



## The digital economy is still very virtual for SMEs and individuals

Two IFOP studies commissioned by Risc Group highlight the lack of awareness by SMEs and the general public in France of the issues linked to the new technologies

Paris, 17 June 2008

**Risc Group**, the European Global Managed Services Provider (GMSP) and **Panda Security**, a leading global provider of IT security solutions, disclose today the results of two surveys conducted by **IFOP** relating to the perception of the digital economy by SMEs and individuals. These results form the basis of the **IFOP/Risc Group Annual Barometer: "SMEs and individuals: crossed views of the new technologies"**.

The results of these surveys, presented in detail by Frédéric Micheau, Director of Studies at IFOP, Loïc Pequignot, President of Risc Group and Roberto Casetta, Vice-President Sales Europe of Panda Security, highlight a surprising fact: **SMEs and the general public in France say they have little awareness of the issues linked to the information technologies.**

- Even if they are aware of the main benefits offered by the information technologies, 46% of SMEs remain sceptical as to their role in developing their turnover.
- And three out of four French people do not know what the term "digital economy" means.

In parallel, these surveys have revealed other major findings:

- ▶ Only **54%** of the people questioned consider that information technology helps to **increase the turnover** of the company and 25% admit they are sceptical as to its contribution in increasing employee productivity.
- ▶ Even if they express their **satisfaction** vis-a-vis the services supplied (90%), most SMEs (66%) would like to deal with a **single service provider** in order to reduce costs and have a single contact partner capable of taking charge of all their IT needs.
- ▶ SMEs may envisage resorting to **outsourcing** in some areas, such as the **updating of software and applications** (53%), security (48%), support (42%) and storage (36%).
- ▶ **The Internet** is the first port of call for SMEs to **acquire information** about the offer of IT products and services (46%), followed by mail shots (42%), then the specialist press (27%) and word of mouth (26%).
- ▶ More than three-quarters of the people questioned prefer **to buy** (76%) the IT products and services the company needs, rather than lease them (23%).
- ▶ **77%** of individuals **do not know** what the term "digital economy" covers and **81%** of French people have never heard of the **State Secretariat for the Development of the Digital Economy** (even though it was created in March 2007, two months before the launch of the survey).
- ▶ The general public mainly put the digital economy in the same category as "**electronic commerce**" (45%) and "**new means of communication**" (42%).
- ▶ A small majority of French people believes that the development of the activity sector of the new technologies should be given **priority** by the Government (51%).

*"On the one hand, our surveys show that for SME executives, IT is an indispensable tool, whose contribution remains limited, in particular in terms of productivity. In parallel, the SMEs have difficulty in managing a highly complex IT tool which is entrusted to too many suppliers and players", comments Frédéric Micheau, IFOP Director of Studies. "On the other hand, individuals say that they are virtually completely unaware of what the digital economy is and are awaiting a firmer commitment from the State. French people have expressed their high expectations in terms of incentives for acquiring IT*

equipment, development of the new technologies sector and training, which it will be essential to take into account in meeting the objectives of Assises du Numérique [conference about the digital economy]".

"We are happy to share today the lessons gleaned from these two studies, in order to understand better the perception of the information technologies by SMEs and the general public, and to realise the work that remain to be accomplished in order to simplify them and have them more widely adopted", says Loïc Pequignot, President of Risc Group. "Deriving from three major spheres – technical, strategic and political – they translate the main concerns of the SMEs, while endorsing the relevance of our strategy. Their recurrent analysis will help to evaluate the progress made".

In order to follow the variations in perceptions of the information technologies by SMEs and the general public in France, Risc Group has decided to set up a barometer which, year after year, will analyse the evolution of companies' IT strategies and follow-up the changes in French people's points of view. Risc Group and Panda Security therefore look forward to meeting you next year for the second edition of the barometer "*SMEs and individuals: crossed views on the new technologies*".

The summary of these two studies can be downloaded from the following addresses: <http://ifop.risc-group.com> (in French) or <http://ifop-en.risc-group.com> (in English).

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#### **About Ifop**

Since its creation in 1938 Ifop has been the pioneer and one of the leaders in opinion surveys and market research, at the crossroads of political and economic news, human sciences and marketing. In order to offer its clients all the sectorial expertise they need, Ifop is organised into four business sectors which share a single culture of offline and online collection and analysis methodologies: Opinion, Marketing (Consumer, Services, Media, Health and Omnibus), Panels and Teleservices (through its subsidiary Phone City). Ifop is active in around fifty countries throughout the world, from its establishments in Paris, Toronto, Buenos Aires and Shanghai.

#### **About PANDA**

Panda Security is a leading international player in security solutions, present in more than 200 countries. Panda Security's mission is to keep its clients' information systems protected from IT threats, by providing them with the most efficient protection systems and consuming the least resources. Panda Security offers a new security model, in order to provide an efficient response to cybercriminals' latest techniques. The company's technologies and products can thus offer higher detection rates than the current market standards and provide clients with greater security. Thanks to the TruPrevent™ technologies, the Panda Software solutions offer a strong return on investment, protecting all types of users from the new threats before they have even been identified. The security solutions of Panda Security enable centralised administration and protect the servers, gateways and other entry points, providing an efficient and simple first line of defence against Internet threats for individuals, VSCs, SMEs and major accounts.

#### **About Risc Group**

Risc Group is the only **Global Managed Services Provider in Europe**. Listed in Compartment C of Euronext Paris' Eurolist, Risc Group is a limited liability company with share capital of €36,604,578.5. Risc Group's missions are to provide its clients with security, mobility, hosting, network protection, video surveillance, server management, telecommunications and hosted applications services and to assist them on a day to day basis with local teams.

Risc Group distributes its managed services by direct and indirect sales via two sectors:

- a SME-Major Accounts sector (Ornis / Backup Avenue / monDSI) dedicated to companies with more than 100 IT workstations;
- a VSC-SME sector (Risc Security / BESDI / Itemos) dedicated to companies with 5 to 100 IT workstations.

Risc Group's 30,000 clients are VSCs, SMEs, MAJOR ACCOUNTS, local administrations and professionals of any business sector. Risc Group achieved a turnover of €39.2 M for the 2006/2007 financial year. Risc Group employs 480 people and its network comprises 24 offices spread across 5 countries (France, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium and Spain).

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