Abstract

This article provides estimates of adult Internet users and non-users in the UK, for 2011 Q4. This is the fourth release of quarterly estimates of Internet users and non-users. By the fourth quarter of 2011, 8.20 million adults in the UK had never used the Internet.

Summary

There were 41.99 million adults in the UK who had ever used the Internet by the end of 2011 Q4. This represents 83.5 per cent of the adult population. The 8.20 million adults who had never used it represents 16.3 per cent of the adult population. There was a decrease of 224,000 adults who had never used the Internet since 2011 Q3, following a decrease of 299,000 between Q2 and Q3.

Internet use is linked to various socio-economic and demographic characteristics, such as age, disability, location and earnings. Adults who were less likely to have 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 fourth 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 98.7 per cent. This represents 7.18 million people.
There were decreases in the numbers of non-users in all age groups. The largest decrease was amongst those aged 55 to 64, where there were 86,000 fewer non-users by 2011 Q4, compared with Q3, with the percentage of non-users in this age group decreasing from 19.8 per cent to 18.7 per cent. There were significant decreases in the other age groups, including a drop of 55,000 amongst those aged 75 and over.

Gender

By 2011 Q4, there were 21.15 million male and 20.84 million female Internet users. Men were more likely to have used the Internet than women, with 86.1 per cent of men having used it compared with 81.0 per cent of women. There were 1.49 million more women than men who had never used the Internet; 4.85 million women compared with 3.36 million men.

Disability

By 2011 Q4, there were 3.98 million disabled adults who had never used the Internet. This represents 34.5 per cent of those who were disabled and just under half of the 8.20 million who had never used it. By 2011 Q4, there was a decrease of 276,000 disabled Internet non-users, compared with Q3. Of those adults who reported no disability, 10.9 per cent had never used the Internet.

Earnings

Of those adults in employment whose gross weekly pay was less than £200 per week, 8.1 per cent had not used the Internet. The proportion of Internet non-users declines with each successively higher weekly pay band up to those paid £800 to £899 where there were no Internet non-users.

Background notes

1. **Key issues specific to this article**

This is the fourth 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 Q4. 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 each quarter to 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 Q4 confidence intervals table](#) shows estimated 95 per cent confidence intervals for estimates relating to Internet 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](http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html) or from the Media Relations Office email: media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk

**Copyright**

© Crown copyright 2012

You may use or re-use this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit