

Ofcom Cross Platform Media Tracker

Technical Report 2017

1. Preface

Under the Communications Act 2003, Ofcom has a duty to draw up, and from time to time revise, a Code for television and radio services covering programme standards. This includes the protection of under-18s, the application of generally accepted standards to provide adequate protection from the inclusion of harmful or offensive material, sponsorship, product placement in television programmes, and fairness and privacy.

Ofcom's Cross Platform Media Tracker is a continuous tracking study that monitors UK audience attitudes towards broadcast (TV and radio) and on-demand and online media, alongside audiences' awareness and views regarding standards regulation and audience protection. In 2017, the study was run by BDRC Continental with fieldwork conducted by its in-house fieldwork division.

The broadcast TV and radio elements and the on-demand and online elements had been tracked in separate studies previously, and were merged into a single survey in 2017.

Since April 2017, data has been collected using a combined methodological approach: face-to-face (CAPI) interviews conducted using a stratified random sampling approach and online interviews using quota sampling. The data from both methodologies is then combined and weighted to the representative proportions within each of the four UK nations in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic group (SEG), working status and region; with an overall weight to rebalance the contribution of each methodology to be 50% each.

The data tables published in April 2018 include data collected from April – December 2017. The total sample of UK adults 16+ in the 2017 dataset is 2,386, including 1,100 face-to-face respondents (54%) and 1,286 online respondents (46%).

This document provides details of the sampling frame, research methodology and weighting procedures.

2. Fieldwork

In 2016, with Ofcom's decision to combine the online and on-demand survey content with the Media Tracker to create an integrated cross platform survey (TV, radio, online), it was decided a mixed method approach that incorporated face-to-face (CAPI) and online methodologies would be most appropriate.

Methodological bias has been reduced as far as possible operationally, by designing both research elements to be as similar as possible: both methods involve self-completion surveys, identical questions wherever possible and continuous interviewing (with fieldwork being conducted for at least three weeks in every month). In March 2017, a pilot study was conducted to trial the combined methodologies and resolve any operational issues.

3. Sample design

Each method has its own sample design, appropriate for each respective methodology.

A. A stratified random sampling approach is applied to face-to-face (CAPI) interviewing. Random sampling points are selected in each region with six interviews undertaken per Primary Sampling Unit (PSU). To ensure a representative sample, individual quotas specific to the profile of each PSU are applied by gender, age (16-24, 25-44, 45-64, 65+) and socio-economic grade (AB, C1, C2, DE).

B. Quota sampling is applied to online interviewing. There is no way of replicating the offline sampling approach online, as the demographic spread of panellists in each region is not nationally representative (and is, by no means, universal). For this reason, a quota sampling approach was adopted to ensure nationally representative responses

Targets at a UK level and within nation are set for the online component on a monthly basis. It is good practice to impose monthly targets, to avoid any skews in the profile of respondents. The monthly targets are set as a proportion of the total annual targets applied to the online component of fieldwork which are as follows:

	UK	England	Scotland	Wales	NI
Total	1080	750	110	110	110
Male	528	368	53	54	54
Female	552	383	57	56	56
16-24	162	113	15	17	18
25-34	363	255	36	33	39
35-44					
45-54	339	233	36	36	34
55-64					
65+	216	150	22	24	20
AB	232	173	21	20	19
C1	330	233	34	32	32
C2	235	158	26	25	25
DE	283	188	29	33	34
Working	625				
Not working	455				
1-2 in HH	664				
3+ in HH	416				
No child in HH	703				
Child in HH	377				
BAME	140				
Disability	162				
Rural	140				
Urban	940				

4. Weighting

Following an analysis of the combined data from the two methods, it was decided that there was a need for two types of weighting:

A. **Demographic & Geographic Weighting** – for all questions, to ensure the data is nationally representative within nation and for the UK overall by age, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic group, working status and region.

B. **Methodology** – An overall weight is applied to re-balance the contribution of each methodology to be equal.

Data from all questions are weighted to be nationally representative within nation and for the UK overall by age, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic group, working status and region; actual population figures and estimates have been taken from Census. An additional overall weight is applied to re-balance the contribution of each methodology to be equal.

The initial unweighted sample and the final weighted sample profiles are illustrated below:

Weighting category	Sub-population	Unweighted	Weighted
Gender	Male	47%	53%
	Female	49%	51%
Age	16-24	14%	15%
	25-34	17%	16%
	35-44	19%	17%
	45-54	18%	17%
	55-64	14%	14%
	65-74	13%	11%
	75+	6%	10%
SEG	AB	24%	22%
	C1	31%	31%
	C2	19%	21%
	DE	26%	26%
Working status	Working	58%	50%
	Not working	42%	50%
Ethnicity	MEG	13%	13%
English region/nation	North East	3%	4%
	North West	10%	11%
	Yorkshire/Humberside	8%	8%
	East Midlands	6%	7%
	West Midlands	8%	9%
	East of England	6%	9%
	South West	7%	8%
	South East	11%	13%
	London	13%	13%
	Scotland	10%	9%
	Wales	10%	6%
	Northern Ireland	9%	2%
Method	Online	54%	50%
	CAPI	46%	50%

Appendix: Guide to Statistical Reliability

This section details the variation between the sample results and the “true” values, or the findings that would have been obtained with a census approach. The confidence with which we can make this prediction is usually chosen to be 95%: that is, 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 and actual samples for some of the main analysis groups.

	Sub-population	Actual (n=2,386)	ESS (n=2,007)
Gender	Male	1,115	925
	Female	1,271	1,088
Age	16-24	330	287
	25-34	394	340
	35-44	451	395
	45-54	419	355
	55-64	337	290
	65+	455	356
SEG	AB	578	491
	C1	734	628
	C2	454	377
	DE	620	523
Working status	Working	1,373	1,198
	Not working	1,007	861
Ethnicity	MEG	302	284
English region/nation	North East	82	78
	North West	229	215
	Yorkshire/Humberside	180	168
	East Midlands	146	138
	West Midlands	186	175
	East of England	135	127
	South West	158	145
	South East	267	248
	London	300	286
	Scotland	237	217
	Wales	247	227
	Northern Ireland	219	128
Method	Online	1,286	1,114
	CAPI	1,100	913

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% ±
2,007 (Total)	1.31%	1.75%	2.00%	2.14%	2.19%
925 (Male)	1.93%	2.58%	2.95%	3.16%	3.22%
628 (C1)	2.35%	3.13%	3.58%	3.83%	3.91%
287 (16-24)	3.47%	4.63%	5.30%	5.67%	5.78%

For example, if 30% or 70% of a sample of 2,007 gives a particular answer, the chances are 95 in 100 that the “true” value will fall within the range of +/- 2.00 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 “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% ±
925 vs. 1,088 (Male vs. Female)	3.71%	4.96%	5.67%	6.07%	6.19%