

Internet Access Quarterly Update, Q3 2011

Abstract

This article provides estimates of adult Internet users and non-users in the UK, for 2011 Q3. This is the third release of quarterly estimates of Internet users and non-users. By the third quarter of 2011, 8.43 million adults in the UK had never used the Internet.

Summary

There were 41.62 million adults in the UK who had ever used the Internet by 2011 Q3. This represents 82.9 per cent of the adult population. The 8.43 million adults who had never used it represents 16.8 per cent of the adult population. There was a decrease of 299,000 adults who had never used the Internet since 2011 Q2, following a decrease of only 12,000 between Q1 and Q2

Internet use is linked to various socio-economic and demographic characteristics, such as age, disability, location and earnings. Adults who were more likely to have never used the Internet included the over 65s, the widowed and those with a disability.

The estimates in this release are derived from the Labour Force Survey. This is the third time that ONS has released quarterly estimates of the numbers of Internet users and non-users. These estimates are experimental and are not seasonally adjusted. ONS developed these statistics to meet the needs of users, especially Raceonline 2012, for more frequent information about people who have never used the Internet. Raceonline 2012 is aiming to help as many new people as possible get online by 2012.

On 31 August 2011 ONS published the [annual 2011 Internet Access – Households and Individuals statistical bulletin](#). The estimates in the Internet Access bulletin are derived from the National Statistics Opinions survey, which has a smaller sample size than the Labour Force Survey. Comparisons made between the two releases should be treated with caution.

Age

As in previous quarters, the majority of people in all age groups, apart from those aged 75 or more, had used the Internet. The largest proportion of Internet users was in the youngest age group (those aged 16 to 24), at 98.6 per cent. This represents 7.16 million people.

There were decreases in the numbers of non-users in all age groups, apart from the youngest. The largest decrease was amongst those aged 75 and over, where there were 164,000 fewer non-users by 2011 Q3, compared with Q2, with the percentage of non-users in this age group decreasing from 76.3 per cent to 72.4 per cent. There were smaller decreases in the other age groups, apart from the youngest. The youngest age group showed an increase in those who had never used the Internet, although this change is not statistically significant.

Gender

By 2011 Q3, there were 20.92 million male and 20.70 female Internet users. Men were more likely to have used the Internet than women, with 85.3 per cent of men having used it compared with 80.6 per cent of women. There were 1.41 million more women than men who had never used the Internet; 4.92 million women compared with 3.51 million men.

Disability

By 2011 Q3, there were 4.25 million disabled adults who had never used the Internet, just over half of the 8.43 million who had never used it. This represents 36.3 per cent of those who were disabled. Of those adults who reported no disability, 10.8 per cent had never used the Internet.

Earnings

Of those adults in employment whose gross weekly pay was less than £200 per week, 8.3 per cent had not used the Internet. The proportion of Internet non-users declines with each successively higher weekly pay band. Of those paid £1000 a week or more, there were no Internet non-users.

Background notes

1. Key issues specific to this article

This is the third in a new series of quarterly releases about Internet use by adults aged 16 or over. The source of the information is the Labour Force Survey (LFS). The results in this article are in respect of 2011 Q3. ONS began publishing quarterly data on Internet users and non-users to enable more timely information on Internet use to be made available to users.

The new question added to the Labour Force Survey in 2011 Q1 was “when did you last use the Internet?” This is the same question that has been used in the Opinions Survey to collect data for the annual publication “Internet Access – Households and Individuals”.

The term ‘disabled’ is used to refer to those who fall within the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) definition of disability.

‘Don’t know’ responses are not separately identified in this article. Therefore, percentage breakdowns sum to less than 100 per cent, reflecting the small number of ‘don’t know’ responses to the Internet use question.

2. **Experimental Statistics**

The estimates in this article are experimental statistics. When new questions are added to the LFS, standard practice is for the question to be asked for four quarters before results are published. However, in order to satisfy user needs the estimates in this article have been released earlier than they would normally have been.

3. **Revisions**

There are no revisions to estimates previously published.

4. **Coherence**

The results published in this quarterly article focus on Internet users and non-users. These results are not directly comparable with the estimates contained in the 2011 annual Internet Access bulletin, which was published on 31 August 2011. This contained a wide range of information about Internet access and use, but from a smaller sample than the LFS. The 2011 annual bulletin was compiled from approximately 3,300 interviews conducted for the National Statistics Opinions survey, whereas approximately 43,000 households respond in each quarter for the LFS. The larger sample size in the LFS allows for more detailed socio-demographic analysis than is possible with the Opinions dataset.

The estimates in this article are on a UK basis whereas the Internet Access 2011 results relate to Great Britain only.

5. **Sampling variability**

The 2011 Q3 confidence intervals table shows estimated 95 per cent confidence intervals for estimates relating to Internet users and non-users, by age and gender. The term '95 per cent confidence intervals' means that 95 per cent of all the possible random samples would produce intervals containing the true value.

6. **Rounding**

In all tables totals may not equal the sum of independently rounded components.

7. 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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