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Coverage
United Kingdom (household access)
Great Britain (individual access)
Theme
Social and Welfare

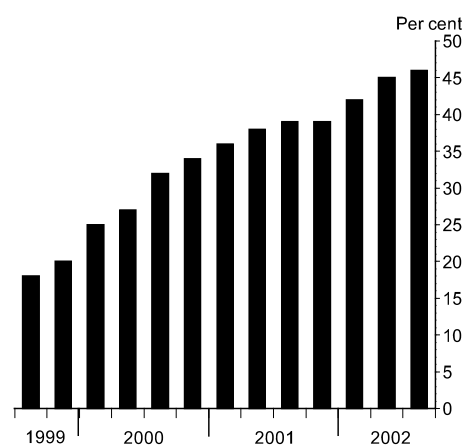
Internet access

Households and Individuals

Over the period July to September 2002 an estimated 11.4 million households in the UK could access the Internet from home, according to the Expenditure and Food Survey (EFS).

That amounts to 46 per cent of all UK households.

Proportion of households with home access to the Internet, UK



An estimated 62 per cent of adults in Great Britain have accessed the Internet at some time according to figures from the October 2002 National Statistics Omnibus Survey. This is equivalent to approximately 28.6 million adults in Britain having accessed the Internet. In the month prior to the survey 52 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
1999			
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	36
April - June	9.5	35	38
July - September	9.7	37*	39
October - December	9.8	37	39
2002			
January - March	10.5*	40	43*
April - June	11.1	42*	45
July - September	11.4	44	46

Source - Family Expenditure Survey (April 1998 to March 2001); Expenditure and Food Survey (April 2001 onwards)

* this figure has been revised from the one published in the Internet Access First Release in September 2002 due to end year processing.

.. data not available for these quarters

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Households with home access to the Internet

Over the third quarter of 2002 an estimated 11.4 million households in the UK could access the Internet from home representing 46 per cent of all households. This is over twice the number three years earlier and is an increase of 7 percentage points from the 39 per cent reported in the third 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 July to September 2002 quarter only a small percentage of households (two per cent) accessed the Internet exclusively using technologies other than home computers.

Who has Internet access

A more detailed analysis of Internet access has to be based on the full sample of the Expenditure and Food Survey (EFS) over a twelve month period. While 46 per cent of households had home access in July to September 2002, the average for the twelve months, October 2001 to September 2002, was 43 per cent, therefore this figure provides the base for the following tables.

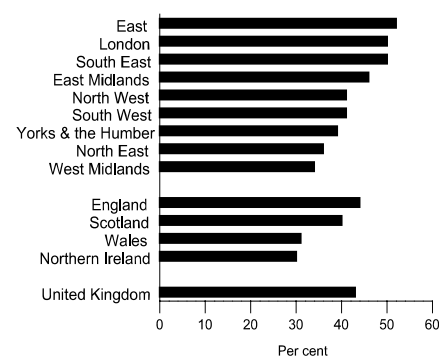


Differences between the countries and regions of the UK

Levels of access vary greatly between different parts of the UK. In October 2001 to September 2002 the proportion of households with access was lowest in Northern Ireland (30 per cent), Wales (31 per cent), and the West Midlands (34 per cent). Proportions were highest in the East of England (52 per cent), London (50 per cent) and the South East (50 per cent) where around half of all households had access to the Internet.

Over the period October 2000 to September 2001 and October 2001 to September 2002 the North East, Scotland, and the East of England saw the largest proportional increases. The growth rates for these regions ranged from just over a 30 per cent increase for the East of England to nearly a 40 per cent increase for the North East. Regional figures are subject to relatively large sampling variability and therefore not all of the apparent differences in growth of Internet access between the two years are statistically significant.

Home access to the Internet by Government Office Region and UK country, October 2001 to September 2002



Households with home access to the Internet by Government Office Region & UK country: October 2000 to September 2001 and October 2001 to September 2002

	Oct 2000 to Sep 2001	Oct 2001 to Sep 2002
<i>Per cent</i>		
North East	26	36
North West	35*	41
Yorkshire and the Humber	32*	39
East Midlands	40	46
West Midlands	35	34
East	40*	52
London	46*	50
South East	46*	50
South West	38	41
England	39	44
Wales	27	31
Scotland	30	40
Northern Ireland	26	30
United Kingdom	37	43

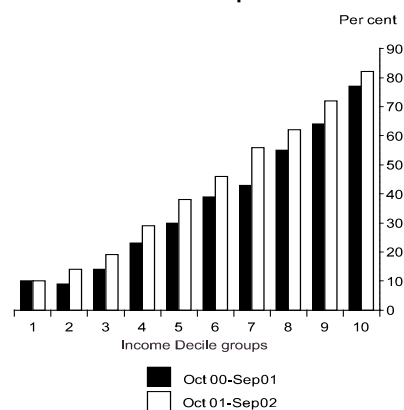
Source - Family Expenditure Survey (April 1998 to March 2001); Expenditure and Food Survey (April 2001 onwards)
* this figure has been revised from the one published in the Internet Access First Release in December 2001 due to end year processing.

Differences between income groups

For this analysis households have been divided into 10 equal groups (deciles) according to their gross income. Levels of access depend very strongly on income. In October 2001 to September 2002 levels of household access were lowest in the first three income groups (10, 14 and 19 per cent respectively). From the third decile group onwards the levels increased rapidly with income, from 19 per cent to 82 per cent for households within the highest income decile group.

The pattern of access over the period from October 2001 to September 2002 is broadly the same as in October 2000 to September 2001, with access to the Internet increasing for all income groups, except the lowest income group which remained the same. While the percentage point change is fairly consistent across all income groups, the percentage point change represents a larger proportional increase in the lower income groups.

Home access to the Internet by gross income decile group, October 2000 to September 2001 and October 2001 to September 2002



Households with home access to the Internet, UK by gross income decile group:

October 2000 to September 2001 and October 2001 to September 2002

	Oct 2000 to Sep 2001	Oct 2001 to Sep 2002
<i>Per cent</i>		
Lowest ten per cent	10*	10
Second decile group	9	14
Third decile group	14*	19
Fourth decile group	23*	29
Fifth decile group	30*	38
Sixth decile group	39	46
Seventh decile group	43*	56
Eighth decile group	55	62
Ninth decile group	64*	72
Highest decile group	77*	82
All households	37	43

Source - Family Expenditure Survey (April 1998 to March 2001); Expenditure and Food Survey (April 2001 onwards)
 * this figure has been revised from the one published in the Internet Access First Release in December 2001 due to end year processing.

Individual Access to the Internet

Sixty-two per cent of adults in Britain have accessed the Internet at some time according to figures from the October 2002 National Statistics Omnibus Survey. This shows that the percentage of adults who had ever accessed the Internet had increased by 5 percentage points since July 2002 and 9 percentage points since October 2001. Over 80 per cent of individuals who had accessed the Internet did so in the month prior to the survey (52 per cent of the adult population).

Adults who have used the Internet by their characteristics

Characteristics	October 2001	October 2002
<i>Per cent</i>		
All Adults	53	62
Age in years		
16 to 24	87	94
25 to 44	69	79
45 to 54	58	68
55 to 64	37	47
65 and over	11	17
Sex		
Men	55	67
Women	51	58

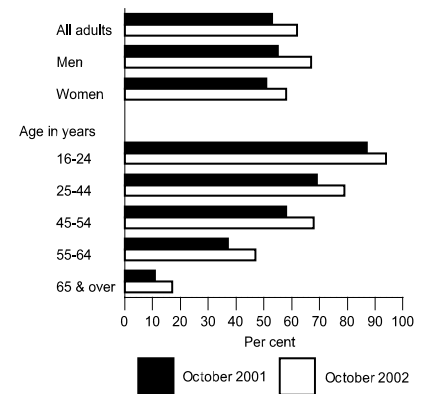
Source - National Statistics Omnibus Survey

How individuals access the Internet

The focus of the National Statistics Omnibus Survey is to collect information on individuals' personal use of the Internet. Four 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 for accessing the Internet. Ninety-nine per cent of individuals who used the Internet for personal use had done so using a computer. By October 2002 11 per cent of adults who had ever used the Internet had done so using a mobile phone and around 7 per cent reported using Digital Television.

Proportion of adults who have accessed the Internet at some time by age and sex, October 2001 and October 2002



What people do on the Internet

Among those who had accessed the Internet for personal use just over three-quarters of adults (76 per cent) used the Internet for e-mail, 71 per cent used it to find information about goods and services and 36 per cent used it for finding education related information. Forty-four per cent of adults who had used the Internet ordered tickets, goods or services.

Internet Purchases

Respondents who had already stated that they used the Internet for personal 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 (31 per cent), tickets for events (24 per cent), books or magazines (20 per cent) and music or CDs (17 per cent). A further 24 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 services¹ in the last three months, 42 per cent reported spending £100 or less in the three months prior to interview, while 22 per cent spent over £500.

Respondent's main reasons for never having purchased over the Internet was that they had security concerns (26 per cent) or that they had no need (21 per cent). Although just over a quarter of adults stated that they had security concerns only six per cent of adults who had used the Internet for personal use stated that they had actually experienced any security problems.

¹ excluding financial investments

People who do not use the Internet

Those adults who had never accessed the Internet (38 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. Thirty-seven per cent of those who had not used the Internet stated that they were not interested in using it, 25 per cent had no means of access to the Internet and 23 per cent did not feel that they had the confidence or the skills required to use the Internet.

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

Reasons	October 2002
<i>Per cent</i>	
Lack of interest	37
No computer or access	25
Lack of confidence / skills	23
No need	15
Do not want to use	14
Feels too old	7
Have not got round to it yet	7
Cannot afford it	4
No time	3
Poor opinion of the Internet	2
Health problems make it difficult	1
Other reasons	3

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 Internet¹ when reporting their main or only reason (not shown in the table above) for not accessing the Internet.

In October 2002 73 per cent 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 over a quarter (28 per cent) of all adults.

¹ 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 (July 1999 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 July to September 2002 quarter. The National Statistics Omnibus Survey is the source for individuals' access to the Internet. These data were last collected in October 2002 (See notes 5 and 6).
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. Estimates are provisional and may be revised when the survey's report *Family Spending* is published. The 95 per cent confidence intervals for the estimate of the proportion of households with home Internet access in the quarter July to September 2002 were 44 per cent to 48 per cent (the survey estimate was 46 per cent).
3. Results from the Family Expenditure Survey/Expenditure and Food Survey are based on data that have been weighted in two stages to reduce the effect of non-response bias and to match population estimates (for more information see *Family Spending* published in January 2002). These weights are based on the best population estimates available before the results of the 2001 Census were published. The 2001 Census results may change the estimates but the relevant data are not yet available.
4. 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.
5. 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.)

6. 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 October 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 October 2002 were 60 per cent to 64 per cent (the survey estimate was 62 per cent).
7. Reported in this release is the estimate of 28.6 million adults in Great Britain having ever accessed the Internet. This figure is based on the latest available population figure from the Labour Force Survey for the period September to November 2002, the weighting of which is based on the best estimate available before the 2001 Census results were published.
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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