.

The Swedish policy for public access to information and various official government documents is indeed promoted by the new technology. The politicians and their parties, cultural figures and institutions, the government and the Parliament and such public agencies also use web sites to present

themselves and their services and in many cases publish important information of the web-pages. One example of this is the Swedish EU Presidency website www.eu2001.se on which it is possible to follow what is happening in the EU. During the first four months of the Presidency, more than 600,000 persons have visited the website for searching for information and more than 1000,000 persons have received e-mails from the information service provided through the website.

Our Heartiest Felicitations to the Government and People of Sweden on the occasion of National Day of Sweden



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Ericsson wishes the people of **Sweden** all the best on their **National Day.**

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Sweden on the Net

- Swedish EU Presidency 1 January to 30 June 2001
<http://www.eu2001.se>
A reliable channel of information for the media and public, but also for officials, NGOs, students and researchers. It is the Swedish Presidency's intention to increase openness and public insight into the work of the EU through this website. A comprehensive database gives easy and instant access to various types of document.
- CultureNet**
<http://www.kulturmat.iva.se>
A collection of Swedish cultural links on the Internet.
- Swedish National Council for Cultural Affairs**
<http://www.kur.se>
The Council is responsible for implementing national cultural policy determined by government and parliament.
- Scandinavian Design**
<http://www.scandinaviandesign.com>
A site dedicated to Scandinavian Design, which is seen internationally as a classic expression of simple and solid elegance.
- Nobel Foundation**
<http://www.nobel.se>
Information about the Nobel Prizes, the Nobel Laureates and their discoveries, as well as information about the donor, Alfred Nobel and the Nobel Foundation.
- Invest in Sweden Agency**
<http://www.isa.se>
A government agency which

- provides information and contact services for foreign investors evaluating business opportunities in Sweden.
- Swedish Trade Council**
<http://www.swedishtrade.com>
A gateway to Swedish business and trade with information about Swedish companies and business sectors.
- Swedish Environet**
<http://smn.environ.se>
Provides data and information on the Swedish environment as well as on environmental work in government agencies, companies and NGOs.
- The Swedish Media Page**
<http://www.svenska-sidor.com/media>
A comprehensive collection of links to Swedish media.
- Government of Sweden**
<http://www.regeringen.se>
Current information on government policies and statistics from each ministry.
- Swedish Parliament**
<http://www.riksdagen.se>
Information about the Swedish Parliament and its work and decisions.
- Global visitor's guide to Sweden**
<http://www.visit-sweden.com>
The Swedish Travel & Tourism Council's gateway to all Internet-based tourist information in Sweden.
- Swedish Tourist Authority**
<http://www.tourist.se>
Information regarding tourism and the tourist industry in Sweden.
- Gateway to Sweden**
<http://www.wlink.se/gateway>

A guide to most of the companies, organisations and authorities with an Internet address in Sweden.

Facts on Swedish IT-Technology
<http://www.itsweden.com>
An overview on Swedish IT-technology, IT companies, the use of IT-technology in the Swedish society as well as investment possibilities in Sweden in regards to IT-technology.

Scandinavian Design
<http://www.scandinaviandesign.com>
Comprehensive guide to Scandinavian design. Information about styles, designers and companies.

Immigration to Sweden
<http://migrationsverket.se>
Information about the current rules for residing, working studying, visiting and seeking asylum in Sweden etc.

Booming trade Sweden-Bangladesh

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direct investment in Bangladesh was registered as the firm Hop Lun inaugurated a factory for production of women's fashion underwear in Dhaka Export Processing Zone.

In addition to the bigger names, numerous smaller Swedish companies are active in Bangladesh selling everything from chocolate and batteries to toilet accessories and iron hooks for hangers in the garment industry.

As a small and open economy Sweden has always been heavily dependent upon trade. As part of GDP exports of goods and services amount to approximately 45 per cent.

Export companies in Sweden currently number almost 50000, but in fact a very small number of powerful groups account for the bulk of the trade. Some 95 per cent of all exports stem from less than a thousand companies.

Over the years Sweden's export has evolved from raw materials and fuels to more sophisticated and highly developed products.

Wood products, pulp and iron ore account for less than 10 per cent of total exports. The biggest sector is nowadays the engineering industry that accounts for 55 per cent of total exports. This includes the product group that is both the largest and fastest growing, namely mobile telephones where Ericsson has grown to become the largest export company.

The Chemical industry has increased its share of exports under the lead of Astra Zeneca and Pharmacia & Upjohn. Among semi-manufacturers, the paper industry and the steel industry are most widely represented.

Exports of foodstuff have traditionally been small but have increased rapidly in recent years. This is due partly to Sweden's entry into the EU which has facilitated exports, and partly to the success of a single product Swedish vodka under the name of Absolut.

Warmest Felicitations to the Government and the Friendly People of The Sweden on their National Day

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