Adults' media use and attitudes

Report 2017

Research Document

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About this document

This report is published as part of our media literacy duties. It provides research that looks at media use, attitudes and understanding, and how these change over time, with a particular focus on those groups that tend not to participate digitally. The report covers TV, radio, mobile, games, and the internet, with a particular focus on the latter.

The report focuses on the current wave of research which was conducted in autumn 2016 and any key changes compared to 2015.

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Section 1

Executive summary

The *Adults' Media Use and Attitudes Report* highlights the roles that media play in people's daily lives. This is the 12th *Adults' Media Use and Attitudes Report* to be published, providing a valuable longitudinal study looking at media use, attitudes and understanding, and how these change over time. This year, a number of new research questions have been introduced and as a result this report includes a more in-depth exploration of the critical understanding of media and digital participation.

The report is part of our fulfilment of Ofcom's responsibility to promote, and carry out research into, media literacy, placed on Ofcom by the Communications Act 2003. Media literacy enables people to have the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to make full use of the opportunities presented both by traditional and by new communications services. Media literacy also helps people to manage content and communications, and protect themselves and their families from the potential risks associated with using these services.

Covering TV, radio, mobile, games, and the internet, with a particular focus on those groups that tend not to participate digitally, this report primarily draws on data gathered from the annual Adults' Media Literacy Tracker survey. This survey is based on interviews with 1,846 adults aged 16 and over in November and December 2016. This year, for the first time, this is supplemented with data from another Ofcom research study, the Technology Tracker survey in 2017,[1] based on 3743 interviews with adults aged 16 and over in January and February 2017. As a result, there are some differences in the year-on-year comparisons contained in this report.

This report also includes, within the annex, an analysis of adults' television viewing habits, using data from BARB 2016 (the UK's television measurement panel) and the frequency of adult internet users' visits to the most popular web properties, using data from comScore (2016).

Published alongside this report are two further media literacy reports:

- *The 2016 Media Lives* report is a 12-year ethnographic video study which aims to put a human face to the data. The study tracks a small number of individuals (19 in this year's study) in terms of how their relationships with digital media evolve – how media fit into their daily lives, what motivates them to adopt new technology and learn new skills, their usage habits and levels of understanding, and their concerns about media.

- *The Internet Citizens Report* draws on a range of quantitative sources to give an overview of people's online use of services and content in a range of citizen-orientated areas.

This executive summary draws together the findings from all these reports to provide an over-arching narrative on adults' media experience in 2016.

[1] The research in the Technology Tracker takes place across two waves per year and the data included in this report (going back to 2014) relates to the first wave that is conducted every year.

Summary of key themes

In this section, we explore a number of key themes drawn from both the qualitative and quantitative data, to create a rich picture of people's changing media use, attitudes and understanding.

Older people are embracing smart and social technology
While use of smartphones by people aged 65 and over is still lower than for other age groups, it increased sharply between 2015 and 2016, both for those aged 65-74 (39% vs. 28%) and for over-75s (15% vs. 8%); the only two age groups for which use has increased. Users aged 65-74 are also twice as likely in 2016 as in 2015 to nominate their mobile phone as the device they would miss the most (20% vs. 10%).

Tablets, smart TVs and streaming media players like Apple TV, Amazon Fire TV and Chromecast are also becoming more popular among these age groups. Adults aged 65-74 are more likely in 2016 than in 2015 to have a tablet (51% vs. 39%), and those aged 75+ are also more likely to have a tablet (30% vs. 19% in 2015) and to use one (27% vs. 15% in 2015). Both age groups are more likely to use a smart TV (27% vs. 16% for 65-74s and 12% vs. 4% for over-75s) and to have and use a streaming media player.

There has also been a significant increase in the number of internet users aged 75 and over embracing social media, with 41% having a social media profile in 2016, compared to 19% in 2015.

Smartphones are becoming an essential tool for navigating daily life…
The results of both the qualitative and quantitative research show that the mobile phone is the device that the majority of people would miss the most (41%). The qualitative research also indicates a growing reliance on smartphones, as mobile internet becomes more accessible and the smartphone is able to fulfil the role of various other devices.

The use of smartphones to go online has not increased since 2015, but because adults are now less likely to go online via a computer (62% vs. 71% in 2015), they are proportionally more likely to use a smartphone than a computer to go online (66% vs. 62%). There has also been an increase in people going online via tablets (49% vs. 45%) and streaming media players (9% vs. 5%). One in four internet users (24%) now *only* use a device other than a computer to go online.

Smartphones are particularly important for newer users of the internet (those who first started using the internet within the last five years). Fifty-eight per cent of newer users ever use a smartphone to go online and 21% only go online via a smartphone. More than half of newer users (55%) only go online using a device other than a computer.

Both the qualitative and the quantitative research found that people were using technology, and in particular their smartphones, for more activities. For instance, the quantitative data shows that compared to 2015, smartphone users are more likely to say they have ever used their phone as a ticket or boarding pass or to gain entry to an event (41% vs. 33%) or to make a contactless payment (28% vs. 20%), and that they use their phone on a weekly basis for contactless payments (14% vs. 9%). However, the more conventional core activities of phoning and texting are still valued: when asked which smartphone activities users would miss the most, the majority of users (69%) said phoning and/or texting.

Although the smartphone is valued for its flexibility, some participants in the qualitative study also talked about sometimes feeling over-dependent on them, including feeling compelled to regularly 'check' their phone, even when in company, or feeling anxious when their phone was not close by.

…but some things are still more difficult on a smartphone
Although many participants in the qualitative study reported a growing preference for their smartphones as their device of choice, there are certain activities they prefer not to do on a smartphone, such as watching TV or doing school or college work.

These findings are also supported in the quantitative research, where the majority of smartphone users (69%) agree that completing forms and working on documents is more difficult on a smartphone, compared to a desktop or laptop, with close to half (46%) agreeing strongly. Six in ten of all internet users who ever go online to complete Government processes say they mostly use a laptop/ netbook or desktop computer for this purpose (60% vs. 68% in 2015), compared with around one in six (17%) who say they mostly use a smartphone to do so.

Managing mobile data can be a challenge
For many participants in the qualitative research, mobile data is an increasingly important consideration when selecting a mobile phone package, but a number of them expressed confusion about how much data is required for different activities. As a result, they are using a range of strategies to try to manage their mobile data use, including changing contracts, buying top-ups, not doing certain activities online or only using public Wi-Fi.

The quantitative data shows that while a majority of all users (63%) say they never use up their data allowance, one in ten (11%) say they do this very often, or in most months. 16-24s (50%) and 25-34s (48%) are more likely than smartphone users overall (36%) to say they ever use up their data allowance. Two in three smartphone users (67%) say that they ever use public Wi-Fi; this incidence is higher among 16-24s (76%) and lower among over-65s (53%).

People are using a broader range of social media to communicate with different groups
While the number of adults who have a social media profile (76% of all internet users) did not increase overall between 2015 and 2016, people are using a wider range of social media services. Since 2015, social media users are more likely to say they have a profile on six sites or apps: WhatsApp (45% vs. 28%), Instagram (31% vs. 22%), YouTube (30% vs. 22%), Snapchat (23% vs. 12%), Google+ (16% vs. 11%) and Pinterest (12% vs. 7%). Facebook is still the dominant social media provider, but fewer social media users now *only* have a Facebook account (43% in 2015 to 32% in 2016).

Most people say they are exposed to opinions and views different to their own on social media
Sharing with friends and family is an important route to discovering new information and content. More than six in ten users of video-sharing sites say that friends or family members tell them about content or forward it to them (62%). Just under half (49%) of viewers of on-demand content say they choose content based on recommendations by friends or family. A number of participants in the qualitative research also talked about social media as an important way of sharing information among friends, family or their local community. Social media also exposes people to different opinions and viewpoints, with the quantitative study finding that 85% of social media users saying that they sometimes, or often, see views they disagree with.

However, not everyone is happy to post or share information. More than four in ten (44%) social media users agree that they are put off from posting content because of the potential for abusive comments or responses. Some of the older participants in the qualitative research are concerned about the impact of sharing content on their reputation among friends and family, and some of the younger people about the impact on future job prospects. But deciding what to share is not always a considered process: three in ten (30%)

who share articles on Twitter or Facebook agree that they often do this without fully reading the content first.

There has been a slight decline in trust in social media content
Many are thinking carefully about the trustworthiness of the content they encounter. Since 2015, social media users have become less trusting of the content they see on social media. One in four (25%) disagree strongly with the statement: "When I visit social media websites or apps I tend to trust what I read or see", up from 18% in 2015. A number of people in the qualitative study said they were more likely to trust content shared via 'closed' networks, such as WhatsApp, than via more open forums like Twitter and Facebook.

People are opting to communicate via private group discussions
There has been an increase in the number of internet users who use instant messaging services (57% in 2017[2] vs. 53% in 2016). The frequency of using instant messaging also increased; 46% of users said they had done this in the previous week, compared to 41% in 2016.

As well as the immediacy and flexibility of instant messaging services, a feature that appealed to some participants in the qualitative research was the opportunity to participate in 'closed' discussion groups based on relationship or interest groups (such as family, work colleagues, school friends, or communities of interest). Participants perceived that these groups offer more privacy when sharing content, reflecting their concerns (noted above) about who could see the content they shared. In the quantitative research four in ten social media users (42%) said they post comments in private group discussions.

Despite a growing awareness of privacy issues, around one in five don't consider privacy or data implications before posting on social media
The majority of internet users (72%) say that they are confident in their ability to manage access to their personal data online. The qualitative research participants' awareness of privacy issues has increased over the past few years, and a number of them are now employing tactics to manage these concerns, including managing their privacy settings, using multiple email addresses, and in some cases providing false information to companies to avoid receiving spam calls or emails.

In relation to posting content on social media, 22% of users say they rarely or never consider privacy or data security implications before they post content like photos.

Seven in ten (70%) internet users who register their details online make at least one of five recommended checks they are asked about, although 24% use less robust measures to decide whether to register their details online, including 11% who use the site regardless, if it is the only way to get the product or service they want or need. More than one in three internet users agree that they are happy to provide personal information online as long as they get what they want (35%).

A third of internet users who make online purchases say they don't check to see if the site is secure by looking for the padlock symbol or 'https' in the web address before entering their card details.

[2] These data are taken from the Technology Tracker study: the most recent data available relate to 2017

Most internet users make some checks to judge the accuracy of factual information online

Respondents are prompted with a range of six checks they could make to judge the accuracy of information online; the majority (67%) say they make one or more of these checks. More than four in ten (45%) say they look at other websites to see if the same information appears on all of them, one in three (32%) check the website address to see if it looks genuine, one in four (25%) check the credibility of the information (such as the author's name or link to original publication). Users aged 65-74 are less likely than average to make any of these checks (53% vs 67%) while 16-24s are more likely than average to make any of these checks (75% vs. 67%). Three in ten of all users (31%) make no checks.

But there is a continuing gap between confidence, knowledge and behaviour in understanding how the internet works

As in 2015, most internet users describe themselves as confident online (89%), although there has been a shift away from internet users describing themselves as 'very confident' (52% vs. 59% in 2015), with more saying they are 'fairly confident' (37% vs. 29% in 2015). However, this online confidence does not necessarily translate into an understanding of the way the internet operates.

Although 97% of internet users have used search engines as a source of online information there is a continuing lack of understanding about how search engines work, and just under half of all adults do not know how search engines are funded (47%).

When asked about the accuracy and bias of the results on search engines, the majority (58%) of search engine users correctly stated that some of the websites listed would be accurate or unbiased while others would not be. However, one in five adults (21%) say that if results are listed by the search engine, the websites will be accurate/ unbiased, demonstrating a lack of critical understanding about how search engines work and the provenance of content.

While the majority of internet users are confident they can recognise advertising online, only half of search engine users could recognise adverts on Google

A majority (84%) of internet users are either very or fairly confident that they can recognise advertising online. However, when shown an example of the results returned by Google for a particular online search and with their attention drawn to the adverts that appeared in these results, just half of adults (48%) only gave the correct response by identifying them as sponsored links, despite their being distinguished by a box with the word 'Ad' in it.

More than half of internet users (56%) are aware of personalised advertising, in that they are aware that other people might see adverts that are different to those they see. More than one in four internet users (27%) state that everyone would see the same adverts, with 17% unsure. Awareness is lower for internet users aged 65-74 (40%) and 75+ (28%).

Users of video-sharing sites were prompted with a list of possible reasons why vloggers might endorse a product. Seven in ten users (72%) were aware that vloggers might be paid by a company to say favourable things about a product or brand, and 28% did not select this option, of whom 12% were unsure. This echoes concerns raised in the qualitative study; some participants felt it wasn't always easy to tell when a YouTuber or social media celebrity was being paid to endorse products.

Section 2

Key quantitative findings

This section is intended to be used as a quick reference guide to some of the key quantitative findings in this report.

The key findings are presented on a chapter-by-chapter basis.

2.1 Digital media take-up and use

Since 2015 there has been a decrease in access to and use of a desktop, laptop or netbook computer in the home, particularly among 16-34s

- Two-thirds of adults in the UK use a computer, whether a desktop, laptop or netbook (66%). This represents a decrease since 2015, from 73%, and is attributable to younger adults (16-34s) and those in DE households.
- Adults are also more likely than in 2015 to own tablets, digital video recorders (DVRs), smart TVs and streaming media players like Apple TV, Now TV box, Amazon Fire TV, Chromecast and Roku.

A quarter of adults (24%) now *only* use a device other than a computer to go online; this is attributable to 16-34s

- Adults are now less likely to go online via computers (62% vs. 71% in 2015), and are now more likely to use smartphones (66%) than computers to go online.
- Tablets are now more likely to be used to go online (49% vs. 45% in 2015), as are streaming media players (9% vs. 5%). Games consoles or players are now less likely than in 2015 to be used for this purpose (11% vs. 15%).
- A quarter of adults (24%) now only go online through devices other than a computer, up from 16% in 2015. This incidence increases to 31% for 16-24s, to 37% for 25-34s and to 33% for adults in DE households.
- Eight per cent of adults only go online through a smartphone, up from 6% since 2015.

People aged over 65 are more likely than in 2015 to use a smartphone, and to say that the mobile phone is the device they would miss the most

- A majority (72%) of all adults aged 16 and over use a smartphone and those aged under 55 are more likely than average to use one.
- While a minority of 65-74s (39%) and over-75s (15%) use a smartphone, both these incidences have increased since 2015 (from 28% and 8% respectively). These are the only two age groups that have seen growth in smartphone use since last year.
- Four in ten adults (41%) say their mobile phone is the device they would miss the most if it were taken away. Since 2015, 65-74s are now twice as likely to nominate their mobile phone as the device they would miss the most (20% vs. 10% in 2015); this may be driven by the increase in smartphone use among this age group.

2.2 Engagement and participation

Four in ten internet users over 75 now have a social media profile or account.

- Three in four (76%) internet users have a social media profile, unchanged since 2015.
- Internet users over 75 are more likely than in 2015 to have a social media profile (41% vs. 19%).

Although Facebook is still the dominant social media provider, fewer social media users now *only* have a Facebook account

- Ninety-five per cent of social media site users have a profile/ account on Facebook, unchanged since 2015, meaning that it remains the most popular social media site.
- Compared to 2015 there has been growth in use of WhatsApp (45% vs. 28%), Instagram (31% vs. 22%), YouTube (30% vs. 22%), Snapchat (23% vs. 12%), Google+ (16% vs. 11%) and Pinterest (12% vs. 7%). As such, the incidence of *only* having a profile or account on Facebook stands at one in three (32%), down from 43% in 2015.

Social media provides people with the opportunity to experience different opinions and viewpoints

- The majority of social media users (56%) say they sometimes see views they disagree with, and a further three in ten (29%) say they often see views they disagree with.
- One in three adults (32%) with a social media site profile say they have ever shared opinions on these sites with people they don't know, and the majority of this group (88%) say they are happy to share these opinions using their real name.

The potential for abusive comments or responses is more likely to deter women from making comments or posting content on social media

- Just over four in ten (44%) social media users agree that they are put off from posting content because of the potential for abusive comments or responses. Women are more likely than men to agree (49% vs. 38%).

More than four in ten users say they have seen something that has upset or offended them on social media in the past 12 months: the majority took some form of action about this

- More than four in ten (43%) social media users aged 16+ say they have seen something offensive or upsetting on social media in the past 12 months, with 17% saying this has happened more frequently than once or twice. Six in ten (62%) of these users took some form of action as a result of seeing the upsetting content; the most popular action was to report it to the website through the 'report or block content' feature (40%).
- Women are more likely than men to say they have seen something offensive or upsetting (52% vs. 32%) and are also more likely to say they have seen this more often than a couple of times (20% vs.13%).

Smartphone users are more likely than in 2015 to have used their phones for transactional purposes.

- Four in ten smartphone users have used their phone as a ticket or boarding pass or as an entry ticket to an event (41% vs. 33% in 2016) and nearly three in ten (28%) have used their phone for contactless payments (20% in 2015).

While computers are still the device most often used for completing Government processes online, this is less likely now than in 2015

- Six in ten (60%) of all internet users who ever go online to complete Government processes say they mostly use a laptop/ netbook or desktop computer to do this, a decrease from 68% in 2015.
- Around one in five (22%) internet users mostly use a tablet to complete Government processes, compared to 16% in 2015, while the number who say they mostly use a smartphone is unchanged at 17%.

2.3 Content

Search engines are by far the most popular source for looking for information online

- Internet users are prompted with a list of eight possible sources for looking for information online. Search engines are the only source used by a majority (97%) of internet users. Four in ten have ever used Wikipedia (41%), websites with user reviews such as Amazon, TripAdvisor or OpenTable (40%) or the BBC website (40%), while a similar proportion (37%) say they have ever used a Government or local council website.
- Eight in ten users (80%) who go online to look for information for their leisure time, including cinema and live music, say they are most likely to use search engines for this.
- A similar number of users (79%) who say they go online to look for information relating to work, college or other official tasks say they are most likely to use a search engine for this purpose, while close to one in ten (8%) say they would use a Government or local council website.

Recommendations from family and friends are important for finding content online.

- Half of viewers of on-demand content say they select content to watch based on recommendations from friends or family (49%) and more than three in five of those who use video-sharing sites (like YouTube or Vimeo) say they discover things to watch on these sites based on friends' or family recommendations (62%).
- Family and friends are also a source of online support. The majority of internet users (58%) say if they got stuck or were unsure about how to do something online they would ask a friend or family member for help.

Concerns about what is on television have decreased since 2015

- Adults with a television in the household are less likely than in 2015 to say they have any concerns about what is on television (35% vs. 39% in 2015), with concerns about quality of content or repeats, in particular, being less likely in 2016 than in 2015 (16% vs. 21%).
- As in 2014 and 2015, less than one in ten have concerns about advertising/ sponsorship (6%), about diversity in content (5%) or about mistrusting content that they perceive to be fixed/ fake/ biased/ inaccurate (2%).

2.4 Critical understanding

Although the majority of internet users describe themselves as being confident online, around a quarter don't make reliable checks before entering financial details

- Almost nine in ten (89%) internet users describe themselves as confident online. While this overall level of confidence is unchanged since 2015, there has been a decrease in the numbers of internet users describing themselves as 'very confident' (52% vs. 59% in 2015).
- More than seven in ten internet users (72%) say they are confident knowing how to manage who has access to their personal data online. Compared to the average (40%), 16-24s (60%) and 25-34s (47%) are more likely to say they are 'very confident'. While 8% of internet users are 'not at all' confident in this aspect of their internet use, this is more likely for 65-74s (18%) and over-75s (17%).
- One in four internet users (24%) don't use reliable checks before entering their personal details online. One-third (33%) of internet users who buy things online don't check that the site looks secure by checking for the padlock symbol or 'https' before entering financial details, with 5% saying they enter their details whenever required, and 11% do so if it's the only way to get the item they want to buy.

The majority of social media users say they consider potential data or privacy implications before posting content.

- Around seven in ten social media users who post photos, or 'tag' people, and 68% of social media users who post comments, or 'check-in' at locations, say they always or sometimes consider any privacy or data security implications of doing this. For each of these activities, users aged 16-24 are less likely than average to say they always consider the security implications (26% vs. 36%).

More than four in five internet users are confident they can identify advertising online, but fewer are aware of personalised advertising

- A majority (84%) of internet users are either very or fairly confident that they can recognise advertising online. Internet users aged 55-64 (12%), 65-74 (15%) and 75+ (18%) are more likely to say they are 'not confident' identifying advertising online.
- More than half of internet users (56%) say they are aware of personalised advertising while around a quarter (27%) are not and 17% are unsure. Awareness is lower for internet users aged 65-74 (40%) and 75+ (28%), and among those in C2 (49%) and DE (48%) households.

Half of search engine users recognise adverts on Google but 28% of adults who use video-sharing sites don't realise that vloggers might be paid to endorse products

- When shown an example of the results returned by Google for a particular online search and with their attention drawn to the adverts that appeared in these results, just half of adults (48%) only gave the correct response by identifying them as sponsored links, despite their being distinguished by a box with the word 'Ad' in it.
- Seven in ten users of video-sharing sites (72%) are aware that vloggers might be being paid by the company to say favourable things, when prompted with a list of possible reasons why vloggers might endorse a product. Twenty-eight per cent did not select this option, of whom 12% were unsure.

Most internet users make some checks to judge the accuracy of factual information online, but this is a challenge for some

- Respondents were prompted with a range of six checks that they could make to judge the accuracy of information online. Two in three internet users (67%) say they validate the accuracy of the factual information they find online by making at least one of the six checks.
- No single check is made by the majority of internet users, but close to half (45%) say they check other websites to see if the same information appears on them all, while one in three (32%) check that the website address looks genuine. One in four (25%) check the credibility of the information (such as the author's name or link to original publication). Other checks were made by less than one in four internet users.
- Thirty-one per cent do not make any of the checks asked about. Users aged 65-74 are less likely than average to make any of these checks (53% vs 67%) while 16-24s are more likely than average to make any of these checks (75% vs. 67%).

One in five adults say that if results are listed by the search engine, the websites will be accurate/ unbiased.

- The majority (58%) of search engine users correctly state that some of the websites listed on a search engine results page will be accurate/ unbiased while others will not be. However, one in five adults (21%) say that if results are listed by the search engine, the websites will be accurate/ unbiased.
- Newer users of the internet are less likely to give the correct response to this question (47% vs. 59%), and are more likely than established users to say that they don't know (12% vs. 4%).

Three in ten users often share links to articles on Twitter or Facebook without fully reading the content first

- Among all who share links to articles on Twitter or Facebook, 30% agree that they often share these articles without fully reading them first, although twice as many disagree (60%).
- Compared to the average, over-55s are more likely to disagree (74% vs. 60%). Women are more likely than men to disagree strongly with this statement (49% vs. 37%).

Social media users are more likely than in 2015 to strongly disagree that they tend to trust the content on social media sites or apps

- As in 2015, adults are more likely to disagree overall (50%) than they are to agree (23%) with the statement: "When I visit social media websites or apps I tend to trust what I read or see". Compared to 2015, however, they are more likely to disagree strongly (25% vs. 18%).

The majority of adults know how television is funded, but knowledge of how digital services are funded is not as widespread

- The majority of adults are aware how television programmes are mainly funded: 81% are aware that the licence fee is the main source of funding for BBC television programmes and 73% are aware that advertising is the main source of funding for television programmes on the PSB commercial channels.
- Younger adults (16-34s) are less likely to be aware, compared to the average: 57% of those aged 16-24 and 73% of 25-34s know how BBC programmes are mainly funded and 54% of 16-24s and 59% of 25-34s know how programmes on the commercial stations are mainly funded.
- Fewer people are aware of how the BBC website (63%) is mainly funded. Compared to the average, those aged 55-64s (71%) and ABs (72%) are more likely to know while those aged 16-24s (44%), over-75s (55%) and DEs (54%) are less likely to know.
- Similarly, just over half of people (54%) are aware that the licence fee is the main source of funding for the i-Player service. Awareness is lower among 16-24s (42%) and over-75s (36%). Those aged 45-54 (61%) and 55-64 (63%) are more likely to give the correct response.
- Forty-four per cent of adults are aware that the main source of funding for YouTube is advertising, increasing to 55% among users of video-sharing sites.
- Awareness of how search engines are mainly funded increased from 46% to 53% between 2015 and 2016.

2.5 Newer, narrow and non-users of the internet

Newer users tend to be older, less confident, and use the internet less than established users, but are more likely to only use a smartphone to go online.

- 'Newer users' are defined as those who first went online less than five years ago. One in ten of all internet users (9%) are newer users – this rises to 21% for those aged 75 and over and to 14% for adults in C2 or DE households.
- Compared to 'established' internet users (those who first went online five years ago or more), newer users are twice as likely to only use a smartphone to go online (21% vs. 8%) and six times as likely to only use a tablet to go online (18% vs. 3%). They also say they spend less time online (11.9 vs. 24.1 hours), are less confident internet users and are more likely to only use websites or apps they have used previously. Newer users are less likely to be aware of the main sources of funding of online services such as the BBC website or iPlayer service, search engine websites or the YouTube website. They are also less likely to be aware that the results returned by search engines may contain

inaccurate or biased information, and less likely to recognise the sponsored content returned by search engines as advertising.

One-third of narrow internet users say they go online less often than every day

- Narrow users are defined as those who carry out between one and four of the 15 types of online use that we ask internet users about. They comprise 28% of all internet users. Those aged 65 and over are more likely than average to be narrow users (44% of 65-74s and 51% of over-75s). Internet users in C2 or DE households are also more likely than average to be narrow users (32% for C2s and 40% for DEs).
- Narrow users are less likely than average to watch on-demand television overall, to watch content on broadcaster catch-up services or to watch content via a mobile phone or online.
- Compared to the average, narrow users are less likely to say they go online every day (64%); they are more likely to say they go online less frequently, whether several times a week (21%) or at least once a week (10%). As such, one in three (36%) narrow users say they go online less frequently than every day.

The majority of non-users feel that nothing would encourage them to go online in the next 12 months.

- Fourteen per cent of adults in the UK are non-users of the internet, unchanged since 2015. One in three (35%) adults aged 65-74 are non-users, as are a majority (56%) of those aged 75 and over. A quarter of adults in DE households (27%) are non-users.
- Three-quarters (75%) of non-users say that nothing would prompt them to go online in the next 12 months; the most common reason for non-use of the internet was that respondents felt that it was 'not for people like them/ they didn't see the need' (43%). However, nearly four in ten (38%) of non-users say they have asked someone to use the internet on their behalf in the last year.

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Section 4

Introduction

4.1 Ofcom's duties

The promotion of media literacy is a responsibility placed on Ofcom by Section 11 of the Communications Act 2003. Under Section 14 (6a) of the Act we have a duty to make arrangements for the carrying out of research into the matters mentioned in Section 11 (1).

What is media literacy?

Media literacy enables people to have the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to make full use of the opportunities presented by communications services. Media literacy also helps people to manage content and communications, and to protect themselves and their families from the potential risks associated with using these services.

Ofcom's definition of media literacy is:

"The ability to use, understand and create media and communications in a variety of contexts".

The objectives of this research are:

- To provide a rich picture of the different elements of media literacy across the internet, television, radio, games and mobile phones.
- To identify emerging issues and skills gaps that help to target stakeholders' resources for the promotion of media literacy.

4.2 Research methodology and analysis

This report is designed to give a detailed but accessible overview of media literacy among adults aged 16 and over, with demographic analysis by age, gender and socio-economic group.

It draws on the data from the latest wave of the Adults' Media Literacy Tracker with adults aged 16 and over. The 2016 quantitative survey was conducted by Saville Rossiter-Base among 1,846 adults in-home using a CAPI (computer-aided personal interviews) methodology between November and December 2016. In this report comparisons are made between the 2016 data and the previous wave of research from 2015. In addition, trends are shown from previous waves of research in the charts, for reference.

This report also draws on additional data from another Ofcom research study - the Technology Tracker survey in 2017[3]. This quantitative study, also conducted by Saville Rossiter-Base, interviewed 3743 adults aged 16 and over between January and February 2017 (of whom 3221 were internet users). As the most recent wave of this research took place in 2017, where we report on data from this study, comparisons are made between 2017 and 2016. Where the data is taken from the Technology Tracker survey, this will be mentioned in the narrative and flagged in the source notes under any relevant chart.

[3] The research in the Technology Tracker takes place across two waves per year and the data included in this report (going back to 2014) relate to the first wave that is conducted every year.

All previous media use and attitudes reports can be found at https://www.ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/media-literacy-research and the sample sizes and fieldwork periods are as follows:

Report published	Sample size Adults aged 16+	Fieldwork months (Year that data are reported on)
2016	1,841	1 wave: Sep-Oct 2015
2015	1,890	1 wave: Oct- Nov 2014
2014	1,642	1 wave: Oct-Nov 2013
2013	1,805	1 wave: Sep--Nov 2012
2012	1,823	1 wave: Sep-Oct 2011
2011	2,117	2 waves: Apr-May & Sep-Oct 2010
2010	1,824	2 waves: Apr-May & Sep-Oct 2009
2008	2,905	1 wave: Oct-Dec 2007
2005	3,244	1 wave: Jun-Aug 2005

Significance testing

Significance testing at the 95% confidence level was carried out, and any findings detailed in this report have been found to be significant to a 95% confidence level. This means that where findings are commented on, there is only a 5% or smaller probability that the difference between the samples is by chance.

Between 2016 and 2017 the Technology Tracker changed from a survey administered using a pencil and paper approach (PAPI) to one administered through a tablet (CAPI). As this could affect the results shown, any difference between 2016 and 2017 has been tested at the 99% level, meaning that there is only a 1% probability that the difference is by chance.

Statistically significant findings between 2015 and 2016 (for the Media Literacy Tracker) and between 2016 and 2017 (for the Technology Tracker) are indicated by arrows in the figures in the report. In addition to reporting on differences over time, we look at adults in the different age groups and socio-economic groups, and compare these to adults overall in 2016, to see if there are any significant differences within these sub-groups. We also report on differences between men and women.

Take-up figures

The take-up figures in this report give useful information to contextualise people's media literacy-related behaviour and attitudes. Official all-UK Ofcom take-up figures, based on the data from the Technology Tracker survey, can be found in the annual CMR (*Communications Market Report*) published each summer. The latest publication can be found here: https://www.ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/cmr/cmr16

Digital media take-up and use

5.1 Section overview

This section looks at UK adults' access to, and personal use of, media devices. It also addresses adults' affinity to the devices they use, in terms of those they would miss the most. It focuses on the devices used to go online, and then details volume of internet use. This is followed by a summary of activities undertaken online (this is expanded upon at a category level in Section 6 and Section 7). This section also documents mobile phone use (smartphones in particular) and looks at how smartphone users manage their data use.

5.2 Key findings

- Compared to 2015, adults are less likely to have access to and to use a computer at home - whether a desktop, laptop or netbook. At the same time, devices such as tablets, digital video recorders (DVRs), smart TVs and streaming media players are now more likely to be owned and used at home.

- The decline in both access to and use of a computer at home is attributable to younger adults (16-34s), those in DE households and both men and women.

- Compared to 2015, ownership of and use of a tablet has increased among adults aged 25-34, 55-64 and 75+, as well as among adults in C2 and DE households, and men.

- Overall use of a mobile phone (90%) is unchanged compared to 2015, as is use of a smartphone (72%). There has also been no change in either of these incidences among adults aged 16-64, or by socio-economic group. Adults aged 65-74 are, however, now more likely to use a smartphone (39% vs. 28% in 2015), as are those aged 75+ (15% vs. 8%).

- A majority of smartphone users (69%) say making calls or sending texts are the activities they would most miss using their smartphone for. Compared to this average, younger users aged 16-34 are less likely to say this, while older users, aged 45 and over, are more likely. While one in eight smartphone users say they would most miss checking social media or messaging people (12%), this is twice as likely to be mentioned by 16-24s (24%).

- Mobile phones are still the device that people say they would miss the most and this continues to be true among adults in age groups from 16 to 54. Those aged 55+ continue to say they would miss their TV set the most. Compared to 2015, however, 65-74s are twice as likely to say they would most miss their mobile phone (20% vs. 10% in 2015). This could be due to their increased use of a smartphone in the past year.

- In 2016, 86% of adults go online, which is unchanged compared to 2015 (87%).

- Use of smartphones to go online has not increased since 2015, but because adults are now less likely to go online via computers (62% vs. 71% in 2015), smartphones (66%) are now more likely to be used to go online than computers (62%).

- Tablets are now more likely to be used to go online (49% vs. 45% in 2015) as are streaming media players (9% vs. 5%). Games consoles or players are now less likely to be used for this purpose, compared to last year (11% vs. 15%).

- These differences in the devices used to go online mean that a quarter of adults (24%) now only go online through devices other than a computer, an increase from 16% in 2015. This incidence increases to 31% for 16-24s, to 37% for 25-34s and to 33% for adults in DE households. The increase between 2015 and 2016 is attributable to younger adults (16-34s) as well as to all four socio-economic groups and both men and women.

- Eight per cent of adults say they only use a smartphone to go online, which is more likely than in 2015 (6%), and 4% of adults only use a tablet to go online, unchanged since last year.

- There has been no change in the overall self-reported volume of internet use per week; UK adults spend on average 22.9 hours online. Younger adults (aged 16-34) continue to spend more hours online in a typical week. Although the overall weekly volume of internet use in any location is unchanged, there has been an increase in time spent online at home since 2015 (14.8 vs. 13.4 hours).

- Compared to the average, younger internet users (aged 16-44) are more likely to have undertaken most types of internet use in the previous week, while those aged 55+ are less likely.

- Half of smartphone users (49%) say they ever check how much data they have remaining in their data allowance, and 16-34s are more likely than average to say they have ever used up their data allowance, and to say they do so most months.

- Two in three smartphone users (67%) ever use public Wi-Fi; this is more likely for 16-24s (76%).

5.3 Access to and use of devices in the home

Compared to 2015 there has been a decrease in access to and use of a desktop, laptop or netbook computer in the home, particularly among 16-34s

We ask respondents about a range of media platforms/ devices to find out which, if any, they have access to at home and which they personally use. These measures are shown in Figure 1 by age, and in Figure 2 by socio-economic group and gender.

As shown in Figure 1, a majority of UK adults have access to six devices in the home: a TV set - either standard or smart (97%), a mobile phone (94%), a desktop, laptop or netbook computer (71%), a tablet (63%), a radio set (60%) and a digital video recorder (DVR) (51%). These six devices are also owned by a majority of adults between the ages of 35 and 74. In contrast, while more than half of 16-34s have access to a TV set, a mobile phone, a computer, a tablet or a games console/ games player, only a minority have access to a radio set (45% for 16-24s and 43% for 25-34s) or a DVR (48% and 41% respectively). A majority of those aged 75 and over have access to three devices: a TV set (100%), a mobile phone (73%) and a radio (78%).

Across all adults aged 16 and over, the 'gap' between access and use is greatest for a games console or player - there is a 15 percentage point difference between having one in the home (39%) and using it (24%). The gap for radio is nine percentage points, and for a DVR or tablet seven percentage points. Each of the other devices has a gap of around five percentage points or less.

There are five devices which are used by a majority of adults: a TV set – either standard or smart (93%), a mobile phone (90%), a desktop, laptop or netbook computer (66%), a tablet

(56%) and a radio set (51%). Around two in five (44%) use a DVR and one in four (24%) a games console or games player.

Compared to the average (90%), use of a mobile phone is more likely among 16-24s (98%), 25-34s (98%), 35-44s (97%) and 45-54s (95%), and less likely among 65-74s (75%) and over-75s (60%). Use of any type of TV set (standard or smart) is higher among 55-64s (97%) and the over-75s (99%) and lower among 25-34s (88%) compared to the average (93%).

Use of a desktop/ laptop or netbook (66% overall) is higher among 35-44s (73%) and 45-54s (74%) and lower for 65-74s (57%) and over-75s (35%). Use of a tablet computer (56% overall) is also lower among 65-74s (40%) and over-75s (27%), and higher among 25-34s (66%) and 45-54s (63%).

Use of a radio set is more likely among over-55s (64% of 55-64s, 69% of 65-74s and 67% of over-75s) and less likely among 16-24s (33%) and 25-34s (34%).

Compared to the average (44%), 35-44s are more likely to use a DVR (52%) while over-75s are less likely (29%). Use of a smart TV is more likely than average (36%) among 35-44s (46%) and 45-54s (45%) and less likely among those aged over 65 (27% for 65-74s and 12% for over-75s).

Compared to the average (24%), use of a games console/ games player is more likely among 16-24s (57%) and 25-34s (39%), and less likely among over-45s (16% of 45-54s 10% of 55-64s, 4% of 65-74s and 2% of over-75s).

Use of streaming media players (like Apple TV, Now TV box, Amazon Fire TV, Chromecast, Roku) is more likely among 25-34s (25% vs. 18% for all) and less likely for those aged 65 and over (9% for 65-74s and 3% for over-75s). These oldest adults are also less likely to use wearable technology (like a smartwatch or a fitness tracker) while those aged 35-44 are more likely to use this technology (11% vs. 7%).

The arrows in Figure 1 show changes in access to and use of media in the home compared to 2015. In summary:

- Access to and use of a desktop/ laptop/ netbook computer is lower than in 2015 with this being attributable to the youngest adults (16-34s). For 35-44s access to a desktop, laptop or netbook computer is lower compared to 2015, but use is unchanged.

- Access to and use of a tablet has increased among adults since 2015, with both these measures increasing for 25-34s and 55-64s. Similarly, those aged 75+ are also more likely to have a tablet (30% vs. 19% in 2015) and to use one (27% vs. 15% in 2015).

- While not shown in the chart, adults aged 65-74 are more likely in 2016 than in 2015 to have a tablet (51% vs. 39% in 2015).

- In the past year the increase in access to and use of DVRs and smart TVs at an overall level is also seen for the oldest adults. While not shown in the chart, those aged 65-74 and 75 and over are more likely to use a smart TV (27% vs. 16% for 65-74s and 12% vs. 4% for over-75s) and to have and use a streaming media player. In addition, adults aged 35-44 are also more likely to have access to and use a DVR.

- Streaming media players are now more likely to be in the home and as a result are more likely to be used, with these increases seen across most age groups.

Figure 1: Summary of access to and use of devices/ media at home, by age: 2016

	All adults		16-24		25-34		35-44		45-54		55-64		65-74		75+	
	Access	Use	Access	Use	Access	Use	Access	Use	Access	Use	Access	Use	Access	Use	Access	Use
Mobile phone	94%	90%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	97%	98%	95%	93%	88%	87%	75%	73%↑	60%
Standard TV set	75%	70%	75%	65%	69%	63%	71%↓	63%↓	71%	66%	79%	75%	78%	74%	92%	91%
Computer	71%↓	66%↓	74%↓	69%↓	70%↓	65%↓	78%↓	73%	80%	74%	77%	71%	66%	57%	40%	35%
Tablet	63%↑	56%↑	67%	55%	71%↑	66%↑	71%	60%	70%	63%	64%↑	57%↑	51%↑	40%	30%↑	27%↑
Radio set (DAB or otherwise)	60%	51%	45%	33%	43%	34%	56%	48%	66%	58%	71%	64%	76%	69%	78%	67%
DVR/ Digital Video Recorder	51%↑	44%↑	48%	37%	41%	38%	58%↑	52%↑	56%	49%	59%↑	50%	52%	43%	39%↑	29%↑
Games console /games player	39%	24%	66%	57%	53%	39%	49%	26%	40%	16%	29%↑	10%	11%	4%	4%	2%
Smart TV set	38%↑	36%↑	41%	37%	40%	37%	48%	46%	47%	45%	37%	37%↑	27%	27%↑	14%↑	12%↑
Streaming media player	21%↑	18%↑	26%↑	21%↑	28%↑	25%↑	25%↑	22%↑	24%	18%	18%↑	15%↑	9%↑	9%↑	4%↑	3%↑
Wearable technology	11%	7%	16%	10%	13%	8%	15%	11%	12%	8%	8%	6%	4%	1%	1%	1%
ANY TV	97%	93%	96%	90%	95%	88%	98%	93%	96%	94%	99%	97%	96%	94%	100%	99%↑

A1/ A2. Can you please look at this list and tell me which of these you have at home? (prompted responses, multi-coded)/ And which of these devices that you just said you had at home do you personally ever use, for any purpose? (prompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ (1846 in 2016, 234 aged 16-24, 272 aged 25-34, 313 aged 35-44, 284 aged 45-54, 270 aged 55-64, 218 aged 65-74, 255 aged 75+).
Arrows show significant changes (95% level) between 2015 and 2016. NB – Significance changes for wearable technology are not shown as the examples of this technology included in this definition were not consistent over time.

Adults in DE households are less likely to have access to and therefore to use most devices/ media

Of the ten devices shown in Figure 2, take-up of seven is more likely for adults in AB households, while take-up of the same seven devices is less likely in DE households: desktop/ laptop or netbook computer (88% AB vs. 47% DE), tablet (74% AB vs. 49% DE), radio set (70% AB vs. 51% DE), DVR (63% AB vs. 38% DE), smart TV (49% AB vs. 29% DE), streaming media player (28% vs. 16%) and wearable technology (18% vs. 6%). Adults in DE households are also less likely to have access to a mobile phone. Access to any type of television or to a games console or player does not vary by household socio-economic group, compared to the average.

These differences by socio-economic group in access to devices within the home are also mirrored in the patterns of use of each device.

In 2016, men are more likely than women to say that they have a streaming media player in the home (24% vs. 18%) and are more likely to say they use a smart TV (39% vs. 34%), a games console/ player (31% vs. 17%) or a streaming media player (20% vs. 15%).

Compared to 2015, the overall decrease in access to and use of a desktop, laptop or netbook computer is attributable to adults in DE households, and can be seen among both men and women. While access is unchanged in C1 households, use of a desktop, laptop or netbook computer is lower for these adults.

Compared to 2015, the increase in access to and use of a tablet computer can be seen for those in C2 and DE households and among men, while increased access and use of a DVR is attributable to adults in AB and C2 households, and women. Compared to last year, women are also more likely to say they have access to, and use, a smart TV and a radio set.

While adults in DE households are more likely to have access to a smart TV, there has not been an uplift in smart TV use since 2015. In contrast, use of a DVR has increased among DE adults, despite there being no increase in access.

The increases in access to and use of streaming media players since 2015 are seen among all four socio-economic groups and among both men and women.

Figure 2: Summary of access to and use of devices/ media at home, by socio-economic group and gender: 2016

	All adults		AB		C1		C2		DE		Male		Female	
	Access	Use	Access	Use	Access	Use	Access	Use	Access	Use	Access	Use	Access	Use
Mobile phone	94%	90%	96%	92%	95%	92%	94%	89%	90%	85%	94%	89%	94%	91%
Standard TV set	75%	70%	70% ↓	66%	73%	67%	79%	74%	79%	73%	73%	67% ↓	77%	72%
Computer	71% ↓	66% ↓	88%	83%	78%	73% ↓	69%	63%	47% ↓	42% ↓	72% ↓	68% ↓	70% ↓	64% ↓
Tablet	63% ↑	56% ↑	74%	66%	67%	60%	62% ↑	53% ↑	49% ↑	42% ↑	63% ↑	54% ↑	64%	57%
Radio set (DAB or otherwise)	60%	51%	70%	62%	58%	50%	61%	50%	51%	43%	60%	51%	60% ↑	52% ↑
DVR/ Digital Video Recorder	51% ↑	44% ↑	63% ↑	55% ↑	50%	44%	52% ↑	43% ↑	38%	32% ↑	51%	44%	51% ↑	43% ↑
Games console /games player	39%	24%	38%	22%	38%	23%	45%	26%	37%	25%	41%	31%	37%	17% ↓
Smart TV set	38% ↑	36% ↑	49%	48%	38%	36%	36%	34%	29% ↑	26%	41%	39%	36% ↑	34% ↑
Streaming media player	21% ↑	18% ↑	28% ↑	24% ↑	21% ↑	18% ↑	18% ↑	15% ↑	16% ↑	13% ↑	24% ↑	20% ↑	18% ↑	15% ↑
Wearable technology	11%	7%	18%	12%	11%	7%	7%	6%	6%	3%	12%	8%	10%	6%
ANY TV SET	97%	93%	97%	95%	96%	92%	98%	94%	98%	92%	97%	93%	97%	94%

A1/ A2. Can you please look at this list and tell me which of these you have at home? (prompted responses, multi-coded)/ And which of these devices that you just said you had at home do you personally ever use, for any purpose? (prompted responses, multi-coded) .
Base: All adults aged 16+ (1846 aged 16+, 427 AB, 566 C1, 369 C2, 484 DE, 885 male, 961 female).
Arrows show significant changes (95% level) between 2015 and 2016. NB – Significance changes for wearable technology are not shown as the examples of this technology included in this definition were not consistent over time.

5.4 Device use and affinity

Smartphone use

Seven in ten adults use a smartphone, unchanged since last year, although over-65s are now more likely to use one

As shown above at Figure 1, nine in ten adults (90%) use a mobile phone, unchanged since 2015 (also 90%). There has been no change in the use of a mobile phone for any age group of adult, compared to last year.

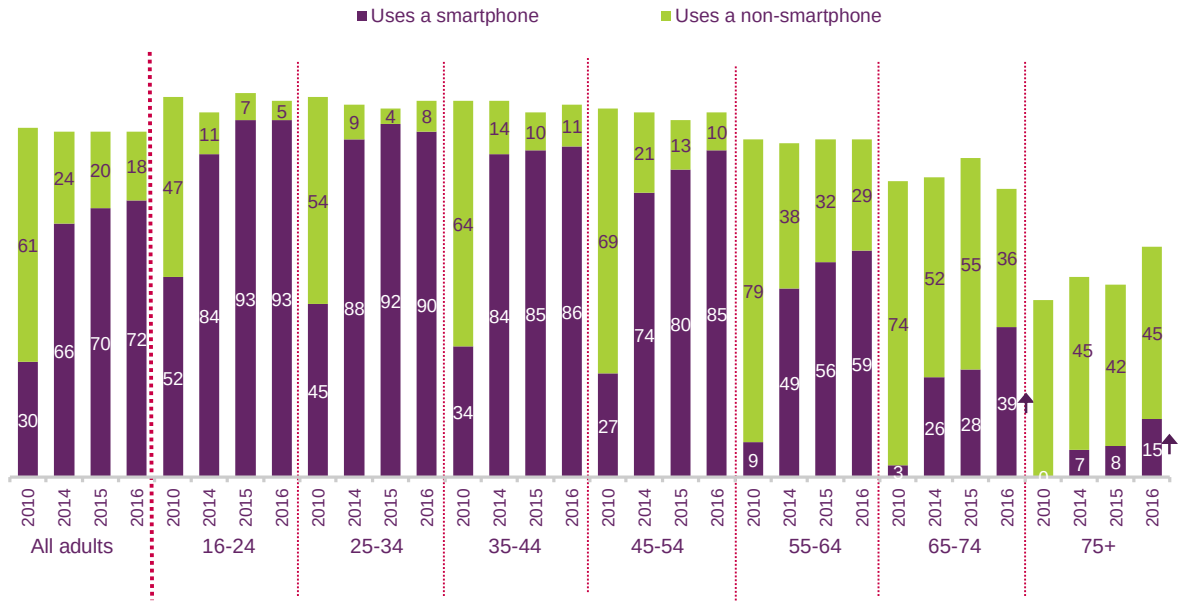
Figure 3 breaks out overall mobile phone use into smartphone and non-smartphone use, and shows that in 2016 adults are four times as likely to use a smartphone (72%) than they are to use a phone that is not a smartphone (18%). Use of a smartphone is also unchanged compared to 2015, following an increase between 2014 (66%) and 2015 (70%).

A majority of adults aged 16-64 use a smartphone, and those aged under 55 are more likely than the average to use one. Smartphone use ranges from 85% for 45-54s to 93% of 16-24s. While a minority of 65-74s (39%) and over-75s (15%) use one, both these incidences have increased compared to last year (from 28% and 8% respectively). These are the only two age groups that have seen growth in smartphone use compared to last year.

As shown in Figure 4, smartphone use is more likely among adults in C1 households (78%) compared to the average (72%), while those in DE households are less likely to use one (61%). There has been no change since last year in use of a smartphone among adults in any of the four socio-economic groups.

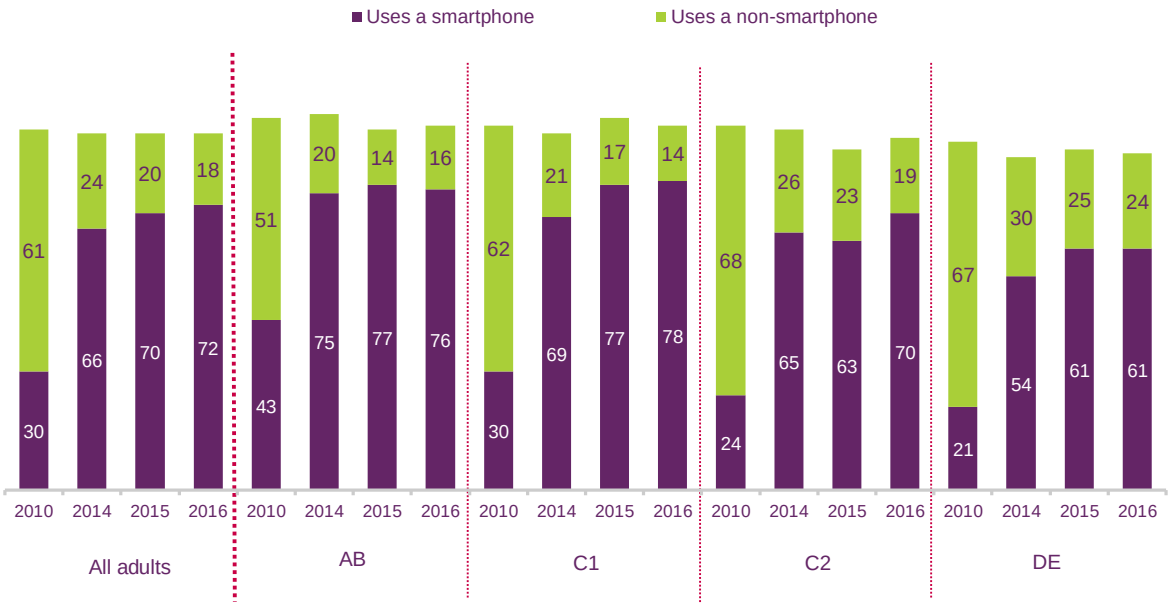
While not shown in Figure 4, men (71%) are as likely as women to use a smartphone (73%), and both these incidences are unchanged compared to 2015.

Figure 3: Mobile phone use, by age: 2010-2016



A4. You said you use a mobile phone. Is it a smartphone? (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ (1846 in 2016, 234 aged 16-24, 272 aged 25-34, 313 aged 35-44, 284 aged 45-54, 270 aged 55-64, 218 aged 65-74, 255 aged 75+).
Arrows show significant changes (95% level) between 2015 and 2016.

Figure 4: Mobile phone use, by socio-economic group: 2010-2016



A4. You said you use a mobile phone. Is it a smartphone? (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ (1846 aged 16+, 427 AB, 566 C1, 369 C2, 484 DE).
Arrows show significant changes (95% level) between 2015 and 2016.

Affinity for smartphone activities

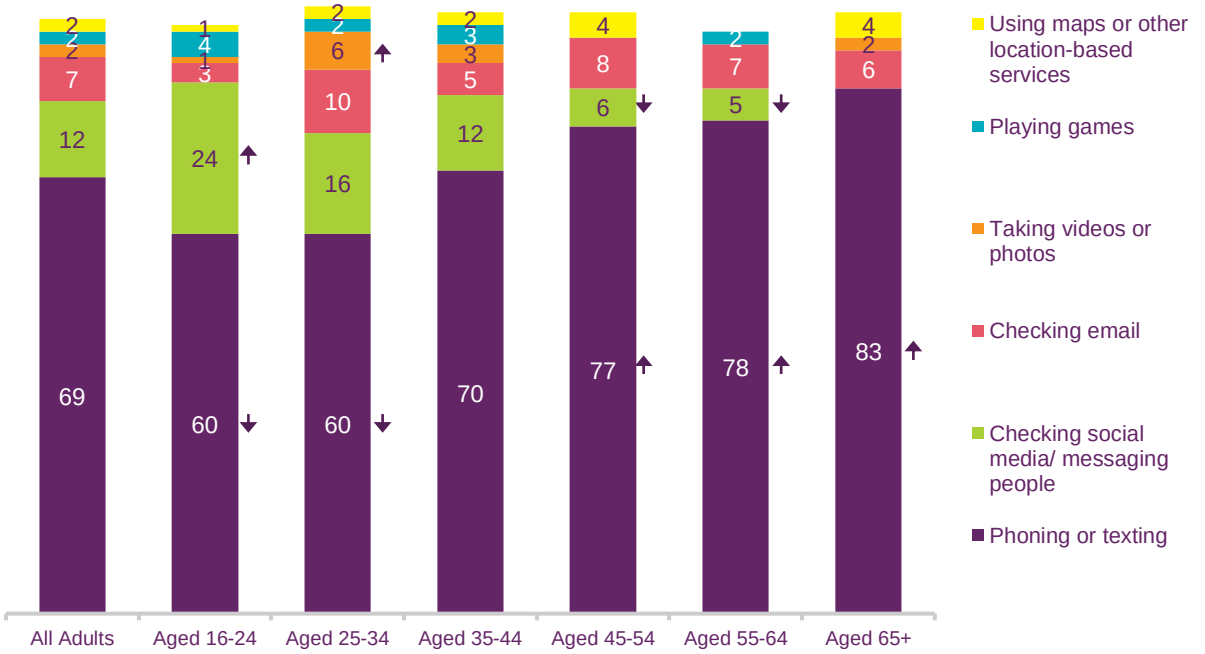
Users say they would most miss using their smartphone to call or text

Smartphone users (72% of adults in 2016) were prompted with ten smartphone activities and were asked to say which one they would miss doing the most on their phone if their phone were taken away. The six activities mentioned by at least 2% of smartphone users overall are shown in Figure 5.

A majority of smartphone users (69%) (and users of any age) say they would most miss using their smartphone for making calls or sending texts. Compared to this average, users aged 45-54 (77%), 55-64 (78%) and over-65 (83%) are more likely to say this, while those aged 16-24 (60%) and 25-34 (60%) are less likely to say this.

One in eight (12%) smartphone users say they would most miss checking social media or messaging people; 16-24s are twice as likely to say this (24%) and 45-54s (6%) and 55-64s (5%) are less likely to give this response. Less than one in ten smartphone users aged 16 and over say they would miss any other activity the most. While 2% of users say they would miss taking photos or videos on their phone, this is more likely among 25-34s (6%).

Figure 5: Activity smartphone users say they would most miss using their phone for, by age

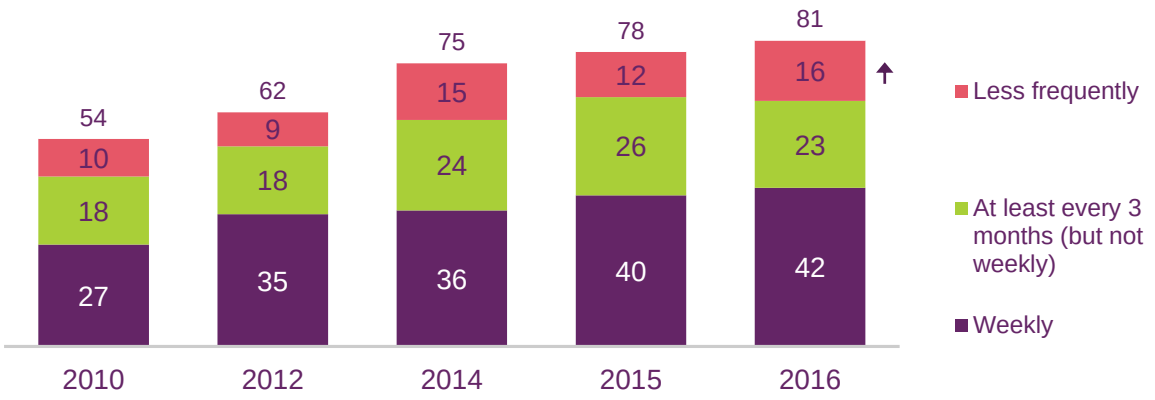


M8. Which one of these activities would you miss doing the most on your smartphone if your phone was taken away from you? (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ with a smartphone (1249 aged 16+, 216 aged 16-24, 247 aged 25-34, 268 aged 35-44, 235 aged 45-54, 157 aged 55-64, 126 aged 65+). Showing responses by >2% of all adults with a smartphone.
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) by age compared to all adults with a smartphone.

Eight in ten smartphone users say they have ever used maps/ satellite navigation on their phone

Smartphone users (72% of adults) are asked specifically about browsing or searching for content on their mobile. Figure 6 shows that in 2016, eight in ten smartphone users (81%) have ever used features on their phone such as maps or satellite navigation to get where they wanted to go, or to plot a route to a destination, and around half of these users (42%) do this on their phone at least weekly. A further 23% use this feature at least quarterly. Each of these measures of frequency of use are unchanged since 2015.

Figure 6: Use of maps or satellite navigation on a smartphone: 2010-2016



M7D. Please tell me from this list, the types of things you use your smartphone for, and how often you do each. (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who use a smartphone (1249 in 2016).
Arrows show significant changes (95% level) between 2015 and 2016.

Compared to the average for smartphone users (42%), those aged 16-24 (50%) and 25-34 (51%) are more likely to use features such as maps or satellite navigation on their phone at least weekly. Those aged 45-54 (34%), 55-64 (30%) or 65+ (16%) are less likely to do so.

Men are more likely than women to say they use these features on their smartphone at least weekly (46% vs. 38%).

Completing forms

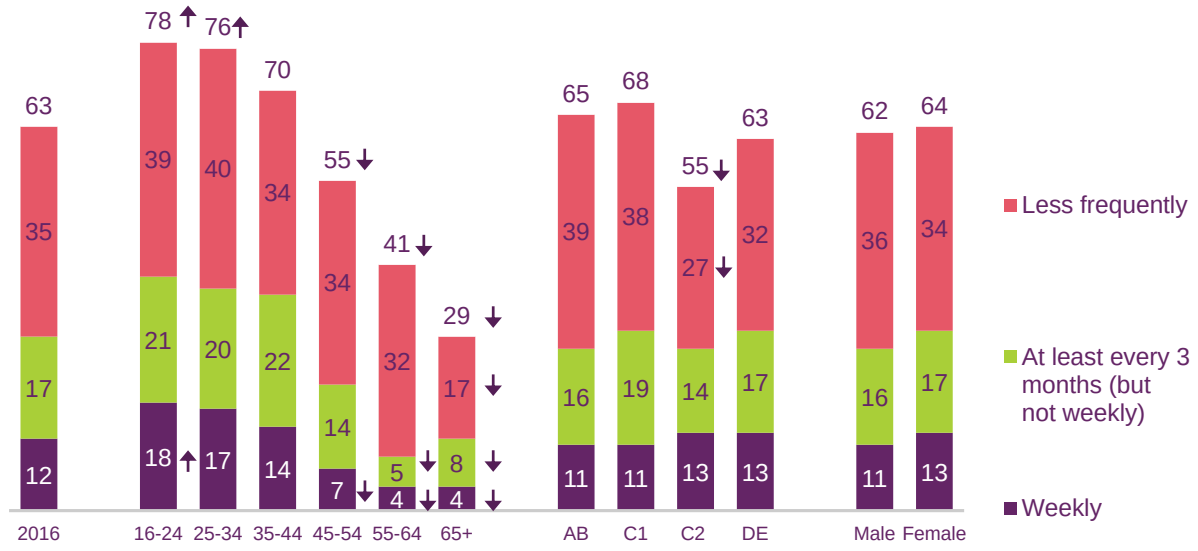
Six in ten smartphone users have ever used their phone to complete a form or application for something

For the first time in 2016, smartphone users were asked about the frequency with which they used their phone to complete a form or application. Figure 7 shows that more than six in ten smartphone users (63%) have ever done this, and one in eight (12%) say they do it weekly. A further 17% say they do it at least quarterly, with around a third (35%) using their phone for this less often than quarterly.

Smartphone users aged 16-24 (78%) and 25-34 (76%) are more likely to say they have ever used their phone to complete a form or application, with over-45s less likely to say they have done this (55% for 45-54s, 41% for 55-64s and 29% for over-65s).

Compared to the average (63%), smartphone users aged 16+ in C2 households (55%) are less likely to say they have ever used their phone to complete a form or application. There are no differences when comparing the results for men and women.

Figure 7: Use of a smartphone for completing a form or application



To complete a form or application for something

M7A. Please tell me from this list, the types of things you use your smartphone for, and how often you do each. (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who use a smartphone (1249 aged 16+, 216 aged 16-24, 247 aged 25-34, 268 aged 35-44, 235 aged 45-54, 157 aged 55-64, 126 aged 65+, 305 AB, 425 C1, 247 C2, 272 DE, 598 male, 651 female).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) for age / socio-economic group compared to all smartphone users and males compared to females.

Most smartphone users agree that completing forms or working on documents is easier on a computer

Smartphone users are also asked the extent to which they agree with the following statement: "Completing forms and working on documents is more difficult on my smartphone than on a laptop or desktop".

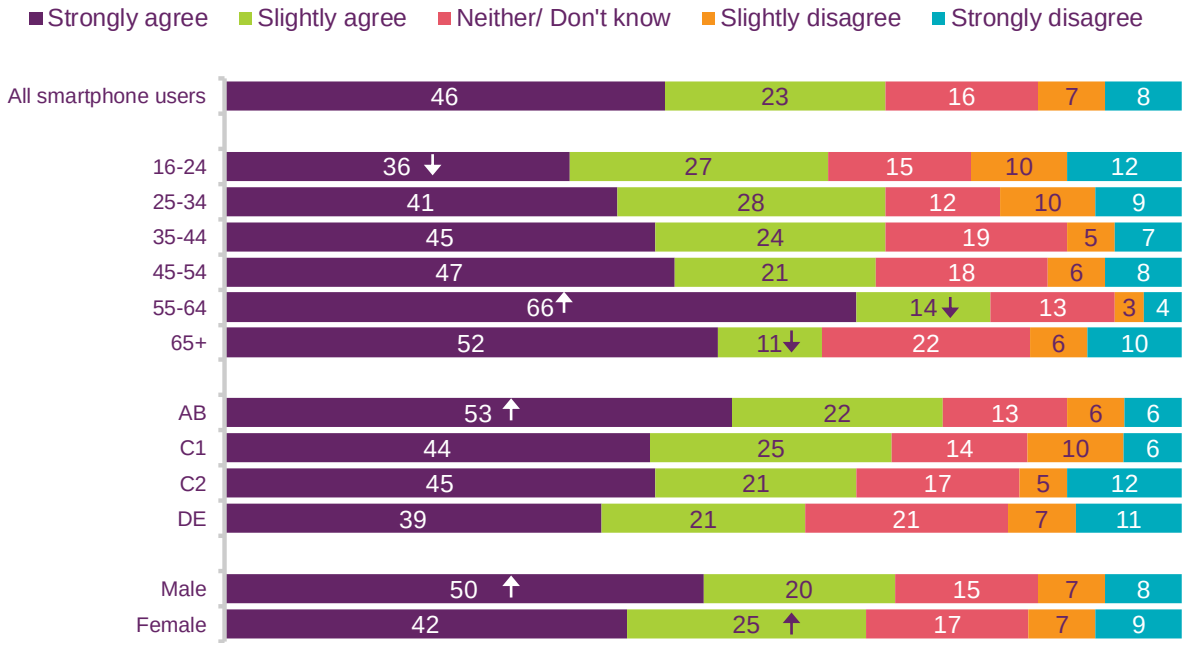
Overall, seven in ten smartphone users agree (69%), with close to half (46%) agreeing strongly. Sixteen per cent disagree overall, either strongly or slightly.

A majority of users in each age group agree overall, with 16-24s being less likely to agree strongly (36% vs. 46%) and 55-64s more likely to agree strongly (66% vs. 46%).

Compared to the average, smartphone users in AB households are more likely to agree (75% vs. 69%) while those in DE households are less likely to agree (60% vs. 69%).

While men and women are as likely to agree overall, men are more likely to agree strongly (50% vs. 42% for women).

Figure 8: Agreement with statement: "Completing forms and working on documents is more difficult on my smartphone than on a laptop or desktop", by age, socio-economic group and gender



M6. Please tell me the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statement - Completing forms and working on documents is more difficult on my smartphone than on a laptop or desktop (prompted responses, single coded)
Base: All adults aged 16+ who use a smartphone (1249 aged 16+, 216 aged 16-24, 247 aged 25-34, 268 aged 35-44, 235 aged 45-54, 157 aged 55-64, 126 aged 65+, 305 AB, 425 C1, 247 C2, 272 DE, 598 male, 651 female).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) for age / socio-economic group compared to all smartphone users and males compared to females.

Most-missed media device

Mobile phones are the most-missed media device among 16-54s, while TV is still the most-missed among over-55s

To understand how much importance people attach to various media devices, we ask them to say, out of all the devices they use, which single device they would miss the most if it were taken away.

In 2016, the mobile phone is the device that adults overall say they would miss the most, chosen by 41%. One in three adults say they would miss a TV set the most (32%) and one in ten say they would miss a computer (desktop computer/ laptop/ netbook) the most (11%). Less than one in ten adults say they would miss either a tablet (7%) or a radio set (3%).

As shown in Figure 9 and Figure 10, there are a number of differences by demographic group:

- 16-24s (74%), 25-34s (60%) and 35-44s (50%) are more likely than average (41%) to say they would miss a mobile phone the most. 16-24s are eight times more likely to say they would miss a mobile phone than any other device. 16-24s (8%) and 25-34s (17%) are also less likely than average (32%) to say they would miss the TV set, and 16-24s (3%) are less likely to say they would miss a tablet (7% overall).

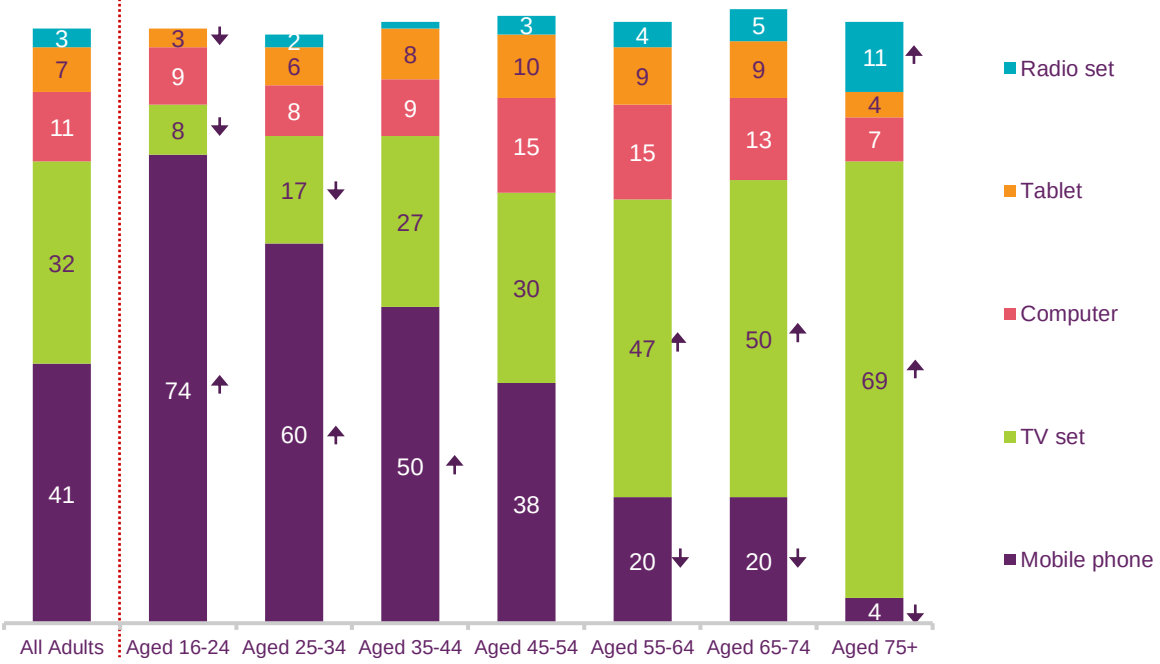
- In contrast, 55-64s (47%) and 65-74s (50%) are more likely than average (32%) to say they would miss the TV set the most. Both 55-64s (20%) and 65-74s (20%) are less likely to say they would miss their mobile phone the most (41% overall).

- Adults aged 75 and over are more likely to say they would most miss a TV set (69% vs. 32%) and a radio set (11% vs. 3%). They are ten times less likely to say they would miss a mobile phone, compared to the average (4% vs. 41%).

- ABs are more likely than average to say they would miss a computer (desktop/ laptop/ netbook) (18% vs. 11%) and a tablet (10% vs. 7%). C1s are less likely to miss a TV set (26% vs. 32%) while C2 adults are less likely to miss a computer (7% vs. 11%). Adults in DE households are less likely to miss a computer (5% vs. 11%) and a tablet (3% vs. 7%) and are more likely to miss a TV set (40% vs. 32%).

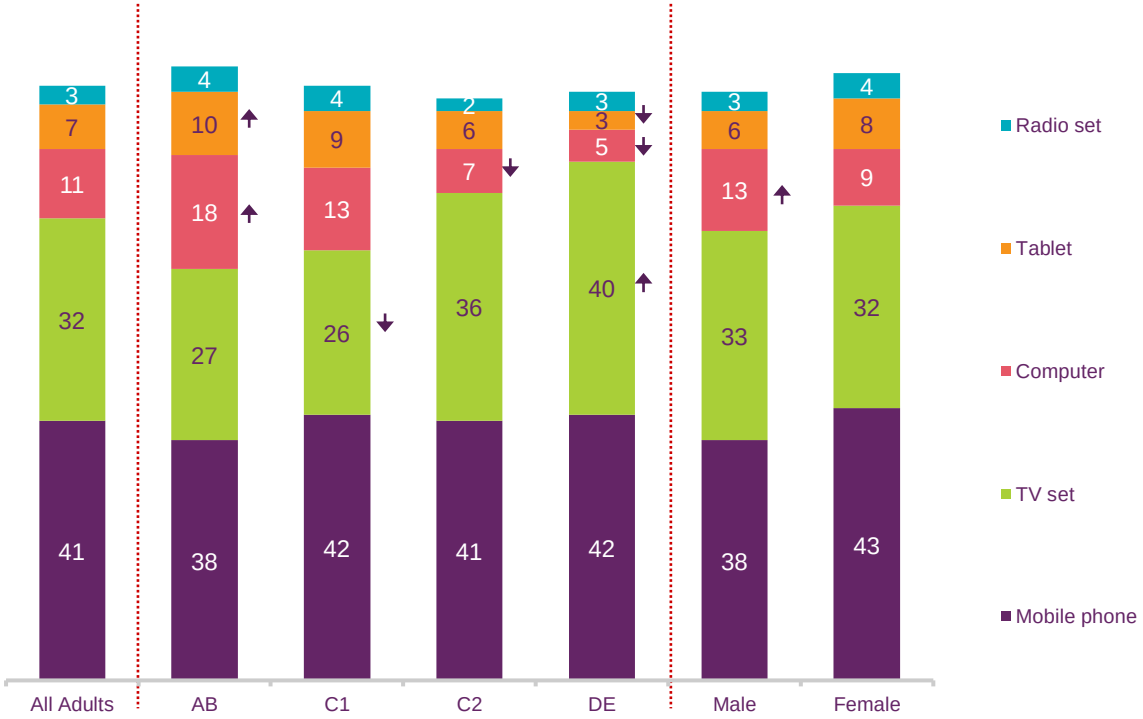
- There is only one difference in 2016 by gender - men are more likely than women to say they would miss a computer (13% vs. 9%).

Figure 9: Most-missed media device, by age



A3. Which one of these things you use would you miss the most if it was taken away? (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ (1846 aged 16+, 234 aged 16-24, 272 aged 25-34, 313 aged 35-44, 284 aged 45-54, 270 aged 55-64, 218 aged 65-74, 255 aged 75+). Showing responses by >2% of all adults.
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) by age compared to all adults.

Figure 10: Most-missed media device, by socio-economic group and gender



A3. Which one of these things you use would you miss the most if it was taken away? (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ (1846 aged 16+, 427 AB, 566 C1, 369 C2, 484 DE, 885 male, 961 female). Showing responses by >2% of all adults.
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) by socio-economic group compared to all adults and males compared to females.

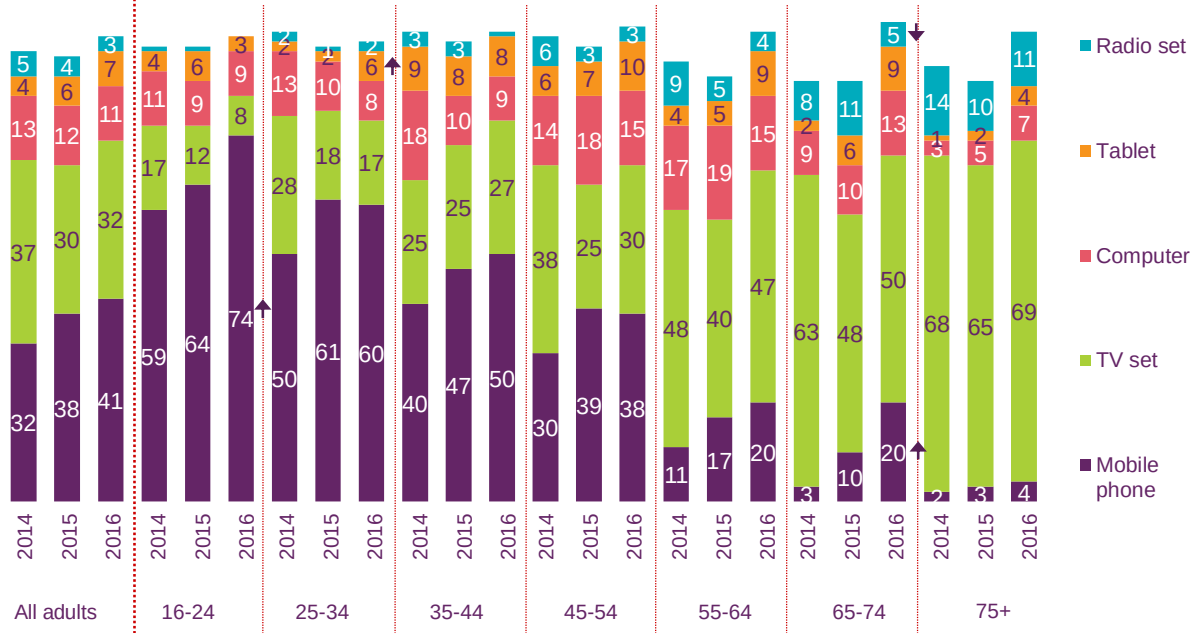
Adults aged 65-74 are more likely to say they would miss their mobile phone, potentially due to the increase in use of a smartphone

Figure 11 shows any change in the most-missed devices, over time, among adults overall and by age.[4] Compared to 2015 there has been no change in the devices that adults overall say they would miss the most. However, 16-24s are more likely to say they would miss their mobile phone most (74% vs. 64%), while 25-34s are more likely to say they would miss their tablet (6% vs. 2%).

The increase in smartphone use among 65-74s, discussed earlier, could be the reason why this age group is now twice as likely to nominate their mobile phone as the device they would miss the most (20% vs. 10% in 2015). This age group is less likely to say they would miss their radio set (5% vs. 11%).

[4] The trends over time should be treated as indicative only, due to changes made to the questionnaire in 2016 which may have affected the results. In 2016 respondents were prompted with ten devices and asked which of these they personally used, and of those used, they were asked to select which one they would miss the most. In 2015 respondents had been prompted with 16 devices.

Figure 11: Most-missed media device: 2014 vs. 2015 and 2016



A3. Which one of these things you use would you miss the most if it got taken away? (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ (1841 in 2015, 1846 in 2016). Showing responses by >2% of all adults.
Arrows show significant changes (95% level) between 2015 and 2016.

5.5 Internet take-up and use

Devices used to go online

In 2016 adults are more likely to go online using a smartphone than a computer

In 2016, as in previous years[5], adults were asked about their use of various devices to go online. These devices were:

- smartphone;
- tablet (such as an iPad or Kindle Fire, included since 2010);
- computer – whether laptop, desktop or netbook (PC or Mac);
- games console or hand-held games player;
- smart TV (included since 2013);
- streaming media player (such as Apple TV, Now TV, Amazon Fire, Chromecast or Roku, added in 2015);

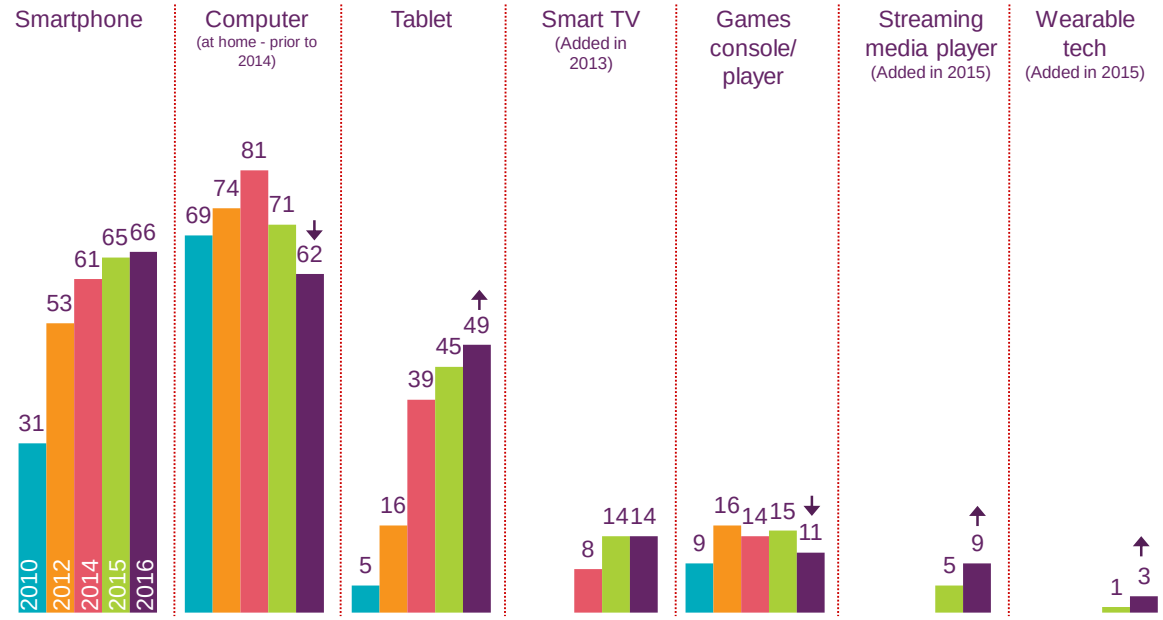
[5] In 2016, respondents were prompted with seven options to select from, whereas in 2015 they were prompted with 12 options. This could affect the trend reported here, particularly with regard to use of device to go online other than a computer.

- wearable technology (such as a smartwatch) - amended in 2015[6].

As shown in Figure 12, 66% of adults use a smartphone to go online, while three in five (62%) use a computer[7]. In 2016, smartphones are more likely than computers to be used to go online. Half of adults (49%) say they use a tablet to go online. One in seven (14%) go online on a smart TV and one in ten (11%) through either a fixed or portable games console or a streaming media player (9%). Three per cent of adults say they go online using wearable technology.

Compared to 2015, adults are less likely to go online using a computer (62% vs. 71%) and are more likely to use a tablet (49% vs. 45%). There has also been growth in the use of streaming media players (9% vs. 5%) and wearable technology to go online (3% vs. 1%), but there has been a decline in the use of a games console or player for this purpose (11% vs. 15% in 2015).

Figure 12: Devices used to go online: 2010-2016



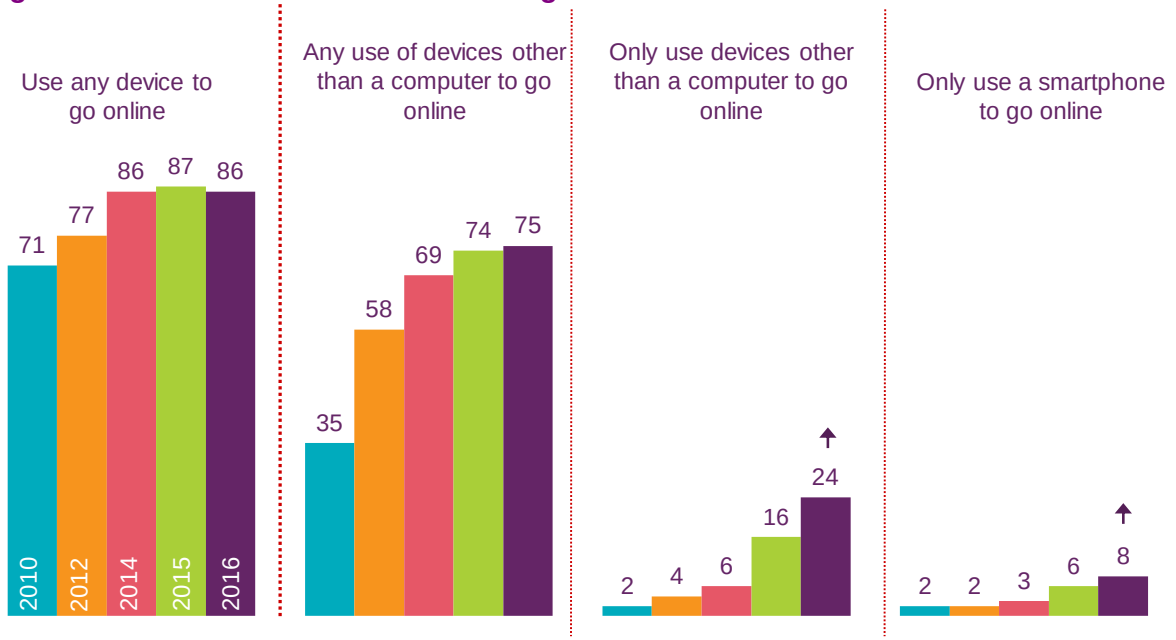
IN1/ IN2. Do you ever go online/ Do you go online using any of these devices? (prompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ (1846 in 2016).
Arrows show significant changes (95% level) between 2015 and 2016.

As shown in Figure 13, use of any device to go online is unchanged compared to last year (86% vs. 87% in 2015). Three in four adults (75%) use a device other than a computer (desktop/ laptop/ netbook) to go online, which is also unchanged since 2015.

A quarter of adults (24%) now *only* use a device other than a computer to go online; this is now more likely than in 2015 (16%). Eight per cent of adults only go online through a smartphone, an increase since 2015 (6%). Although not shown in Figure 13, 4% of adults say they only go online through a tablet, unchanged since 2015 (3%).

[6] In 2014, the definition provided to respondents was 'wearable technology like a smartwatch (e.g. Pebble, Samsung, Sony etc.) or Google Glass. Since 2015 the definition was amended to no longer reference Google Glass to 'wearable technology like a smartwatch (such as Apple Watch).
[7] Before 2014, use of a computer to go online was only based on use within the home and not elsewhere.

Figure 13: Use of alternative devices to go online: 2010-2016



IN1/ IN2. Do you ever go online/ Do you go online using any of these devices? (prompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ (1846 in 2016).
Arrows show significant changes (95% level) between 2015 and 2016.

The increase in *only* using devices other than a computer to go online is attributable to 16-34s

Figure 14 and Figure 15 show the devices that can be used to go online, that adults were asked about in 2016. Figure 14 breaks this out by age and Figure 15 by socio-economic group and gender.

The significance testing shown in both these charts (indicated by the arrows) shows any increases or decreases between 2015 and 2016 among the subgroups shown.

Before looking at these trends over time, by type of device, it is worth noting that in 2016, adults aged 16-24 (98%), 25-34 (97%), 35-44 (93%) and 45-54 (94%) are more likely than average (86%) to go online. Those aged 65-74 (65%) or 75 and over (44%) are less likely to go online.

Those aged 16-24 and 25-34 are more likely to go online on a smartphone (94% and 93% vs. 66%) or on a games console or player (33% and 16% vs. 11%). Compared to the average (24%), *only* using devices other than a computer to go online is more likely among 16-24s (31%) and 25-34s (37%), while 25-34s are twice as likely as average to only use a smartphone to go online (17% vs. 8%).

Adults aged 35-44 (82%) and 45-54 (73%) are also more likely to use a smartphone to go online; this latter age group is also more likely than average to go online on a computer (71% vs. 62%), a tablet (58% vs. 49%) or a smart TV (20% vs. 14%). Adults aged 45-54 are less likely to use a games console or player to go online (6% vs. 11%).

Three of the devices asked about are less likely to be used by 55-64s to go online, compared to the average: smartphones (48% vs. 66%), smart TVs (9% vs. 14%) and games consoles/ players (1% vs. 11%). Adults aged 65-74 and over 75s are less likely than average to use each of the devices asked about to go online.

As shown by the significance testing in Figure 14, the overall growth or decline since 2015 in the use of some devices to go online, at an overall level, can be attributed to specific age groups:

- The overall decrease in use of a computer to go online (62% from 71%) is due to a decrease among 25-34s (60% from 78%).
- The decrease in use of a games console or player to go online (11% from 15%) is due to a decrease among 25-34s (16% from 28%), 45-54s (6% from 13%) and 55-64s (1% from 6%).
- Increased tablet use to go online (49% from 45%) is a result of an increase among 55-64s (49% from 38%) and over-75s (23% from 14%).
- The increase in use of streaming media players to go online is attributable to 65-74s (5% from 0%), while the increase in using wearable technology to go online is attributable to 16-24s (3% from 0%).
- The increase in *only* using a device other than a computer to go online (24% up from 16%) is attributable to the youngest adults (31%, up from 20% for 16-24s, and 37%, up from 19% for 25-34s). 25-34s are also more likely than in 2015 to say they only use a smartphone to go online (17% vs. 9%).

Figure 14: Devices used to go online at home or elsewhere, by age of user

	All adults	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
Smartphone	66%	94%	93%	82%	73%	48%	26%	6%
Computer	62% ↓	68%	60% ↓	68%	71%	65%	52%	33%
Tablet	49% ↑	49%	55%	54%	58%	49% ↑	36%	23% ↑
Smart TV	14%	20%	18%	19%	20%	9%	5%	2%
Games console/ player	11% ↓	33%	16% ↓	13%	6% ↓	1% ↓	1%	0%
Streaming media player	9% ↑	11%	11%	12%	9%	5%	5% ↑	1%
Wearable tech	3% ↑	3% ↑	3%	3%	5%	1%	1%	0%
Goes online	86%	98%	97%	93%	94%	82%	65%	44%
Only use devices other than a computer to go online	24% ↑	31% ↑	37% ↑	25%	23%	17%	12%	11%
Only uses a smartphone to go online	8% ↑	12%	17% ↑	10%	8%	2%	1%	0%

IN1/ IN2. Do you ever go online/ Do you go online using any of these devices? (prompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ (1846 aged 16+, 234 aged 16-24, 272 aged 25-34, 313 aged 35-44, 284 aged 45-54, 270 aged 55-64, 218 aged 65-74, 255 aged 75+).
Arrows show significant changes (95% level) between 2015 and 2016.

One in three adults in the DE socio-economic group only use devices other than a computer to go online

Compared to the average (86%), adults in AB households (93%) and C1 households (93%) are more likely to say they go online, while those in DE households are less likely (73%).

There are also differences by socio-economic group in terms of the devices used to go online. Compared to the average, four of the devices are more likely to be used by AB adults

to go online, and are less likely to be used to go online by those in DE households: computers (78% for ABs vs. 39% DEs), tablets (59% vs. 35%), smart TVs (23% vs. 7%) and streaming media players (14% vs. 5%). In addition, adults in DE households are less likely than average (66%) to go online using a smartphone (57%) while those in C1 households are more likely (72%). Adults in C1 households (71%) are also more likely to go online using a computer (62% overall).

Use of wearable technology to go online is also more prevalent in AB households (5% vs. 3% overall).

Compared to the average (24%), DE adults are more likely to use *only* devices other than a computer to go online (33%), while AB adults are less likely to do so (15%). Eight per cent of adults only use a smartphone to go online; adults in AB households are less likely to do this (3%) and adults in DE households are more likely (13%).

While men (85%) are as likely as women (86%) to go online using any device, they are more likely to go online using five particular devices: a computer (67% vs. 58%), a smart TV (18% vs. 11%), a games console or player (16% vs. 5%), a streaming media player (12% vs. 6%) and wearable tech (4% vs. 1%). Women are, however, more likely to use *only* devices other than a computer to go online (28% vs. 19% for men).

As shown by the significance testing in Figure 15, the overall growth or decline since 2015 in the use of some devices to go online can be attributed to particular subgroups:

- The overall decline in the use of a computer to go online is attributable to a decrease among ABs (78% vs. 88% in 2015), DEs (39% vs. 54%), men (67% vs. 75%), and women (58% vs. 68%).

- The increase in the use of a tablet to go online is due to C2s (46% vs. 37%) and DEs (35% vs. 26%).

- The decrease in the use of a games console or player to go online is seen among C1s (11% vs. 19%) and women (5% vs. 13%).

- The increase in the use of a streaming media player to go online is due to ABs (14% vs. 9%), C2s (7% vs. 3%), DEs (5% vs. 2%) and men (12% vs. 6%).

- The increase in use of wearable technology to go online is evident for ABs (5% vs. 2%), C2s (2% vs. 0%), men (4% vs. 2%) and women (1% vs. 0%).

- The overall increase in *only* using a device other than a computer to go online is seen across each of the four socio-economic groups, and among both men and women, while the increase in only using a smartphone to go online is due to those in the C1 socio-economic group (8% vs. 3%).

Figure 15: Devices used to go online, by socio-economic group and gender

	All adults	AB	C1	C2	DE	Male	Female
Smartphone	66%	70%	72%	62%	57%	66%	66%
Computer	62% ↓	78% ↓	71%	58%	39% ↓	67% ↓	58% ↓
Tablet	49% ↑	59%	53%	46% ↑	35% ↑	48%	49%
Smart TV	14%	23%	14%	12%	7%	18%	11%
Games console/ player	11% ↓	12%	11% ↓	11%	9%	16%	5% ↓
Streaming media player	9% ↑	14% ↑	8%	7% ↑	5% ↑	12% ↑	6%
Wearable tech	3% ↑	5% ↑	2%	2% ↑	1%	4% ↑	1% ↑
Goes online	86%	93%	93%	84%	73%	85%	86%
Only use devices other than a computer to go online	24% ↑	15% ↑	22% ↑	26% ↑	33% ↑	19% ↑	28% ↑
Only uses a smartphone to go online	8% ↑	3%	8% ↑	8%	13%	7%	9%

IN1/ IN2. Do you ever go online/ Do you go online using any of these devices? (prompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ (1846 aged 16+, 427 AB, 566 C1, 369 C2, 484 DE). Significance testing shows any change between 2015 and 2016.
Arrows show significant changes (95% level) between 2015 and 2016.

Volume of internet use

Younger adults continue to record the highest weekly internet use

Adults who go online at home or elsewhere are asked to estimate how many hours in a typical week they use the internet in each of three locations: at home, in the workplace or place of education, and anywhere else. Figure 16 compares the average among all internet users by year. Because these estimates are self-reported it is likely that there will be a degree of under- and over-reporting, and the results should be taken as indicative only.

The total average weekly hours spent online is unchanged since 2015 (22.9 vs. 21.6 hours in 2015) and there has been no change in the hours spent online in the workplace or place of education (5.9 vs. 6.0 hours) or anywhere else (2.1 vs. 2.2 hours). Compared to 2015, adults say they spend more hours online at home (14.8 vs. 13.4 hours in 2015).

Although not shown in Figure 16, there are differences by demographic group, in terms of volume of internet use:

- Younger internet users have a higher weekly volume of use than internet users overall (35.2 hours for 16-24s and 26.4 hours for 25-34s). Volumes are higher than average for 25-34s at home (17.1 vs. 14.8 hours) whereas for 16-24s, use is higher than average in all three locations.

- Those aged 45-54 have lower use at home (12.5 vs. 14.8 hours). Internet users aged 55-64 have a lower volume of weekly use (17.1 vs. 22.9 hours) due to a lower volume of weekly use in the home (10.5 vs. 14.8 hours) and in locations other than home or work/ place of education (0.6 hours vs. 2.1 hours).

- Those aged 65-74 and 75+ have a lower weekly volume of use compared to internet users overall (14.8 hours for 65-74s, 7.4 hours for over-75s). For 65-74s use is lower in

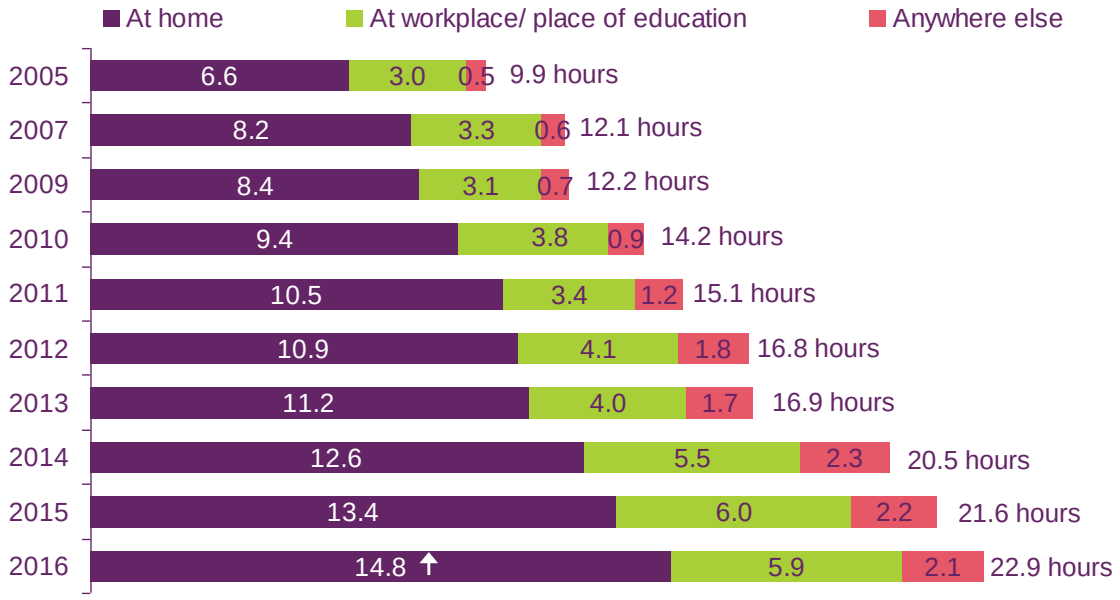
the workplace/ place of education and anywhere else, while home use does not differ to that of all internet users. For those aged 75 and over internet use is lower than average in all three locations.

- Adult users in the AB socio-economic group have a similar overall average as internet users overall, but their use is higher in the workplace/ place of education (8.9 vs. 5.9 hours). Users in the C1 socio-economic group have a higher overall weekly average (25.4 hours) than all internet users (22.9 hours), with more hours spent online in the workplace or place of education (7.7 hours).

- Adults in the C2 socio-economic group have a lower overall volume of weekly use compared to users overall (18.5 vs. 22.9 hours), due to lower use in the workplace/ place of education (3.4 vs. 5.9 hours). Those in the DE socio-economic group have a lower than average volume of use in the workplace/ place of education (2.0 vs. 5.9 hours).

- The overall estimated weekly volume of use does not differ by gender. Men are, however, more likely than women to have higher use in the workplace/ place of education (6.6 vs. 5.3 hours) and in locations other than home or work/ place of education (2.4 vs. 1.9 hours).

Figure 16: Volume of internet use per week: 2005-2016



IN5A-C. How many hours in a typical week would you say you use the internet at home/ at your workplace or place of education/ anywhere else? (unprompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online at home or elsewhere (1553 in 2016).
Arrows show significant changes (95% level) between 2015 and 2016.

Online activities undertaken regularly (in the past week)

Four types of internet use had been undertaken by a majority of internet users in the previous week: email, banking, communications and transactions

Another aspect of understanding online use is to look at the types of activities that people are undertaking. In previous years' reports, the results for the online activities undertaken were taken from the Media Literacy Tracker. In 2016, we revised the questions relating to type and frequency of internet use. Adults who go online were asked a shorter set of questions, and the frequency options that respondents could select were amended.

Ofcom's Technology Tracker study also includes questions about types and frequency of internet use, and the results included here come from the research conducted in that study in 2017.

Internet users are prompted with 24 different internet activities and are asked to say which of them, if any, they have been online to do, and which of these they have done in the past last week.

In reporting these online activities, we focus initially on those undertaken in the previous week, in order to draw out any differences in activities that are undertaken habitually/ regularly. Later, in Sections 6 and 7 of this report, we look in more detail at some individual online activities by frequency of use.

For this initial analysis, 23 of the 24 activities[8] have been grouped into 15 types of use, to enable broader comparison. These 15 types of use are detailed in Figure 17.

Figure 18 and Figure 19 show the incidence of each of the 15 broad categories of use among internet users, in order to make comparisons between age groups, socio-economic groups and by gender. As detailed above, data have been taken from Ofcom's Technology Tracker. [9]

[8] For the purpose of this analysis the activity 'General surfing/ browsing the internet' has not been included.

[9] There is some overlap in the types of use asked about in the Technology Tracker and in the Media Literacy Tracker, pertaining to use of the internet for news, social networking, government services and watching video content. The categories of use shown in this section from the Technology Tracker tend to group a number of individual measures under one heading, and the questions asked to identify types of use are not the same across the two surveys. Where possible we have prioritised the data collected from the Media Literacy Tracker, which we use and report on in more detail later: accessing news/ politics/ current affairs websites later (Figure 72 onwards), having a social media profile/ account (Figure 28 onwards), accessing government services (Figure 41 onwards) and watching video-sharing sites (Figure 62 onwards).

Figure 17: Activities the internet is used for, by category

Category	Individual activities included in category
E-mail	• Send/ receive emails
Banking	• Banking
Communications	• Communicating via instant messaging e.g. Facebook Chat, Skype Chat, Snapchat • Making voice calls using a VoIP service e.g. Skype • Making video calls e.g. via FaceTime, Skype
Transactions	• Online shopping (purchasing goods/ services/ tickets etc) • Trading/ auctions e.g. eBay
Social Media	• Using social networking (such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Bebo or Snapchat) • Using Twitter (browsing/ reading/ posting on site)
News	• Accessing news
Information for work/ school/ college	• Finding/ downloading information for work/ business/ school/ college/ university/ homework
Watch short video clips	• Watching short video clips (e.g. on YouTube, Dailymotion, Vimeo or Facebook)
Watch TV content	• Watching TV programmes or film content online
Health	• To find information on health related issues
Radio/ Audio services	• Listening to radio • Streamed audio services (free) e.g. Spotify (free) or Deezer (free) • Streamed audio services (subscription) e.g. Spotify Premium, Apple Music or Deezer Premium
Government services	• Using local council/ Government sites e.g. to find information, to complete processes such as tax returns, to contact local MP
Games	• Playing games online or interactively
Upload/ add content	• Uploading/ adding content to the internet e.g. photos, videos, blog posts
Remote	• Accessing files through a cloud service such as Dropbox, Google Drive, Microsoft OneDrive or Apple iCloud • Remotely control TV services at home such as Sky+, Sky Q or Tivo using an online device • Remotely control or monitor household appliances e.g. fridge, cooker, washing machine, tumble dryer and/ or home heating, lighting or security system or home energy consumption

Source: Ofcom Technology Tracker, Half 1 2017
QE5A/ QE5B. Which, if any, of these do you use the internet for? (prompted responses, multi-coded)/ And, which, if any, of these activities have you used the internet for in the last week? (prompted responses, multi-coded).

Compared to the average, 16-44s are more likely, and over-55s less likely, to have undertaken most types of internet use in the previous week

Figure 18 shows the proportion of internet users who carried out each of the 15 categories of internet use in the previous week, at an overall level and by age. Generally, under-45s are more likely than the average internet user to have undertaken a number of online activities in the previous week, while over-55s are less likely.

- Internet users aged 16-24 are more likely than average to have done eight of the 15 types of use in the past week: communications (72% vs. 53%), social media (67% vs. 49%), looking for information for work/ school/ college (41% vs. 32%), watching short video clips (45% vs. 31%), watching TV content (32% vs. 24%), using radio/ audio services (30% vs. 22%), for games (28% vs. 17%) and uploading/ adding content (28% vs. 17%). Compared to the average, 16-24s are less likely to have used Government services in the past week (14% vs. 21%).

- 25-34s are more likely than average to have gone online in the previous week for 11 of the 15 types of use: email (81% vs. 76%), banking (66% vs. 53%), communications (70% vs. 53%), transactions (62% vs. 52%), social media (61% vs. 49%), watching short video clips (40% vs. 31%), watching TV content (30% vs. 24%), using radio/ audio services (29% vs. 22%), for games (26% vs. 17%) uploading/ adding content (23% vs. 17%) and for remote activities (23% vs. 17%).

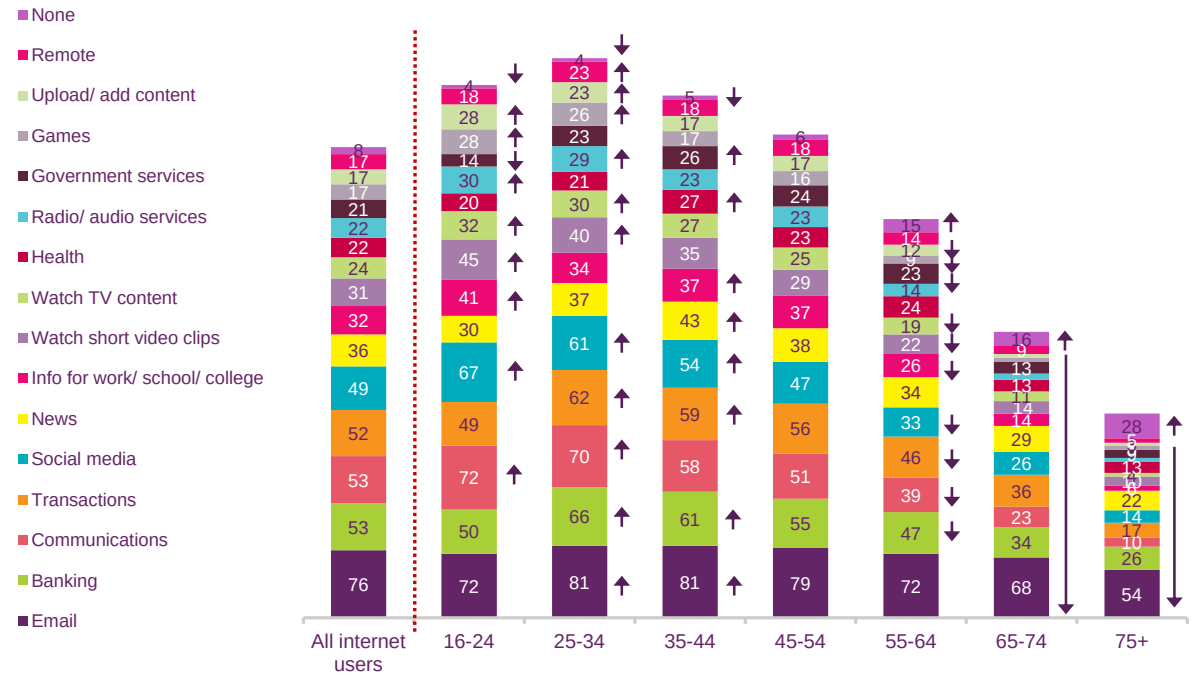
- 35-44s are more likely than average to undertake eight types of use: email (81% vs. 76%), banking (61% vs. 53%), transactions (59% vs. 52%), social media (54% vs. 49%), news (43% vs. 36%), looking for information for work/ school/ college (37% vs. 32%), health (27% vs. 22%) and Government services (26% vs. 21%).

- 45-54s' use of the internet in the previous week does not differ to that of the average internet user for any of the 15 categories.

- 55-64s are less likely than average to have gone online in the previous week for ten of the activities: banking (47% vs. 53%), communications (39% vs. 53%), transactions (46% vs. 52%), social media (33% vs. 49%), information for work/ school/ college (26% vs. 32%), watching short video clips (22% vs. 31%), watching TV content (19% vs. 24%), using radio/ audio services (14% vs. 22%), for games (9% vs. 17%) and to upload/ add content (12% vs. 17%).

- Internet users aged 65-74, and over-75s, are less likely than average to have undertaken all 15 types of activity in the previous week. As such, both age groups are more likely than average to say they haven't undertaken any of these types of use in the previous week (16% for 65-74s, 28% for 75+ vs. 8% overall).

Figure 18: Activities the internet has been used for in the past week, by age



Source: Ofcom Technology Tracker, Half 1 2017
QE5B. And, which, if any, of these activities have you used the internet for in the last week? (prompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: All adults who go online (3221 in 2017, 506 aged 16-24, 536 aged 25-34, 613 aged 35-44, 531 aged 45-54, 520 aged 55-64, 364 aged 65-74, 151 aged 75+).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) by age compared to all internet users.

Those in the AB socio-economic group have a broader weekly internet use

Where differences exist between the socio-economic groups, it tends to be the case that ABs are more likely than internet users overall to have undertaken an activity in the previous week, and DEs are less likely.

Fourteen of the 15 types of activity are more likely to have been undertaken in the previous week by ABs, with only games matching the average.

In contrast to the above, DEs are less likely to have been online in the previous week for ten of the 15 types of activity: email (60% vs. 76%), banking (38% vs. 53%), transactions (40% vs. 52%), news (25% vs. 36%), information for work/ school/ college (20% vs. 32%), health (17% vs. 22%), using radio/ audio services (16% vs. 22%), Government services (13% vs. 21%), to upload/ add content (13% vs. 17%) and for remote activities (10% vs. 17%).

Use of the internet in the previous week by C1s does not differ to that of the average internet user for any of the 15 individual categories. They are, however, more likely than average to say they have undertaken any of the 15 activities in the previous week (94% vs. 92%).

Compared to the average, internet users in C2 households are less likely to have carried out eight activities in the previous week: email (69% vs. 76%), social media (43% vs. 49%), news (26% vs. 36%), information for work/ school/ college (25% vs. 32%), watching short video clips (25% vs. 31%), health (14% vs. 22%), Government services (15% vs. 21%) and remote activities (13% vs. 17%).

There are also differences by gender. Men are more likely than women to have been online in the previous week for news (40% vs. 34%), info for work/ school/ college (35% vs. 29%), to watch TV content (29% vs. 20%), for radio/ audio services (24% vs. 19%) and for Government services (23% vs. 19%). Women are more likely than men to have been online in the previous week for social media (51% vs. 46%) and for health (24% vs. 19%).

Figure 19: Activities the internet has been used for in the last week, by socio-economic group and gender

Source: Ofcom Technology Tracker, Half 1 2017
QE5B. And, which, if any, of these activities have you used the internet for in the last week? (prompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: All adults who go online (3221 in 2017, 789 AB, 1019 C1, 679 C2, 731DE, 1570 male, 1651 female).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) by socio-economic group compared to all internet users, and males compared to females.

5.6 Gaming

Gaming, across devices

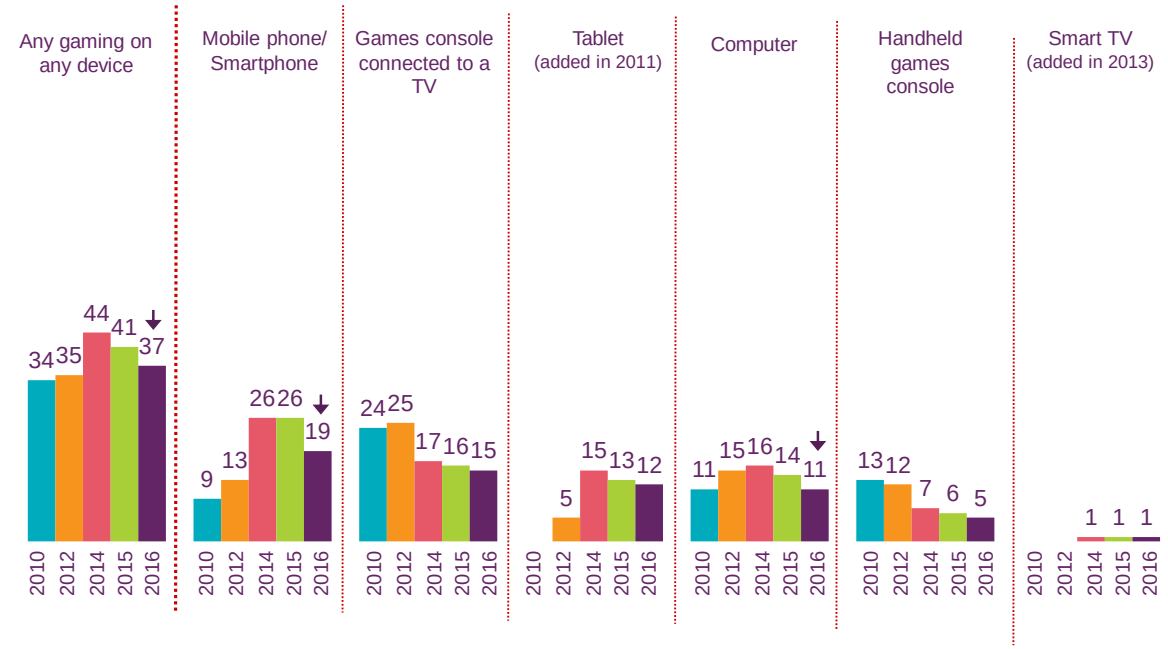
Compared to 2015, adults are less likely to say they ever play games

Adults are shown a list of devices that can be used for gaming, and are asked to say which they ever use to play games, at home or elsewhere (see Figure 20). More than one in three (37%) UK adults use any of the devices we ask about for gaming – a decrease compared to 2015 (41%).

One in five adults play games on a mobile phone (19%), with more than one in ten doing so on a games console connected to a TV (15%), on a tablet (12%), or on a desktop computer/ laptop/ netbook (11%). Less than one in ten adults (5%) say they play games on a handheld games console (such as a Sony PS Vita or Nintendo 3DS) or through a smart TV (1%).

The overall decline in gaming compared to 2015 is attributable to a decrease in gaming through a mobile phone (19% vs. 26%) and through a desktop computer/ laptop/ netbook (11% vs. 14%).

Figure 20: Devices used for gaming at home or elsewhere: 2010-2016



G1. Do you ever play games at home or elsewhere in any of these ways? (prompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ (1846 in 2016).
Arrows show significant changes (95% level) between 2015 and 2016.

As shown in Figure 21, in 2016, younger adults (aged 16-34) are more likely than average to use any of the devices for gaming (67% of 16-24s and 50% of 25-34s vs. 37% overall), while over-45s are less likely (27% of 45-54s, 23% of 55-64s, 21% of 65-74s, and 13% of over-75s).

- 16-24s are more likely than average to play games on the following devices: a mobile phone or smartphone (40% vs. 19%), on a games console connected to a television (41% vs. 15%), on a desktop computer, laptop or netbook (19% vs. 11%) and on a handheld games console (15% vs. 5%).

- 25-34s and 35-44s are more likely to game on mobile phones (27% for both vs. 19% overall). 25-34s are also more likely to play on a games console connected to a TV (27% vs. 15%).

- 45-54s are less likely to play games on a games console connected to a TV (5% vs. 15%) or on a desktop computer/ laptop/ netbook (6% vs. 11%).

- 55-64s and 65-74s are less likely to play games on a mobile phone (6% and 4% vs. 19%), on a games console connected to a TV (5% and 2% vs. 15%) or on a handheld games console (2% and 1% vs. 5%).

- Adults aged 75+ are less likely than average to play games on five of the six devices shown. They are as likely to game on a smart TV (0% vs. 1%).

  While there is no difference in the overall incidence of gaming by socio-economic group compared to the average, those in DE households are less likely to play games on a tablet (8% vs. 12%) and adults in AB households are less likely to do so on a mobile phone/ smartphone (15% vs.19%).

Men are more likely than women to play games overall (41% vs. 32%), and they are more than three times as likely to play games on a console connected to a TV (24% vs. 7%). Men are also more likely to play games on a desktop computer, laptop or netbook (14% vs. 8%).

Figure 21: Devices used for gaming at home or elsewhere, by demographic group

	All adults	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
Base	1846	234	272	313	284	270	218	255
Any gaming on any device	37%	67%↑	50%↑	42%	27%↓	23%↓	21%↓	13%↓
Mobile phone/ smartphone	19%	40%↑	27%↑	27%↑	18%	6%↓	4%↓	1%↓
Games console connected to a TV	15%	41%↑	27%↑	19%	5%↓	5%↓	2%↓	1%↓
Tablet	12%	16%	13%	14%	10%	10%	12%	5%↓
Computer (Desktop / laptop/ netbook)	11%	19%↑	12%	12%	6%↓	10%	9%	6%↓
Handheld games console	5%	15%↑	8%	4%	3%	2%↓	1%↓	2%↓
Smart TV	1%	2%	1%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%

	All adults	AB	C1	C2	DE	Male	Female
Base	1846	427	566	369	484	885	961
Any gaming on any device	37%	33%	40%	37%	36%	41%↑	32%
Mobile phone/ smartphone	19%	15%↓	23%	19%	20%	19%	20%
Games console connected to a TV	15%	15%	16%	16%	14%	24%↑	7%
Tablet	12%	13%	14%	12%	8%↓	11%	13%
Computer (Desktop / laptop/ netbook)	11%	11%	11%	12%	8%	14%↑	8%
Handheld games console	5%	3%	6%	6%	5%	6%	4%
Smart TV	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%

G1. Do you ever play games at home or elsewhere in any of these ways? (prompted responses, multi-coded). Arrows show significant differences (95% level) by age / socio-economic group compared to all adults, and males compared to females

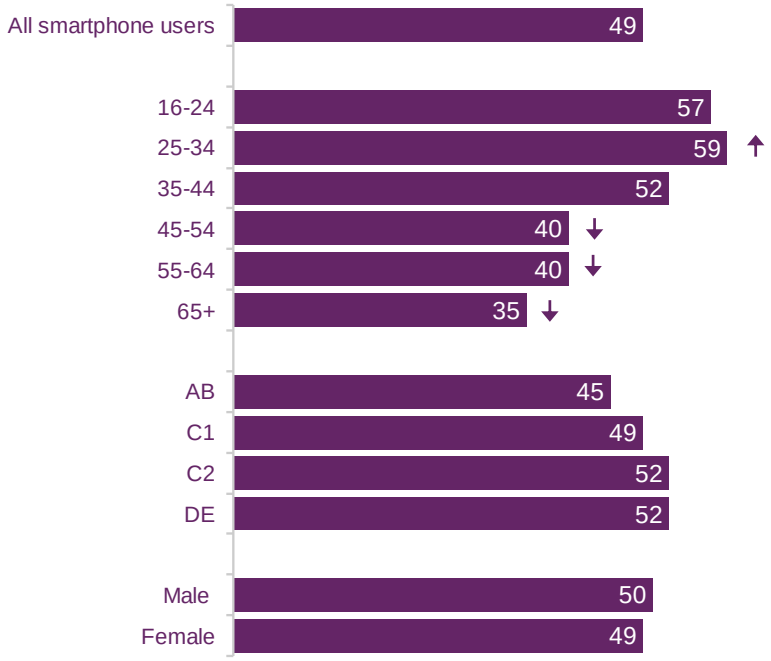
5.7 Data use

Half of smartphone users ever check their data allowance to see how much data they have left

In 2016, questions were added to the study to better understand how smartphone users manage their data use.

As shown in Figure 22, half of smartphone users (49%) say they ever check their data allowance to see how much data remains. This is more likely among 25-34s (59%) and less likely among 45-54s (40%), 55-64s (40%) and over-65s (35%).

Figure 22: Checking mobile data allowance, by age, socio-economic group and gender



M2. Do you ever check your data allowance to see how much data you have left? (prompted responses, single coded)
Base: All adults aged 16+ who use a smartphone (1249 aged 16+, 216 aged 16-24, 247 aged 25-34, 268 aged 35-44, 235 aged 45-54, 157 aged 55-64, 126 aged 65+, 305 AB, 425 C1, 247 C2, 272 DE, 598 male, 651 female).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) for age / socio-economic group compared to all smartphone users and males compared to females.

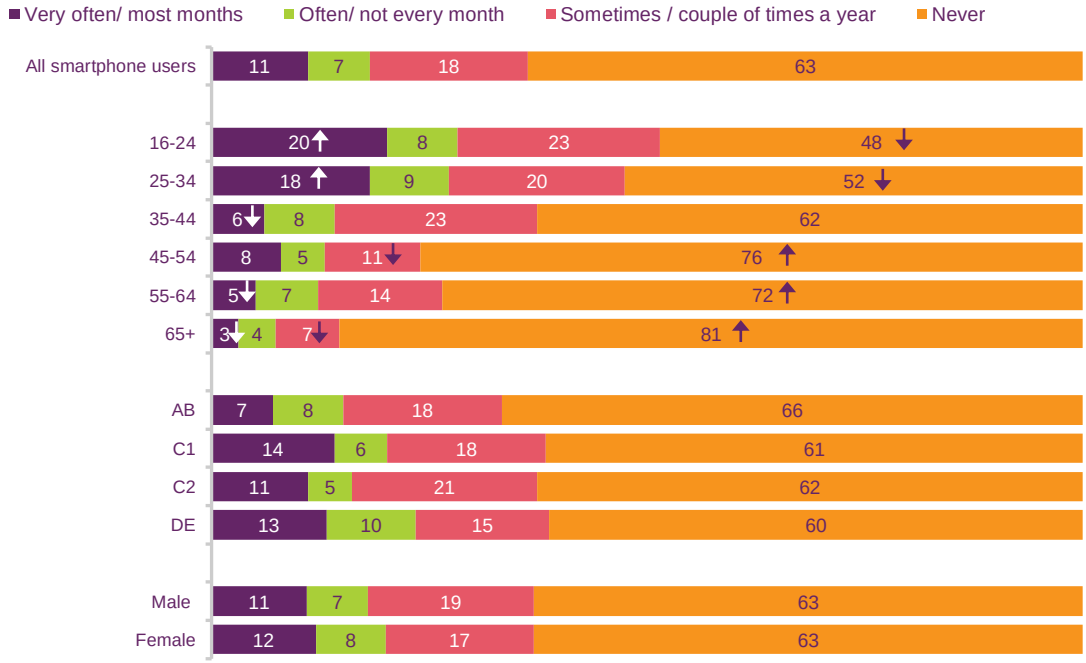
16-34s are more likely to ever use up their data allowance

Smartphone users are also asked how frequently they use up their data allowance. A majority of users, more than six in ten (63%), say they never use up their data allowance, with one in ten (11%) saying they do this very often or most months. A further 7% say they run out of data often, but not necessarily every month, while 18% say they run out of data a couple of times a year.

16-24s (50%) and 25-34s (48%) are more likely than users overall (36%) to say they ever use up their data allowance, and are more likely to say they do this very often/ most months

(20% for 16-24s, 18% for 25-34s vs. 11% overall). Those aged 45 and over are less likely to say they ever use up their smartphone data allowance.

Figure 23: Frequency of using up data allowance, by age, socio-economic group and gender



M3. Do you ever use up your data allowance on your mobile phone? (unprompted responses, single coded)
Base: All adults aged 16+ who use a smartphone (1249 aged 16+, 216 aged 16-24, 247 aged 25-34, 268 aged 35-44, 235 aged 45-54, 157 aged 55-64, 126 aged 65+, 305 AB, 425 C1, 247 C2, 272 DE, 598 male, 651 female).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) for age / socio-economic group compared to all smartphone users and males compared to females.

One in five smartphone users who ever use up their data allowance say they buy extra data when they are at risk of running out

Smartphone users who ever use up their data allowance were then prompted with six options and are asked to say which they ever do when they are at risk of running out of data.

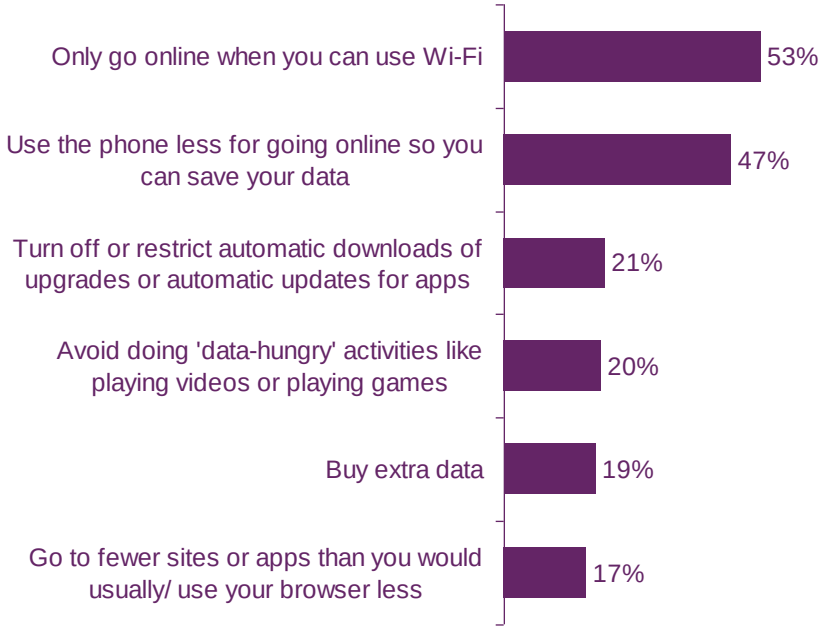
Half (53%) restrict their data use/ only go online when they can use Wi-Fi, with a similar proportion (47%) saying they just use their phone less for going online. One in five (21%) turn off or restrict automatic downloads or updates of apps, avoid 'data-hungry' activities like playing videos or games (20%) or buy extra data from their network provider (19%). Less than one in five (17%) go to fewer sites or apps, or use their browser less.

There are no differences by age when comparing those aged 16-34 with users aged over 35,[10] or when comparing results by gender.

Compared to those in C2DE[11] households, smartphone users in ABC1 households are more likely to say they only go online when they can use Wi-Fi (59% vs. 46%), or turn off or restrict automatic downloads/ updates (26% vs. 15%) or avoid 'data-hungry' activities (26% vs. 12%).

[10] Low base sizes prevent analysis by the usual six age groups
[11] Low base sizes prevent analysis by the usual four socio-economic groups

Figure 24: Actions undertaken when at risk of running out of data



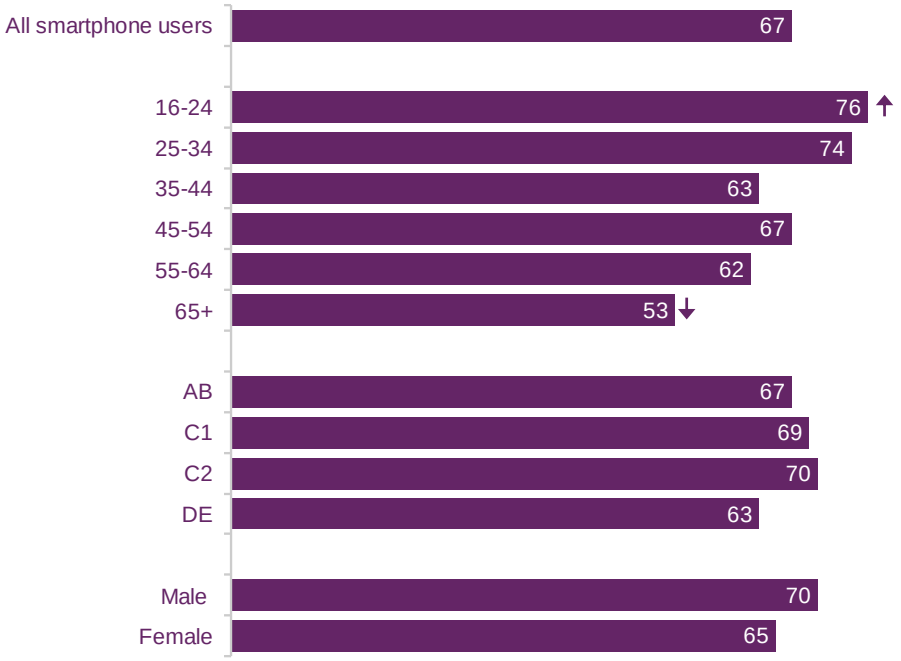
M4. When you are at risk of running out of data do you ever do any of the following things? (prompted response, multi-coded)
Base: Those with a smartphone who have ever used up their data allowance (423)

Public Wi-Fi

Two in three smartphone users ever use public Wi-Fi

In 2016, smartphone users were also asked whether they ever used public Wi-Fi.[12] Two in three smartphone users (67%) say that they ever used public Wi-Fi; this incidence was higher among 16-24s (76%) and lower for over-65s (53%).

Figure 25: Use of public Wi-Fi



M5. Do you ever use free public Wi-Fi? (prompted responses, single coded)
Base: All adults aged 16+ who use a smartphone (1249 aged 16+, 216 aged 16-24, 247 aged 25-34, 268 aged 35-44, 235 aged 45-54, 157 aged 55-64, 126 aged 65+, 305 AB, 425 C1, 247 C2, 272 DE, 598 male, 651 female).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) for age / socio-economic group compared to all smartphone users and males compared to females.

[12] The following definition was read out to respondents if required: Wi-Fi that is provided free of charge in public locations like coffee shops or hotels. Some of these may require you to register or to log in to gain access to the public Wi-Fi.

Section 6

Engagement and participation

6.1 Section overview

This section looks at the ways in which internet users engage and participate online. It first addresses how internet users communicate online, with a particular focus on social media – looking at the sites used, activities undertaken, experience of sharing content and exposure to upsetting or offensive content.

It looks at use of the internet to access Government or other public or civic services, as well as reasons for not completing Government services online.

It also covers some of the creative activities that adult internet users may do online, and looks at their experience of transacting online or through their smartphone.

6.2 Key findings

- In 2017[13], internet users are now more likely to use instant messaging services (57% vs. 53% in 2016) and to have done so in the previous week (46% vs. 41%).

- Three in four internet users (76%) have a social media profile or account – unchanged since 2015. There has also been no change in the use of social media among 16-74s. However, internet users aged 75+ are now more likely to have a profile or account (41% vs. 19% in 2015).

- Ninety-five percent of social media site users have a profile/ account on Facebook, making it the most common social media site on which to have a profile. Compared to 2015 there has been growth for WhatsApp (45% vs. 28%), Instagram (31% vs. 22%), YouTube (30% vs. 22%), Snapchat (23% vs. 12%), Google+ (16% vs. 11%) and Pinterest (12% vs. 7%). As such, the incidence of *only* having a profile or account on Facebook stands at one in three (32%), down from 43% in 2015.

- Three activities are each ever carried out on social media sites by a majority of users: posting comments or sharing videos or photos (78%), liking, sharing or commenting on things that other people have shared (76%), and looking at posts without commenting, liking or sharing (71%). While sharing content on social media is a popular activity, it is worth noting that three in ten who share links to articles on Facebook or Twitter agree that they often do this without fully reading the content first.

- The majority of social media users say they sometimes see views they disagree with (56%), with a further three in ten (29%) saying they often see views they disagree with. Women are more likely than men to say they often see views they disagree with (32% vs. 26%) and are nearly twice as likely as men to strongly agree that the potential for abusive comments puts them off making comments or posting content (26% vs. 14%).

[13] This data is taken from the Technology Tracker study and the most recent data available relates to 2017.

- More than two in five social media site users (43%) say they have seen something that has upset or offended them on social media in the past year. Six in ten (61%) say they took some form of action as a result of seeing the upsetting content; the most popular action was to report it to the website through the 'report or block content' feature (40%).

- Six in ten internet users have ever looked online for public services information on Government sites such as gov.uk, ni.direct or HMRC (60%), or have completed Government processes online - such as updating their Universal Credit or renewing a driving licence or passport (59%). More than four in ten have ever paid their council tax or used another local council service online (46%), or signed an online petition or used a campaigning website (43%).

- In 2017[14] three in ten internet users (30%) have ever uploaded content – such as photos, videos or blog posts, unchanged since 2016. Close to one in five (17%) say they have done this in the previous week, also unchanged since 2016. Uploading content in the previous week is more likely among younger internet users aged 16-34 and less likely among those aged 55+. This difference by age is reflected in how confident internet users feel doing creative things online. Compared to the average (41%), those aged 16-24 (68%) and 25-34 (54%) are more likely to say they are very confident doing creative things online, while this is less likely for users aged 45+.

- Compared to 2016, internet users are more likely to have gone online in the previous week to purchase goods, services or tickets etc. (48% vs. 40% in 2016).

- Smartphone users are more likely than in 2015 to have used their phones for transactional purposes. Four in ten have used their phone as a ticket or boarding pass or as an entry ticket to an event (41% vs. 33% in 2015) and close to three in ten (28%) have used their phone for contactless payments (20% in 2015).

6.3 Communication

In 2016, the questions in the Media Literacy Tracker, relating to type and frequency of internet use, were revised. A shorter set of questions were asked of adults who go online, and the frequency options that respondents could select were also amended.

As Ofcom's Technology Tracker study also includes questions about types and frequency of internet use, the specific online activities that can be grouped under the heading of 'online communication' that are included in this section of the report come from that study rather than from the Media Literacy Tracker.

These results are from the most recent wave of Technology Tracker research, conducted in 2017. Any analysis making comparisons over time for these online activities therefore looks at differences between 2016 and 2017, rather than between 2015 and 2016.

Internet users are now more likely than in 2016 to use instant messaging services

The four activities that internet users are asked about in the Technology Tracker survey, which fall under the heading of 'online communication' are: sending or receiving emails, communicating via instant messaging (e.g. Facebook Chat, Skype Chat, Snapchat etc.), making video calls (e.g. via FaceTime, Skype) or making voice calls on these types of VoIP

[14] These data are taken from the Technology Tracker study and the most recent data available relate to 2017.

(voice over internet protocol) services.Internet users are more likely to have used VoIP services for video calls than for voice calls, both 'ever' (37% vs. 26%) and in the previous week (24% vs.16%). Compared to 2016, internet users are less likely to say they have ever used VoIP services for voice calls (26% vs. 30% in 2016).

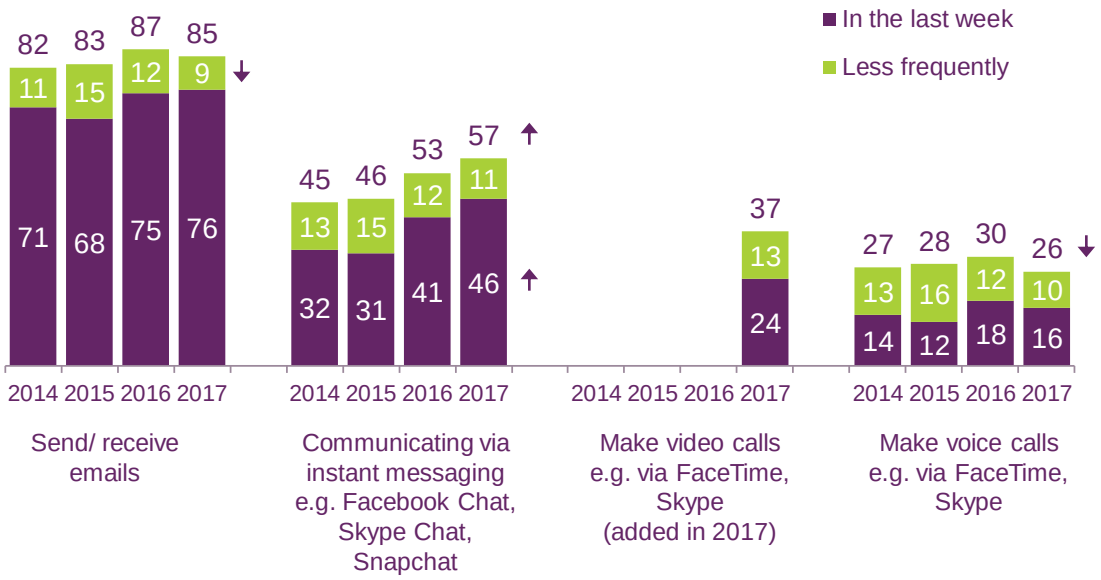
Figure 26 shows the proportion of adult internet users, from 2014 to 2017,[15] who say they ever undertake each of these activities online, broken out into those who have done this in the previous week, and less frequent use[16].

In 2017, more than eight in ten internet users say they have ever been online to send or receive emails (85%) while three-quarters (76%) say they have done this in the previous week. Both of these measures are unchanged compared to 2016.

More than half of internet users have ever used instant messaging services (57%); an increase compared to 2016 (53%). Close to half of users say they have done this in the previous week (46%); this is also more likely compared to the four in ten (41%) who said they did this in 2016.

Internet users are more likely to have used VoIP services for video calls than for voice calls, both 'ever' (37% vs. 26%) and in the previous week (24% vs.16%). Compared to 2016, internet users are less likely to say they have ever used VoIP services for voice calls (26% vs. 30% in 2016).

Figure 26: Communicating online: 2014-2017



Source: Ofcom Technology Tracker, Half 1 2014-2017
QE5A/ QE5B. Which, if any, of these do you use the internet for? / And, which, if any, of these activities have you used the internet for in the last week? (prompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online (3221 in 2017).
Arrows show significant changes (99% level) between 2016 and 2017.

As shown in Figure 27, in 2017, internet users aged 16-24 and 25-34 are more likely than average to have been online in the previous week to use instant messaging services, or to

[15] Between 2014 and 2017 the research on the Technology Tracker study took place in two waves per year, the data shown relates to the first wave of research conducted in January/ February each year.
[16] It is not possible to show a trend for making video calls over VoIP services as this was first included in the Technology Tracker survey in 2017.

use VoIP services, whether for video or voice calls. Internet users aged 25-34 and 35-44 are more likely to have been online in the previous week to send or receive emails, while those aged 55-64 are less likely to have been online in the previous week to use instant messaging services or to make video calls. Compared to internet users overall, those aged 65 and over are less likely to have been online in the previous week to carry out each of these four activities.

For three of the four activities (email, and voice and video calls on VoIP services), compared to internet users overall, those in AB households are more likely to have undertaken each of these activities, while those in C2 or DE households are less likely.

Women who go online are more likely than men to say they have used instant messaging services in the previous week (48% vs. 43%), while men are more likely to say they have made voice calls using VoIP services (18% vs. 14%).

Figure 27: Communication online in the previous week, by age, gender and socio-economic group

	All internet users	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
Base	3221	506	536	613	531	520	364	151
Send/ receive emails	76%	72%	81% ↑	81% ↑	79%	72%	68% ↓	54% ↓
Communicating via instant messaging e.g. Facebook Chat, Skype Chat, Snapchat	46%	64% ↑	61% ↑	49%	44%	31% ↓	19% ↓	5% ↓
Make video calls e.g. via FaceTime, Skype	24%	36% ↑	34% ↑	27%	20%	14% ↓	9% ↓	6% ↓
Make voice calls e.g. via FaceTime, Skype	16%	21% ↑	21% ↑	19%	16%	12%	5% ↓	1% ↓

	All internet users	AB	C1	C2	DE	Male	Female
Base	3221	789	1019	679	731	1570	1651
Send/ receive emails	76%	89% ↑	78%	69% ↓	60% ↓	76%	75%
Communicating via instant messaging e.g. Facebook Chat, Skype Chat, Snapchat	46%	49%	45%	41%	45%	43%	48% ↑
Make video calls e.g. via FaceTime, Skype	24%	31% ↑	24%	19% ↓	20% ↓	23%	25%
Make voice calls e.g. via FaceTime, Skype	16%	23% ↑	17%	12% ↓	11% ↓	18% ↑	14%

Source: Ofcom Technology Tracker, Half 1 2017
QE5B. And, which, if any, of these activities have you used the internet for in the last week? (prompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online (3221 in 2017).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) by age/ socio-economic group compared to all internet users, and males compared to females.

6.4 Social media

Incidence of having a social media profile/ account

Three in four internet users have a social media profile/ account, with over-75s being more likely to have a profile/ account than in 2015

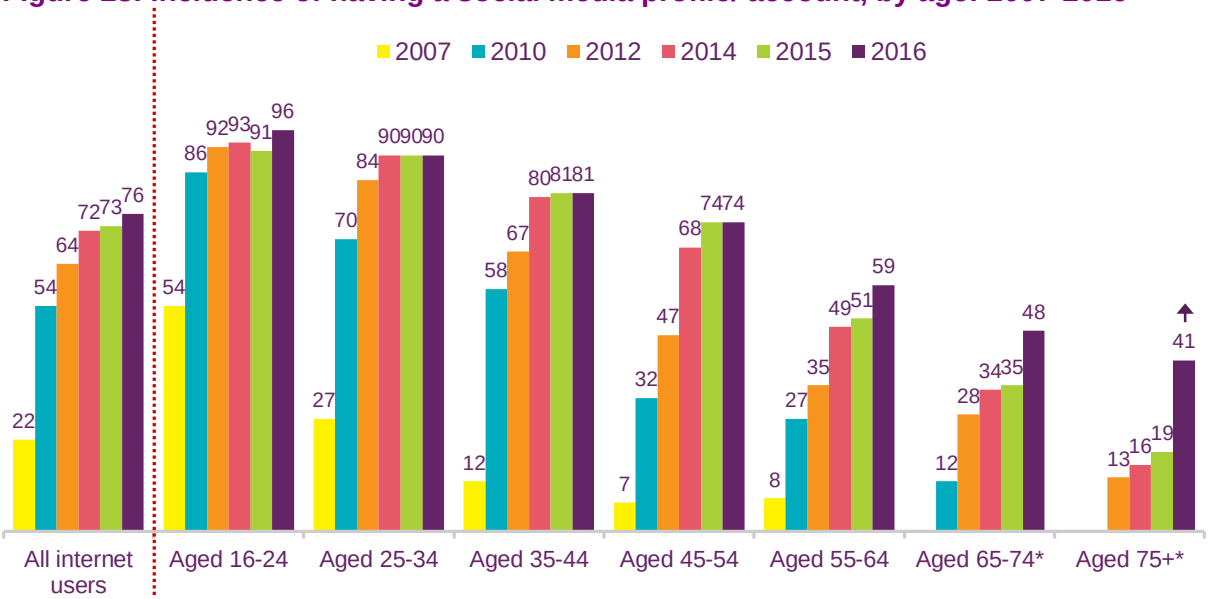
Three in four (76%) internet users have a social media profile/ account. While this is unchanged since 2015 (73%), it is now more likely than in 2014 (72%). When expressed as

a proportion of all adults aged 16+ (rather than all internet users), around two in three (65%) adults have a social media profile/ account.

Internet users aged 16-24 (96%) and 25-34 (90%) are more likely than average (76%) to have a social media profile/ account, and those aged 55-64 (59%), 65-74 (48%) and over 75 (41%) are less likely.

Compared to 2015, internet users aged 16-74 are no more or less likely to have a social media profile/ account, while over-75s are now more likely to (41% vs. 19%). As such, around one in five (18%) of all adults aged 75 and over now have a social media profile/ account.

Figure 28: Incidence of having a social media profile/ account, by age: 2007-2016



IN21. I'd now like to ask you some questions about social media - so using websites or apps like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and YouTube. Do you have a social media profile or account on any sites or apps? (unprompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online (1553 in 2016, 231 aged 16-24, 265 aged 25-34, 293 aged 35-44, 265 aged 45-54, 220 aged 55-64, 279 aged 65+).
Arrows show significant changes (95% level) between 2015 and 2016.
*Base too low to report for 65-74s in 2007, and 75+ in 2007 and 2010

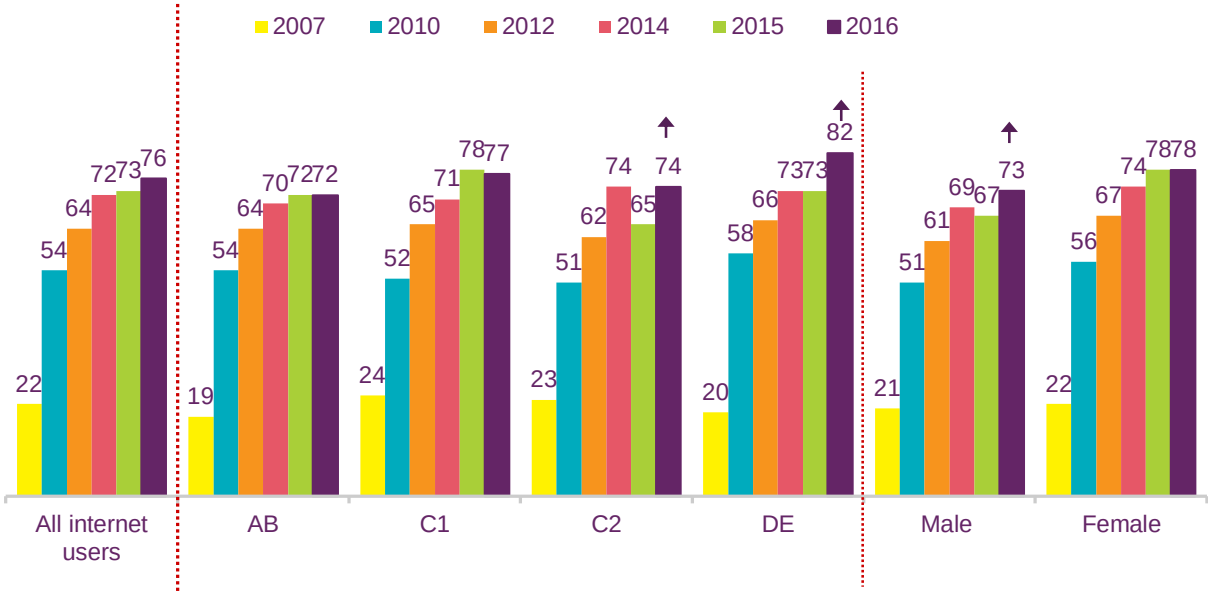
As shown in Figure 29, a majority of internet users in all four socio-economic groups have a social media profile/ account. Adults in C2 households are more likely than in 2015 to have a profile/ account (74% vs. 65%)[17] as are those in DE households (82% vs. 73%).

This increase between 2015 and 2016 for internet users in DE households means that in 2016 those in DE households (82%) are now more likely than average (76%) to have a profile/ account. This was not the case in 2015, where those in DE households matched the average incidence (73%).

Compared to 2015, men are more likely to have a social media profile/ account (73% vs. 67%), with no change seen for women over this period. In spite of this increase between 2015 and 2016 for men, women continue to be more likely to have a profile/ account (78% vs. 73% for men).

[17] This, however, follows a corresponding decrease between 2014 (74%) and 2015 (65%).

Figure 29: Incidence of having a social media profile/ account, by socio-economic group and gender: 2007-2016



IN21. I'd now like to ask you some questions about social media - so using websites or apps like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and YouTube. Do you have a social media profile or account on any sites or apps? (unprompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online (1553 in 2016, 394 AB, 521 C1, 300 C2, 338 DE, 745 male, 808 female).
Arrows show significant changes (95% level) between 2015 and 2016.

Social media users are less likely than in 2015[18] to say they only have a profile/ account on Facebook

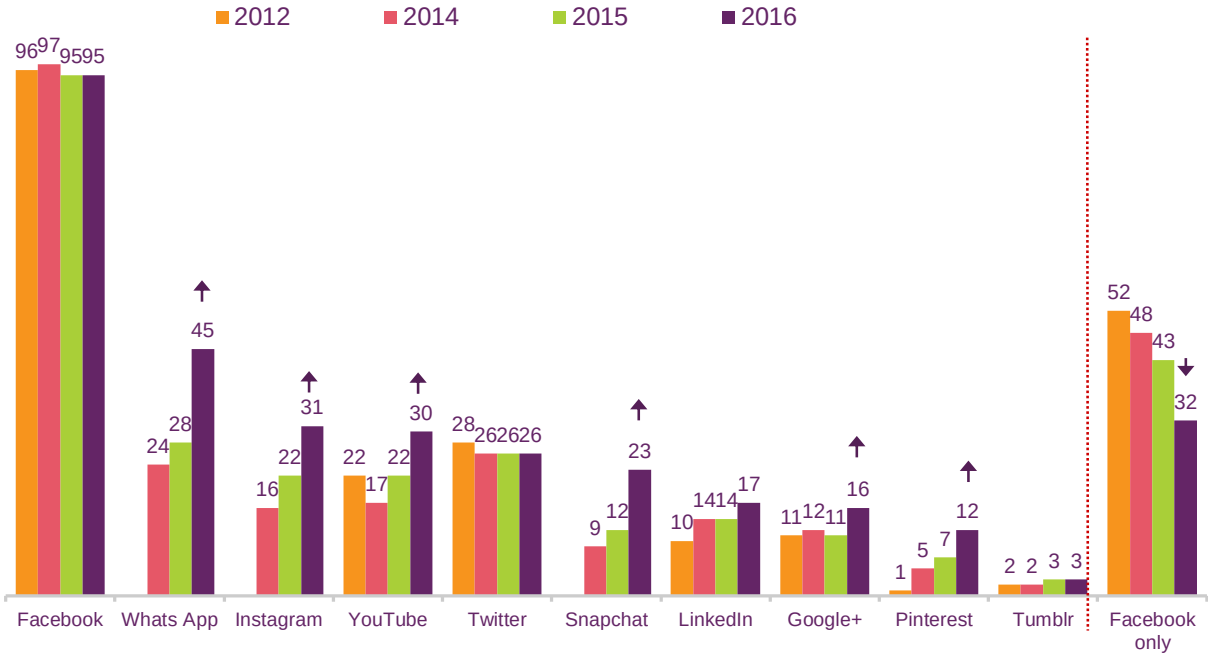
As shown in Figure 30, 95% of adults with a social media profile/ account say they use Facebook. No other site or service is used by a majority of those with a social media profile/ account. One in three (32%) of those with a profile/ account say they *only* have one on Facebook, although this measure is down by 11 percentage points compared to 2015.

More than four in ten social media users have a profile/ account on WhatsApp (45%) with at least one in four using Instagram (31%), YouTube (30%), Twitter (26%) or Snapchat (23%). More than one in ten have a profile/ account on LinkedIn (17%), Google+ (16%) or Pinterest (12%). All other sites are used by less than one in ten social media site users.

Compared to 2015, social media site users are more likely to say they have a profile/ account on six of the sites or apps: WhatsApp (45% vs. 28%), Instagram (31% vs. 22%), YouTube (30% vs. 22%), Snapchat (23% vs. 12%), Google+ (16% vs. 11%) and Pinterest (12% vs. 7%).

[18] Please note that the changes shown in the Figure could be attributable to a change in approach at this question between 2015 and 2016. In 2015 respondents were prompted with 20 possible social media sites (as well as an option to give another response) which in 2016 was reduced down to ten options.

Figure 30: Social media sites used: 2012, 2014, 2015 and 2016



IN22. Which sites or apps do you have a profile or account on that you still use? (prompted responses, multi-coded) – showing responses of 3% or more of adults in 2016 aged 16+ with a social media profile/ account.
NB Showcard amended in 2016 reducing the prompted responses to the top ten most popular in 2015
Base: All adults aged 16+ with a social media profile/ account (1136 in 2016).
Arrows show significant changes (95% level) between 2015 and 2016

While not charted, there are differences by demographics:

- Compared to the average, 16-24s are more likely to have a profile/ account on five of the ten social media sites/ apps shown above: Instagram (61%), Snapchat (59%) YouTube (46%), Twitter (39%) and Tumblr (11%). Adults aged 25-34 are more likely to have a profile/ account on WhatsApp (57%), Instagram (40%) or YouTube (38%).

- Over-35s with a social media profile/ account tend to be less likely than average to have a profile/ account on YouTube or Snapchat, and over-45s tend to be less likely to have a profile/ account on Instagram or WhatsApp.

- There are no differences by age in having a profile/ account on Facebook compared to the average, although *only* using Facebook is more likely for those aged 45-54 (40% vs. 32%) and for over-65s (58%).

- There are differences by socio-economic group: AB adults are more likely to have a profile/ account on LinkedIn (34%) while those in C2 (6%) or DE (5%) households are less likely to use this site. Adults in AB households are also less likely to use Snapchat (15%).

- Women are more likely than men to have a profile/ account on Instagram (34% vs. 27%) and on Pinterest (17% vs. 7%), while men are more likely than women to have a profile/ account on YouTube (34% vs. 26%) or LinkedIn (20% vs. 14%).

Eight in ten social media users consider their Facebook profile/ account to be their main one

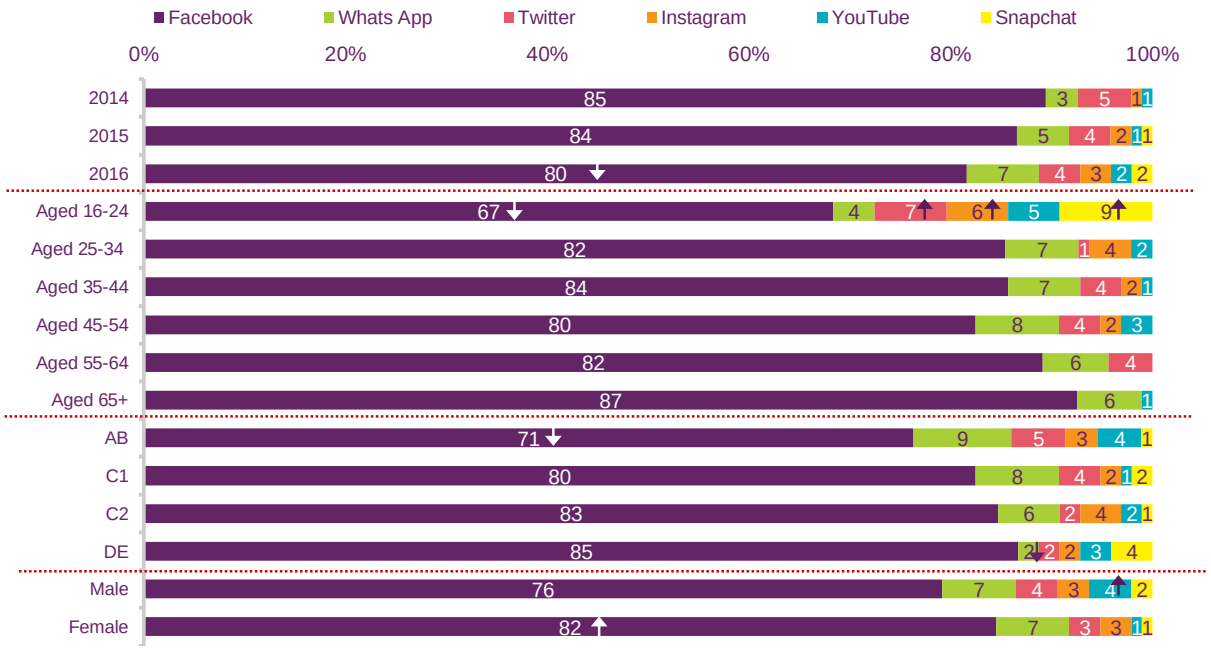
In addition to asking respondents about the social media sites or apps they have a profile/ account on, they are asked to nominate which they consider to be their main one i.e. the one they use most often. The results are shown in Figure 31.

Eight in ten with a social media profile/ account on any site or app consider Facebook to be their main profile/ account (80%); less likely than in 2015 (84%). Seven per cent nominate WhatsApp and less than 5% nominate Twitter, Instagram, YouTube or Snapchat.

There are some differences within these overall measures by age, socio-economic group and gender. Those aged 16-24 are less likely than average to nominate Facebook (67% vs. 80%) and more likely to nominate Snapchat (9% vs. 2%), Twitter (7% vs. 4%) or Instagram (6% vs. 3%) as their main profile/ account.

Adults in AB households are less likely to nominate Facebook (71% vs. 80%) while DEs are less likely to nominate WhatsApp (2% vs. 7%). Facebook is more likely to be nominated by women than by men (82% vs. 76%), whereas men are more likely than women to say that YouTube (4% vs. 1%) is their main profile/ account.

Figure 31: Service considered as main social media profile/ account, by year and demographic group



IN23. And which one would you say is your main social media site or app – the one you use most often? (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ with a social media profile/ account (1136 aged 16+, varies by demographic).
Showing responses of >1% in 2016 among all adults with a profile/ account.
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) between 2015 and 2016 at the overall level, and by age / socio-economic group compared to all with a social media profile/ account, and males compared to females.

Activities undertaken on social media sites or apps

Four in ten users say they ever post comments in private group discussions. As shown in Figure 32, three activities are ever undertaken on social media sites by at least seven in ten adult users: posting comments or sharing videos or photos (78%), liking, sharing or commenting on things that other people have shared (76%) or looking at posts without commenting, liking or sharing (71%).

Four in ten users say they ever post comments in private group discussions (42%) and three in ten ever 'check-in' at locations they visit (32%). One in four users ever like, share or comment to try and win prizes (25%), ever post comments in public groups (24%) and create groups/plan events (24%). One in five (19%) ever complain to companies through social media. One in eight (12%) say they ever click on the ads that appear in their newsfeed.

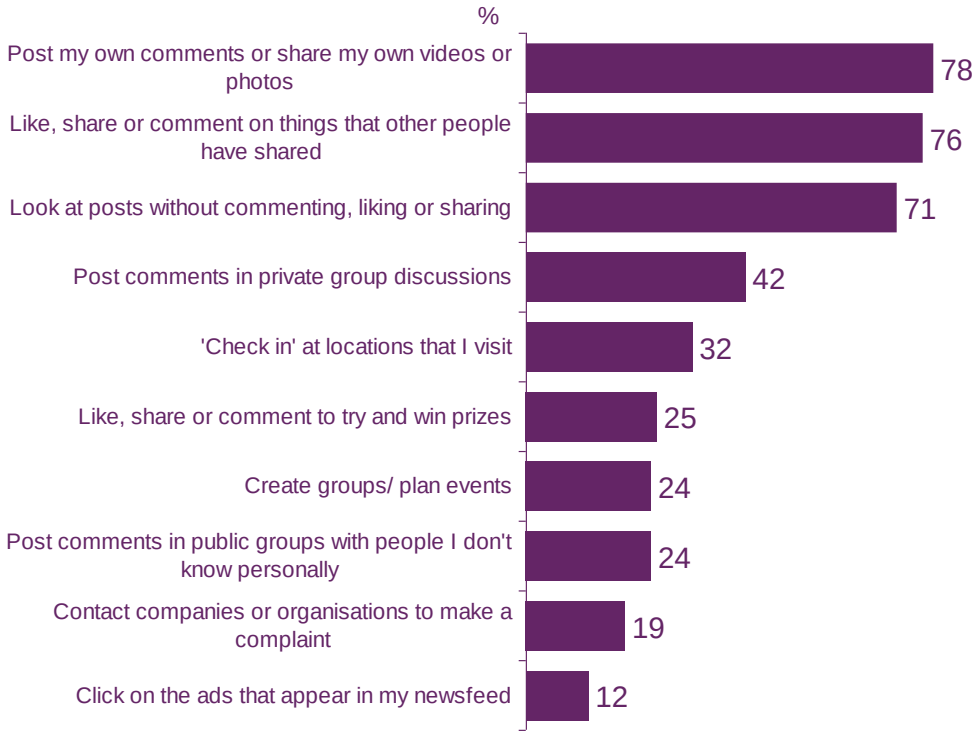
Compared to the average, adults aged 16-24 with a social media profile/ account are more likely to say they like, share or comment on things other people have shared (85% vs. 76%) or to say they create groups or plan events (34% vs. 24%). Those aged 25-34 are more likely to say they post their own comments, share their own videos or photos (86% vs. 78%) or post comments in public groups (32% vs. 24%).

Between the ages of 45 and 64, some activities are less likely to be undertaken on social media: posting comments in public groups (15% for 45-54s vs. 24% overall), posting comments or sharing videos or photos (65% for 55-64s vs. 78%) and creating groups or planning events (11% for 55-64s vs. 24%). Compared to the average, over-65s are as likely to say they look at posts without commenting, liking or sharing, or contact organisations to complain, and are less likely to have ever carried out each of the remaining eight activities.

Compared to the average, adult social media users in AB households are more likely to say they post comments in private group discussions (51% vs. 42%) or create groups or plan events (31% vs. 24%) and are less likely to say they check in at locations they visit (24% vs. 32%). Those with a social media profile/ account in DE households are more likely than average to say they like, comment or share to try and win prizes (34% vs. 25%).

Women are more likely than men to say they carry out five of these activities: post comments, share videos or photos (81% vs. 75%), post comments in private group discussions (46% vs. 38%), check in at locations visited (35% vs. 28%), make a complaint to an organisation (22% vs. 16%), or click on newsfeed ads (14% vs. 9%).

Figure 32: Types of use of social media sites: 2016



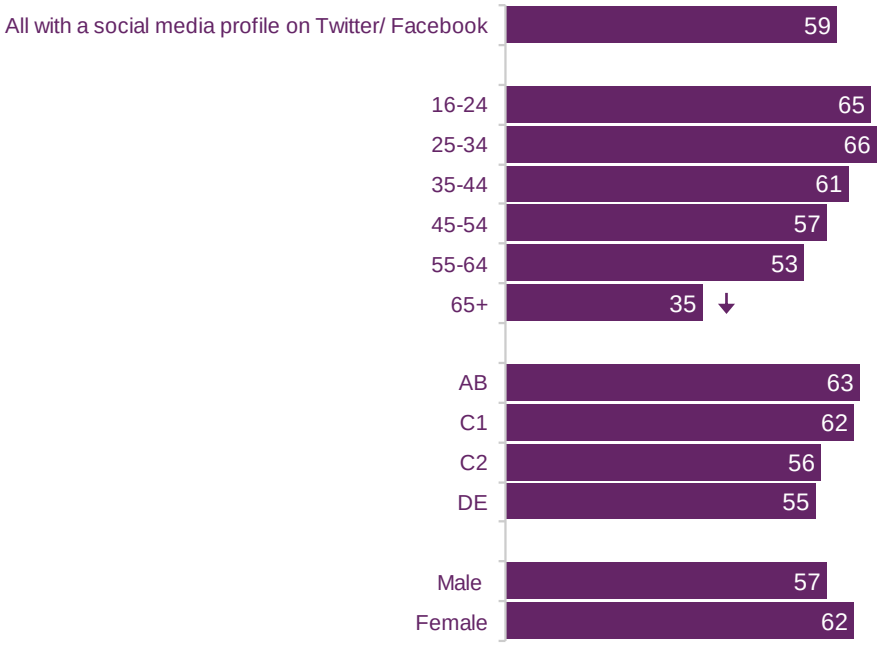
IN24. Do you ever do any of these things on social media sites or apps? (prompted responses, multi-coded)
Base: All adults aged 16+ with a social media profile/ account (1136 aged 16+)

Sharing links to articles on social media

Three in ten who share links to articles on Facebook or Twitter say they often do this without fully reading the content first

Figure 33 shows the incidence of sharing links to articles on Twitter or Facebook. Six in ten (59%) with a profile/ account on Twitter or Facebook say they ever do this; the incidence is lower for those aged 65+ (35%). There are no differences by household socio-economic group compared to the average, nor between men and women.

Figure 33: Sharing links to articles on Twitter or Facebook, by demographic group



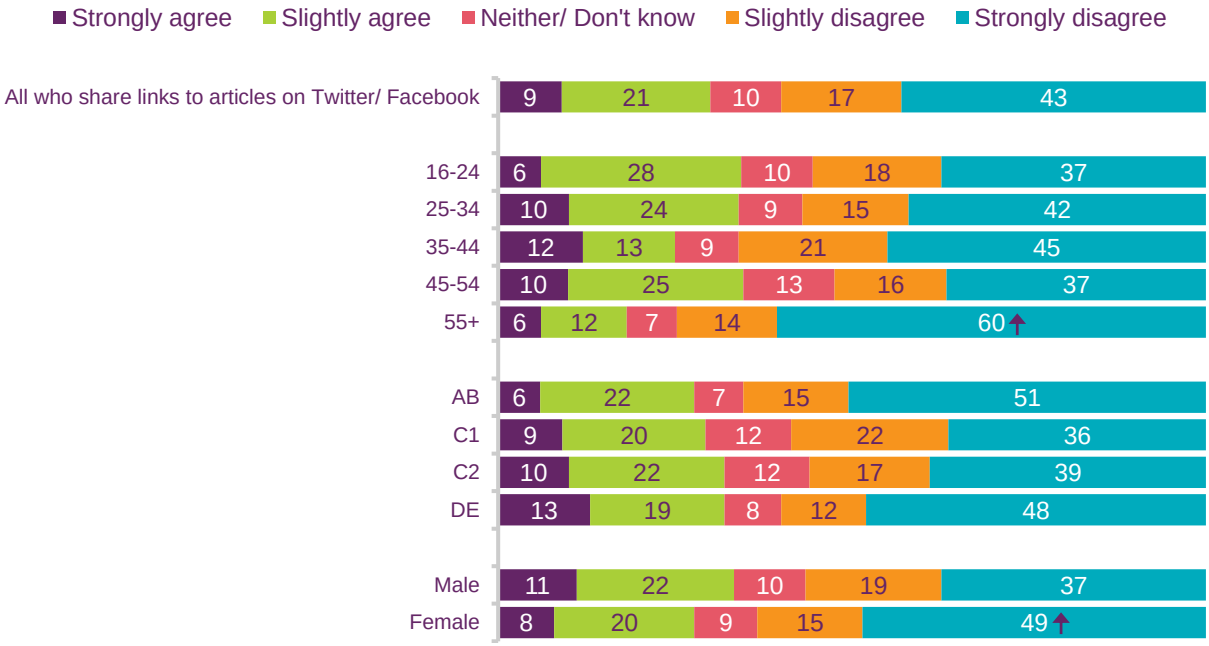
IN26. Do you ever share links to articles on Twitter or Facebook? (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ with a social media profile/ account on Twitter or Facebook (1097 aged 16+, varies by demographic).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) by age / socio-economic group compared to all with a social media profile/account on Twitter or Facebook, and males compared to females.

Those with a profile/ account on Twitter or Facebook who say they ever share links to articles on these social media sites are then asked the extent to which they agree with the following statement: "I often share links to articles on Twitter or Facebook without fully reading the content first". Responses by age, socio-economic group and gender are shown in Figure 34.

Among those who share links to articles on Twitter or Facebook, a majority (60%) disagree that they often share these articles without fully reading them, twice as many as those who agree (30%). There are relatively few differences in either of these incidences by age. Compared to the average, over-55s are more likely to disagree overall (74% vs. 60%), because they are more likely to disagree strongly (60% vs. 43%).

Women are more likely than men to disagree strongly with this statement (49% vs. 37%).

Figure 34: Agreement with statement: "I often share links to articles on Twitter or Facebook without fully reading the content first", by age, gender and socio-economic group



IN27. Please tell me the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statement – I often share links to articles on Twitter or Facebook without fully reading the content first (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: All who share links to articles on Twitter or Facebook (662 aged 16+, varies by demographic).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) by age / socio-economic group compared to all who share links to articles on Twitter or Facebook, and males compared to females.

Sharing opinions on social media sites or apps

One in three social media users say they share opinions with strangers on these sites

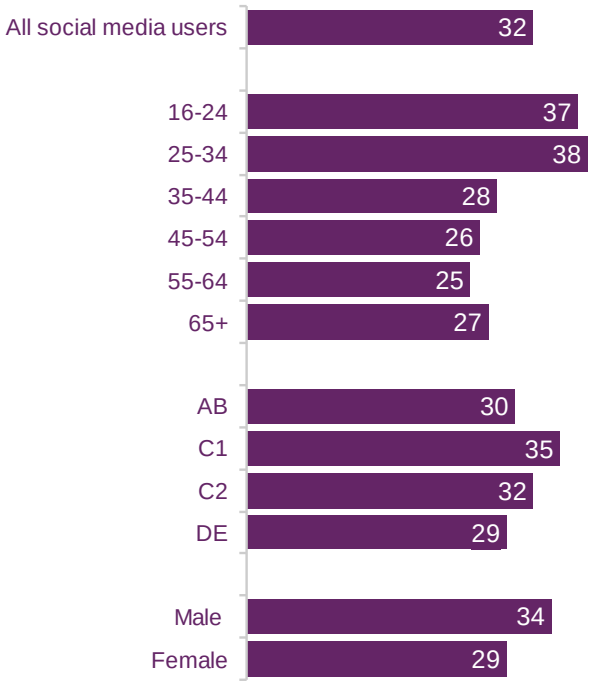
As shown in Figure 35, one in three adults (32%) with a social media site profile/ account say they have ever shared opinions on these sites with people they don't know.

Compared to the average, there are no differences by age. However, younger social media users (aged 16-34) are more likely than over-45s to do this.

Additional questions are then asked of those who say they share opinions with people they don't know on social media. More than four in five (88%) say they are happy to share these opinions using their real name.[19]

[19] Low base sizes by age prevent further analysis by this criterion.

Figure 35: Incidence of sharing opinions on social media sites with people not known to them, by age, gender and socio-economic group



IN29. Do you ever share your opinions on social media sites with people you don't know? (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ with a social media profile/ account (1136 aged 16+, varies by demographic).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) by age / socio-economic group compared to all with a social media profile/ account, and males compared to females.

The majority of adults with a social media site profile/ account say they see views they disagree with

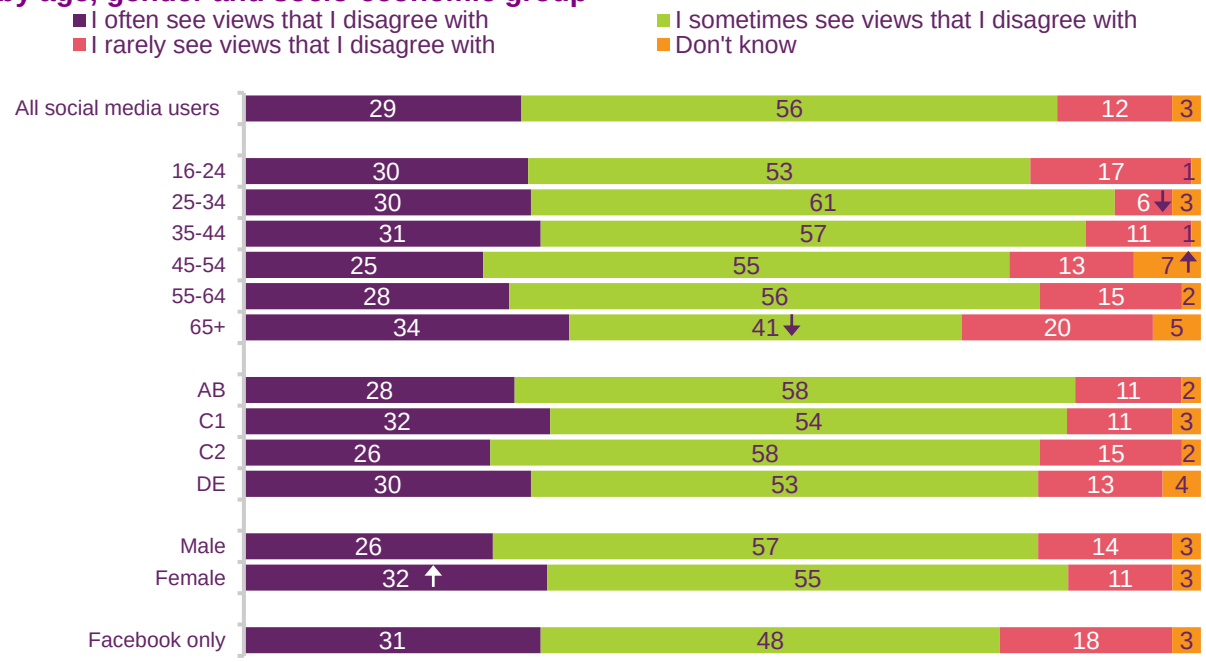
To try and gauge the variety of opinions that people are exposed to on social media, adults with a social media profile/ account are prompted with three responses and are asked to say which one best applies to their experience of social media. These responses are:

- I often see views that I disagree with
- I sometimes see views that I disagree with
- I rarely see views that I disagree with

As shown in Figure 36, one in ten with a social media profile/ account (12%) say they rarely see views that they disagree with. The majority (56%) say they sometimes see views they disagree with, and a further three in ten (29%) say they often see views they disagree with.

Those aged 25-34 are less likely to say they rarely see views they disagree with (6% vs. 12% overall) and women are more likely than men to say they often see views they disagree with (32% vs. 26%).

Figure 36: Extent to which people see views on social media that they disagree with, by age, gender and socio-economic group



IN33. When you use social media, which one of these best applies? (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ with a social media profile/ account (1136 aged 16+, varies by demographic).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) by age / socio-economic group compared to all with a social media profile/ account, and males compared to females.

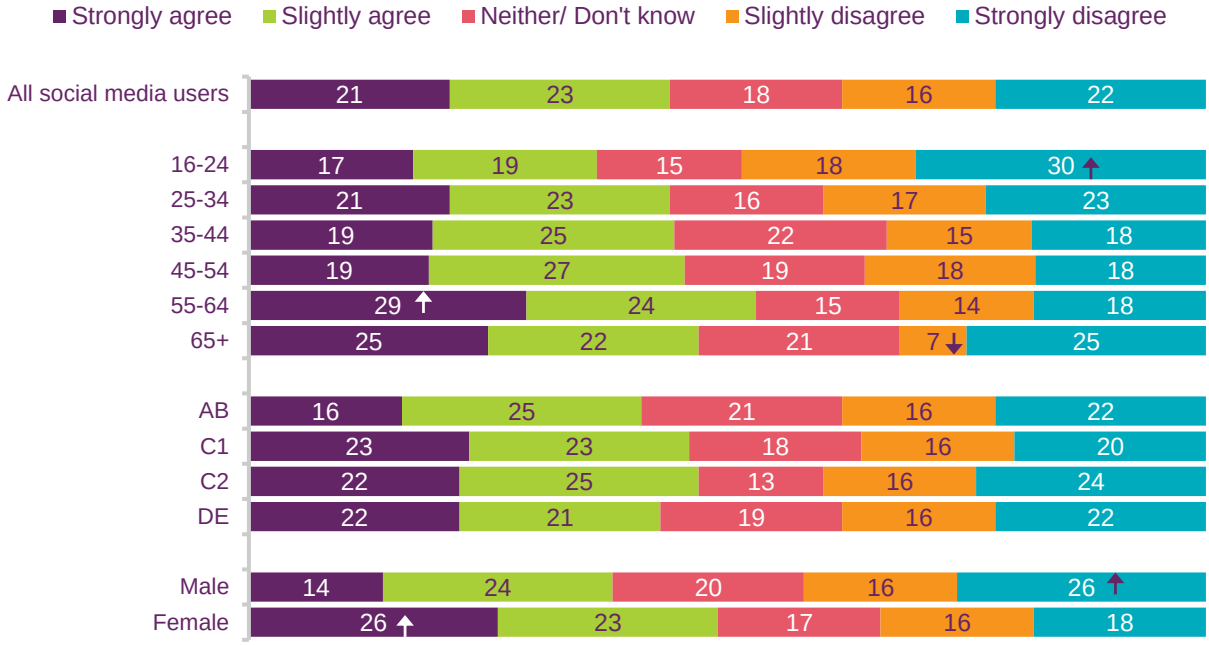
The potential for abusive comments or responses is more likely to deter women from making comments or posting content on social media

Adults with a social media profile/ account are asked the extent to which they agree with the statement: "The potential for abusive comments or responses puts me off making comments or posting things on social media".

Among social media users overall there is no view held by an overall majority, although users are more likely to agree (44%) than they are to disagree (38%). Those aged 16-24 are more likely to strongly disagree (30% vs. 22%), and 55-64s are more likely to strongly agree (29% vs. 21%).

Women with a social media profile/ account are more likely than men to agree that they are put off from posting content because of the potential for abusive comments or responses (49% vs. 38%).

Figure 37: Agreement with statement: "The potential for abusive comments or responses puts me off making comments or posting things on social media", by age, gender and socio-economic group



IN25A. Please tell me the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about social media sites – The potential for abusive comments or responses puts me off making comments or posting things on social media (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ with a social media profile/ account (1136 aged 16+, varies by demographic).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) by age / socio-economic group compared to all with a social media profile/ account, and males compared to females.

Seeing content on social media sites or apps that upsets or offends

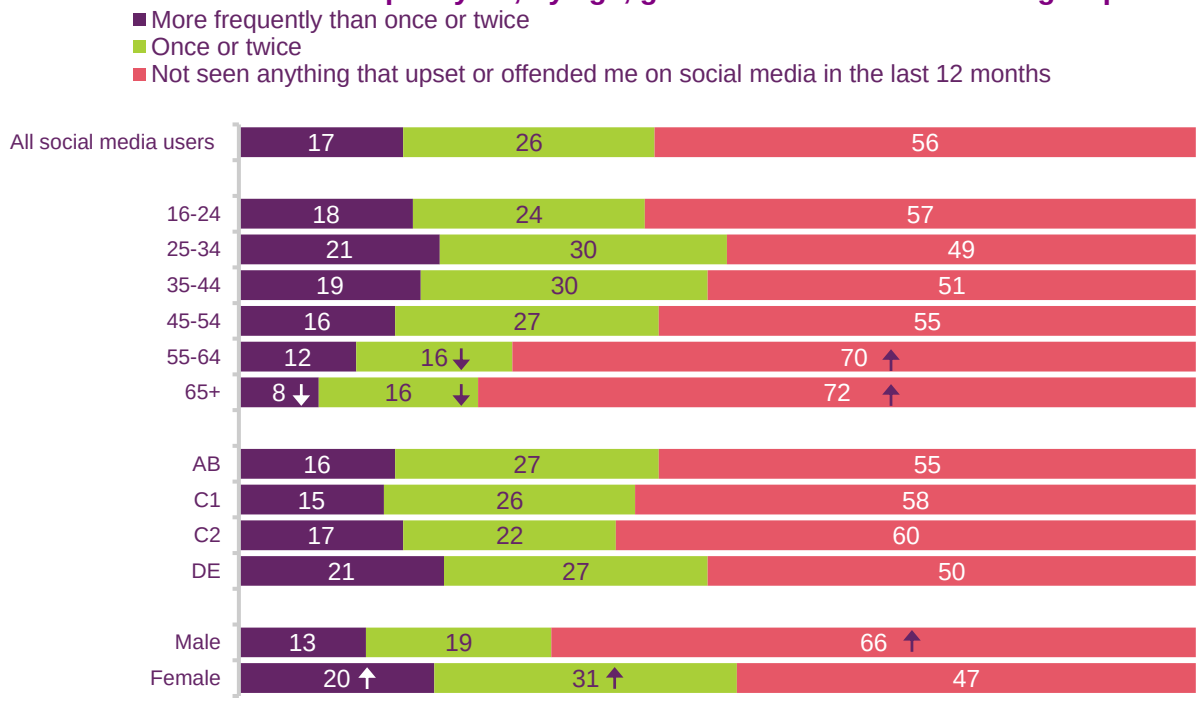
More than four in ten users say they have seen something that has upset or offended them on social media in the past 12 months

Social media users are asked whether they have seen something that upset or offended them on the sites they use, in the past 12 months. The results are shown in Figure 38.

Around four in ten (43%) social media users aged 16+ say they have seen something that has upset or offended them in the past year, with less than one in five (17%) saying they have seen this more often than once or twice.

Compared to the average (43%), users aged 55-64 (28%) and over-65 (24%) are less likely to say they have seen something that has upset or offended them in the past 12 months. Women are more likely than men to say they have done so (52% vs. 32%) and are also more likely to say it has happened more often than once or twice (20% vs. 13%).

Figure 38: Frequency that users have seen something that has upset or offended them on social media in the past year, by age, gender and socio-economic group



IN56. You said earlier you had a social media profile or account. Have you seen anything that upset or offended you in the last 12 months on any of the social media sites you use? (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ with a social media profile/ account (1136 aged 16+, varies by demographic).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) by age / socio-economic group compared to all with a social media profile/ account, and males compared to females.

Two in five who have seen something upsetting or offensive on social media in the past year said it related to reports or images of cruelty, violence, war or death

Those users who had seen something upsetting or offensive on social media in the last 12 months are then prompted with a range of possible types of content[20], as well as an option to mention something else, and are asked to say which best describes the type of content they had seen.

As shown in Figure 39, the most common type of content mentioned was reports or images of cruelty, violence, war or death (43%). This equates to 12% when expressed as a proportion of all adults aged 16+ (rather than social media users who have seen something upsetting or offensive).

All other types of content are mentioned by less than one in ten when expressed as a proportion of all adults aged 16+ (rather than social media users who have seen something upsetting or offensive).

Three types of content are mentioned by one in three of those who have seen something upsetting or offensive on social media; discriminatory content, based on race, gender, religion, sexuality or gender identity (34%), extremist views or content (33%) or someone making nasty or aggressive comments about someone else (33%). When expressed as a proportion of all adults aged 16+ this equates to 9% for each of these.

Four types of content are mentioned by less than two in ten of those who have seen something upsetting or offensive on social media; unwanted comments, photos or videos of a sexual nature from someone (18%), other content of a sexual nature (17%) and criminal/ illegal activity (17%). When expressed as a proportion of all adults aged 16+ this equates to 5% for each of these.

Fourteen per cent say it related to someone making nasty or aggressive comments about them which equates to 4% of the adult population.

Each of the other types of content were mentioned by less than one in ten people who have seen something upsetting or offensive on social media.

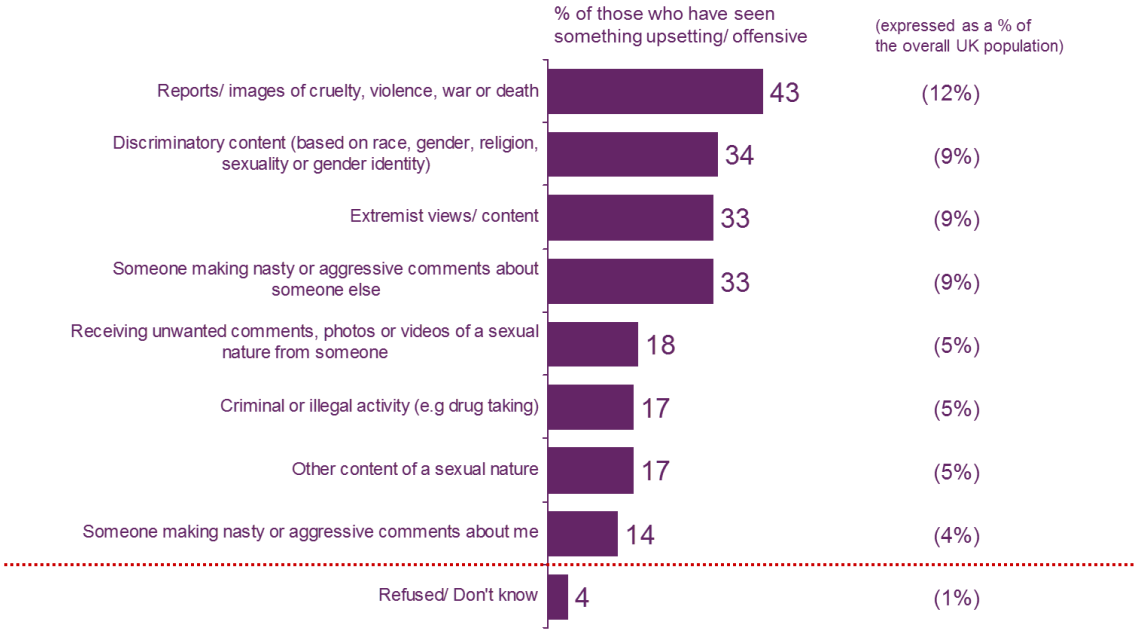
Adults aged 16-44[21] are more likely than over-45s to say they have seen upsetting or offensive content on social media of criminal or illegal activity (20% vs. 10%), or 'other content of a sexual nature' (20% vs. 8%).

Those in the C2DE socio-economic group[22] are more likely than ABC1s to say that the following types of content have upset or offended them on social media in the past year: reports or images of cruelty, violence, war or death (51% vs. 36%), unwanted comments, photos or videos of a sexual nature from someone (22% vs. 14%) or someone making nasty or aggressive comments about them (19% vs. 11%).

Women are more likely than men to say the content that upset or offended them was reports or images of cruelty, violence, war or death (47% vs. 36%).

[20] As no formal definitions of these categories were provided to respondents, these findings should be taken as indicative due to the potential subjective nature of responses linked to differences in interpretation and understanding.
[21] Low base sizes prevent analysis by all six age groups (aged 16-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64 and 65+).
[22] Low base sizes prevent analysis by all four socio-economic groups (AB, C1, C2 and DE).

Figure 39: Type of content considered upsetting or offensive



IN58. Could you please look at this list and tell me whether the content you found upsetting or offensive fell into any of these categories? (prompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who have seen something upsetting or offensive on the social media sites they use in the past 12 months (454).

While two in five say they reported the offensive or upsetting content to the social media site, a similar proportion did not take any action

Social media site users who have seen something upsetting or offensive on social media in the last 12 months are asked whether they took any action as a result of seeing this content. They are prompted with six specific options as well as an option to say they didn't take any of the six actions. The results are shown in Figure 40.

Four in ten (40%) say they reported it through the report function on the website, with three in ten (28%) saying they blocked the person who shared the content or made the comments. Around one in ten or less responded publicly (10%) or privately (6%) to the person who made or shared the content/ comments. Eight per cent say they shared it to raise awareness of it, while 5% stopped using that social media site. Four in ten (38%) say they did not take any of these actions. Six in ten, therefore, took any of the six actions (62%).

Those aged 16-44 are more likely than over-45s to say they reported it through the report function on the website (46% vs. 25%) while the over-45s are more likely to say they did not take any of these actions (50% vs. 32%).

Those in the C2DE socio-economic group are more likely than ABC1s to say they reported it through the report function on the website (46% vs. 35%). Women are more likely than men to say they did this (46% vs. 29%) or to say they responded privately to the person who shared the content or made the comments (8% vs. 3%). Men are more likely to say they did not take any action (47% vs. 32%).

Figure 40: Action taken as a result of seeing the upsetting or offensive content

IN57. Did you take any of the following actions as a result of seeing this upsetting or offensive content? (prompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: All who have seen something upsetting or offensive on the social media sites they use in the past 12 months (454 aged 16+)

6.5 Accessing Government services/ public/ civic activities

Using public or civic services online

Fifteen per cent of internet users had looked online for public services information in the previous week

Of the online activities that internet users are asked about in 2016 in the Media Literacy Tracker[23], four activities can be grouped under the heading of public or civic services. These are:

1. looking online for public services information on Government sites such as gov.uk, ni direct or HMRC;

2. completing Government processes online – such as updating Universal Credit, renewing a driving licence or passport etc.;

3. paying online for council tax or for another local council service (parking ticket, congestion charge etc.); and

4. signing an online petition or using a campaigning website such as change.org.

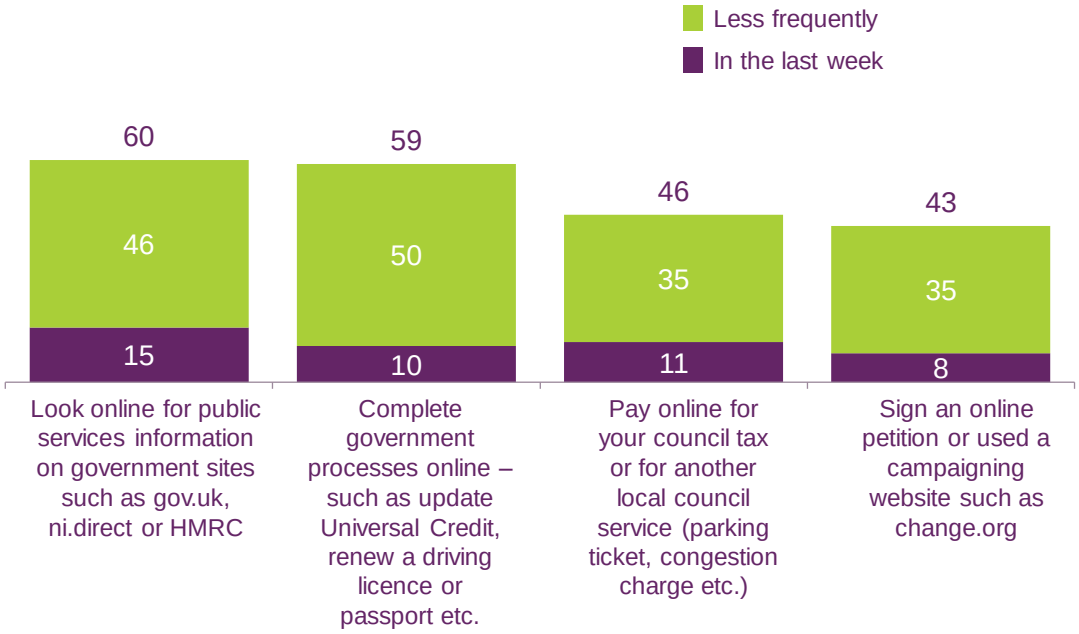
[23] As these questions were retained on the Media Literacy Tracker in 2016, they have been included here, rather than the data about online activities from the 2017 Technology Tracker. It is not possible to show a trend, however, due to changes in the frequency options that respondents were asked to select.

Figure 41 shows the proportion of adult internet users in 2016 who say they have ever undertaken each online activity, broken out into those who had done so in the last week, and those who do so less frequently.

A majority of internet users have ever undertaken two of the four public or civic activities: looking online for public services information on Government sites (60%) and completing government processes online (59%). Close to half (46%) have ever paid for their council tax or other local council service online, while more than four in ten have ever signed an online petition or used a campaigning website (43%).

More than one in ten internet users (15%) say they have looked online for public services information on Government sites in the past week. Around one in ten internet users have paid their council tax or other local council service online (11%), completed Government processes (10%), or signed an online petition/ used a campaigning website (8%) in the last week.

Figure 41: Using public or civic services online, by activity type: 2016



IN13/ IN14. Which if any of these activities have you ever done online? / And which if any of these activities have you used the internet for in the last week? (prompted responses, multi-coded)
Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online (1553 in 2016).

Figure 42 shows any variation in the incidence of ever undertaking each of these four public or civic activities online, by age, while Figure 43 shows any variation by household socio-economic group and by gender.

Compared to the average, internet users aged 16-24 are less likely to have ever undertaken three of the four activities: looking online for public services information on Government sites (50% vs. 60%), completing Government processes online (49% vs. 59%) and paying online for council tax or for another local council service (28% vs. 46%).

Internet users aged 25-34 and 35-44 are more likely than average to have paid their council tax or other local council service online (57% for 25-34s and 59% for 35-44s vs. 46%). Adults aged 35-44 are also more likely to have ever looked online for public services information on Government sites (68% vs. 60%).

Those aged 55-64 are also more likely to have ever looked online for public services information on Government sites (68% vs. 60%) or to have completed Government processes online (68% vs. 59%).

Over-65s who go online are less likely than average to have ever undertaken public/ civic activities online. Those aged 65-74 and over-75 are less likely to have paid their council tax or other local council service online (31% for 65-74s and 19% for 75+ vs. 46%). The over-75s are also less likely to have ever undertaken the other three activities: looking online for public services information on Government sites (34% vs. 60%), completing Government processes online (46% vs. 59%) or signing an online petition or using a campaigning website (25% vs. 43%).

Figure 42: Use of public or civic services online, by age

	All internet users	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
Base	1553	231	265	293	265	220	141	138
Look online for public services information on government sites such as gov.uk, ni.direct or HMRC	60%	50%↓	59%	68%↑	63%	68%↑	56%	34%↓
Complete government processes online – such as update Universal Credit, renew a driving licence or passport etc	59%	49%↓	62%	58%	64%	68%↑	59%	46%↓
Pay online for your council tax or for another local council service (parking ticket, congestion charge etc.)	46%	28%↓	57%↑	59%↑	47%	48%	31%↓	19%↓
Sign an online petition or used a campaigning website such as change.org	43%	46%	42%	45%	45%	45%	40%	25%↓

IN13. Which if any of these activities have you ever done online? (prompted responses, multi-coded)
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) by age compared to all internet users

Adult internet users in AB households are more likely than average to have ever undertaken each of the four public or civic activities online.

Adults in C2 households are less likely to say they have ever signed an online petition or used a campaigning website (31% vs. 43%). Adults in DE households are less likely to have undertaken three of the four activities, but they are as likely as internet users overall to have signed an online petition or used a campaigning website.

Women are more likely than men to say they have ever signed an online petition or used a campaigning website (47% vs. 39%).

Figure 43: Use of public or civic services online, by socio-economic group and gender

	All internet users	AB	C1	C2	DE	Male	Female
Base	1553	394	521	300	338	745	808
Look online for public services information on government sites such as gov.uk, ni.direct or HMRC	60%	75% ↑	61%	54%	46% ↓	58%	62%
Complete government processes online – such as update Universal Credit, renew a driving licence or passport etc	59%	75% ↑	60%	55%	41% ↓	60%	59%
Pay online for your council tax or for another local council service (parking ticket, congestion charge etc.)	46%	59% ↑	48%	42%	32% ↓	46%	47%
Sign an online petition or used a campaigning website such as change.org	43%	53% ↑	46%	31% ↓	37%	39%	47% ↑

IN13. Which if any of these activities have you ever done online? (prompted responses, multi-coded)
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) by socio-economic group compared to all internet users, and males compared to females.

Devices mostly used for completing Government processes online

Computers are the device most often used for completing Government processes online

Figure 44 shows how the device mostly used for completing Government processes online varies over time as well as by age, socio-economic group and gender.

Six in ten internet users who ever go online to do this type of task say they mostly use a laptop/ netbook or desktop computer for this purpose, with about one in five (22%) mostly using a tablet. About one in six (17%) say they mostly use a smartphone to complete Government processes.

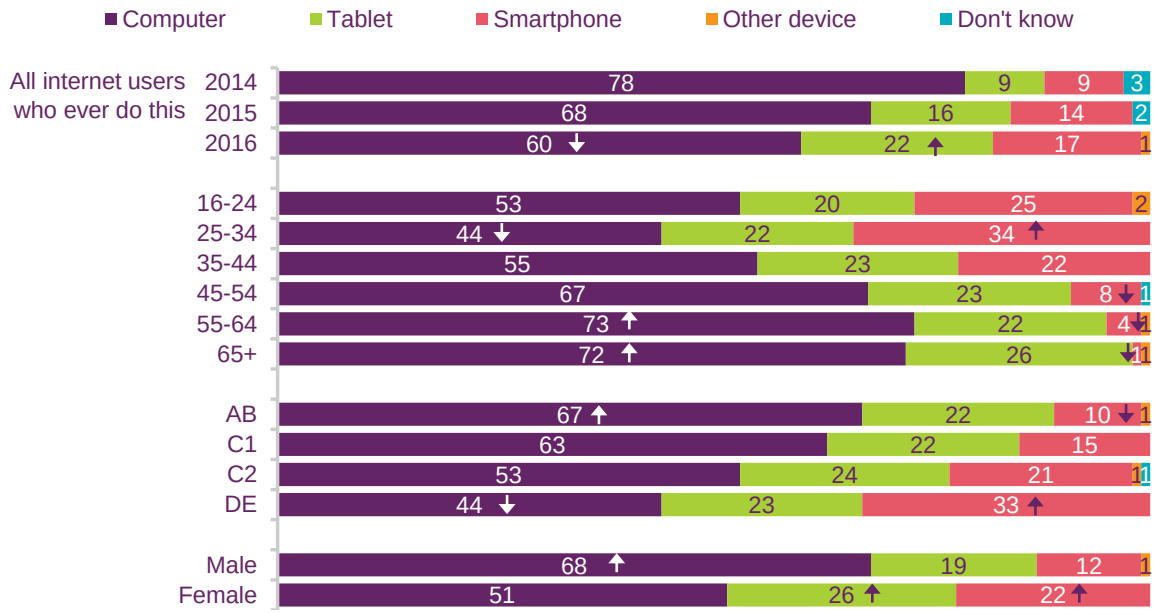
Compared to 2015, those who go online to complete Government processes are now less likely to say they mostly use a computer to do it (60% vs. 68%), and more likely to say they mostly use a tablet (22% vs. 16%).

Computers are the device most commonly used to complete Government processes, among internet users of all ages. Compared to the average (60%), over-55s are more likely to say they mostly use this device (73% for 55-64s and 72% for over-65s), while those aged 25-34 are less likely (44%). Mostly using a tablet to complete Government processes online does not vary by age, compared to the average. One in three 25-34s (34%) say they mostly use a smartphone, which is higher than the UK average (17%). Less than one in ten of over-45s say they mostly use a smartphone, lower than the UK average.

Those in AB households who complete Government processes online are more likely to say they mostly use a computer for this activity, compared to the average (67% vs. 60%), and are less likely to say they mostly use a smartphone (10% vs. 17%). In contrast, adults in DE households are more likely to mostly use a smartphone (33% vs. 17%) and are less likely to use a computer (44% vs. 60%).

Men are more likely than women to say they mostly use a computer to do this activity (68% vs. 51%), while women are more likely to say they mostly use a tablet (26% vs. 19%) or a smartphone (22% vs. 12%).

Figure 44: Device mostly used for completing Government processes, by demographic group



IN16. You said earlier that you go online to complete Government processes such as updating Universal Credit, renewing a driving licence or a passport. Which one of these devices do you use most for completing Government processes online? (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online and who complete Government processes online (883 in 2016, 102 aged 16-24, 164 aged 25-34, 173 aged 35-44, 164 aged 45-54, 136 aged 55-64, 144 aged 65+, 289 AB, 301 C1, 156 C2, 137 DE, 434 male, 449 female).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) between 2015 and 2016 at the overall level and by age / socio-economic group compared to all internet users, and males compared to females.

Reasons for not completing government processes online

Three in ten who have never completed Government processes online say it is because they prefer to use pen and paper/ fill out a form/ use the post

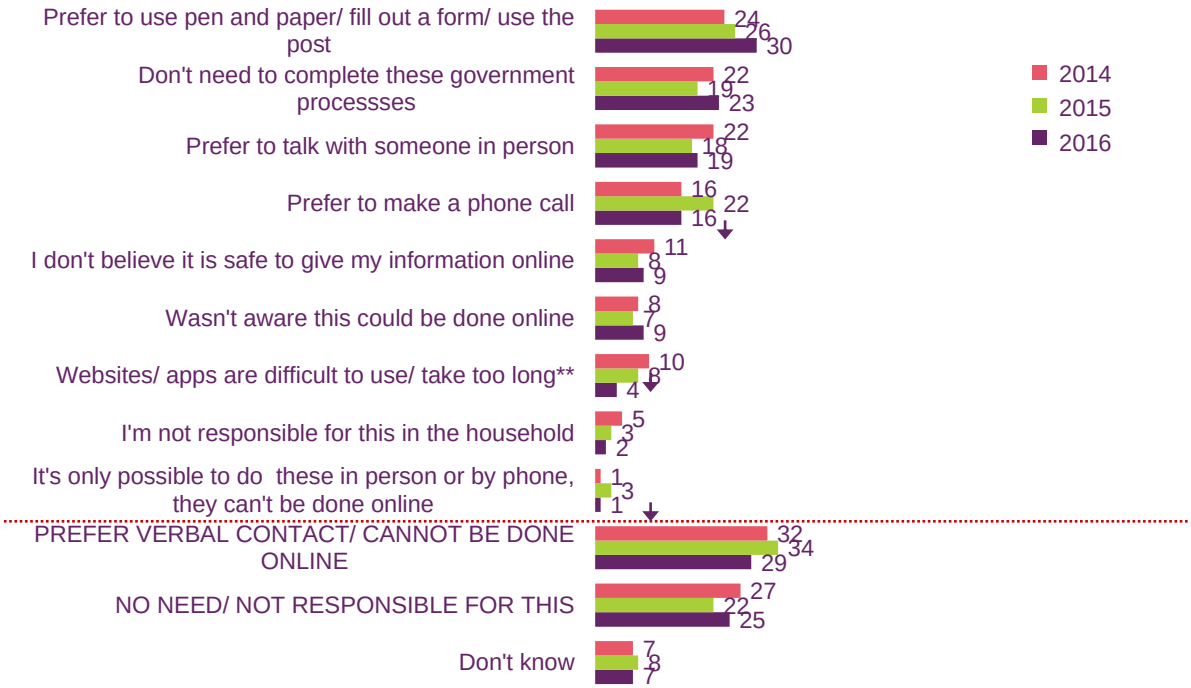
Internet users who have never completed any Government processes online (such as updating Universal Credit, or renewing a driving licence or a passport, accounting for 41% of all internet users) are prompted with eight reasons for not doing this and are asked to say which applies to them.

As shown in Figure 45, 30% of this group say they don't complete any Government processes online because they prefer to fill in a form and use the post. Around one in four (23%) say it is because they don't need to complete Government processes, and one in five (19%) say they prefer to talk with someone in person. One in six say it is because they prefer to make a phone call (16%). All other responses are given by one in ten or less.

Overall, three in ten (29%) internet users who don't complete Government processes online say it is because they prefer some kind of verbal contact, either by phone or by talking to someone in person, or because they think the process cannot be done online.

Internet users who have never completed any Government processes online are less likely than in 2015 to say that this is because they prefer to make a phone call (16% vs. 22% in 2015) returning to the level seen previously in 2014.

Figure 45: Reasons for not completing government processes online



IN15. You said earlier that you don't go online to complete Government processes such as updating Universal Credit, renewing a driving licence or a passport. Which of these are reasons why you don't do this online? (prompted responses, multi-coded) **In 2016 this option is created from what had been two separate codes in previous years, so the trend should be seen as indicative only.
Base: Adult internet users aged 16+ who have never completed Government processes online (670 in 2016). Arrows show significant changes (95% level) between 2015 and 2016.

6.6 Creativity

Confidence in undertaking creative activities online

There has been an increase in the number of people who say they are confident in being creative online

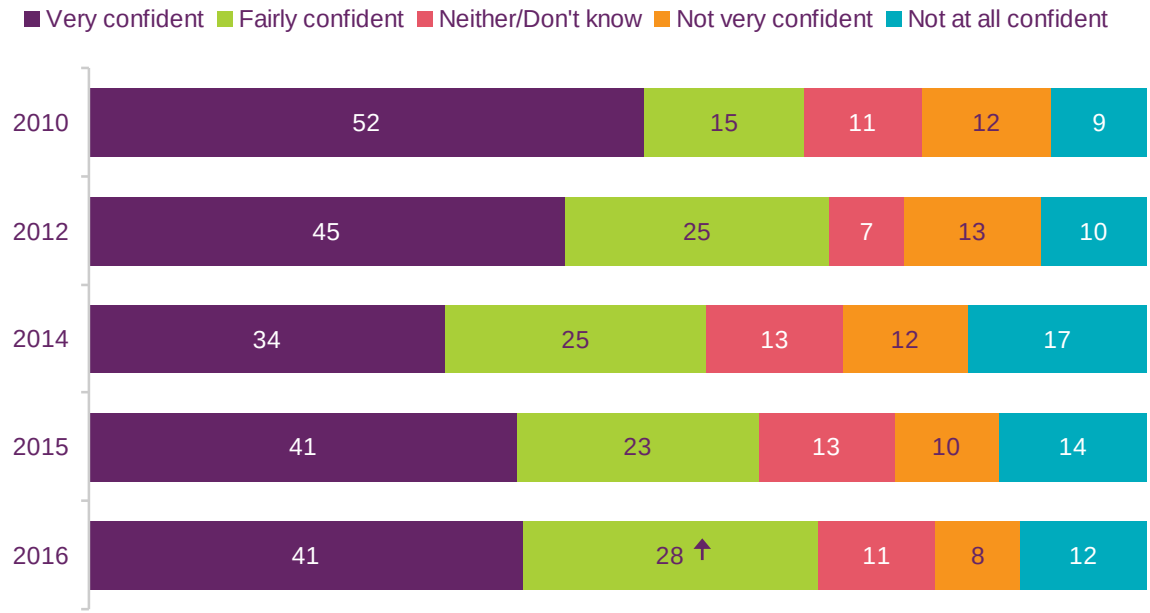
Those who go online are asked the extent to which they are confident in using the internet to do things like making blogs, sharing photos online and uploading short videos.

As shown in Figure 46, two in three internet users (68%) say that, overall, they are confident in doing these types of creative activity online, with four in ten saying they are very confident (41%). Almost three in ten (28%) say they are fairly confident, compared to 23% in 2015. One in five internet users say they are not confident overall (20%), with one in eight (12%) saying they are not at all confident.

Internet users aged 16-24 (68%) and 25-34 (54%) are more likely than average (41%) to say they are very confident, while this is less likely among over-45s (33% for 45-54s, 24% for 55-64s, 26% for 65-74s and 9% for the over-75s). Those aged 65-74 (30%) and over-75 (37%) are more than twice as likely as internet users overall (12%) to say they are not at all confident.

Men are more likely than women to say they are very confident doing these types of creative activities online (45% vs. 37%) and women are more likely to say they are not at all confident (14% vs. 10% for men).

Figure 46: Confidence with creative activities online: 2010-2016



IN11B. How confident are you using the internet to do things like making blogs, sharing photos online, or uploading short videos? (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: Adults aged 16+ who go online (1553 in 2016).
Arrows show significant changes (95% level) between 2015 and 2016.

Uploading content online

Three in ten internet users have uploaded content online

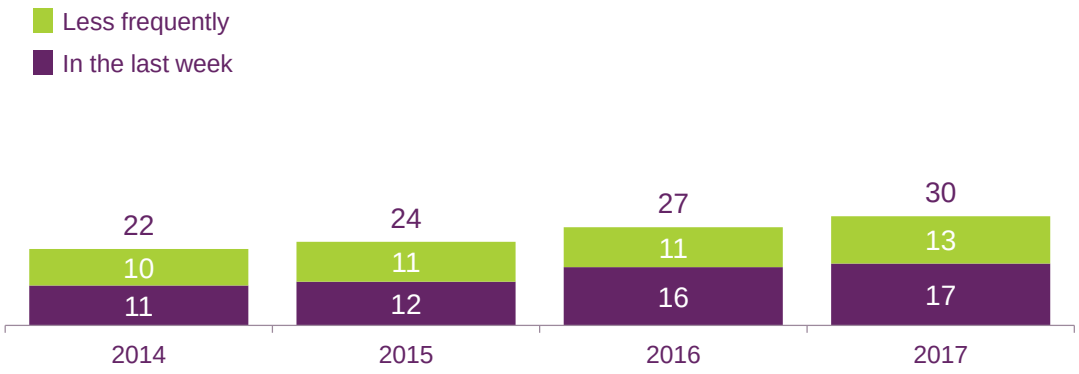
One of the activities that internet users are asked about in the Technology Tracker survey[24] falls under the heading of creative activities: uploading or adding content to the internet (e.g. photos, videos or blog posts).

Figure 47 shows the proportion of adult internet users, between 2014 and 2017[25], who say they have ever undertaken this activity online, broken out into those who had done this in the past week, and less frequent use.

In 2017, three in ten internet users say they have ever uploaded or added content to the internet, with around half of these (17%) saying they have done this in the past week.

These incidences are unchanged since 2016, although adult internet users are more likely than in 2014 to have done this, whether 'ever' (30% vs. 22% in 2014) or 'in the last week' (17% vs. 11% in 2014).

Figure 47: Uploading content online: 2014-2017



Uploading/ adding content to the internet e.g. photos, videos, blog posts

Source: Ofcom Technology Tracker, Half 1 2014- 2017
QE5A/ QE5B. Which, if any, of these do you use the internet for?/ And, which, if any, of these activities have you used the internet for in the last week? (prompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online (3221 in 2017).

In 2017, internet users aged 16-24 (28%) and 25-34 (23%) are more likely than average (17%) to say they have uploaded or added content online in the previous week, while those aged 55-64 (12%), 65-74 (4%) or aged 75+ (3%) are less likely.

Adult internet users in AB households (23%) are more likely than average (17%) to have done this in the previous week, while those in DE households (13%) are less likely.

[24] As mentioned earlier, the data relating to the types of online activities that internet users carry out come either from the most recent wave of the Technology Tracker study or from the Media Literacy Tracker.
[25] As the most recent wave of Technology Tracker research was in 2017, any trend analysis addresses differences between 2016 and 2017 (rather than between 2015 and 2016).

Use of a smartphone for creative activities

More than a third of smartphone users edit photos or videos on their phone on a weekly basis

Smartphone users (72% of adults) are asked about two creative activities they may use their smartphone for: taking photos or videos and editing photos or videos.

Figure 48 shows that in 2016, nearly all smartphone users (97%) have ever used their phone to take photos or videos, with seven in ten (69%) doing this on a weekly basis.

Slightly more than seven in ten smartphone users (72%) say they have ever edited photos or videos on their smartphone; more than a third (37%) say they do this at least weekly.

Figure 48: Use of a smartphone for creative activities: 2016

M7B/ C. Please tell me from this list, the types of things you use your smartphone for, and how often you do each. (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who use a smartphone (1249 in 2016).

As shown in Figure 49, compared to the average for smartphone users, those aged 16-24 and 25-34 are more likely to use their smartphone at least weekly for both of these creative activities. In contrast, those aged 45 and over are less likely to do so.

Women are more likely than men to say they take photos or videos on their smartphone at least weekly (72% vs. 65%).

Figure 49: Use of a smartphone at least weekly for creative activities

	All smartphone users	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Base	1249	216	247	268	235	157	126
Take photos or videos	69%	82% ↑	83%↑	70%	60%↓	46%↓	44% ↓
Edit photos or videos	37%	54% ↑	48%↑	41%	24%↓	20%↓	17% ↓

	All smartphone users	AB	C1	C2	DE	Male	Female
Base	1249	305	425	247	272	598	651
Take photos or videos	69%	70%	67%	70%	68%	65%	72% ↑
Edit photos or videos	37%	35%	37%	41%	38%	35%	40%

M7B/ C. Please tell me from this list, the types of things you use your smartphone for, and how often you do each. (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who use a smartphone (1249 in 2016).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) by age/ socio-economic group compared to all smartphone users, and males compared to females.

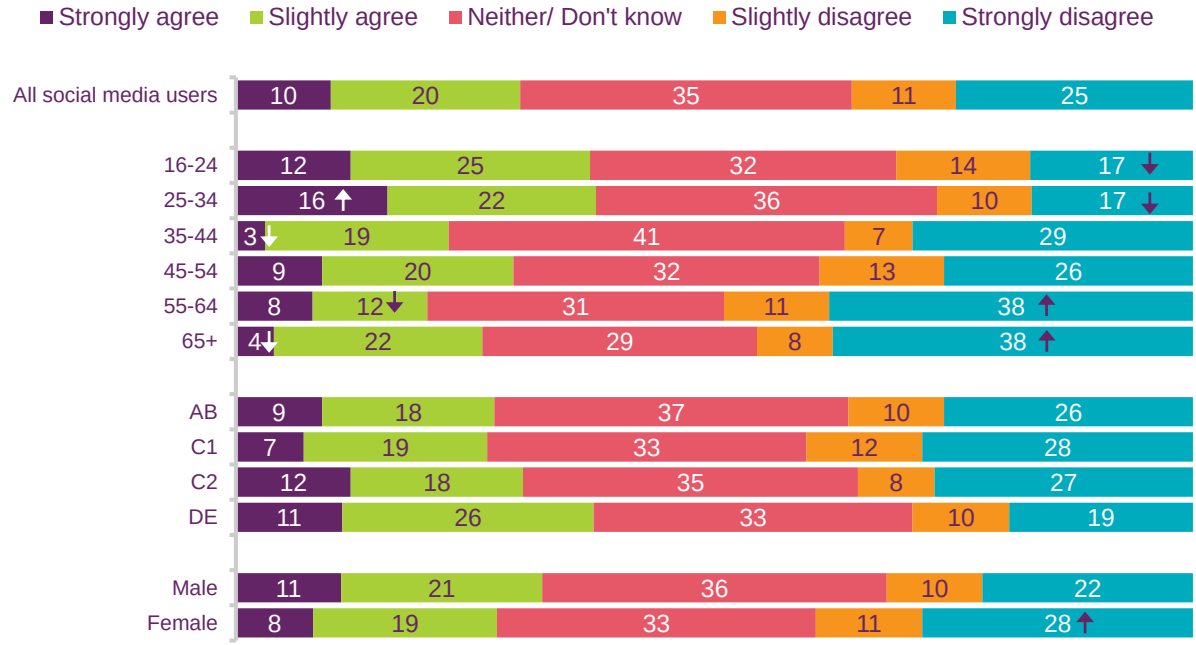
Creativity and social media

Three in ten users say they feel more creative when using social media sites; this is more likely among 25-34s

Social media site users are asked the extent to which they agree with the following statement: "I feel more creative when I use social media". Three in ten agree (30%), while a higher proportion disagree (36%). Users aged 25-34 (37%) are more likely to agree, while those aged 55-64 (49%) are more likely to disagree.

Women are more likely than men to disagree (39% vs. 32%).

Figure 50: Agreement with statement: "I feel more creative when I use social media", by age, gender and socio-economic group



IN25C. Please tell me the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about social media sites – I feel more creative when I use social media (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ with a social media profile/ account (1136 aged 16+, varies by demographic).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) by age / socio-economic group compared to all with a social media profile/ account, and males compared to females.

6.7 Transacting online

Compared to last year, internet users are more likely to say they have shopped online in the previous week

Two activities that internet users are asked about on the Technology Tracker survey fall under the heading of transacting online: online shopping (purchasing goods, services, tickets etc.) and banking.

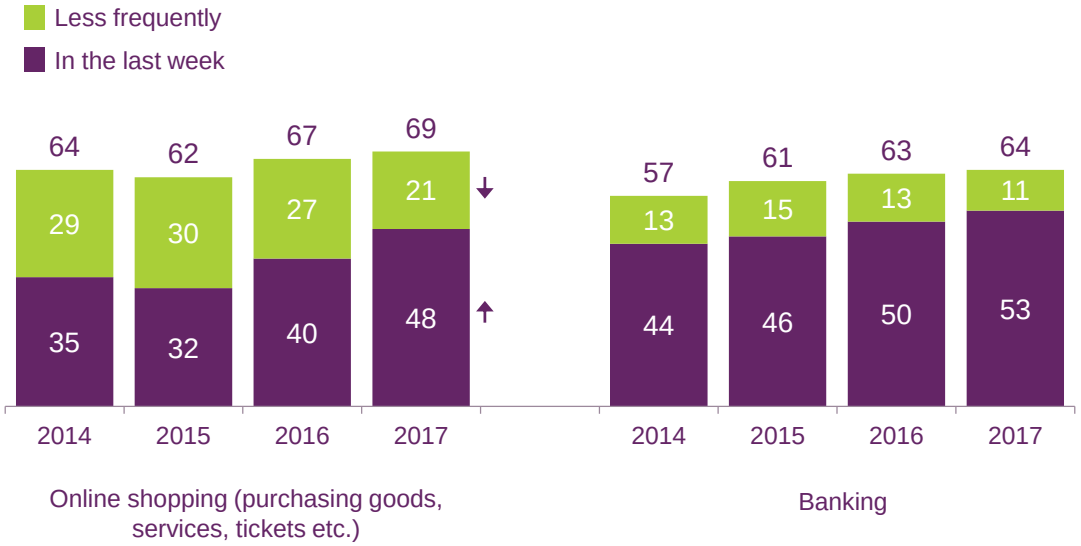
Figure 51 shows the proportion of adult internet users, between 2014 and 2017[26], who say they have ever undertaken each of these activities online, broken out into those who have done this in the past week, and less frequent use.

In 2017, seven in ten internet users say they have shopped online (69%) while more than six in ten (64%) say they have gone online for banking. While these incidences are unchanged compared to last year, both activities are more likely than in 2014.

Close to half of internet users in 2017 say they have shopped online in the previous week (48%), which is more than the four in ten (40%) who said this in 2016. More than half of internet users say they have gone online in the previous week to do banking (53%); unchanged since 2016 (50%).

[26] As the most recent wave of Technology Tracker research was in 2017, any trend analysis addresses differences between 2016 and 2017 (rather than between 2015 and 2016).

Figure 51: Transacting online: 2014-2017



Source: Ofcom Technology Tracker, Half 1 2014-2017
QE5A/ QE5B. Which, if any, of these do you use the internet for?/ And, which, if any, of these activities have you used the internet for in the last week? (prompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online (3221 in 2017).
Arrows show significant changes (99% level) between 2016 and 2017.

As shown in Figure 52, in 2017 internet users aged 25-34 and 35-44 are more likely than internet users overall to say they have gone online in the past week to do shopping or banking. Those aged 65-74 or over-75 are less likely to have done each type of online activity. Those aged 55-64 are less likely to have done online banking in the past week.

Adult internet users in AB households are more likely than internet users overall to have done online shopping or banking in the previous week, while those in DE households are less likely to have done both of these transactional activities online.

Figure 52: Transacting online in the previous week, by age, gender and socio-economic group

	All internet users	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
Base	3221	506	536	613	531	520	364	151
Banking	53%	50%	66%↑	61%↑	55%	47%↓	34%↓	26%↓
Online shopping (purchasing gods, services, tickets etc.)	48%	44%	56%↑	55%↑	52%	43%	34%↓	15%↓

	All internet users	AB	C1	C2	DE	Male	Female
Base	3221	789	1019	679	731	1570	1651
Banking	53%	66%↑	55%	48%	38%↓	53%	53%
Online shopping (purchasing gods, services, tickets etc.)	48%	58%↑	50%	43%	35%↓	47%	48%

Source: Ofcom Technology Tracker, Half 1 2017
QE5B. And, which, if any, of these activities have you used the internet for in the last week? (prompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online (3221 in 2017).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) by age/ socio-economic group compared to all internet users, and males compared to females.

Use of a smartphone for transacting

Compared to 2015, smartphone users are now more likely to use their phone for contactless payments

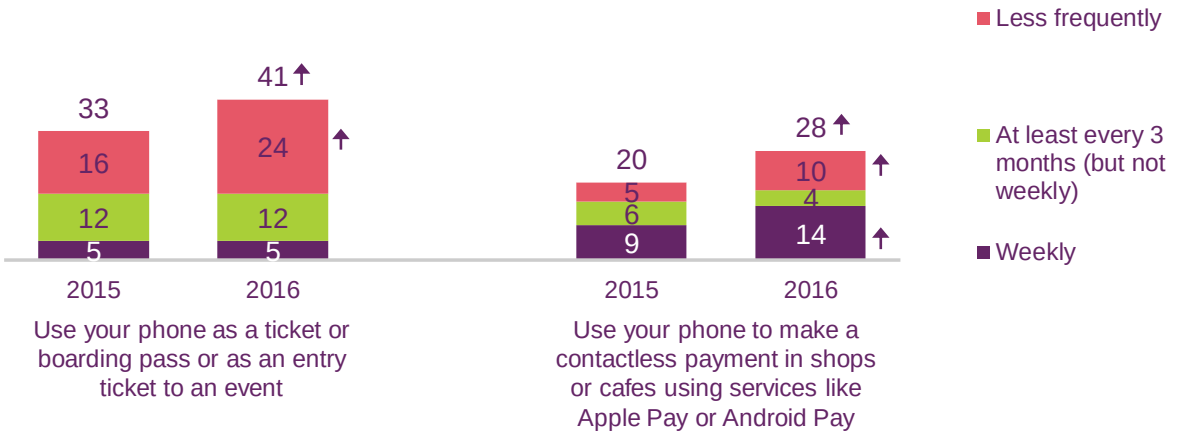
Smartphone users (72% of adults) are asked how frequently they use their mobile phone 'as a ticket or boarding pass or as an entry ticket to an event' or 'to make a contactless payment in shops or cafes using services like Apple Pay or Android Pay'[27].

Figure 53 shows that in 2016, four in ten smartphone users ever use their phone as a ticket or boarding pass or to gain entry to an event (41%) with 5% saying they use their phone in this way at least weekly.

Close to three in ten smartphone users (28%) say they use their phone to make contactless payments, with around half of these doing so at least weekly (14%).

Compared to 2015, smartphone users are more likely to say they use their phone as a ticket or boarding pass or to gain entry to an event (41% vs. 33%) or to make a contactless payment (28% vs. 20%). Smartphone users are also more likely than in 2015 to use their phone on a weekly basis for contactless payments (14% vs. 9%).

Figure 53: Use of a smartphone for transactions: 2015 and 2016



M7E/ F. Please tell me from this list, the types of things you use your smartphone for, and how often you do each. (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who use a smartphone (1249 in 2016).
Arrows show significant changes (95% level) between 2015 and 2016.

As shown in Figure 54, compared to the average for smartphone users (14%) those aged 25-34 are more likely to use their phone to make a contactless payment at least weekly (21%), while those aged 65 and over are less likely (1%).

[27] The differences shown for this measure (compared to 2015) could be attributable to changes made to the questionnaire in 2016. In 2015 respondents were asked how frequently they used their mobile phone to make a payment in a shop, by touching it against a contactless reader.

Smartphone users aged 16-24 are twice as likely as average to say they use their phone at least weekly as a ticket, boarding pass or to gain entry to an event (10% vs. 5% overall). No smartphone users aged 65 and over say they do this at least weekly. Men are also more likely than women to use their phone for this purpose (6% vs. 3%).

Figure 54: Use of a smartphone at least weekly for transacting

All smartphone users		16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Base	1249	216	247	268	235	157	126
Use your phone to make a contactless payment in shops or cafes using services like Apple Pay or Android Pay	14%	18%	21% ↑	15%	10%	8%	1% ↓
Use your phone as a ticket or boarding pass or as an entry ticket to an event	5%	10% ↑	5%	5%	3%	2%	0% ↓

All smartphone users		AB	C1	C2	DE	Male	Female
Base	1249	305	425	247	272	598	651
Use your phone to make a contactless payment in shops or cafes using services like Apple Pay or Android Pay	14%	15%	14%	14%	14%	15%	13%
Use your phone as a ticket or boarding pass or as an entry ticket to an event	5%	7%	2%	5%	4%	6% ↑	3%

M7E/ F. Please tell me from this list, the types of things you use your smartphone for, and how often you do each. (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who use a smartphone (1249 in 2016).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) by age/ socio-economic group compared to all smartphone users, and males compared to females.

Section 7

Content

7.1 Section overview

This section looks at the ways in which adults engage with media content. It starts by looking at the extent to which users of media are concerned about the media they engage with.

It addresses their experience of and attitudes towards playing games online with or against other people. It looks at their experience of watching content online and explores the ways in which they find out about on-demand content as well as content on video-sharing sites.

It reports on how internet users access audio content online – whether listening to online radio, or free or premium streamed audio services.

It concludes by looking at the ways in which they find information online through the various sources available to them.

7.2 Key findings

- Concerns about what is on television are now less likely than in 2015 (35% vs. 39% in 2015); concerns about quality of content or repeats, in particular, are less likely (16% vs. 21% in 2015).
- Half of internet users (50%) say they are concerned about what is on the internet, three in ten who use a mobile phone have concerns about mobile phones (30%), while close to one in four (23%) who play games are concerned about gaming. Each of these measures is unchanged compared to 2015.
- In 2017, internet users are more likely to have been online in the previous week to look for information on health-related issues (22% vs. 17% in 2016).
- Two in three internet users (67%) have ever accessed news/ politics/ current affairs websites, with two-thirds of these (44%) having done so in the previous week. Half (53%) have looked for job opportunities or applied for a job online, with 16% having done this in the previous week.
- Search engines are by far the most popular source when looking for information online: used by 97% of internet users in 2016.
- Four in ten internet users say they use sources such as Wikipedia (41%), websites with user reviews (40%) or the BBC website (40%) to look for information online, three in ten use YouTube (31%) for information purposes and one in four (26%) have used social media sites or apps. These last two sources are more likely to be used by 16-24s, compared to the average.
- Close to half (46%) of internet users say that in most weeks they usually only use websites or apps they've used before, unchanged since 2015.
- Two in three internet users have been online to compare products or services – such as looking at reviews or doing price comparison searches (68%), with half of these (35%) having done this in the previous week.

- Personal recommendations also have a key role to play when looking for content or information online. The majority of internet users (58%) say if they got stuck or were unsure about how to do something online they would ask a friend or family member for help.

- Half of all viewers of on-demand content select the content to watch based on recommendations from friends or family (49%). More than three in five of those who use video-sharing sites (like YouTube or Vimeo) say they discover things to watch on these sites based on friends or family telling them about the content (62%).

7.3 Concerns about media

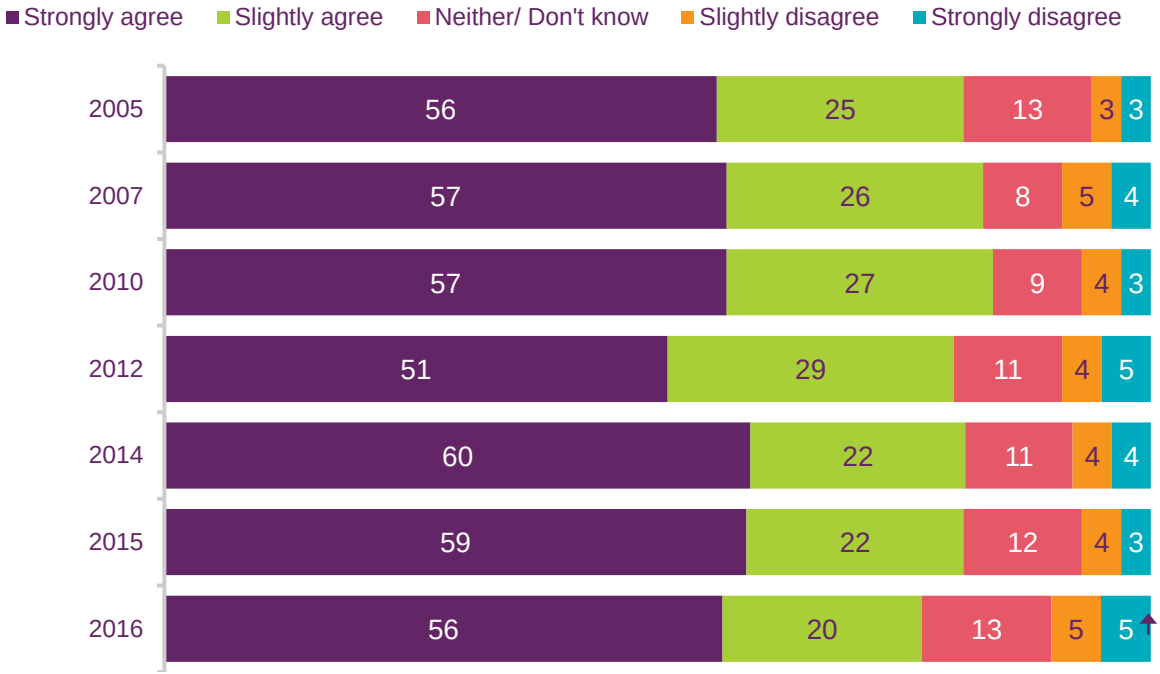
Most internet users believe that people must be protected from seeing inappropriate or offensive content

As context for understanding more about the levels of concern people have about media, we ask about the extent to which they feel it is necessary for there to be protection against inappropriate or offensive content.

Figure 55 shows the overall levels of agreement and disagreement among internet users. The majority agree strongly that users should be protected from inappropriate or offensive content (56%), with this measure unchanged compared to 2015. While 5% of internet users disagree strongly with this statement, this is more than in 2015 (3%).

Overall, three in four internet users agree (76%), and this is more likely for those aged 75+ (87%), and for women (80%) compared to men (72%).

Figure 55: Agreement with statement: "Internet users must be protected from seeing inappropriate or offensive content": 2005-2016



IN38A. I'm going to read out some things that other people have said about being online. Please use this card to tell me the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement I read out – Internet users must be protected from seeing inappropriate or offensive content (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: Adults aged 16+ who go online (1553 in 2016).
Arrows show significant changes (95% level) between 2015 and 2016.

Concerns about media are mostly unchanged since 2015, although concerns about what is on television have decreased

An important area that we monitor is the extent to which people have concerns about the media they use, and what types of concern they have. We ask users if they have any concerns about what is on television, the internet and about mobile phones or gaming. Figure 56 compares the overall mentions of any concerns among users of each of these platforms, since 2005.

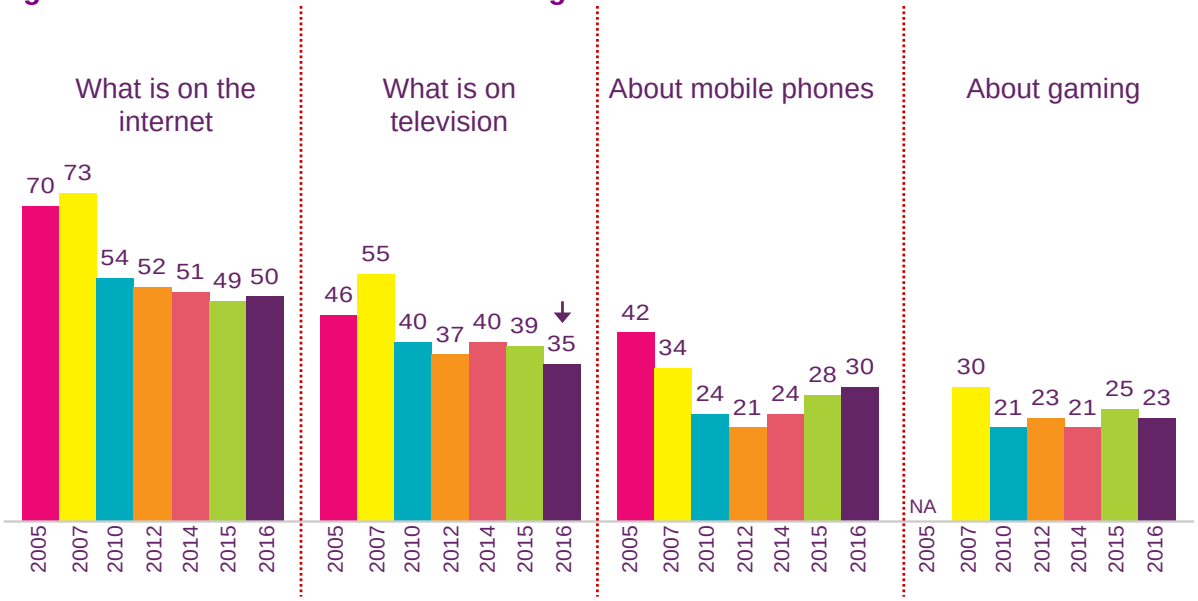
Half of internet users (50%) say they have any concerns about what is on the internet. This compares to 35% of those with a TV in the household who say that they have concerns about television content. Three in ten mobile users (30%) say they have concerns about mobile phones and one in four (23%) of those who play games say they have concerns about gaming.

Concerns about what is on television are less likely than in 2015 (35% vs. 39%).

Demographic variations are as follows:

- Internet: Users aged 16-24 (35%) are less likely than average (50%) to have concerns about what is online, while those aged 55-64 are more likely (61%). Women (56%) are more likely than men (45%) to have concerns. Adults in AB households (60%) who go online are more likely than average to have concerns while those in C2 households are less likely (41%).
- Television: Users aged 65-74 (45%) and 75+ (60%) are more likely than average (35%) to have concerns about what is on TV, while those aged 16-24 (18%) and 25-34 (27%) are less likely. As with the internet, women (39%) are more likely than men (31%) to have concerns about television. Compared to the average, those in AB households are more likely to have concerns (42%) while those in C2 households are less likely (29%).
- Mobile phones: Compared to the average (30%), concerns about mobile phones are less likely among those aged 16-24 (21%) and higher for 55-64s (39%). Mobile users in AB households (40%) are more likely than average to have concerns about mobile phones and those in C2 households are less likely (24%).
- Games: Women are more likely than men to say they have concerns about gaming (31% vs. 16%). Compared to the average (23%), those who play games in AB households (32%) are more likely to have concerns.

Figure 56: Concerns about media among users: 2005-2016



IN20/ T7/ M1/ G2. Can you tell me if you have any concerns about what is on the internet/ TV? Do you have any concerns about mobile phones/ gaming? (unprompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: Adults aged 16+ who use each platform (variable base).
Arrows show significant changes (95% level) between 2015 and 2016.

Concerns about TV content

Specific concerns about the quality of content on television are lower compared to 2015

When asked if they have any concerns about what is on television, more than one in three adults with a TV in the household (35%) say they do. As above, this is lower than in 2015 (39%).

As shown in Figure 57, these concerns[28] relate mainly to harmful or offensive content (20%), or poor quality of content or repeats (16%), with this latter measure being less likely than in 2015 (21%).

As in 2014 and 2015, less than one in ten have concerns about advertising/ sponsorship (6%), about diversity in content (5%) or about mistrusting content that they perceive to be fixed/ fake/ biased (2%).

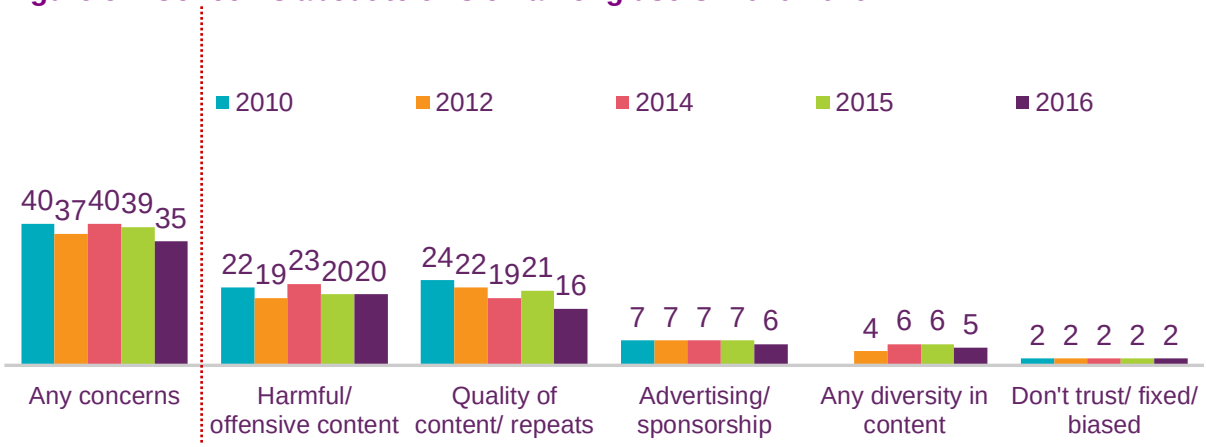
Adults aged 16-24 are less likely than average to have concerns about harmful or offensive content on television (10% vs. 20%) or about quality of content/ repeats (6% vs. 16%). Those aged 25-34 are also less likely to be concerned about offensive content (13% vs. 20%). Concerns relating to harmful or offensive content are more likely among the over-75s (38% vs. 20%), and concerns about quality of content/ repeats are more likely among 65-74s (23% vs. 16%) and over-75s (24%).

While ABs are more likely than average to have any concerns about television and C2s are less likely, as discussed earlier, these differences are not seen for any specific type of

[28] The top three specific concerns about television are: violence in general (10%), offensive language (spoken or song lyrics) (8%) and too many repeats (7%). These specific (unprompted) concerns are then placed into the categories described.

content. Women are more likely than men (25% vs. 15%) to be concerned about harmful or offensive content.

Figure 57: Concerns about television among users: 2010-2016



T7. Can you tell me if you have any concerns about what is on TV? (unprompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: Adults aged 16+ with any TVs in the household (1801 in 2016).
Arrows show significant changes (95% level) between 2015 and 2016.

Concerns with internet content

Concerns about what is online are unchanged compared to 2015

Half of internet users say they have concerns about what is on the internet, which is unchanged since 2015 (50% vs. 49% in 2015). These concerns relate mainly to offensive/ illegal content (38%), risks to others/ society (22%) and concerns about security / fraud (20%). Other concerns include personal privacy (9%) and advertising (7%). Each of these types of concern are unchanged since 2015.

Although not shown on the chart, the top three specific[29] concerns about the internet mentioned by adult internet users are: content unsuitable for children (20%), sexual content/ pornography (17%), and strangers contacting children (16%).

In 2016, compared to adult internet users overall, 16-24s are less likely to have concerns about offensive/ illegal content (27% vs. 38%), risks to others/ society (11% vs. 22%) and personal privacy (4% vs. 9%). Adults aged 25-34 are less likely to be concerned about security/ fraud (14% vs. 20%).

Adults aged 55-64 are more likely to be concerned about risk to others/ society (31% vs. 22%) and about security/ fraud (28% vs. 20%).

Adults in AB households are more likely to be concerned about offensive/ illegal content (46% vs. 38%) and about security/ fraud (27% vs. 20%), while concerns about offensive/ illegal content are less likely for C2s (31% vs. 38%).

Women are more likely than men to be concerned about offensive/ illegal content (41% vs. 35%).

[29] These specific (unprompted) concerns are then placed into the categories described.

Figure 58: Concerns about the internet among users: 2010-2016

IN20. Can you tell me if you have any concerns about what is on the internet? (unprompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: Adults aged 16+ who go online (1553 in 2016).

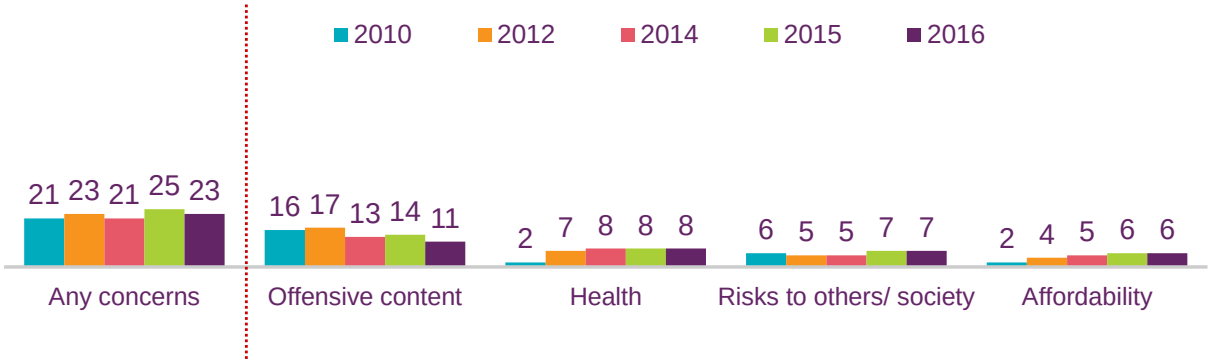
Concerns about gaming

Concerns about gaming are also unchanged compared to 2015

When asked if they had any concerns about gaming, around one in four adults who ever played games say they do (23%); this is unchanged since 2015 (25%). Concerns relate to offensive content (11%), health risks (8%), risks to others/ society (7%) and affordability (6%).

Women are more likely than men to be concerned about offensive content (18% vs. 6%).

Figure 59: Concerns about gaming among users: 2010-2016



G2. Can you tell me if you have any concerns about gaming? (unprompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: Adults aged 16+ who play games (605 in 2016).

Concerns about mobile phones

Concerns about mobile phones are unchanged compared to 2015

When asked if they have any concerns about mobile phones, three in ten (30%) who personally use a mobile phone say they do. No single category of concern dominates, with one in ten mentioning concerns relating to risks to others or to society as a whole (10%) and affordability (10%). Less than one in ten mention concerns about security/ fraud (8%), privacy (7%) or health (6%). As with concerns overall, each of these types of concern are unchanged since 2015.

Mobile phone users aged 55-64 (13%) are more likely than average (8%) to have concerns about security/ fraud, while those aged 75 and over are less likely (3%). Users aged 16-24 are less likely to say they have privacy concerns (2% vs. 7%).

Users in AB households are more likely to have concerns about affordability (14% vs. 10%) and about privacy (11% vs. 7%). Privacy concerns are lower among users in DE households (3% vs. 7%), while those in C2 households are less likely to have health-related concerns (1% vs. 6%). Women are more likely than men to have health-related concerns (7% vs. 4%).

Figure 60: Concerns about mobile phones among users: 2010-2016

M1. Can you tell me if you have any concerns about mobile phones? (unprompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: Adults aged 16+ who personally use a mobile phone (1625 in 2016).

7.4 Watching: TV content, short video clips and discoverability

On-demand content

Half of adults watch on-demand content

Adults aged 16 and over were asked whether they ever watched TV programmes or films on demand, and were provided with the following definition of on-demand content: "By on-demand I mean watching TV programmes or films via online services such as BBC iPlayer, Netflix, Amazon Prime, Sky Go etc. This could be through your television service or on any device you use to go online".

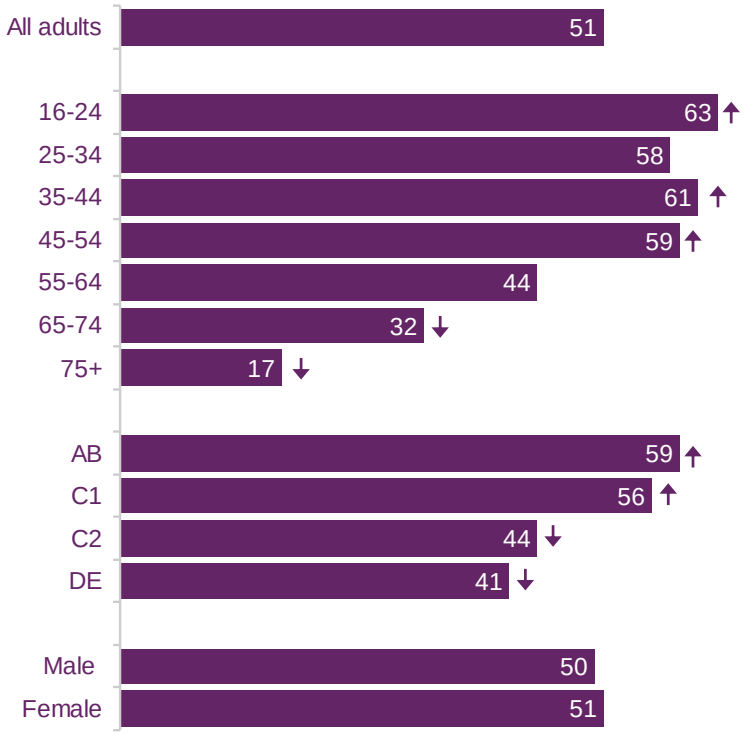
Figure 61 shows the incidence of watching on-demand content among adults overall as well as by age, socio-economic group and gender, in 2016.

Half of adults (51%) say they watch on-demand content,; this is more likely among 16-24s (63%), 35-44s (61%) and 45-54s (59%). Those in AB (59%) or C1 (56%) households are also more likely to view this type of content.

Older adults are less likely to ever watch on-demand content (32% for 65-74s and 17% for the over-75s), as are those in C2 (44%) or DE households (41%).

There are no differences in watching on-demand content by gender.

Figure 61: Incidence of watching on-demand content



T2. Do you ever watch TV programmes or films on-demand? By on-demand we mean watching TV programmes or films via online services such as BBC iPlayer, Netflix, Amazon Prime, Sky Go etc. This could be through your television service or on any device you use to go online (unprompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ (1846 aged 16+, 234 aged 16-24, 272 aged 25-34, 313 aged 35-44, 284 aged 45-54, 270 aged 55-64, 218 aged 65-74, 255 aged 75+, 427 AB, 566 C1, 369 C2, 484 DE, 885 male, 961 female).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) for age / socio-economic group compared to all adults, and males compared to females.

Content on video-sharing sites

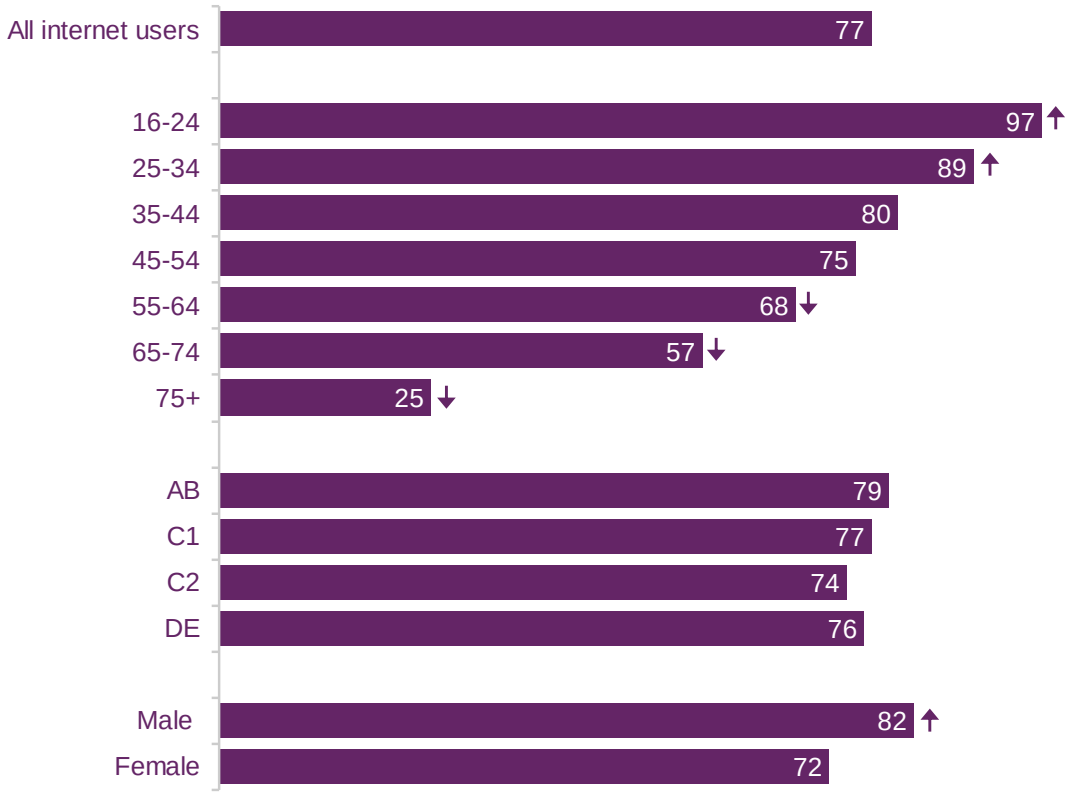
Three in four internet users say they watch content on video-sharing sites; this is more likely for 16-34s (compared to the average) and for men (compared to women)

Adults who go online (86% of adults overall) were asked whether they ever watched videos on sites or apps like YouTube or Vimeo.

More than three in four adult internet users (77%) say they ever watch content on video-sharing sites; this increases to 97% of internet users aged 16-24 and 89% of those aged 25-34. While a majority of internet users aged 55-64 (68%) and 65-74 (57%) ever view this type of content, this is less likely than the average. Internet users aged 75 and over are also less likely ever to watch videos through these sites (25%).

The incidence does not vary by household socio-economic group compared to the average, and men are more likely than women to say they ever watch this type of content online (82% vs. 72%).

Figure 62: Incidence of watching content on video-sharing sites



IN17. Do you ever watch videos on sites or apps like YouTube or Vimeo? (unprompted responses, single coded). Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online (1553 aged 16+, 231 aged 16-24, 265 aged 25-34, 293 aged 35-44, 265 aged 45-54, 220 aged 55-64, 279 aged 65+, 394 AB, 521 C1, 300 C2, 338 DE, 745 male, 808 female). Arrows show significant differences (95% level) for age / socio-economic group compared to all internet users, and males compared to females.

Content watched on video-sharing sites

Users of video-sharing sites are most likely to use these sites for entertainment purposes – particularly 16-24s

Internet users who say they ever watch videos on sites like YouTube or Vimeo (77% of internet users; 66% of adults overall) are prompted with nine options and asked to say which of these describe the types of videos they tend to watch on video-sharing sites. The results are shown in Figure 63.

Three types of content are watched by a majority of users: short entertainment videos (like music, film trailers, clips from TV programmes or highlights) (63%), funny videos, jokes, pranks or challenges (56%), and 'how-to' videos, tips or tutorials (54%). More than one in three (37%) look at reviews of things they might want to buy, with at least one in four watching news, current affairs or documentary content (31%) or longer entertainment videos (such as whole TV programmes or films) (26%). One in eight (13%) say they view political speeches or campaigns, while one in ten look at vlogs from vloggers (9%). Four per cent say they have looked at religious speeches or events.

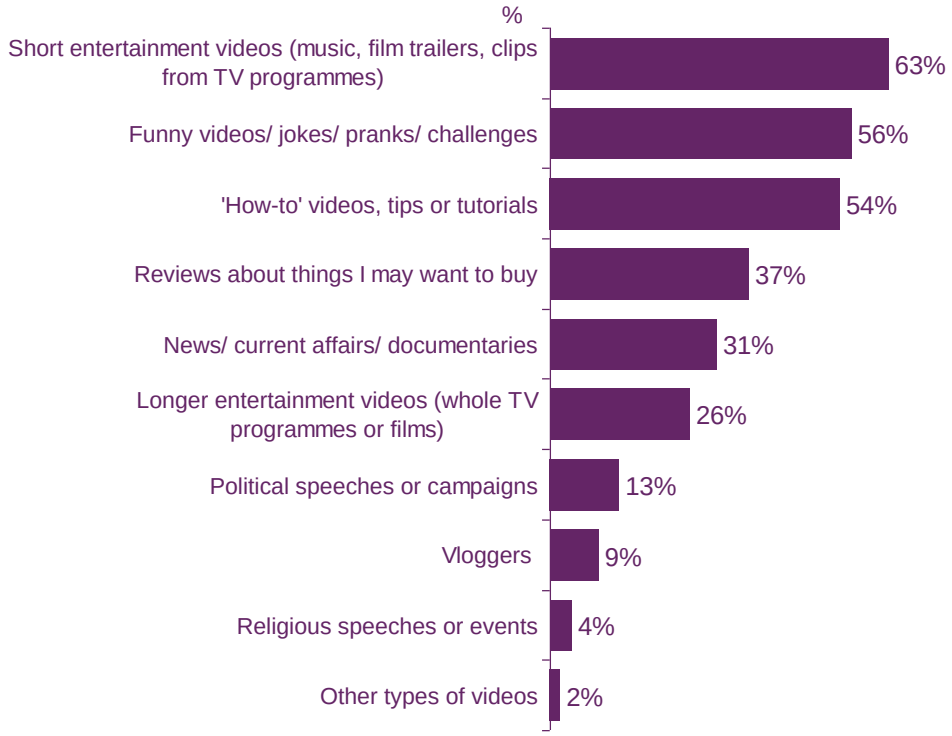
Compared to the average, there are four types of content that are more likely to be viewed by 16-24s and less likely to be viewed by over-65s: short entertainment videos (72% for 16-24s, 43% for 65+ vs. 63% overall), funny videos, jokes, pranks or challenges (72% for 16-24s, 38% for 65+ vs. 56% overall), longer entertainment videos (36% for 16-24s, 15% for 65+ vs. 26% overall) and vlogs/ vloggers (24% for 16-24s, 2% for 65+ vs. 9%).

Users aged 45-54 and 55-64 are also less likely to say they watch funny videos, jokes, pranks or challenges (45% for 45-54s, 40% for 55-64s vs. 56% overall) or watch vlogs/ vloggers (3% for 45-54s, 2% for 55-64s vs. 9% overall). Users aged 45-54 are also less likely to say they watch longer entertainment videos (18% vs. 26%).

Compared to the average, users of video-sharing sites in AB households are more likely to say they watch news/ current affairs or documentary content (41% vs. 31%) and less likely to watch funny videos, jokes, pranks or challenges (45% vs. 56%). Those in DE households are less likely to watch news/ current affairs or documentary content (20% vs. 31%) and also less likely to look at reviews of things they might want to buy (29% vs. 37%).

There are two types of content that are more likely to be viewed by men rather than women: news/ current affairs and documentary content (34% vs. 28%) and political speeches and campaigns (15% vs. 10%).

Figure 63: Type of content watched on video sharing sites



IN18. And what types of videos do you tend to watch on these sites or apps? (prompted responses, multi-coded). Base: All aged 16+ who ever watch videos on these types of sites (1114).

7.5 Listening: radio and other audio services

Use of streamed audio services is higher than in 2016

Three activities that internet users were asked about in the Technology Tracker survey[30] fall under the heading of listening to audio content online: listening to radio online and using streamed audio services, whether free or subscription-based.

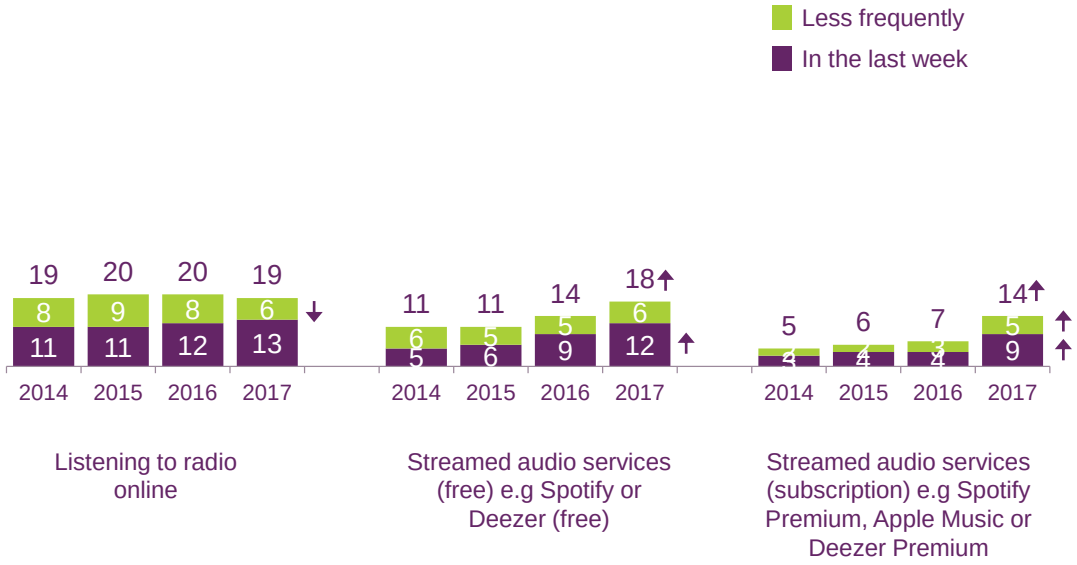
[30] As mentioned earlier, the data relating to the types of online activities that internet users carry out either comes from the most recent wave of the Technology Tracker study or from the Media Literacy Tracker.

Figure 64 shows the proportion of adult internet users, between 2014 and 2017[31], who say they ever undertake each of these activities online, broken out into those who have done this in the past week, and those who do so less frequently.

In 2017, one in five internet users say they have ever listened to radio online (19%), with a similar proportion (18%) saying they use free streamed audio services (like Spotify or Deezer). Slightly fewer users say they have ever used the subscription version of these services; for example, sites like Spotify or Deezer Premium or Apple Music (14%). For each of these types of audio service, use in the previous week is more likely than less frequent use. Around one in eight say they have listened to radio online (13%) or free streaming services (12%) in the previous week, and one in ten (9%) to subscription streaming services.

Compared to 2016, internet users are more likely to have ever used free (18% vs. 14%) or subscription-based (14% vs. 7%) streamed audio services, and to have done so in the past week (12% vs. 9% for free services and 9% vs. 4% for subscription-based services).

Figure 64: Listening to audio services online: 2014-2017



Source: Ofcom Technology Tracker, Half 1 2014- 2017
QE5A/ QE5B. Which, if any, of these do you use the internet for?/ And, which, if any, of these activities have you used the internet for in the last week? (prompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online (3221 in 2017).
Arrows show significant changes (99% level) between 2016 and 2017.

As shown in Figure 65, in 2017 internet users aged 16-24 and 25-34 are more likely than average to say they have been online in the previous week to listen to streamed audio services, whether free or subscription-based, while those aged 55 and over are less likely to have done this. In addition, those aged 65-74 or 75 and over are less likely to say they have listened to radio online in the last week.

Adult internet users in AB households are more likely than average to have been online in the past week to listen to radio or to use subscription-based audio services, while those in DE households are less likely to have done either of these.

[31] As the most recent wave of Technology Tracker research was in 2017, any trend analysis addresses differences between 2016 and 2017 (rather than between 2015 and 2016).

Men who go online are more likely than women to say they have used all three types of audio services in the previous week.

Figure 65: Listening to audio services online in the previous week, by age, gender and socio-economic group

	All internet users	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
Base	3221	506	536	613	531	520	364	151
Listening to radio online	13%	12%	17%	14%	16%	11%	6%↓	4%↓
Streamed audio services (free) e.g Spotify or Deezer (free)	12%	19%↑	20%↑	15%	10%	4%↓	1%↓	1%↓
Streamed audio services (subscription) e.g Spotify Premium, Apple Music or Deezer Premium	9%	15%↑	14%↑	12%	8%	5%↓	1%↓	0%↓

	All internet users	AB	C1	C2	DE	Male	Female
Base	3221	789	1019	679	731	1570	1651
Listening to radio online	13%	17%↑	14%	11%	8%↓	15%↑	11%
Streamed audio services (free) e.g Spotify or Deezer (free)	12%	15%	12%	9%	10%	14%↑	10%
Streamed audio services (subscription) e.g Spotify Premium, Apple Music or Deezer Premium	9%	14%↑	8%	9%	6%↓	12%↑	7%

Source: Ofcom Technology Tracker, Half 1 2017
QE5B. And, which, if any, of these activities have you used the internet for in the last week? (prompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online (3221 in 2017).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) by age/ socio-economic group compared to all internet users, and males compared to females.

7.6 Gaming

Playing games online

One in eight adults play games online with or against other people, rising to four in ten 16-24s

Adults who say they play games on any type of gaming device (as discussed at Figure 21 earlier, in this report) were asked whether they ever played games online, with or against other people.

Figure 66 shows the incidence of online gaming, expressed as a proportion of adults overall.

As shown earlier, compared to the average, any type of gaming is more likely among younger adults (aged 16-34) and among men. This is also the case for online gaming with or against other people. While one in eight adults overall (13%) play games online in this way, this is three times more likely for 16-24s (41%). Adults aged 25-34 (20%) are also more likely to do this, while over-45s are less likely (6% for 45-54s, 6% for 55-64s, 2% for 65-74s and 3% for the over 75s).

There are no differences by household socio-economic group, compared to the average for all adults. Men are three times more likely than women to play games online in this way (20% vs. 7%).

Figure 66: Playing games online with or against other people: 2016

G3. Many games can be played online. Do you ever play games online with or against other people? (unprompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ (1846 aged 16+, 234 aged 16-24, 272 aged 25-34, 313 aged 35-44, 284 aged 45-54, 270 aged 55-64, 218 aged 65-74, 255 aged 75+, 427 AB, 566 C1, 369 C2, 484 DE, 885 male, 961 female). Arrows show significant differences (95% level) for age / socio-economic group compared to all adults, and males compared to females.

Attitudes towards online gaming

A majority of those who play online games with or against other people agree that game-based chatting or messaging enhances their gaming experience

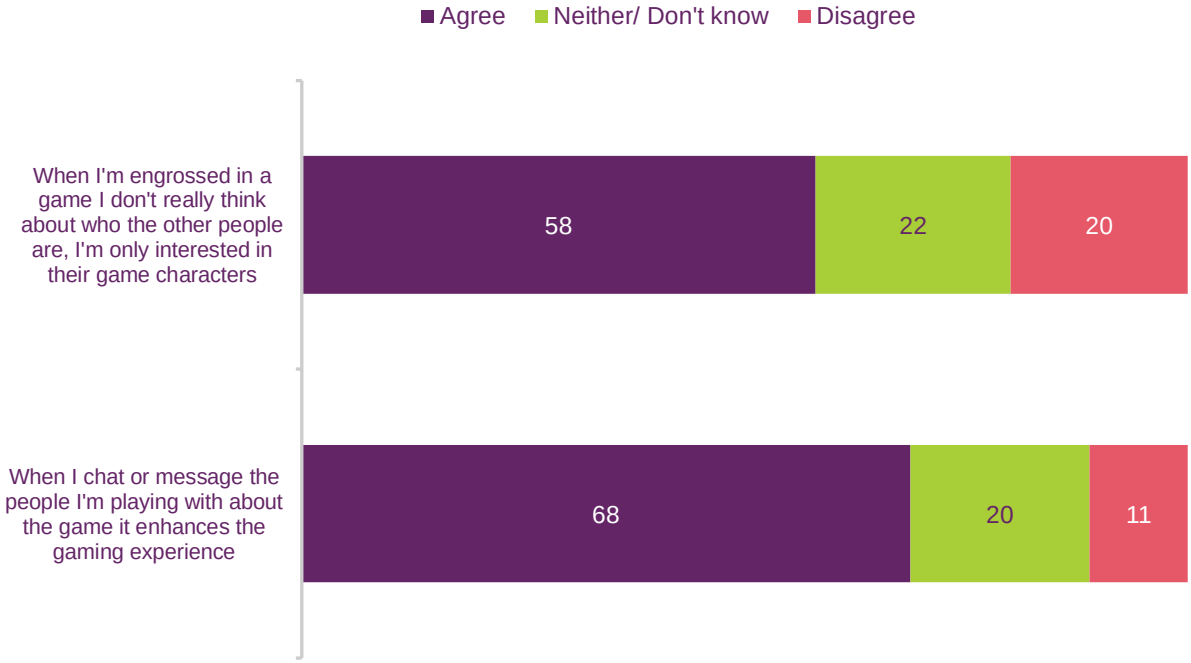
Adults who play games online with or against other people are prompted with two statements about online gaming and asked the extent to which they agree or disagree with each of them.

The results are shown in Figure 67 and exclude those who opted to give a 'not applicable' response, either because they do not play these types of character-based games (excluded from first statement shown), or because they do not chat or message people when gaming online (excluded from the second statement shown). Given the relatively low base of adults who play games online with or against other people (13% of adults overall), it is not possible to conduct any further analysis by age, socio-economic group or gender.

Among those who say they play these sorts of games, a majority (58%) agree that "When I'm engrossed in a game I don't really think about who the other people are, I'm only interested in their game characters". This compares to 20% who disagree.

Two-thirds of adults (68%) who say they chat or message within the game agree that "When I chat or message the people I'm playing with about the game it enhances the gaming experience". One in ten (11%) disagree with this statement.

Figure 67: Agreement with statements about online gaming



G4A. When I'm engrossed in a game I don't really think about who the other people are, I'm only interested in their game characters. (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults who say they play these types of games online (199 aged 16+)
G4B When I chat or message the people I'm playing with about the game it enhances the gaming experience (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults who say they chat or message people when they play these types of games (180 aged 16+)

7.7 Finding content and information

Discoverability of content

Half of viewers of on-demand content choose content based on recommendations by friends or family

Adults who ever watch on-demand television content (51% of adults overall) are asked how they choose TV programmes or films to watch on demand.

More than six in ten choose on-demand content because they missed it when it was originally broadcast (64%). All other responses are given by a minority of on-demand users.

Half (49%) say they choose content based on recommendations by friends or family, with a third (34%) seeing trailers or adverts on TV or radio. Around one in five say that they discover content to watch because it is recommended to them by the on-demand service (21%), through it being discussed in the media (18%) and through it being mentioned on social media (18%).

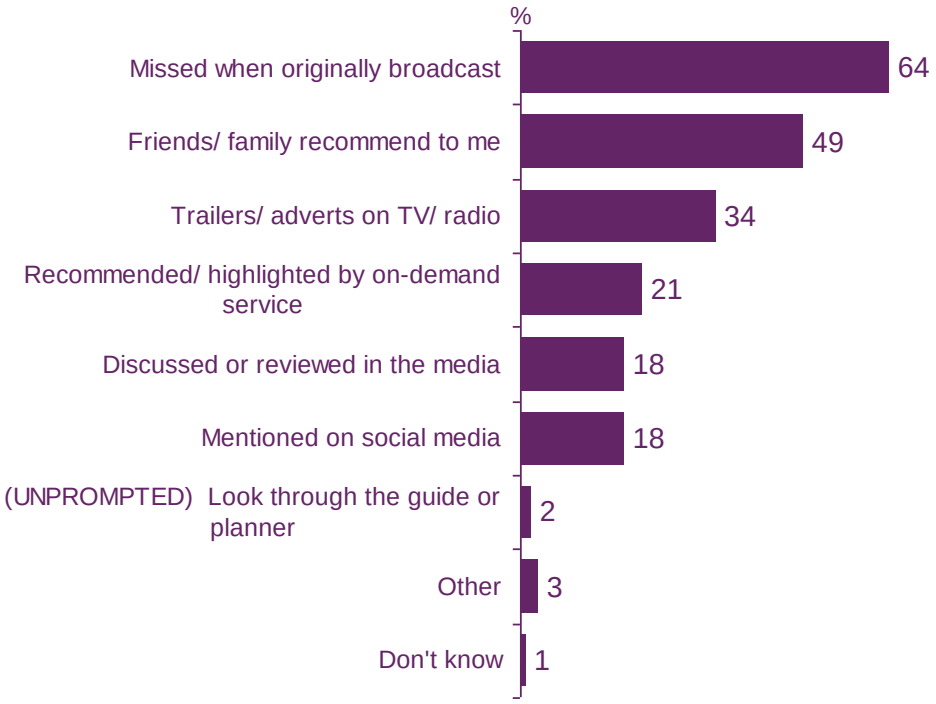
Viewers of on-demand content aged 16-24 are more likely than average to say they discover content through friends' or family recommendations (60% vs. 49%) or through social media (34% vs. 18%). Both 16-24s and 25-34s are less likely to say they view content because

they missed it when it was originally broadcast (53% for 16-24s and 54% for 25-34s vs. 64%) while this reason is more likely to be mentioned by 45-54s (74%).

On-demand users aged 65 and over are less likely to say they choose content based on friends' or family recommendations (26% vs. 49%), from trailers or adverts on TV or radio (17% vs. 34%) or through social media (5% vs. 18%).

There is only one difference by gender. Women are more likely than men to say they watch on-demand content because they missed it when it was broadcast (68% vs. 59%).

Figure 68: Ways in which on-demand content is chosen/ discovered



T3. How do you choose what TV programmes or films to watch on demand? (prompted responses, multi-coded)
Base: All who ever watch on-demand content (891)

Personal recommendations play an important role in discovering content on video-sharing sites

Video-sharing site users (77% of internet users) are also asked about how they discover content to watch on these types of websites.

More than six in ten say that friends or family members tell them about the content or forward it on to them (62%), with more than four in ten (45%) saying they find it in search engine results. Around one in three discover it through links from social media sites (38%) or see it promoted on the 'recommended/ trending/ most popular' section of the site (32%). Around one in eight say it is because they subscribe to a channel (14%) or see articles or adverts in the media (whether online or offline) (12%). Less than one in ten say it is through clicking on online adverts (6%).

Compared to the average (38%), users aged 16-24 (52%) and 25-34 (49%) are more likely to discover content through social media, while those aged 45-54 (29%), 55-64 (22%) and 65+ (17%) are less likely to say this. Users aged 16-24 are also more likely to say they

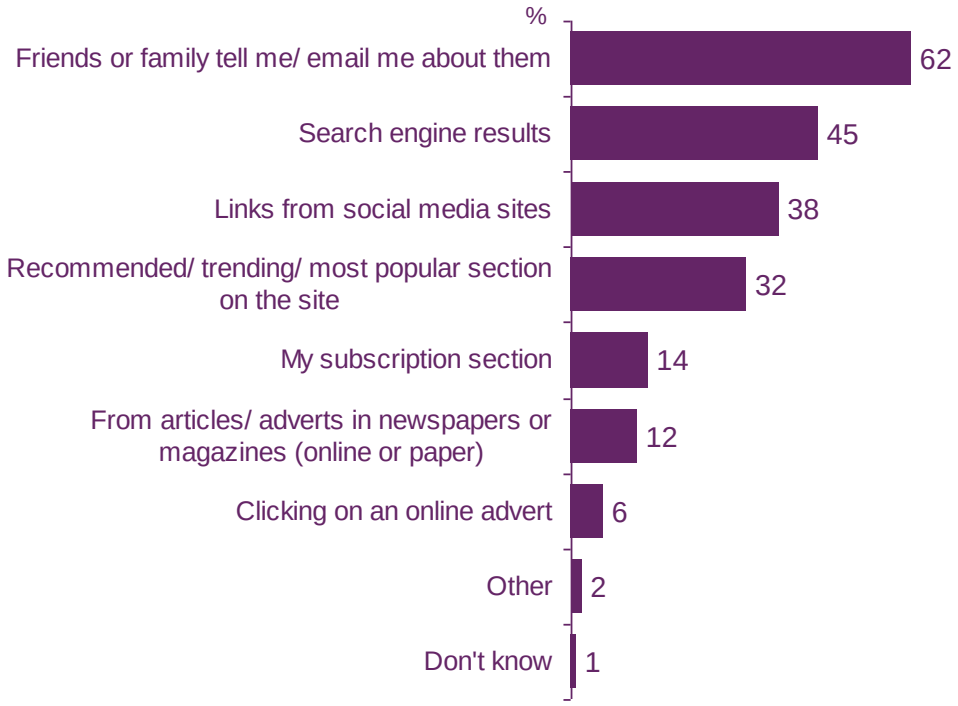
discover content through the 'recommended/ trending/ most popular' section of the site (46% vs. 32%) or through their channel subscriptions (28% vs. 14%).

Users aged 55-64 (16%) and 65+ (11%) are less likely to say they discover content through the 'recommended/ trending/ most popular' section of the site (32% overall) with this latter group also less likely to say they find content because of their channel subscriptions (4% vs. 14%) or through clicking on an online advert (2% vs. 6%).

Compared to the average, users of video-sharing sites in DE households are less likely to say they discover content from search engine results (33% vs. 45%), while those in AB households are less likely to say it is because of their channel subscriptions (9% vs. 14%).

Men are more likely than women to say they discover content in two ways: through search engine results (49% vs. 41%) and through their subscriptions to channels on these sites (17% vs. 11%). Women are more likely to say it is because friends/ family recommend content (65% vs. 58%) or through links from social media (41% vs. 35%).

Figure 69: Ways in which content is chosen/ discovered on video-sharing sites



IN19. Which of these ways describes how you find videos to watch on these sites or apps (prompted responses, multi-coded)
Base: All who ever watch videos on these types of sites (1114)

Finding information[32]

In 2016, the questions relating to type and frequency of internet use were revised. A shorter set of questions were asked of adults who go online, and the frequency options that respondents could select were also amended.

[32] In 2016, the questions relating to type and frequency of internet use were revised. A shorter set of questions were asked of adults who go online, and the frequency options that respondents could select were also amended. Ofcom's Technology Tracker questionnaire also includes questions about types and frequency of internet use, so those specific online activities that can be grouped under the

Ofcom's Technology Tracker questionnaire also includes questions about types and frequency of internet use, so those specific online activities that can be grouped under the heading of 'finding information online' have been included in this section of the report. These results are from the most recent wave of Technology Tracker research, which was conducted in 2017 (as opposed to 2016). Unlike the data from the Media Literacy Tracker, it is also possible to show trend data for these measures (since 2014), so the data have been shown separately (Figure 70) to any similar measures from the media literacy research (Figure 72).

Internet users are more likely than in 2016 to have been online to find health-related information in the past week

Of the online activities that internet users were asked about on the Technology Tracker in 2017, three activities can be grouped under the heading of finding information. These are:

1. general surfing or browsing the internet;

2. finding or downloading information for work, business, school, college, university or homework[33]; and

3. finding information on health-related issues.

Figure 70 shows the proportion of adult internet users in each year from 2014 to 2017 who say they ever undertake each online activity, broken out into those who had done this in the past week, as well as less frequently.

Close to nine in ten internet users (87%) say they use the internet for general browsing/surfing, with eight in ten (80%) saying they have done this in the past week. Almost half (46%) say they find or download information for work, business, school, college, university or homework, with one in three (32%) having done this in the previous week. Four in ten internet users (41%) say they go online to find information for health-related issues, with about half of these (22%) having done so in the previous week.

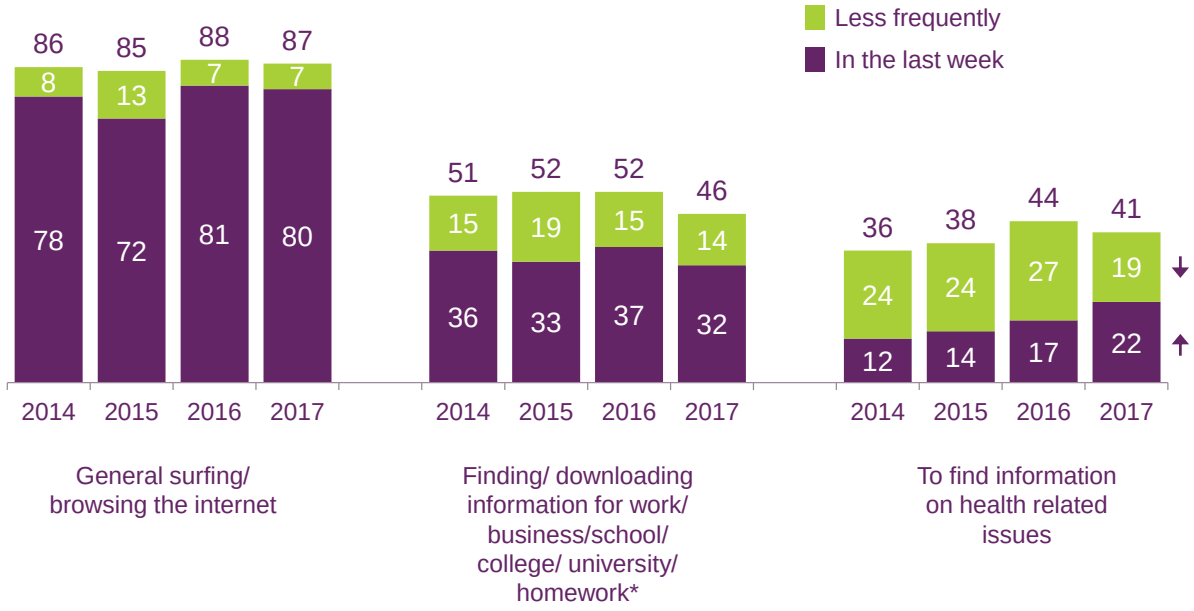
Figure 70 shows a change between 2016 and 2017 for one measure[34]. While overall use of the internet for searching for health-related information is unchanged (41% in 2017 vs. 44% in 2016), internet users are now more likely to have done this in the previous week (22% vs. 17%).

heading of 'finding information online' have been included in this section of the report. These results are from the most recent wave of Technology Tracker research, which was conducted in 2017 (as opposed to 2016). Unlike the data from the Media Literacy Tracker, it is also possible to show trend data for these measures (since 2014), so the data have been shown separately (Figure 70) to any similar measures from the media literacy research (Figure 72).

[33] In previous years, finding information for work or business purposes was asked about separately to finding information for school/ college/ university/ homework; with these two separate questions combined into one question in 2017. The measures for 2014 and 2016 are therefore showing a 'net' measure based on combining the separate questions. Any differences between 2016 and 2017 have not, therefore, been tested for statistical significance.

[34] Where it is possible to show any changes over time – see footnote 32, above.

Figure 70: Finding information online, by activity type: 2014-2017



Source: Ofcom Technology Tracker, Half 1 2014- 2017
QE5A/ QE5B. Which, if any, of these do you use the internet for? / And, which, if any, of these activities have you used the internet for in the last week? (prompted responses, multi-coded).
* NB – prior to 2017 finding information for work or business was asked separately to finding information for school /college/ university/ homework so for 2014-2016 the figures shown are net measures.
Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online (3221 in 2017).
Arrows show significant changes (99% level) between 2016 and 2017.

Figure 71 shows any variation in the incidence of undertaking each of these activities online in the previous week, by age, socio-economic group and gender, in 2017.

Compared to internet users overall, those aged 16-24 are more likely to have gone online in the past week to find or download information for work, business, school, college, university or homework (41% vs. 32%). Adults aged 35-44 are more likely to have gone online in the past week for all three activities: general/ surfing or browsing the internet (84% vs. 80%), finding or downloading information for work, business, school, college, university or homework (37% vs. 32%), or to find information on health-related issues (27% vs. 22%).

Users aged 55-64 are less likely to have gone online in the previous week to find or download information for work, business, school, college, university or homework (26% vs. 32%), as are those aged 65-74 (14%) and 75+ (6%). In the previous week, these oldest users are also less likely to have generally surfed the internet (62% for 65-74s and 66% for 75+ vs. 80%) or to have found information on health-related issues (13% for both age groups vs. 22%).

Compared to the average for all internet users, adults in AB households are more likely, and those in C2 or DE households less likely, to have been online in the previous week to look for all three types of information.

Men are more likely than women to say they have been online in the past week to find work- or education-related content (35% vs. 29%) while women are more likely than men to say they have looked for health-related information (24% vs. 19%).

Figure 71: Finding information online in the past week, by age, gender and socio-economic group

	All internet users	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
Base	3221	506	536	613	531	520	364	151
General surfing/ browsing the internet	80%	83%	84%	84%↑	83%	75%	62%↓	66%↓
Finding/ downloading information for work/ business/school/ college/ university/ homework	32%	41%↑	34%	37%↑	37%	26%↓	14%↓	6%↓
To find information on health related issues	22%	20%	21%	27%↑	23%	24%	13%↓	13%↓

	All internet users	AB	C1	C2	DE	Male	Female
Base	3221	789	1019	679	731	1570	1651
General surfing/ browsing the internet	80%	87%↑	80%	73%↓	75%↓	81%	78%
Finding/ downloading information for work/ business/school/ college/ university/ homework	32%	44%↑	35%	25%↓	20%↓	35%↑	29%
To find information on health related issues	22%	30%↑	22%	14%↓	17%↓	19%	24%↑

Source: Ofcom Technology Tracker, Half 1 2017
QE5B. And, which, if any, of these activities have you used the internet for in the last week? (prompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online (3221 in 2017).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) by age/ socio-economic group compared to all internet users, and males compared to females.

Almost three-quarters of adult internet users say they have ever accessed information online for their leisure time

Figure 72 shows the frequency with which internet users go online to undertake four specific activities that were asked about in the Media Literacy survey in 2016[35].

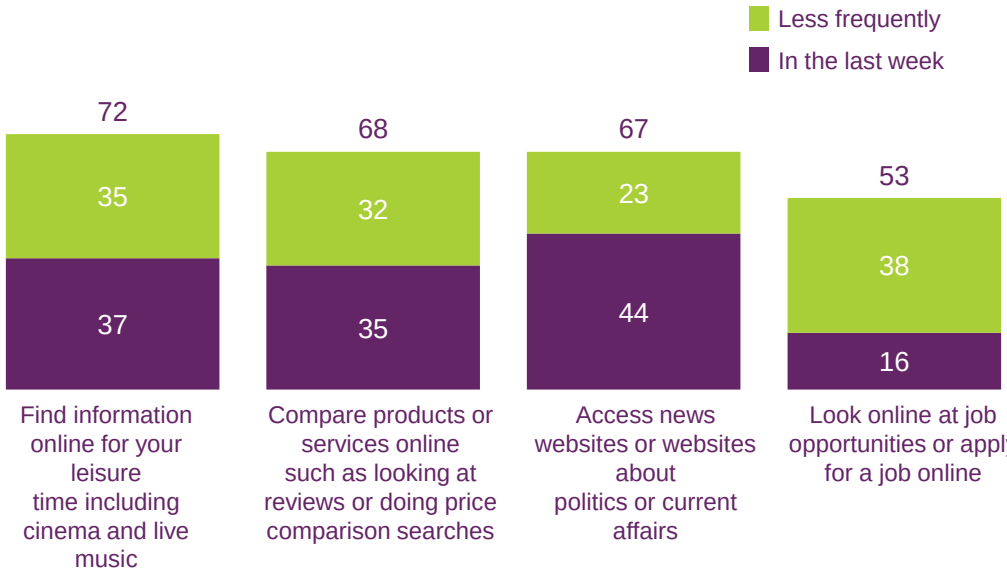
All of the four activities shown have 'ever' been undertaken by the majority of internet users. More than seven in ten (72%) have ever been online to find information for their leisure time (including cinema and live music) while around half of these (37%) have done so in the previous week.

Two in three internet users (68%) have ever been online to compare products or services (such as looking at reviews or doing price comparison searches) or to access news websites or sites about politics or current affairs (67%). While around one in three (35%) have compared products or services online, a higher proportion (44%) have accessed news, politics or current affairs websites in the previous week.

Half of internet users say they have ever looked online at job opportunities or applied for a job online (53%) with one in six (16%) having done this in the past week.

[35] It is not possible to show a trend for these measures as the online activities and the responses with which internet users were prompted were amended in 2016.

Figure 72: Finding information online, by activity type: 2016



IN13/ IN14. Which if any of these activities have you ever done online? / And which if any of these activities have you used the internet for in the last week? (prompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online (1553 in 2016).

Figure 73 shows how these types of online activity vary in 2016 by age, gender and socio-economic group.

Compared to the average, internet users aged 16-24 are more likely to have been online in the previous week to find information for their leisure time (45% vs. 37%) or to look at job opportunities (29% vs. 16%). Those aged 25-34 are also more likely to have looked for leisure information online (45% vs. 37%). In contrast, 65-74s are less likely to have undertaken three of these four activities and over-75s are less likely to have undertaken all four.

Compared to the average, adults in AB households are more likely to have been online in the previous week to access news websites (58% vs. 44%) while those in C2 or DE households are less likely (35% for C2s and 28% for DEs). Those in C2 (30%) or DE households (29%) are also less likely than internet users overall (37%) to have been online to find leisure information, while C1s are more likely to have been online for this purpose (43%). Comparing products or services online in the past week is more likely among ABs (42%) and less likely for DEs (29%) compared to the average (35%).

Men are more likely than women to say they have been online in the previous week to access news websites (49% vs. 38%).

Figure 73: Finding information online in the previous week, by age, gender and socio-economic group

	All internet users	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
Base	1553	231	265	293	265	220	141	138
Access news websites or websites about politics or current affairs	44%	39%	41%	47%	51%	49%	34%↓	27%↓
Find information online for your leisure time including cinema and live music	37%	45%↑	45%↑	40%	36%	31%	23%↓	15%↓
Compare products or services online such as looking at reviews or doing price comparison searches	35%	39%	34%	39%	33%	38%	34%	20%↓
Look online at job opportunities or apply for a job online	16%	29%↑	18%	15%	14%	13%	2%↓	1%↓

	All internet users	AB	C1	C2	DE	Male	Female
Base	1553	394	521	300	338	745	808
Access news websites or websites about politics or current affairs	44%	58%↑	48%	35%↓	28%↓	49%↑	38%
Find information online for your leisure time including cinema and live music	37%	43%	43%↑	30%↓	29%↓	39%	36%
Compare products or services online such as looking at reviews or doing price comparison searches	35%	42%↑	37%	31%	29%↓	37%	33%
Look online at job opportunities or apply for a job online	16%	16%	15%	12%	19%	17%	15%

IN14. And which if any of these activities have you used the internet for in the last week? (prompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online (1553 in 2016).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) by age/ socio-economic group compared to all internet users, and males compared to females.

7.8 Online information sources used

Search engines are the only information source used by more than half of internet users

Adults who go online were prompted with a list of eight possible sources of information and were asked which sources, if any, they had ever used to look for information online. Figure 74 shows the results for 2016.

A search engine (97%) is the only source used by a majority of internet users. Four in ten have ever used Wikipedia (41%), websites with user reviews such as Amazon, TripAdvisor or OpenTable (40%) or the BBC website (40%), while a similar proportion (37%) say they have ever used a Government or local council website. Three in ten (31%) have ever used YouTube to look for information, and one in four have ever used social media websites (26%) or online articles (25%).

Differences in the information sources used, by age, are summarised below:

- Compared to the average, internet users aged 16-24 are more likely to have ever used YouTube (39% vs. 31%), social media (39% vs. 26%) or online articles (33% vs. 25%). Social media is more likely to be used by 25-34s (35%).

- Those aged 35-44 are more likely to say they have used a Government or local council website (45% vs. 37%).

- Users aged 55-64 (16%) or 65-74 (13%) are less likely than users overall (26%) to say that they have ever used social media, and this latter age group are also less likely to have ever used YouTube (18% vs. 31%) or online articles (15% vs. 25%).

- Adults aged 75 and over who go online are less likely to say they use all eight sources.

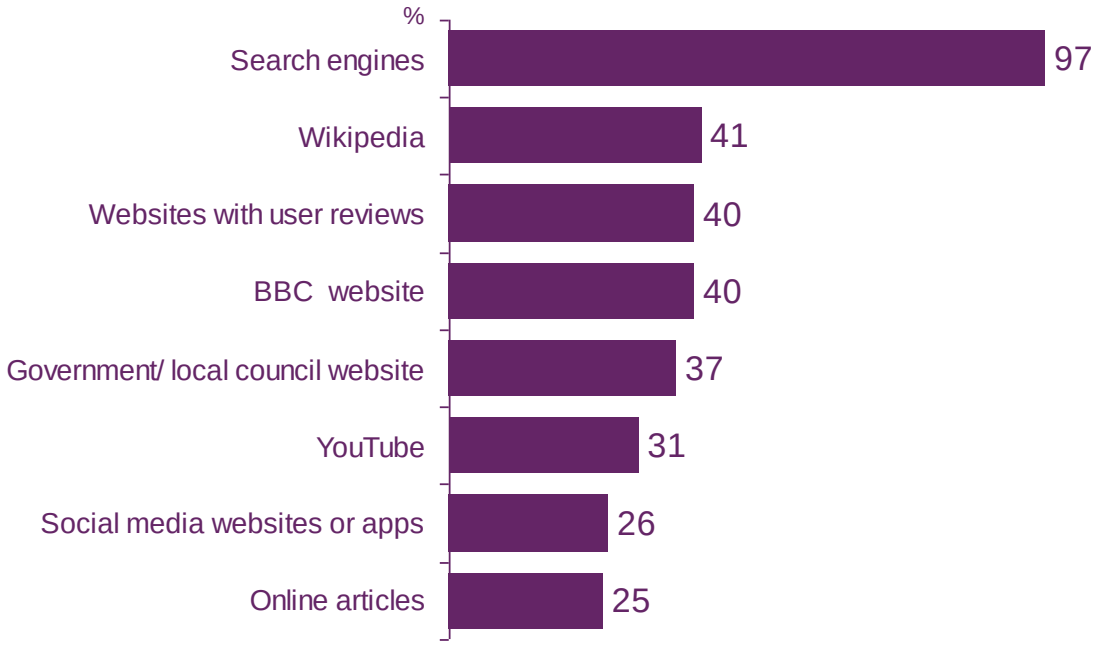
There are also differences by socio-economic group:

- Compared to internet users overall, four sources are more likely to have ever been used by adults in AB households, and these same four sources are less likely to have been used by those in DE households: Wikipedia (50% for ABs vs. 32% for DEs), the BBC website (52% vs. 24%), Government or local council websites (48% vs. 28%) and online articles (36% vs. 15%).

- Compared to the average, those in C2 households are also less likely to have ever used the BBC website (31% vs. 40%), a Government or local council website (29% vs. 37%) or online articles (14% vs. 25%). DE adults are less likely to use websites with user reviews (28% vs. 40%).

Men are more likely than women to say they have ever looked for information on YouTube (35% vs. 28%). Women are more likely to say they have ever used a Government or local council website (40% vs. 33%) or social media websites (30% vs. 23%).

Figure 74: Sources used to look for information online



IN45. Please think about when you want to look for information about something online. Which, if any of these sources have you ever used to look for information online? (prompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: Adults aged 16+ who go online (1553 in 2016).

Sources most likely to be used when looking for information online

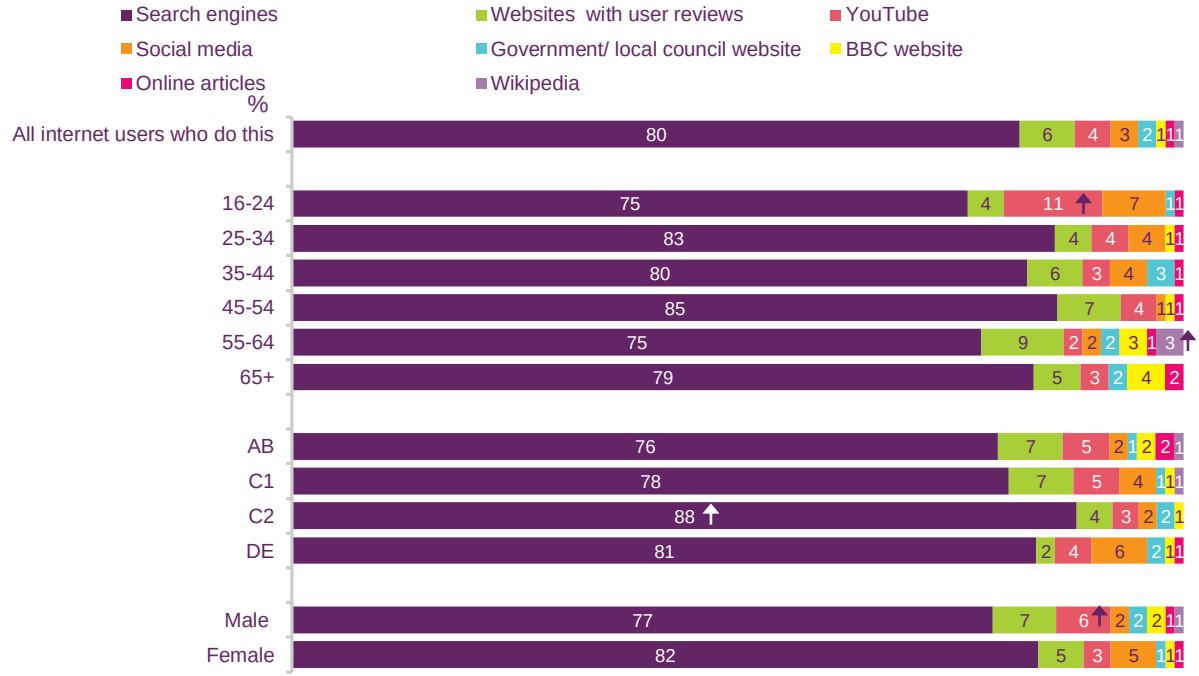
Internet users are most likely to use search engines to look for information relating to their leisure time/ hobbies/ for entertainment purposes

Internet users who say they go online to look for information for their leisure time (72% of internet users overall) were asked which information source they are most likely to use to find out about their leisure time, or for hobbies or entertainment purposes.

In 2016, four in five internet users (80%) say they are most likely to use search engines; this is more likely among adults in C2 socio-economic group (88%).

While only 4% of internet users say they use the YouTube website for this purpose, this is more likely among 16-24s (11%) and among men (6% vs. 3% for women).

Figure 75: Information source most likely to be used when finding information about leisure time or for hobbies or entertainment purposes



IN46C. You said earlier you went online to find information for your leisure time. Please use this card to say which one of the following online sources you are most likely to use for finding out information about your leisure time or for hobbies or entertainment purposes? (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online to look for information for their leisure time (1083 aged 16+, varies by demographic).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) by age/ socio-economic group compared to all internet users who do this, and males compared to females.

Eight in ten of those who go online to look for information for work or college or for other official purposes would be most likely to use a search engine to do this

Internet users who say they go online to look for information relating to work, college or other official tasks (68% of internet users overall) are asked which information source they are most likely to use for finding this type of information.

Eight in ten of these users (79%) say they are most likely to use a search engine for this purpose, while 8% say they would use a Government or local council website.

Compared to the average, those aged 35-44 who go online to look for this type of information are less likely to say they would use search engines (72% vs. 79%) and are more likely to say they would use a Government or local council website (13% vs. 8%). Those aged 16-24 are less likely to say they would use Government or local council websites (2% vs. 8%) while those aged 55-64 are more likely to say they would use the BBC website (6% vs. 2%).

Compared to men, women are more likely to say they would use a Governmental or local council website (11% vs. 5%).

Figure 76: Information source most likely used when finding information for work, college, school or some other official task

IN46A. Please use this card to say which one of the following online sources you are most likely to use for finding information for work, college, school or some other official task (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online to look for information relating to work or college or for other official tasks (1016 aged 16+, varies by demographic).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) by age/ socio-economic group compared to all internet users who do this, and males compared to females.

Use of websites or apps not used before

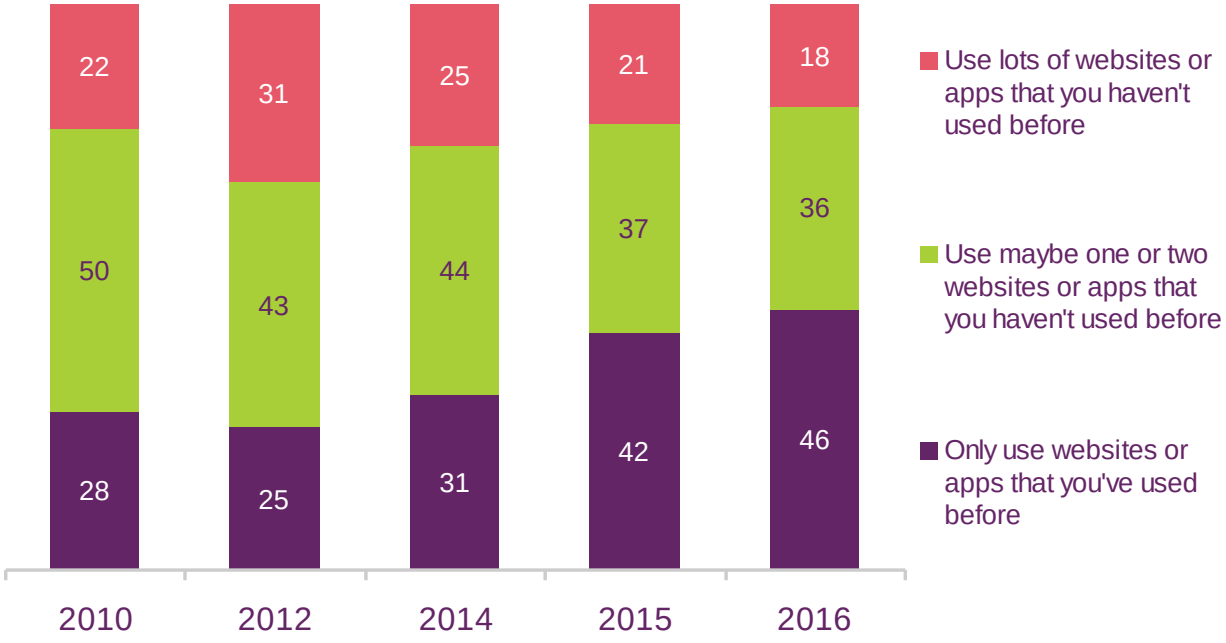
Nearly half of internet users say that in most weeks they only use websites or apps that they have used before

It is important to understand the extent to which people are willing to explore online, as context for many of their attitudes and behaviours. In order to have a proxy for this willingness to move beyond what is familiar online, we ask whether or not they usually use websites or apps that they haven't used before (in most weeks when they go online).

One in five (18%) internet users say they use lots of websites or apps that they haven't used before. More than one in three (36%) say they use 'maybe one or two' sites or apps that they haven't used before. Close to half (46%) say that they tend to use only websites or apps that they have used before. Each of these measures is unchanged since 2015.[36]

[36] Responses shown in the figure reflect those who expressed an opinion.

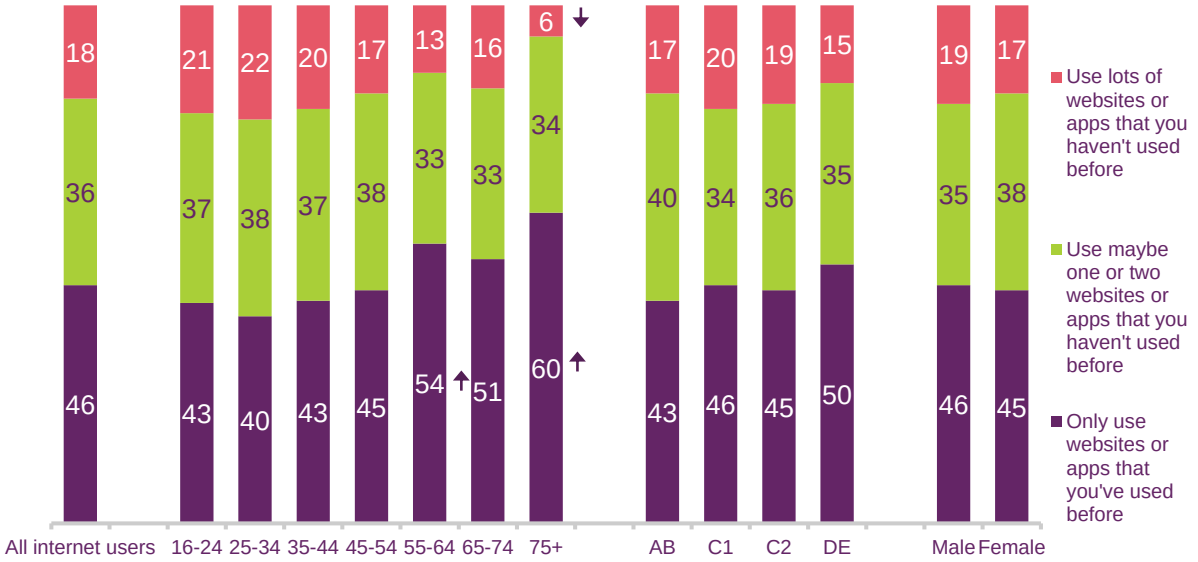
Figure 77: Use of websites or apps not used before, most weeks: 2010-2016



IN12. In most weeks when you go online do you usually… (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online (1536 in 2016) excludes 'don't know' responses.

As shown in Figure 78, internet users aged 55-64 (54%) and 75+ (60%) are more likely than average (46%) to say that they only use websites or apps they've used before. There are no other differences in these measures by age or household socio-economic group, compared to the average. There are also no differences between men and women.

Figure 78: Use of websites or apps not used before, by age, socio-economic group and gender



IN12. In most weeks when you go online do you usually… (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online (1536 in 2016, varies by demographic) - excludes 'don't know' responses.
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) for age / socio-economic group compared to all internet users, and males compared to females.

Reading and writing online reviews

Three in four internet users read online reviews, while two in five say they write them

Internet users are asked whether (before deciding to buy a product or service) they read online reviews about that product or service by members of the public. They are also asked whether they write online reviews for other people to read after they have purchased a product or service. The results for both these questions are shown at an overall level, and by age, socio-economic group and gender, in Figure 79.

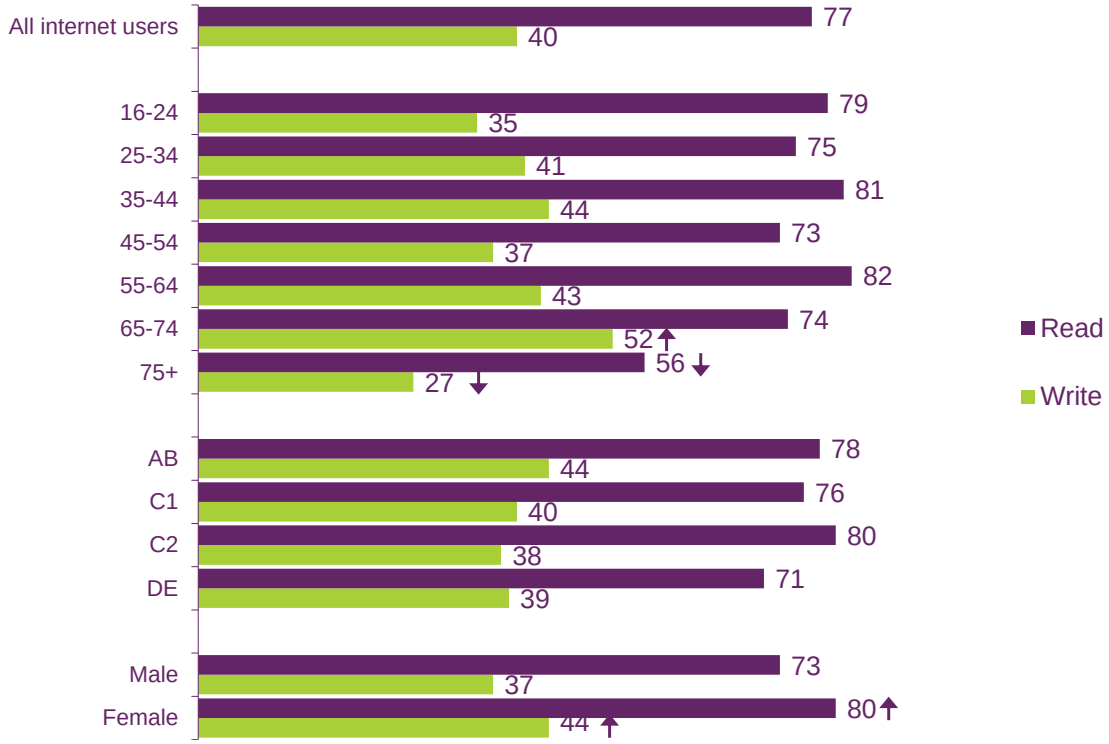
While around three-quarters of internet users (77%) read reviews, only four in ten (40%) write them. For each of the age and socio-economic groups, reading online reviews is more likely than writing them. No single age group of adults is more likely than the average to read online reviews, while over-75s are less likely to do this (56% vs. 77%).

Internet users aged 65-74 (52%) are more likely than average to say they write online reviews about a product or service, while over-75s are less likely (27%).

Women are more likely than men to say they read (80% vs. 73%) or write (44% vs. 37%) online reviews.

While not shown in Figure 79, the incidence of reading and writing online reviews is unchanged compared to 2015.

Figure 79: Reading and writing online reviews, by demographic group



IN47/ IN48. Before you decide to purchase a product or use a service, do you read reviews that other members of the public have written or posted online about that product or service? / After purchasing a product or using a service, do you write online reviews for other people to read about that product or service (unprompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online (1553 in 2016).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) by age/ socio-economic group compared to all internet users and males compared to females.

Information sources used, if unsure how to do something online

When stuck on how to do something online, adults are most likely to say they would ask for help, although one in five would refer to sites like YouTube

Internet users are prompted with eight options[37] and are asked to say which of them they would do if they got stuck or were unsure about how to do something online. More than half (58%) say they would ask a friend or family for help, while more than four in ten (43%) say they would work it out for themselves.

Close to one in five (18%) say they would watch 'how-to' videos on sites like YouTube or the BBC. Eight per cent say they would give up, or get someone else to do it for them, while a similar proportion (7%) would phone a helpline. Each of the other options are only mentioned by around one in 20 internet users or less.

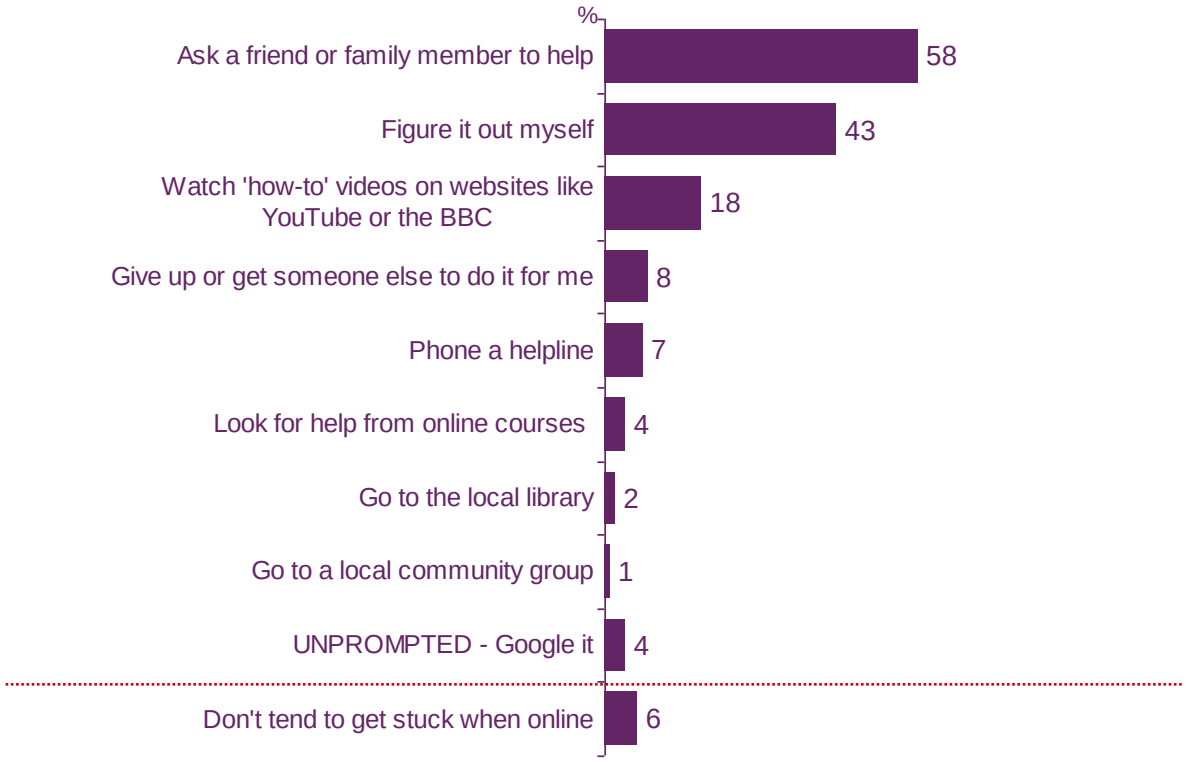
Users aged 16-24 are more likely to say they would work it out for themselves (56% vs. 43%) or to watch 'how-to' videos on sites like YouTube or the BBC (26% vs. 18%). Those aged 25-34 are less likely to say they would ask a friend or family member for help (48% vs. 58%). Watching 'how-to' videos is also more likely for 35-44s (25% vs. 18%).

Users aged 55 and over are more likely to say they would ask a friend or family member for help (69% for 55-64s, 73% for 65-74s and 80% for over-75s vs. 58% overall) and are less likely to say they would work it out for themselves (34% for 55-64s, 27% for 65-74s and 21% for over-75s vs. 43% overall). Compared to the average (18%), those aged 65-74 (11%) and 75+ (1%) are also less likely to say they would watch 'how-to' videos.

Women are more likely than men to say they would ask a friend/ family member for help (67% vs. 49%) while men are more likely than women to say they would work it out for themselves (47% vs. 39%).

[37] They were also allowed to nominate something else, say they tended not to get stuck online, or to say that they were unsure.

Figure 80: Sources of assistance when unsure of how to do something online



IN4. Which if any of the following would you do if you got stuck or were unsure about how to do something online? (prompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: Adults aged 16+ who go online (1553 in 2016).

Section 8

Critical thinking

8.1 Section overview

This section looks at findings relating to adults' knowledge, behaviours and attitudes on topics which are linked to critical thinking and understanding of the media they engage with.

It starts by examining the overall level of confidence that users have in using the internet, before exploring adults' understanding of the main sources of funding for TV programmes and websites (and specifically, the main source of funding for BBC content and commercial operators, for each of these media).

It also reports on questions relating to online privacy and data security, examining areas such as the judgements made when providing personal information online, use of various online security measures and safety features, and the incidence of any negative online experiences.

This chapter then goes on to look at users' awareness of and attitudes towards online advertising, before exploring behaviours and attitudes around content evaluation.

8.2 Key findings

- Overall confidence as an internet user is unchanged since 2015 (89% vs. 88% in 2015). There has, however, been a shift away from internet users describing themselves as 'very confident' (52% vs. 59% in 2015) and towards 'fairly confident' (37% vs. 29%).

- The majority of adults are aware how television programmes are mainly funded – whether on the BBC, through the PSB commercial channels, or on Sky or Virgin Media - although younger adults (16-34s) are less likely to be aware, compared to the average.

- The majority of adults correctly identify the licence fee as the main source of funding for the BBC website (63%) and BBC i-Player (54%).

- Prior to 2016, a minority of adults were aware how search engine websites were mainly funded (45% in 2014, 46% in 2015); this as increased to more than half (53%) in 2016.

- Awareness of how YouTube is mainly funded stands at 44% among adults overall, increasing to 49% for internet users overall and to more than half (55%) among users of video-sharing sites (like YouTube or Vimeo).

- More than seven in ten internet users (72%) say they are confident that they can manage who has access to their personal data online. Compared to the average (40%), 16-24s (60%) and 25-34s (47%) are more likely to say they are 'very confident'. While 8% of internet users are 'not at all' confident in this aspect of their internet use, this is more likely for 65-74s (18%) and over-75s (17%).

- When posting content on social media, at least two in three users say they always or sometimes consider the privacy or data security implications – particularly when posting photos.

- Seven in ten internet users (70%) who register personal details online say they make appropriate checks before giving their personal details, and more than one in four (27%) say they give out inaccurate or false details online in order to protect their personal information.

- While three-quarters of internet users (74%) who purchase online say they make appropriate checks before entering their debit/ credit card details online. One in four (24%) say they do at least one of the following less secure things: enter their details whenever required (5%), do so if it's the only way to buy the item they want (11%), or check to see if the site is listed on a search engine (15%).

- Two security measures are used at home by a majority of internet users: software such as anti-virus or anti-spyware packages (65%) or strong passwords on devices used to go online (54%). A minority (46%) say they use strong passwords for online services like email, social media and PayPal.

- More than four in five internet users (84%) say they are very (45%) or fairly (39%) confident at knowing which online content is advertising, and more than half (56%) are aware of personalised advertising.

- Close to three in four (72%) users of video-sharing sites (like YouTube or Vimeo) are aware of the potential for vloggers to be paid to endorse the products they discuss.

- When shown an image of links on Google, distinguished by a box with the word 'ad' in it, 48% of search engine users understood that these were there because they were paid-for advertising, and not because they were the best or most relevant results.

- One in five adults who use search engines (21%) say that if results are listed by a search engine, the websites will be accurate/ unbiased.

- Compared to 2015, social media users are less trusting of the content they see on social media sites or apps.

- Two in three internet users say they validate the accuracy of the factual information they find online by making at least one of the six checks they are prompted with. No single check is made by the majority of internet users, but close to half (45%) say they check different websites to see if the same information appears on them all, while one in three (32%) check that the website address looks genuine. Three in ten make none of these checks.

8.3 Confidence as an internet user

Confidence when going online

Half of those who go online say they are very confident users - although this is lower than in 2015

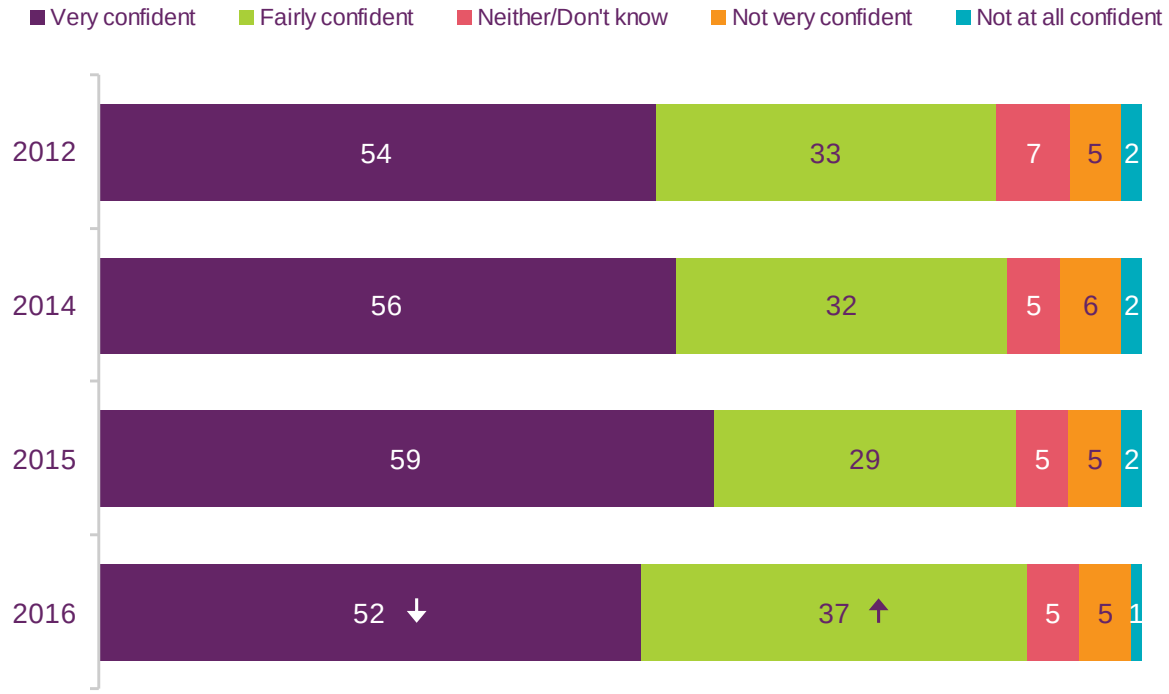
We ask internet users to rate their levels of confidence across several aspects of using the internet, and at an overall level as an internet user. The results for overall confidence as an internet user are discussed below, as a way of framing what users do online, which is discussed in the rest of this section.

As shown in Figure 81, half (52%) of UK adults who go online describe themselves as being 'very confident' as an internet user, and more than one in three say they are fairly confident (37%). While overall confidence (very/ fairly combined) is unchanged since 2015 (89% vs. 88% in 2015) it is worth noting that there has been a shift away from internet users describing themselves as 'very confident' (52% vs. 59% in 2015).

Internet users aged 16-24 (75%) and 25-34 (63%) are more likely to say they are 'very confident' than the average adult internet user (52%), as are AB adults (58%); this is also the case for men compared to women (57% vs. 47%).

Over-65s are more likely than average to describe themselves as 'not confident' (20% for 65-74s and 23% for over-75s, vs. 7% for all internet users).

Figure 81: Confidence as an internet user, by year



IN11A. Overall, how confident are you as an internet user? (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: Adults aged 16+ who go online (1553 in 2016).
Arrows show significant changes (95% level) between 2015 and 2016.

8.4 Media funding

Adults are asked to say, without prompting, what they believe are the main sources of funding for television programmes and for particular websites. For each medium, questions are asked about the main source of funding for content on the BBC and for commercial operators.

BBC television funding

The majority of people know how BBC television programmes are mainly funded, but this is less likely among 16-34s

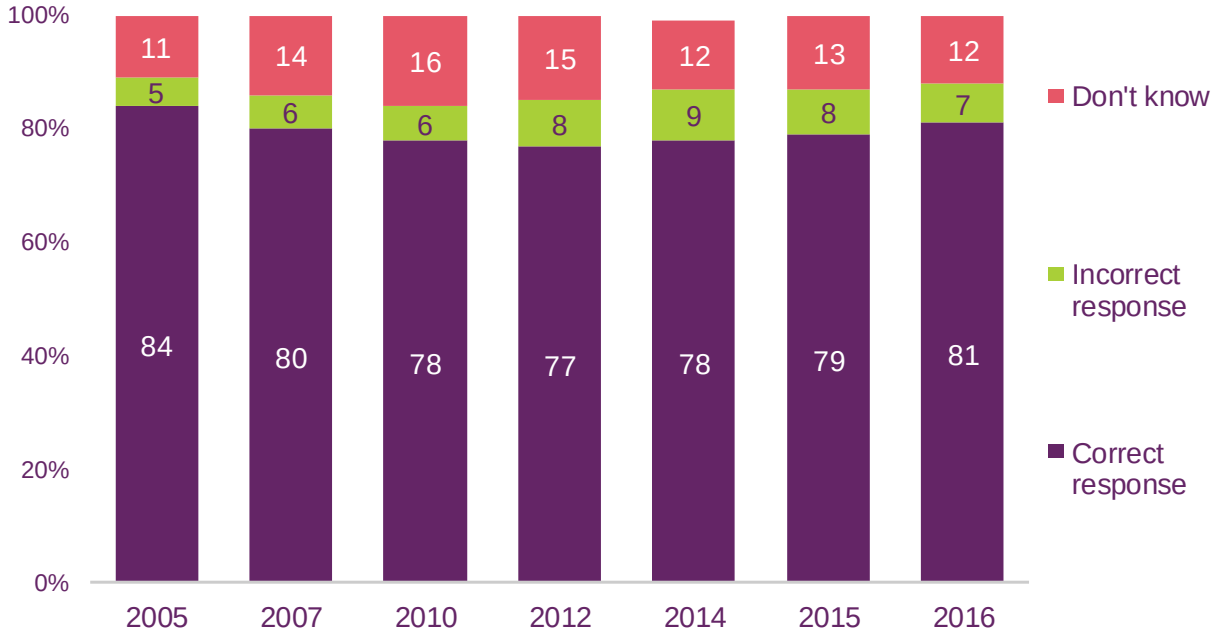
As shown in

Figure 82, awareness of the licence fee as the main source of funding for BBC television programmes has not changed compared to 2015 (81% in 2016 vs. 79% in 2015).

Adults aged 16-24 and 25-34 are less likely to be aware that the licence fee is the main source of BBC funding (57% for 16-24s and 73% for 25-34s). Adults aged 55-64 (93%), 65-74 (91%) and over-75 (88%) are more likely than adults overall to give the correct response.

Those in AB households (87%) are more likely to say the licence fee is the main source of funding, compared to adults overall. Men (84%) are more likely than women (78%) to give the correct response.

Figure 82: Awareness of how BBC TV programmes are mainly funded: 2005-2016



T4. How would you say BBC TV programmes are mainly funded? (unprompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ (1846 in 2016).

Commercial television funding

Younger people are less likely to know how commercial television is funded

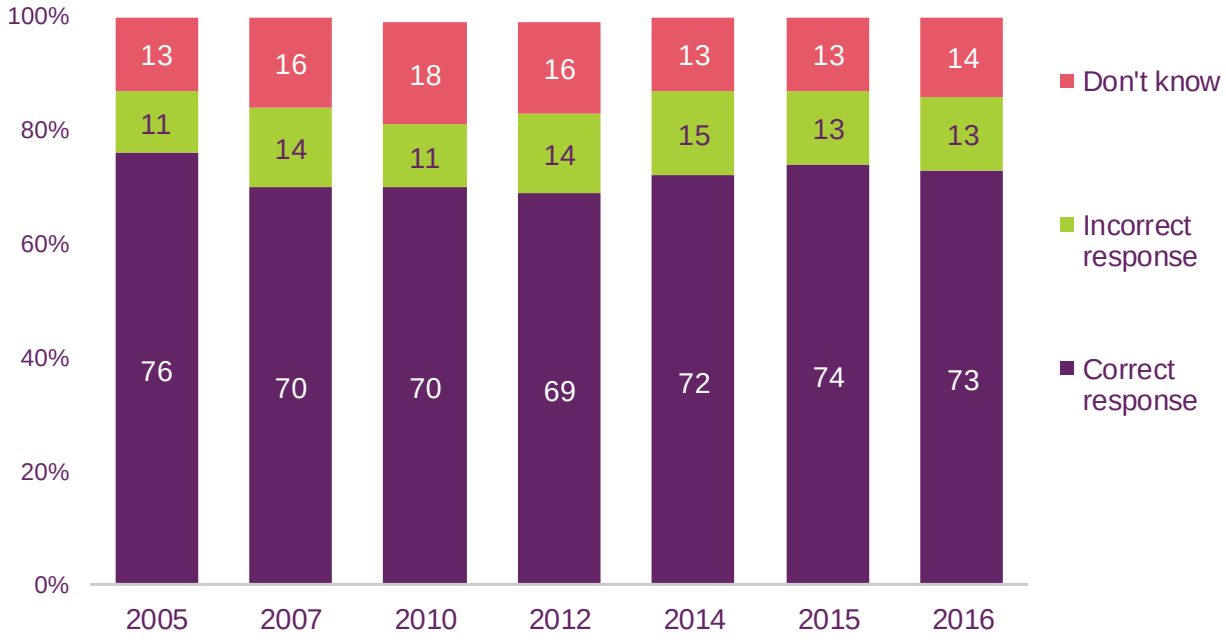
As shown in Figure 83, three in four adults are aware that advertising is the main source of funding for television programmes on the commercial stations (73%); this is unchanged since 2015 (74%).

As with awareness of how BBC programmes are mainly funded, 16-24s (54%) and 25-34s (59%) are less likely to give the correct response, while adults aged 55-64 (81%), 65-74 (86%) and over-75 (83%) are more likely.

Compared to the average, adults in AB households (82%) are more likely to give the correct response, while those in DE households are less likely (67%).

Men are more likely than women to be aware that advertising is the main source of funding (76% vs. 70%).

Figure 83: Awareness of how commercial TV programmes are mainly funded: 2005-2016



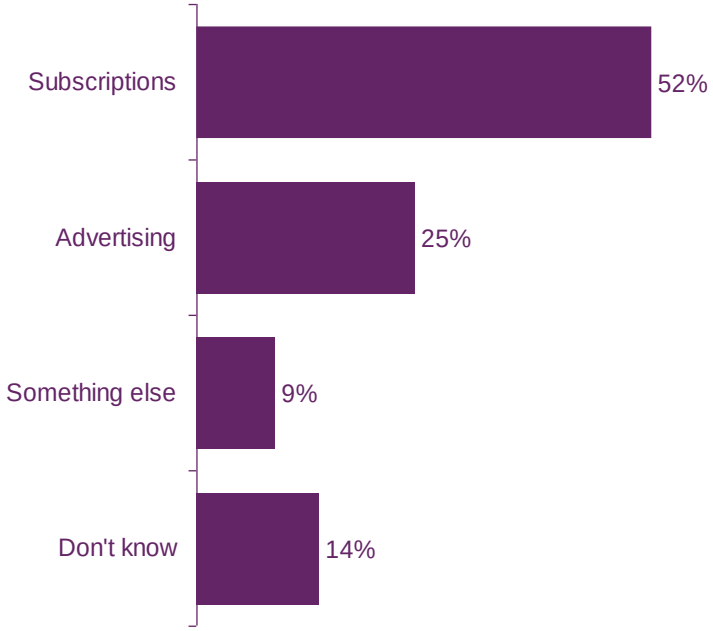
T5. How would you say programmes are mainly funded on ITV, Channel 4 and Five? (unprompted responses, single coded)
Base: All adults aged 16+ (1846 in 2016).

Adults are also asked about the main source of funding for the Sky and Virgin Media TV services. About half (52%) of adults say the main source of funding is subscriptions, while one in four (25%) say that they are mainly funded through advertising.

There is little variation in knowledge about either of these sources of funding by age; compared to the average, over-75s (38%) are less likely to say that the main source of funding is subscriptions, while advertising is less likely to be mentioned by 16-24s (18%).

One in seven adults (14%) are unsure as to the main source of funding for these providers; this is more likely for 16-24s (23%) and over-75s (28%). Those in DE households are also more likely to be unsure (21%) as are women compared to men (18% vs. 10%).

Figure 84: Awareness of how the Sky and Virgin Media TV services are mainly funded



T6. How is the Sky or Virgin Media TV service mainly funded? (unprompted responses, single coded)
Base: All adults aged 16+ (1846 in 2016).

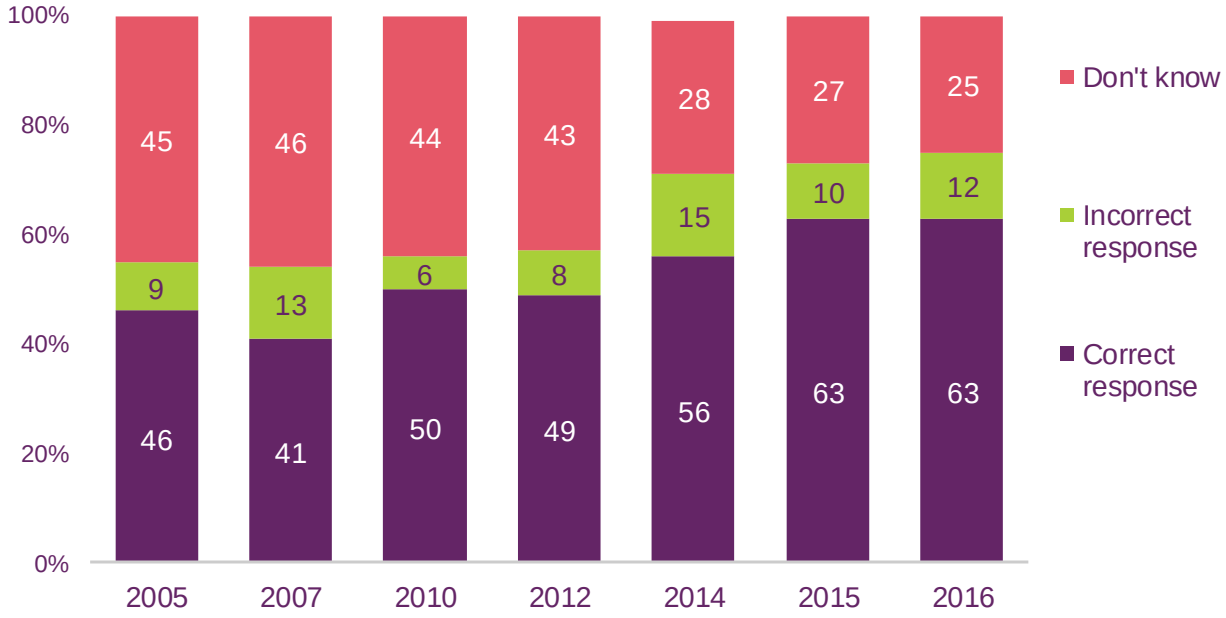
Funding of BBC website and iPlayer

Knowledge of how the BBC website and BBC iPlayer are funded is lower compared to BBC TV

More than six in ten adults (63%) correctly identify the licence fee as the main source of funding for the BBC website; this measure is unchanged since 2015.

Compared to the average, this response is more likely among 55-64s (71%) and ABs (72%), and less likely among 16-24s (44%), over-75s (55%) and DEs (54%). Men are also more likely than women to give this response (67% vs. 60%).

Figure 85: Awareness of how the BBC website is mainly funded: 2005-2016



IN34. How do you think the BBC's website is mainly funded? (unprompted responses, single coded)
Base: All adults aged 16+ (1846 in 2016).

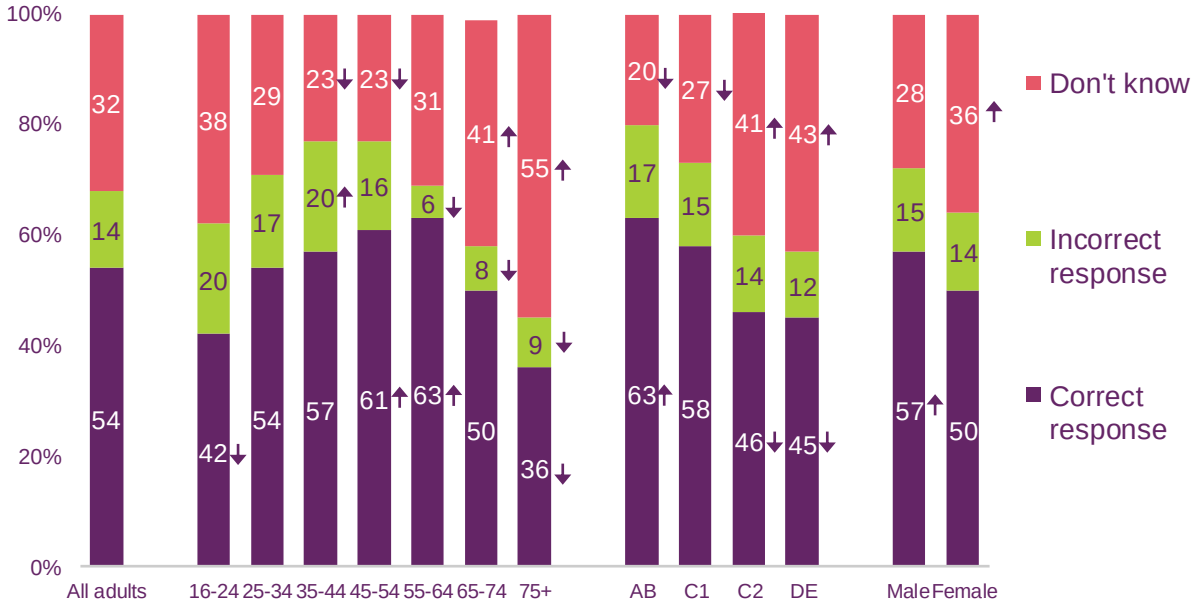
Adults are also asked about how the BBC's iPlayer service is mainly funded. More than half (54%) are aware that the licence fee is the main source of funding. Awareness is lower among 16-24s (42%) and over-75s (36%). Those aged 45-54 (61%) and 55-64 (63%) are more likely to give the correct response.

Adults in AB households are more likely than average to give the correct response (63%) while those in C2 (46%) and DE (45%) households are less likely. Men are more likely than women to give the correct response (57% vs. 50%).

One in three adults (32%) say they are unsure[38] of the main source of funding; this is more likely for older adults (41% for 65-74s and 55% for over-75s), C2s (41%) and DEs (43%). Women are also more likely than men to say they are unsure (36% vs. 28%).

[38] Either responding 'don't know' (31%) or stating they had never heard of the BBC iPlayer service (1%).

Figure 86: Awareness of how the BBC iPlayer service is mainly funded, by age, socio-economic group and gender



IN36. How do you think the BBC's iPlayer service is mainly funded (unprompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ (1846 in 2016, varies by demographic).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) by age/ socio-economic group compared to all adults, and males compared to females.

Funding of search engines

Awareness of how search engines are mainly funded has increased to 53%

More than half (53%) of adults are aware of how search engine websites are mainly funded, three in ten (31%) are unsure[39], and one in six (16%) give an incorrect response. Compared to 2015, awareness of how search engines are mainly funded has increased (from 46%).

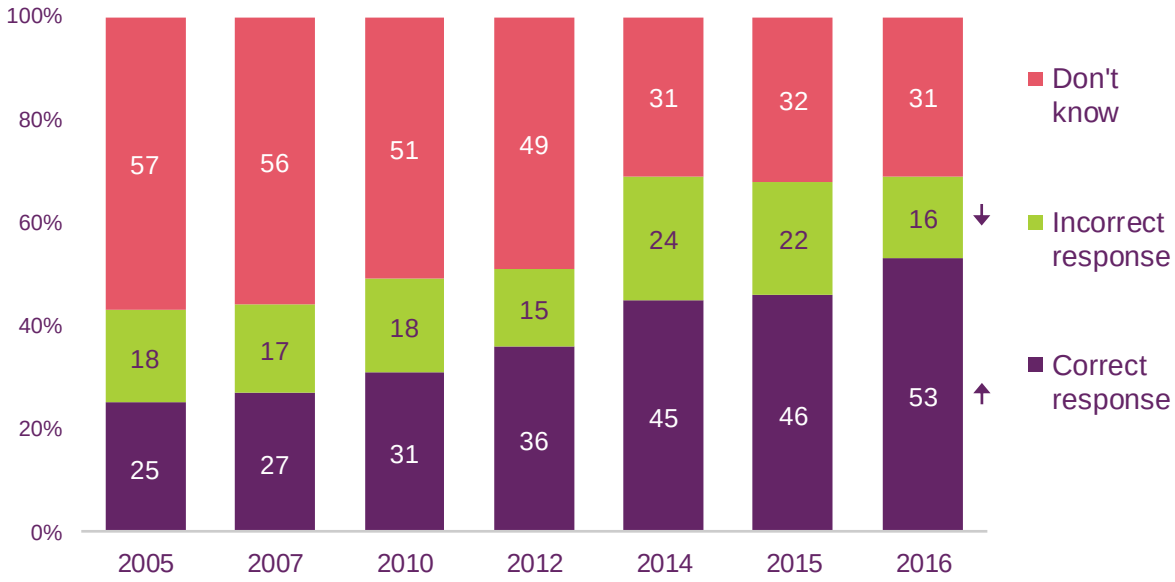
Compared to the average, those aged 35-44 (64%) and 45-54 (65%) are more likely to give the correct response[40], while 65-74s (35%) and over-75s (28%) are less likely.

Adults in AB households are more likely to be aware of how search engine websites are mainly funded (66%), while those in C2 (46%) and DE (41%) households are less likely. Men (61%) are more likely than women (46%) to give the correct response.

While certain groups may be less likely to give a correct response, this tends to be because they are unsure, rather than incorrect. Compared to the average (31%), adults aged 65-74 (47%), 75+ (62%), women (38%) and those in C2 (37%) or DE households (44%) are more likely to say they are unsure how search engine websites are mainly funded.

[39] Either responding 'don't know' (29%) or stating they had never heard of search engine websites (2%).
[40] Awareness is taken from two coded responses deemed as correct - 1) 'Advertising on the website' and 2) 'Advertisers pay when users click through from sponsored links to their website'.

Figure 87: Awareness of how search engines are mainly funded: 2005-2016



IN35. How do you think search engine websites such as Google or Bing are mainly funded? (unprompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ (1846 in 2016).
Arrows show significant changes (95% level) between 2015 and 2016.

Funding of YouTube

Less than half of adults are aware that the main source of funding for YouTube is advertising

In 2016, more than four in ten adults (44%) are aware that the main source of funding for YouTube is advertising, with this response more likely among those aged 35-44 (57%). Adults aged 65-74 (28%) or over-75 (18%) are less likely to give the correct response.

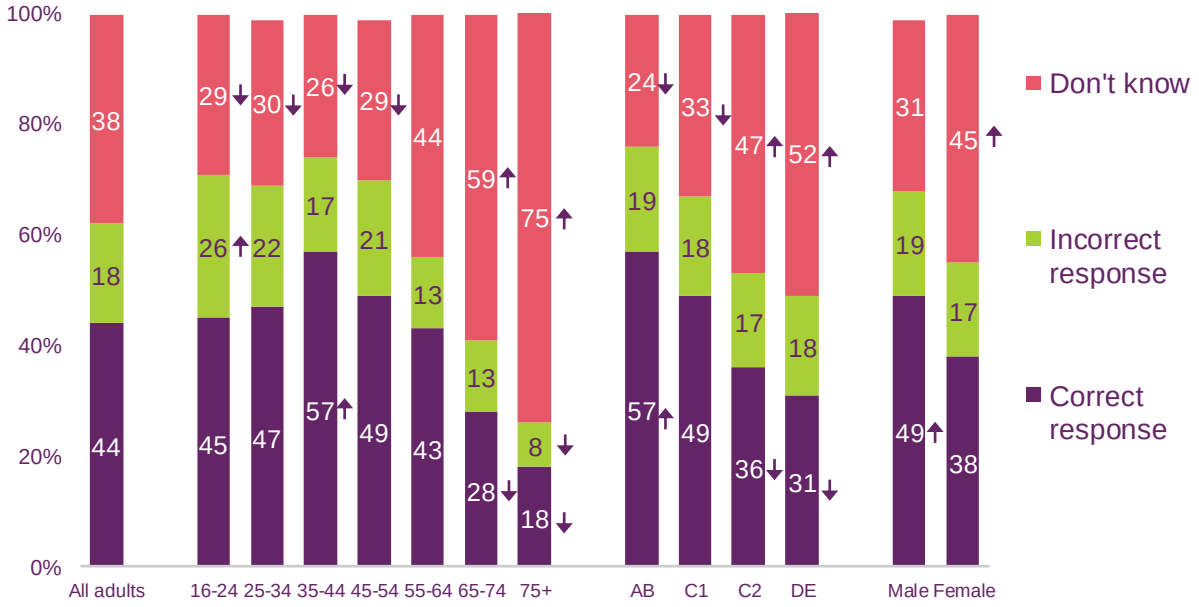
Compared to adults overall, those in AB households are more likely to give the correct response (57%), while C2s (36%) and DEs (31%) are less likely. Men are also more likely than women to be aware that advertising is the main source of YouTube funding (49% vs. 38%).

More than one in three adults (38%) are unsure[41] how YouTube is funded; this rises to a majority of those aged 65-74 (59%) or over 75 (75%).

Awareness of how YouTube is funded is close to half (49%) among internet users overall, with this increasing to more than half (55%) among users of video-sharing sites such as Vimeo and YouTube.

[41] Either responding 'don't know' (37%) or stating they had never heard of YouTube (2%).

Figure 88: Awareness of how YouTube is mainly funded, by age, socio-economic group and gender



IN37. How do you think YouTube is mainly funded? (unprompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ (1846 in 2016, varies by demographic).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) by age/ socio-economic group compared to all adults, and males compared to females.

Attitudes towards the funding of online content

At an overall level, adults are as likely to agree as to disagree that: "as long as the internet provides good websites it doesn't really matter who owns them or how they are funded"

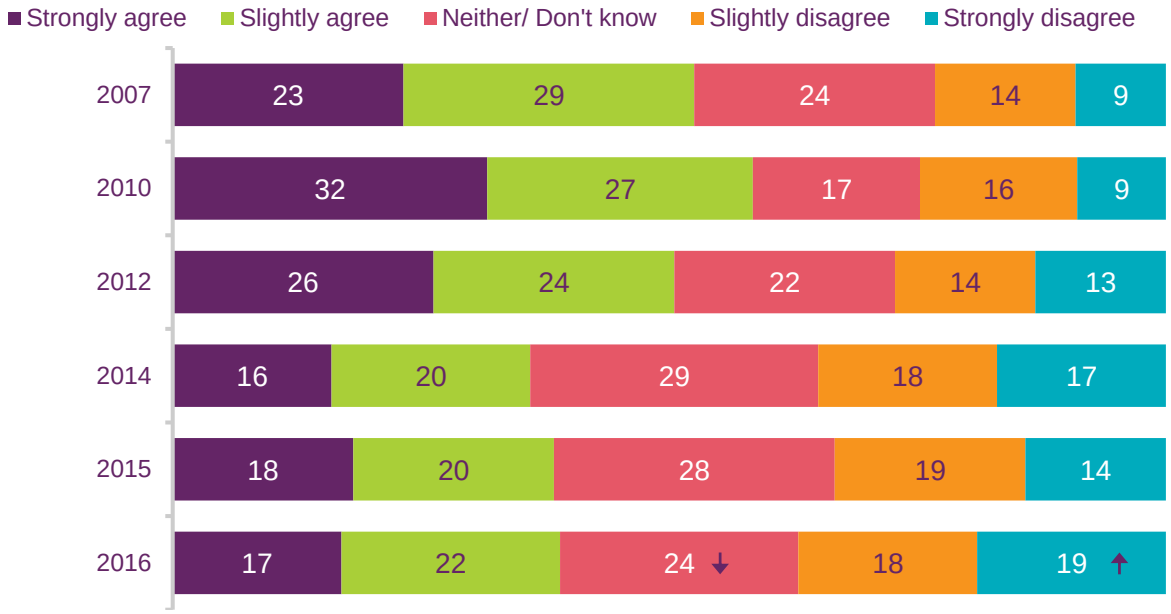
Adults who go online are asked the extent to which they agree with the statement: "As long as the internet provides good websites it doesn't really matter who owns the websites or how they're funded".

Figure 89 shows that, compared to 2015, internet users are more likely to strongly disagree (19% vs. 14% in 2015), bringing this measure back into line with the results seen in 2014.

As such, and similar to 2014, there is no clear consensus as to whether internet users agree overall (39%) or disagree overall (37%) with this statement.

In 2016, agreement does not vary by age or household socio-economic group compared to the average. As in 2015, men (44%) are more likely than women (35%) to agree with this statement.

Figure 89: Agreement with statement: "As long as the internet provides good websites it doesn't really matter who owns the websites or how they're funded": 2007-2016



IN38B. I'm going to read out some things that other people have said about being online. Please use this card to tell me the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement I read out – As long as the internet provides good websites it doesn't really matter who owns the websites or how they're funded (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: Adults aged 16+ who go online (1553 in 2016).
Arrows show significant changes (95% level) between 2015 and 2016.

8.5 Online privacy, managing personal data and online security

More than seven in ten internet users say they are confident managing access to their personal data online

In 2016, internet users were asked the extent to which they had confidence in knowing how to manage who had access to their personal data online[42].

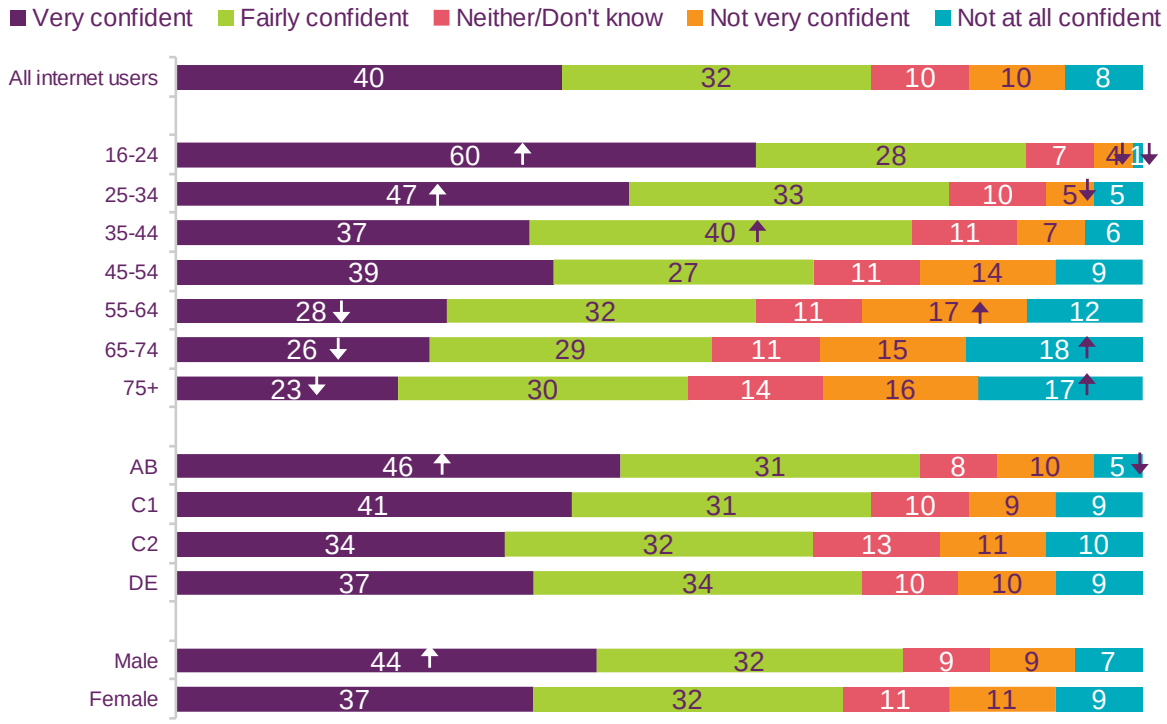
The results are shown in Figure 90. More than seven in ten internet users (72%) say they are confident in this aspect of their internet use, with four in ten saying they are very confident (40%). Among those who are not confident, around one in five (18%), there is an even split between those who say they are not *very* confident (10%) or not *at all* confident (8%).

Internet users aged 16-24 (60%) and 25-34 (47%) are more likely than average to say they are very confident while this is less likely among over-55s (28% for 55-64s, 26% for 65-74s and 23% for over-75s). Those aged 65-74 (18%) and over-75 (17%) are more than twice as likely as internet users overall to say they are not at all confident.

Adults in AB households (46%) are more likely than average to say they are very confident, as are men (44%) compared to women (37%).

[42] Users are also prompted with the following explanation: 'By this I mean knowing how to stop companies from getting access to information like your personal details (like your address, phone number, date of birth etc.) or information on things like where you shop or your interests.

Figure 90: Confidence in knowing how to manage access to their personal data online, by age, socio-economic group and gender



IN11C. How confident are you in knowing how to manage who has access to your personal data online? By this I mean knowing how to stop some companies from getting access to information like your personal details (like your address, phone number, date of birth etc.) or information on things like where you shop or your interests.
Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online (varies by demographic).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) by age/ socio-economic group compared to all internet users, and males compared to females.

Consideration of data security implications when posting content on social media

When posting content on social media at least two in three users say they always or sometimes consider the privacy or data security implications

Adults with a social media profile/ account are asked the extent to which they consider any privacy or data security implications when using social media for four specific activities: posting their own photos, tagging other people in photos they post, posting comments and 'checking-in' at locations visited.

For each of these four activities, users are allowed to say they don't undertake that particular activity, and in these instances they are excluded from the analysis shown in Figure 91 to Figure 94.

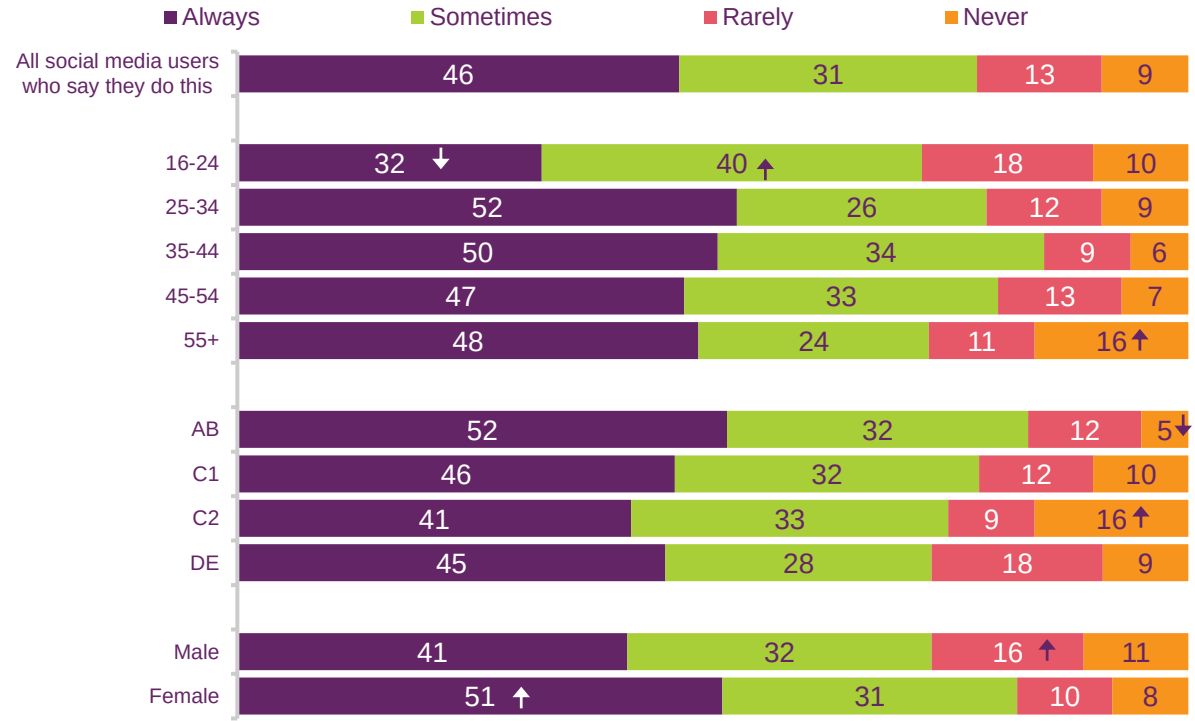
As shown in Figure 91, close to half of social media users who post photos (89% of social media users) say they always consider any privacy or data security implications when doing this (46%). Three in ten (31%) say they sometimes consider this, while 13% say they rarely do and one in ten (9%) say they never consider the security implications.

Social media users aged 16-24 (32%) are less likely than average to say they always consider the security implications when posting photos, but are more likely to say they sometimes do this (40%). Users aged 55 and over are more likely to say they never consider the security implications (16% vs. 9% overall).

Social media users in C2 households who post photos are more likely than average to say they never consider the security implications when posting photos (16% vs. 9%), while users in AB households are more likely to say they ever do this (95% vs. 90%).

Women are also more likely than men to say they always do this (51% vs. 41%).

Figure 91: Consideration of privacy/ data security implications when posting photos on social media, by age, socio-economic group and gender

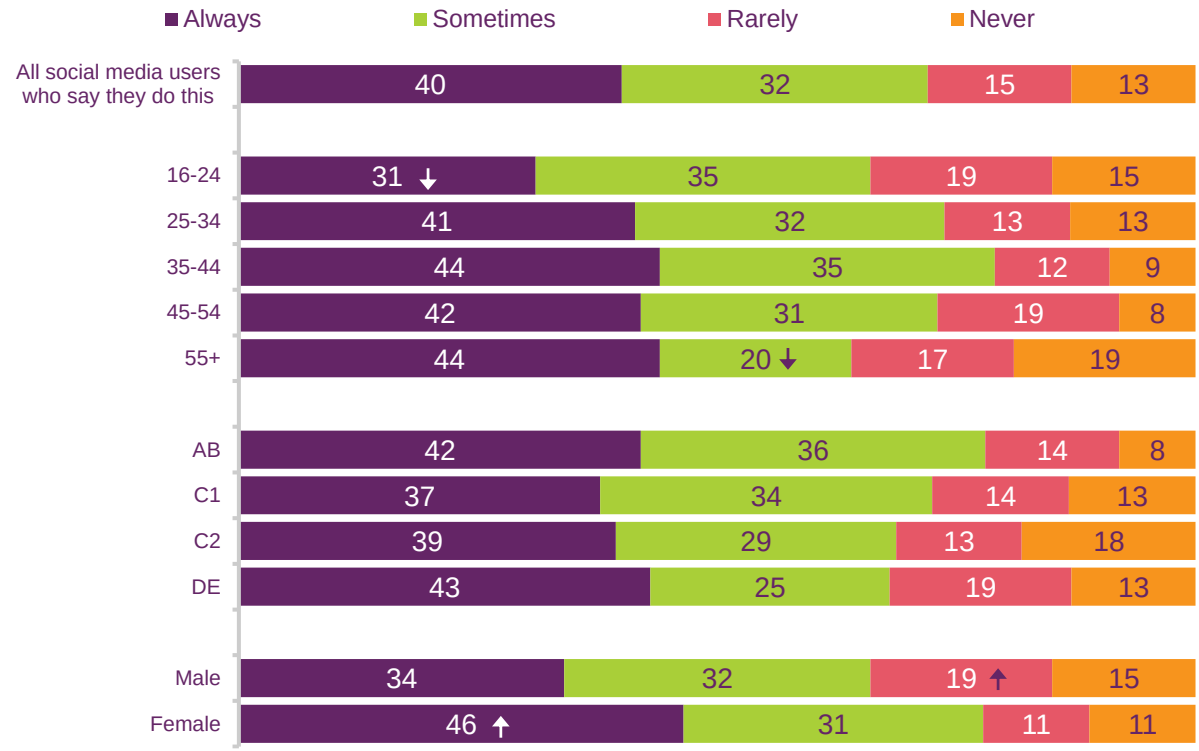


IN32A. How often do you consider any privacy or data security implications when you post photos you have taken? (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: All with a social media profile/ account who say they do this (1001 aged 16+, varies by demographic).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) by age/ socio-economic group compared to all, and males compared to females.

Four in ten social media users who tag other people in photos (85% of social media users) say they always consider the privacy or data security implications before doing this (40%), with one in three (32%) sometimes doing this. Users are as likely to say they rarely do this (15%) as they are to say they never do this (13%).

Social media users aged 16-24 are less likely than average to say they always consider the privacy/ data security implications of tagging other people in photos (31%). Women are more likely than men to say they always do this (46% vs. 34%).

Figure 92: Consideration of privacy/ data security implications when tagging people in photos on social media, by age, socio-economic group and gender



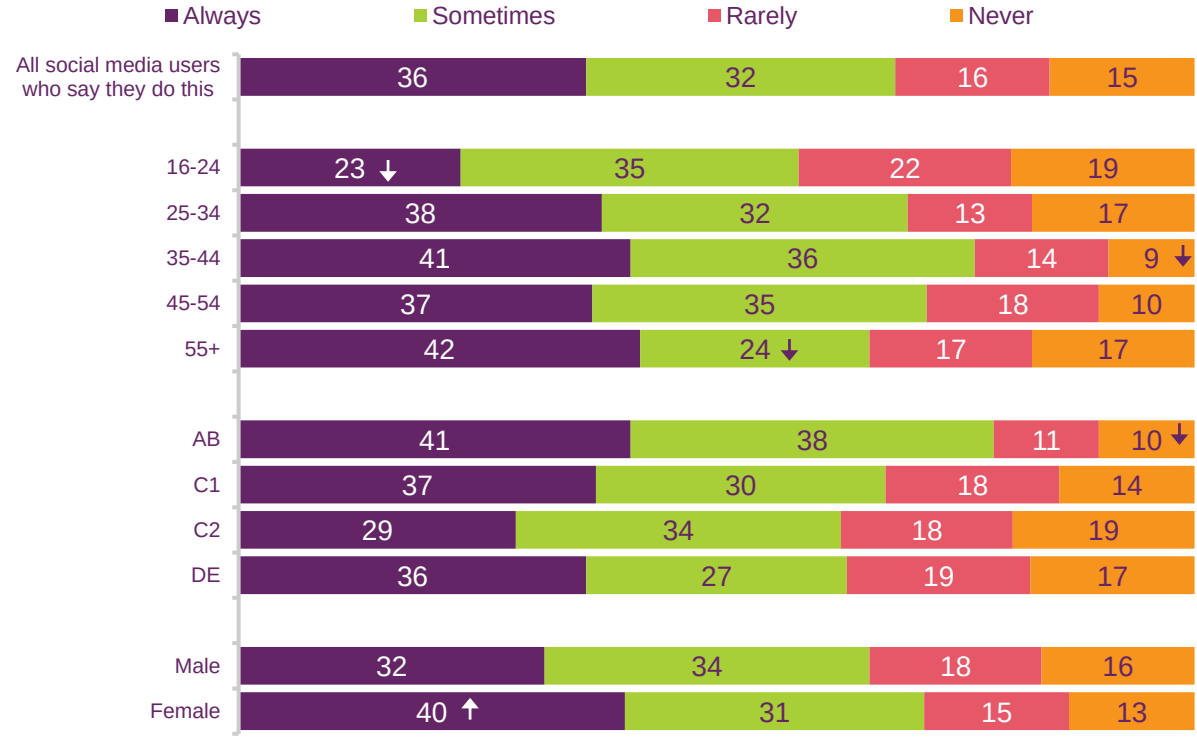
IN32B. How often do you consider any privacy or data security implications when you tag other people in photos you post? (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: All with a social media profile/ account who say they do this (945 aged 16+, varies by demographic).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) by age/ socio-economic group compared to all, and males compared to females.

More than one in three social media users who post comments (92% of social media users) say they always consider the privacy or data security implications before doing this (36%), with slightly fewer saying they sometimes do this (32%). A similar proportion say they rarely (16%) do this as say they never do this (15%).

Social media users aged 16-24 are also less likely than average to say they always consider the privacy or data security implications when posting comments (23%). Users aged 35-44 are more likely to say they ever do this (91% vs. 85%).

Compared to the average, adults in AB households who post comments on social media are more likely to say they ever consider the privacy or data security implications of doing this (90% vs. 85%). Women are more likely than men to say they always do this (40% vs. 32%).

Figure 93: Consideration of privacy/ data security implications when posting comments on social media, by age, socio-economic group and gender

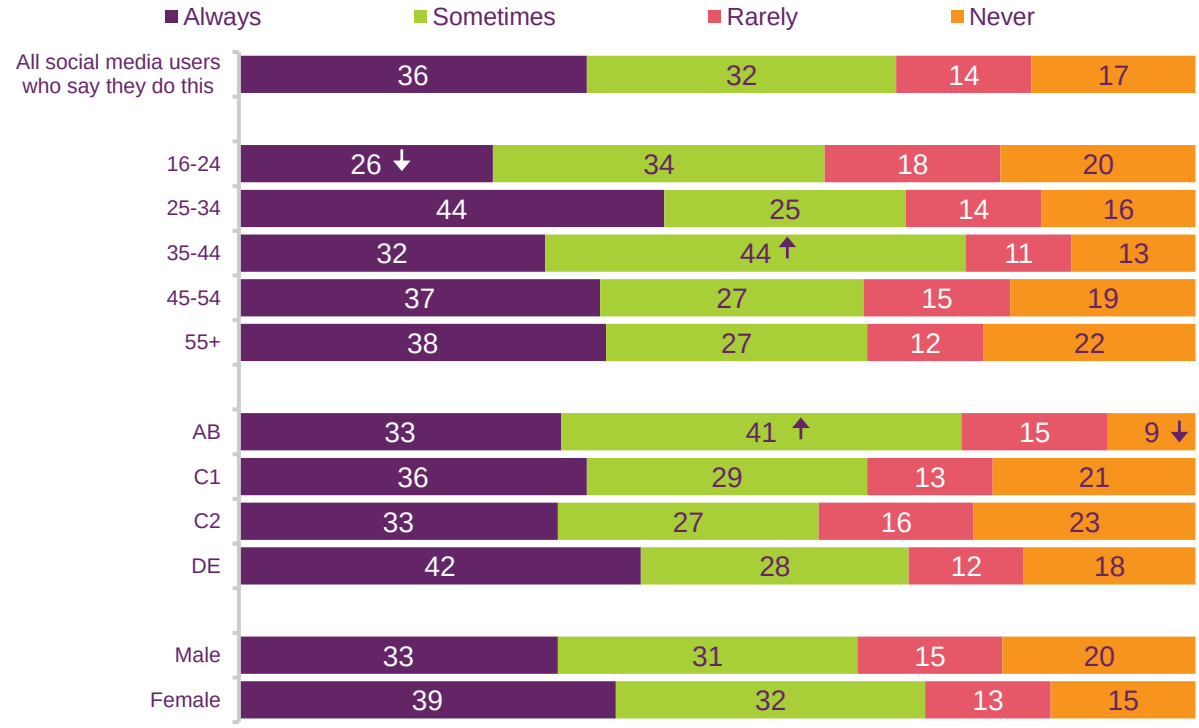


IN32C. How often do you consider any privacy or data security implications when you post comments? (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: All with a social media profile/ account who say they do this (1040 aged 16+, varies by demographic).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) by age/ socio-economic group compared to all, and males compared to females.

Slightly more than one in three social media users who 'check-in' at locations they visit (74% of social media users) say they always consider the privacy or data security implications before doing this (36%) with a third sometimes doing this (32%). One in seven (14%) rarely consider the security implications and slightly more (17%) say they never consider the security implications.

As with each of the other activities asked about, users aged 16-24 are less likely than average to say they always consider the security implications (26%). Users in AB households are more likely to say they ever consider the security implications when checking in (89% vs. 82%). Unlike each of the other social media activities we asked about, there are no differences by gender for this activity.

Figure 94: Consideration of privacy/ data security implications when 'checking-in' on social media, by age, socio-economic group and gender



IN32D. How often do you consider any privacy or data security implications when you 'check-in' at locations you visit? (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: All with a social media profile/ account who say they do this (830 aged 16+, varies by demographic).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) by age/ socio-economic group compared to all, and males compared to females.

Checks made before entering personal information online

Three in ten internet users don't make appropriate/ any checks before entering their personal information online

Internet users who go online are prompted with a list of potential checks they could make before submitting their personal details online, and are asked which, if any, they carry out. They are also permitted to say they register their details online whenever they are asked to do so.[43]

Five of these reasons (shown in purple below) could be seen as 'appropriate' checks, while those in green are considered less reliable (or media literate) responses, of the possible options respondents could choose from.

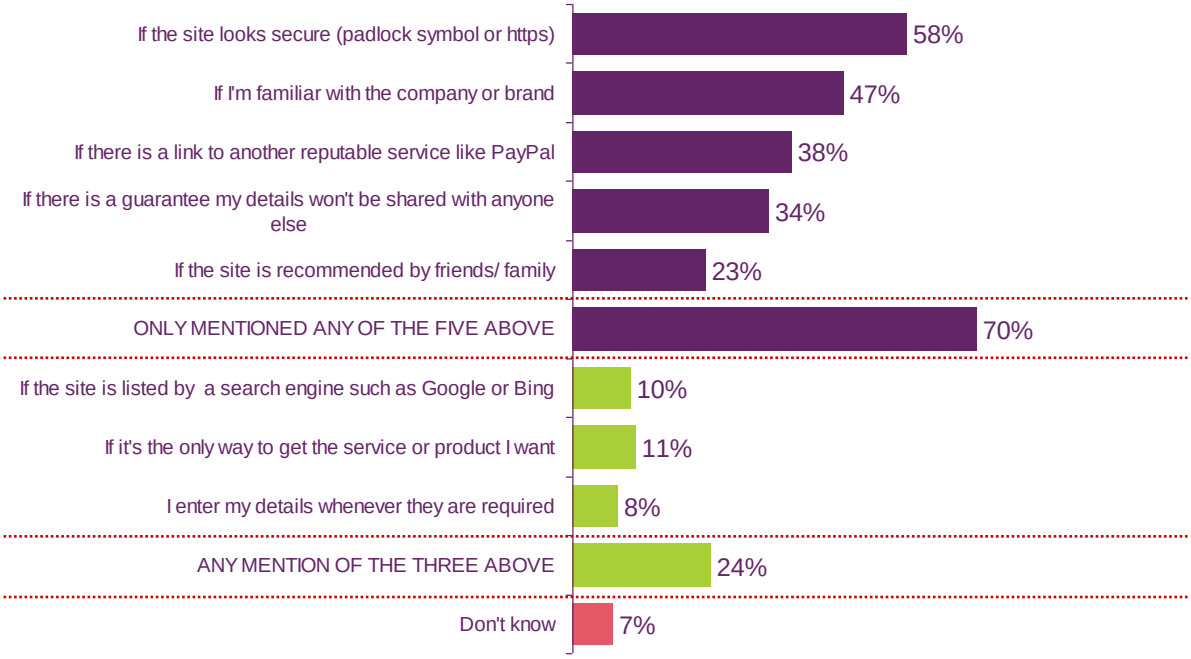
Looking first at these 'appropriate' checks, more than half (58%) say they check to see whether the site looks secure before registering their details online, while close to half (47%) say they check whether they are familiar with the company or brand. At least one in three say they look to see if there is a link on the website to another reputable service (like PayPal) (38%) or see if there is a guarantee that their details won't be shared with anyone else (34%). One in four (23%) rely on peer-review by seeing if the site is recommended by friends or family.

[43] Two per cent of internet users spontaneously mentioned that they never registered with websites/ entered their personal details online, and have been excluded from the results shown.

Overall, seven in ten internet users make at least one of these five checks, and this incidence does not vary by age or socio-economic group compared to the average. There are no differences between men and women.

One in ten rely on checking whether the site is listed by a search engine (10%), and a similar proportion would register if it was the only way to get the product or service they wanted (11%). Less than one in ten say they tend to enter their personal details whenever they are required (8%). As such, one in four internet users (24%) give at least one of these responses. This incidence does not vary by age or socio-economic group compared to the average, and there are no differences between men and women.

Figure 95: Checks made before registering with websites



IN41. Lots of websites now ask you to register your personal details with them, which if any of these things do you do before registering personal details online? I look to see... (prompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: Adults aged 16+ who go online who say they register personal details online (1516).

Checks made before entering financial information

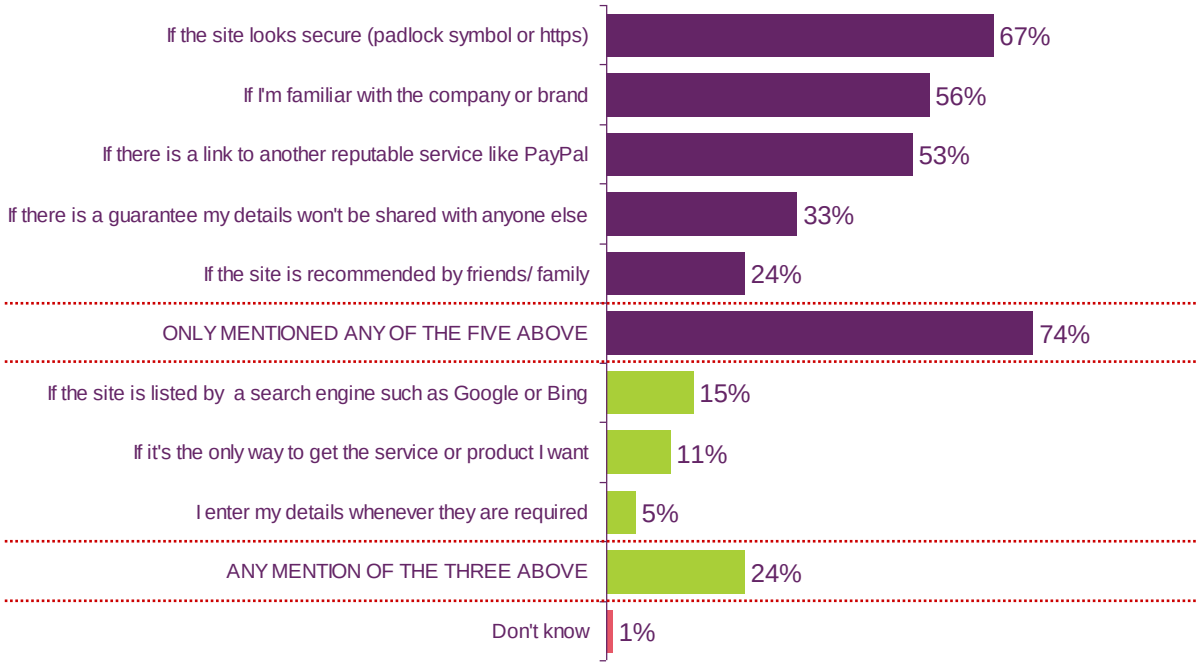
One-third of internet users who have bought things online don't check to see if the site has the padlock symbol or 'https'

Internet users are also asked about the types of checks they make when buying online, before entering their debit or credit card details. They are also allowed to say they do not purchase online, and the 15% of internet users who gave this response have been excluded from the analysis shown in Figure 96.

Two in three internet users who say they buy things online (67%) say they check to see if the site looks secure, while more than half check whether they are familiar with the company or brand (56%) or check whether there is a link to another reputable service (53%). One in three check to see if there is a guarantee that their details will not be shared with anyone (33%) and one in four rely on recommendations from their friends or family (24%). Three in four internet users make any of these checks (74%); this is more likely among those aged 35-44 (84%) and less likely for 25-34s (64%).

Fifteen per cent of those who purchase online say they look to see if the site they are purchasing from is listed on a search engine, and one in ten (11%) say they go ahead with the purchase anyway if it is the only way to get what they want. Five per cent say they enter their credit or debit card details online whenever they are asked for; this is more likely for 25-34s (8% vs. 5%). One in four (24%) internet users who purchase online say they do at least one of these three things; this is more likely for 25-34s (34%) and less likely for 35-44s (15%). There are no differences in this incidence by socio-economic group compared to the average and there are also no differences between men and women.

Figure 96: Checks made when purchasing online before entering debit or credit card details



IN40. When you buy things online, which if any of these things do you do before entering your credit or debit card details? I look to see... (prompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: Adults aged 16+ who say they buy things online (1309 in 2016).

Security measures in place

One third of internet users say they do not use anti-virus or anti-spyware software

As shown in Figure 97, internet users are prompted with nine possible security measures and are asked to say which if any of these they, or someone else in the household, do at home.

There are two security measures, each of which are used at home by a majority of internet users. Two in three internet users (65%) say they use security software such as anti-virus or anti-spyware packages, while 54% say they use strong passwords on devices used to go online.

At least four in ten use strong passwords for online services like email, social media, PayPal etc. (46%), use a firewall (43%) or download the latest software updates onto their devices when prompted (39%). Around a third say they routinely back-up information on their devices (34%), delete cookies from their web browsers (33%) and use email filters or software that can block spam (32%). Three in ten (29%) say they use ad-blocking filters or software.

There are differences in use by demographic group compared to the average, summarised below:

- Compared to the average (65%), internet users aged 25-34 are less likely to use security software such as anti-virus or anti-spyware packages (57%); these are more likely to be used by those aged 55-64 (74%).

- Adults aged 65-74 are less likely to say they use strong passwords for online services (29% vs. 46%), or routinely back up information on their devices (25% vs. 34%) or use ad-blocking filters or software (18% vs. 29%).

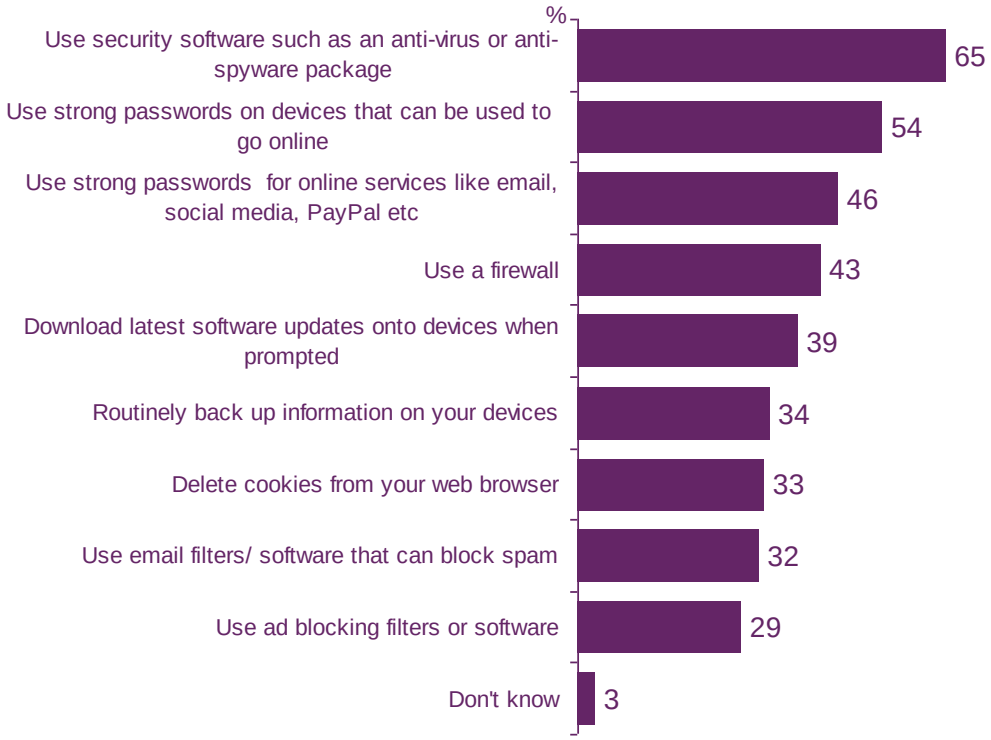
- With the exception of using anti-virus anti-spyware packages and using strong passwords on devices that can be used to go online, internet users aged 75+ are less likely to use each of the other seven security features.

- Adults in AB households are more likely to say they use all nine security features, while internet users in C2 or DE households are less likely to download the latest software updates when prompted (32% for both C2s and DEs vs. 39% overall), to routinely back up information on their devices (25% for C2s and 21% for DEs vs. 34%) and to use email filters or software (23% for C2s and 22% for DEs vs. 32% overall).

- In addition, compared to the average, users in C2 households are also less likely to say they use strong passwords both on devices used to go online (45% vs. 54%) and for online services like email or social media (37% vs. 46%), or to say they use ad-blocking filters or software (19% vs. 29%). Users in DE households are less likely to say they use security software such as an anti-virus or anti-spyware package (52% vs. 65%) and to use a firewall (32% vs. 43%).

- Men are more likely than women to say they use the following features: a firewall (48% vs. 38%), downloading the latest software updates onto devices when prompted (44% vs. 35%) and using ad-blocking filters or software (33% vs. 25%).

Figure 97: Security measures in place among internet users



IN6. Which, if any of these things do you or someone in your household do at home? (prompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: Adults aged 16+ who go online (1553 in 2016).

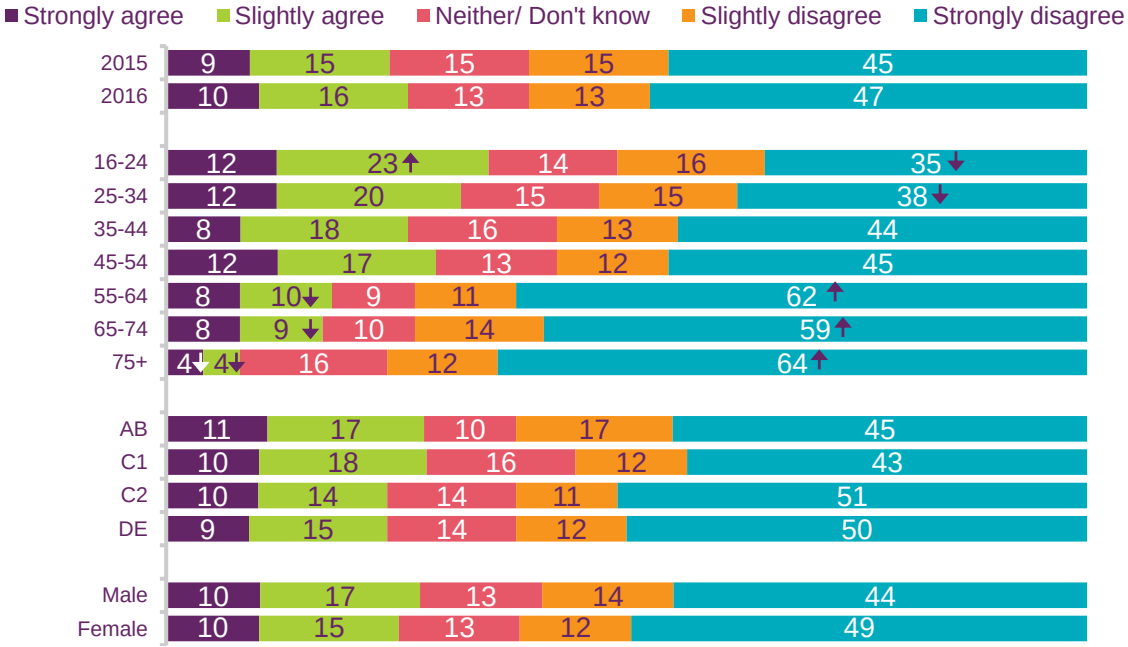
Attitudes towards protecting personal information online

More than one in four internet users say they give out inaccurate or false details online to protect their personal identity

More than one in four (27%) internet users agree overall (either strongly or slightly) that they give out inaccurate or false details on some websites to protect their personal identity online, as shown in Figure 98. This is more likely among 16-24s (35%) and less likely among internet users aged 55-64 (18%), 65-74s (17%) and over-75s (8%).

Six in ten (60%) internet users disagree overall, with close to half (47%) disagreeing strongly.

Figure 98: Agreement with statement: "I give out inaccurate or false details on some websites to protect my personal identity online", by age, socio-economic group and gender



IN42A. Please take a look at the six statements shown on this card and tell me which number on this scale from 1 to 5 best describes the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement - I give out inaccurate or false details on some websites to protect my personal identity online. (prompted responses, single coded)
Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online (1553 aged 16+, varies by demographic).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) between 2015 and 2016 at the overall level and by age/ socio-economic group compared to all internet users, and males compared to females.

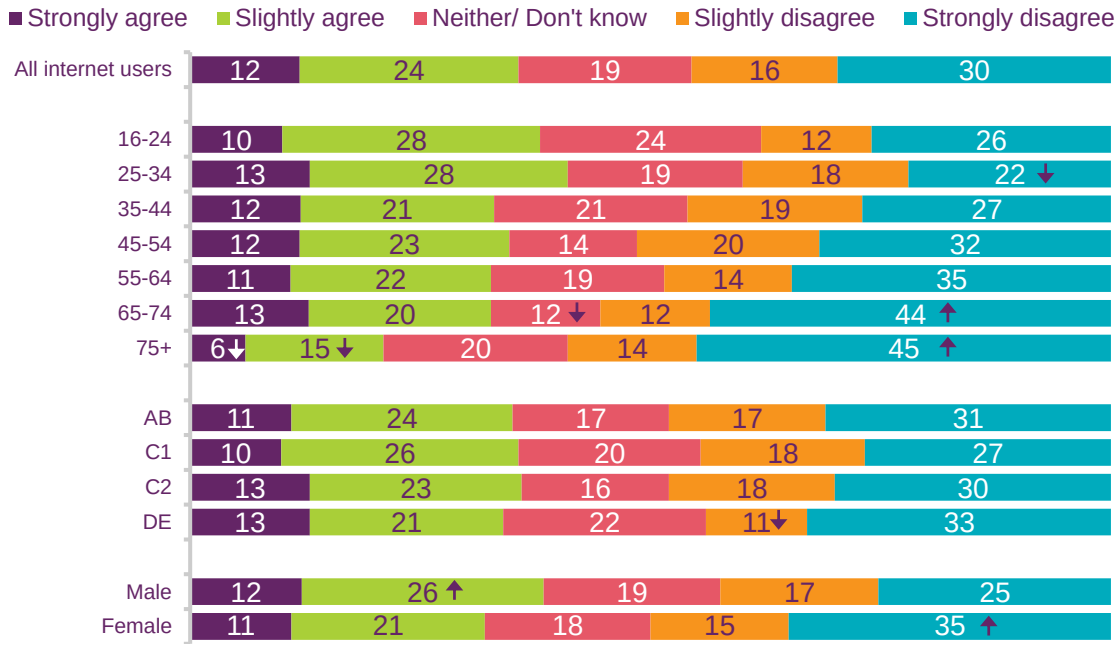
One in three internet users say they are happy to provide their personal information online to get something they want

Thirty-five per cent of internet users agree (strongly or slightly) that they are happy to provide personal information online as long as they get what they want, while a higher proportion (46%) disagree overall.

Compared to the average (46%), those aged 65-74 (56%) and 75+ (59%) are more likely to disagree.

Compared to men, women are more likely to disagree strongly (35% vs. 25%).

Figure 99: Agreement with statement: "I am happy to provide personal information online as long as I get what I want", by age, socio-economic group and gender



IN42B. Please take a look at the six statements shown on this card and tell me which number on this scale from 1 to 5 best describes the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement - I am happy to provide personal information online as long as I get what I want. (prompted responses, single coded)
Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online (1553 aged 16+, varies by demographic).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) by age/ socio-economic group compared to all internet users, and males compared to females.

Experience of negative online events.

Around one in four internet users have experienced at least one 'negative' online event in the past 12 months

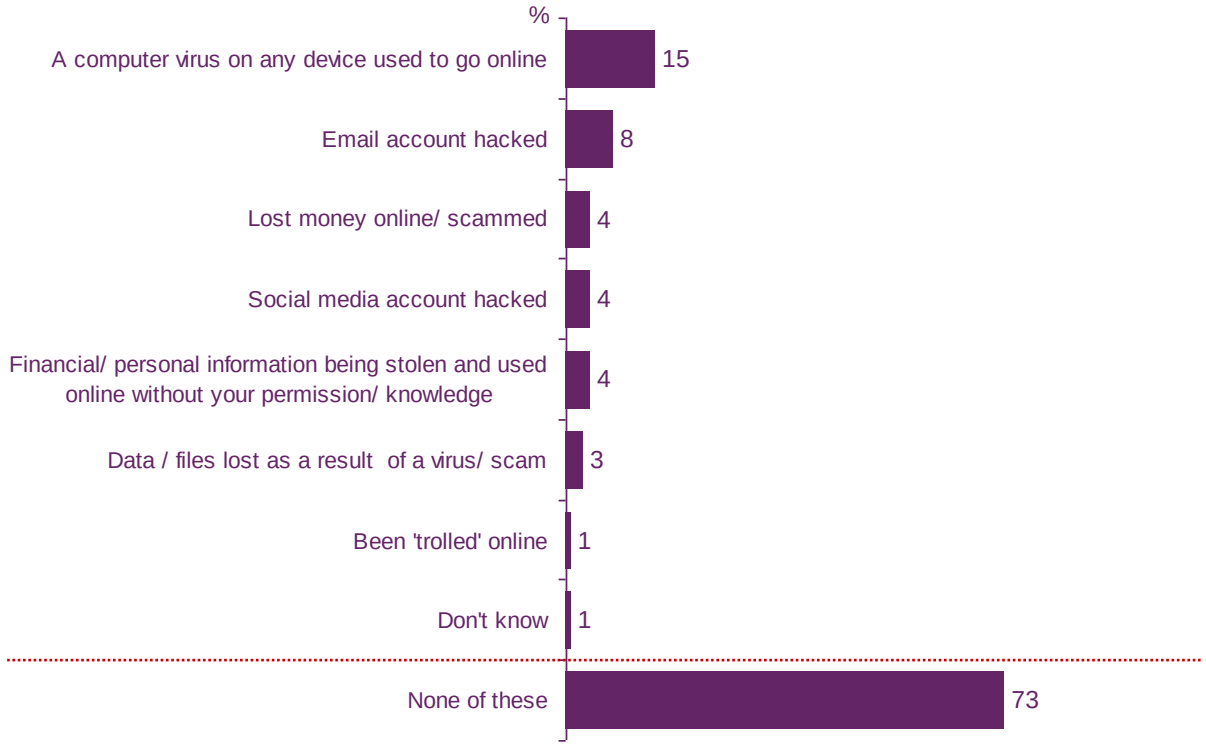
Internet users are prompted with seven types of event and were asked to say which, if any, they have experienced in the past 12 months, as shown in Figure 100.

Around one in four (27%) say they have experienced any of these seven events, with 15% saying they have experienced a computer virus on any device used to go online. Less than one in ten internet users say they have experienced each of the other six events.

Internet users aged 16-24 are more likely to say their social media account has been hacked (7% vs. 4%) or that they have been trolled online (5% vs. 1%), while those aged 35-44 are more likely to say they have had their financial or other personal information stolen and used without their permission (8% vs. 4%). Internet users aged 65-74 are less likely to say their social media account had been hacked (0% vs. 4%), while over-75s are less likely to say they have lost money online (1% vs. 4%) or had their financial or other personal information stolen and used without their permission (1% vs. 4%).

There are no differences by household socio-economic group compared to the average. Men are more likely than women to say that in the past 12 months they have had a virus on a device they use to go online (19% vs. 12%) and that they have lost data or files from their device as a result of a virus or a scam (4% vs. 2%). Women are more likely than men to say they have experienced their email account being hacked (10% vs. 5%).

Figure 100: Experience of 'negative' online events in the past 12 months



IN7. Have you personally experienced any of the following issues in the last 12 months? (prompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: Adults aged 16+ who go online (1553 in 2016).

8.6 Online advertising

Confidence in recognising advertising when seeing or reading things online

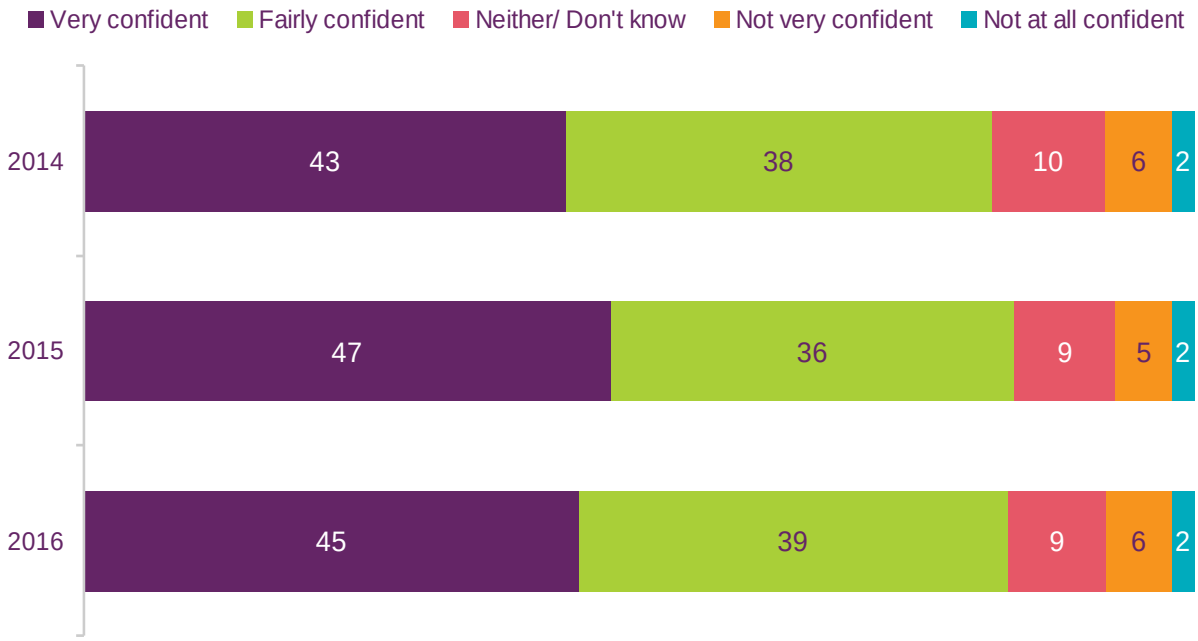
Four in five internet users continue to be confident they can identify online advertising

A majority (84%) of internet users are either very or fairly confident that they know what is and is not advertising online. However, less than half (45%) are 'very confident'. Less than one in ten (7%) say they are not confident (either not very, or not at all). Each of these measures is unchanged since 2015.

Compared to the average (45%), those aged 16-24 (57%) and 25-34 (54%) and those in AB households (52%) are more likely to be 'very confident' in knowing what is online advertising.

Internet users aged 55-64 (12%), 65-74 (15%) or 75+ (18%) are more likely to say they are 'not confident'. Men are more likely than women to say they are 'very confident' (51% vs. 40%).

Figure 101: Confidence in recognising online advertising: 2014-2016



IN11D. I'm going to read out some questions about confidence using the internet, for each one please say which of the options on the card applies to you. – When you see or read things online, how confident are you in recognising what is advertising and what is not? (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: Adults aged 16+ who go online (1553 in 2016).

Personalised advertising

More than half of internet users are aware of personalised advertising

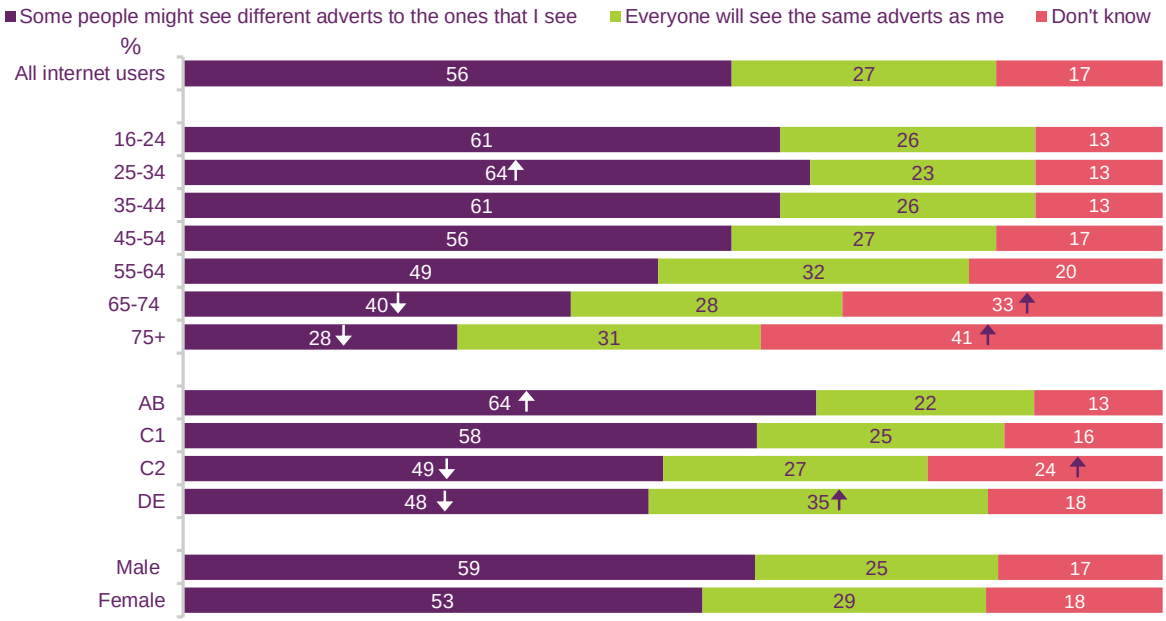
Internet users are prompted with two options and are asked which one applies to any advertising they might see on a website or app that they visit[44].

Figure 102 shows that more than half of internet users (56%) are aware of personalised advertising, in that they are aware that some people might see different adverts to those that they see. More than one in four internet users (27%) state that everyone would see the same adverts, with 17% unsure.

Compared to the average, awareness of personalised advertising is higher among 25-34s (64%) and those in AB households (64%). Lower awareness is found in internet users aged 65-74 (40%) and 75+ (28%), as well as among those in C2 (49%) or DE (48%) households.

[44] The specific question stated: *If someone in the same country as you visits the same website or app at the same time as you, which one of these things applies to any advertising shown?* The purpose of this question is to gauge the extent to which internet users are aware of personalised advertising.

Figure 102: Awareness of personalised online advertising, by age, socio-economic group and gender



IN52. If someone in the same country as you visits the same website or app at the same time as you, which one of these things applies to any advertising shown? (prompted response, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online (1553 aged 16+, varies by demographic).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) by age/ socio-economic group compared to all internet users, and males compared to females.

Seven in ten adults who use video sharing sites are aware of the potential for product endorsement by vloggers

Adults who go online who ever use video-sharing sites (like YouTube or Vimeo) are asked about vloggers endorsing or promoting brands on sites like YouTube. They are offered three choices of response and asked which of these might explain why vloggers might say favourable things about a particular product or brand[45].

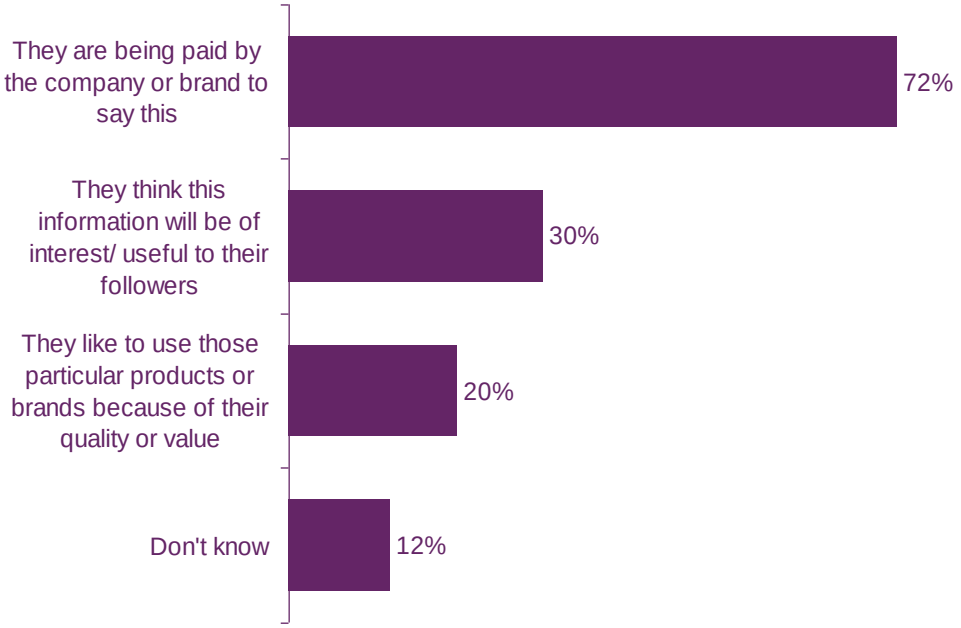
Close to three in four users of video-sharing sites (72%) are aware that the vloggers might be being paid by the company to say favourable things. This incidence does not vary by age, or socio-economic group, compared to the average. There are also no differences between men and women.

More than one in ten users are unsure (12%); this response is more likely among users in DE households (18%) and less likely among 16-24s (5%).

As such 28% (of whom 12% are unsure) do not say there is potential for vloggers to be endorsing a company or brand.

[45] The specific question stated: 'On sites like YouTube some vloggers with lots of followers like Zoella, Thatcher Joe or PewDiePie might say good things about a particular company or product or brand, such as Nike clothing, a new game or clothes from TopShop. Which, if any, of these are reasons why they might say good things about these products or brands?'

Figure 103: Understanding of potential product endorsement by vloggers among users of video-sharing services



IN55. On sites like YouTube some vloggers with lots of followers like Zoella, Thatcher Joe or PewDiePie might say good things about a particular company or product or brand, such as Nike clothing, a new game or clothes from TopShop. Which if any of these are reasons why they might say good things about these products or brands? (prompted response, multi-coded).
Base: Adults who ever watch videos on sites like YouTube or Vimeo (1114 in 2016).

Attitudes towards online advertising

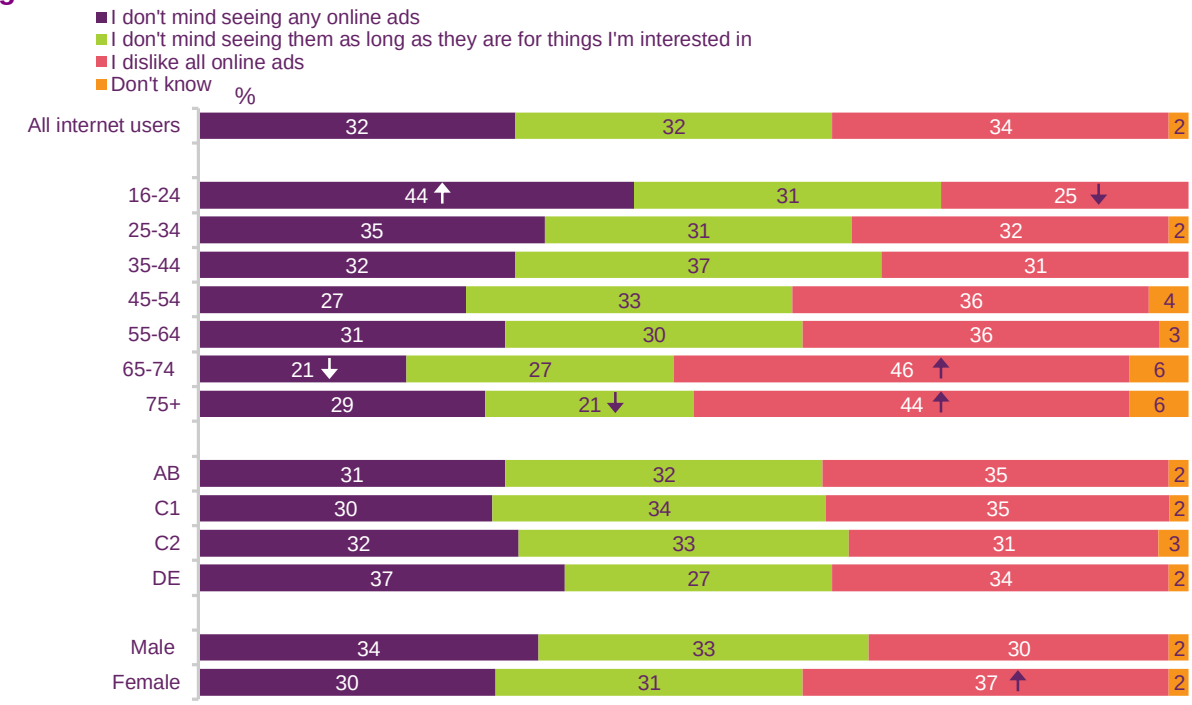
One-third of internet users say they dislike all online advertising

Internet users are prompted with three statements about online advertisements and are asked to say which one best applies. The results are shown in Figure 104.

Across internet users, responses are evenly split across all three statements. One third of internet users (32%) say they don't mind seeing any online ads, one third don't mind seeing them as long as they are relevant to them (32%) and one third say they dislike all online adverts (34%).

Users aged 16-24 are more likely to say they don't mind seeing online adverts (44%), while those aged 65 and over are more likely to say they dislike all online ads (46% for 65-74s and 44% for 75+). Women are more likely than men to say they dislike all online ads (37% vs. 30%).

Figure 104: Attitudes towards online advertising, by age, socio-economic group and gender



IN53. Which, if any, of the following statements best describe your feelings about online advertisements (prompted response, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online (1553 aged 16+, varies by demographic).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) by age/ socio-economic group compared to all internet users, and males compared to females.

Action undertaken to avoid online advertising

Close to half of internet users say they have taken some form of action to avoid seeing any online ads

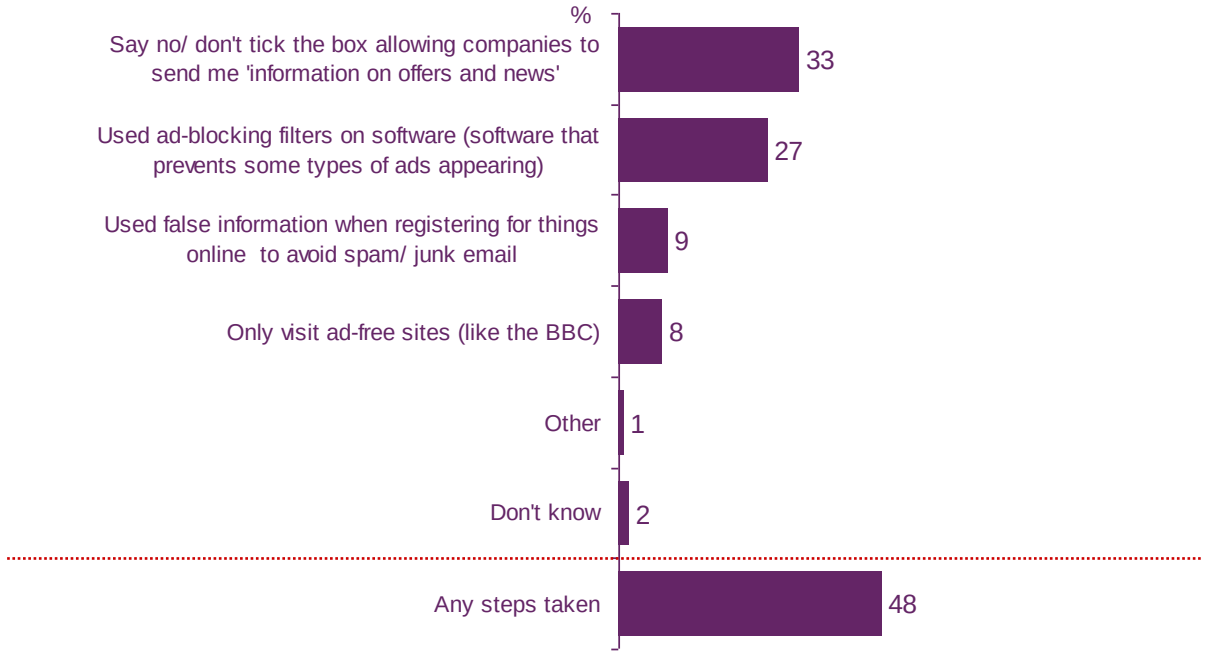
Internet users are also asked whether they have taken any action to avoid seeing online adverts. They are prompted with four options and asked to say which they have ever done, as well as being given the option to say they haven't taken any actions to avoid seeing online adverts.

As shown in Figure 105, one third (33%) say they opt out of marketing communications, while more than a quarter (27%) say they use ad-blocking filters or software. One in ten (9%) say they deliberately provide false information when required to avoid spam, and only visit ad-free sites (8%).

Close to half (48%) say they have taken any of these actions to avoid seeing any online ads; this incidence is lower among internet users aged 75 and over (28%) and those in DE households (40%). Internet users in AB households are more likely than average to say they have done any of these things (57%).

While not shown in Figure 105, the overall incidence of taking any steps to avoid online adverts increases to 59% for those who say they dislike seeing any online ads. This is because they are more likely to opt out from marketing communications (40% vs. 33% overall) and to use ad-blocking filters (35% vs. 27%).

Figure 105: Steps taken by internet users to avoid online adverts



IN54. Which if any of the following steps have you taken to avoid seeing online ads? (prompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: Adults aged 16+ who go online (1553 in 2016).

Recognising sponsored content in search engine results

Close to three in five search engine users can identify sponsored links in search engine results

Adults who use search engine websites are shown a picture of the results returned by Google for an online search for 'walking boots'. Their attention is drawn to the first four results at the top of the list, which are distinguished by a green box with the word 'Ad' written in it. They are then prompted with three options and asked whether any of these apply to these first four results. These options are[46]:

- These are adverts/ sponsored links/ paid to appear here
- These are the best results/ the most relevant results
- These are the most popular results used by other people

The results are shown in Figure 106. Close to three in five adults who use search engines (57%) state that the first four results are sponsored links/ advertising/ paid to appear there. One in five say they are the most popular results used by other people (23%), and that the results are the best or most relevant (21%). Around one in eight (12%) say they are unsure.

Compared to the average, those aged 75+ are more likely to say they are unsure (27%) and are less likely to say that the first four results are adverts (46%).

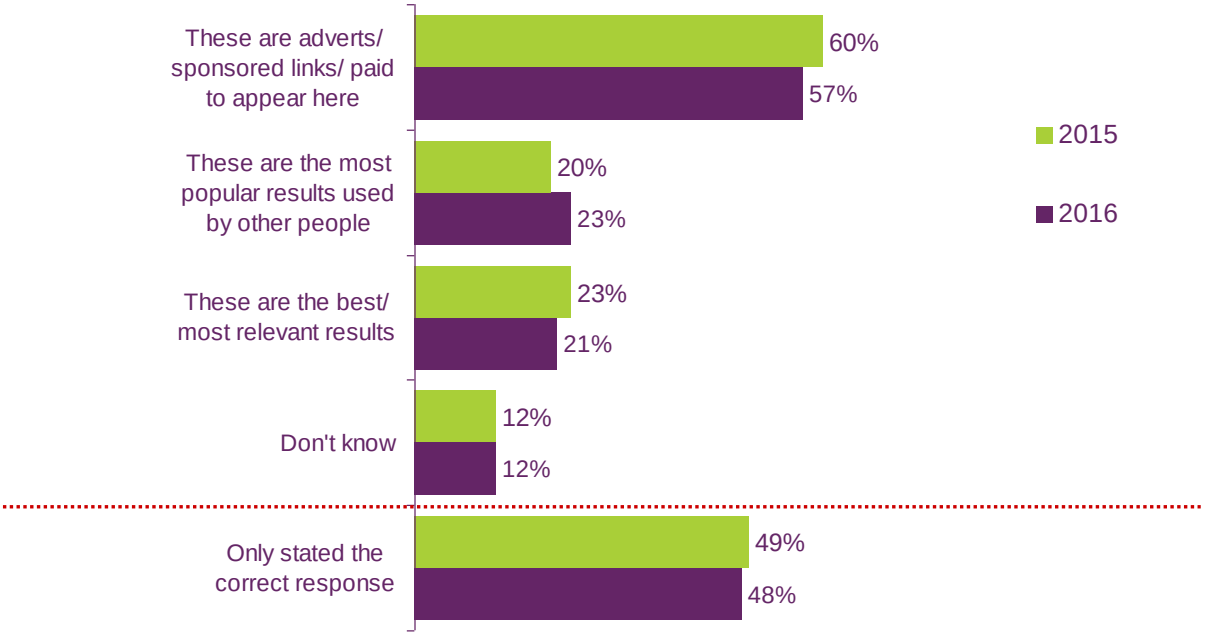
Adults in AB households (66%) are more likely than adults overall to recognise the results as advertising, while those in C2 or DE households are less likely (both 49%).

[46] They are also allowed to nominate some other reason, or say that they are unsure.

Search engine users are allowed to select more than one response to this question, so it is also worthwhile looking at those who give only the correct response and do not select either of the other options. Around half (48%) only give the correct response; that is, they state that the results flagged are adverts. There are no differences by age, compared to the average.

Search engine users in AB households (56%) are more likely than average to say this, and those in C2 households are less likely (41%). Men are more likely than women to *only* say that the results are adverts (51% vs. 45%).

Figure 106: Understanding of paid-for results returned by Google searches, among adults who use search engine websites or apps: 2015-2016



IN51. Here's an image (SHOWCARD OF IMAGE) from a Google search for 'walking boots''. Do any of these apply to the first four results that are listed? (prompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: Adults aged 16+ who go online and use search engine websites or apps (1516).

8.7 Evaluating content

Understanding how search engines work

Six in ten users understand how search engines operate

Users of search engines (98% of internet users overall) are asked to say which of the following statements is closest to their own opinion:

- *"I think that if they have been listed by the search engine, these websites will have accurate and unbiased information."*
- *"I think that some of the websites will be accurate or unbiased and some won't be."*
- *"I don't really think about whether or not they have accurate or unbiased information, I just use the sites I like the look of."*

Around six in ten (58%) feel that some of the websites returned will be accurate or unbiased while others will not be; in other words, a response that shows a level of critical

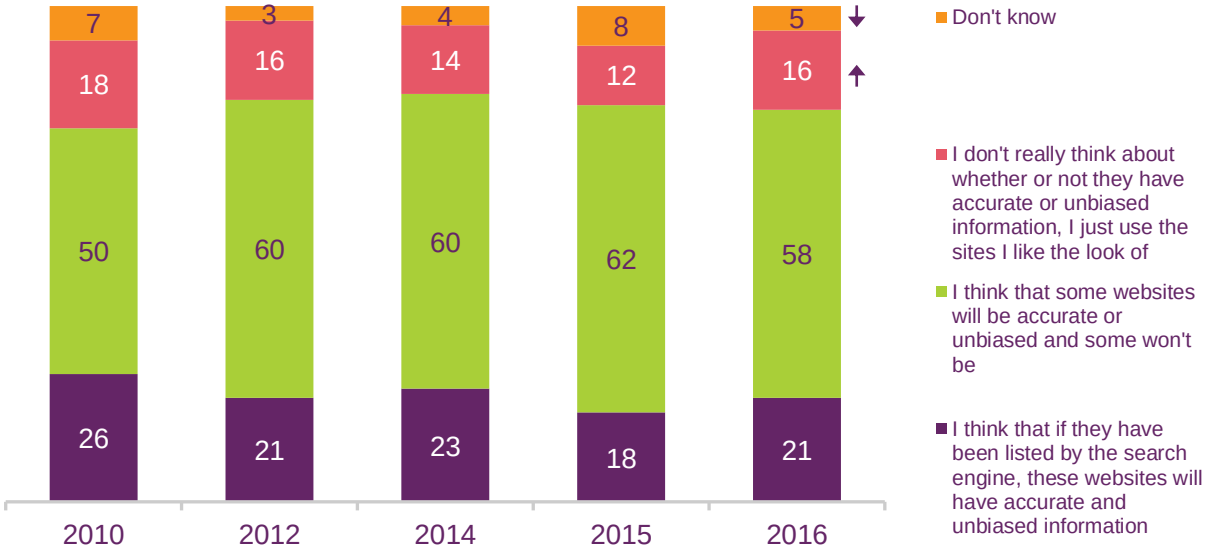
understanding or awareness about the provenance of content. This measure is unchanged compared to 2015 (62%), as shown in Figure 107.

One in five adults (21%) say that if results are listed by the search engine, the websites will be accurate/ unbiased. This response is unchanged compared to 2015 (18%) and does not vary by age or household socio-economic group compared to the average. There are no differences by gender.

Compared to 2015, there has been an increase from 12% to 16% in the number of search engine users who say that they don't really think about whether or not the websites have accurate to unbiased information – they just use them because they like the look of them.

No particular age group stands out, but DEs are less likely to 'understand' search engine results (49% vs. 58% overall).

Figure 107: Understanding of how search engines operate: 2010-2016



IN50. When you use a search engine to find information, you enter a query in the search box and the search engine will then show some links to websites in the results pages. Which one of these is closest to your opinion about the level of accuracy or bias of the information detailed in the websites that appear in the results pages? (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who ever use search engines (1516 in 2016).
Arrows show significant changes (95% level) between 2015 and 2016

Adults who understand that some of the websites returned by search engines will be accurate and unbiased while some will not be are more likely to recognise that the first four results for the online search for 'walking boots' (as discussed in Figure 106 above) are sponsored links (67% vs. 57% overall), and are more likely to give only this correct response (55% vs. 48%).

Trust in content on social media sites

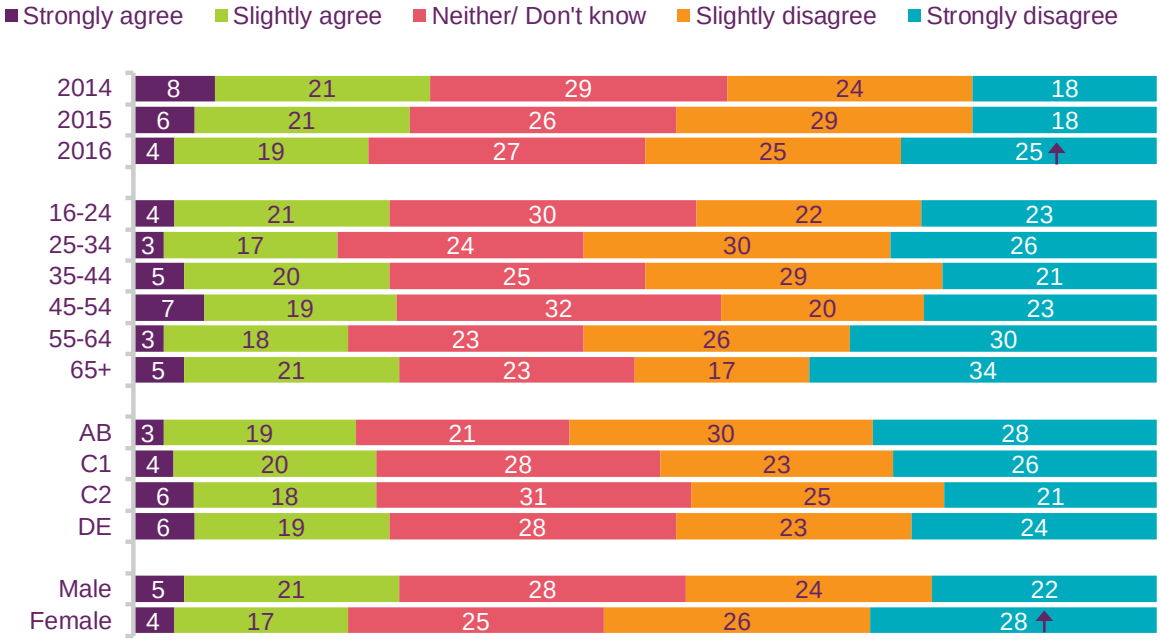
Compared to 2015, social media users are less trusting of the content they see on social media sites or apps[47]

Adults with a social media profile/ account are asked the extent to which they agree with the statement: "When I visit social media websites or apps I tend to trust what I read or see".

As in 2015, adults are more likely to disagree overall (50%) than they are to agree (23%). Compared to 2015, however, they are more likely to disagree strongly (25% vs. 18%).

Compared to the average, there is little variation in opinions by age or household socio-economic group in 2016. Women are more likely than men to disagree strongly (28% vs. 22%).

Figure 108: Agreement with statement: "When I visit social media websites or apps I tend to trust what I read or see", by age, gender and socio-economic group



IN28. Please tell me the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statement – When I visit social media websites or apps I tend to trust what I read or see (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ with a social media profile/ account (1136 aged 16+, varies by demographic).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) between 2015 and 2016 at the overall level, and by age / socio-economic group compared to all with a social media profile/ account, and males compared to females.

[47] It is worth noting that the fieldwork period for the research was 1 November to 9 December 2016, which coincided with the US elections.

Validating factual information online

Two in three internet users say they make some check of the accuracy of the factual information they find online

Internet users are asked whether they check the accuracy of the factual information they find online[48]. Figure 109 shows that two in three internet users (67%) say they make any of the six checks they are prompted with.

More than four in ten (45%) say they check different websites to see if the same information appears on them all, while one in three (32%) check the website address to see if it looks genuine.

One in four (25%) check the credibility of the information (such as the author's name or link to original publication), and one in five assess whether the site looks professional (21%) or whether people they trust use the site or sites (21%). One in six check whether the site is regularly updated (16%).

Internet users aged 16-24 are more likely than average to say they make any of these checks (75% vs. 67%) although this is not attributable to their being more likely to make any individual check. Users aged 25-34 are more likely to check that the website address looks genuine (40% vs. 32%) while 55-64s are more likely to check the credibility of the information (32% vs. 25%).

Those aged 65-74 are less likely to say they make any checks (53% vs. 67%) with this being attributable to four specific checks: looking to see if the same information appears on different websites (31% vs. 45%), checking that the website looks genuine (17% vs. 32%), checking the credibility of the information (15% vs. 25%) and checking whether the site looks professional (14% vs. 21%).

Those aged 75 and over are less likely to make any checks (44% vs. 67%) and are less likely to make each of the six individual checks.

Internet users in AB households (78%) are more likely than average (67%) to make any checks, while those in DE households (57%) are less likely to do so. These differences are also apparent for four specific checks: looking to see if the same information appears on different websites (56% for ABs vs. 34% for DEs), checking that the website address looks genuine (39% for ABs vs. 25% for DEs), checking the credibility of the information (33% for ABs vs. 16% for DEs) and checking whether the website is updated regularly (24% for ABs vs. 9% for DEs).

[48] Internet users were asked the following question and prompted with six possible 'checks' as well as the option to say they didn't make any of the checks: *"When you find factual information online, perhaps on social media or on search engines like Google do you ever check the accuracy of the information in any of these ways?"*

Figure 109: Checking the accuracy of factual information found online

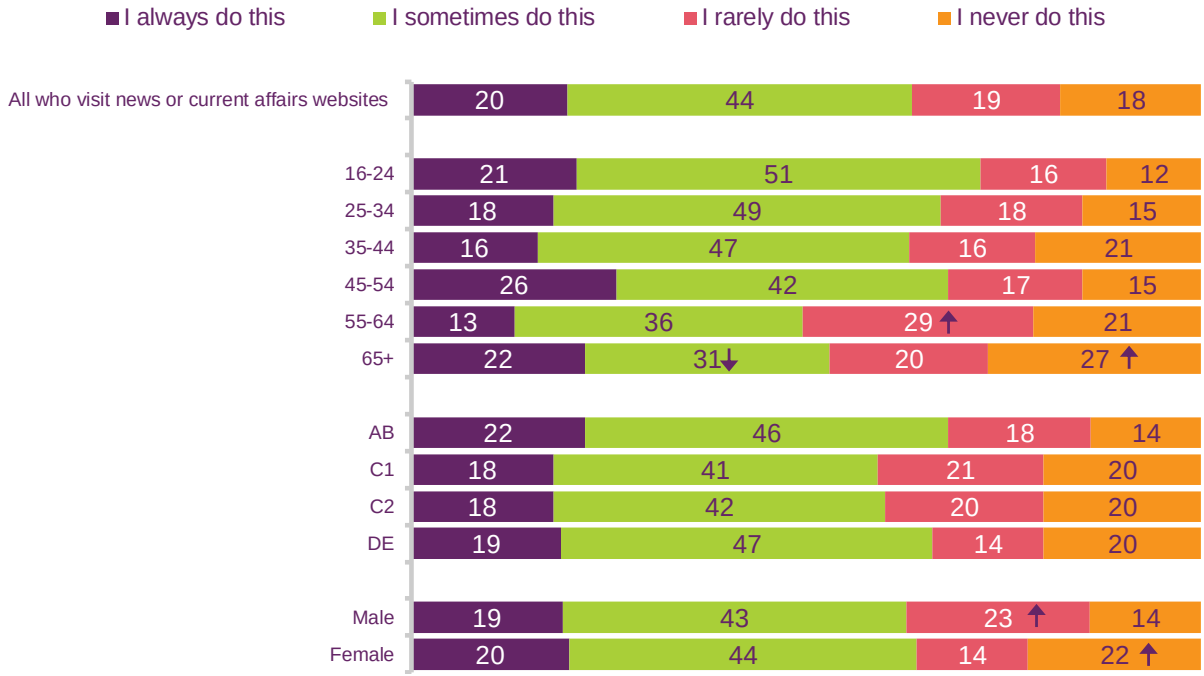
IN39. When you find factual information online, perhaps on social media or on search engines like Google do you ever check the accuracy of the information in any of these ways? (prompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: Adults aged 16+ who go online (1553 in 2016).

Among those who look at news or current affairs online, older people are less likely to seek a range of points of view on stories they are interested in

Internet users who go online to look at news, politics or current affairs websites are prompted with four options and asked to say which one best applies about the following statement: "*When I come across a news or current affairs story that I am interested in I go to different websites or apps to get a range of points of view".* The purpose of this question is to explore the extent to which news stories are validated or checked for accuracy.

As shown in Figure 110, one in five (20%) of all who go online to look at news content say they always do this. Nearly half (44%) say they sometimes do this. Similar proportions say they rarely do this (19%) or never do this (18%).

Figure 110: Extent to which internet users who visit news or current affairs websites say they validate the content they read to get a range of points of view



IN43. Which one of the following options best applies to the following statement: When I come across a news or current affairs story that I am interested in I go to different websites or apps to get a range of points of view (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: All who go online to look at news or current affairs websites (999 aged 16+, varies by demographic).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) by age/ socio-economic group compared to all internet users who do this, and males compared to females.

Section 9

Newer, narrow and non-users of the internet

9.1 Section overview

This section explores in detail the behaviour and attitudes of adults who are less familiar with using the internet. In addition to those who do not personally use the internet at all (non-users), we categorise those who do use the internet in two ways:

- Recency of take-up i.e. when they first started using the internet. In particular we focus on those who say they first started using the internet less than five years ago - *newer* users.

- Breadth of use i.e. the number of activities they do online. The main focus is on those who have done between one and four categories of internet activity, out of the 15 assessed. We term these *narrow* users.

For *non-users* of the internet we explore the following:

- The incidence within the overall adult population, as well as their demographic profile compared to internet users.

- The extent to which they have asked someone else to use the internet on their behalf (i.e. proxy use) in the past year – and what this has been for.

- Their reasons for not going online and what, if anything, would encourage them to do so.

9.2 Key findings

- 'Newer users' are defined as those who first went online less than five years ago. One in ten of all internet users (9%) are newer users – this rises to 21% for those aged 75 and over and to 14% for adults in C2 and DE households.

- Compared to 'established' internet users (those who first went online five years ago or more), newer users are twice as likely to only use a smartphone to go online (21% vs. 8%) and six times more likely to only use a tablet to go online (18% vs. 3%).

- Newer users have a lower estimated weekly volume of use compared to established users (11.9 vs. 24.1 hours). This difference is due to lower volume of use in each location: at home, in the workplace/ place of education, and anywhere else.

- Compared to established users, newer users are less confident internet users and are more likely to only use websites or apps they have used previously.

- Newer users are less likely to be aware of the main sources of funding of online services such as the BBC website or iPlayer service, search engine websites and the YouTube website. They are also less likely to be aware that the results returned by search engines may contain inaccurate or biased information, and less likely to recognise sponsored content returned by search engines as advertising.

- Compared to established users, newer users are less likely to use all nine security measures they are prompted with. Less than half use security software such as an anti-virus or anti-spyware package (44% vs 67% for established users).One in three newer users say they use strong passwords on devices used to go online (33% vs. 57% for established users), and one in five (19% vs. 50%) use strong passwords on online services like email, social media and PayPal.

- 'Narrow users' are defined as those who carry out between one and four of the 15 types of online use we asked internet users about. They comprise 28% of all internet users. Those aged 65 and over are more likely than average to be narrow users (44% of 65-74s and 51% for 75+). Internet users in C2 or DE households are also more likely to be narrow users (32% for C2s and 40% for DEs).

- While three in four internet users (76%) go online outside the home, this is less likely for narrow users (59%). Narrow users are also less likely than internet users overall to go online every day (64% vs. 79%).

- Narrow users are less likely than average to watch on-demand television content overall, to watch content on broadcaster catch-up services or to watch content via a mobile phone or online.

- Fourteen per cent of adults in the UK are non-users of the internet, unchanged since 2015. One in three (35%) adults aged 65-74 are non-users, as are a majority (56%) of those aged 75 and over. A quarter of adults in DE households (27%) are non-users.

- More than four in ten non-users (43%) say the main reason they don't go online is because 'they don't see the need'/ 'being online is not for people like them', although a similar proportion of non-users (38%) say they have asked someone else to use the internet on their behalf in the last year.

- Three in four non-users say that nothing would encourage them to go online in the next 12 months (75%), although this is less likely for non-users aged 16-64 (63%) than for those aged 65+ (80%).

9.3 Newer internet users

This sub-section looks in detail at 'newer' users of the internet. Ideally, newer users of the internet would be those who first started going online in the last couple of years. However, we need to ensure that any group of newer users is big enough (at least 100 respondents) in order to enable comparison with established internet users.

In 2016, 3% of internet users had first started going online in the past one to two years (53 respondents), with a further 6% first having gone online in the past three to four years (98 respondents). We therefore define 'newer internet users' as those who first started using the internet up to five years ago, and 'established users' as those who first started using it five or more years ago.

Incidence of newer users within the online population

Those who go online aged 75 and over are more likely to be newer users

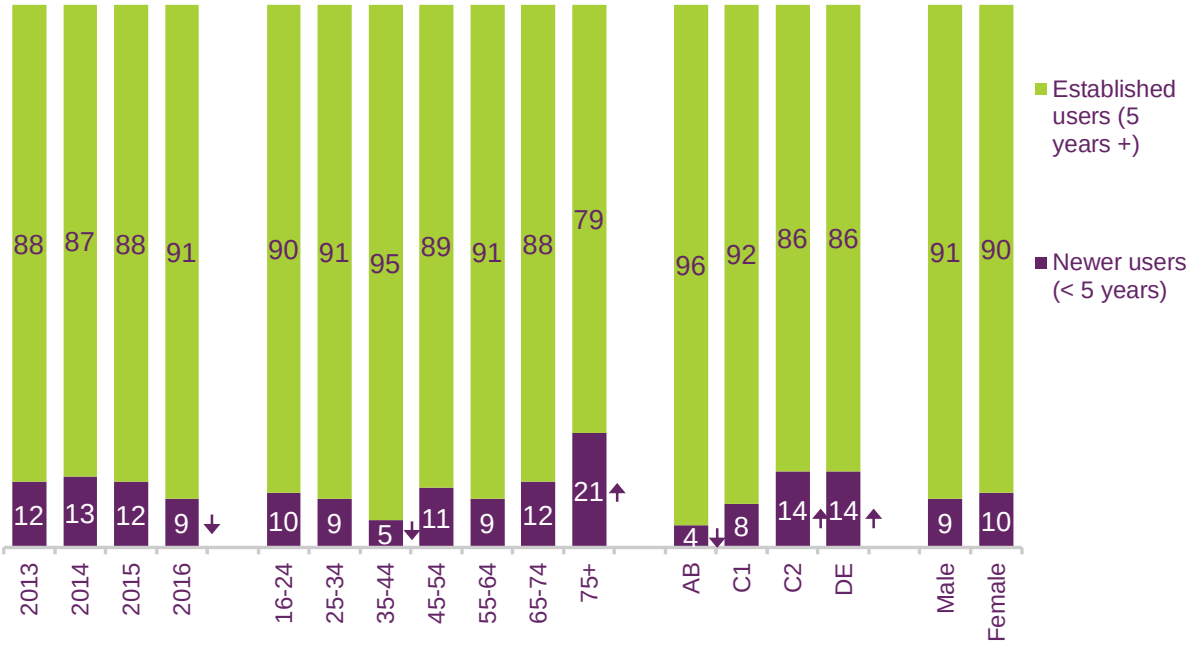
Across all UK adult internet users, 9% are newer users, with the remaining 91% established internet users. Compared to 2015 there has been a decrease in the incidence of newer internet users (down from 12%). Although not shown in Figure 111, the majority of internet

users (71%) say they first started going online ten or more years ago, higher than in 2015 (64%).

As shown in Figure 111, compared to the average, those aged 35-44 (5%) are less likely to be newer users and the over-75s (21%) are more likely.

Compared to the average, those in the C2 (14%) and DE (14%) socio-economic groups are more likely to be newer users, while ABs are less likely (4%).

Figure 111: Proportion of newer and established users, by year and age



IN3. How long ago did you first start going online? (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online (1553 aged 16+, 231 aged 16-24, 265 aged 25-34, 293 aged 35-44, 265 aged 45-54, 220 aged 55-64, 141 aged 65-74, 138 aged 75+, 394 AB, 521 C1, 300 C2, 338 DE, 745 male, 808 female).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) between 2015 and 2016 at the overall level and by age/ socio-economic group compared to all internet users, and males compared to females.

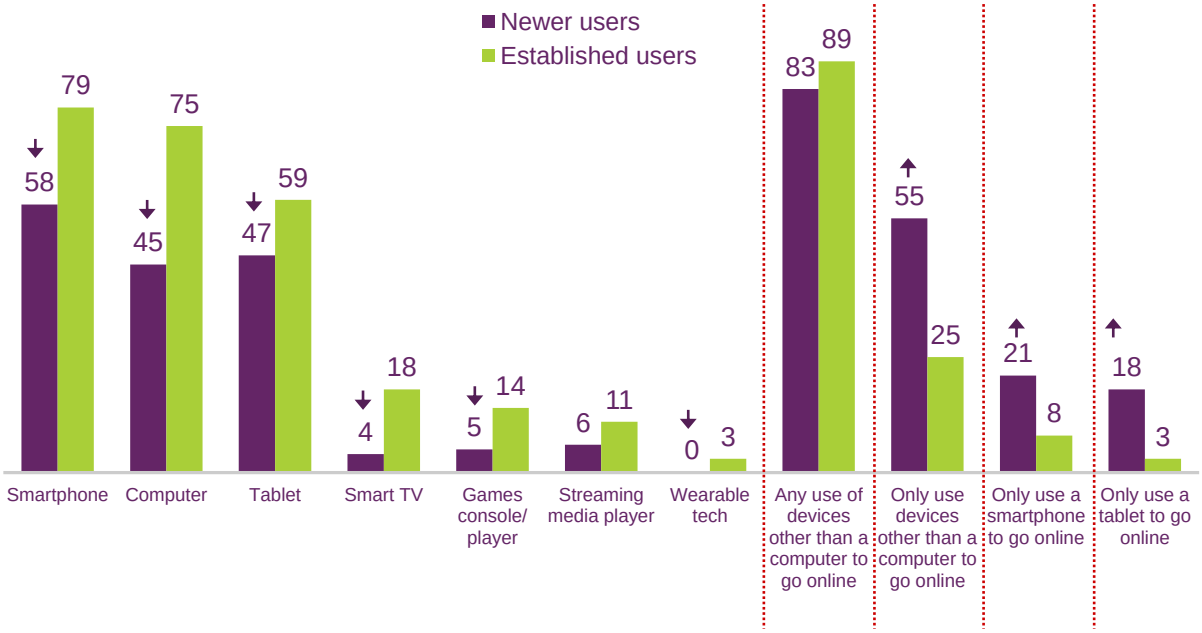
Devices used to go online

The smartphone is the only device used to go online by the majority of newer users, and more than half of newer users only go online on devices other than a computer

Compared to established users, newer internet users are less likely to go online through most of the devices shown in Figure 112, with only one device used to go online by a majority of newer users – a smartphone (58%).

They are, however, more likely than established users to only go online through devices other than a computer (55% vs. 25%). Around one in five newer users only go online on a smartphone (21%) or a tablet (18%); both of these measures are higher than for established users (8% and 3% respectively).

Figure 112: Devices used to go online: newer vs. established users

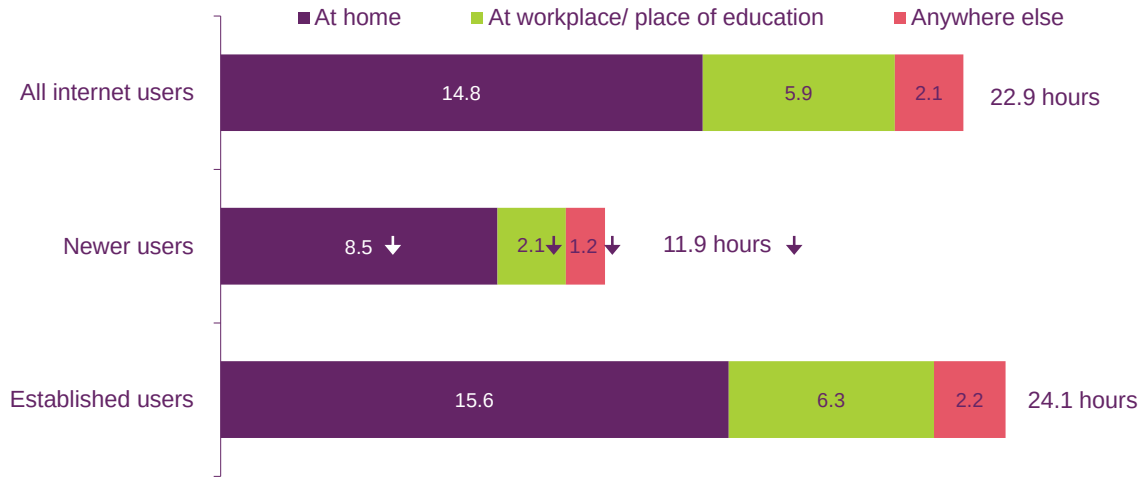


IN2. Do you go online using any of these devices? (prompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online who first went online less than 5 years ago (151), 5+ years ago (1353).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) between newer and established users.

Newer users go online for fewer hours in a typical week

As shown in Figure 113, newer users have a lower estimated weekly volume of use compared to established users (11.9 hours vs. 24.1 hours). This difference is due to a lower volume of use at home (8.5 vs. 15.6 hours), in the workplace or place of education (2.1 vs. 6.3 hours) and elsewhere (1.2 vs. 2.2 hours).

Figure 113: Volume of internet use per week: newer vs. established users

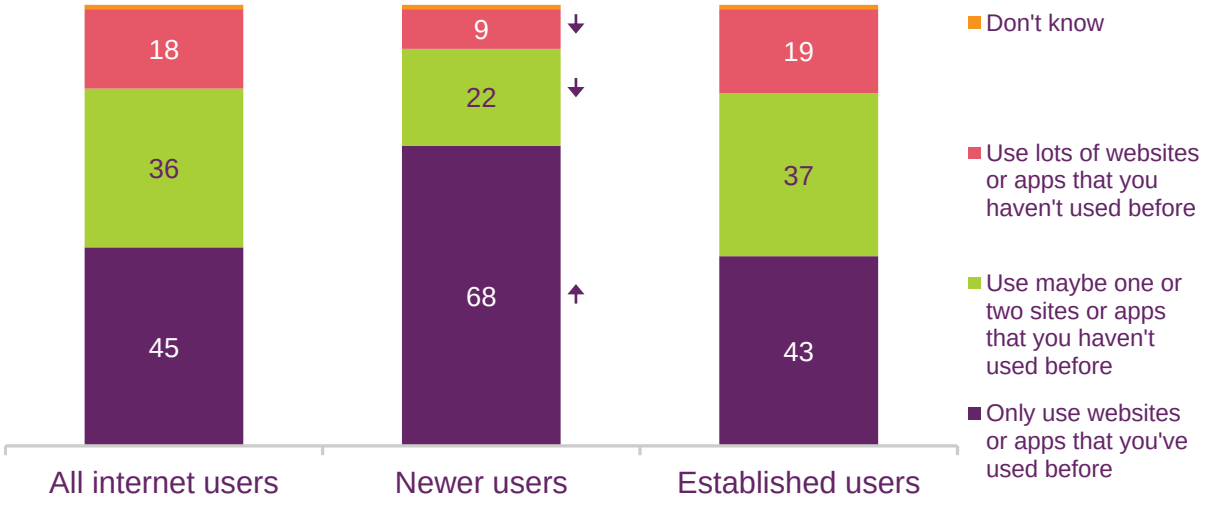


IN5A/B/C. How many hours in a typical week would you say you use the internet at home/ at your workplace or place of education/ anywhere else? (unprompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online (1553), started using less than 5 years ago (151), 5+ years ago (1353).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) between newer and established users.

The majority of newer users usually visit the same sites and apps they have used before

In most weeks when they go online, newer users (68%) are more likely than established users (43%) to say that they only go to websites or apps they have used before. Consequently, they are less likely than established users to say they 'use one or two sites or apps they haven't used before' (22% vs. 37%) or to say they 'use lots of websites or apps they haven't used before' (9% vs. 19%).

Figure 114: Use of websites not used before: newer vs. established users



IN12. In most weeks when you go online do you usually… (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online (1553), started using less than 5 years ago (151), 5+ years ago (1353).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) between newer and established users.

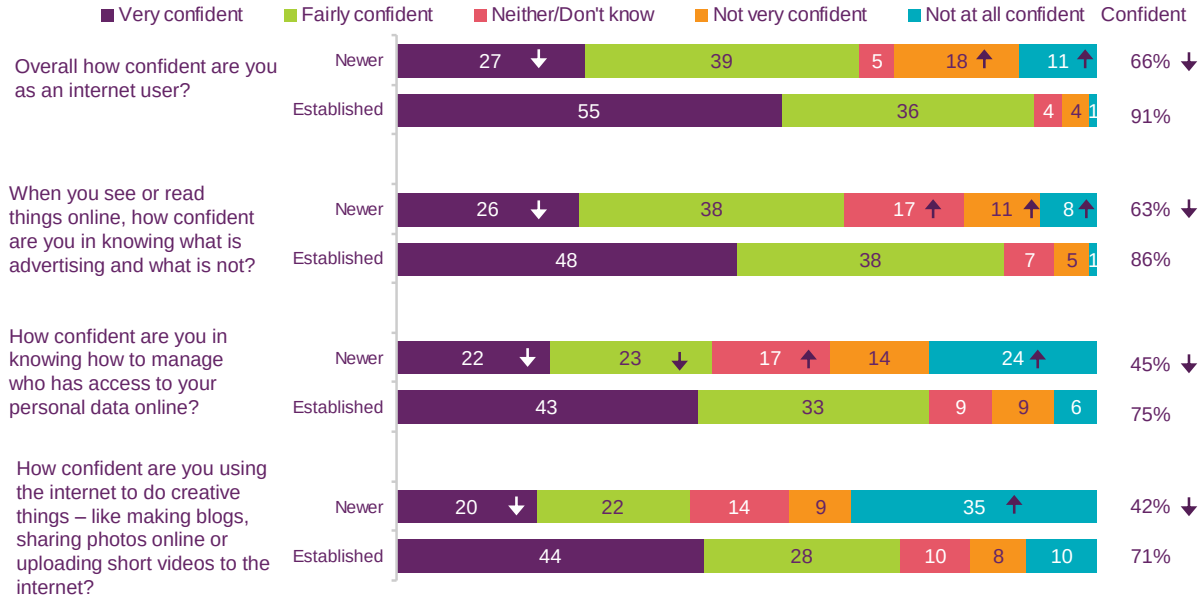
Confidence as an internet user

Newer users are less confident in their use of the internet

Figure 115 shows the self-reported ratings of confidence, across the different aspects of using the internet, as given by newer and established users. For each aspect, newer users are less likely to describe themselves as confident, and more likely to describe themselves as not confident (either not very, or not at all confident).

Broadly speaking, compared to newer users, established users are twice as likely to describe themselves as 'very confident'. Around one in four newer users rate themselves as very confident in knowing what is advertising and what is not (26% vs. 48%) and very confident overall as an internet user (27% vs. 55%). Around one in five are very confident that they know how to manage who has access to their data online (22% vs. 43%) and in using the internet to do creative things (20% vs. 44%).

Figure 115: Confidence as an internet user: newer vs. established users



IN11A/B/C/D. I'm going to read out some questions about confidence using the internet, for each one please say which of the options on the card applies to you. (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online who started using less than 5 years ago (151), 5+ years ago (1353).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) between newer and established users.

Awareness of sources of funding for websites and online services

Newer internet users are less likely to be aware of the main sources of funding for certain websites or online services

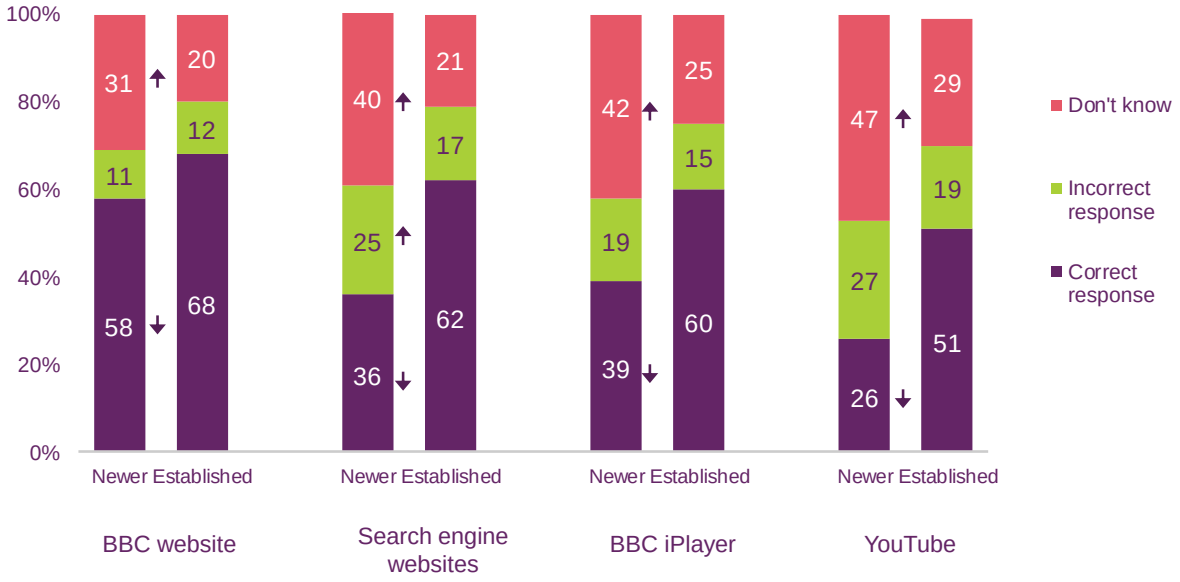
Adults are asked to say, without prompting, what they believe are the main sources of funding for particular websites and online services. Figure 116 shows the results among those who go online, split by newer/ established users, for four online sites or services: the BBC website, search engine websites, the BBC iPlayer service and for YouTube.

Across each of the four, newer internet users are less likely than established users to give the correct response. While the majority of established users are aware of how each of the four websites/ services are mainly funded, this is true only for the BBC website (58%) among newer users. Four in ten newer internet users (39%) say they are aware that the licence fee funds the BBC iPlayer service. More than one in three newer users (36%) give the correct response regarding the main source of funding for search engine websites[49], while only one in four newer users (26%) are aware that advertising is the main source of funding for YouTube.

One in four newer users give an incorrect response about how search engine websites are mainly funded, which is more likely than for established users (25% vs. 17%). Across each of these four online websites/ services, newer internet users are more likely than established users to say they are unsure[50].

[49] Awareness is taken from two coded responses deemed as correct - 1) 'Advertising on the website' and 2) 'Advertisers pay when users click through from sponsored links to their website'.
[50] Either because they gave a 'Don't know' response or said they had never heard of the service.

Figure 116: Awareness of how websites or online services are funded newer vs. established users



IN34/ IN35/ IN36/ IN37. How do you think the BBC's website is mainly funded/ How do you think search engine websites such as Google or Bing are mainly funded?/ How do you think the BBC's iPlayer service is mainly funded / How do you think YouTube is mainly funded? (unprompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online who first went online less than 5 years ago (151), 5+ years ago (1353).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) between newer and established users.

Understanding search engines results

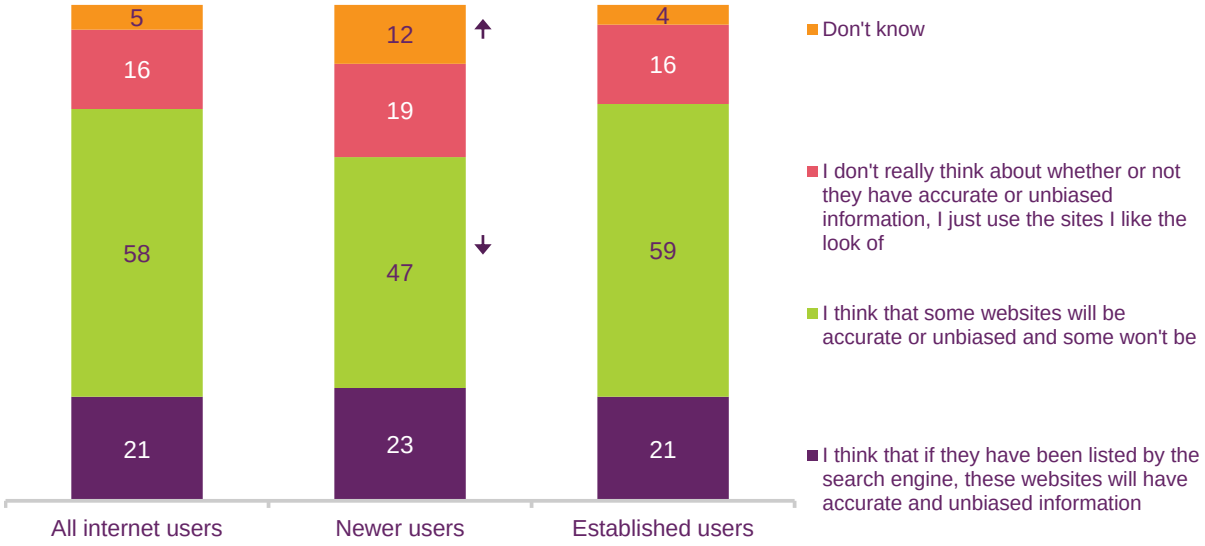
Newer users are less likely to understand how search engines work

Adults who ever use search engines (96% of newer users, 98% of established users) are asked to say which of the following statements is closest to their own opinion:

- "I think that if they have been listed by the search engine, these websites will have accurate and unbiased information."
- "I think that some of the websites will be accurate or unbiased and some won't be."
- "I don't really think about whether or not they have accurate or unbiased information, I just use the sites I like the look of."

Figure 117 shows that while one in five newer users (23%) and a similar proportion of established users (21%) feel that results returned by search engines will be accurate and unbiased, newer users are less likely to give the correct response – that some websites will be accurate or unbiased and some will not (47% vs. 59%). Newer users are also more likely to say they are unsure (12% vs. 4%).

Figure 117: Opinions on search engine accuracy: newer vs. established users



IN50. When you use a search engine to find information, you enter a query in the search box and the search engine will then show some links to websites in the results pages. Which one of these is closest to your opinion about the level of accuracy or bias of the information detailed in the websites that appear in the results pages? (prompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who use search engines (1516) who first went online less than 5 years ago (144),5+ years ago (1326).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) between newer and established users.

Four in ten newer users can identify advertising in search engine results

Adults who use search engine websites are shown a picture of the results returned by Google for an online search for 'walking boots'. Their attention is drawn to the first four results at the top of the list, which are distinguished by a green box with the word 'Ad' written in it. They are then prompted with three options and asked whether any of these apply to these first four results. These options are[51]:

- These are adverts/ sponsored links/ paid to appear here
- These are the best results/ the most relevant results
- These are the most popular results used by other people

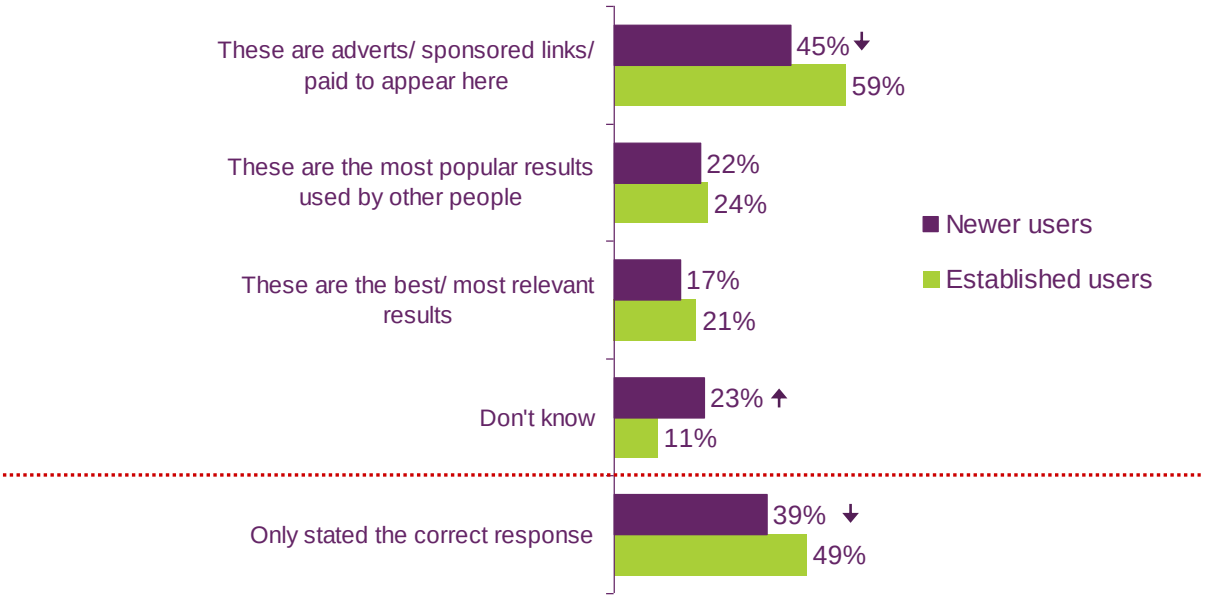
The results are shown in Figure 118 below. Less than half of newer users (45%) who use search engines say that the first four results are 'sponsored links/ advertising/ paid to appear there', compared to six in ten established users (59%).

While newer users are no more likely to nominate either of the incorrect responses - that these are 'the most popular results used by other people' (22% vs. 24% for established users) or 'the best/ most relevant' results (17% vs. 21%) - they are more likely to be unsure (23% vs. 11%).

Search engine users are allowed to select more than one response to this question, so it is also worthwhile looking at those who give *only* the correct response and do not select either of the other options. Half of the established users (49%) only give the correct response; that is, they state that the results flagged are adverts. This is less likely for newer users (39%).

[51] They were also allowed to nominate some other reason, or say that they were unsure.

Figure 118: Understanding of paid-for results returned by Google searches, among adults who use search engine websites or apps: newer vs. established users



IN51. Here's an image (SHOWCARD OF IMAGE) from a Google search for 'walking boots''. Do any of these apply to the first three results that are listed? (prompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: Adults aged 16+ who go online and use search engine websites or apps who first went online less than 5 years ago (144), 5+ years ago (1326).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) between newer and established users.

Understanding of personalised advertising

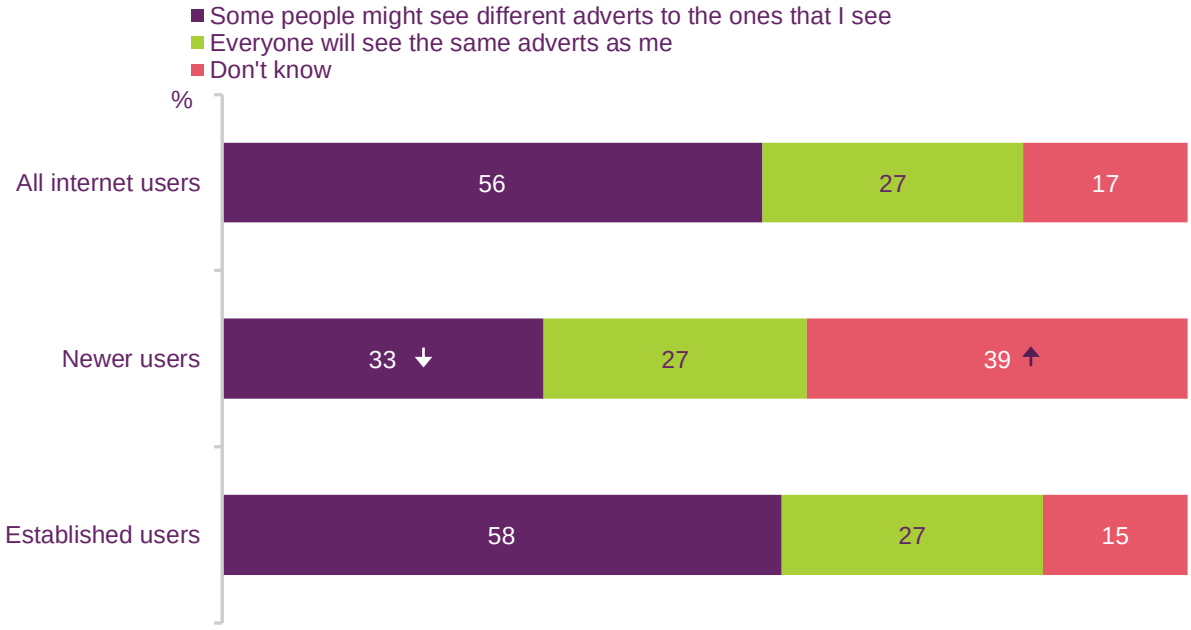
A third of newer users are aware of personalised online advertising, compared to nearly twice as many established users

Internet users are prompted with two options and asked which one applies to any advertising they might see on a website or app that they visit[52].

Figure 119 shows that while more than half of established internet users (58%) are aware of personalised advertising, in that they are aware that some people might see different adverts to those that they see, this accounts for only one-third of newer users (33%). More than one in four newer and established users (27% for both) state that everyone would see the same adverts. As such, newer users are more than twice as likely as established users to say they are unsure (39% vs. 15%).

[52] The specific question stated: *If someone in the same country as you visits the same website or app at the same time as you, which one of these things applies to any advertising shown?* The purpose of this question is to gauge the extent to which internet users are aware of personalised advertising.

Figure 119: Awareness of personalised online advertising: newer vs. established users



IN52. If someone in the same country as you visits the same website or app at the same time as you, which one of these things applies to any advertising shown? (prompted response, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online (1553) who first went online less than 5 years ago (151), 5+ years ago (1353).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) between newer and established users.

Online security measures and safety features

Only one in five newer internet users say they use strong passwords for online services

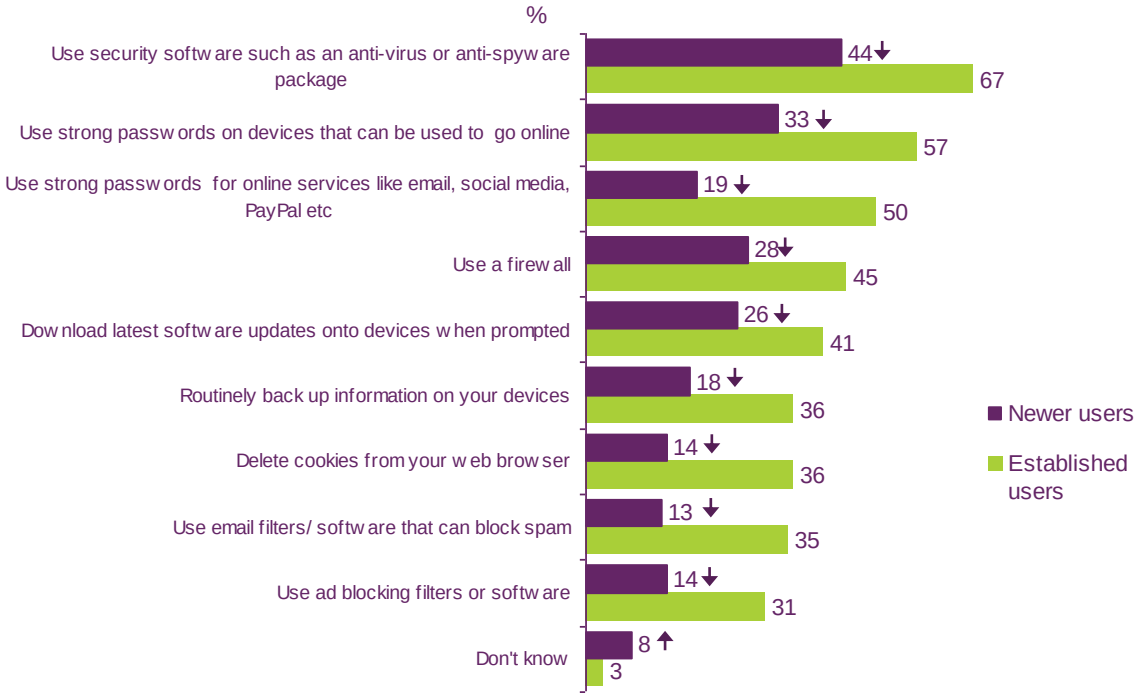
As shown in Figure 120, internet users are prompted with nine possible types of security measures and asked to say which if any of these they, or someone else in the household, do or use at home.

Compared to established users, newer internet users are less likely to say they use each of these nine types of security measures.

While there are three types of security measures each used by a majority of established users – anti-virus or anti- spyware packages (67%) and strong passwords on devices that can be used to go online (57%) or on online services like email, social media, PayPal etc. (50%) – none are used by a majority of newer users.

Newer users are most likely to say they use anti-virus or anti-spyware packages (44%). One in three say they use strong passwords on devices that can be used to go online (33%), while fewer say they use strong passwords for online services like email, social media or PayPal (19%).

Figure 120: Security measures used within the home: newer vs. established users



IN6 Which, if any of these things do you or someone in your household do at home? (prompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who first went online less than 5 years ago (151), 5+ years ago (1353).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) between newer and established users.

While around half of newer internet users say they would verify factual information online, this is lower than among established users

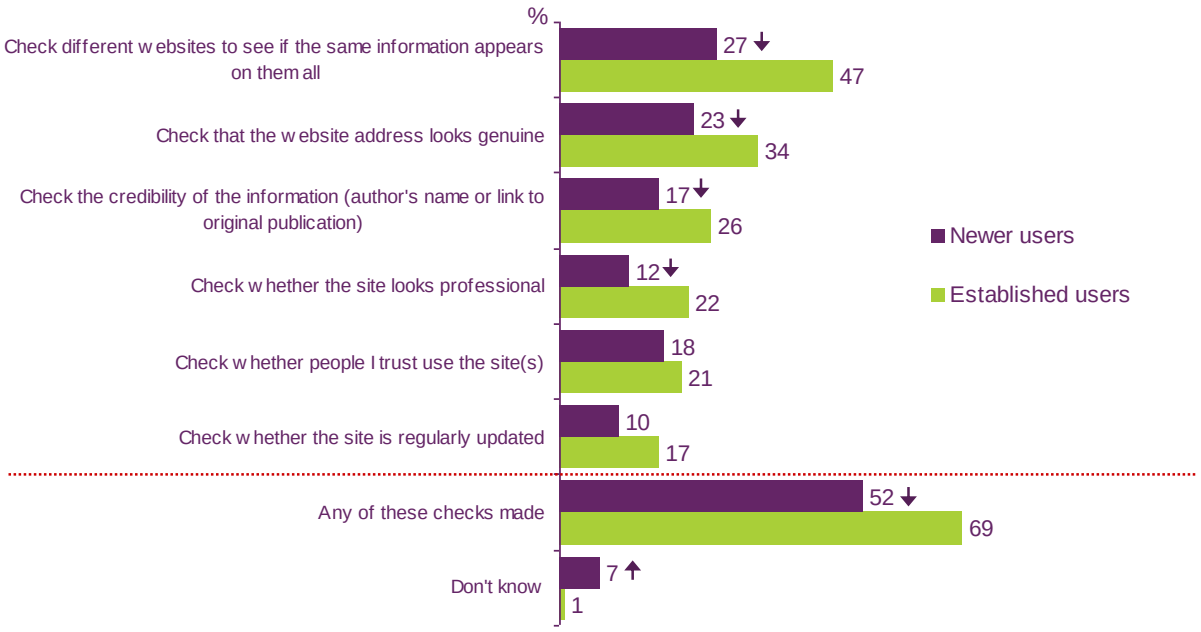
Internet users are asked whether they check the accuracy of the factual information they find online.

There are four specific checks less likely to be made by newer users: checking different websites to see if the same information appears on them all (27% vs. 47%), checking that the website address looks genuine (23% vs. 34%), checking the credibility of the information (17% vs. 26%) and checking whether the site looks professional (12% vs. 22%).

Figure 121 shows that a majority of newer users (52%) say they make any of the six checks they are prompted with, and this is less likely compared to established users (69%).

There are four specific checks less likely to be made by newer users: checking different websites to see if the same information appears on them all (27% vs. 47%), checking that the website address looks genuine (23% vs. 34%), checking the credibility of the information (17% vs. 26%) and checking whether the site looks professional (12% vs. 22%).

Figure 121: Verification of factual information online: newer vs. established users



IN39. When you find factual information online, perhaps on social media or on search engines like Google, do you ever check the accuracy of the information in any of these ways? (prompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who first went online less than 5 years ago (151), 5+ years ago (1353).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) between newer and established users.

A majority of newer internet users say they carry out checks before registering with websites

Internet users are prompted with a list of potential checks they might make before registering their personal details online, and asked which, if any, they carry out. They are also permitted to say they register their details online whenever they are asked to do so.[53]

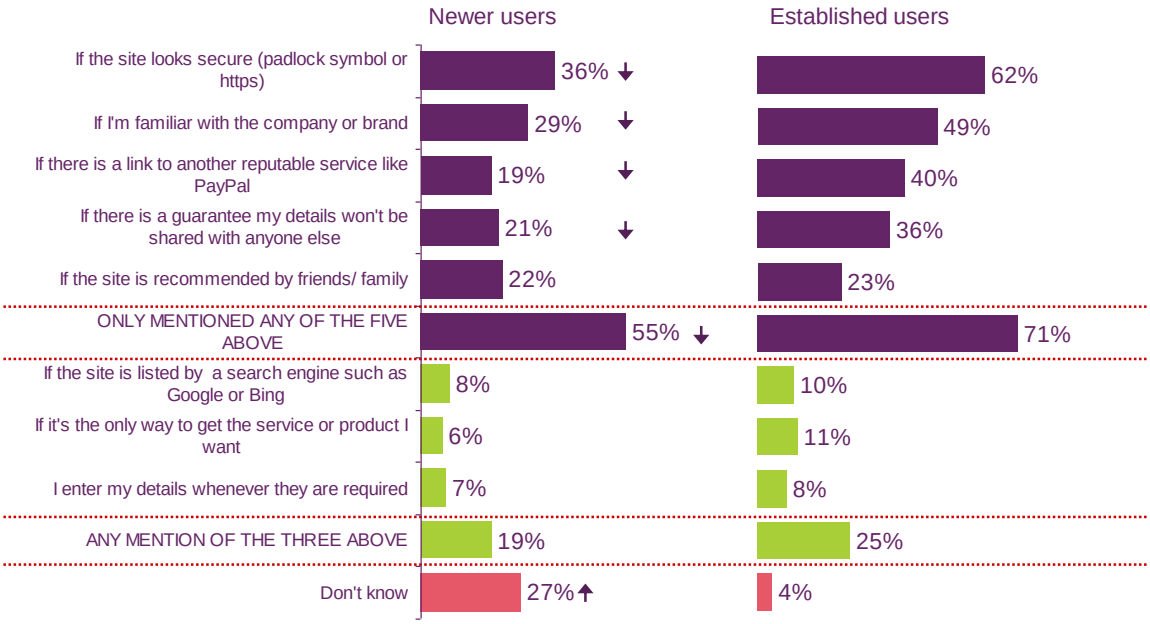
Five of these reasons (shown in purple below) can be seen as 'appropriate' checks, while those in green are considered less reliable (or media-literate) responses, out of the list of options respondents are offered.

Compared to established users, newer users are less likely to say they make four of the five 'appropriate' checks. Overall, more than half of newer users say they make at least one of the checks (55%).

Less than one in ten newer users give each of the less reliable responses: before entering their information they check whether the site is listed on a search engine (8%), they enter their details whenever they are required (7%), or they weigh up whether this is the only way to get the service or product that they need (6%). One in five (19%) newer users give at least one of these responses. There are no differences between newer and established users in terms of their giving these 'less reliable' responses (shown in green).

[53] Two per cent of internet users (9% for newer users and 2% for established users) spontaneously mentioned that they never registered with websites/ entered their personal details online, and have been excluded from the results shown.

Figure 122: Checks made before registering with websites: newer vs. established users



IN41. Lots of websites now ask you to register your personal details with them, which if any of these things do you do before registering personal details online? I look to see...(prompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: Adults aged 16+ who go online who say they register personal details online who first went online less than 5 years ago (137), 5+ years ago (1330).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) between newer and established users.

Concerns about the internet

Concerns about the internet do not differ between newer and established internet users

Figure 123 shows that around half of newer users (48%) have concerns about what is on the internet; this incidence is comparable to that seen for established users (51%).

Three in ten newer internet users have concerns about offensive or illegal content (31%) while around one in four have concerns about the risks to others or to society (27%), and concerns relating to security or fraud (26%). One in ten have concerns about personal privacy (10%), with fewer being concerned about advertising (6%). Each of these types of concern do not differ compared to established users.

Figure 123: Concerns about the internet: newer vs. established users

IN20. Can you tell me if you have any concerns about what is on the internet? (unprompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who first went online less than 5 years ago (151), 5+ years ago (1353).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) between newer and established users.

9.4 Narrow internet users

In previous years the breadth-of-use analysis that has been included in the report was run from the Media Literacy Tracker. In 2016, the breadth-of-use analysis included here comes from the research conducted in the 2017 Ofcom Technology Tracker.

In the Technology Tracker study, internet users were asked whether they had ever undertaken 24 individual online activities. Twenty-three of the 24 activities[54] have been grouped into 15 types of online use. Internet users have been categorised as narrow, medium or broad users of the internet, depending on how many of these 15 types of use they ever make.

Narrow users are defined as those ever carrying out up to four of the 15 types of online use, medium users ever carry out between five and nine types, and broad users ever carry out between ten and 15 types.

The 15 types of use are:

1. Email – send or receive emails.
2. Transactions - online shopping (purchasing goods/ services/ tickets etc.), trading/ auctions e.g. eBay.
3. Communications – Communicating via instant messaging e.g. Facebook Chat, Skype Chat, Snapchat, making voice calls using a VoIP service e.g. Skype, making video calls e.g. via FaceTime, Skype.
4. Banking
5. Social media – using social networking (such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Bebo or Snapchat), using Twitter (browsing, reading, posting on site).
6. News – accessing news.
7. Information for work/ school/ college – finding/ downloading information for work/ business/ school/ college/ university/ homework.
8. Watch short video clips – Watching short video clips (e.g. on YouTube, Dailymotion, Vimeo or Facebook).
9. Health – find information on health-related issues.
10. Government services – Using local council/ Government sites e.g. to find information, to complete processes such as tax returns, to contact local MP.
11. Watching TV content – watching TV programmes or film content online.
12. Radio/ audio services – listening to radio, streamed audio services (free) e.g. Spotify (free) or Deezer (free), streamed audio services (subscription) e.g. Spotify Premium, Apple Music or Deezer Premium.
13. Upload/ add content to the internet – uploading/ adding content to the internet e.g. photos, videos, blog posts.

[54] For the purpose of this analysis the activity "General surfing/ browsing the internet" has not been included.

14. Remote - Accessing files through a cloud service such as Dropbox, Google Drive, Microsoft OneDrive or Apple iCloud, remotely control TV services at home such as Sky+, Sky Q or Tivo using an online device, remotely control or monitor household appliances e.g. fridge, cooker, washing machine, tumble dryer and/ or home heating, lighting or security system or home energy consumption.
15. Games – playing games online or interactively.

Incidence of narrow users within the online population

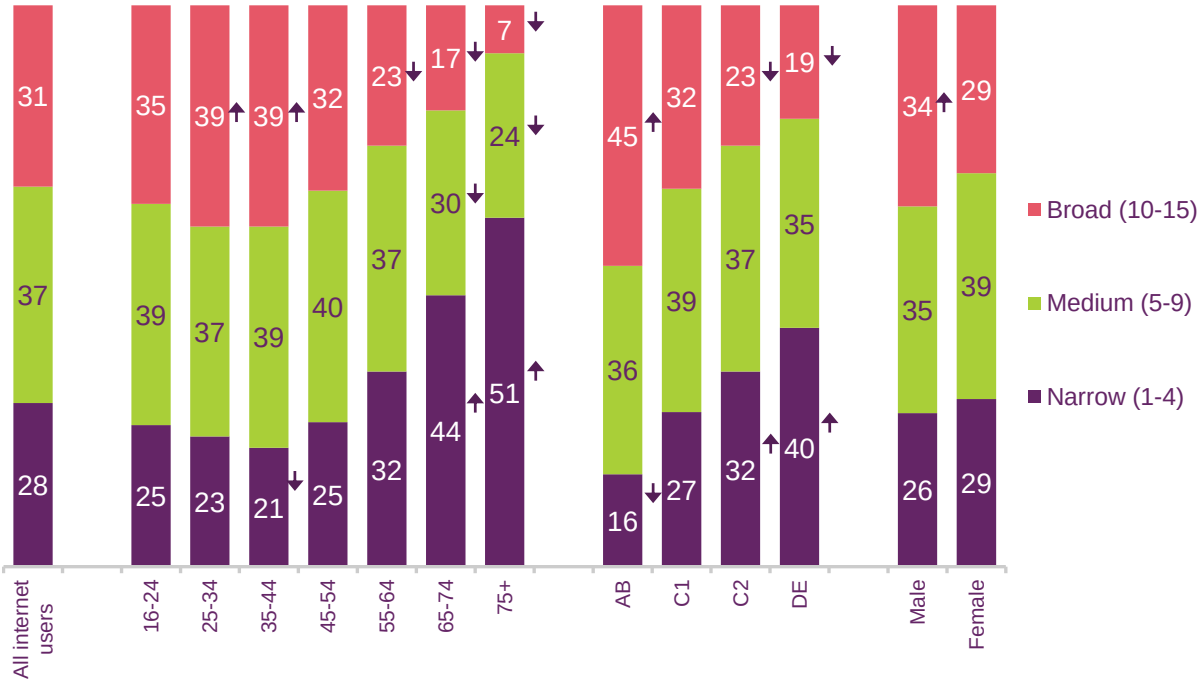
Older adults and C2DE adults are more likely to be narrow users

Figure 124 compares the distribution of narrow, medium and broad users in 2017, across the different demographic groups.

Narrow users account for 28% of all internet users, medium users account for 37% of internet users and broad users for 31%.

Those aged 65 and over are more likely than average to be narrow users (44% for 65-74s and 51% for over-75s), while those aged 35-44 are less likely to be narrow users (21%). Compared to the average, those in the C2 (32%) and DE (40%) socio-economic groups are more likely to be narrow users, while internet users in AB households are less likely (16%).

Figure 124: Breadth of use of the internet, by demographic group



Source: Ofcom Technology Tracker, Half 1 2017
QE5A. Which, if any, of these do you use the internet for? (prompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online (3221 in 2017, varies by demogrpahic).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) by age / socio-economic group compared to all internet users and males compared to females.

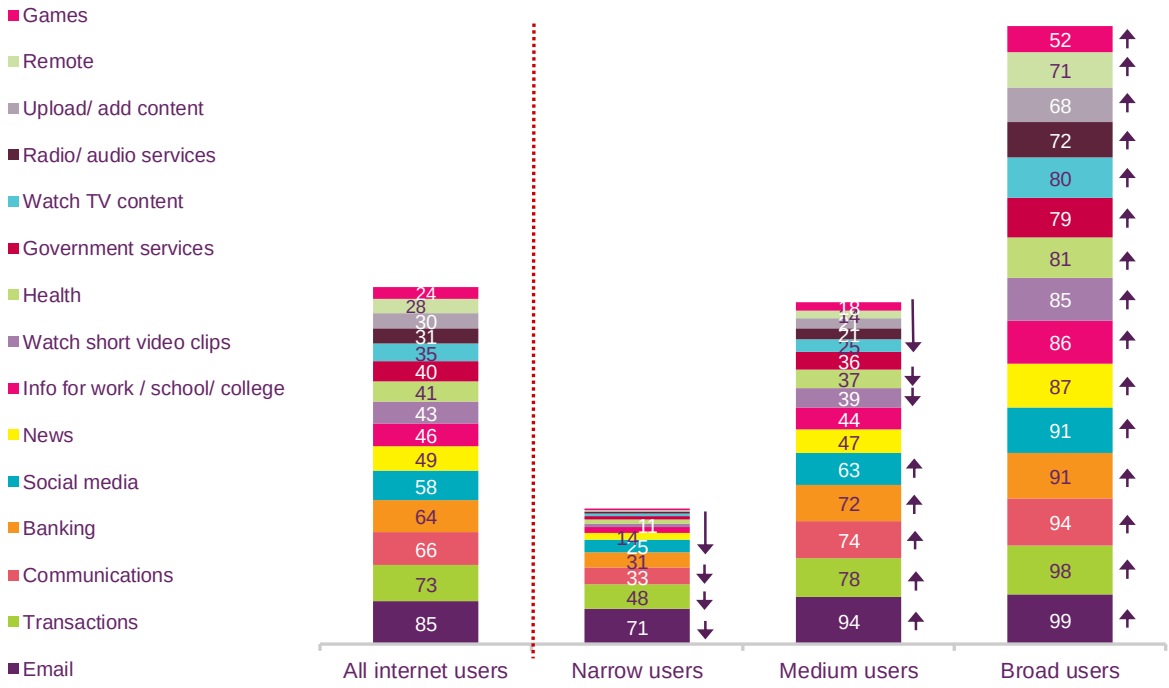
Types of online activity undertaken

The only type of activity undertaken by a majority of narrow internet users is email

Based on the breadth-of-use analysis, it is reasonable to expect narrow users to be less likely to have conducted most of these types of activity. Figure 125 clearly shows, however, the contrast between narrow users, who are less likely to have ever done all 15 activities, and broad users, who are more likely to have ever done them.

And while a majority of narrow users have ever undertaken only one of these types of activity - email (71%) – a majority of broad internet users have undertaken all 15 types.

Figure 125: Categories of internet use: narrow, medium and broad users



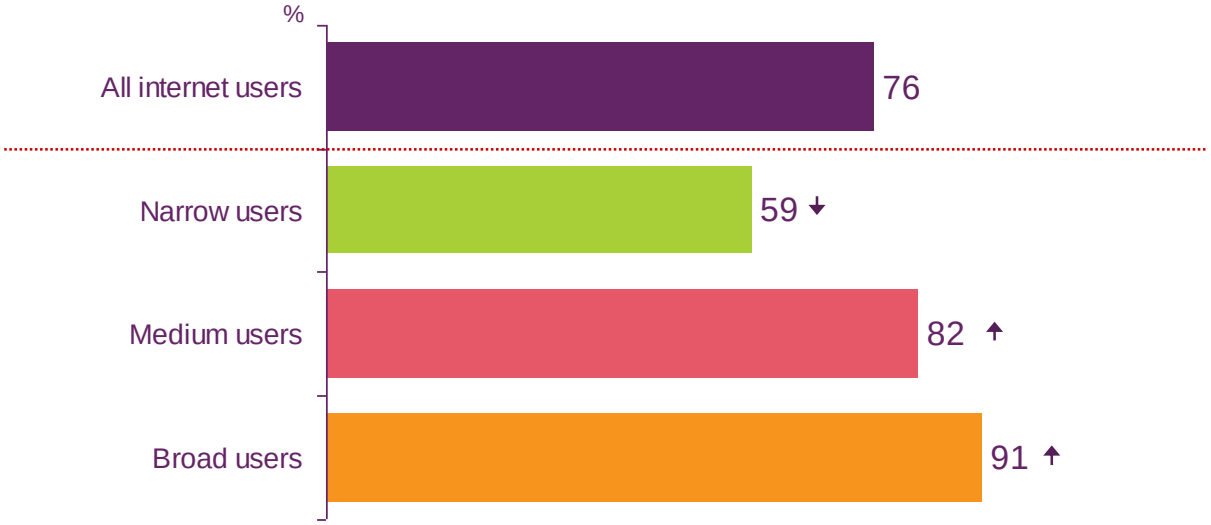
Source: Ofcom Technology Tracker, Half 1 2017
QE5A Which, if any, of these do you use the internet for? (prompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online (3221 in 2017), narrow (949), medium (1176) and broad users (932).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) between any of the breadth of user categories and all internet users.

Internet use – location of use, frequency and device preference

Three in five narrow users say they go online outside the home

In 2017, three-quarters (76%) of all internet users say they go online outside the home. This is less likely among narrow users (59%) and more likely among broad internet users (91%).

Figure 126: Use of the internet outside the home: narrow, medium and broad users



Source: Ofcom Technology Tracker, Half 1 2017
IN6. Do you ever go online anywhere other than in your home at all? IF YES: Where is that? (prompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online (3221 in 2017), narrow (949), medium (1176) and broad users (932).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) between any of the breadth of user categories and all internet users.

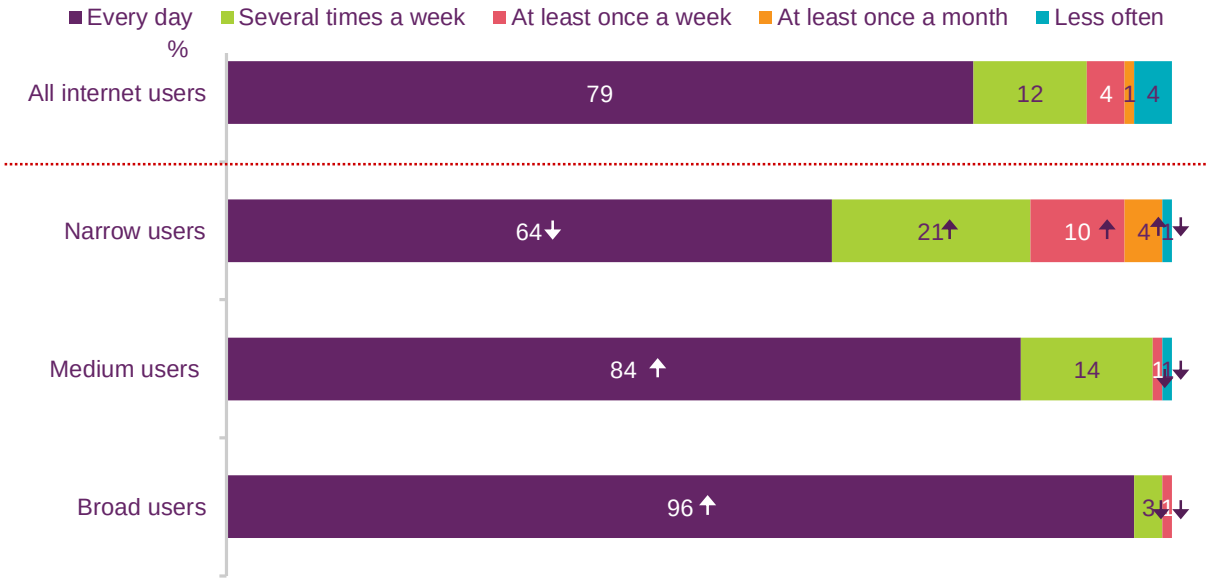
One third of narrow internet users say they go online less often than every day

As shown in Figure 127, four in five internet users say they go online every day (79%), with one in eight (12%) going online several times a week. A further 4% say they go online at least once a week and fewer do it at least once a month (1%).

Compared to the average (79%), narrow users are less likely to say they go online every day (64%); they are more likely to say they go online less frequently, whether several times a week (21%), at least once a week (10%) or at least once a month (4%). As such, one in three (36%) narrow users say they go online less frequently than every day.

In contrast, nearly all broad users (96%) say they go online every day, compared to 64% of narrow users.

Figure 127: Frequency of internet use: narrow, medium and broad users



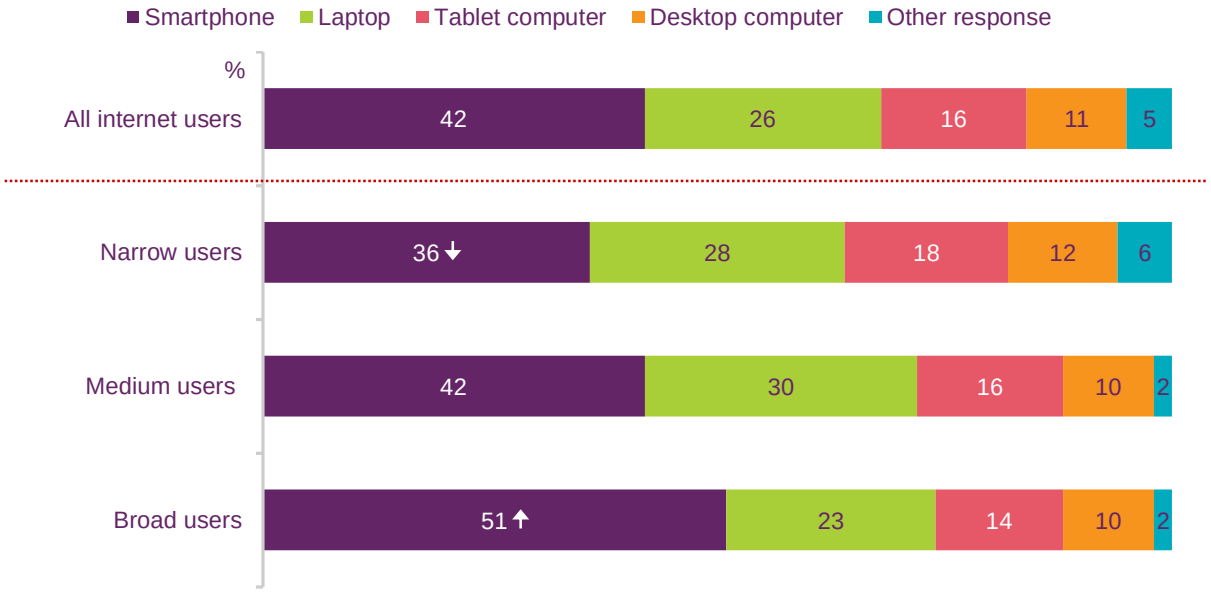
Source: Ofcom Technology Tracker, Half 1 2017
QE23 And how often do you personally use the internet nowadays either at home or elsewhere? (prompted response, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online (3221 in 2017), narrow (949), medium (1176) and broad users (932).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) between any of the breadth of user categories and all internet users.

Narrow internet users are less likely to say their smartphone is the most important device for going online

Around four in ten internet users consider their smartphone (42%) their most important device for going online at home or elsewhere, with one in four (26%) saying this about a laptop. Sixteen per cent say a tablet is their most important device for going online, and one in ten say a desktop computer (11%).

While narrow users are as likely as all internet users to nominate a laptop (28%), a tablet (18%) or a desktop computer (12%) as their most important device, they are less likely to name a smartphone (36%). This contrasts with half of broad users (51%) nominating a smartphone as their most important device for going online.

Figure 128: Most important device for going online: narrow, medium and broad users



Source: Ofcom Technology Tracker, Half 1 2017
QE40. Which is the most important device you use to connect to the internet, at home or elsewhere? (prompted response, single coded) Showing responses given by > 1% of all internet users.
Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online (3221 in 2017), narrow (949), medium (1176) and broad users (932).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) between any of the breadth of user categories and all internet users.

Online knowledge and understanding

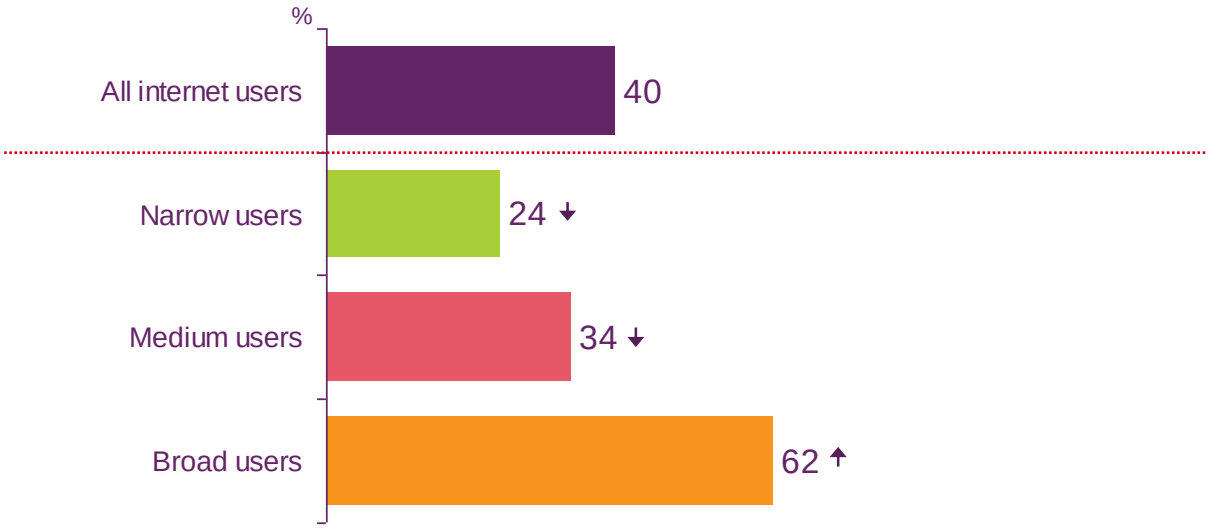
One in four narrow users say they know how to find out what broadband speeds they are getting on their home computer

Internet users were asked a series of questions about the speed of their home broadband connectionOne in four narrow users (24%) say they know how to do this; this is lower than average (40%). More than three in five (62%) of broad users say this is something they know how to do.

Figure 129 shows the results by breadth of use for the question: "Do you know how to find out what speeds you are getting on your computer at home?"

One in four narrow users (24%) say they know how to do this; this is lower than average (40%). More than three in five (62%) of broad users say this is something they know how to do.

Figure 129: Awareness of how to find out about home broadband speeds: narrow, medium and broad users

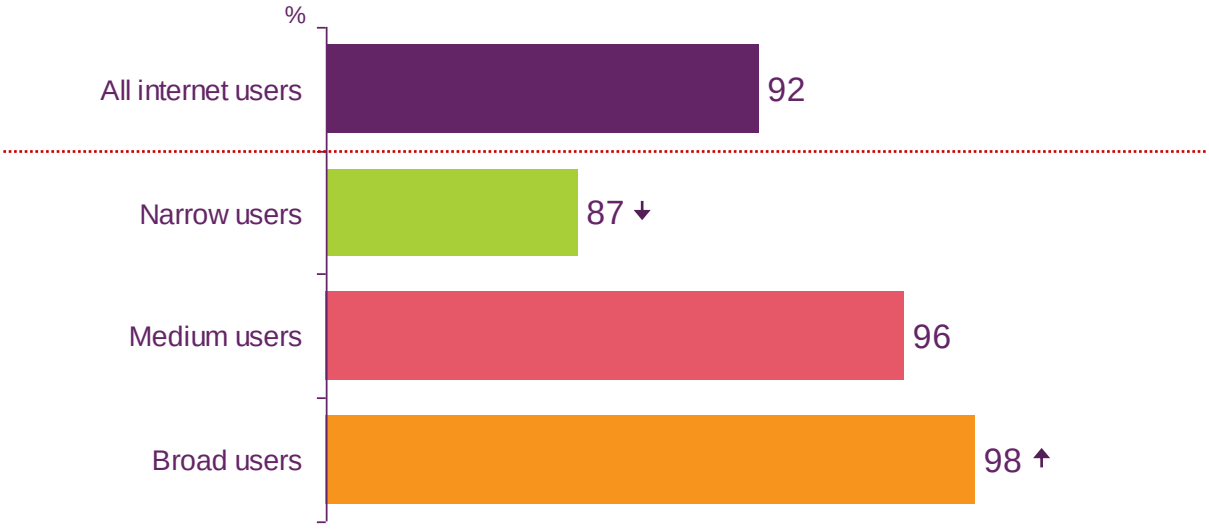


Source: Ofcom Technology Tracker, Half 1 2017
QE11C. Do you know how to find out what (broadband) speeds you are getting on your computer at home (unprompted responses, single code).
Base: All internet users aged 16+ who use broadband to connect to the internet at home (2914) narrow (793), medium (1096) and broad users (897).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) between any of the breadth of user categories and all who use broadband to connect to the internet at home.

Close to nine in ten narrow users are aware of VoIP

While awareness of VoIP among narrow users is high, at 87%, this is lower than average (92%). For broad users, awareness is near-universal (98%).

Figure 130: Awareness of VoIP: narrow, medium and broad users



Source: Ofcom Technology Tracker, Half 1 2017
QE29. Before now, were you aware that you could make voice calls or video calls using the internet? (unprompted responses, single code).
Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online (3221 in 2017), narrow (949), medium (1176) and broad users (932).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) between any of the breadth of user categories and all internet users.

On-demand viewing

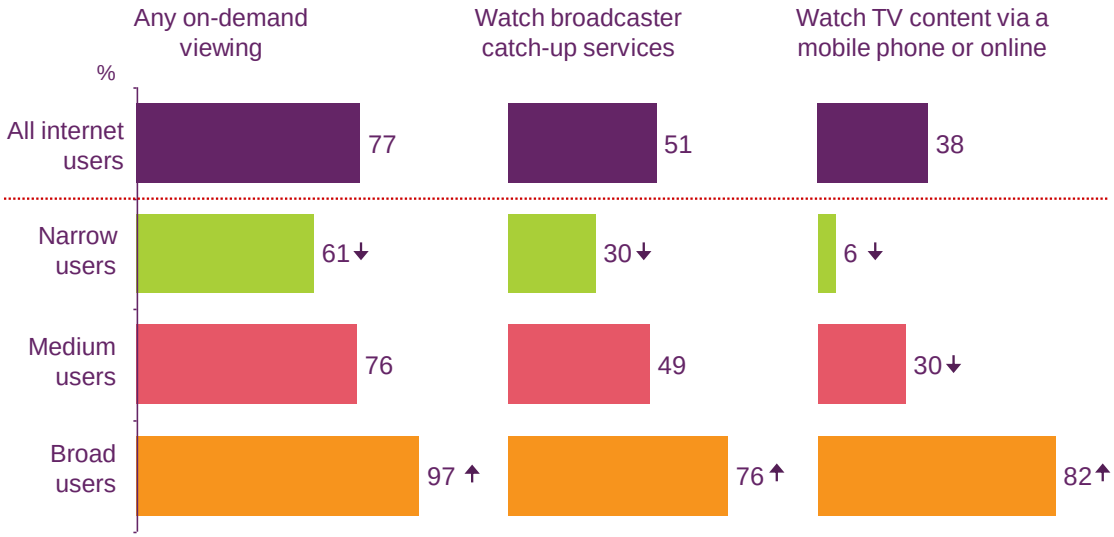
Narrow users are less likely to watch television content through broadcaster catch-up services or to watch on-demand content more generally

All respondents on the Technology Tracker survey are asked about their television viewing habits. Figure 131 shows the results relating to viewing that requires some element of online connectivity in order to access television content.

Half of all internet users say they watch broadcaster catch-up services[55] (51%); this is less likely among narrow users (30%) and more likely among broad users (76%). Overall, three-quarters of all internet users say they watch any type of on-demand content[56] (77%); this is also less likely for narrow users (61%) and more likely for broad users (97%).

While close to four in ten internet users (38%) say they watch television content on a mobile phone or online, this is also less likely for narrow users (6%) and more likely for broad users (82%).

Figure 131: Use of on-demand services: narrow, medium and broad users



Source: Ofcom Technology Tracker, Half 1 2017, derived from several questions.
Base: All adults aged 16+ who go online (3221 in 2017), narrow (949), medium (1176) and broad users (932).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) between any of the breadth of user categories and all internet users.

[55] Having selected 'TV programmes/ films on broadcaster services (e.g. BBC iPlayer, ITV Hub, All 4, My 5 or Sky Go)' when asked: Do you use any of the following types of services to view online TV programmes or films via any type of device (including a mobile phone, tablet or TV set).
[56] Based on those respondents who said they either a) used their DVR to watch recorded programmes b) watched content on broadcaster services, c) watched live TV content online as it was broadcast d) purchased content through pay-per-view services or stand-alone subscription services or e) watched other free professional TV programmes or video channels.

9.5 Non-users of the internet

This section looks at the incidence of non-use of the internet, i.e. those who say they do not go online, and compares the demographic profiles of internet users and non-users in 2016. This section uses data from the 2016 Media Literacy Tracker.

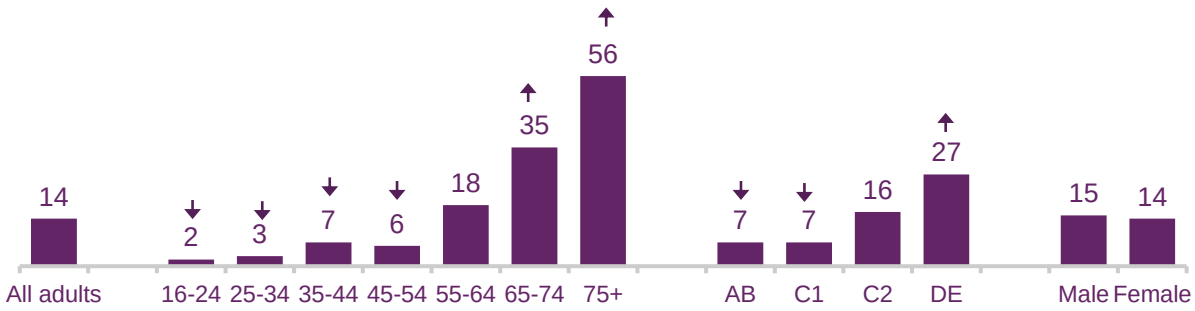
Incidence of non-users within the adult population

More than half of over-75s are non-users of the internet

Figure 132 shows that 14% of adults in the UK are non-users of the internet, and that this is more likely among over-65s (35% for 65-74s and 56% for those aged 75+) and DEs (27%).

While not shown in the chart, there has been no change in the incidence of non-users in recent years (14% in 2014, 13% in 2015).

Figure 132: Incidence of non-use of the internet, by demographic group



IN1. Do you ever go online? (unprompted responses, single coded).
Base: All adults aged 16+ (1846 aged 16+, 234 aged 16-24, 272 aged 25-34, 313 aged 35-44, 284 aged 45-54, 270 aged 55-64, 218 aged 65-74, 255 aged 75+, 427 AB, 566 C1, 369 C2, 484 DE, 885 male, 961 female).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) by age/ socio-economic group compared to all adults, and males compared to females.

Demographic profile of non-users versus internet users

Around three in five non-users are aged 65 and over

Figure 133 compares the age, socio-economic group and gender profile of internet users and non-users.

Non-users are more likely than users to be aged 65 or over. Three in five (62%) non-users are in this age bracket, compared to 12% of internet users.

Close to half of non-users are in the DE socio-economic group, compared to one in five internet users (48% vs. 21%).

Figure 133: Demographic profile of all UK adults: users and non-users of the internet

Demographic	All UK adults	Internet users	Non-users of the internet
Base	1846	1553	293
Aged 16-24	13%	14%	1%
Aged 25-44	37%	41%	12%
Aged 45-64	31%	32%	25%
Aged 65-74	11%	8%	24%
Aged 75+	10%	5%	38%
AB	27%	29%	13%
C1	27%	29%	14%
C2	22%	21%	25%
DE	25%	21%	48%
Male	49%	49%	50%
Female	51%	51%	50%

Reasons for not going online

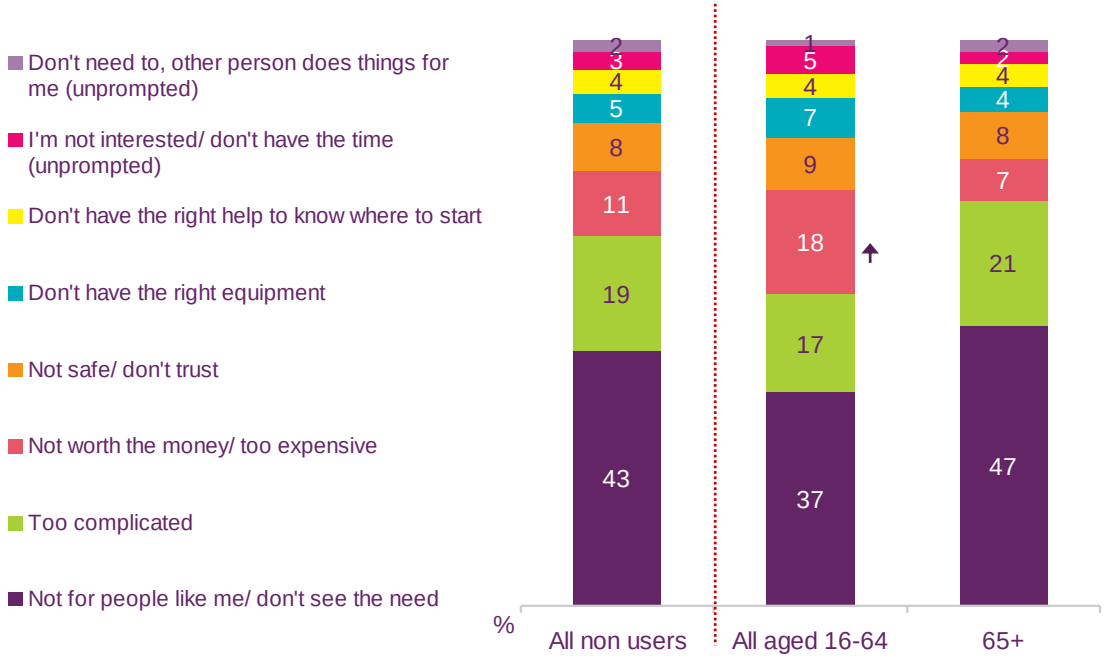
More than four in ten non-users say the main reason they are not online is because they don't see the need

Non-users of the internet are prompted with six options[57] and are asked to say which one is their main reason for not going online. More than four in ten of all non-users say it 'is not for people like them/ they don't see the need' (43%), with one in five (19%) saying it is too complicated. One in ten state that it is too expensive (11%), with less than one in ten giving any other response.

Given the relatively low numbers of non-users, any further analysis by age is limited to looking at any differences among those aged under and over 65. There is only one difference when looking at these groups; non-users aged 16-64 are more likely than the over-65s to say the main reason for going online is because 'it's not worth the money/ too expensive' (18% vs. 7%).

[57] As well as an option to give some other response or to say they were unsure.

Figure 134: Main reason for not going online, by age of non-user



IN8. Which one of the following best describes the main reason why you don't go online? (prompted responses, single coded). Showing response given by >1% of non-users.
Base: Adult internet users aged 16+ who do not go online (293 aged 16+, 99 aged 16-64, 194 aged 65+).
Arrows show significant differences (95% level) between non users aged 16-64 and those aged 65+.

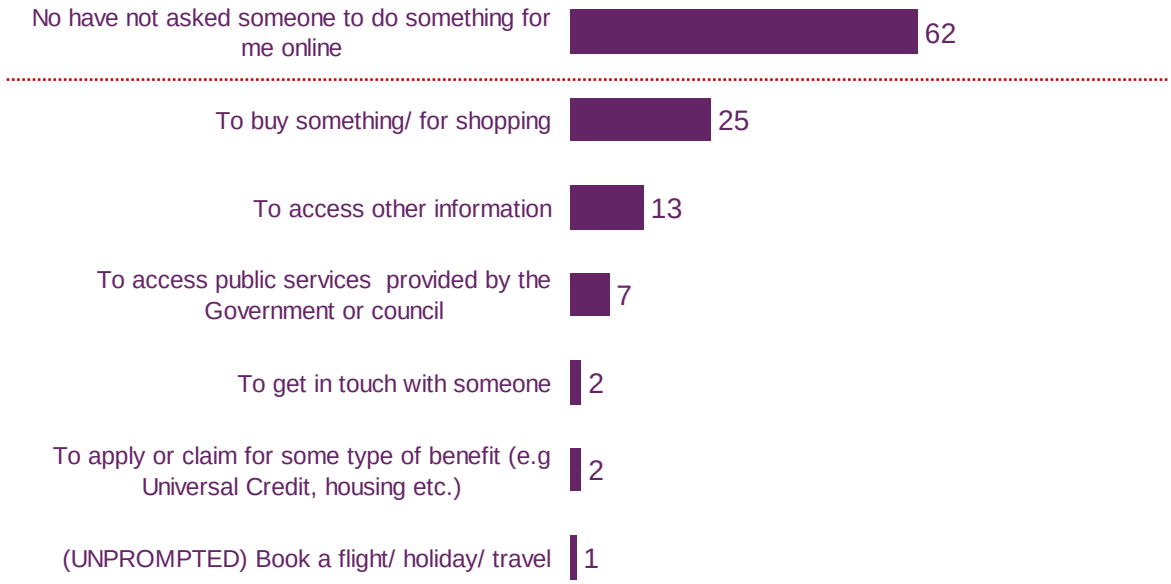
Proxy use of the internet by non-users

Close to four in ten non-users have asked someone else to use the internet on their behalf in the past year

We ask non-users of the internet whether they have asked someone else to do something for them online in the past year. If they say they have, they are prompted with five options and asked to say which of these reasons applies to them.

Nearly four in ten (38%) non-users say they have made a 'proxy' use of the internet in this way, with one in four saying it was to purchase something (25%) and 13% saying it was to access information (other than public service information). Seven per cent say it was to access public services provided by the Government or council (e.g. doctor or hospital appointments, apply for a bus pass or to get information about tax etc.). Less than 5% of non-users give any other reason for the proxy use.

Figure 135: Proxy use of the internet in the past year, among non-users



IN9. In the past year have you asked someone else to do something for you on the internet? IF YES: And was it to do any of the following or to do something else? (prompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: Adult internet users aged 16+ who do not go online (293 aged 16+).

Three in four non-users of the internet felt that nothing would encourage them to go online in the next 12 months.

Non-users are prompted with seven possible reasons[58] and asked to say which, if any, would prompt them to go online in the next 12 months.

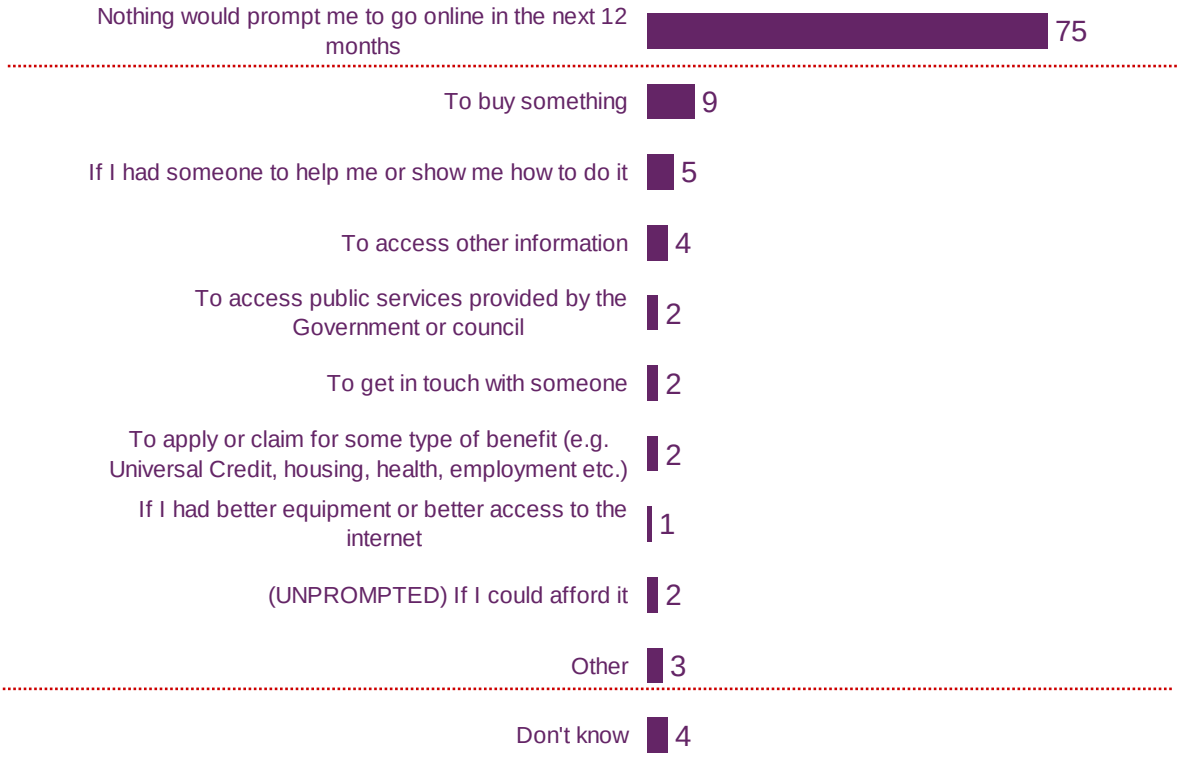
Three-quarters (75%) say that nothing would prompt them to go online in the next 12 months; this is less likely among non-users aged 16-64 (63%) than among over-65s (80%).

Among all non-users, slightly more than one in five (22%) mention something that would prompt them to go online. One in ten (9%) say they would be prompted to go online to purchase something, while around half this amount (5%) say they would if they had someone to help them or to show them how to do it. All other 'prompts' to go online are mentioned by less than 5% of non-users.

Compared to the over-65s, non-users aged 16-64 are more than twice as likely to say they would be prompted to go online in order to buy something (15% vs. 6%).

[58] As well as an option to give some other response or to say they were unsure.

Figure 136: Possible reasons to go online in the next 12 months



IN10. And would any of these reasons prompt you to go online in the next 12 months? (prompted responses, multi-coded).
Base: Adult internet users aged 16+ who do not go online (293 aged 16+).