

Internet Access Quarterly Update, Q2 2011

Abstract

There were 41.26 million adults who had ever used the Internet by the second quarter of 2011, representing 82.3 per cent of the adult population. These results are derived from the Labour Force Survey. This is the first time that ONS has provided estimates of the quarterly change in the numbers of Internet users and non-users and these estimates are experimental.

Summary

By the second quarter of 2011, 8.73 million adults had never used the Internet. This represented 17.4 per cent of the adult population. This was a decrease of 12,000 adults since quarter one, a change which is not statistically significant. There were 41.26 million adults who had used the Internet by 2011 Q2, representing 82.3 per cent of the adult population. These estimates are derived from data collected by the Labour Force Survey. This is the first time that ONS has provided estimates of the quarterly change in the numbers of Internet users and non-users and these estimates are experimental. It is important to note that this is only the second quarter for which figures are available and that these figures are not seasonally adjusted.

ONS today also publishes the annual [2011 Internet Access – Households and Individuals statistical bulletin](#). This contains information about how people use the Internet. The estimates in the Internet Access bulletin are derived from the National Statistics Opinions survey, which has a much smaller sample size than the Labour Force Survey. Comparisons between the two releases should be treated with caution.

Internet use is linked to various socio-economic and demographic characteristics, such as age, disability, location and income. Groups of adults who were more likely to have never used the Internet included the over 65s, the widowed and those with a disability. As the total numbers of Internet users and non-users have not changed significantly this quarter, the socio-demographic breakdowns remain similar to the estimates published for quarter one.

Age

As in the previous quarter, the majority of adults in all age groups, apart from the group of adults aged 75 or more, had used the Internet. The largest proportion of Internet users was in the 16 to 24 age group, at 98.8 per cent. This represented 7.19 million people. Only 64,000 adults in this youngest age group had never used the Internet. There were small decreases shown in the estimates of Internet non-users, in nearly all age groups. There was an increase in those who had never used the internet for the 75 and over age group, which can be explained by the fact that the sampling errors for this age group are higher than the others due to the sample design of the LFS. The changes are not statistically significant.

Sex

By 2011 Q2, the numbers of male and female Internet users were similar, at 20.71 million and 20.54 million respectively. Men were more likely to have used the Internet than women, with 84.6 per cent of men having used it compared with 80.1 per cent of women. There were 1.37 million more women than men who had never used the Internet; 5.05 million women compared with 3.68 million men.

Disability

By 2011 Q2 there were 4.24 million disabled adults who had never used the Internet, almost half of all those who had never used it. This represented 36.8 per cent of those who were disabled. Of those adults who reported no disability, 11.6 per cent of adults had never used the Internet.

Gross weekly pay

Of those adults in employment whose gross pay was less than £200 per week, 9.2 per cent had not used the Internet. The proportion of Internet non-users declined 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 second 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 estimates in this article are in respect of 2011 Q2. ONS has begun publishing quarterly data on Internet users and non-users, enabling 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 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**

Estimates published on 18 May 2011, relating to 2011 Q1, were based on data that had been collected for the first time in that quarter. As a result, it was not possible to include imputed cases, which would normally be the case. The availability of the Q2 data has led us to update the method used to calculate Internet users and non-users estimates in Q1, and, as a result we have revised slightly the estimates relating to that period. The revisions mean that the estimates presented in this bulletin for 2011 Q1 have been made as comparable as possible with the estimates relating to 2011 Q2.

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 also published today in the 2011 annual Internet Access bulletin, which contains a wide range of information about Internet access and use, but from a far smaller sample than the LFS. The 2011 annual bulletin was compiled from approximately 3,600 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 Q2 confidence intervals table shows estimated 95 per cent confidence intervals for estimates relating to Internet users and non-users, by age and sex. 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. **Related Information**

[Further information on the the Opinions Survey](#) can be found on the ONS website.

8. 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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