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# Children and parents: media use and attitudes report 2022

## Annex 1: Sources and methodologies

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## A1. Background

- A1.1 The promotion of media literacy is a responsibility placed on Ofcom by Section 11 of the Communications Act 2003. Under Section 14 (6a) of the Act we have a duty to make arrangements for the carrying out of research into the matters mentioned in Section 11 (1).
- A1.2 Media literacy enables people to have the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to make full use of the opportunities presented both by traditional and by new communications services. Media literacy also helps people to manage content and communications and protect themselves and their families from the potential risks associated with using these services. Ofcom's definition of media literacy is: *"the ability to use, understand and create media and communications in a variety of contexts"*
- A1.3 The **Children and parents: media use and attitudes report 2022** is designed to give an accessible overview of media literacy among children aged 3-17 and their parents. Where possible, demographic analysis is conducted by age and gender (of the child interviewed). Where differences exist by demography these are commented on in the report. Analysis of differences relating to limiting/impacting conditions and financial vulnerability, and differences between nations, are presented in separate sections.
- A1.4 This 2022 report provides an update to the reports on children's media literacy published in 2006, 2008, and annually since 2010.<sup>1</sup>
- A1.5 This 2021 report forms part of Ofcom's wider programme of work, Making Sense of Media, which aims to help improve the online skills, knowledge and understanding of UK adults and children. We do this through providing cutting-edge research, and by bringing together organisations and individuals with expertise in media literacy to share ideas and to support their activities. To find out more about Ofcom's Making Sense of Media programme and for details on how to join the network, please go to [www.ofcom.org.uk/making-sense-of-media](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/making-sense-of-media).

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<sup>1</sup> [Children's Media Use and Attitudes - Ofcom](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/making-sense-of-media)

## A2. Ofcom's Children's and Parents' Media Literacy Tracker

### Methodology

- A2.1 The Children's and Parent's Media Literacy tracker is an annual quantitative tracking survey which has been running since 2005.<sup>2</sup>
- A2.2 The key objectives of this research are to:
- provide a rich picture of the different elements of media literacy across the key platforms: the internet, television, on-demand, games, and mobile phones;
  - provide a focus on data about children's internet habits/opinions, and parents' strategies to protect their children online; and
  - identify emerging issues and skills gaps that help to target stakeholders' resources for the promotion of media literacy and the development of wider policy.
- A2.3 Up to 2019, this survey was conducted face-to-face in the home using Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI). In 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and in common with other Ofcom tracking studies with an element of in-home interviewing, the survey was split into two surveys and delivered via post-to-web and online panels.
- A2.4 For 2021, further methodological changes were made to improve and adapt the survey to developing research needs and interests. It was therefore split into three surveys:
- **Children's online behaviours and understanding (COBA):** Two waves a year, delivered via online panels, with a sample of c. 3,300 children aged 8-17 and parents of children aged 3-17. This survey was conducted across two waves so that we could capture children's use of rapidly changing media, such as social media, live streaming and video-sharing platforms. The fieldwork for the first wave was conducted July-August 2021, and the second wave September-October 2021.
  - **Children's online knowledge and understanding (COKU):** One wave a year, delivered via online panels, with a sample of c. 2,100 children aged 8-17. The fieldwork was conducted November-December 2021.
  - **Parents only:** One wave a year, delivered via a mix of online panels and post-to-web surveys, using a sample of c. 2,400 parents of children aged 3-17. The mixed methodology enabled us to be able to reach a broader sample of respondents. The fieldwork was conducted October-December 2021.

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<sup>2</sup> This survey was not conducted in 2006 or 2008.

## Significance testing and trend data

- A2.5 For the COBA and COKU surveys, data was statistically significance tested at the 95% confidence level within sub-groups. This means that there is only a 5% or smaller probability that the difference between the samples is by chance. For the Parents only survey, due to the mixed methodology, significance testing was done at the 99% level, meaning that there is only a 1% or smaller probability that the difference between the samples is by chance.
- A2.6 For the majority of the 2022 report no statistically significant year-on-year differences are shown. This is due to the change in methodology in 2021 meaning that no direct comparisons between the current and previous waves are possible. An exception to this is the CATI (Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing) questions which relate to digital access. This survey was conducted across two waves in 2021, the methodology remaining the same for both, and as such any significant changes are noted in our analysis.

## Duplicated data

- A2.7 Where questions were asked on multiple surveys, for example in the case of online device use, we report figures from our Parents only survey.<sup>3</sup> This is because the mixed methodology of the Parents survey means the data is more likely to be reflective of a true picture of online habits, thanks to the post-to-web element allowing households with more limited or infrequent access to the internet to respond.

## Nations' analysis

- A2.8 Analysis of the data by UK nation focuses on the 2021 data and does not include commentary on trends over time. As with the UK overall, the change in methodology may have affected the results.
- A2.9 For each survey, quotas were set to achieve a minimum number of interviews per nation for analysis, with weighting applied to correct the profile.
- A2.10 The breakdown of the sample, weighted by nation, is shown below. The weighted profile is also shown in brackets for each survey and nation.

	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
<b>Parents only</b>	47% (82%)	18% (9%)	17% (5%)	18% (4%)
<b>COKU</b>	65% (82%)	13% (9%)	12% (5%)	10% (4%)
<b>COBA</b>	62% (82%)	14% (9%)	13% (5%)	11% (4%)

<sup>3</sup> Selected questions were asked on multiple surveys for routing purposes.

## A3. Additional Ofcom research

### Children's Media Lives

- A3.1 Children's Media Lives<sup>4</sup> is Ofcom's qualitative longitudinal study of children's digital media use. Since 2014 this study has been tracking, each year, the online behaviours and experiences of 18 children aged between 8 and 18. Interviewing these children annually has allowed Ofcom to gain insight into how different factors affect children's media use, including age, family, social life, and society as a whole. In 2021, the sample was expanded to 21 children, to allow us to explore the media lives of children in a wider range of circumstances, including additional vulnerabilities.
- A3.2 Due to the social distancing guidance during the COVID-19 pandemic, all interviews for wave 8 (2021) were conducted remotely via a video-calling platform (as per wave 7).
- A3.3 This wave of the study included the following:
- a) **An initial exploratory interview** with each child and their parent.
  - b) **A media diary:** Following the interview, children kept a diary over a six-day period, including a description of what they did each day. They also undertook six screen-recorded tasks to illustrate how they used their devices, and to give tours around their favourite social media apps and influencers.
  - c) **Social media tracking:** In addition to the material that the children recorded for the study, it was also possible to follow them on social media for a two-week period, allowing us to see how they acted online.
  - d) **Follow-up interviews:** During follow-up interviews, researchers were able to explore what the participants had uploaded and shared on their social media profiles, as well as specific topics of interest raised during their first interview.

### News Consumption Survey 2021

- A3.4 Alongside Ofcom's annual News Consumption Survey, conducted among adults aged 16+, a further 1,010 online interviews were carried out with children aged 12-15 in 2021. The purpose of this research is to gain a deeper understanding of older children's interest in and attitudes towards news, and the sources and platforms used for news.
- A3.5 The online interviews for the 2021 study were conducted through a research panel in two waves (November – December 2020 and February – March 2021) and combined for reporting. The initial approach is to the child's parent (the panel member) to gain their

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<sup>4</sup> [Children's Media Lives - Ofcom](#)

permission to interview the child aged 12-15, before gaining permission from the child. Quotas are set by age, gender and nation.<sup>5</sup>

- A3.6 It should be noted that the fieldwork periods for the News Consumption Survey 2021 overlapped with the second and third phases of UK-wide COVID-19 lockdown.

## Children's Audio Survey

- A3.7 Ofcom commissioned the Children's Audio Survey conducted by The Insights Family in order to enrich our understanding of children's listening habits, including their use of radio, podcasts and smart speakers.
- A3.8 A sample of 2,734 respondents aged 7-15 were surveyed using an online panel methodology. Quotas were set for a 50/50 gender split, but all other demographics depend on natural fallout. Fieldwork was conducted between 2 September 2021 and 2 March 2022.

## Wellbeing quick poll

- A3.9 To supplement our media literacy research and gain a better understanding of the positive role online services and behaviours can play in promoting wellbeing, we commissioned a one-off 'quick poll' using our online research panel.
- A3.10 A sample of 251 respondents aged 13-17 were surveyed, with quotas set for gender and age. Fieldwork was conducted between 28 February 2022 and 4 March 2022.

## CATI Omnibus research

- A3.11 In early 2021, Ofcom commissioned a CATI (computer-assisted-telephone-interview) omnibus survey to complement our regular Technology Tracker to gain further understanding of digital exclusion across the UK. Later in 2021, we continued this study under the umbrella of the Media Literacy Trackers.
- A3.12 The CATI omnibus survey was conducted with c. 3,100 adults aged 18+ living in the UK, and the data was weighted to the profile of UK adults, including those with children in their household. Fieldwork was conducted between 12 November and 5 December 2021.
- A3.13 The CATI omnibus survey provides data on:
- a) access to devices;
  - b) access to the internet;
  - c) the number of each type of device in the household;
  - d) the extent to which children in the household had access to appropriate devices for their schooling requirements; and
  - e) how children's lack of access to appropriate devices was managed.

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<sup>5</sup> A full discussion of the methodology and findings from the adults' and children's news consumption research is available here: [News Consumption in the UK: 2020 \(ofcom.org.uk\)](https://www.ofcom.gov.uk/news/2021/12/news-consumption-in-the-uk-2020)

## A4. External research sources

### The Insights Family<sup>6</sup>

- A4.1 The Insights Family collects data in a linear manner via an online survey of 3-18-year-olds. At least 410 responses are collected every week, equating to 5,325 per quarter and 21,300 annually in the UK. The sample is nationally representative regarding both age and gender.
- A4.2 To collect data, The Insights Family works with research panels across the world, with offices in Europe, North America and Asia, and which comply with GDPR, COPPA, the EU Safer Internet programme and all ESOMAR guidelines.
- A4.3 The survey data collected are uploaded to a real-time data portal, which allows users to view, analyse and interrogate the data by age, date and gender.
- A4.4 The Insights Family carries out two children's surveys, each focusing on a different part of their lives:
- Survey 1 focuses on children's digital ecosystems, identifying the latest trends in their attitudes to the digital world, their digital behaviour and consumption.
  - Survey 2 focuses predominantly on children's non-digital lives, such as hobbies, interests, and what products they are buying and consuming.
- A4.5 The data used in the *Children and parents: media use and attitudes 2022 report* have been taken from Survey 1, with the data collected between 20 September 2021 and 20 December 2021. The sample sizes for these periods were c.2,600 each.

### CHILDWISE<sup>7</sup>

- A4.6 The CHILDWISE Monitor Report 2022 is based on data collected from September to November 2021, from 2,727 children and young people aged between 5 and 16 years, from 55 schools across the UK.
- A4.7 Schools were drawn from the CHILDWISE Schools Panel and selected to give a representative mix of demographics (e.g., urban/ suburban/ rural, level of deprivation, Ofsted results).
- A4.8 Children completed online surveys in school, lasting for 20-25 minutes, and focusing on children and their media, the child as a consumer, and children's attitudes and activities.
- A4.9 Data was weighted to restore representation by age and gender, using separate weight matrices for the overall sample and each of the sub-samples.

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<sup>6</sup> The Insights Family: <https://theinsightsfamily.com/>

<sup>7</sup> CHILDWISE: <http://www.childwise.co.uk/>



## BARB<sup>8</sup>

- A4.10 To complement our research, we include findings from BARB, the UK's television audience measurement body. BARB has two sources of data that we have used: the BARB panel, and device-based census data for online TV viewing.
- A4.11 The BARB panel is made up of 5,300 homes (including 200 broadband-only homes) that are representative of household type, demographics, TV platform and geography. There are over 12,000 people living in these homes. All the panel's viewing on the TV set (through any device attached to it) is measured, as well as their viewing to BVoD services (broadcaster video-on-demand) on PCs/laptops and tablets.
- A4.12 BARB also collects device-based census data whenever anyone in the UK watches a BVoD service on a PC/laptop, tablet or smartphone. These data provide granular evidence of how online TV is being watched.

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<sup>8</sup> [BARB | Broadcasters Audience Research Board](#)