

Media literacy – Critical thinking summary piece

In June 2017, Ofcom published its annual *Adults' Media Use & Attitudes*¹ report, which looks at media use, attitudes and understanding and how these have changed over time. Published alongside this report were Ofcom's *Adults' Media Lives*² report – a longitudinal ethnographic study tracking a small number of individuals and their evolving relationships with digital media; and Ofcom's *Internet Citizens Report*³, which draws on quantitative sources to give an overview of people's online use of services and content in a range of citizen-orientated areas.

This summary piece highlights some of the key findings from the **Critical thinking** chapter.

Critical thinking

Chapter 8 of our report looks at findings relating to adults' **critical thinking** about the media they engage with. It examines people's online confidence, their understanding of the main sources of funding for TV programmes and websites, the judgements made when providing personal information online, use of various online security measures and safety features, and the incidence of negative online experiences.

A selection of key findings

Managing online privacy

More than seven in ten (72%) internet users say they are confident managing access to their personal data online.



Compared to the average, those aged 16-34 are more likely to say they are 'very confident' in this aspect of their internet use. Those aged 65+ are more likely to be among the 8% who say they are 'not at all confident'.



Almost half (46%) of social media users who post photos online say they *always* consider privacy or data security implications.

Three in ten (31%) say they *sometimes* consider this, 13% *rarely* do, and 9% *never* consider the implications.

¹ <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/media-literacy-research/adults/adults-media-use-and-attitudes>

² <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/media-literacy-research/adults/media-lives>

³ <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/internet-and-on-demand-research/internet-use-and-attitudes/internet-citizens-2017>

Providing personal information online

Providing personal information: Respondents were asked about five reliable and appropriate checks which could help keep personal information safe online, and three checks which were less reliable.



Seven in ten (70%) internet users who provide this information say they make any of the five reliable checks first. A quarter (24%) made any of the less reliable checks.

The most popular check was to see whether the site looks secure before registering their details online (58%), followed by checking whether they are familiar with the company or brand (47%).

Purchasing online: Respondents were also asked about the types of checks they make when purchasing online, before entering their debit or credit card details.



Three-quarters (74%) of online purchasers said they made any of the five appropriate checks when entering debit or credit card details. As with personal information, the most popular check was if the site looks secure (67%), followed by familiarity with the company or brand (56%).

Search engine funding awareness

Awareness of how search engines, such as Google or Bing, are mainly funded has increased since 2015 (from 46% to 53%).



Adults aged 35-54 are more likely to give the correct response, while those aged 65+ are less likely. However, among those less likely to give the correct response, this tends to be because they are unsure, rather than incorrect.

BBC and commercial television funding awareness

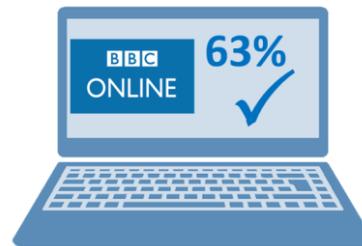
The majority of adults are aware how television programmes are mainly funded – whether on the BBC, through the public service broadcasting (PSB) commercial channels, or on Sky or Virgin Media.



Compared to the average, younger adults aged 16-34 are less likely to be aware of this, and those aged 55+ are more likely.

BBC website and iPlayer funding awareness

The majority of adults (63%) correctly identify the licence fee as the main source of funding for the BBC website. Although still more than half (54%), a lower proportion correctly identify this for BBC iPlayer.



For both platforms, compared to the average, this response is more likely among those aged 55-64, and less likely among 16-24s and over-74s.

Source: Ofcom: Adults' Media Use and Attitudes Report 2017