
Ofcom's Adult's News Consumption Survey

Notification of changes to the 2022 survey

1. Overview

In 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Ofcom made the decision to suspend all face-to-face fieldwork. The 2021 Adults News Consumption Survey was affected by this decision, and an alternative mixed mode methodology of online and telephone interviews (CATI), was used to complete fieldwork instead of the previous face-to-face and online mixed mode methodology.

Due to the ongoing situation surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic, Ofcom will continue to use a mixed mode methodology of online and telephone interviews among UK adults for the 2022 Adults News Report fieldwork.

A summary of changes – in brief

- The total sample will remain a nationally representative sample of c.4.050 UK adults
- A mixed mode method of 74% online and 26% telephone (CATI) interviews will continue to replace the pre-pandemic design of 50% online and 50% face-to-face.
- All demographic questions asked in the adults 2021 CATI survey will continue to be asked in the 2022 survey.
- Questions about interests and devices asked in the adults 2021 CATI survey will continue to be asked in the 2022 CATI survey.
- Questions about news consumption at the platform level asked in the adults 2021 CATI survey will continue to be asked in the 2022 CATI survey.
- Questions about consumption of or attitudes towards individual news sources asked in the adults 2021 CATI survey will not be asked in the 2022 CATI survey.
- The adults' online questionnaire will retain all questions about consumption of and attitudes towards individual news sources.

Background to survey

The Adults News Consumption Survey is an annual survey that explores UK adults' news consumption across television, radio, print, social media, other internet sources and magazines.

The research findings provide data and insight across a variety of topics relating to the consumption of news; the level of use of platforms and particular sources; the use of social media; the perceived importance of different platforms and outlets; attitudes to individual news sources; reasons for following news; an overview of national and local media consumption; and a breakdown of news consumption in the nations. It also provides our cross-platform news consumption metric. This survey is one of a range of sources examining the consumption of content, and attitudes towards that content, across different platforms.

Methodology

Since 2018, the methodology used for this survey was a mixed mode combination of in-home face-to-face interviews and online survey completion. The outbreak of Covid-19 has prevented the face-to-face element from continuing for the foreseeable future. Therefore, for a second year we have taken the decision to change the face-to-face element of the research to telephone (CATI) methodology.

The total sample over 2 waves will remain a nationally representative sample of 4,050 UK adults. Where we previously split the survey 50% online and 50% face to face, we will change the split to c.74% online and 26% telephone (CATI). The telephone interviews will be nationally representative and therefore replicate the face-to-face sample profile. Due to modal differences between the 2021 online and telephone questionnaires and specifically differences in how respondents answered questions about individual news sources, only platform level data was reported by the mixed mode methodology adult sample in the 2021 News Report. All other adults' data was reported on the online sample only. Consequently, for the Adults News Report 2022 fieldwork we plan to have a reduced CATI questionnaire: we will only ask platform-level news consumption questions on the CATI questionnaire. The questions removed from the CATI questionnaire will be:

1. Questions D2a-D8a which ask about consumption of individual TV, newspaper, magazine, radio, social media and other internet sources.
2. Questions D2b-D8b which ask about frequency of consumption of individual TV, newspaper, magazine, radio, social media and other internet sources.
3. E1a which asks about respondents' single most important individual news source, E2 which asks respondents about the importance of individual news sources to them, and E3 which asks respondents to rate the news sources they use for news regularly for a number of attitude statements.
4. F6 which asks respondents about the sources they use to get news about their nation, and F10 which asks respondents to rate the news sources they use for news regularly for two Covid-19 attitude statements.

The 2022 online questionnaire will remain largely consistent with the 2021 questionnaire: we will continue to ask the full set of questions about consumption of and attitudes towards news sources.

Fieldwork will continue to be split in two waves: November/December 2021 and February/March 2022. Data will be published in Q2 2022.

Impact on 2021 dataset

As an official statistic, this survey provides longitudinal data which helps us understand how behaviours and attitudes shift over time. The change in methodology will not impact our ability to directly compare trend data to the 2021 survey but our ability to compare to data before 2021 will continue to be limited.

If you would like any further information, please email market.research@ofcom.org.uk