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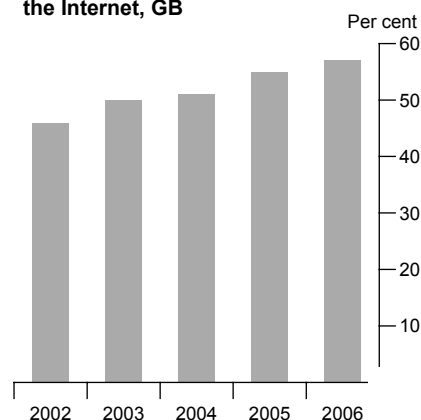
Internet Access Households and Individuals

An estimated 13.9 million households (57 per cent) in Great Britain could access the Internet from home between January and April 2006, according to the National Statistics Omnibus Survey. This is an increase of 2.9 million households (26 per cent) since 2002, and 0.6 million (5 per cent) over the last year.

This year the survey has been expanded to include Northern Ireland and for the United Kingdom the total number of households with Internet access in 2006 was 14.3 million.

In total 40 per cent of UK households were estimated to have broadband Internet access between January and April. This was an increase from the 28 per cent recorded for GB in 2005.

Households with access to the Internet, GB



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Households with access to the Internet, GB

	Per cent	Number of GB households	Percentage change on previous year
2002	46	11.0m	-
2003	50	11.9m	8
2004	51	12.2m	3
2005	55	13.3m	9
2006	57	13.9m	5



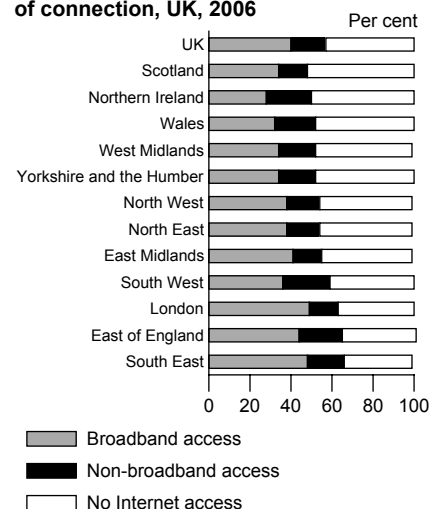
In 2006 the percentage of households able to access the Internet varied between different parts of the country. The region with the highest percentage was the South East with 66 per cent. The area with the lowest access level was Scotland with 48 per cent.

Overall, 40 per cent of UK households, or 69 per cent of households that had Internet access, had a broadband Internet connection.

London had the highest level of households with broadband Internet access at 49 per cent (78 per cent of households with Internet access). Northern Ireland had the lowest level at 28 per cent of all households (56 per cent of households with Internet access).

The annual increases in the level of broadband access vary from 17 percentage points in London and the East of England to 4 percentage points in the West Midlands. The increase for GB was 12 percentage points to 40 per cent in 2006.

Percentage of households with Internet access by region and type of connection, UK, 2006



Households with Internet access by region and type of connection, UK, 2005 and 2006

	Broadband access		Non-broadband access		No Internet access	
	2005	2006	2005	2006	2005	2006
<i>Per cent</i>						
South East	36	48	26	18	37	33
East of England	27	44	30	21	42	36
London	32	49	21	14	46	37
South West	25	36	30	23	45	41
East Midlands	31	41	28	14	41	44
North East	28	38	15	16	56	45
North West	28	38	24	16	48	45
Yorkshire and the Humber	21	34	29	18	49	48
West Midlands	30	34	26	18	44	47
Wales	27	32	27	20	46	48
Northern Ireland		28		22		50
Scotland	21	34	32	14	47	52
GB	28	40	26	17	45	42
UK	-	40	-	17	-	43

Reasons why households do not have Internet access

Of the 43 per cent of households that did not have Internet access, 24 per cent said that they didn't need the Internet and 24 per cent said that they lacked the necessary skills.

Reasons why UK Households do not have Internet access, 2006

	Percentage of UK Households
Don't need Internet because not useful, not interesting etc	24
Lack of skills	24
Equipment costs too high	14
Access costs too high (telephone etc.)	11
Other	9
Have access to Internet elsewhere	7
Privacy or security concerns	5
Don't want Internet because content harmful etc.	3
Physical disability	2

Individuals

Twenty eight million adults (60 per cent of the UK adult population) accessed the Internet in the 3 months prior to interview, with men more likely to do so than women (65 per cent compared with 55 per cent respectively). Forty per cent of women had never used the Internet compared with only 30 per cent of men. Over half of adults in all age groups, except the 65+ group, had accessed the Internet in the 3 months prior to interview.

There is still a large divide between the young and the old, with 83 per cent of the 16 to 24 age group accessing the Internet within 3 months prior to interview, compared with 15 per cent of the 65+ age group. This is also supported by data that show there are now only 10 per cent of the 16 to 24 age group who have never used the Internet, compared with 82 per cent of the 65+ age group.

When adults last used the Internet, by sex and age-group, 2006

		Within the last 3 months	Between 3 months and 1 year ago	More than 1 year ago	Never used it
<i>Per cent</i>					
	Men	65	3	2	30
	Women	55	3	2	40
	All	60	3	2	35
Age-groups	16–24	83	4	3	10
	25–44	79	3	2	17
	45–54	68	4	2	26
	55–64	52	3	2	43
	65+	15	1	2	82

The higher an individual's income, the more likely he or she is to have accessed the Internet. Fifty one per cent of adults with an income of £10,400 or less had never used the Internet. In contrast, 93 per cent with an income of £36,400 or more had used the Internet in the 3 months prior to interview, more than twice the proportion (43 per cent) of those earning £10,400 or less.

When adults last used the Internet, by income, UK, 2006

		Within the last 3 months	Between 3 months and 1 year ago	More than 1 year ago	Never used it
<i>Per cent</i>					
	Up to £10,400	43	4	2	51
	£10,401 – £14,559	54	4	4	38
	£14,560 – £20,799	70	3	3	25
	£20,800 – £36,399	85	2	1	12
	£36,400 +	93	1	0	6

Frequency of Use

Young people not only accessed the Internet more, they also accessed it more often. Most adults (59 per cent) who had used the Internet in the last 3 months used it every day or almost every day, with the age group 25 to 44 using it the most (63 per cent). Less than half of those aged 65+ who had accessed in the last 3 months (43 per cent) used it every day or almost every day, and 11 per cent used it less than once a month. Men were more likely than women to use the Internet every day or almost every day (64 per cent compared to 54 per cent).

Frequency of use of the Internet in the last 3 months, by sex and age-group, UK, 2006

	Every day or almost every day	At least once a week (but not every day)	At least once a month (but not every week)	Less than once a month
<i>Per cent</i>				
Men	64	26	6	4
Women	54	28	12	5
All	59	27	9	4
Age-groups				
16–24	60	26	9	5
25–44	63	26	8	4
45–54	62	24	10	4
55–64	49	33	13	5
65+	43	34	13	11

Activities on the Internet

The most popular activity on the Internet was searching for information about goods or services (84 per cent). This was carried out more by men (88 per cent) than women (79 per cent). Women's most popular activity was using email (80 per cent), which was men's second most popular (81 per cent).

Of the activities asked about, there were only two where the percentage of women's activities was higher than men's. These were seeking health related information and activities related to a school, college or university course. Telephoning over the Internet or video conferencing was an activity undertaken by 13 per cent of men and 7 per cent of women.

Internet activities of adults who have accessed the Internet in the last 3 months, 2006

	UK	Male	Female
<i>Per cent</i>			
Searching for information about goods or services	84	88	79
Using email	80	81	80
General browsing or surfing	72	75	68
Searching for information about travel and accommodation	71	72	69
Playing or downloading games, images or music	45	51	40
Internet banking	42	47	37
Reading or downloading on-line news (inc. newspapers or news magazines)	35	43	27
Activities related specifically to employment (current or future job)	32	35	28
Seeking health related information	27	26	28
Activities related to a school, college or university course	27	24	30
Looking for a job or sending a job application	24	26	23
Listening to web radios/watching web television	23	30	16
Downloading software other than games	23	33	13
Other communication e.g. chat rooms, message boards	20	23	18
Post educational activities (e.g. leisure activities)	18	20	16
Selling goods or services	17	22	13
Telephoning over the Internet/Video conferencing	10	13	7

Where adults have accessed the Internet

The most common place to access the Internet was the home (85 per cent), while nearly half (46 per cent) of adults accessed from a place of work. The data show that individuals tended to access the Internet at more than one location.

Adults who have accessed the Internet in the last 3 months, by place of access, 2006

Location	Percentage of UK adults
Home	85
Place of work (other than home)	46
Another person's home	29
Place of education	15
Public library	10
Internet café	8
Public office, town hall, government agency	4
Community or voluntary organisation	2

How adults obtained their computer or Internet skills

Of those adults who have used a computer, the highest percentage (48 per cent) obtained their skills to carry out computer and Internet activities by self-study in the sense of learning by doing, and 45 per cent learned through informal assistance from colleagues, relatives and/or friends. A lower percentage (30 per cent) obtained their skills in a formalised educational institution i.e. school, college or university. The data show that many people obtained their skills from more than one source.

Where/how UK adults obtained ICT skills, 2006

	Percentage of UK adults
Self-study in the sense of learning by doing	48
Informal assistance from colleagues, relatives, friends	45
Formalised educational institution (school, college, university etc.)	30
Vocational training courses (on the demand of your employer)	24
Self-study using books, cd-roms etc.	17
Training courses in adult education centre (but not on employer's initiative)	15
Some other way	1

Purchases over the Internet

Forty four per cent of adults had purchased goods or services over the Internet. Of these, 79 per cent had purchased within the last 3 months, with a higher percentage of men (81 per cent) than women (77 per cent) having done so.

Adults who purchased goods or services over the Internet, UK, 2006

	Male	Female	Total
<i>Per cent</i>			
Ever purchased	50	38	44
<i>of these</i>			
Within the last 3 months	81	77	79
Between 3 months and a year ago	15	18	16
More than one year ago	4	6	5

Of those who bought goods or services on-line in the last 12 months, the most popular purchases were films and music (53 per cent). This was closely followed by travel or holiday accommodation (51 per cent).

Internet purchases by UK adults in the last 12 months, 2006

	Percentage of UK adults
Films, music	53
Travel or holiday accommodation	51
Books/magazines/newspapers/e-learning material	37
Clothes, sports goods	37
Tickets for events	35
Computer software and upgrades (including video games)	29
Electronic equipment (including cameras)	25
Household goods (e.g. furniture, toys etc.)	24
Share purchases/financial services/insurance	24
Computer hardware	22
Food/groceries	20
Other	11
Lotteries or betting	7

BACKGROUND NOTES

1. This First Release on Internet Access shows information about both households with home access to the Internet and about individuals' use of the Internet. The source of this information is the National Statistics Omnibus Survey. These data were collected in January, February and April 2006. This is a new release of these data, and replaces the more frequent periodic publications of results from smaller samples on the National Statistics website.
2. The National Statistics Omnibus Survey is a multi-purpose survey developed by the Office for National Statistics for use by government departments, other public bodies, charities and academics. It provides a fast, cost effective and reliable way of obtaining information on topics too brief to warrant their own survey. The Omnibus Survey is carried out each month on a random sample of about 2000 adults, aged 16 and over living in private households throughout Great Britain. (For general information on the National Statistics Omnibus Survey, contact 020 7533 5310, omnibus@ons.gov.uk).
3. The National Statistics Omnibus Survey is carried out by interviewing a nationally representative sample of households in Great Britain. About 2,000 households are sampled each month, and estimates are subject to sampling variability, like those from all sample surveys. The Internet Access modules were asked in January, February and April 2006 in Great Britain, and in January 2006 in Northern Ireland. Information for Northern Ireland is not available on this topic prior to 2006.
4. The 95 per cent confidence intervals for the estimate of the proportion of households with home Internet access in the period January to April 2006, were 54 per cent to 61 per cent. The survey estimate was 57 per cent. For the estimate of the percentage of adults who have used the Internet in the three months prior to interview, the 95 per cent confidence intervals were 56 per cent to 63 per cent. The survey estimate was 60 per cent. The weights used to match population estimates for data in this release are based on data from the 2001 Census. Adults are defined as individuals aged 16 or over. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to independently rounded components.
5. This release should not be confused with the Internet Connectivity First Release. This is a separate release which presents an index of Internet connectivity showing changes in the levels of subscribers to the Internet (business and non-business). This information comes from the quarterly survey of Internet Service providers.

6. Information about the e-commerce Survey of Business is available at:
http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/Methodology_by_theme/e-commerce_related_activities/default.asp
7. Prior to this publication, Internet access data for households and individuals was published periodically on the National Statistics website:
(<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=5672>).
These data will now be published annually. The next Internet Access First Release is due to be published in August 2007.
8. Details on National Statistics policy governing the release of new data are available from the ONS Press Office.
9. **National Statistics** are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference. © Crown Copyright 2006.