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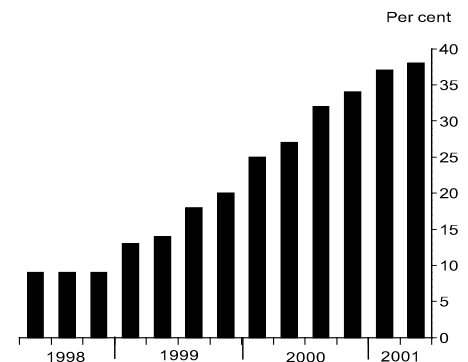
Internet access

Household and Individuals

Over the period April to June 2001 an average 9.4 million households in the UK could access the Internet from home, according to the Expenditure and Food Survey.

That amounts to over one third (38 per cent) of all UK households.

Proportion of households with home access to the Internet, UK



Over half (51 per cent) of adults in Great Britain have accessed the Internet at some time according to figures from the July 2001 National Statistics Omnibus Survey. This is equivalent to 23.0 million adults in Britain having accessed the Internet. In the month prior to the survey 40 per cent of adults had accessed the Internet.

Households with home access to the Internet, UK (by quarter)

	Number of households with access to the Internet (millions)	Percentage of households with access from home computers	Percentage of households with home access using all forms of access
1998			
April - June	2.2	9	..
July - September	2.3	9	..
October - December	2.2	9	..
1999			
January - March	3.2	13	..
April - June	3.5	14	..
July - September	4.5	18	..
October - December	5.1	20	..
2000			
January - March	6.5	25	..
April - June	6.9 *	26	27
July - September	7.8	30	32
October - December	8.6	33	34 *
2001			
January - March	9.2	34	37
April - June	9.4	35	38

Source - Family Expenditure Survey (April 1998 to March 2001); Expenditure and Food Survey (April 2001 onwards)
.. data not available for these quarters

* these figures have been revised from the ones published in the Internet Access First Release in July 2001 due to end year processing.

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Households with home access to the Internet

Over the second quarter of 2001 an average of 9.4 million households in the UK could access the Internet from home. That amounts to 38 per cent of all households and is just over four times the number three years earlier.

Figures from April 2000 cover all forms of access including new technologies such as digital TV; earlier figures only include access from home computers. The table on page one shows that in the April to June 2001 quarter only a small percentage of households (three per cent) accessed the Internet exclusively using technologies other than home computers.

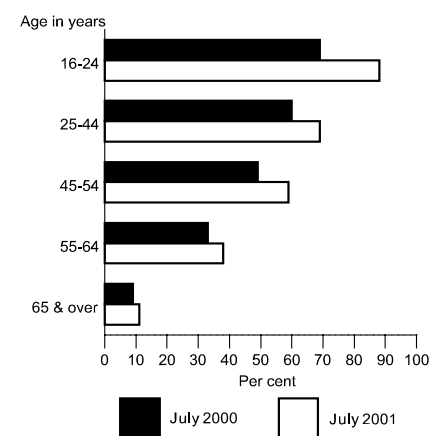
Individual Access to the Internet

Fifty-one per cent of adults in Britain have accessed the Internet at some time according to figures from the July 2001 National Statistics Omnibus. This is equivalent to 23 million adults in Britain having accessed the Internet. This is the same figure as the January and April 2001 surveys, but represents a six per cent increase on the July 2000 and October 2000 surveys. Just under 80 per cent of individuals who had accessed the Internet did so in the month prior to the survey (40 per cent of the adult population).

As found in previous quarters, men were more likely to have used the Internet than women; fifty-six per cent of men had used the Internet compared with 47 per cent of women. Although the proportions of both men and women who have accessed the Internet have increased since July 2000, the gap between them is starting to close (13 per cent in July 2000 and 9 per cent in July 2001).

The proportion of adults who had used the Internet decreases steadily with age from 88 per cent of those aged 16 to 24 years to 11 per cent of those aged 65 and over.

Proportion of adults who have accessed the Internet at some time by age, July 2000 - July 2001



Over the year, Internet access has risen 19 percentage points for people aged 16 to 24, and nine and 10 percentage points for people aged 25 to 44 and 45 to 54 respectively, while there were much smaller changes for people aged 55 and over.

Adults who have used the Internet by their characteristics

Characteristics	July 2000	July 2001
<i>Per cent</i>		
All Adults	45	51
Age in years		
16 to 24	69	88
25 to 44	60	69
45 to 54	49	59
55 to 64	33	38
65 and over	9	11
Gender		
Male	52	56
Female	39	47

Source - National Statistics Omnibus Survey - July 2001

Uptake of Internet access

The Internet is continuing to attract new users, with nine per cent of those who have ever accessed the Internet, doing so for the first time within the last three months.

Women reported logging onto the Internet for the first time more recently than men. Forty-eight per cent of men who had accessed the Internet reported having first logged on over three years ago, compared to only 28 per cent of women who had been users for more than three years.

How individuals access the Internet

The focus of the NS Omnibus Survey is to collect information on individuals' personal use of the Internet. Six per cent of those adults who had accessed the Internet had done so exclusively for work and are therefore excluded from the subsequent figures presented here.

Individuals can now use a range of technologies to access the Internet. Computers continue to dominate as the preferred method of accessing the Internet. Ninety-eight per cent of individuals who used the Internet for personal use had done so using a computer. By July 2001, eight per cent of adults who had ever used the Internet reported they had done so using a phone, while those using Digital TV remained steady at around six per cent.

Where people use the Internet

While individuals continue to access the Internet for personal use from a wide range of locations, the respondent's own home continues to be the most popular location (78 per cent) followed by their workplace (36 per cent) or another person's home (33 per cent).

Locations adults have used to access the Internet (for personal use)

Place used to access the Internet	July 2000	July 2001
<i>Per cent</i>		
Respondent's own home	70	78
Another person's home	33	33
Respondent's workplace	32	36
A school, college, university or other educational institution	25	24
A public library	7	8
An Internet cafe or shop	6	8
A community or voluntary organisation	1	1
A government office	1	0
A post office ¹	-	0
Somewhere else	3	2

Source - National Statistics Omnibus Survey - July 2001

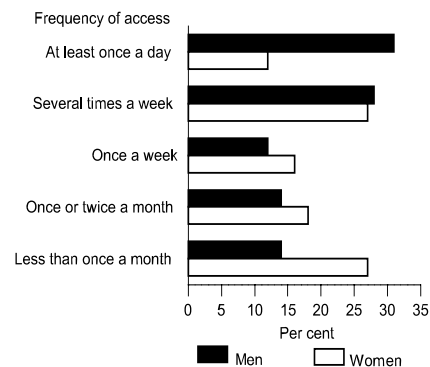
¹ A Post Office was not included in July 2000

Note: percentage do not add to 100 per cent as respondents may give more than one answer

Frequency of access

Respondents were also asked how frequently they used the Internet. Fifty-nine per cent of men who accessed the Internet for private use did so several times a week (31 per cent at least once a day). Thirty-nine per cent of women who had accessed the Internet for private use, did so several times a week (12 per cent at least once a day). Conversely 45 per cent of women who accessed the Internet for personal use did so once or twice a month or less frequently; the equivalent figure for men was 28 per cent.

Frequency of access to the Internet for personal use, July 2001



Respondents were also asked when they had last accessed the Internet. Sixty-four per cent reported accessing the Internet within the last seven days and a further 14 per cent within the last month; just four per cent had last accessed the Internet over a year ago.

What people do on the Internet

Among those who had accessed the Internet nearly a quarter of adults used the Internet to find information about goods or services (74 per cent) whilst nearly three quarters used e-mail (71 per cent). Fifty-seven per cent of adults who had used the Internet used it for general browsing.

Adults who have accessed the Internet by purpose of Internet use (personal use only)

Activities	July 2000	July 2001
<i>Per cent</i>		
Finding information about goods / services	70	74
Using e-mail	69	71
General browsing or surfing	64	57
Finding information related to education	34	35
Buying or ordering tickets / goods / services	28	35
Personal banking/financial/investment activities	21	27
Looking for work	18	21
Downloading software, including games*	17	23
Using chat rooms or sites	17	18
Playing or downloading music	16	19
Using or accessing government / official services	15	19
Other things	11	4

Source - National Statistics Omnibus Survey - July 2001

* Category in July 2000 "Playing or downloading games"

Note: percentage do not add to 100 per cent as respondents may give more than one answer

Internet Purchases

Questions on Internet purchases were asked for the first time in July 2001. Respondents who had already stated that they used the Internet for private use and who bought or ordered tickets, goods and services or used the Internet for personal banking, financial and investment activities were asked what goods they had bought on the Internet in the three months prior to interview. The most popular purchases were flights and holiday accommodation (35 per cent), books or magazines (26 per cent), music or CDs (25 per cent) and tickets for events (19 per cent), a further 20 per cent of respondents who had previously bought goods on the Internet had not bought anything in the three months prior to interview. Of those who had purchased goods or services 29 per cent reported spending £100 or less in the three months prior to interview, whilst 18 per cent spent over £500.

Amount spent by respondents who had purchased goods or services on the Internet in the 3 months prior to interview (*personal use only*)

July 2001

Per cent

Total value of goods bought on the Internet
(in 3 months prior to interview)

£100 or less	29
£101 to £200	14
£201 to £500	17
Over £500	18
Don't know	2
No purchases in last 3 months	20

Source - National Statistics Omnibus Survey - July 2001

People's main reason for not purchasing over the internet was security concerns (29 per cent) although only five per cent of people who had used the Internet for private use had stated that they had actually experienced any security problems on the Internet. The other main reasons respondents had not used the Internet for purchasing or ordering goods and services were that people preferred to shop in person and that they had no need to purchase over the Internet (23 per cent and 20 per cent respectively).

People who do not use the Internet

Those adults who had never accessed the Internet (49 per cent) were asked why they had not used it. A wide range of reasons was given and respondents could give more than one answer if they wished.

Forty-two per cent of those who had not used the Internet stated that they were not interested in using it, 26 per cent had no means of access to the Internet, 16 per cent did not feel that they had the confidence or the skills required to use the Internet whilst a further 16 per cent felt they had no need to access the Internet.

Reasons for not using the Internet (adults who have never accessed the Internet)

Reasons	July 2001
<i>Per cent</i>	
Lack of interest	42
No need	16
Lack of confidence / skills	16
No computer or access	26
Cannot afford it	7
Feels too old	9
No time	4
Do not want to use	11
Have not got round to it yet	6
Poor opinion of the Internet	3
Health problems make it difficult	1
Other reasons	2

Source - National Statistics Omnibus Survey - July 2001

Note: percentage do not add to 100 per cent as respondents may give more than one answer

Fifty-four per cent of individuals who have yet to access the Internet reflected a general lack of interest in accessing the Internet¹ when reporting their main or exclusive reason (not shown in the table above) for not accessing the Internet. This lack of interest increases with age to 55 per cent of those who are aged 65 and over.

The proportion of all adults who consider it very unlikely they will access the Internet in the next year has stayed fairly constant: between 34 and 37 per cent. Since July 2000 this core group make up an increasing proportion of those who have never accessed the Internet. In July 2000 64 per cent of those who have never accessed the Internet stated that they were unlikely to access the Internet in the next year as opposed to 76 per cent in July 2001.

¹ no interest in the Internet, no need to use the Internet and do not want to use the Internet

BACKGROUND NOTES

1. This sixth in the quarterly series of First Releases on Internet Access shows information about both households with home access to the Internet and about individuals' access to the Internet. This information comes from two different data sources, one for households and the other for individuals. The Family Expenditure Survey (April 1998 to March 2001) and from April 2001 onwards, the Expenditure and Food Survey is the source for households, the most recently available information from this survey covers the April to June 2001 quarter. The National Statistics Omnibus Survey is the source for individuals' access to the Internet. This data was last collected in July 2001 (See note 4).
2. The Family Expenditure Survey (now the Expenditure and Food Survey) is carried out by interviewing a nationally representative sample of households in the United Kingdom. About 1,600 households provide information each quarter, and estimates are subject to sampling variability, like those from all sample surveys. The 95 per cent confidence intervals for the estimate of the proportion of households with home internet access in the quarter April to June 2001 was 36 to 40 per cent (the survey estimate was 38 per cent).
3. A question on whether the household had access to the Internet has been included in the the Family Expenditure Survey (now the Expenditure and Food Survey) since April 1998. Up to March 2000 the question was asked only for households who had already said they had a home computer. New methods of accessing the Internet (such as digital television) were just beginning to be taken up then, so the levels of Internet access in the first quarter of 2000 may be slightly understated. From April 2000 all households have been asked about home access to the Internet and, if they have it, the means of access.
4. The National Statistics Omnibus Survey is a multi-purpose survey developed by ONS 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 a survey of their own, and for topics of immediate interest. The Omnibus survey is carried out eight times a year and each month the survey runs a random sample of about 1,800 adults, aged 16 and over, living in private households throughout Britain. Each month's questionnaire covers a variety of topics, and results are available to users within three weeks of the end of fieldwork. (For further details on the National Statistics Omnibus Survey contact Amanda Wilmott on 020-7533 5310.)
5. Questions on individuals' access to the Internet were included in the National Statistics Omnibus Survey for the first time in July 2000 and are being placed on the survey on a quarterly basis. The results from the

National Statistics Omnibus survey are subject to sampling error, like those from all sample surveys. The 95 per cent confidence intervals for the estimate of the proportion of individuals who had ever accessed the Internet are 49 per cent to 54 per cent (the survey estimate was 51 per cent).

6. Details of the National Statistics policy governing the release of new data are available from the press office. Also available is a list of the names of those given pre-publication access to the contents of this release.
7. National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference. © Crown copyright 2001.