

Consumer understanding of broadband terminology - Technical Report

Survey objectives

The core aims of this study are:

- To understand what, if any, additional information on broadband technology consumers would find useful in ads and at point of sale, specifically to:
 - Test whether clearer information on the delivery method for broadband services may be useful to consumers once broadband terms are explained.
 - Establish, when consumers are deciding which broadband provider and product to purchase, the relative degree of usefulness of having descriptions of the underlying technology and its capabilities included in marketing materials and at point of sale vs. other factors considered.
 - Test what this information would be and at what point in the purchase journey it would be useful.

Sampling approach and sample achieved

An initial qualitative pilot was conducted via video calls to help inform the descriptions of four broadband services to be assessed during the quantitative stage.

The main quantitative stage was conducted using an online panel and river sampling approach, providing a cost-effective and efficient means to reach the audience consulted for this study. As the research is specifically about fixed broadband internet services, an online approach was deemed to be acceptable.

Targets were set by demographics, full fibre broadband availability, and ISP. Targets were set for fibre broadband availability and ISP to ensure that a minimum number of interviews per cell was achieved for the purposes of analysis. Respondents in the devolved nations and with full fibre availability were oversampled to ensure robust bases for analysis.

We invited the targeted sample to take part in the research from which respondents were screened for broadband decision making for their household. The achieved interviews were as per the table below:

	Achieved
Total	1155
Gender	
Male	541
Female	612
SEG	
ABC1	678
C2DE	477
Age	
16-34	309
35-64	598
65-74	178
75+	70
Nation	
England	801
Scotland	121
Wales	129
NI	104
English region	
North	208
Midlands	251
South	342
Fibre in area	
Full fibre available	545
Full fibre not available	562
Broadband supplier	
BT/EE/PlusNet	393

Sky	287
Virgin Media	178
TalkTalk	128
Other	137

The survey was conducted from 7th – 14th November 2022 and comprised a total of 1,155 interviews.

Weighting and sample efficiency

The final data was weighted to be nationally representative on gender, age, SEG, nation, macro English region and full fibre availability. The profile for fibre availability was derived from internal Ofcom data.

	Achieved		Weighted profile	Weighting factor
	n	%	%	
Total	1155	100	100	
Gender				
Male	541	47%	49%	1.05
Female	612	53%	51%	0.96
SEG				
ABC1	678	59%	53%	0.90
C2DE	477	41%	47%	1.14
Age				
16-34	309	27%	30%	1.12
35-64	598	52%	49%	0.95
65-74	178	15%	12%	0.78
75+	70	6%	9%	1.49
Nation				
Scotland	121	10%	9%	0.86
Wales	129	11%	4%	0.36
NI	104	9%	2%	0.22
English region				
North	208	18%	24%	1.31
Midlands	251	22%	26%	1.21
South	342	30%	35%	1.19

Fibre in area				
Full fibre available	545	47%	35%	0.74
Full fibre not available	562	49%	60%	1.23
Prefer not to say	48	4%	5%	1.20

The total data has a weighting efficiency of 84%.

Guide to statistical reliability

The variation between the sample results and the “true” values (the findings that would have been obtained if everyone aged 16+ in the UK had been interviewed) can be predicted from the sample sizes on which the results are based, and on the number of times that a particular answer is given. The confidence with which we can make this prediction is usually chosen to be 95%, that is, the chances are 95 in 100 that the “true” values will fall within a specified range. However, as the sample is weighted, we need to use the effective sample size¹ (ESS) rather than actual sample size to judge the accuracy of results. The ESS for the total sample size of 1,155 is 967.

Note on current fixed broadband service

The household’s current fixed broadband service used was respondent-reported and, as demonstrated by matching of postcode data for full fibre availability, we can see that some respondents mistakenly believed they had a full fibre (FTTP) service in areas where it is not currently available.

¹ Effective Sample Size shown as Effective Base in the data tables produced.