

E-commerce and ICT Activity, 2013



Coverage: UK

Date: 28 November 2014

Geographical Area: UK

Theme: Business and Energy

Key Points

- E-commerce sales represented 20% of business turnover in 2013, up from 18% in 2012, and an increase of 6 percentage points from the 2008 estimate of 14%.
- Sales by Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) made up almost two-thirds (65%) of the value of total e-commerce sales in 2013, with the remainder (35%) being website sales.
- While 22% of businesses generated e-commerce sales, 51% of businesses made e-commerce purchases in 2013.
- 95% of businesses had broadband Internet and 80% had a website in 2013.
- In 2013, 42% of businesses used social networks and 24% purchased cloud computing services.

Overview

Estimates of the values of e-commerce and the adoption and use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) by UK businesses are provided in this release. The source of the information is the E-commerce Survey of UK Businesses.

Estimates of the levels of e-commerce are calculated using estimates of business turnover for the sectors covered by the E-commerce Survey of UK Businesses from the [Annual Business Survey \(ABS\)](#). The 2013 E-commerce Survey of UK Businesses selected approximately 7,850 UK businesses with 10 or more employees, in the manufacturing, production, construction, distribution and parts of the service sectors of the economy. It should be noted that no estimation is made in this release for businesses with fewer than 10 employees.

There were changes to the measurement of e-commerce as part of the 2008 survey, which means that e-commerce estimates prior to 2008 are not comparable with those since 2008 (see Background Note 4). Therefore, the time series for e-commerce estimates in this release start at 2008. Approximately 40% of the survey questions change each year. This is to enable the survey to

cover changes and developments in the use of ICT and e-commerce. This means that the available time series varies according to how long a particular question has been included in the survey.

The [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development \(OECD\)](#) definition of e-commerce is used in this statistical bulletin. An e-commerce transaction is defined as “the sale or purchase of goods or services, conducted over computer networks by methods specifically designed for the purpose of receiving or placing of orders”. It is important to note, under this definition, that “the goods or services are ordered by those methods, but the payment and the ultimate delivery of the goods or services do not have to be conducted online”.

A quality improvement to the estimates of the values of e-commerce sales was made for the 2011 release that was published in November 2012. Prior to the 2011 survey, estimates of the values of e-commerce sales had been calculated using ABS total business turnover data from the previous year. Since the 2011 survey it has been possible to use ABS data from the relevant survey year to derive estimates of e-commerce sales, which resulted in more accurate estimates. See Background Note 5 and an [information note \(29.7 Kb Pdf\)](#) published on the Office for National Statistics (ONS) website for further details.

Estimates of the values of e-commerce sales are presented at current prices in this release.

Comparisons between four categorisations of businesses based on their size in terms of their number of employees are included within this statistical bulletin. The employment size bands used are 10 to 49, 50 to 249, 250 to 999 and 1,000 or more. This release shows that the largest businesses (1,000 or more employees) dominate e-commerce sales.

In 2013 there was still a large difference, as in previous years, in the proportion of large and small businesses that adopt emerging technologies. For example, cloud computing services were purchased by more than three times the proportion of large businesses compared with the smallest.

The usual revisions policy for this release is that estimates in the previous two years are subject to revision. However, some unusually large revisions of contributor data affecting the breakdown of the values of e-commerce sales between EDI and website sales have been applied back to 2009, the earliest period that was possible to revise.

Your Views Matter

We are constantly aiming to improve this release and its associated commentary. We would welcome any feedback you might have and would be particularly interested in knowing how you make use of these data to inform your work. Please contact us via email: ecommerce@ons.gsi.gov.uk or telephone Cecil Prescott on +44 (0)1633 456767.

Total E-commerce Sales

Total e-commerce sales comprise sales received over a website and sales received over Electronic Data Interchange (EDI). EDI is the computer-to-computer exchange of data and documents in a

standard electronic format. EDI is a central part of e-commerce because it enables businesses to exchange information electronically much faster, more cheaply and more accurately than is possible using a paper-based system.

In 2013, the estimated value of total e-commerce sales was £557 billion. This was an increase of £222 billion (66%) since the 2008 estimate of £335 billion.

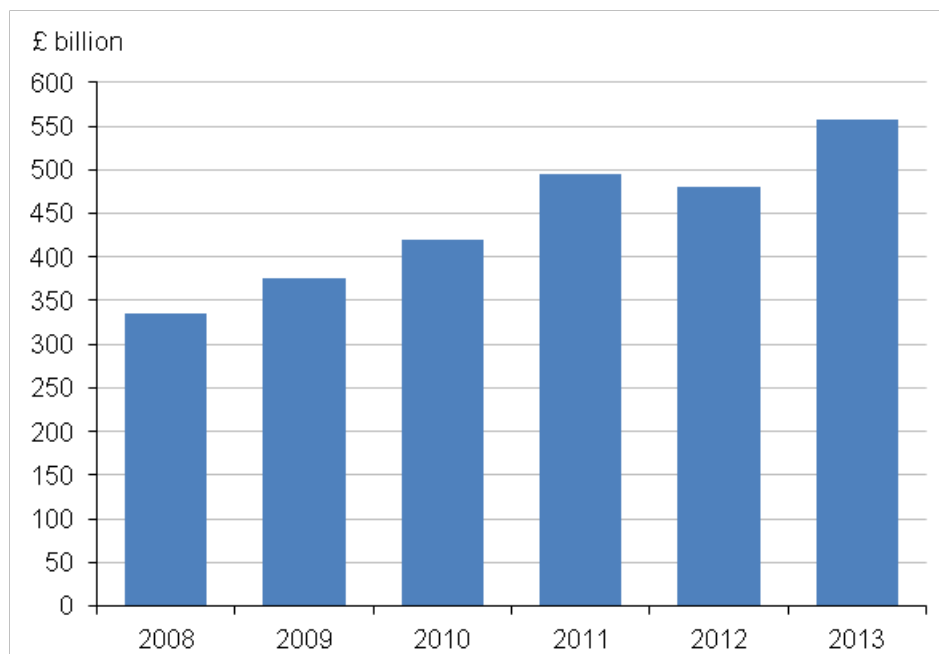
The UK's largest businesses (1,000 or more employees) continued to dominate e-commerce sales. While there are comparatively few businesses with 1,000 or more employees in the UK, these businesses made up just under half (46%) of all e-commerce sales in 2013.

EDI sales of £364 billion made up almost two thirds (65%) of the value of total e-commerce sales in 2013, with the remaining £193 billion (35%) being website sales. The proportion of businesses making e-commerce sales was 22% in 2013, an increase from 17% in 2009 (the earliest year when comparable records are available). In 2013, more businesses made website sales (18%) compared with EDI sales (6%), although the value of EDI sales is much greater than website sales.

The total e-commerce sales of £557 billion represented nearly 20% of business turnover, compared with 18% in 2012 and 14% in 2008.

The value of total e-commerce sales decreased between 2011 and 2012 due to a decrease in EDI sales over this period. This decrease needs to be treated with a degree of caution and could partly be explained as a consequence of sampling variability. See Sales over EDI for further details. Sampling variability is explained in more detail in the background notes of this release.

While 22% of businesses generated e-commerce sales, 51% of businesses made e-commerce purchases in 2013. Businesses have in the past, found it difficult to provide information on the value of their e-commerce purchases and these are therefore no longer measured in this release.

Figure 1: Value of total sales derived from e-commerce sales

Source: Office for National Statistics

Download chart

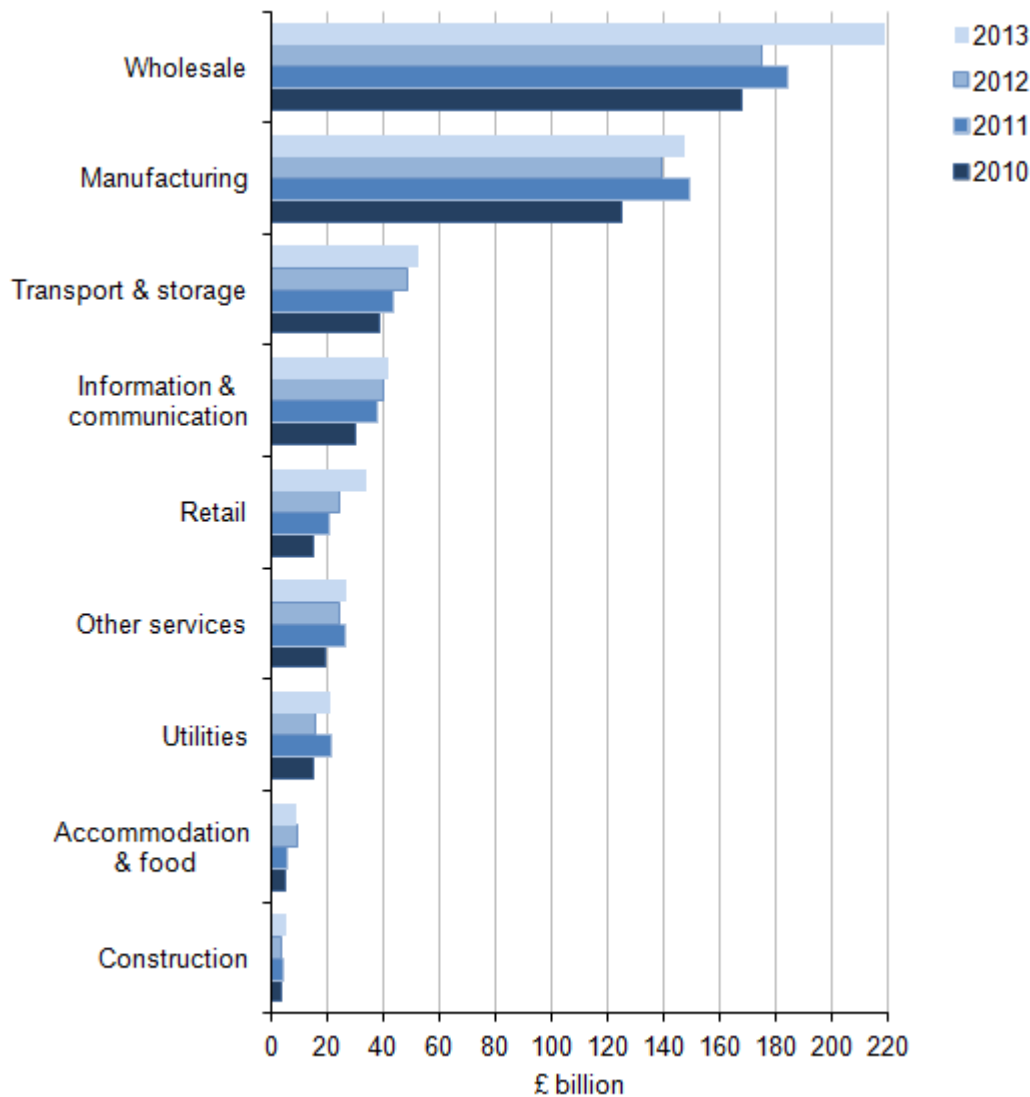
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E-commerce Sales by Industry Sector

The Wholesale and Manufacturing sectors reported the highest levels of e-commerce sales in 2013, of £219 billion and £147 billion respectively.

The Construction sector reported the highest percentage increase in total e-commerce sales in 2013, an increase of 50%, from £4 billion in 2012 to £6 billion in 2013. However this sector was the smallest in terms of the value of sales, making up only 1% of the total value of e-commerce sales.

Figure 2: Value of total e-commerce sales, by industry sector

Source: Office for National Statistics

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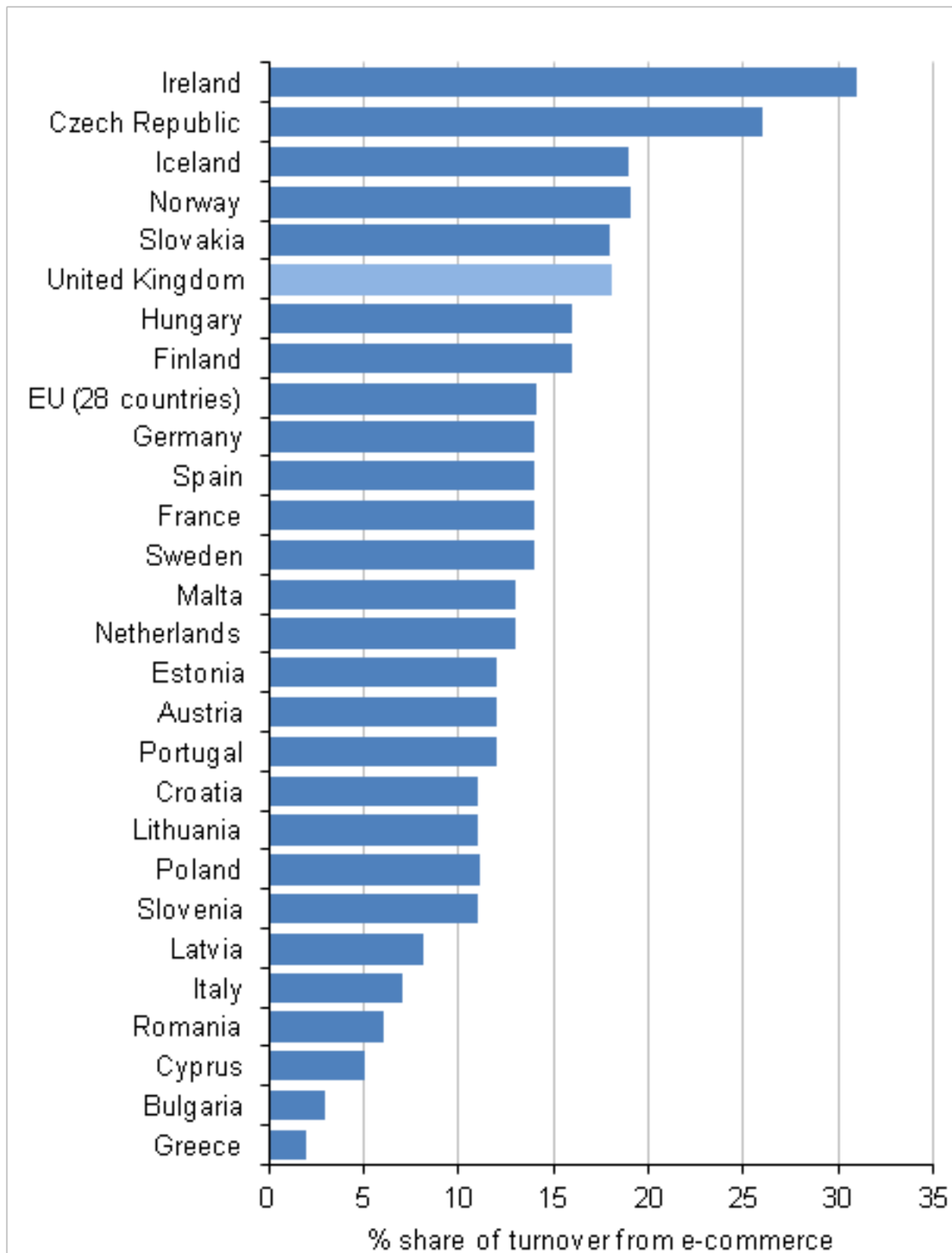
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International Comparisons

A comparable survey is run in all countries of the European Union (EU) and also in some non-EU countries. Eurostat plays a key role in this and each year leads a process whereby the data requirements for the survey are reviewed and updated. Comparative data for EU countries can be found on the [Eurostat website](#).

Results published by Eurostat in relation to the 2012 survey showed the UK to be near the top of the EU table for the proportion of total sales that were derived from e-commerce.

In 2012, the UK reported 18% of total business turnover derived from e-commerce. This placed the UK in joint fifth position, in terms of the proportion of total turnover derived from e-commerce, when compared with other European countries. Ireland reported the highest proportion (31%), and Greece the lowest (2%).

Figure 3: Value of total turnover from e-commerce, European country comparisons, 2012

Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Data not available for Denmark, Luxembourg and Belgium.

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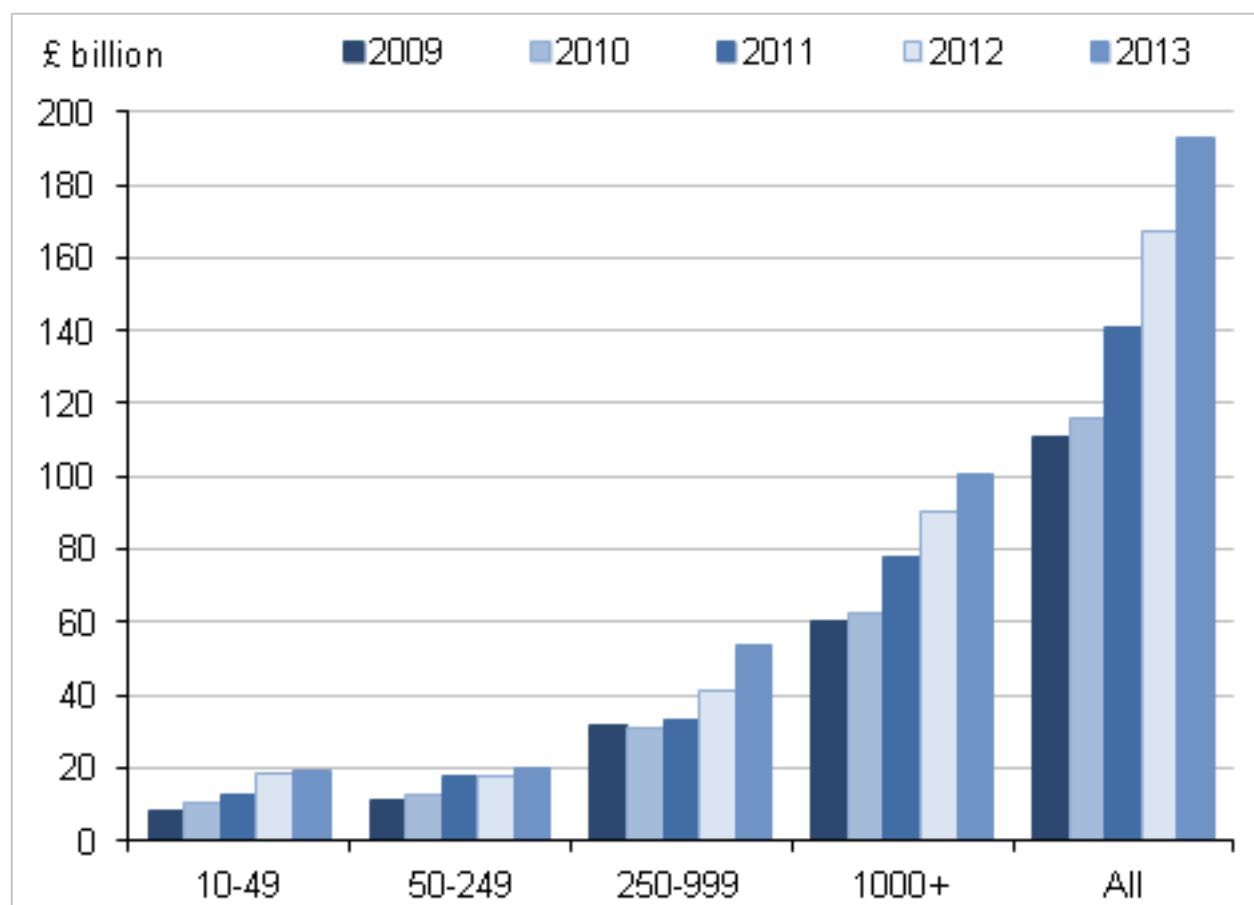
Website Sales

Sales over a website have seen steady growth in recent years, both in terms of the proportion of businesses using websites for sales, and the value of website sales. In 2009, 14% of businesses sold over a website, to a value of £111 billion. In 2013, 18% of businesses sold over a website, with sales of £193 billion, an increase in the value of sales of £82 billion (74%) since 2009.

The value of website sales, as a proportion of total business turnover, increased in 2013 to 7%, up from 6% in 2012 and 5% in 2009. The estimate of 7% of business turnover in 2013 relating to website sales is dominated by the largest businesses (1,000 or more employees), which contributed 4% of the value of total e-commerce sales for all businesses. The smallest businesses (10 to 49 employees) contributed only 1% to the estimate of total business turnover derived from website sales.

Sales to private customers of £101 billion made just over half (53%) of the total value of website sales in 2013, with the remaining £92 billion being made to businesses or public authorities (47%).

The largest businesses (1,000 or more employees) made the highest sales to private customers (£73 billion) in 2013, while businesses in the 250-999 sizeband made the highest sales to businesses or public authorities (£44 billion).

Figure 4: Value of e-commerce sales over a website, by size of business

Source: Office for National Statistics

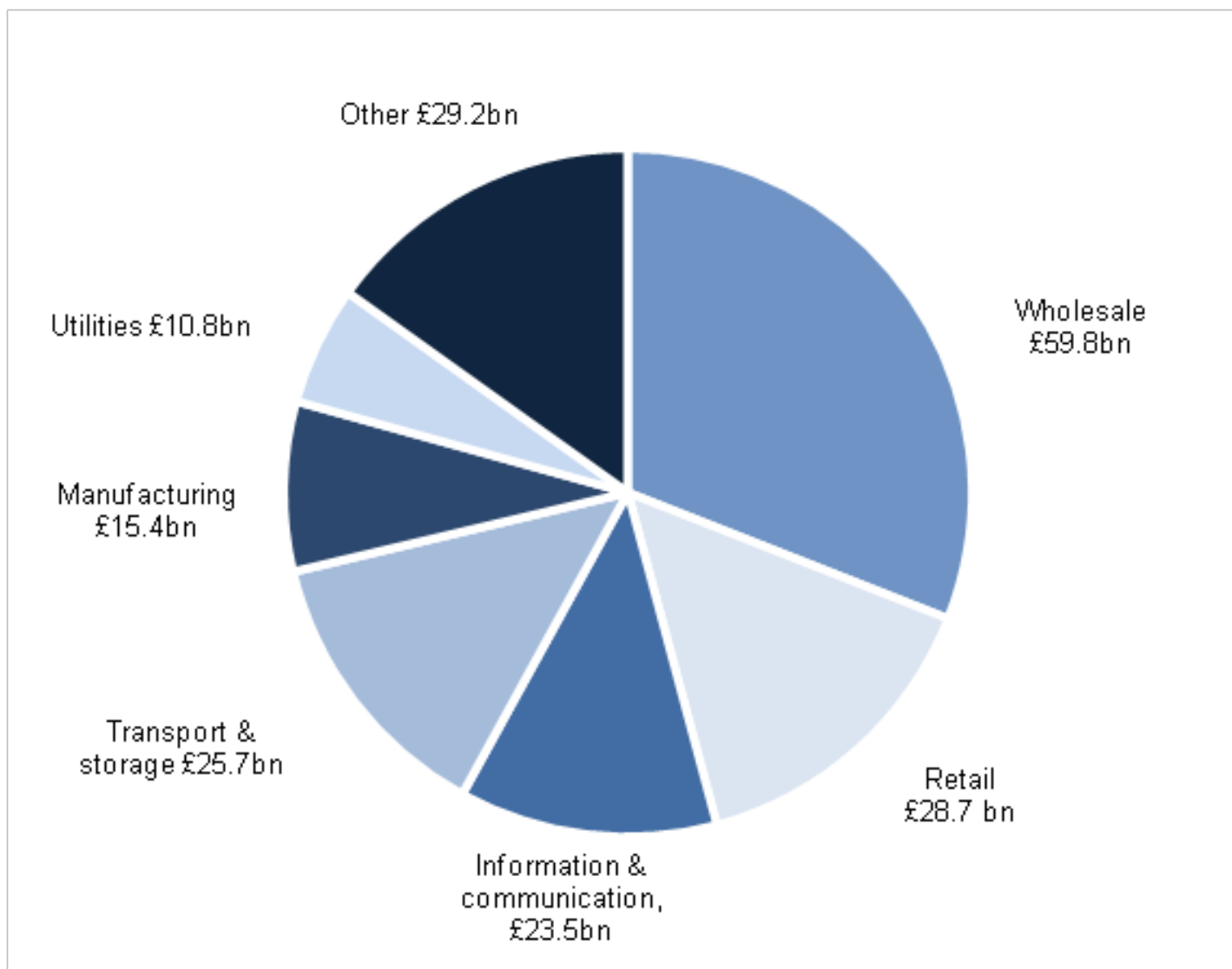
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Website Sales by Industry Sector

The Wholesale sector has reported the highest value of website sales every year since 2008, reaching £60 billion in 2013, up from £25 billion in 2008. However the Retail sector reported the highest proportion of businesses making website sales (37%). The Accommodation and food services sector reported the highest percentage increase (223%) in the value of website sales since 2008, increasing from £3 billion to £8 billion. However this sector was the second smallest in terms of the absolute value of website sales.

Figure 5: Website sales by industry sector

Source: Office for National Statistics

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Sales over EDI

As specified earlier, EDI is the computer-to-computer exchange of data and documents in a standard electronic format. Sales over EDI are between businesses, whereas website sales are to businesses or public authorities and households. The value of EDI sales increased by £51 billion (16%), from £312 billion in 2012, to £364 billion in 2013. The increase was £99 billion (38%) since the 2009 estimate of £264 billion. EDI sales represented 13% of total business turnover in 2013.

The 2012 estimate of EDI sales has been revised down as a result of more accurate information from businesses that arose in the course of processing the 2013 survey. Therefore, the decrease

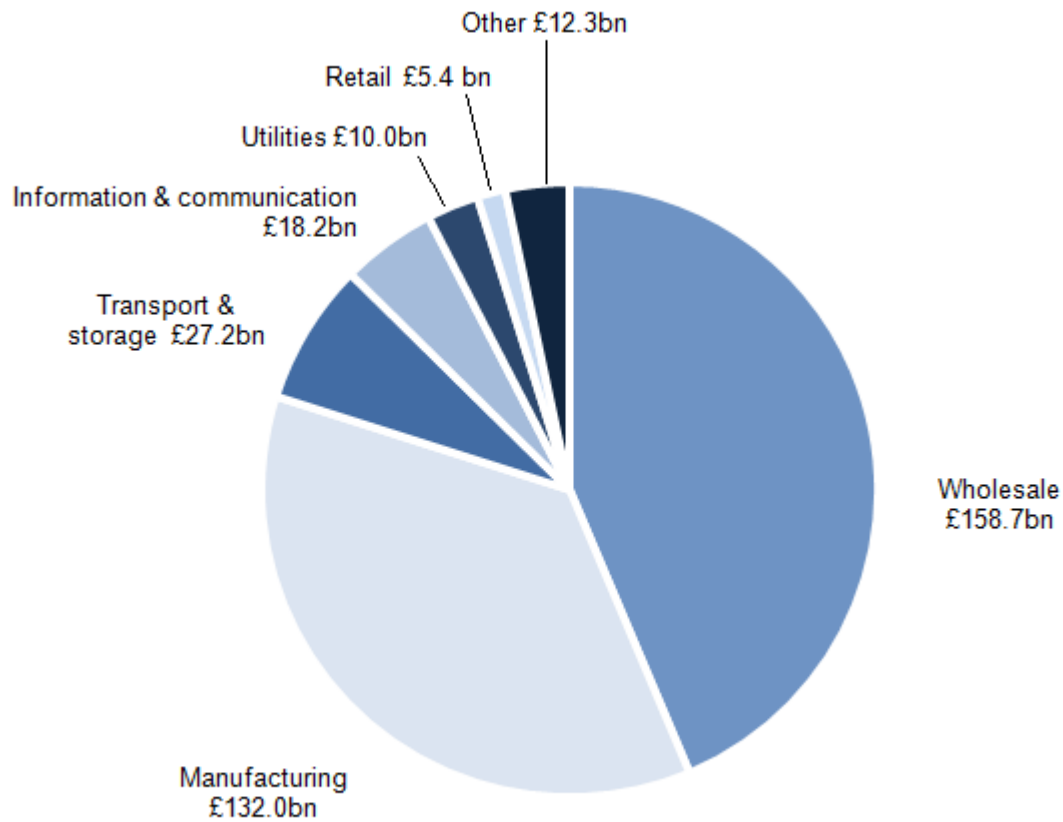
between 2011 and 2012 is larger than first published. The decrease in the value of EDI sales between 2011 and 2012 needs to be treated with caution and could partly be explained as a consequence of sampling variability. Sampling variability is explained in more detail in the background notes of this release.

In 2013, relatively few businesses (6%) made sales over EDI, an increase since the 2012 estimate of 5%. While three times as many businesses sold over websites compared with those that sold over EDI, the value of EDI sales was almost double that of website sales, at £364 billion and £193 billion respectively.

Sales over EDI by Industry Sector

The Wholesale sector reported the largest EDI sales in 2013 (£159 billion). This was followed by the Manufacturing sector (£132 billion). The Wholesale sector also saw the largest increase of any sector in the value of EDI sales in 2013, up £33 billion (26%) from £126 billion in 2012 to £159 billion.

The Wholesale sector also reported the highest proportion of businesses making EDI sales (12%). The Information and communication sector reported the highest percentage increase (271%) in the value of EDI sales since 2008, increasing from £5 billion to £18 billion.

Figure 6: EDI sales by industry sector

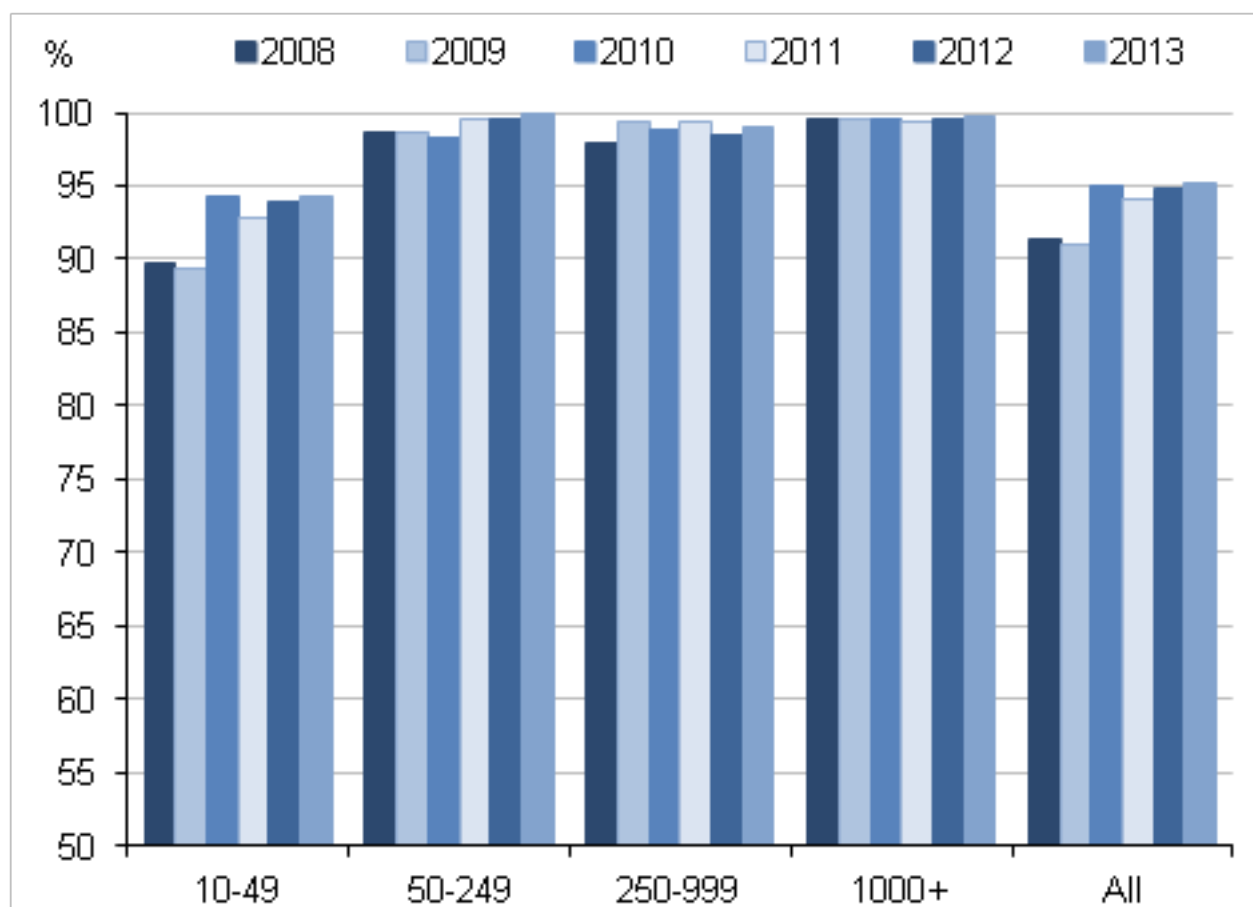
Source: Office for National Statistics

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Internet Access

In 2013, the vast majority of businesses had Internet access (95%). Of particular note, businesses in all of the larger size bands (50 or more employees) reported levels of Internet access above 99%. Since 2010, there has been little change in the proportion of businesses reporting Internet access.

Figure 7: Proportion of businesses with Internet access, by size of business

Source: Office for National Statistics

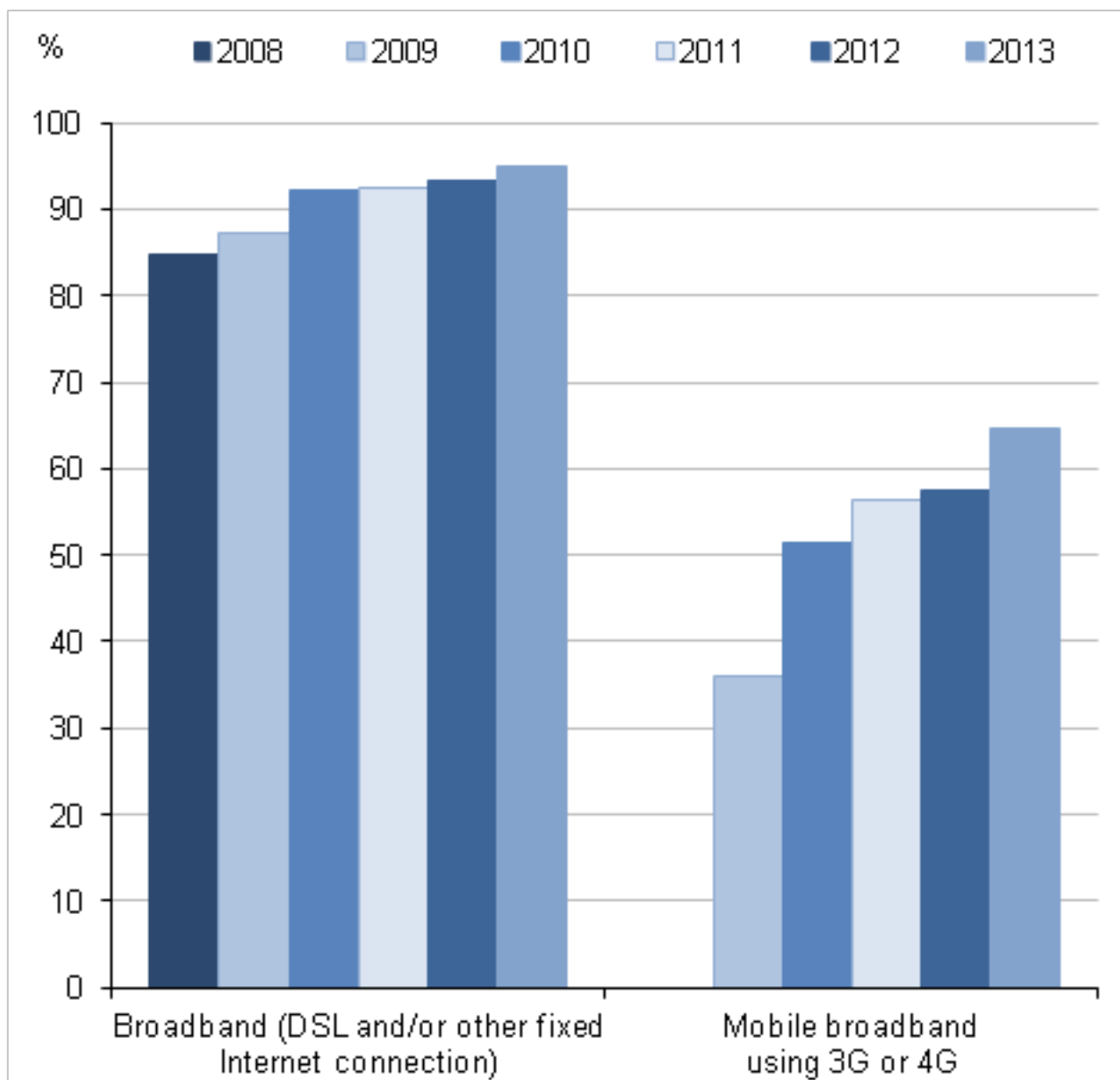
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As with households, as reported in the [Internet Access Households and Individuals 2014](#) statistical bulletin, the majority of businesses have a fixed Internet connection, with 95% continuing to use fixed broadband (DSL or other fixed connection) in 2013. This was up from 93% in 2012 and 85% in 2008.

There was also an increase in the proportion of businesses using a mobile broadband (3G or 4G) connection, from 36% in 2009 to 65% in 2013.

Figure 8: Proportion of businesses by type of connection

Source: Office for National Statistics

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Internet Connection Speeds

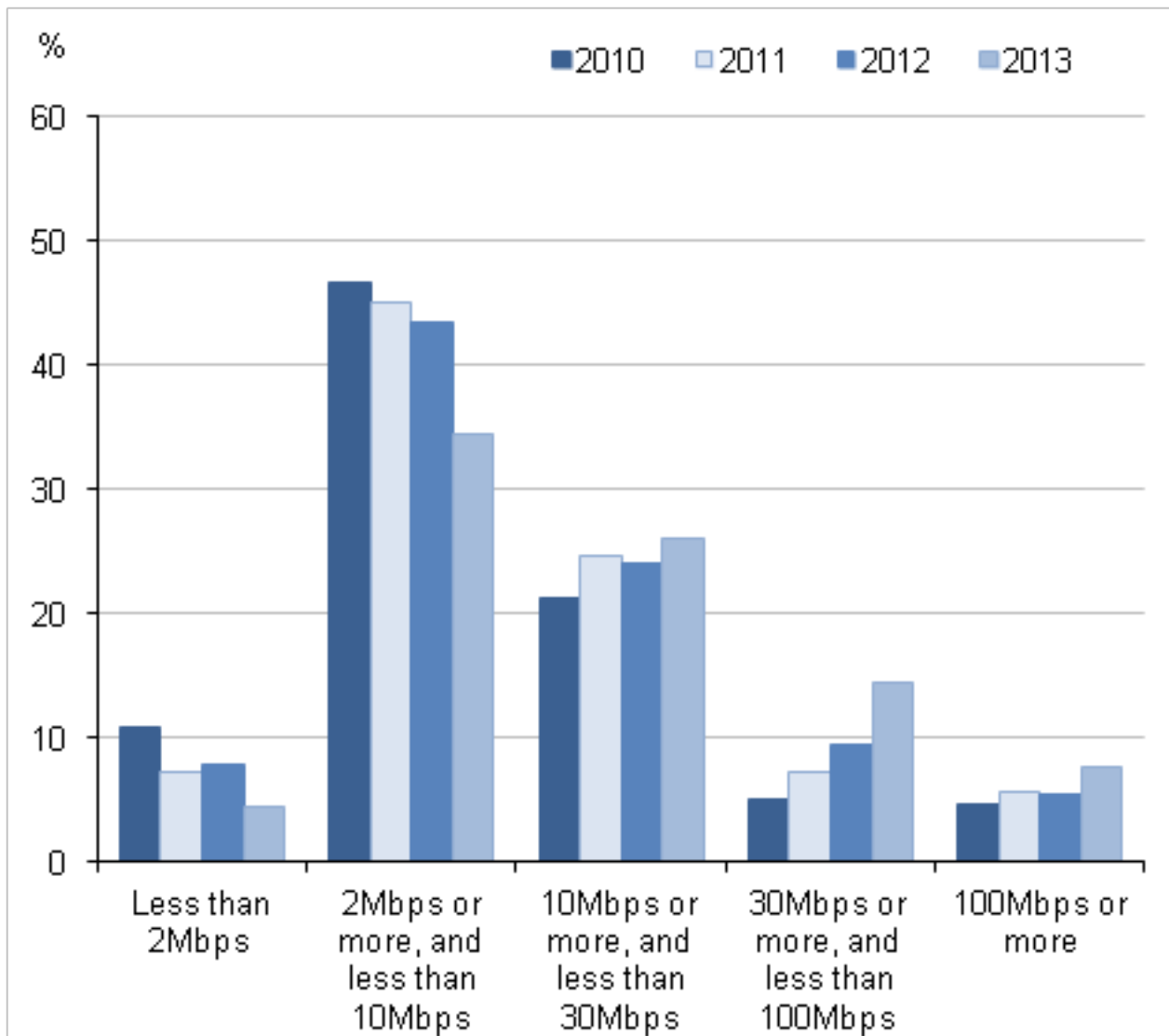
As high speed fibre optic broadband is rolled out across the UK by providers offering improved speeds for businesses and households, it is unsurprising that there has been a decline in the proportion of businesses using the slowest connection speeds (less than two megabits per second (Mbps)) since 2010. Only 4% of businesses reported speeds less than two Mbps in 2013 compared with 11% in 2010.

In 2013, although the most common connection speed remained between two and ten Mbps, with 34% of businesses reporting this speed, this was a decrease from the estimate of 47% in 2010.

Since 2010 there has been an increase in businesses using connection speeds of ten Mbps or more. The largest increase can be seen in businesses subscribing to broadband with a connection speed between 30 and 100 Mbps, which increased from 5% in 2010 to 15% in 2013. The proportion of businesses using superfast broadband, above 100 Mbps, has increased from 5% in 2010 to 8% in 2013.

The size of a business has an effect on the likely Internet connection speed a business will subscribe to. The most common connection speed for the smallest businesses (with 10 to 49 employees) was between two and ten Mbps (36%), In contrast, the largest businesses were most likely to use superfast broadband (44%).

Figure 9: Proportion of businesses with Internet access, by maximum contracted connection speed



Source: Office for National Statistics

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Business' Use of Websites

In 2013, 80% of businesses had a website. Virtually all of the largest businesses (with 1,000 or more employees) had a website (99%), while only 77% of the smallest businesses with 10 to 49 employees) reported having one. Since 2008, the proportion of the largest businesses with a website has changed little, from 98% in 2008 to 99% in 2013. Over the same period the proportion of the smallest businesses with a website increased from 71% to 77%.

Social Networks

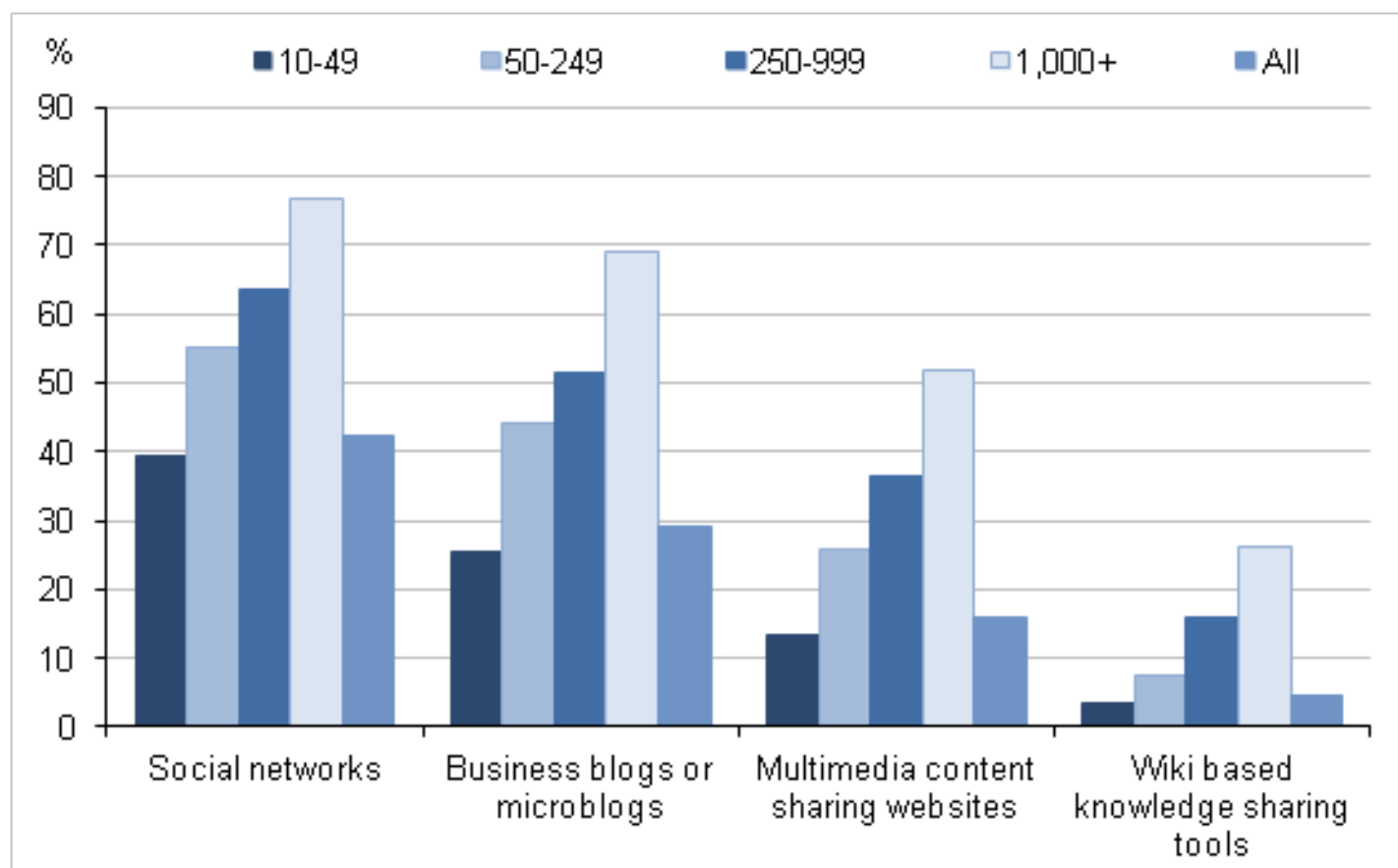
Social networking has enabled businesses to change the way they interact with customers and provide new facilities for marketing their business and recruiting staff. In 2013, 42% of businesses used social networks such as Facebook or LinkedIn. The likelihood of a business interacting on social networks is linked to its size; 77% of the largest businesses (1,000 or more employees) used these networks compared with 39% of the smallest businesses (with 10 to 49 employees).

Blogs and Microblogs

In 2013, nearly three in ten businesses (29%) used a blog or a microblog, for example Twitter. More businesses with 1,000 or more employees used a blog or a microblog than those with 10 to 49 employees, at 69% and 26% respectively. The Information and communication sector reported the highest rate of use (65%), the Transport and storage sector the lowest (14%).

Multimedia Content Sharing Websites

In 2013, 16% of businesses used multimedia content sharing websites such as Youtube or Flickr. Just over half of the largest businesses used content sharing websites (52%). The Information and communication sector again reported the highest rate of use (40%).

Figure 10: Proportion of businesses using social media, by size of business, 2013

Source: Office for National Statistics

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Cloud Computing

Cloud computing, or Internet storage space, is the use of remote servers hosted on the Internet to store, manage, and process data. The use of cloud computing has become more common in recent years as an alternative to storing data on local servers or personal computers.

In 2013, 24% of businesses purchased a cloud computing service, including email, database hosting and file storage. Larger businesses were more likely to purchase cloud computing services than the smaller ones. While 65% of businesses with 1,000 or more employees purchased cloud computing services, only 21% of business with 10-49 employees did so. The service purchased the most was storage of files, with 17% of businesses reporting this. The lowest purchase of a cloud computing service was for computing capacity to run own software, with 5% of businesses reporting this.

The Information and communication sector purchased the largest amount of cloud computing services across all types of services surveyed, while the Accommodation and food services sector purchased the least. The two most common reasons reported for not purchasing cloud computing

services over the Internet were insufficient knowledge or expertise (37%) followed by the risk of security breach or disclosure (33%).

Other ICT Adoption and Use

This release focuses on the most significant aspects of e-commerce and ICT activity. There are additional [data tables \(3.34 Mb Excel sheet\)](#) on other aspects of ICT use by businesses in the tables associated with this release.

Background notes

1. Key issues specific to this release

This is the latest annual release about e-commerce and the adoption and use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) by UK businesses published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). The results in this release are in respect of 2013. The source of the information is the E-commerce Survey of UK businesses.

The Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR) was used as the sampling frame for the survey. The survey was sent to approximately 7,850 UK businesses with 10 or more employees, in the Manufacturing, Production, Construction, Distribution and Service sectors.

This statistical bulletin reports e-commerce activity by UK businesses, regardless of where the respondent's customer or supplier is located, or whether the trading activity is with households or businesses.

The Annual Business Survey (ABS), formerly the Annual Business Inquiry part 2 (ABI/2), produced by ONS, is the key resource for estimating the level of e-commerce in the UK. All sectors covered by the E-commerce Survey are also covered by the ABS.

The ABS samples approximately 62,000 businesses in Great Britain from a population of over 1.8 million businesses in the sample frame on the IDBR. The responding businesses provide information such as their turnover, purchases, employment costs, capital expenditure and stocks. Data for approximately 11,000 businesses in Northern Ireland are collected by the Department of Finance and Personnel Northern Ireland and contribute to the UK estimates.

On 13 November 2014, ONS published provisional results from the 2013 ABS. The release covered:

- Non-Financial Services;
- Distribution;
- Production;
- Construction;
- Parts of Agriculture.

Together these industries represent the UK Non-Financial Business Economy and account for around two thirds of the whole economy of the UK in terms of Gross Value Added.

2. Consultation on Measuring the Digital Economy

From 7 August to 30 October 2014, ONS conducted a public consultation on the future publication of statistics that measure the digital economy. ONS intends to publish the response to the consultation by the end of 2014.

3. National Statistics

The UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) has reviewed this publication in their report: [Assessment of compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics: Statistics on E-commerce and Information and Communication Activity](#) which was published on 27 July 2010. This review recommended that the E-commerce and ICT Activity release be designated as National Statistics, subject to ONS carrying out certain requirements. ONS carried out the necessary work to comply with the requirements in this report and as a result, the UKSA confirmed that this release has National Statistics status.

4. Classification Changes

The 2013 survey was based on the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) 2007. The estimates published for 2009 were the first to be published based on SIC 2007, which replaced the SIC 2003 classification system. The estimates in this release that relate to the 2006 and 2007 survey years are based on SIC 2003. Results for the 2008 survey were originally compiled and published based on SIC 2003, and have been re-estimated based on the new SIC 2007, to enable comparisons to be made with future years.

There were changes to the e-commerce questions asked in the 2008 survey, which impacted on the published results. The Internet/non-Internet split of e-commerce transactions, that had been included since the survey began, were discontinued after the 2008 survey. This split was replaced with a breakdown of website and non-website transactions. The historical e-commerce estimates, broken down by Internet and non-Internet sales, are still available on the ONS website in the [2008 E-commerce and ICT Statistical Bulletin](#). As a result of the changes to the measurement of e-commerce, this release provides estimates of the values of e-commerce from 2008 onwards.

Until the 2007 survey, the definition of e-commerce sales and purchases included transactions over manually typed email. From the 2008 survey onwards, this changed and email transactions have been excluded. This means that e-commerce sales published in this release are not directly comparable with estimates previously published for 2007 and previous years.

5. Quality Improvement to the Estimation of E-commerce Sales Values

Prior to the 2011 survey, estimates of the values of e-commerce sales had been calculated using the ABS total business turnover data from the previous year. This method had been used since the e-commerce survey commenced in 2000. When the survey was initiated, the impact of

using ABS total turnover from the previous year was not obvious, as the values of e-commerce in particular, and the economy as a whole, were growing each year. However, this changed, most notably, with the onset of the recession in 2008/09.

ABS results used to be published approximately 14 months after the year end, meaning that the previous years ABS data were the latest available at the time of finalising the e-commerce results. Due to improvements to the timeliness of ABS estimates, and through enhancements to the systems used to produce estimates for this release, it is now possible to use ABS data from the relevant survey year to derive estimates of e-commerce sales. This change has served to produce more accurate estimates of e-commerce sales, as it means that the estimates of e-commerce reported by businesses are now applied to rates of turnover, from the ABS, from the same year that they relate to.

6. Common Pitfalls in Interpreting the Series

This report should not be confused with the Internet Access Household and Individuals statistical bulletin. This is a separate release that contains estimates on Internet access and use of the Internet by households and individuals, not by businesses.

7. Uses of the data

This bulletin provides information on the estimates of e-commerce sales, and the use by businesses of various types of ICT. In some cases, growth over time can be seen where ICT use has been measured on a comparable basis in previous years. Examples of this include the measurement of ICT activities such as Internet access, broadband and websites. Results are presented by business employee sizeband. This allows comparisons of the levels of e-commerce trading and ICT activity to be made between different sized businesses.

[Eurostat](#) is the primary user of the statistics. The UK provides statistics to Eurostat measuring business use of ICT and e-commerce activity, in accordance with [Regulation of the European Parliament and Council 808/2004](#). These estimates are used to provide information that is consistent with other European Union (EU) member states, as part of progress towards measuring EU benchmarking indicators. These EU indicators compare the development and use of ICT in the EU member states, and help to provide a better understanding of the adoption of ICT and the Internet by businesses at an EU level.

ICT is considered as critical for improving the competitiveness of European industry and, more generally, to meet the demands of society and the economy. Broadband is considered to be important when measuring access to, and use of, the Internet. Broadband offers users the possibility to rapidly transfer large volumes of data and keep access lines open. The take-up of broadband is a key ICT policy-making indicator. Widespread access to the Internet, via broadband, is regarded as essential for the development of advanced services on the Internet, such as e-business, e-government or e-learning.

Do you make use of our estimates of e-commerce and ICT activity? If yes, we would like to hear from you (ecommerce@ons.gsi.gov.uk) and understand how you make use of these statistics. This may enable us, in the future, to better meet your needs as a user.

8. International context

A comparable survey is run in all countries of the European Union (EU) and also in some non-EU countries. The measurement of e-commerce and ICT activity by businesses is under continuing review and development. Eurostat plays a leading role in this and each year leads a process whereby the data requirements for the survey are reviewed and updated. Comparative data for EU countries can be found on the [Eurostat website](#). Note that approximately 40% of the survey questions change each year to enable the survey to cover new and developing aspects of ICT use. This means that the available time series for ICT adoption and use varies and not all time series are updated each year.

9. Estimation

The estimates of the proportions of businesses use number raised estimation. Results weighted by number of businesses give an equal weight to businesses irrespective of size. This method reflects the greater number of small businesses than large ones. Therefore, estimates of proportions of businesses in 'All sizebands' are likely to be closer to the estimates for the 10 to 49 employment sizeband, than for the 1,000+ employment sizeband. Estimates of the monetary values of e-commerce use the employment of the business with the estimated percentage of total turnover derived from e-commerce. This means that businesses with larger employment have a greater weight in the estimation of the monetary values of e-commerce. Full details of the estimation methods used are available in the [E-commerce and ICT Quality and Management Information Paper \(99.7 Kb Pdf\)](#).

10. Coverage

The provision of the results to Eurostat is a requirement set out in [EU Regulation 808/2004](#). The survey collects the data necessary to meet this requirement. The estimates in this release relate to those sectors of the economy where coverage is required by Eurostat under the terms of the Regulation. It should therefore be noted that the survey is not intended to provide full coverage of all UK ICT and e-commerce business activity.

The survey covers businesses within the following economic sectors, according to the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) 2007.

- Manufacturing: Divisions 10-33;
- Utilities: Divisions 35-39;
- Construction: Divisions 41-43;
- Wholesale: Divisions 45-46;
- Retail: Division 47;
- Transport and Storage: Divisions 49-53;
- Accommodation and food services: Divisions 55-56;
- Information and communication: Divisions 58-63;
- Other services: Divisions 68-74, 77-82, 95.1.

The sectors of the SIC 2007 not covered by the survey are as follows:

- Section A Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing;

- Section B Mining and Quarrying;
- Section K Finance and Insurance Activities
- Division 75 Veterinary Activities;
- Section O Public Administration and Defence, Social Security;
- Section P Education;
- Section Q Health and Social Work;
- Section R Arts, Entertainment and Recreation;
- Section S Other Service Activities except SIC 95.1, Repair of computers.

Estimates in this release relate to businesses with 10 or more employees. No information has been collected from businesses with less than 10 employees. Until the 2004 survey, businesses with less than 10 employees were included in the survey, due to a specific user interest from the then Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). When this user interest ended the coverage of these businesses was discontinued, leaving the coverage from 2005 onwards as being just what was required by Eurostat under [EU Regulation 808/2004](#).

It is not possible to estimate what the current survey results would be if the businesses with less than 10 employees were still covered by the survey. However, in 2004, the last year that these businesses were included, ONS estimated that their sales represented 6.6% of total sales over the Internet. These businesses also had lower proportions of ICT adoption and usage than the larger businesses. This meant that estimates of the proportions of "all businesses" carrying out an ICT activity were lower in the 2004 results than in the 2005 results and onwards, when "all businesses" were defined as businesses with 10 or more employees.

In recent years there has been user interest in resuming coverage of the businesses with less than 10 employees and ONS is intending to resume coverage with effect from the 2014 survey.

11. Revisions to Earlier Years

As in previous years, estimates are subject to revision. The usual revisions policy for this release is that estimates in the previous two years are subject to revision. However, some unusually large revisions of contributor data affecting the breakdown of the values of e-commerce sales between EDI and website sales have been applied back to 2009, the earliest period that was possible to revise. As it was not possible to revise the 2008 estimates, some of the splits between EDI and website sales have been suppressed

12. Sampling Variability and Confidence Intervals

The estimates in this release are subject to sampling variability, as are those from all sample surveys. The following confidence interval tables show estimated 95% confidence intervals for selected estimates relating to e-commerce and ICT activity.

All of the published estimates come from survey data and so have a degree of statistical error associated with them. Confidence intervals are an indication of the reliability of the estimate; the smaller the interval, the more reliable the estimate is likely to be. With regards to '95% confidence intervals', we mean that if we repeated our survey 100 times, 95% of the time (95

times out of 100), the true population value would fall within the range of these confidence intervals.

Table 1: Value of website sales: 95 per cent confidence intervals, 2013

	£ billion		
Website sales	Lower limit	Survey estimate	Upper limit
Manufacturing	12.7	15.4	18.1
Utilities	6.5	10.8	15.0
Construction	0.1	0.7	1.3
Wholesale	45.8	59.8	73.8
Retail	21.9	28.7	35.6
Transport & Storage	18.2	25.7	33.2
Accommodation & Food Services	6.4	8.4	10.3
Information & Communication	12.3	23.5	34.6
Other Services	11.6	20.1	28.5
Total	170.0	192.9	215.8

Table source: Office for National Statistics

Download table


 [XLS format](#)
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Table 2: Value of EDI sales: 95 per cent confidence intervals, 2013

£ billion

EDI sales	Lower limit	Survey estimate	Upper limit
Manufacturing	120.3	132.0	143.7
Utilities	5.6	10.0	14.4
Construction	1.7	4.9	8.2
Wholesale	124.8	158.7	192.6
Retail	3.4	5.4	7.3
Transport & Storage	20.3	27.2	34.1
Accommodation & Food Services	0.5	1.0	1.4
Information & Communication	6.6	18.2	29.7
Other Services	4.4	6.4	8.4
Total	324.9	363.7	402.5

Table source: Office for National Statistics

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Table 3: Proportion of business making website sales, 95 per cent confidence intervals, 2013

Website sales	Lower limit	Survey estimate	Upper limit
Manufacturing	15.2	18.0	20.8
Construction	0.4	2.7	5.0
Wholesale	28.1	31.7	35.2
Retail	30.7	37.3	43.8
Accommodation & Food Services	9.7	13.9	18.0
Information & Communication	20.2	26.4	32.7
Other Services	9.3	11.9	14.6
Total	16.9	18.3	19.7

Table source: Office for National Statistics

Table notes:

1. Estimates for the Utilities and Transport & Storage sectors are not included in this table due to concerns about data quality.

Download table


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Table 4: Proportion of business making EDI sales, 95 per cent confidence intervals, 2013 %

EDI sales	Lower limit	Survey estimate	Upper limit
Manufacturing	9.8	11.9	14.0
Construction	0.6	2.8	4.9
Wholesale	10.1	12.4	14.7
Retail	3.6	7.0	10.5
Accommodation & Food Services	0.0	1.6	3.9
Information & Communication	4.6	9.0	13.5
Other Services	1.2	2.4	3.7
Total	5.4	6.2	7.1

Table source: Office for National Statistics

Table notes:

1. Estimates for the Utilities and Transport & Storage sectors are not included in this table due to concerns about data quality.

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13. Imputation

No imputations were made for contributor or item non-response, as all data items on a business' completed questionnaire have to pass validation checks before being included in the survey results. The only exceptions to this are where, under certain conditions, a missing value data item was estimated based on other contributors in the same employment size band and SIC.

For this to take place, the business had to have returned all non-value data items and all these items had to have passed the validation checks.

14. ONS Business Statistics

There is a [Business and Trade Statistics](#) community on the [StatsUserNet](#) website. StatsUserNet is the Royal Statistical Society's interactive site for users of official statistics. The community objectives are to promote dialogue and share information between users and producers of official business and trade statistics about the structure, content and performance of businesses within the UK. Anyone can join the discussions by registering via either of the links above.

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16. Special events

ONS has published commentary, analysis and policy on 'Special Events' which may affect statistical outputs. For full details visit the [Special Events](#) page on the ONS website.

Publication policy

17. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available by visiting www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html or from the Media Relations Office email: media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk

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