

PRESS RELEASE**HALF OF BRITONS BASE SOCIAL JUDGMENTS ON THE STYLE OF EMAILS**

- **Younger Brits use their Inbox to avoid stressful verbal conversations**
- **1 in 3 contrive their own 'email image'**

20 April 2009, London: Over half of the British public (54 per cent) admit to basing social judgments on the style of emails they receive, forming opinions on aspects such as the sender's intelligence, age and social status, according research released today by GMX, www.gmx.co.uk, the free email service for more than 11 million active users. The survey of 1900 UK consumers¹ found that email psychology is commonplace in Britain, with 1 in 3 adults admitting to purposefully adapting the language and style of their emails to create their own 'email image'. Significantly, younger generations are far more inclined to both adapt their own image over email (66 per cent), and use email as a way to avoid stressful conversations with over 40 per cent of 16-24 and 25-34 yr olds using email for this purpose, and 1 in 4 sending emails to deliberately avoid social contact with certain individuals. The data suggests that email has made a real impact on how many younger Britons manage their personal lives.

The GMX 'Email Britain' study found that in 2009 the UK is an email savvy nation with many Britons valuing email as a tool to manage their work/life balance. For example, 1 in 3 (36 per cent) would approach romantic suitors via email, and 18 per cent of under 25s would end a relationship via email. It is perhaps unsurprising then that over half of the public (54 per cent) are now confident to base their social judgments on the style and tone of emails that they receive. Intelligence was the most common aspect to be judged (40 per cent) rising to 54 per cent in 25-34 year olds, followed by age (20 per cent) and social status (16 per cent). Interestingly, the extent to which we judge emails decreases with age, with only 46 per cent of over

¹ 1958 UK adults surveyed by Tickbox.net in February 2009 via electronic feedback form

55 year olds participating as compared to 62 per cent of 25-34s and 67 per cent of 16-24s.

A significant proportion of the public now admit to adapting their email style or tone in order to create a desired image. One third of adults (33 per cent) manage their emails to have an effect on how they are perceived, with 'intelligence', 'authority' and 'calmness' the most desirable aspects of email image. Influencing ones email persona via email is especially common amongst younger email users where two thirds of 16-24 year olds (66 per cent) regularly adapt their email style. Women are twice as likely to feign cheerfulness as men, with 1 in 4 women (26 per cent) admitting to using a false tone and symbols such as smiley-faces to mask their true feelings.

Interestingly, the data suggests that many Britons now use their Inbox as a shield against emotional or stressful dialogues. A large number of Britons now purposefully choose an email over face-to-face or telephone conversation for emotional or stressful communication. For example, 30 per cent regularly rely on email to converse with institutions and companies that make them nervous. Some 27 per cent of respondents would prefer to use an email to announce a major life decision to family. Once again, women appear more affected than men, and are twice as likely to use an email to say 'no' to friends or family than men.

Eva Heil, Managing Director, GMX, said, "Email is today a highly valued means of communication for most Britons. Most people now make social judgments based on the emails they receive and care about their own email identity, which means that an individual's approach to their email has never been so important".

Significantly, GMX's research suggests that younger age groups nowadays rely on email to manage awkward or stressful conversations far more than older ones. Some 44 per cent of 16-24s and 42 per cent of 25-34 yr olds choose email to avoid verbal dialogue with companies or institutions as compared to only 20 per cent of over 55 year olds. Some 27 per cent of Generation Y, (25-34 year olds) admit to

using email to avoid contact with individuals, and are most likely to use email to avoid face-to-face confrontation with family members (26 per cent).

Graham Jones, Internet Psychologist, said, “Young people have grown up with email and it's second nature to them. Often they can't understand why older members of their family don't have an email address or rarely log on to collect messages. It's all to do with the way the brain gets “wired up” – younger people don't even have to think about email, it's obvious to them.”

Remarkably, 38 per cent of British 25 year olds would nowadays choose email to share a major life decision with family, compared to only 26 per cent of those 10 years older. Nearly half (46 per cent) of 25 year olds would ask a romantic suitor out on a date via email. Coupled with the statistic that young people are more inclined to contrive their own email image (66 per cent), GMX's research lends weight to the idea that the role of email has made a cultural impact on how younger people choose to present themselves and communicate.

Heil added, “The research shows that, in particular, many younger users rely upon email as a way to manage challenging communication. Today's free email services have a surprising range of features, such as GMX LiveEmoticons, to help make written communication more expressive”.

With over 11 million active users, GMX draws on over a decade of free email expertise and is well placed to offer a reliable, secure service. Besides great looks, great performance and state-of-the-art functionality, GMX.co.uk offers the widest selection of first-choice addresses such as myname@gmx.co.uk.

Free email has grown up, find it at GMX. The new free email service can be seen at www.gmx.co.uk

About GMX

GMX is a specialized freemail provider with more than 10 years experience and more than 11 million users. With its reliable and powerful webmail system, GMX provides a comfortable email solution for private usage in USA, UK, Spain, France

and Germany. Its features and convenience rival those of traditional client-based software that require installation on your computer. GMX guarantees optimum performance as well as high mail security and customer privacy with data centres located in Europe and the United States.

GMX Internet Services Inc. (Global Mail Exchange) is a wholly owned subsidiary of United Internet Group, a publicly listed company (ISIN DE0005089031) with a market cap of more than 1 billion GBP and some 4,500 employees, and a pioneer of communication via the Internet.

For GMX Internet Services Inc.:

Richard Stevenson or Tazeen Syeda
Tel. 01753 490 414
press@gmx.co.uk