
Ofcom's Children's Media Literacy 2020

Technical Report

To accompany the data tables for Survey 2

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Preface

The Children's Media Literacy Research 2020 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.

In previous years this research has been conducted face to face in-home using Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI). In 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and in common with other Ofcom tracking studies with an element of in-home interviewing, it was not possible to conduct the research in this way. Various alternative methods of conducting research have been tested across different tracking surveys in 2020; including online panels, outbound telephone interviews, and approaches based on initial mailings and reminders, with these postal approach studies completed online, by phone or on paper (either requested or unsolicited).

For this study, alternative methods were considered and discounted. The interview was considered too complex to administer on paper by post, and there was the additional issue of needing to interview both a parent and child (where a child aged 8-15 was present and willing to be interviewed). A telephone approach was discounted due to the volume of (prompted) questions which would be difficult to administer by phone. An approach that wholly relied on a postal approach (by mailing to households in significant numbers and inviting those with children to participate) would have resulted in a significant waste of paper and would also not have been a cost-effective solution. Thus, for this study, the only option was to encourage eligible households to complete the survey online, through online panel interviewing.

In order to adapt the 2019 in-home CAPI questionnaire to an online approach it was necessary to reduce the number of questions that were asked of respondents. Some of these questions were therefore removed, with the potential to be reinstated on a future survey. There remained, however, too many questions to be accommodated on one online survey. The remaining survey questions were therefore fielded across two online studies in 2020: a 'main' online study (Survey 1) and an 'overflow' online study (Survey 2). The questions that had been asked of all children, rather than all who go online, tended to be retained on the 'main' survey (Survey 1) while those that were asked of children that go online were incorporated into Survey 2.

The remainder of this document outlines the approach for Survey 2, with a separate Technical Report available for Survey 1.

It was decided that the most cost-effective solution for this Survey 2 would be online research where parents and children would be recruited to take part through an online panel.

The questions that were fielded on this online study related to the following topic areas:

- Use of video sharing platforms, social media, chat or messaging, live streaming and Q&A apps/ sites;
- Creative activities undertaken online;
- Trust in content shown on sites/apps used for social media, schoolwork or homework and for news content;

- Whether their media use changed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and specifically whether they had used video calls to keep in touch with other people;
- Attitudinal statements about their use of social media and other online content.

In order to establish whether the relevant child uses the internet, particularly among parents of children aged 3-4 or 5-7, we also asked about the devices the child uses to go online. This question was also required on Survey 1 but was asked in the wider context of the devices the child has access to and uses at home. As such, to avoid the duplication of results, this question has been omitted from the Survey 2 data tables.

The research for Survey 2 was conducted between 27th November 2020 and 15th January 2021.¹

Details of the sampling frame and weighting procedures are outlined overleaf. A note on statistical reliability is also included.

¹ The research for Survey 1 was conducted between 6th October 2020 and 15th January 2021.

Sample Design

Sample for the online study was provided via online consumer panels through our research panel partners Savanta, Lucid and WALR. Sourcing sample from multiple panel providers and their affiliates tends to minimise potential panel based- bias from using a single panel. The sample was de-duplicated to ensure that respondents could not complete the survey more than once.

Parents of children aged 3-7 were recruited to take part and would answer about, and on behalf of, their child. In households with children aged 8-15 present, both the parent and the child would be invited to take part. In all instances where a child aged 8-15 was invited to participate, they would be recruited through their parent who had opted in to receive survey invitations from the research panel.

Fieldwork and Quotas

The sample was designed initially to be able to report on internet users aged 8-15 in the devolved nations without compromising the effectiveness of the sample. Specific targets were set at an overall level by age group within nation.

In addition, quotas were set by gender within age, by nation as well as on socio-economic group for the overall sample. Within England soft quotas were set to ensure a good mix by English region.

The final sample sizes achieved met almost all the objectives but demands on online samples in Northern Ireland across all panel providers meant that there was a shortfall in interviews in the age groups within Northern Ireland.²

The total number of interviews achieved across the study, was as follows:

	England	Scotland	Wales	N Ireland	Total
Aged 3-4	217	23	12	9	261
Aged 5-7	219	23	12	9	263
Aged 8-11	389	119	113	75	696
Aged 12-15	388	119	115	77	699
Total	1213	284	252	170	1919

² The initial target was 100 internet users by age group within nation. Once it was realised that meeting these sample sizes in N Ireland may be unachievable, the target was amended to reach 100 internet users within just the 8-11 and 12-15 age groups.

Weighting

Rim weighting was used to align the profiles to the UK population by gender within age group (3-4, 5-7, 8-11, 12-15), nation, urbanity and SEG. A set of pre-weights were then calculated to ensure consistent average age within age category by nation.

The following table shows the initial unweighted sample and the final weighted sample profile for the final sample.

Figures are based on UK children aged 3-15	Census profile	Interviews achieved	
		Unweighted**	Weighted**
Boys aged 3-4	8%	7%	8%
Girls aged 3-4	8%	7%	8%
Boys aged 5-7	12%	7%	12%
Girls aged 5-7	12%	7%	12%
Boys aged 8-11	16%	18%	15%
Girls aged 8-11	15%	18%	15%
Boys aged 12-15	15%	18%	15%
Girls aged 12-15	14%	18%	15%
SEG – AB	22%	29%	24%
SEG – C1	31%	24%	30%
SEG – C2	21%	23%	19%
SEG – DE	26%	24%	27%

**Figures are based on UK children aged 3-15 in households using the internet

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 2020 data due to the change in methodology.³ 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 within the main sample.

	Actual	ESS
Total 3-15s	1919	1468
AGE: 3-4	261	249
AGE: 5-7	263	249
AGE: 8-11	696	502
AGE: 12-15	699	514
AGE: 5-15	1658	1221
BOYS AGED 3-4	135	129
GIRLS AGED 3-4	126	121
BOYS AGED 5-7	132	125
GIRLS AGED 5-7	131	124
BOYS AGED 8-11	351	252
GIRLS AGED 8-11	345	250
BOYS AGED 12-15	354	259
GIRLS AGED 12-15	345	255
SEG – AB (AGED 5-15)	490	373
SEG - C1 (AGED 5-15)	397	291
SEG - C2 (AGED 5-15)	379	297
SEG – DE (AGED 5-15)	383	302

³ Prior to 2020, this was at 95%

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%
	±	±	±	±	±
1,221 (Total aged 5-15)	2.2	3.0	3.4	3.6	3.7
252 (Boys aged 8-11)	4.9	6.5	7.5	8.0	8.1
302 (SEG DE aged 5-15)	4.4	5.9	6.8	7.2	7.4

For example, if 30% or 70% of a sample of 1,221 gives a particular answer, the chances are 99 in 100 that the "true" value will fall within the range of + 3.4 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 have to 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%
	±	±	±	±	±
373 vs. 302 (AB vs. DE aged 5-15)	6.0%	8.0%	9.1%	9.8%	10.0%
252 vs. 250 (boys vs. girls aged 8-11)	6.9%	9.2%	10.5%	11.3%	11.5%