Ofcom's Adults' Media Literacy research 2022 Technical Report

To accompany the Adults' Media Literacy data tables

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Preface

The Adults' Media Literacy Research 2022 is 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 adults aged 16+.

In 2021, Ofcom's media literacy research programme was refreshed to ensure that the study continued to provide rich and robust data in a constantly evolving digital media landscape.

For the adults' study this involved complementing the traditional 'core' in-home, face-to-face study with a series of online-only studies looking at adults' online behaviour and attitudes and their knowledge and understanding of the digital media they engage with.

Further information about each of these studies is summarised in the next section, followed by a more detailed overview for each of the three studies.

Summary of approach

- The **Adults' core study**: This survey covers questions on key media literacy measures such as internet access, ownership and use of devices, confidence online, awareness of funding and attitudes towards smartphone use. In 2022, this study was conducted face-to-face in-home/ on the doorstep[1] with additional online interviews conducted through a research panel. This 2022 survey reports on a UK nationally representative sample of adults aged 16+, including the views of those who do not go online. A total of 3,651 interviews were conducted (2,130 interviews face-to-face and 1,521 online). All fieldwork was conducted between 23rd September and 9th November 2022.
- The **Adults' online behaviours and attitudes study (AOBA)**: This survey addresses media use and attitudes among adults aged 16+ who go online. It covers watching/ uploading videos, watching/ sharing live stream videos, sending messages or making video/ voice calls, social media use and gaming. It consisted of two waves of research in April and May 2022 (3,059 interviews) and in October and November 2022 (3,041 interviews). All interviewing was conducted through an online panel. Three sets of data tables are published, one for Wave 1, one for Wave 2 and a combined set for Waves 1 and 2.
- The **Adults' online knowledge and understanding (AOKU) study:** This survey addresses adults' knowledge of and critical understanding about the online world they engage with and covers topics such as: trust and misinformation, validating online content and personal data, privacy and security. This particular survey also incorporates scenario testing to provide an improved measure of critical understanding regarding advertising within search engine results and on social media, exposure and reactions to scam advertising and fake social media profiles. It consisted of one wave of research in October and November 2022 (3,041 interviews). All interviewing was conducted through an online panel.

Significance testing

Due to the mixed method approach adopted for the **Core** study, significance testing for these data tables is applied at the 99% level. For **AOBA** and **AOKU** (as single methodology studies), testing is applied at the 95% level.

[1] Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, in 2021, it was not possible to conduct the research face-to-face, in home so an alternative approach was adopted. This consisted of a postal survey inviting respondents to complete the survey online or by requesting a paper questionnaire to return. Online interviews were also conducted through a research panel to align the data to a more nationally representative profile. This approach was complemented by a separate CATI omnibus survey – to reach a UK representative sample – with a small subset of questions around internet access and reasons for non-use of the internet.

Trend reporting

Due to the difference in methodology between 2021 and 2022 for the **Core** study, any trend data for these years should be treated with caution and seen as indicative only. The approach for AOBA and AOKU was identical between 2021 and 2022 and it is therefore possible to draw comparisons over time where questions have been kept consistent.

Common questions across studies

Due to the differences in the data collection methodologies, across each of the three studies a common set of 'key' questions was carried. This was done to draw comparisons in the type of response given and to see whether there were any differences in the data, potentially due to the methodology, which would have required additional weighting to align the datasets. No additional weighting was required, and these common questions have been removed from the **AOBA** and **AOKU** data set as the equivalents on the **Core** study are used for reporting.

Financial vulnerability

We have included in each set of data tables a measure for household financial vulnerability, ranging from most to least vulnerable This analysis is based on household income and household composition (i.e. size and number of children) and can only be run on the data where respondents have given a response at each of these questions. The following breakdown shows the detailed definitions for each group.

Most financially vulnerable	Potentially financially vulnerable	Least financially vulnerable
Household income under £10,399	**Earning between £10,400 - £25,599**	**Earning between £26,600 - £36,399**
All respondents	1 adult, 0-1 child	1 adult, 0 children
Earning between £10,400 - £25,599	2 adults, 0-1 child	**Earning between £36,400 - £51,999**
1 adult, 2+ children	3 adults, no children	1 adult, 0-1 child
2 adults, 2+ children	**Earning between £26,000 - £36,399**	2 adults, 0 children
3 adults, 1+ children	1 adult, 1 to 3 children	**Household income over £52,000**
4+ adults, 0+ children	2 adults, 0 to 3 children	All households
Earning between £26,000 - 36,399	3 adults, 0 to 1 child	
1 adult, 4+ children	4 adults, no children	
2 adults, >3 children	**Earning between £36,400 - 51,999**	
3 adults, 2+ children	1 adult, 2-3 children	
4 adults, 1+ children	2 adults, 1-2 children	
5+ adults, 0+ children	3 adults, 0-2 children	
Earning between £36,400 - 51,999	4 adults, 0-1 child	
1 adults, >3 children	5 adults, 0 children	
2 adults, 3+ children		
3 adults, 3+ children		
4 adults, 2+ children		
5 adults, 1+ children		
6+ adults, 0+ children		

The Core study

Critical Research interviewed a quota sample of 2,130 adults aged 16 and over face-to-face, using Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI). Interviews were carried out across 176 different sampling points in the UK.

A further quota sample of 1,521 online interviews were conducted using online consumer panels.

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

Sample Design

Face-to-Face: To ensure consistency with previous research conducted face-to-face on this study the same approach to sampling was adopted. This uses Census 2011 Output Areas (OAs)[2] as the basic building block for sampling, then uses quota control by three key variables (age, gender and household socio-economic group for the household) to control the sample interviewed within each sampling point.

The OAs in the UK were grouped into 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.
- Thirdly, rural/ urban strata SUs were sorted by Small Area Deprivation Index.

Since region has been used as the first sorting variable, the regional distribution of SUs will be more or less in proportion to the number of residential addresses in each region.

The size of a SU is measured by the number of addresses it contains. The SUs were selected with a probability proportionate to size. This ensures that all households within an SU have an equal chance of being selected, regardless of the size of the SU in which a household is situated. The number of interviews per SU was 12.

The following quotas were set (within each SU) to represent the population within that SU, which means the overall quotas across the UK will closely match the UK population. Quotas were set using 2011 Census data for Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

- Age (16-24, 25-44, 45-64, 65-74, 75+)
- Socio-economic group (SEG)
- Gender

[2] 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.

For each sampling unit, socio-economic group quotas are based on the Census 2011 variable Approximate Social Grade of Household Reference Person.

Online: Sample for the online part of the study was provided via online consumer panels.

Fieldwork

Face-to-face: Interviewers were provided with specific addresses. The average SU contains around 130 households in England and Wales and 160 households in Scotland and Northern Ireland, thus affording tight control over the addresses the interviewers called at.

Online: When the face-to-face part of the study was underway, interviewing started on the online only part of the study, with quotas set for key demographics and for internet use.

Reporting

The sample is drawn based on households, 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.

Weighting

The data has been weighted to the national UK profile using target rim weights for key demographic variables (nation, urbanity, age, gender, working status and household composition) with additional weighting to align internet use, in terms of time spent online, and to check the profiles within nation delivered by the basic weighting.

The incidence of not using the internet has been estimated from the current face-to-face study, after weighting to the UK population using the demographics mentioned above.

The following table shows the initial unweighted sample and the final weighted sample profile. The percentages described as '% Weighted' are the targets used to weight the data. The figures for age and gender are taken from the 2011 Census. The socio-economic group profiles come from NRS published data and working status information from the ONS. The '% Unweighted' column shows the actual percentage of interviews achieved in the 2022 fieldwork.

Figures based on UK adults	% Weighted	% Unweighted
	Profile	Interviews achieved
Gender – Man 16+	49%	47%
Gender – Woman 16+	51%	53%
Age – 16-34	30%	29%
Age – 35-54	34%	34%
Age – 55-64	15%	16%
Age – 65+	21%	21%
SEG – ABC1	55%	52%
SEG – C2DE	45%	48%
Working Status – working	59%	58%
Working Status – not working	41%	41%

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 calculated at the 99% limit for the 2022 data due to the change in methodology. This means that the chances are 99 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.

Figures based on UK adults	Actual	ESS
Total	3,651	2,779
Age – 16-24	468	358
Age – 25-34	588	457
Age – 35-44	665	523
Age – 45-54	568	442
Age – 55-64	578	426
Age – 65+	784	576
Gender – Man 16+	1,715	1,324
Gender – Woman 16+	1,923	1,447
SEG – ABC1	1,907	1,468
SEG – C2DE	1,738	1,289

The table below illustrates the required ranges for different sample sizes and percentage results at the "99% 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% ±
2,779 (Total)	1.5%	2.0%	2.2%	2.4%	2.4%
1,324 (Gender: Man)	2.1%	2.8%	3.2%	3.5%	3.5%
1,289 (SEG: C2DE)	2.2%	2.9%	3.3%	3.5%	3.6%
576 (Age: 65+)	3.2%	4.3%	4.9%	5.3%	5.4%

For example, if 30% or 70% of a sample of 2,779 give a particular answer, the chances are 99 in 100 that the 'true' value will fall within the range of +/- 2.2 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 must know the size of the samples, the percentages giving a certain answer and the degree of confidence chosen. If we assume '99% 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% ±
1,324 vs. 1,447 (Men vs. Women)	2.9%	3.9%	4.5%	4.8%	4.9%
1,468 vs. 1,289 (SEG ABC1 vs. C2DE)	2.9%	3.9%	4.5%	4.8%	4.9%

The Adults' online behaviours and attitudes study (AOBA)

Critical Research interviewed a sample of 6,100 adults aged 16 and over across two waves of research:

- Wave 1 fieldwork in April and May 2022 – 3,059 interviews
- Wave 2 fieldwork in October and November 2022 – 3,041 interviews

All interviews were carried out across the UK through an online panel. Target quotas were set on nation/ English region, age and gender (interlocking), household socio-economic group, working status and internet use (hours spent online).

Weighting

For the panel only studies, we have no respondents who do not use the internet. Hence, we cannot weight the sample to the profile of all UK adults, instead we weight to the profile of internet users.

On each wave of the AOBA study, the weighting used the same key demographics as the core study detailed earlier but with the targets changed from all UK adults to all UK internet users, using results from Ofcom's Technology Tracker study.

An additional level of weighting was added, to correct the sample for volume of internet use as panel studies tend to be low on infrequent users.

In addition, some pre-weights within nation have been applied, by urbanity and weight of internet use.

Each wave is weighted independently, to identical targets. As mentioned earlier, Wave 1 and Wave 2 data tables are published separately, together with a combined set of data tables. This means the combined tables produced are simply the sum of the two waves.

The following table shows the initial unweighted sample and the final weighted sample profile across the two waves combined. The percentages described as '% Weighted' are the targets used to weight the data. The '% Unweighted' column shows the actual percentage of interviews achieved in the 2022 fieldwork.

Figures based on UK adults who go online	% Weighted	% Unweighted
	Profile	Interviews achieved
Gender – Man 16+	48%	46%
Gender – Woman 16+	51%	53%
Age – 16-34	33%	30%
Age – 35-54	36%	34%
Age – 55-64	15%	16%
Age – 65+	15%	20%
SEG – ABC1	56%	53%
SEG – C2DE	43%	46%
Working Status – working	65%	59%
Working Status – not working	35%	40%

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 calculated at the 95% limit for the 2022 data. This means that 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 & actual samples for some of the main analysis groups.

Figures based on UK adults who go online	Actual	ESS
Total	6,100	3,902
Age – 16-24	852	553
Age – 25-34	949	631
Age – 35-44	1,112	758
Age – 45-54	957	652
Age – 55-64	1,001	618
Age – 65+	1,229	742
Gender – Man 16+	2,828	1,825
Gender – Woman 16+	3,210	2,040
SEG – ABC1	3,235	2,119
SEG – C2DE	2,815	1,758

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% ±
3,902 (Total)	0.9%	1.3%	1.4%	1.5%	1.6%
1,825 (Gender: Man)	1.4%	1.8%	2.1%	2.2%	2.3%
1,758 (SEG: C2DE)	1.4%	1.9%	2.1%	2.3%	2.3%
742 (Age: 65+)	2.2%	2.9%	3.3%	3.5%	3.6%

For example, if 30% or 70% of a sample of 3,902 give a particular answer, the chances are 95 in 100 that the 'true' value will fall within the range of +/- 1.4 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 must 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% ±
1,825 vs. 2,040 (Men vs. Women)	1.9%	2.5%	2.9%	3.1%	3.2%
2,119 vs. 1,758 (SEG ABC1 vs. C2DE)	1.9%	2.5%	2.9%	3.1%	3.2%

The Adults' online knowledge and understanding study (AOKU)

Critical Research interviewed a sample of 3,041 adults aged 16 and over in one wave of research.

All interviews were carried out across the UK through an online panel. Target quotas were set on nation/ English region, age and gender (interlocking), household socio-economic group, working status and internet use (hours spent online). All fieldwork took place in October and November 2022.

Weighting

For the panel only studies, we have no respondents who do not use the internet. Hence, we cannot weight the sample to the profile of all UK adults, instead the target universe is all internet users.

The same weighting approach was used as for the AOBA study; the initial weights used key demographics with the targets changed from all UK adults to all UK internet users, using results from Ofcom's Technology Tracker study.

An additional level of weighting was added, to correct the sample for volume of internet use as panel studies tend to be low on infrequent users.

To correct minor deviations within nation within the AOKU data, some pre-weights were also introduced by age, SEG, gender, urbanity and working status.

The following table shows the initial unweighted sample and the final weighted sample profile. The percentages described as '% Weighted' are the targets used to weight the data. The '% Unweighted' column shows the actual percentage of interviews achieved in the 2022 fieldwork.

Figures based on UK adults who go online	% Weighted	% Unweighted
	Profile	Interviews achieved
Gender – Man 16+	48%	48%
Gender – Woman 16+	51%	51%
Age – 16-34	33%	30%
Age – 35-54	36%	33%
Age – 55-64	15%	16%
Age – 65+	15%	21%
SEG – ABC1	57%	54%
SEG – C2DE	43%	45%
Working Status – working	65%	59%
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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 calculated at the 95% limit for the 2022 data. This means that 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 & actual samples for some of the main analysis groups.

Figures based on UK adults who go online	Actual	ESS
Total	3,041	2,000
Age – 16-24	421	285
Age – 25-34	481	329
Age – 35-44	537	374
Age – 45-54	464	317
Age – 55-64	491	326
Age – 65+	5647	410
Gender – Man 16+	1,464	974
Gender – Woman 16+	1,545	1,003
SEG – ABC1	1,646	1,108
SEG – C2DE	1,379	883

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% ±
2,000 (Total)	1.3%	1.8%	2.0%	2.1%	2.2%
974 (Gender: Man)	1.9%	2.5%	2.9%	3.1%	3.1%
883 (SEG: C2DE)	2.0%	2.6%	3.0%	3.2%	3.3%
410 (Age: 65+)	2.9%	3.9%	4.4%	4.7%	4.8%

For example, if 30% or 70% of a sample of 2,000 give a particular answer, the chances are 95 in 100 that the 'true' value will fall within the range of +/- 2.0 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 must 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% ±
974 vs. 1,003 (Men vs. Women)	2.6	3.5	4.0	4.3	4.4
1,108 vs. 883 (SEG ABC1 vs. C2DE)	2.7	3.5	4.1	4.3	4.4