

## 4 Internet and web-based content

### 4.1 Internet take-up

#### Almost eight in ten homes in Northern Ireland are internet-connected

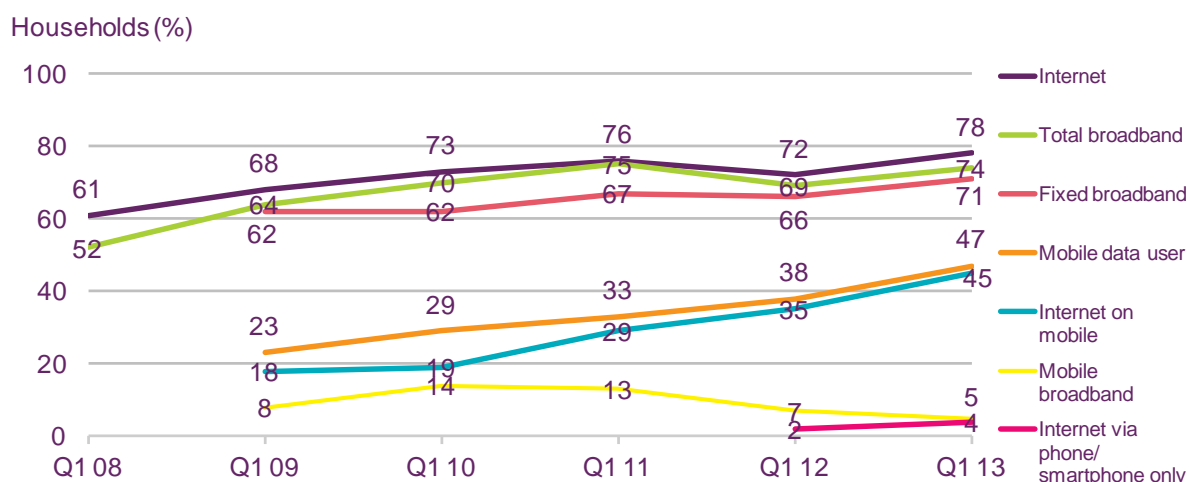
Just less than eight in ten households in Northern Ireland (78%) had access to the internet in Q1 2013 (via broadband, mobile phone or narrowband), with this figure increasing by seven percentage points year on year, to equal the UK average.

Northern Ireland was the only nation to see a significant rise in broadband take-up, increasing from 69% in Q1 2012 to 74% in Q1 2013 (in line with the UK average of 75%). This has been driven by an increase in take-up in rural Northern Ireland, where three-quarters of consumers (75%) now have broadband, up from 69% a year ago.

There has also been a significant rise in the proportion of consumers accessing the internet on their mobile phones, increasing by ten percentage points in the past year to 45% of consumers. This is discussed in more detail in Figure 5.7.

Conversely, over the past three years, take-up of mobile broadband dongles has declined, falling from 14% of households in Q1 2010 to 5% in Q1 2013, as smartphones and tablets offer other ways of staying connected while on the move, or without the need for a fixed broadband connection.

**Figure 4.1 Internet take-up, Northern Ireland: 2008-2013**



Source: Ofcom Technology Tracker

Base: All adults aged 16+ (n = 629 Northern Ireland 2008, 652 Northern Ireland 2009, 761 Northern Ireland 2010, 511 Northern Ireland 2011, 508 Northern Ireland 2012, 507 Northern Ireland 2013)

### 4.2 Internet-enabled devices

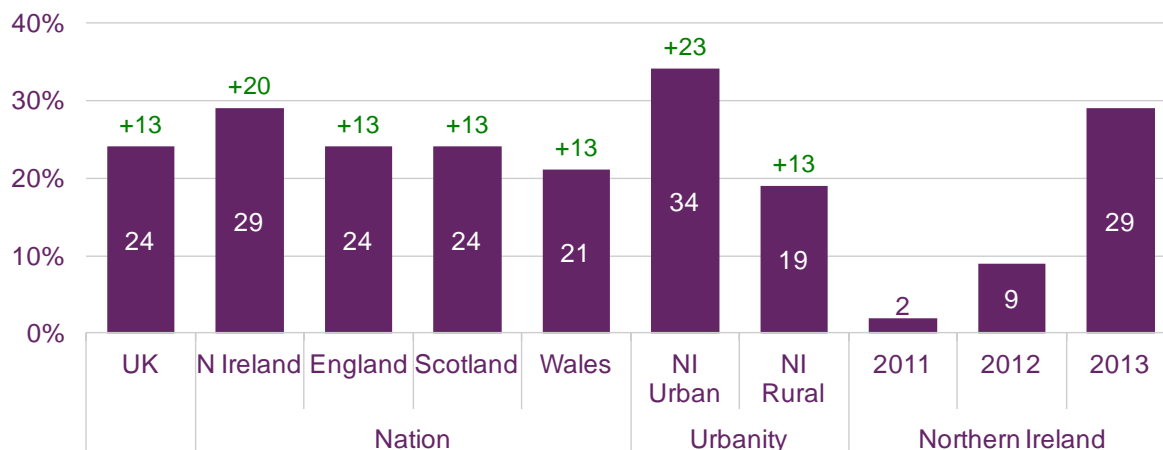
#### Three in ten households in Northern Ireland have a tablet computer

Household tablet computer take-up is highest in Northern Ireland, having increased three-fold (20pp) over the year to Q1 2013, with three in ten homes (29%) now owning one. The increase in take-up was particularly marked in urban Northern Ireland, where 34% of households now have a tablet, up from 11% the previous year. Those aged 16-34 (37%) and

35-54 (33%), from ABC1 households (36%), and from higher-income households (42%) were more likely to own a tablet than the Northern Ireland average.

**Figure 4.2 Take-up of tablet computers in Northern Ireland**

Households (%) / percentage point change in take-up of tablet computers from Q1 2012



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

Source: Ofcom research, Q1 2013

Base: All adults aged 16+ (n = 3750 UK, 507 Northern Ireland, 2250 England, 501 Scotland, 492 Wales 254 Northern Ireland urban, 253 Northern Ireland rural, 487 Scotland 2011, 500 Scotland 2012, 501 Scotland 2013)

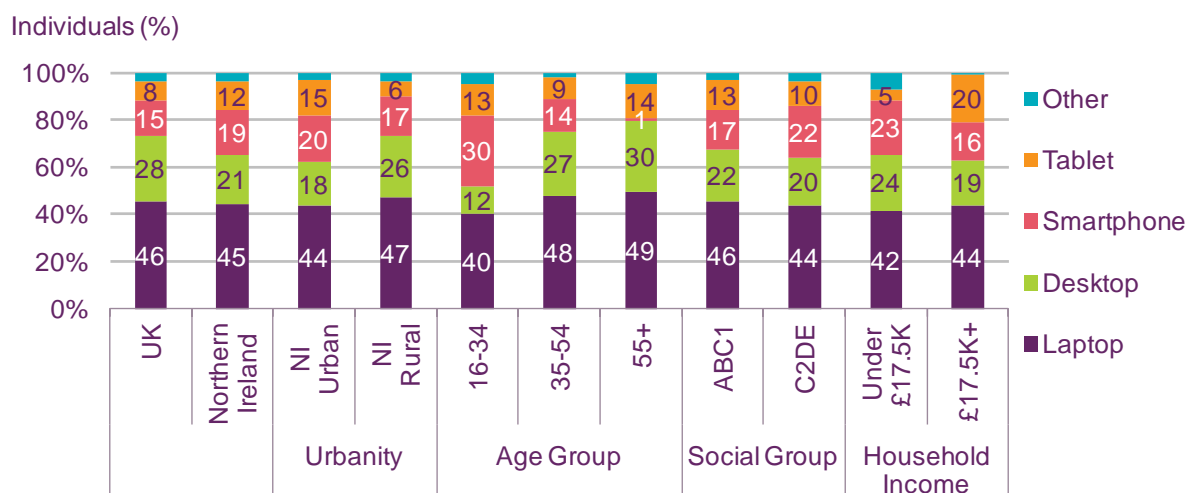
### Internet users in Northern Ireland are more likely than those in the UK to choose their tablet as the most important device for getting online

In comparison to the UK average, internet users in Northern Ireland were equally as likely to choose the laptop, less likely to choose the desktop, and one and half times more likely to choose the tablet as their most important device for accessing the internet. The tablet preference is likely to reflect the higher ownership in Northern Ireland of tablet computers compared to the rest of the UK. We consider device importance by ownership in Chapter 4 of the *UK Communications Market Report*.

The device most likely to be chosen as the most important device for accessing the internet by internet users in Northern Ireland was the laptop (45%), followed by the desktop computer (21%) and the smartphone (19%).

There are significant differences according to age, income, and urbanity. Those aged 16-34 were less likely than older age groups to choose their desktop computer as the most important device for accessing the internet (12%), but more likely to choose their smartphone (30%). Internet users in urban areas (15%) and those from higher-income households (20%) were significantly more likely than those in rural areas (6%) and lower-income households (5%), to choose their tablet computer as their most important internet device.

**Figure 4.3 Most important device for accessing the internet in Northern Ireland**



Source: Ofcom research, Q1 2013

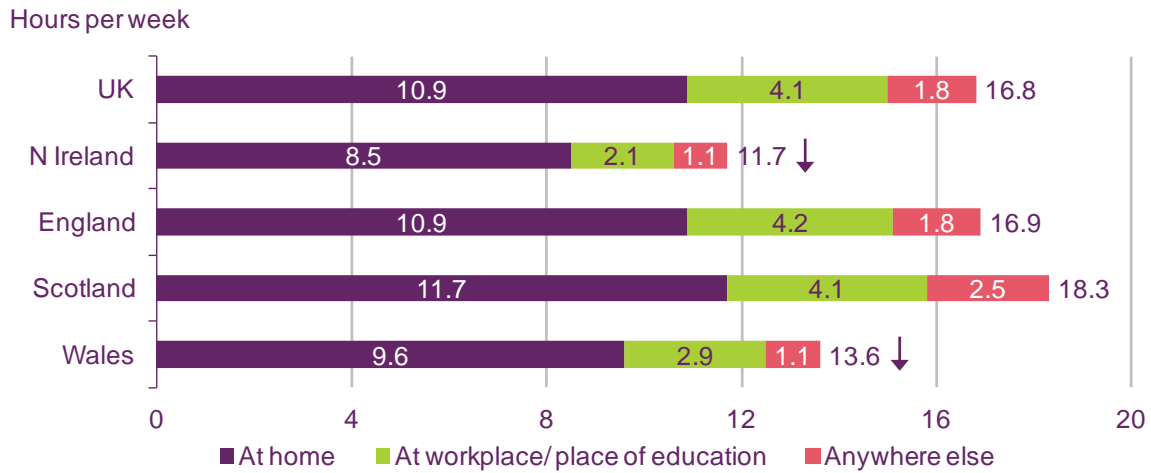
Base: Internet users aged 16+ (n = 2918 UK, 376 Northern Ireland, 185 NI urban, 191 NI rural, 152 16-34, 134 35-54, 90 55+, 205 ABC1, 171 C2DE, 99 under £17.5K, 124 £17.5K+). Question: Which is the most important device you use to connect to the internet, at home or elsewhere? "Other" responses include: "Netbook", "Games console", "Other device", "None" and "don't know".

### 4.3 Internet use

#### Internet users in Northern Ireland claim to spend significantly less time online than the UK average

According to research conducted for Ofcom's *Adult Media Literacy Report*, internet users in Northern Ireland claim to spend almost 12 hours on the internet per week. This is significantly lower than the UK average of 16.8 hours. Following a pattern similar to the rest of the UK, internet users claim to spend the majority of time online at home, followed by their workplace or place of education, and the least time online in any other location.

**Figure 4.4 Claimed time spent on the internet in a typical week**



Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in September to November 2012

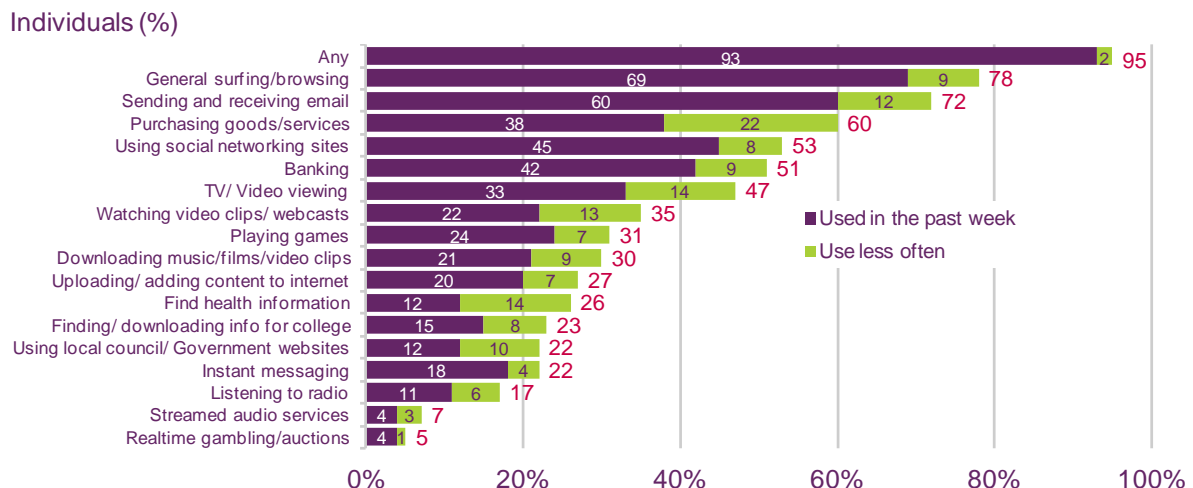
IN6A-C – How many hours in a typical week would you say you use the internet at home/ at your workplace or place of education/ anywhere else? (Unprompted responses, single coded)

Base: All adults aged 16+ who use the internet at home or elsewhere (1381 UK, 857 England, 183 Scotland, 177 Wales, 164 Northern Ireland). Significance testing shows any difference between any nation and the UK.

**Over half of broadband users in Northern Ireland use social networking sites**

Figure 4.5 shows that well over half of internet users in Northern Ireland go online for general surfing/ browsing (78%), emailing (72%) and purchasing goods or services (60%). Fifty-three per cent claim to use the internet for accessing social networking sites such as Facebook or LinkedIn, on a par with the UK average, with 45% saying that they had done this within the previous week (45%). A similar proportion of internet users said they banked online (51%), with four in ten (42%) claiming to have done so in the previous week.

**Figure 4.5 Activities conducted online by internet users.**



QE5. Which, if any, of these do you use the internet for?

Source: Ofcom research, Q1 2013

Base: Adults aged 16+ who use the internet at home or elsewhere (n= 376 Northern Ireland 2013)