

Statistical bulletin

Internet access – households and individuals, Great Britain: 2020

Internet access in Great Britain, including how many people have internet access, what they use it for and online shopping.



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Release date:
7 August 2020

Next release:
To be announced

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1 . Main points

- In January to February 2020, 96% of households in Great Britain had internet access, up from 93% in 2019 and 57% in 2006 when comparable records began.
- Internet connections in households with one adult aged 65 years and over have increased by seven percentage points since 2019 to 80%; these households still had the lowest proportion of internet connections.
- In January to February 2020, 76% of adults in Great Britain used internet banking, increasing from 30% in 2007 and 73% in 2019.
- In January to February 2020, 87% of all adults shopped online within the last 12 months, up from 53% in 2008; those aged 65 years and over had the highest growth, rising from 16% to 65% over this period.
- The most common online purchase was for clothes, shoes and accessories, by 55% of adults, followed by deliveries from restaurants, fast-food chains or catering services, bought by 32% of adults.
- In January to February 2020, 49% of adults in Great Britain aged 25 to 34 years used a virtual assistant smart speaker or app, compared with 17% of those aged 65 years and over; 35% of all adults used these “internet of things” devices.
- In January to February 2020, 18% of adults in Great Britain used internet-connected energy or lighting controls, with those aged 35 to 44 years using these most at 26%.
- Of those adults who have a smartphone for private use, 17% did not have security on their smartphone and a further 32% did not know whether they had security.

2 . Internet access – households and individuals data

[Internet access – households and individuals](#)

Dataset | Released 7 August 2020

Annual data on internet usage in Great Britain, including frequency of internet use, internet activities and internet purchasing.

[Internet access – households and individuals: 95% confidence intervals](#)

Dataset | Released 7 August 2020

95% confidence intervals for selected estimates.

3 . Measuring the data

The Internet Access Survey results are derived from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN). Estimates for 2020 in this release refer to data collected in the January and February 2020 modules of the OPN. For this bulletin, the collection method of the OPN changed from telephone interviews to a mixed mode method, with online collection as the initial collection mode and telephone interviews for respondents who could not or preferred not to access the survey online. As a result, 80% of respondents completed the survey online, with the remaining respondents completing it via a telephone interview.

Prior to the introduction of web collection in the OPN, work was carried out to investigate whether the change in survey mode from telephone to online data collection was expected to impact the survey results. The conclusion was that the change would have only minimal impact. More information on this analysis can be found in the [OPN: mixed mode pilot analysis report](#).

In previous years, the Internet Access Survey has also been collected in the April module of the OPN. The Internet Access Survey questions were not included in the April 2020 OPN as resources were reprioritised to measure impacts of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. However, OPN response rates in January and February were higher than in previous years, meaning that a sufficient number of responses were achieved in just two months, to provide robust results for this bulletin.

Where possible, we make comparisons over time; however, time series comparisons vary, as the survey questions change from year to year.

More quality and methodology information on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in the [OPN QMI](#) and the [Internet Access - households and individuals QMI](#).

Coronavirus

The collection of the data contained in this bulletin has not been affected by the coronavirus pandemic. The survey data were collected in January and February 2020, before the UK government announcement of the lockdown on 23 March.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has released a [public statement on COVID-19 and the production of statistics](#).

4 . Related links

[Internet users, UK: 2019](#)

Bulletin | Released 24 May 2019

Internet use in the UK annual estimates by age, sex, disability and geographic location. Comparisons made between estimates in this release and the Internet users, UK: 2019 publication should be undertaken with caution. This bulletin provides more information on the range of activities carried out using the internet, but the estimates are derived from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN), which has a smaller sample size than the Labour Force Survey (LFS), from which estimates for the Internet users bulletin are derived.