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MODERATE GROWTH IN ABM USAGE AND INTERNET BANKING IN 2006: STUDY

TORONTO, February 13, 2007 – The traditional bank branch continues to lose ground as Canadians conduct more day-to-day transactions at self-service banking machines (ABMs) and over the Internet, according to an annual tracking study by TNS Canadian Facts, a Toronto-based marketing research firm.

Conducted in the fall of 2006, TNS' *How Canadians Bank* study found that just over half of Canadian adults (53%) reported visiting a branch in the month prior to the survey, the lowest level of branch banking reported since the study began in 1994.

At the same time, online banking continues to attract new users. In Fall 2006, 37 per cent of Canadians reported using an online banking service in the month prior to the survey, compared to 34 per cent in 2005. Six out of 10 Canadians with Internet access have signed up for online banking.

Usage of ABMs has also shown modest growth over the past year. In Fall 2006, 81 per cent of Canadian adults had used a bank machine in the month preceding the survey, up from 78 per cent in 2005.

Over half of bill payments, account transfers and account balance enquiries are conducted online. ABMs are the dominant method of making cash withdrawals, with nine out of every 10 withdrawals made at a bank machine. Deposits of cheques and cash at ABMs outnumber in-branch deposits by a ratio of two to one.

“We are seeing a continued trend toward reliance on two main modes for day-to-day transactions: online banking and ABMs,” said Rhonda Grunier, a vice president at TNS Canadian Facts.

“While Canadians are interacting with staff at branches less often for routine banking activities, this does not mean that the branch is becoming irrelevant or obsolete. Canadians continue to prefer to go their branch to make RSP contributions and to acquire financial products, such as new accounts and mortgages, than to do so by phone or online. Furthermore, Canadians are still most likely to visit their branch when they want information about the products and services that their financial institution offers,” added Grunier.

For the study, TNS Canadian Facts surveyed a nationally representative sample of Canadian adults 18 years and older. A total of 1,899 self-administered mail surveys were completed between October 6 and November 17, 2006. The survey results are considered accurate to within 2.2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

TNS Canadian Facts (www.tns-cf.com) is one of Canada's most prestigious full-service marketing, opinion and social research organizations.

About TNS

TNS is a market information group:

- The world's largest provider of custom research and analysis
- A leader in political and social polling
- A major supplier of consumer panel, media intelligence and TV and radio audience measurement services.

TNS operates across a global network in over 70 countries, allowing us to provide internationally consistent, up-to-the-minute and high quality information and analysis.

The group's employees deliver innovative thinking and excellent service to local and multi-national clients worldwide. In the custom business, they combine in-depth sector knowledge with expertise in the areas of new product development, positioning and segmentation research, brand and advertising research and stakeholder management.

TNS' strategic goal is to be recognized as the global leader in delivering value added information and insights that help our clients to make more effective decisions.

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