
Ofcom's Technology Tracker

Methodology Explanation

Overview

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Ofcom took the decision to suspend all face-to-face fieldwork from March 2021 onwards, across all consumer research projects. This decision was made to protect the safety of everyone involved in the research. Ofcom's Technology Tracker has been affected by this decision. This document outlines the changes Ofcom made to the Technology Tracker's methodology for the 2021 survey.

Background to survey

The Technology Tracker provides us with continuous understanding of consumer attitudes and behaviour in the UK communications markets (fixed and mobile telecoms, internet, multichannel TV, on-demand services, and radio/audio) among adults aged 16+. The data helps us to monitor change and assess the degree and success of market competition.

Methodology

Main fieldwork

Up until 2021, the methodology used for the Technology Tracker has been face-to-face interviews in the home with the participants, carried out once a year (January-February) with around 3,900 adults.

The outbreak of Covid-19 prevented the use of a face-to-face methodology and Ofcom was therefore forced to adapt the usual methodology. The 2021 survey, with fieldwork conducted between the 14th January and the 31st March 2021 and data published on 17th May, utilised a mixed-mode methodology:

- a) An online survey and via post in the place of the existing face-to-face format.
- b) A letter was posted out to c.22,500 households among the general UK population inviting adults aged 16+ to complete an online survey or request a paper version of the questionnaire.
- c) Participants were supplied with a link to the online survey within the letter. Alternatively, they had the option of calling an 0800 freephone number to request a paper questionnaire to complete and return.
- d) The paper version of the survey focused on the non-internet user questions to capture the offline population as well.
- e) Up to two adults aged 16+ per household were invited to complete the survey.
- f) The questionnaire length had to be reduced to maintain respondent engagement in online/paper surveys. For questions that remained, some wording had to be amended to be suitable for an online/paper format and to be appropriate for self-completion.¹

¹ See the [Technology Tracker - Confirmation of Changes](#) published on 21st December 2020

Telephone Omnibus

In addition to the online and via post methodology, Ofcom decided to ask a small subset of questions by telephone (using the Ipsos MORI weekly CATI omnibus survey) to ensure we had a nationally representative sample and that included representative proportions of offline participants. Questions asked in this telephone survey were around device ownership and internet access. These questions were like, or the same as questions asked in the main fieldwork outlined above. This means that for some questions, we have two sets of results.

The table below outlines the questions which were the same or similar across both surveys:

CATI omnibus question number	Post-to-paper/online question number
KDR01	QC1
KDR20	QC32
KDR02	E1
KDR06	E2
KDR09	IN6
KDR07	E9
KDR10	S1BBC
KDR11	S1ABBC
KDR12	E24
KDR13	E25A
KDR14	E25B

In addition, Ofcom also asked new questions via the telephone omnibus to help explore the issue of digital exclusion among families with children of school age during the pandemic. These questions will be used to help inform our work on Media Literacy and were recently published in the [Adults' Media Use and Attitudes report](#) and the [Children and parents: media use and attitudes report](#).

Impact on 2021 data

As an official statistic, this survey provides trend data. However, the change in methodology means that we will not be able to directly compare trend data to previous years, although we hope to be able to make meaningful indicative comparisons.

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