
Ofcom's Adult's News Consumption Survey

Notification of changes to the 2021 survey

1. Overview

Due to the ongoing situation surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic and current guidelines that are in place, Ofcom has made the decision to suspend all face-to-face fieldwork across all consumer research projects to protect the safety of everyone involved. The Adults News Consumption Survey 2021 is affected by this decision. This document details the alternative methodology that we will use to complete 2020/21 fieldwork, and the impact this will have on the 2021 dataset.

A summary of changes – in brief

The total sample will remain a nationally representative sample of c. 4,050 UK adults.

Mixed mode method 63% (n:2,550+ hard to reach boosts) online and 37% (n:1,500) telephone (CATI) will replace the 50% online and 50% face-to-face design.

The telephone interviews will be nationally representative and split c.65% landline and c.35% mobile.

The online questionnaire will remain unchanged, but the move to a CATI methodology requires some changes to the content of the previously face-to-face questionnaire to ensure it is suitable for this different methodology.

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. For this coming two waves of research we have therefore 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 4050 UK adults. Where we previously split the survey 50% online and 50% face to face, we will change the split to

63% online and 37% telephone (CATI). The telephone interviews will be nationally representative and therefore replicate the face to face sample profile. The online questionnaire will remain unchanged, but there will be changes to the content of the previously face-to-face questionnaire, to ensure it is manageable and an acceptable length for a telephone methodology.

Fieldwork will continue to be split in two waves: November/December 2020 and February/March 2021. Data will be published in Q2 2021.

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 means that we may not be able to directly compare trend data to previous years. We will be evaluating the extent of this when we get the data back.

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