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## First phase of the "PC 4 All" campaign a success

*Berlin (ots) -*

50,000 Bertelsmann employees have already received their free Internet PCs - "planet B" Internet portal provides information, entertainment and tutorials in five languages

Over the past few months, 50,000 free personal computers with Internet access were shipped to Bertelsmann employees all over the world as part of the "PC 4 All" campaign. Initiated by the Bertelsmann Executive Board, the program aims to encourage the media company's employees to discover the diversity of the new media for themselves and their families. In the first phase, allinclusive PC packages were sent to Bertelsmann employees in the US and Canada, Germany, France, Great Britain, Austria, Switzerland, Belgium, Spain and Portugal. In Phase Two of "PC 4 All", packages will now be shipped to Hong Kong, Malaysia, Greece, New Zealand, Poland, and other countries. In all, the campaign involves 58 countries in which the media company does business. This makes Bertelsmann the first company to implement such a program all over the world.

Detlef Hunsdiek, Bertelsmann AG's chief of Human Resources, delivered a very positive interim report on the campaign on the occasion of the company's annual press conference on Thursday in Berlin: "The response to 'PC 4 All' to date has been overwhelming. More than 80 percent of eligible employees have actually ordered their free PCs and are now able to explore the realms of communication, knowledge access and, above all, fun that the Internet has to offer. People are surfing, e-mailing and chatting like crazy; employees are learning to use new technologies and the Internet and, not least, to appreciate Bertelsmann's corporate culture of partnership."

The PC packages contain a fully-equipped Compaq PC including software, printer, modem, graphics and sound cards, and speakers. For a surcharge, employees can also order an upgraded PC for particularly sophisticated multimedia applications, or a laptop; the PCs come with pre-installed software and Internet access. The "planet B" Internet portal ([www.planet-b.net](http://www.planet-b.net)) as created as a point of departure for excursions into the World Wide Web. It currently offers news from the world of media, practical hints for recreation, and entertainment in five languages on eleven different, country-specific sites. Beyond this, "planet B" provides interactive computer and Internet tutorials, e-mail accounts, and useful links. The portal passed its first acid test in the wake of the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, when Bertelsmann employees from all over the world sent e-mails pledging solidarity with their approximately 18,000 American colleagues to a "planet B" forum that had been set up specifically for this purpose. A large number of US colleagues responded and reported on their experiences.

Bertelsmann is spending nearly 90m EUR on the PC campaign. Ever since the PC deliveries began, Chairman & CEO Thomas Middelhoff has received numerous delighted letters and e-mails from all over the world. In many cases, employees affectionately organized "Thank You" initiatives and gifts, including a PC-shaped chocolate-and-marzipan cake, group photos and a banner containing hundreds of signatures.

In Germany, "PC 4 All" ("Alle ins Netz!") was launched in late March. In all, some 21,500 of nearly 25,000 eligible employees have now received their PC package or laptop. The launch was originally scheduled for the previous year, but was delayed for tax reasons. After Bertelsmann held in-depth talks with the responsible ministries

and the chancellery, the German tax laws were amended, making it easier for companies to prepare their employees for the Internet and for a future of connectivity.

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