



Internet Access Households and Individuals 2009

Date: 28 August 2009

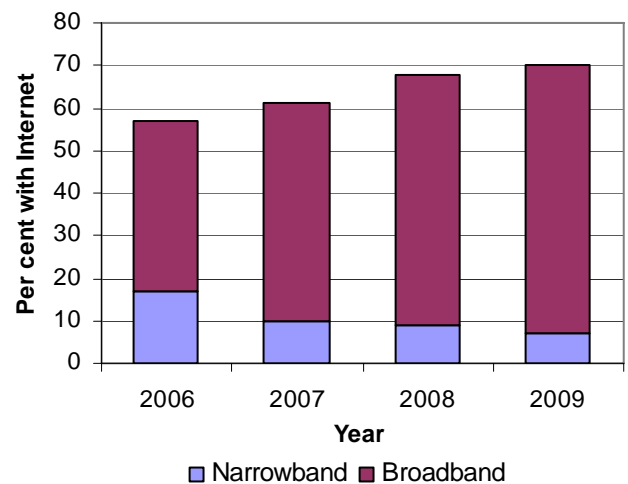
Coverage: United Kingdom **Theme:** Social and Welfare

In 2009, 18.31 million UK households had Internet access. This represented 70 per cent of households and an increase of 1.85 million households since 2008. These estimates are derived from the 2009 National Statistics Opinions (Omnibus) survey.

Of all UK households, 63 per cent (16.5 million) had a broadband Internet connection in 2009, an increase from 56 per cent in 2008. The number of all households with broadband has increased by 6.6 million since 2006.

Of those households with Internet access, 90 per cent had a broadband connection in 2009, an increase from 69 per cent in 2006.

Households with access to the Internet and broadband



Households with access to the Internet and broadband

Internet access				Broadband		
Year	Per cent	Number of households	Percentage change on previous year	Per cent	Number of households	Percentage change on previous year
2006	57	14.26m	-	40	9.91m	-
2007	61	15.23m	7	51	12.82m	29
2008	65	16.46m	8	56	14.14m	10
2009	70	18.31m	11	63	16.52m	17

Base: All UK households

Household Internet access (tables 1-3)

In 2009, the proportion of households able to access the Internet varied between UK regions. The region with the highest level of Internet access was London at 80 per cent. Scotland had the lowest proportion of households with Internet access at 62 per cent.

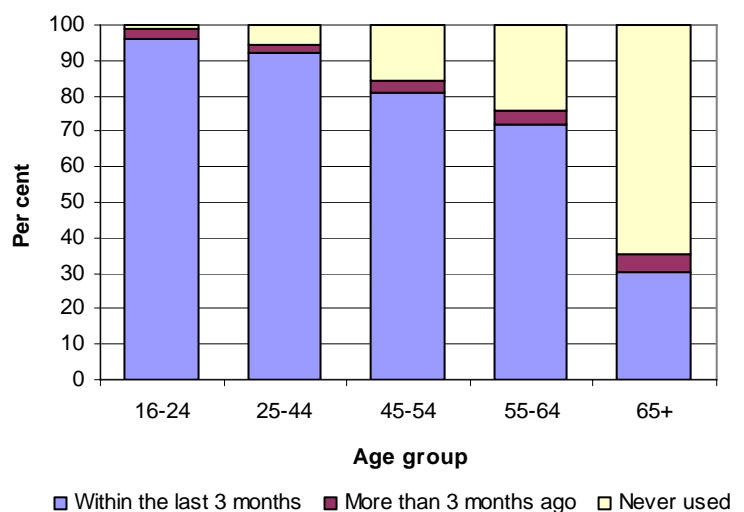
The proportion of households with broadband access continued to increase year on year, with 63 per cent of all households able to access the Internet through a broadband connection.

Individuals' use of the Internet (table 4)

In 2009, 37.4 million adults (76 per cent of the UK adult population) accessed the Internet in the three months prior to interview. This was an increase of 10.3 per cent (3.5 million adults) from 2008. Subsequently, the number of adults who had never accessed the Internet fell to 10.2 million adults (21 per cent) in 2009.

There has been growth in Internet access by all age groups. Although the youngest age group (those aged 16-24) had the highest level of access, at 96 per cent, the largest increase in the proportion of those accessing the Internet was in the oldest age group (65 plus). Access by those aged 65 plus increased proportionally by 15 per cent, compared with an increase of 3 per cent for the 16-24 age group.

Individuals' use of the Internet



Men were 8 percentage points more likely to have accessed the Internet in the last three months than women (80 per cent compared with 72 per cent).

Frequency of use of the Internet (table 5)

In 2009, the proportion of adults who were recent Internet users - who accessed the Internet every day or almost every day - was 73 per cent (27.3 million adults). The 16-24 age group accessed the Internet the most, with 86 per cent using it every day or almost every day. The 65 plus age group used it the least, with 52 per cent using it every day or almost every day.

Internet activities (tables 6 and 7)

The most popular activity of recent Internet users was sending and receiving emails, at 90 per cent. However, 2009 also saw a boom in social networking. Forty per cent of recent Internet users stated that they posted messages to chat sites, blogs and newsgroups (up from 20 per cent in 2008). There was an increase from 24 per cent to 40 per cent of recent Internet users who stated they uploaded self created content.

The use of the Internet for online audiovisual activities also saw significant developments in 2009.

An increasing number of broadcasters made their content available to web viewers or listeners in 2009, highlighted by the 42 per cent of recent users listening to web radio or watching web television. This increased from 34 per cent in 2008.

Telephoning over the Internet (or making video calls using webcams) was also a popular activity in 2009, with 21 per cent communicating over this medium.

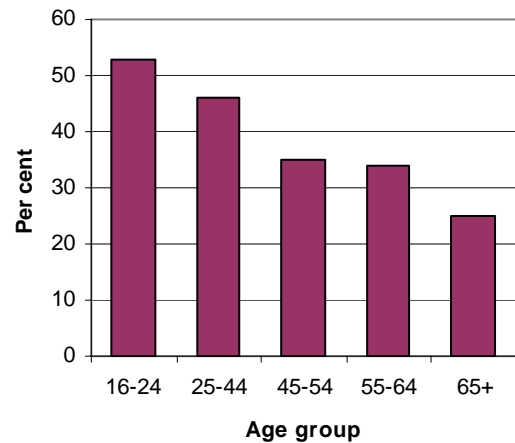
Purchasing over the Internet (tables 8-15)

In 2009, 64 per cent of all recent Internet users had ever purchased goods or services over the Internet. Of these, 83 per cent (26 million) had purchased within the last three months, with little difference between the proportions of men and women who made recent purchases. The proportion of men who made recent purchases remained at the 2008 level of 83 per cent, while those made by women continued to rise (by 2 per cent) to 82 per cent.

Of those men who had purchased goods or services online in the last three months, the most popular item was films and music (52 per cent). However, the most popular purchases made by women were clothes or sporting goods (54 per cent). Women were twice as likely to purchase food or groceries online than men (30 per cent compared with 15 per cent).

Age is also a factor in the types of goods and services purchased online. While the younger age groups favoured purchasing clothes and sports goods, the most popular purchase for the oldest age group were books, magazines, newspapers or e-learning material.

Recent Internet users who use web TV or web radio



Growth of wi-fi hotspots (tables 16 and 17)

In 2009, the majority of Internet users accessed the Internet at home (94 per cent). However, the number of users accessing the Internet via a wireless hotspot has risen in recent years. A wireless hotspot is a public area where a wireless Internet connection is provided, common in such places as cafes and airports. While in 2007 just under 700,000 people accessed the Internet via a wi-fi hotspot (2 per cent of recent Internet users), this rose to almost 2.5 million (6 per cent of recent users) in 2009. This coincided with growth in available hotspots, with many pubs and cafes now offering free wireless Internet access.

Digital TV (table 18)

The UK is currently in the process of the digital television switch-over, which is scheduled to be complete by 2012. In 2009, 86 per cent of UK households received digital television, with Wales leading the way at 90 per cent. Households in London had the lowest level of digital television, at 81 per cent.

Internet access and educational qualifications (table 19)

Almost all adults (95 per cent) aged under 70 who had a degree or equivalent qualification were estimated to live in a household with Internet access. Those who had no formal qualifications were least likely to have an Internet connection, at 52 per cent.

Background Notes

BASIC QUALITY INFORMATION

1. Key issues specific to this release

This Statistical Bulletin 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 Opinions (Omnibus) Survey. These responses were collected in January, February and March 2009. This is the fourth 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 Opinions 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 Opinions 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. For general information on the National Statistics Opinions Survey, contact 01633 455810, Opinions@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 e-commerce release which is a separate release containing information about use of the Internet and other Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) by businesses.

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 2009 in this release mean data collected in January to March 2009.

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

4. Accuracy

Revisions to earlier years

Revisions have not been made to previously published statistics.

5. Sampling variability

The National Statistics Opinions 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 estimates in the survey relate to the whole of the UK. As in previous years, the Isles of Scilly and the Scottish Highlands (North of the Caledonian Canal) and Islands were not sampled. However, Northern Ireland was also not sampled for the 2009 survey, but has been included in the estimation of UK results. As a result, no estimates relating to Northern Ireland specifically are available for the 2009 survey.

The 95 per cent confidence interval for the estimate of the proportion of households with home Internet access in the UK in 2009, was 68 per cent to 72 per cent. The survey estimate was 70 per cent. For the estimate of the proportion of recent Internet users, the 95 per cent confidence interval was 74 per cent to 78 per cent. The survey estimate was 76 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 2009 country and regional estimates for households with Internet access.

Confidence intervals			
	Lower limit	Upper limit	Survey estimate
<i>Per cent</i>			
London	74	86	80
East of England	70	83	77
South East	69	80	75
South West	64	79	72
East Midlands	59	76	67
North West	60	73	67
West Midlands	59	75	67
North East	55	77	66
Yorks & Humber	56	72	64
England	69	73	71
Wales	58	78	68
Scotland	54	71	62
UK	68	72	70

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>	60	30	10

7. Calibration

Weights are used in the analysis of the Opinions 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 the household analysis, the weights are influenced by the characteristics of all the members of the household.

As 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

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
- .. Insufficient sample size to produce reliable 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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Table 1: Households with Internet access by country and region

	Internet access		
	2007	2008	2009
<i>Per cent</i>			
London	69	73	80
East of England	67	70	77
South East	65	74	75
South West	69	67	72
East Midlands	59	61	67
West Midlands	56	61	67
North West	56	56	67
North East	52	54	66
Yorks & Humber	52	62	64
England	61	66	71
Wales	57	67	68
Scotland	60	61	62
UK	61	65	70

Base: All UK households

Table 2: UK household Internet access

	2006	2007	2008	2009
<i>Per cent</i>				
Broadband connection	40	51	56	63
Dial up connection	17	10	9	7
No Internet connection	43	39	35	30

Base: All UK households

Table 3: UK household Internet connections

	2006	2007	2008	2009
<i>Per cent</i>				
Broadband connection	69	84	86	90
Dial up connection	31	16	14	10

Base: UK households with Internet access

Table 4: When adults last used the Internet

		Within the last 3 months			More than 3 months			Never used		
		2007	2008	2009	2007	2008	2009	2007	2008	2009
<i>Per cent</i>	Men	71	75	80	5	4	3	23	20	17
	Women	62	66	72	6	5	4	31	29	24
	All	67	71	76	6	5	4	27	25	21
Age groups	16-24	90	93	96	6	..	..	4	..	..
	25-44	80	87	92	6	5	3	13	8	5
	45-54	75	78	81	6	..	..	19	17	16
	55-64	59	63	72	5	..	4	35	33	24
	65+	24	26	30	5	5	5	71	70	64

Base: UK adults

Table 5: Frequency of use of the Internet

		Every day or almost every day			At least once a week (but not every day)			Once a month or less		
		2007	2008	2009	2007	2008	2009	2007	2008	2009
<i>Per cent</i>	Men	70	73	75	22	20	19	8	7	6
	Women	63	66	71	26	24	22	12	11	8
	All	67	69	73	24	22	20	10	9	7
Age groups	16-24	70	77	86	22	19	12	8	..	..
	25-44	70	72	75	22	19	20	7	8	5
	45-54	67	65	71	23	27	20	10	8	9
	55-64	60	64	65	29	25	24	11	11	11
	65+	46	54	52	29	27	32	24	19	16

Base: UK adults who accessed the Internet in the last three months

Table 6: Internet activities by sex

	Men		Women		All	
	2008	2009	2008	2009	2008	2009
<i>Per cent</i>						
Sending/receiving emails	88	90	86	90	87	90
Finding information about goods and services	86	81	81	75	84	78
Using services related to travel and accomodation	66	68	61	70	63	69
Internet banking	51	57	47	52	49	54
Reading or downloading online news, newspapers, magazines	55	57	40	47	48	52
Playing or downloading games, images, films or music	-	49	-	38	-	44
Listening to web radio or watching web TV	-	49	-	36	-	42
Seeking health related information	31	37	37	48	34	42
Uploading self created content	-	42		39	-	40
Posting messages to chat sites, blogs, newsgroups etc	23	40	17	40	20	40
Consulting the Internet with the purpose of learning	35	41	29	33	32	37
Looking for information about education, training or courses	31	34	32	40	31	36
Downloading software	46	47	28	25	37	36
Looking for a job or sending a job application	28	31	23	29	25	30
Telephoning over the Internet/video calls (via webcam)	-	24	-	19	-	21
Selling goods or services over the Internet	23	21	15	16	19	19
Doing an online course	6	10	7	6	7	8

Base: UK adults who accessed the Internet in the last three months

Table 7: Internet activities by age

	16-24	25-44	45-54	55-64	65+	All
	<i>Per cent</i>					
Sending/receiving emails	94	92	88	86	82	90
Finding information about goods and services	64	83	80	81	75	78
Using services related to travel and accomodation	53	75	72	72	65	69
Internet banking	50	61	55	48	43	54
Reading or downloading online news, newspapers, magazines	46	58	52	47	44	52
Playing or downloading games, images, films or music	70	46	35	26	16	44
Listening to web radio or watching web TV	53	46	35	34	25	42
Seeking health related information	31	45	47	44	38	42
Uploading self created content	54	44	34	29	21	40
Posting messages to chat sites, blogs, newsgroups etc	71	45	25	19	..	40
Consulting the Internet with the purpose of learning	41	39	38	32	26	37
Looking for information about education, training or courses	53	38	36	21	15	36
Downloading software	46	39	31	25	25	36
Looking for a job or sending a job application	50	33	27	12	..	30
Telephoning over the Internet/video calls (via webcam)	25	23	19	19	13	21
Selling goods or services over the Internet	19	23	17	13	..	19
Doing an online course	..	9	10	..	..	8

Base: UK adults who accessed the Internet in the last three months

Table 8: Purchasing over the Internet

		Ever purchased ¹			Of those who ever purchased ²					
					Within last 3 months			Over 3 months ago		
		2007	2008	2009	2007	2008	2009	2007	2008	2009
<i>Per cent</i>	Men	58	59	69	80	83	83	20	17	17
	Women	48	52	60	75	80	82	25	20	18
	All	53	55	64	78	81	83	22	19	17
<i>Age group</i>	16-24	68	70	81	74	72	78	26	28	22
	25-44	67	73	82	82	84	86	18	16	14
	45-54	60	60	69	79	85	83	21	15	17
	55-64	44	47	55	74	81	83	26	19	17
	65 plus	15	17	21	69	77	73	31	23	27

¹ Base: All UK adults

² Base: UK adults who had ever bought or ordered goods online

Table 9: Purchases over the Internet by sex

	Male	Female	All
<i>Per cent</i>			
Films, music	52	47	50
Clothes, sports goods	44	54	49
Household goods (eg furniture, toys, etc)	44	50	47
Holiday accommodation (hotel etc)	43	41	42
Books, magazines, newspapers or e-learning material	40	41	41
Other travel arrangements (transport tickets, car hire etc)	41	39	40
Tickets for events	38	35	37
Electronic equipment (including cameras)	35	21	28
Video games software and upgrades	30	22	26
Food or groceries	15	30	22
Other computer software and upgrades	26	13	20
Share purchases, insurance policies and other financial services	21	12	17
Telecommunication services (eg TV, broadband subscriptions etc)	19	9	14
Computer Hardware	19	9	14
Other	7	4	5
Medicine	5	5	5

Base: UK adults who had bought or ordered online in the last 12 months

Table 10: Purchases over the Internet by age

	16-24	25-44	45-54	55-64	65+	All
<i>Per cent</i>						
Films, music	53	57	48	39	21	50
Clothes, sports goods	61	51	44	36	35	49
Household goods (eg furniture, toys, etc)	29	54	49	45	47	47
Holiday accommodation (hotel etc)	23	46	46	51	47	42
Books, magazines, newspapers or e-learning material	28	43	41	47	50	41
Other travel arrangements (transport tickets, car hire etc)	24	42	45	49	40	40
Tickets for events	30	41	38	36	26	37
Electronic equipment (including cameras)	26	31	25	28	21	28
Video games software and upgrades	35	28	25	15	..	26
Food or groceries	14	28	22	19	..	22
Other computer software and upgrades	18	20	20	20	21	20
Share purchases, insurance policies and other financial services	..	18	19	18	..	17
Telecommunication services (eg TV, broadband subscriptions etc)	..	15	16	15	..	14
Computer hardware	..	13	18	14	..	14
Other	..	4	..	..	..	5
Medicine	..	4	..	..	..	5

Base: UK adults who had bought or ordered online in the last 12 months

Table 11: Value of purchases over the Internet

	2007	2008	2009
<i>Per cent</i>			
£100 or less	34	34	34
£101 - £200	20	21	23
£201 - £500	24	23	21
More than £500	21	22	20

Base: UK adults who had bought or ordered online in the last 12 months

Table 12: Do purchasers read conditions of sale?

	Male	Female	All
<i>Per cent</i>			
Always	26	30	28
Sometimes	47	49	48
Never	27	21	24

Base: UK adults who had bought or ordered online in the last 12 months

Table 13: Were problems encountered when purchasing over the Internet?

	Male	Female	All
<i>Per cent</i>			
Yes	14	11	13
No	86	89	87

Base: UK adults who had bought or ordered online in the last 12 months

Table 14: Reasons for purchasing over the Internet

	Very much	Some extent	Not at all
<i>Per cent</i>			
Convenience	79	18	3
Easy to use the website	61	32	7
Opportunity to buy products not available in my area	61	29	10
Lower prices	60	32	8
Wider choice of goods	52	38	10
Certainty about legal rights and guarantees	33	46	21
Certification of quality of website services	32	42	26
Opinion rating and feedback	32	44	24

Base: UK adults who had bought or ordered online in the last 12 months

Table 15: Reasons for not purchasing over the Internet

	2009
<i>Per cent</i>	
No need	46
Prefer to shop in person	35
Payment security concerns	26
Privacy concerns	18
Lack of skills	12
Trust concerns	8

Base: UK adults who purchased or ordered goods or services over a year ago, or never purchased online

Table 16: Where adults have accessed the Internet

	2007	2008	2009
<i>Per cent</i>			
Home	87	90	94
Place of work (other than home)	44	44	43
Another person's home	19	20	28
Place of education	12	14	15
Hotspot (wi-fi)	2	5	6
Internet cafe	4	5	6
Public library	4	4	5

Base: UK adults who accessed the Internet in the last three months

Table 17: Mobile Internet connections

	Male	Female	All
<i>Per cent</i>			
Mobile phone via GPRS	21	15	18
Mobile phone via UMTS, HSPDA (3G, 3G+)	11	5	8
Handheld computer (palmtop, PDA)	7	..	5
Portable computer (laptop) via wireless connection away from home/work	29	23	26
None of the above	54	66	60

Base: UK adults who accessed the Internet in the last three months

Table 18: Digital tv access by region

	2009
<i>Per cent</i>	
North West	89
North East	87
South East	86
West Midlands	86
Yorks & Humber	86
East of England	85
South West	85
East Midlands	84
London	81
Wales	90
England	85
Scotland	85
UK	86

Base: All UK Households

**Table 19: Internet access in households by
Individuals' highest educational qualification**

	2008	2009
<i>Per cent</i>		
Degree or higher	93	95
Higher education	86	89
A Level	89	88
GCE / GCSE A-C	82	84
GCSE D-G	74	78
No qualification	56	52

Base: UK adults under 70

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