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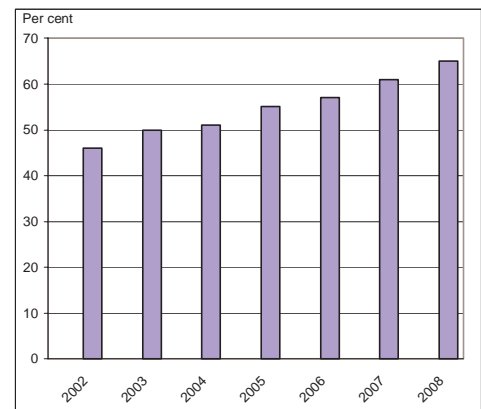


## Internet Access 2008 Households and Individuals

In 2008, 16.46 million UK households had Internet access. This represented 65 per cent of households and an increase of 1.23 million households since 2007. These estimates are derived from the 2008 National Statistics Omnibus survey.

Of all UK households, 56 per cent had broadband Internet access in 2008, an increase from 51 per cent in 2007. Of the UK households with Internet access, 86 per cent had a broadband connection in 2008.

**Households with access to the Internet, Great Britain, 2002 to 2008**



Great Britain has seen an average increase of over 1 million households per year connecting to the Internet since 2004, reaching a total of 16.05 million in 2008.

### Households with access to the Internet, Great Britain and UK, 2002 to 2008

Great Britain				UK			
Year	Per cent	Number of Households	Percentage change on previous year	Year	Per cent	Number of Households	Percentage change on previous year
2002	46	11.02m	-	2002	-	-	-
2003	50	11.88m	8	2003	-	-	-
2004	51	12.16m	2	2004	-	-	-
2005	55	13.26m	9	2005	-	-	-
2006	57	13.93m	5	2006	57	14.26m	-
2007	61	14.94m	7	2007	61	15.23m	7
2008	65	16.05m	7	2008	65	16.46m	8

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**Household Internet access**

In 2008, the proportion of households able to access the Internet varied between different parts of the country. The region with the highest level of access was the South East, with 74 per cent.

**Households with Internet access by country and region, UK, 2006, 2007 & 2008**

	Internet access		
	2006	2007	2008
<i>Per cent</i>			
South East	66	65	74
London	63	69	73
East of England	64	67	70
South West	59	69	67
Yorks & Humber	52	52	62
East Midlands	55	59	61
West Midlands	53	56	61
North West	54	56	56
North East	54	52	54
Wales	52	57	67
England	59	61	66
Scotland	48	60	61
NI	50	52	56
UK	57	61	65

The confidence intervals for regional estimates are wider than estimates for the UK and England due to the smaller regional samples. Confidence intervals are available on page 12.

UK households connecting to the Internet via broadband increased in 2008, with 56 per cent of all UK households connecting this way, compared with 51 per cent in 2007. Dial up (narrowband) connections continued to fall, to just 9 per cent in 2008.

**Household Internet connections, UK, 2006, 2007 & 2008**

	2006	2007	2008
<i>Per cent</i>			
Broadband connection	40	51	56
Dial up connection	17	10	9
No Internet connection	43	39	35

### Reasons why households do not have an Internet connection

The proportion of UK households without an Internet connection fell to 35 per cent in 2008. The most common response, when adults were asked why their household did not have an Internet connection, was that they did not need it (34 per cent). The last time adults were asked why they did not have an Internet connection was in 2006. Since then, while overall numbers are down, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of adults who stated they did not want the Internet, from 3 per cent in 2006 to 24 per cent in 2008.

### Why households do not have an Internet connection, UK, 2006 & 2008

	2006	2008
<i>Per cent</i>		
Don't need Internet	24	34
Don't want Internet	3	24
Equipment costs are too high	14	15
Lack of skills	24	15
Access costs are too high	11	11
Have access to Internet elsewhere	7	10

### Households that receive digital television channels

The UK is currently in the process of the digital television switch-over, which is scheduled to be completed by 2012. In 2008, households in the North West had the highest digital television take-up with 87 per cent and Northern Ireland the lowest, with 67 per cent.

### Households that receive digital television channels, UK, 2008

	2008
<i>Per cent</i>	
North West	87
Yorks & Humber	83
North East	82
East Midlands	80
West Midlands	80
South East	79
East of England	78
South West	76
London	75
Scotland	89
Wales	83
England	80
Northern Ireland	67
UK	80

### Internet access and educational qualifications

Adults under 70 who had a degree or equivalent qualification were most likely to have access to the Internet in their home, at 93 per cent. Those individuals who had no formal qualifications were least likely to have an Internet connection in their home, at 56 per cent.

### Household Internet access and educational qualifications, UK, adults under 70, 2008

	2008
<i>Per cent</i>	
Degree level or higher	93
Higher educational qualification	86
A Level	89
GCE / GCSE (A-C grade)	82
GCSE (D-G grade)	74
No formal qualification	56

### Individuals' use of the Internet

In 2008, 33.9 million adults (71 per cent of the UK adult population) accessed the Internet in the three months prior to interview. This was an increase of 6.6 per cent (2.1 million adults) from 2007. As in 2007, men were more likely to access the Internet than women (75 per cent compared with 66 per cent respectively). Adults aged 65 plus were still the least likely to use the Internet, with 70 per cent stating they had never used it, down from 82 per cent in 2006.

### When adults last used the Internet, by sex and age groups, UK, 2006, 2007 & 2008

	Within the last 3 months			More than 3 months			Never used it		
	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008
<i>Per cent</i>									
Men	65	71	75	5	5	4	30	23	20
Women	55	62	66	5	6	5	40	31	29
All	60	67	71	5	6	5	35	27	25
<i>Age groups</i>									
16-24	83	90	93	7	6	..	10	4	..
25-44	79	80	87	5	6	5	17	13	8
45-54	68	75	78	6	6	..	26	19	17
55-64	52	59	63	5	5	..	43	35	33
65 plus	15	24	26	3	5	5	82	71	70

### Frequency of use of the Internet

In 2008, the proportion of adults who were recent Internet users who accessed the Internet every day or almost every day was 69 per cent (23.5 million adults). The 16-24 age group used it most, with 77 per cent using it every day or almost every day. For the first time the majority of adults aged 65 plus who used the Internet in the last three months, did so every day or almost every day (54 per cent). Almost three quarters of men (73 per cent) now use the Internet every day or almost every day, compared with two thirds of women (66 per cent).

### Frequency of use of the Internet by recent Internet users, by sex and age groups, UK, 2006, 2007 & 2008

	Every day or almost every day			At least once a week (but not every day)			Once a month or less		
	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008
<i>Per cent</i>									
Men	64	70	73	26	22	20	10	8	7
Women	54	63	66	28	26	24	17	12	11
All	59	67	69	27	24	22	14	10	9
<i>Age groups</i>									
16-24	60	70	77	26	22	19	13	8	..
25-44	63	70	72	26	22	19	11	7	8
45-54	62	67	65	24	23	27	14	10	8
55-64	49	60	64	33	29	25	18	11	11
65 plus	43	46	54	34	29	27	24	24	19

### Activities on the Internet

The most popular activity of recent Internet users was sending or receiving emails at 87 per cent. This proved to be the most popular activity for both the older age groups (55-64 and 65 plus), and the youngest age group, aged 16-24. While the youngest age group was often the most likely to be involved in Internet activities, it was the least likely to use the Internet for services related to travel and accommodation (50 per cent), and seeking health related information (22 per cent).

Nearly half of recent Internet users had used Internet banking (49 per cent). This activity, along with online selling proved to be most popular among the 25-44 age group (at 57 per cent and 24 per cent respectively).

**Internet activities of recent Internet users, by age groups, UK, 2008**

	16- 24	25- 44	45- 54	55- 64	65 plus	All
<i>Per cent</i>						
Sending/receiving emails	91	87	85	86	89	87
Finding information about goods or services	77	87	86	85	75	84
Using services related to travel and accommodation	50	65	68	71	61	63
Downloading software	55	38	30	25	25	37
Reading or downloading online news, magazines	54	50	46	42	35	48
Looking for a job or sending a job application	35	33	18	11	..	25
Seeking health-related information	22	39	36	35	26	34
Internet banking	43	57	46	44	34	49
Selling of goods or services (e.g. via auctions)	17	24	17	14	..	19
Looking for information - education, training, courses	44	37	26	16	..	31
Consulting the Internet with the purpose of learning	43	33	31	23	19	32

**Where recent users have accessed the Internet**

In 2008, the most common place to access the Internet was the home (90 per cent). The only location which saw a substantial change over the year was wi-fi hotspots which more than doubled in popularity since 2007 from 2 per cent to 5 per cent.

**Places of access by recent Internet users, UK, 2006, 2007 & 2008**

	2006	2007	2008
<i>Per cent</i>			
Home	85	87	90
Place of work (other than home)	46	44	44
Another person's home	29	19	20
Place of education	15	12	14
Public library	10	4	4
Internet cafe	8	4	5
Hotspot (wi-fi)	-	2	5
At another place	-	11	11

### Mobile devices

Recent Internet users were asked if they used mobile devices to access the Internet. The use of laptops via a wireless connection increased year on year, from 18 per cent in 2007 to 23 per cent in 2008.

#### Adults who have accessed the Internet in the last 3 months, by mobile devices, UK, 2007 & 2008

	2007	2008
<i>Per cent</i>		
Portable computer (laptop) via wireless connection	18	23
Mobile phone via GPRS	15	15
Handheld computer (e.g. palmtop, PDA)	4	4
Mobile phone via UMTS (3G mobile)	3	4

### Activities on a mobile phone

Adults who used a mobile phone were asked about what activities they carried out on their phone. Of the mobile phone activities surveyed, the most popular was sending photographs or other video clips, an activity popular with a quarter of mobile phone users. However, in excess of two thirds of UK adults (68 per cent) had never done any of the activities surveyed. Men were almost twice as likely to browse the Internet via their mobile phone, than women (15 per cent and 8 per cent respectively).

#### Mobile phone users' activities in the last 3 months (excluding voice calls and SMS), by sex, UK, 2008

	Male	Female	All
<i>Per cent</i>			
Sending photographs or other video clips	24	25	25
Uploading photographs or video clips from your phone	6	7	6
Browsing the Internet	15	8	11
Reading emails	7	5	6
Personal navigation	3	2	3
None of the above	66	70	68

### Mobile phone payment

Pre payment was the method most popular among UK adult mobile phone users, 62 per cent preferring this method of payment.

#### How adults paid for mobile phone usage, UK, 2008

	Male	Female	All
<i>Per cent</i>			
Pay as you go (pre paid)	59	65	62
Contract (post paid)	41	35	38

## Use of advanced services

Men showed more interest in online activities relating to communication and audiovisual content than women. Almost all activities showed a greater popularity among men, with the exception of maintaining or creating weblogs (or blogs).

### Communication over the Internet by recent users, by sex, UK, 2008

	Male	Female	All
<i>Per cent</i>			
Use of instant messaging	31	26	29
Reading weblogs (or blogs)	26	16	21
Posting messages to chat sites, newsgroups etc	23	17	20
Video calls (via webcam)	14	10	12
Telephoning	12	8	10
Creating or maintaining own weblog (or blog)	6	8	7
None of the above	49	58	53

Downloading or listening to music (other than web radio) was the most popular audiovisual activity carried out on the Internet, for both men and women in 2008.

### Audiovisual content over the Internet by recent users, by sex, UK, 2008

	Male	Female	All
<i>Per cent</i>			
Downloading or listening to music (other than web radio)	43	33	38
Listening to web radios or watching web television	41	27	34
Uploading self-created content (text, images, photo, video)	25	24	24
Downloading or watching movies, short films or videos	29	17	23
Downloading computer or video games or their updates	19	7	13
Using peer to peer file sharing for exchange of movies, music, video files	16	9	12
Using browser based news feeds (e.g RSS)	17	7	12
Playing networked games with others	13	7	10
Using podcast services to automatically receive audio or video files	13	5	9
None of these	35	47	40

### Purchases over the Internet

In 2008, 55 per cent of all adults had ever purchased goods or services over the Internet. Of these, 81 per cent had purchased within the last three months. As in 2007, men were more likely to have purchased in recent months than women (83 per cent and 80 per cent respectively).

### Adults who purchased goods or services over the Internet, by sex and age groups, UK, 2006, 2007 & 2008

	Ever purchased			Of those who had ever purchased					
				Within last 3 months			Over 3 months ago		
	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008
<i>Per cent</i>									
Men	50	58	59	80	80	83	20	20	17
Women	39	48	52	76	75	80	24	25	20
All	44	53	55	79	78	81	21	22	19
<i>Age groups</i>									
16-24	51	68	70	80	74	72	20	26	28
25-44	62	67	73	82	82	84	18	18	16
45-54	55	60	60	80	79	85	20	21	15
55-64	36	44	47	65	74	81	35	26	19
65 plus	8	15	17	71	69	77	29	31	23

Of those who had bought goods or services within the last 12 months, the most popular purchase was for travel, accommodation or holiday related items (48 per cent). Lotteries and betting saw an increase year on year, from 6 per cent in 2007 to 10 per cent in 2008. Films and music saw a significant drop in purchases, from 51 per cent in 2007 to 41 per cent in 2008.

### Internet purchases by adults in last 12 months, UK, 2006, 2007 & 2008

	2006	2007	2008
<i>Per cent</i>			
Travel, accommodation or holidays	51	46	48
Clothes or sports goods	37	38	42
Films, music	53	51	41
Household goods	24	39	40
Books, magazines or newspapers	37	35	37
Tickets for events	35	33	37
Electronic equipment	25	20	26
Computer software and upgrades	29	21	22
Food and groceries	20	20	19
Computer hardware	22	17	12
Shares, financial services or insurance	24	9	11
Lotteries or betting	7	6	10
Other goods and services	11	8	8

Of adults who had purchased items that were available as downloads, 24 per cent downloaded films and music.

**Purchases downloaded from the Internet in the last 12 months, by sex, UK, 2008**

	Men	Women	All
<i>Per cent</i>			
Films or music	29	18	24
Computer software	27	10	19
Electronic reading material	11	..	8

Although the number of adults buying online has steadily increased year on year, the pattern of spending has remained static.

**Total value of goods or services bought over the Internet in the last 3 months, UK, 2006, 2007 & 2008**

	2006	2007	2008
<i>Per cent</i>			
£100 or less	33	34	34
£101 - £200	20	20	21
£201 - £500	24	24	23
More than £500	22	21	22

## BACKGROUND NOTES

### BASIC QUALITY INFORMATION

#### 1. Key issues specific to this release

This First Release on Internet Access shows information about both households with home access to the Internet and about individuals' use of the Internet. The source of this information is the National Statistics Omnibus Survey. These responses were collected in January, February and March 2008 for England, Wales and Scotland, and January 2008 for Northern Ireland. This is the third annual release of these estimates, which replaced the more frequent periodic publications of results from smaller samples on the National Statistics website.

The National Statistics Omnibus Survey is a multi-purpose survey developed by the Office for National Statistics for use by government departments, other public bodies, charities and academics. It provides a fast, cost effective and reliable way of obtaining information on topics too brief to warrant their own survey. The Omnibus Survey is carried out each month on a random sample of about 1,800 adults, aged 16 and over living in private households throughout Great Britain. After accounting for refusals and where no contact can be made, approximately 1,200 interviews are conducted each month. In January 2008, approximately 400 interviews were carried out in Northern Ireland. For general information on the National Statistics Omnibus Survey, contact 01633 455810, omnibus@ons.gov.uk.

Prior to the 2006 annual publication, Internet access data for households and individuals were published periodically on the National Statistics website at <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=5672>. These estimates related to Great Britain only as Northern Ireland was not covered by the Internet Access survey prior to 2006.

#### 2. Common pitfalls in interpreting series

This release should not be confused with the Internet Connectivity First Release (see paragraph 8). This is a separate release which presents an index of Internet connectivity showing changes in the levels of subscribers to the Internet (business and non-business).

#### 3. Relevance to users

In this release, Internet access estimates relate to households, while Internet usage estimates relate to individuals, or adults, who are defined as being aged 16 or over.

References to 2008 in this release mean data collected in January to March 2008 for England, Wales and Scotland, and January 2008 for Northern Ireland.

A recent Internet user is defined as an adult who accessed the Internet within three months prior to interview.

The whole of the UK is covered by the survey, apart from the Isles of Scilly and the Scottish Highlands (North of the Caledonian Canal) and Islands.

#### 4. Accuracy

##### Revisions to earlier years

Revisions have not been made to previously published statistics.

## 5. Sampling variability

The National Statistics Omnibus Survey is carried out by interviewing a nationally representative sample of households in Great Britain. About 1,800 households are sampled each month, and estimates are subject to sampling variability, as are those from all sample surveys.

The 95 per cent confidence interval for the estimate of the proportion of households with home Internet access in the UK in 2008, was 63 per cent to 67 per cent. The survey estimate was 65 per cent. For the estimate of the proportion of adults who have used the Internet in the three months prior to interview, the 95 per cent confidence interval was 69 per cent to 73 per cent. The survey estimate was 71 per cent. The weights used to match population estimates for statistics in this release are based on outputs from the 2001 Census.

The following table contains the 95 per cent confidence intervals for the 2008 country and regional estimates for households with Internet access.

	Confidence Intervals		Survey estimate
	Lower limit	Upper limit	
<i>Per cent</i>			
London	65	81	73
South East	69	80	74
East of England	63	77	70
South West	60	75	67
Yorks and Humber	53	70	62
East Midlands	52	70	61
West Midlands	52	70	61
North East	42	66	54
North West	48	65	57
Wales	56	78	67
Scotland	52	70	61
England	63	68	66
Northern Ireland	48	63	56
UK	63	67	65

## 6. Response rates

The voluntary nature of the survey means that people who do not wish to take part in the survey can refuse to do so. The sample is designed to ensure that the results of the survey represent the population. The risk of the survey not being representative is likely to increase with every refusal or non-contact with a sampled household (survey non-response). One measure of the quality of survey results is therefore the response rate.

A **response** denotes a household which has answered all applicable questions.

A **refusal** is a household which refuses to respond to the survey.

A **non contact** arises when an address is occupied but where it has not been possible to contact any member of the household in the collection period.

	Response rate	Refusals	Non contact
<i>Per cent</i>	61	30	8

## 7. Calibration

Weights are used in the analysis of the Omnibus data, both for households and for individuals. These weights are derived by calibration, using population estimates for age group by sex and region. The weights are used to improve the accuracy of results by compensating for different response rates for different groups and by reducing the random variation in estimates. For this release we have made a small change to the weighting process to account for survey item non response. This amendment has made no substantial impact on the history of the series. For the household analysis, the weights are influenced by the characteristics of all the members of the household.

Because the responses are weighted to population estimates, weighted totals of individuals by age group, sex and region from the survey are guaranteed to match the fixed population estimates. However, the weighting does not include control totals for the total number of households. Therefore the total number of households arrived at by summing across the categories shown in the tables is a survey estimate and subject to random variation. Over time, this estimate will fluctuate around the true number of households in the population, but is not guaranteed to exactly match the true value (or estimates from other sources), nor show the same year-on-year change.

## 8. Coherence

The ONS conducts a quarterly survey of Internet Service Providers which is used to produce the Index of Internet Connectivity. This measures the change in the levels of all connections (business and non-business) to the Internet. The release includes the broadband and dial-up component indices. Further information is available at <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=8251>

The ONS' annual e-commerce survey provides information on business' use of the Internet and other ICTs. Further information is available at <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/STATBASE/Product.asp?vlnk=6645>

## 9. Symbols used in the tables

- Estimate not available
- .. Disclosive estimate

## 10. Rounding

Percentages may not sum to 100 or agree with related totals, due to independently rounded components.

## 11. Publication policy

Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available from the press office.

## 12. National Statistics

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