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**Coverage**

United Kingdom  
(household access)

Great Britain  
(individual access)

**Theme**

Social and Welfare

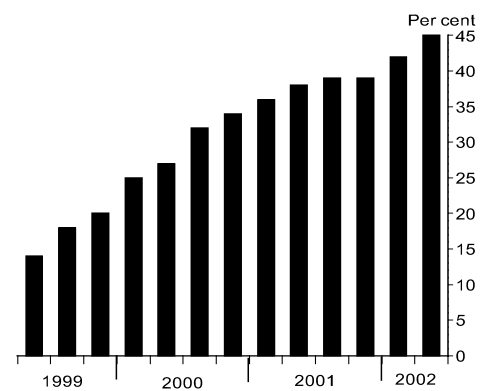
# Internet access

## Households and Individuals

Over the period April to June 2002 an estimated 11.1 million households in the UK could access the Internet from home, according to the Expenditure and Food Survey (EFS).

That amounts to 45 per cent of all UK households.

Proportion of households with home access to the Internet, UK



An estimated fifty-seven per cent of adults in Great Britain have accessed the Internet at some time according to figures from the July 2002 National Statistics Omnibus Survey. This is equivalent to approximately 26.3 million adults in Britain having accessed the Internet. In the month prior to the survey 47 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
<b>1999</b>			
April - June	3.5	14	..
July - September	4.5	18	..
October - December	5.1	20	..
<b>2000</b>			
January - March	6.5	25	..
April - June	6.9	26	27
July - September	7.8	30	32
October - December	8.6	33	34
<b>2001</b>			
January - March	9.2	34	36
April - June	9.5	35	38
July - September	9.7	36	39
October - December	9.8	37	39
<b>2002</b>			
January - March	10.7	40	42
April - June	11.1	43	45

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

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**Households with home access to the Internet**

Over the second quarter of 2002 an estimated 11.1 million households in the UK could access the Internet from home representing 45 per cent of all households. This is over three times the number three years earlier and is an increase of 7 percentage points from the 38 per cent reported in the second quarter of 2001.

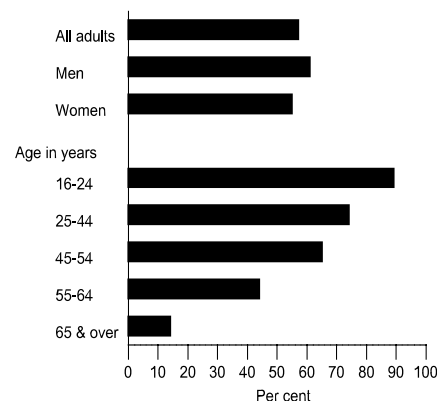
Figures from April 2000 cover all forms of access including new technologies such as digital TV; earlier figures only include access from home computers. The table on page one shows that in the April to June 2002 quarter only a small percentage of households (2 per cent) accessed the Internet exclusively using technologies other than home computers.

**Individual Access to the Internet**

Fifty-seven per cent of adults in Britain have accessed the Internet at some time according to figures from the July 2002 National Statistics Omnibus Survey. This shows that the percentage of adults who had ever accessed the Internet by July 2002 had risen 6 percentage points since July 2001. As seen in previous quarters, the percentage of adults who had ever used the Internet decreased steadily with age and ranged from 89 per cent of adults aged 16 to 24 to 14 per cent for those aged 65 and over.

Eighty-two per cent of individuals who had accessed the Internet did so in the month prior to the survey (47 per cent of the adult population).

**Proportion of adults who have accessed the Internet at some time, July 2002**



**Adults who have used the Internet by their characteristics**

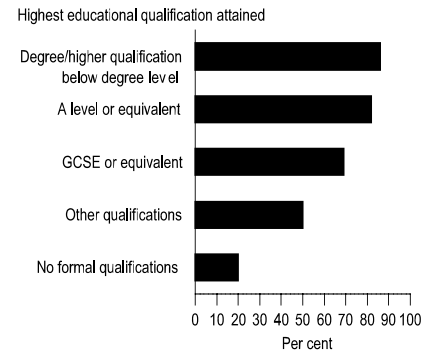
Characteristics	July 2002
<i>Per cent</i>	
<b>All Adults</b>	57
<b>Age in years</b>	
16 to 24	89
25 to 44	74
45 to 54	65
55 to 64	44
65 and over	14
<b>Sex</b>	
Men	61
Women	55

Source - National Statistics Omnibus Survey

**Internet access by education level and economic activity status**

Level of Internet access varies according to respondents' highest educational qualification attained and economic activity status. In July 2002 adults with a degree or higher education qualification below degree level, and those with an A level or equivalent, were more likely to have accessed the Internet at some time (86 per cent and 82 per cent respectively). Those with no formal qualifications were least likely to have ever accessed the Internet (20 per cent - see Background Note for definitions). Seventy-four per cent of economically active adults (those adults in employment or who were ILO unemployed) had accessed the Internet at some time while only 31 per cent of those economically inactive (this group includes, for example those adults who were looking after a family or retired) had done so.

**Proportion of adults who have ever accessed the Internet by highest educational qualification attained, July 2002**



**How individuals access the Internet**

The focus of the National Statistics Omnibus Survey is to collect information on individuals' personal use of the Internet. Five 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. In July 2002 computers continued to dominate as the preferred method for accessing the Internet (98 per cent). Ten per cent of adults who had ever used the Internet had done so using a mobile phone, while around 7 per cent reported using Digital Television.

**Where people use the Internet**

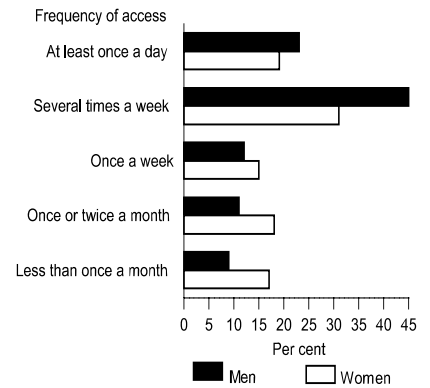
While individuals continue to access the Internet for personal use from a wide range of locations, the respondent's own home continues to be the most popular location (79 per cent) followed by their workplace (29 per cent) or another person's home (28 per cent).



**Frequency of access**

Respondents were also asked how frequently they used the Internet. Men still use the Internet more than women: 68 per cent of men who accessed the Internet for private use did so more than once a week (23 per cent at least once a day), while 50 per cent of women who had accessed the Internet for private use, did so more than once a week (19 per cent at least once a day). Conversely 17 per cent of women who accessed the Internet for personal use did so less than once a month; the equivalent figure for men was 9 per cent.

**Frequency of access (adults who have used Internet for personal use), July 2002**



**What people do on the Internet**

Among those who had accessed the Internet for private use nearly eight in ten adults used the Internet to find information about goods or services (79 per cent) or used e-mail (78 per cent). Since July 2001 the proportion of adults ordering tickets, goods or services has risen by 11 percentage points to 46 per cent. This represents a quarter of the adult population.

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

Activities	July 2002
<i>Per cent</i>	
<b>Communication</b>	
Using e-mail	78
Using chat rooms or sites	15
<b>Information search and on-line services</b>	
Finding information about goods / services	79
Finding information related to education	31
Reading or downloading on-line news	28
Playing or downloading music	19
Downloading other software	17
Playing or downloading games	11
Listening to web radio/watching web television	10
<b>Purchasing goods, services and banking</b>	
Buying or ordering tickets / goods / services	46
Personal banking/financial/investment activities	30
<b>Interaction with public authorities</b>	
Using or accessing government / official services	16
<b>Others</b>	
General browsing or surfing	57
Looking for work	22
Other things	4

Source - National Statistics Omnibus Survey

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

### Internet Purchases

The National Statistics Omnibus Survey shows that the longer a person has used the Internet the more likely it is that they have bought or ordered goods and services on-line. By July 2002 57 per cent who had used the Internet for more than three years had bought or ordered on-line, compared with 42 per cent who had used the Internet for more than a year but less than three years and around 20 per cent of those who had been on-line for less than a year.

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 for travel (39 per cent), tickets for events (26 per cent), books or magazines (25 per cent), and music or CDs (20 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<sup>1</sup> in the last three months, 37 per cent reported spending £100 or less in the three months prior to interview, while 22 per cent spent over £500.

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

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##### Total value of goods bought on the Internet<sup>1</sup> (in 3 months prior to interview)

July 2002

*Per cent*

£100 or less	37
£101 to £200	19
£201 to £500	21
Over £500	22
Don't know	1

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Source - National Statistics Omnibus Survey

Respondent's main reasons for never having purchased over the Internet was that they had security concerns (29 per cent) or that they preferred to shop in person (23 per cent). Although over a quarter of adults stated that they had security concerns only five per cent of adults who had used the Internet for private use stated that they had actually experienced any security problems.

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<sup>1</sup> excluding financial investments

### People who do not use the Internet

Those adults who had never accessed the Internet (43 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 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, 19 per cent did not feel that they had the confidence or the skills required to use the Internet while a further 18 per cent felt they had no need to access the Internet.

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

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Reasons	July 2002
<i>Per cent</i>	
Lack of interest	40
No computer or access	26
Lack of confidence / skills	19
No need	18
Do not want to use	10
Feels too old	9
Cannot afford it	7
Have not got round to it yet	6
No time	5
Health problems make it difficult	2
Poor opinion of the Internet	1
Other reasons	2

Source - National Statistics Omnibus Survey

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

Just under half (49 per cent) of all individuals who have yet to access the Internet reflected a general lack of interest in accessing the Internet<sup>1</sup> when reporting their main or only reason (not shown in the table above) for not accessing the Internet.

In July 2002 three-quarters of adults who had never accessed the Internet stated that they were very unlikely to access the Internet in the next year. This core group represents nearly a third (32 per cent) of all adults.

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<sup>1</sup> no interest in the Internet, no need to use the Internet and do not want to use the Internet

## BACKGROUND NOTES

1. This First Release 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 2002 quarter. The National Statistics Omnibus Survey is the source for individuals' access to the Internet. These data were last collected in July 2002 (See notes 4 and 5).
2. The Expenditure and Food Survey (formerly the Family Expenditure Survey) is carried out by interviewing a nationally representative sample of households in the United Kingdom. About 1,700 households provide information each quarter, and estimates are subject to sampling variability, like those from all sample surveys. Quarterly estimates are provisional and may be revised when the survey's report *Family Spending* is published. For April to June 2002 Northern Ireland data have been imputed. The 95 per cent confidence intervals for the estimate of the proportion of households with home Internet access in the quarter April to June 2002 were 42 per cent to 48 per cent (the survey estimate was 45 per cent).
3. A question on whether the household had access to the Internet has been included in the Family Expenditure Survey/Expenditure and Food Survey since April 1998. Up to March 2000 the question was asked only of 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 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 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 general information on the National Statistics Omnibus Survey, contact Amanda Wilmot on 020-7533 5321.)

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. Figures from the National Statistics Omnibus Survey presented in this release are from July 2002. 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 in July 2002 were 55 per cent to 59 per cent (the survey estimate was 57 per cent).
6. Reported in this release is the figure for July 2002 that approximately 26.3 million adults in Great Britain had ever accessed the Internet. This figure is based on the latest available population figures from the Labour Force Survey for the period June to August 2002. Without this revision the estimate would have been 26.1 million.
7. Highest educational qualification attained has been grouped according to the following: *Degree/higher qualification below degree level* includes Degree or higher degree and Higher educational qualifications below degree level. *A level and equivalent* includes A level or Highers and ONC/ BTEC. *GCSE or equivalent* includes O level, GCSEs, CSEs and O Grade and Standard Grade. *Other qualifications* includes "foreign qualifications below degree level".
8. This release should not be confused with the *National Statistics First Release Internet Connectivity*. 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). This information comes from the monthly survey of Internet Service Providers.
9. 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.
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