

5 Internet and web-based content

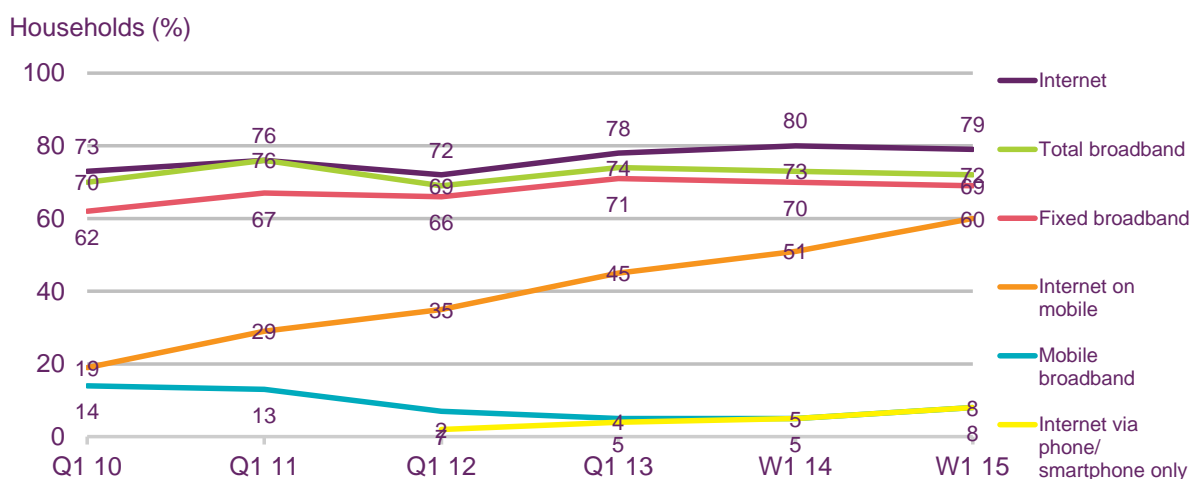
5.1 Internet take-up

Close to eight in ten households in Northern Ireland have access to the internet

In 2015, about eight in ten households in Northern Ireland (79%) had access to the internet via broadband, mobile phone or narrowband (dial-up), consistent with take-up in 2014 (80%). Throughout this chapter, we note differences which are statistically significant. Depending on sample size and reported number, not all differences between reported figures reflect real changes in take-up or use of devices or services.

Seven in ten households in Northern Ireland (69%) have access to fixed broadband at home, also unchanged since 2014 (70%). Six in ten (60%) adults in Northern Ireland have online access through a mobile phone, an increase of nine percentage points (pp) since 2014. The proportion of adults in Northern Ireland accessing the internet exclusively through a mobile phone or smartphone remains stable at 8%.

Figure 5.1 Internet take-up, Northern Ireland: 2010-2015



Source: Ofcom Technology Tracker. Data from Q1 of each year 2010-2013, then wave 1 2014-2015
 Base: All adults aged 16+ (n = 761 Northern Ireland 2010, 511 Northern Ireland 2011, 508 Northern Ireland 2012, 507 Northern Ireland 2013, 499 Northern Ireland 2014, 504 Northern Ireland 2015)

Note 1: 'Internet' includes access to the internet/ World Wide Web at home (via any device, e.g. PC, mobile phone, tablet etc).

Note 2: 'Total broadband' includes the following methods to connect to the internet at home – fixed broadband (via phone line or cable service), mobile broadband (via a USB stick or dongle, or built-in connectivity in a laptop/netbook/tablet with a SIM), tethering (via mobile phone internet connection on laptop/tablet), and mobile broadband wireless router (via 3G or 4G mobile network, which can be shared between devices).

Note 3: 'Fixed broadband' includes ADSL, cable and fibre services – perhaps using a WiFi router. This would include superfast broadband services.

Note 4: 'Mobile broadband' is connecting a device using a USB stick or dongle, or built-in connectivity in a laptop or netbook or tablet computer with a SIM card.

Note 5: 'Internet on mobile' is the proportion of adults who use a mobile phone for any of the following activities: Instant messaging, downloading apps or programs, email, internet access, downloading video, video streaming, visiting social networking sites.

5.2 Internet-enabled devices

Smartphone ownership in Northern Ireland grew to 63% of adults in 2015

Smartphone ownership in Northern Ireland grew 8pp between 2014 and 2015, with about six in ten adults owning one (63%) in 2015.

The incidence of smartphone ownership among adults in Northern Ireland does not differ statistically from the UK average (66%). Ownership in 2015 is more likely among those in urban than rural areas (67% vs. 57%).

Figure 5.2 Take-up of smartphones in Northern Ireland

Adults 16+ (%) / percentage point change in take-up of smartphones from W1 2014



Source: Ofcom Technology Tracker, wave 1 2015 Base: All adults aged 16+ (n = 3756 UK, 504 Northern Ireland, 2264 England, 492 Scotland, 496 Wales, 249 Northern Ireland urban, 255 Northern Ireland rural, 511 Northern Ireland 2011, 508 Northern Ireland 2012, 507 Northern Ireland 2013, 499 Northern Ireland 2014, 504 Northern Ireland 2015)

QD24B. Do you personally use a smartphone? A smartphone is a phone on which you can easily access emails, download files and applications, as well as view websites and generally surf the internet. Popular brands of smartphone include BlackBerry, iPhone and Android phones such as the Samsung Galaxy.

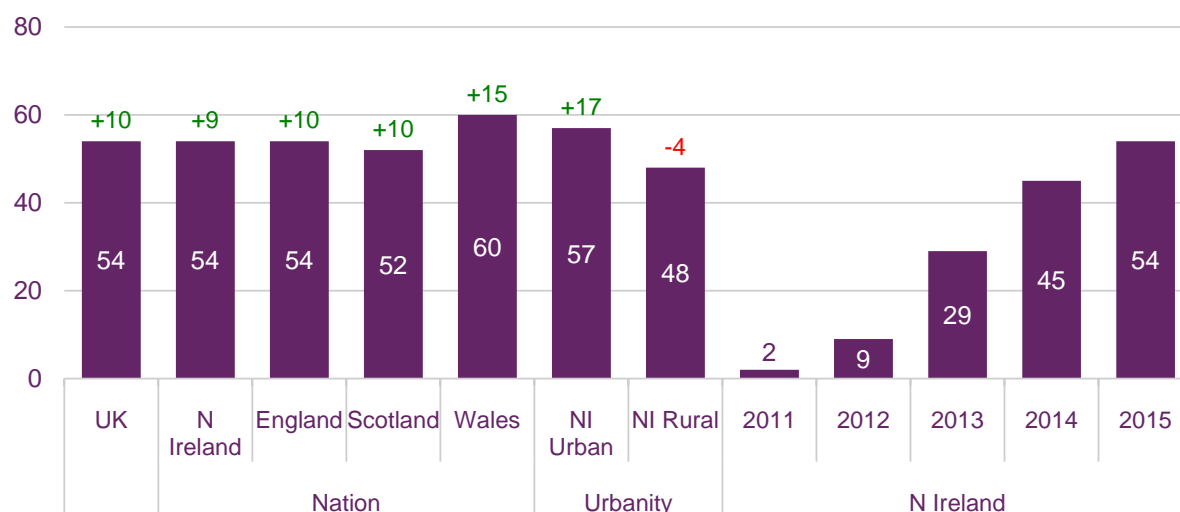
Over half of all households in Northern Ireland have a tablet computer, up by nine percentage points on 2014

Tablet ownership has continued to increase among adults in Northern Ireland and in the UK overall. A majority of adults in Northern Ireland say they have a tablet computer in the household (54%), compared to less than half (45%) in 2014. The increase in ownership levels since 2014 is in line with the increase for the UK as a whole, and tablet ownership in Northern Ireland matches the incidence for all UK adults (54%).

The increase in tablet ownership in Northern Ireland as a whole since 2014 is due to its increase in urban areas: up by 17pp to 57%. Tablet ownership in rural areas of Northern Ireland has not changed since 2014 and is now lower than in urban areas, at 48%.

Figure 5.3 Take-up of tablet computers in Northern Ireland

Households (%) / percentage point change in take-up of tablet computers from W1 2014



Source: Ofcom Technology Tracker, wave 1 2015

Base: All adults aged 16+ (n = 3756 UK, 504 Northern Ireland, 2264 England, 492 Scotland, 496 Wales, 249 Northern Ireland urban, 255 Northern Ireland rural, 511 Northern Ireland 2011, 508 Northern Ireland 2012, 507 Northern Ireland 2013, 499 Northern Ireland 2014, 504 Northern Ireland 2015)

QE1. Does your household have a PC, laptop, netbook or tablet computer?

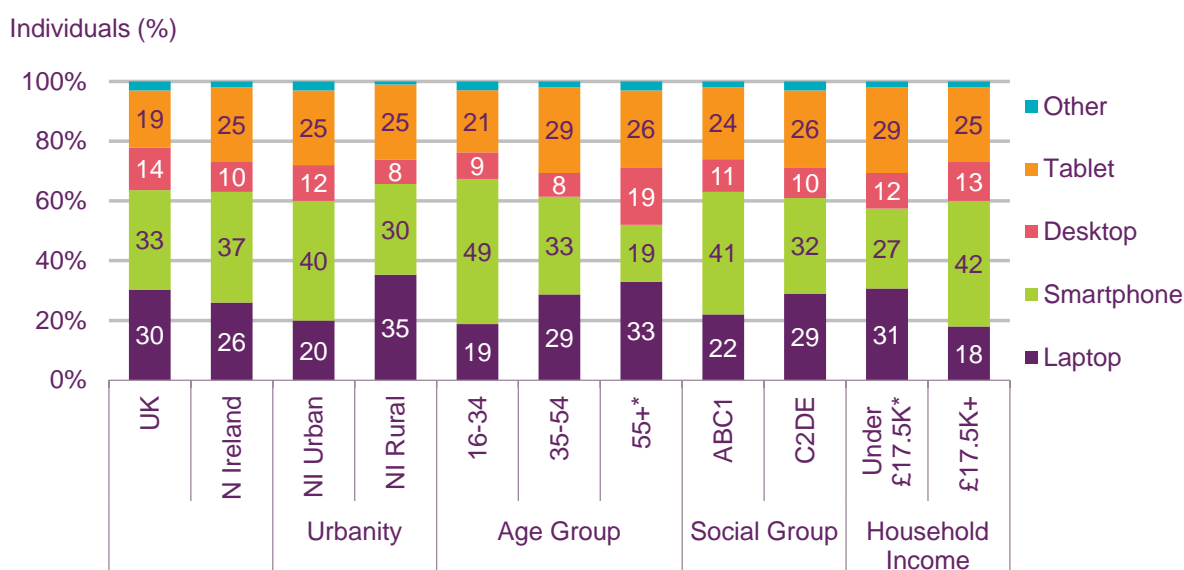
Smartphones are the most important device for going online for internet users in Northern Ireland, but tablets are also relatively important, compared to the UK as a whole

When asked to name their most important device for accessing the internet, no single device was named by a majority of adult internet users in Northern Ireland. The most commonly named device was a smartphone (37%), similar to the result for the UK as a whole (33%). Compared to the UK average, internet users in Northern Ireland were more likely to cite a tablet computer as their most important device (25% and 19% respectively), and less likely to cite a desktop computer (10% vs. 14%).

About half (49%) of internet users aged 16-34 say a smartphone is their most important device for going online; a higher proportion than for older internet users.

Internet users in rural areas of Northern Ireland are more likely than those in urban areas to cite a laptop computer as the most important device (35% compared to 20%). Apart from this, there are no significant differences between urban and rural areas in relation to most-favoured devices.

Figure 5.4 Most important device for accessing the internet: Northern Ireland



Source: Ofcom Technology Tracker, wave 1 2015

Base: Internet users aged 16+ (n = 3095 UK, 383 Northern Ireland, 193 Northern Ireland urban, 190 Northern Ireland rural, 161 16-34, 146 35-54, 76* 55+, 214 ABC1, 169 C2DE, 80* under £17.5K, 131 £17.5K+)

QE40. Which is the most important device you use to connect to the internet, at home or elsewhere? "Other" responses include: "other device", "none" and "don't know". * Caution: Low base

5.3 Internet use

Internet users in Northern Ireland say they spent significantly more time online in 2014 than they did in the previous year

According to research conducted for Ofcom's *Adult Media Literacy Report*³², internet users in Northern Ireland claimed to spend 21.6 hours on the internet per week, while in 2013 they claimed to spend 13.8 hours per week. As elsewhere in the UK, internet users in Northern Ireland say they spend the majority of time online at home, followed by their workplace or place of education.

³² Available from online at <http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/market-data-research/other/research-publications/adults/media-lit-10years/>

Figure 5.5 Claimed time spent on the internet in a typical week

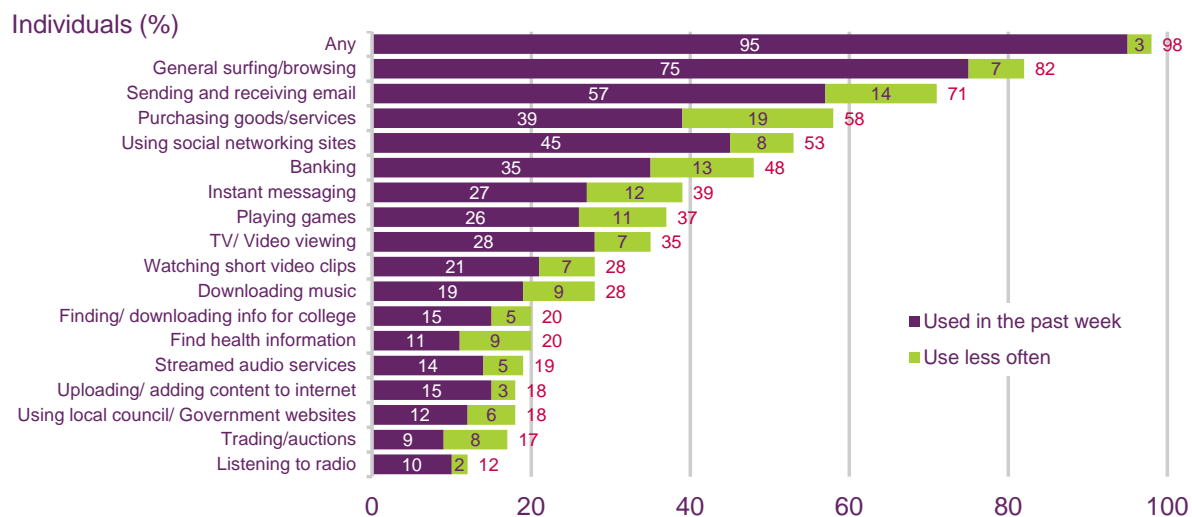


Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in October to November 2014
 Question: IN6A-C – How many hours in a typical week would you say you use the internet at home/ at your workplace or place of education/ anywhere else? (Unprompted responses, single coded)
 Base: All adults aged 16+ who use the internet at home or elsewhere (1609 UK, 1022 England, 194 Scotland, 200 Wales, 193 Northern Ireland).

More than half of internet users in Northern Ireland had used the internet for general surfing/browsing or sending and receiving email in the past week

Four activities were undertaken by a majority of internet users in Northern Ireland: general surfing or browsing (82%), sending and receiving email (71%), purchasing goods or services (58%) and using social networking sites (53%). The first two of these activities had been undertaken in the previous week by a majority of internet users in Northern Ireland.

Figure 5.6 Activities done online by internet users in Northern Ireland



Source: Ofcom Technology Tracker, wave 1 2015
 Base: Adults aged 16+ who use the internet at home or elsewhere (n= 383 Northern Ireland 2015)
 QE5. Which, if any, of these do you use the internet for?

