Ofcom's Children's Media Literacy 2019 Technical Report

Preface

The Children's Media Literacy Research 2019 has been run by Critical Research on behalf of Ofcom. The objective of the survey is to provide detailed evidence on media use, attitudes and understanding among children and young people aged 5-15, as well as detailed information about the media access and use of young children aged 3-4.

Critical Research interviewed a 'main' quota sample of 1393 children aged 8-15 and their parents in the UK. They also conducted 604 interviews with parents of children aged 5-7 and 704 interviews with parents of children aged 3-4. Interviews were carried out across 252 different sampling points in the UK, face-to-face, in-home.

In 2019 there was a requirement to achieve a minimum of 100 interviews with internet users aged 3-4, 5-7, 8-11 and 12-15 in each of the nations. It was therefore necessary to conduct additional or boost interviews in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland with parents whose child aged 3-7 goes online as well as with children aged 8-15 who go online and their parents.

In addition, a further 542 'boost' interviews were conducted in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in 78 separate sample points to the 'main' study. Parents of 3-15s were screened to ensure their child used the internet. The data from the main and the boost studies have been combined with weighting applied to correct for the oversampling in the nations and to correct for the higher proportion of interviews with internet users.

The total number of interviews achieved, by age, was as follows:

AGE: 3-4	900
AGE: 5-7	764
AGE: 8-11	817
AGE: 12-15	762
AGE: 5-15	2,343

All interviews were conducted between 25th April and 11th July 2019. Fieldwork was longer in 2019 compared to previous years due to the additional number of interviews conducted.

Details of the sampling frame, research methodology, and weighting procedures are outlined in the following pages. A note on statistical reliability is also included.

Sample design - Random Location Quota Sampling

To ensure consistency with trend data, the same approach to sampling has been used as in previous waves for both the main and the boost samples, using Census 2011 Output Areas (OAs) [1] as the basic building block for sampling, then using quota control by three key variables (interlocked age by gender quotas for children aged 3-15 and socio-economic group for the household) to control the sample interviewed within each sampling point.

The OAs in the UK were grouped into larger sampling units (SUs), which were then stratified by region, rural/ urban indicator and Small Area Deprivation Index.

- firstly, all the SUs were sorted by region/ country,
- secondly, the SUs were then sorted within region/ country by rural/ urban categories based on UK Geographics' Urbanity classification.
- Within rural/urban strata SUs were sorted by Small Area Deprivation Index.

Sampling units were selected with probability proportionate to size where the size of each first stage sampling unit was measured by the estimated number of children aged 3-15.

Since region has been used as the first sorting variable, regional distribution of SUs will be more or less in proportion to the number of children 3-15 in each region. The number of interviews per SU was 11 for the 'main' sampling points, and 7 for the boost interviews.

Quotas

Quotas were set within each SU to achieve an overall UK sample by gender within each age group (3-4, 5-7, 8-11, 12-15) which would be sufficient to look in detail within this overall sample at internet users by gender within age.

The initial calculation of quotas for children aged 3-15 is based on Census 2011 data for each sampling point and these quotas are adjusted as necessary to achieve the targets detailed above. For each sampling unit, socio-economic group quotas are based on the Census 2011 variable Approximate Social Grade of Household Reference Person. For the boost interviews quotas were only set for gender within each age group.

Fieldwork

Interviewers were provided with specific addresses, thus affording tight control over the addresses the interviewers called at. All interviews were conducted in the home, using CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing).

[1]The 2011 Census Output Areas were used as a building block for the creation of slightly larger first-stage Sampling Units (SUs) used for sampling. This approach allows 100% coverage of all UK areas.

Weighting

The combined face-to-face data are initially weighted to correct the oversampling of internet users and the SEG profile, then using target rim weights for age, gender, nation and by urban/ rural. The following table shows the initial unweighted sample and the final weighted sample profile for the main sample.

Figures based UK children aged 3-15	Census profile	Interviews achieved unweighted	Interviews achieved weighted
Boys aged 3-4	8%	13%	8%
Girls aged 3-4	8%	14%	8%
Boys aged 5-7	12%	11%	11%
Girls aged 5-7	12%	13%	12%
Boys aged 8-11	16%	12%	15%
Girls aged 8-11	15%	14%	15%
Boys aged 12-15	15%	12%	16%
Girls aged 12-15	14%	11%	15%
SEG – AB	22%	20%	22%
SEG – C1	31%	28%	30%
SEG – C2	21%	22%	21%
SEG – DE	26%	30%	27%

Reporting

The sample is drawn based on households within SUs, while quotas are set based on adult population profiles. The data is then weighted to the profile of UK adults and so the data is representative of adults aged 16+. Therefore, when reporting it is necessary to state that the data represents the percentage of adults rather than the percentage of households.

Within each wave of research, we ask a set of core questions relating to these topic areas: take-up and use of landline, mobile phone, internet, television, radio, devices, and bundles. Other questions asked may vary wave on wave.

Guide to Statistical Reliability

The variation between the sample results and the "true" values (the findings that would have been obtained if everyone 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 size (ESS) rather than actual sample size to judge the accuracy of results.

The following table compares ESS and actual samples for some of the main analysis groups within the main sample.

	Actual	ESS
Total	**3,243**	**1,995**
AGE: 3-4	900	565
AGE: 5-7	764	468
AGE: 8-11	817	550

AGE: 12-15	762	540
AGE: 5-15	2343	1552
BOYS AGED 3-4	435	286
GIRLS AGED 3-4	466	310
BOYS AGED 5-7	351	216
GIRLS AGED 5-7	413	254
BOYS AGED 8-11	376	251
GIRLS AGED 8-11	441	303
BOYS AGED 12-15	392	294
GIRLS AGED 12-15	370	249
SEG – AB (AGED 5-15)	473	335
SEG - C1 (AGED 5-15)	667	452
SEG - C2 (AGED 5-15)	530	342
SEG – DE (AGED 5-15)	673	425

The table below illustrates the required ranges for different sample sizes and percentage results at the '95% confidence interval'.

Approximate sampling tolerances applicable to percentages at or near these levels

Effective sample size	10% or 90% ±	20% or 80% ±	30% or 70% ±	40% or 60% ±	50% ±
1,552 (Total aged 5-15)	1.5	2.0	2.3	2.4	2.5
251 (Boys aged 8-11)	3.7	4.9	5.7	6.1	6.2
425 (SEG DE aged 5-15)	2.9	3.8	4.4	4.7	4.8

For example, if 30% or 70% of a sample of 1,552 gives a particular answer, the chances are 95 in 100 that the "true" value will fall within the range of + 2.3 percentage points from the sample results.

When results are compared between separate groups within a sample, different results may be obtained. The difference may be "real", or it may occur by chance (because not everyone has been interviewed). To test if the difference is a real one – i.e. if it is "statistically significant" – we again have to know the size of the samples, the percentages giving a certain answer and the degree of confidence chosen. If we assume "95% confidence interval", the difference between two sample results must be greater than the values given in the table below to be significant:

Differences required for significant at or near these percentages

Sample sizes being compared	10% or 90% ±	20% or 80% ±	30% or 70% ±	40% or 60% ±	50% ±
335 vs. 425 (AB vs. DE aged 5-15)	4.3%	5.7%	6.6%	7.0%	7.2%
251 vs. 303 (boys vs. girls aged 8-11)	5.0%	6.7%	7.7%	8.2%	8.4%