

Ofcom News Consumption Technical Report for Adults Combined online & CAPI (face to face) approach

A. Preface

Ofcom is the regulator for the UK communications industries, with responsibilities across television, radio, video-on-demand, telecommunications, wireless and postal communications. Ofcom regularly carries out research into these markets to stay informed on new technology developments and the impact that they might have on the sectors they regulate.

As part of their regulatory duties Ofcom monitors consumption and attitudes towards news across television, radio, print and online.

Ofcom's adult News Consumption survey has been conducted on a yearly basis, since 2013, using a face to face omnibus methodology.

Under the new Royal Charter and Agreement, regulation of the BBC has now passed from the BBC Trust to Ofcom. One of Ofcom's central responsibilities will be to hold the BBC to account for its performance in fulfilling its Mission and promoting its Public Purposes. For this assessment to be meaningful, Ofcom need it to be based in a clear understanding of a range of factors, including audiences' own views on the BBC's performance.

Because of this additional responsibility, in 2017 Ofcom sought to commission a bespoke quantitative survey that could incorporate the adult News Consumption survey and provide additional questioning that would fulfil Ofcom's regulatory requirements of the BBC.

From December 2017 until March 2020, Jigsaw Research conducted a mixed methodology approach, combining online and face to face interviews. However, during the last two years of research, Jigsaw were unable to do this consistently, due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Since online methodologies tend to underrepresent low/non internet users, Jigsaw conducted a combination of online and telephone interviews during November/December 2020, March/April 2021 and November/December 2021, to ensure that these groups had the opportunity to express their views. In March/April 2022, Jigsaw reverted to the preferred methodology of conducting online and face to face interviews, to be consistent with previous and future years.

In total, the face to face survey achieved 1,086 interviews, with the nations over-represented during fieldwork. This data has been weighted to correct for this over-representation, with weights being applied by age, gender and socio-economic group (SEG) within nation, to provide a representative view of all UK adults. The online and face to face data has been combined to provide a snapshot of opinion across both methodologies during March/April 2022. The 1,717 online interviews collected in November/December 2021 have not been included in the combined data.

We compared the online data collected in November/December 2021 with the online data collected in March/April 2022 and while we did observe some significant differences there were no indications of strong seasonal effects. We took the decision that a combined face to face and online dataset based on March/April 2022 data alone was preferable to a dataset based on online data from November/December 2021 and March/April 2022, and face to face data from March/April 2022, as less weighting was required. Therefore, the combined face to face and online dataset contains data from interviews conducted between 7th March and 3rd April 2022 only.

To ensure that any trend data within this publication is comparable, we have also decided to publish the online data separately, as we did in 2021. The 3,423 online interviews have been weighted by age, gender,

nation/region, working status and ethnicity to ensure they are representative of 'recent' internet users, as found in the ONS Internet Users research (published on 6th April 2020).

The online interviews were conducted over two waves of research, from 6th November - 5th December 2021 and 7th March - 3rd April 2022, whilst the face to face interviews were conducted from 7th March - 3rd April 2022

The two fieldwork periods have remained consistent over the last five years to ensure comparability.

Details of the combined online and face to face sample design and weighting procedures are outlined in the following pages, as well as a note on statistical reliability. A separate technical report is available for the online (only) data. The 530 CATI interviews collected in November/December 2021 have also not been included in the combined data. Data for these CATI interviews will be published separately, along with the News Report, in July 2022.

B. Sample Design

Face to Face Interviewing

Jigsaw Research adopted a random location interviewing (RLI) approach to ensure that the sample was representative of UK adults. Sample frames were developed separately for each of the four nations (England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland) covering the following key subgroups - age (16-24/25-34/35-44/45-54/55-64/65-74/75+), gender and socio-economic group (AB/C1/C2/DE).

The random location interviews (RLI) were conducted using a stratified sample, to ensure an adequate representation of all groups of interest. UK Geographics generated the sampling points as follows:

- Based on the Census Output Areas, the smallest level at which the Census data is collected, containing approximately 125 addresses in England, Wales and NI and approximately 50 addresses in Scotland.
- Prior to selection, the OAs were sorted by BBC TV region and within nation/region by the UK Geographics urbanity indicator
- Sample was allocated proportionately across the 11 English BBC TV regions, based on the population aged 16+. Sample for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales would be structured to ensure at least 350 interviews per TV area

The frame of sampling points had 100% coverage of all residential areas and households. Including the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands.

The following quotas were set to represent the population of each sampling point, which meant the overall quotas closely matched the population within each BBC TV region/Nation.

- Age (16-24, 25-44, 45+)
- Gender
- Socio-economic group (AB/C1/C2/DE)

Online Interviewing

Jigsaw Research adopted a quota sample approach to their online interviewing to ensure that the sample was representative of 'recent' internet users. The sample frame was developed at a UK level covering the following key subgroups:

- Age (16-24/25-34/35-44/45-54/55-64/65-74/75+)
- Gender
- Nation/Region

- Working status (Employed/unemployed)

Ethnicity (White, Mixed/multiple ethnic background, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese, Other Asian background, Black/African/Caribbean/Black British, Any other ethnic group)

C. Weighting

At the analysis stage, data from both methodologies were combined. Two stages of weighting then took place. Stage 1 was used to correct for over-representation of Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish respondents and align demographics to the known UK profile. We then used a methodological weight, during Stage 2, to account for differences between the face to face and online approaches.

C.1. Demographic weights

For stage 1, the CAPI data was weighted by nation and within each nation by gender, age and socio-economic group (SEG). Rim weights were applied using targets from Nomis, April 2020 (nation, gender and age) and the 2011 Census (SEG).

The initial unweighted sample and the weighted sample profiles are illustrated below:

Weighting Category	Sub-group	Unweighted	Demographic weight
Nation	England	50%	84%
	Scotland	17%	8%
	Wales	17%	5%
	Northern Ireland	16%	3%
Gender	Men	48%	49%
	Women	52%	51%
Age	16-24	13%	13%
	25-39	20%	25%
	40-54	26%	25%
	55-74	30%	27%
	75+	11%	10%
	SEG	AB	21%
C1		30%	30%
C2		22%	22%
DE		27%	26%

The online data was weighted by nation/region, gender, age, working status and ethnicity to be representative of 'recent' internet users, as found in the ONS Internet Users research (published on 6th April 2020).

The initial unweighted sample and the weighted sample profiles are illustrated below:

Weighting Category	Sub-group	Unweighted	Demographic weight
Nation	North East	4%	4%
	North West	9%	11%
	Yorkshire & the Humber	6%	8%
	East Midlands	6%	7%
	West Midlands	9%	9%
	East of England	7%	9%
	London	15%	14%
	South East	11%	14%
	South West	6%	9%
	Scotland	9%	8%
	Wales	9%	5%
	Northern Ireland	7%	3%
Gender	Men	48%	49%
	Women	52%	50%
Age	16-24	18%	14%
	25-34	15%	18%
	35-44	18%	17%
	45-54	18%	18%
	55-64	14%	16%
	65-74	11%	11%
	75+	6%	6%
Working Status	Employed	53%	66%
	Unemployed	47%	34%

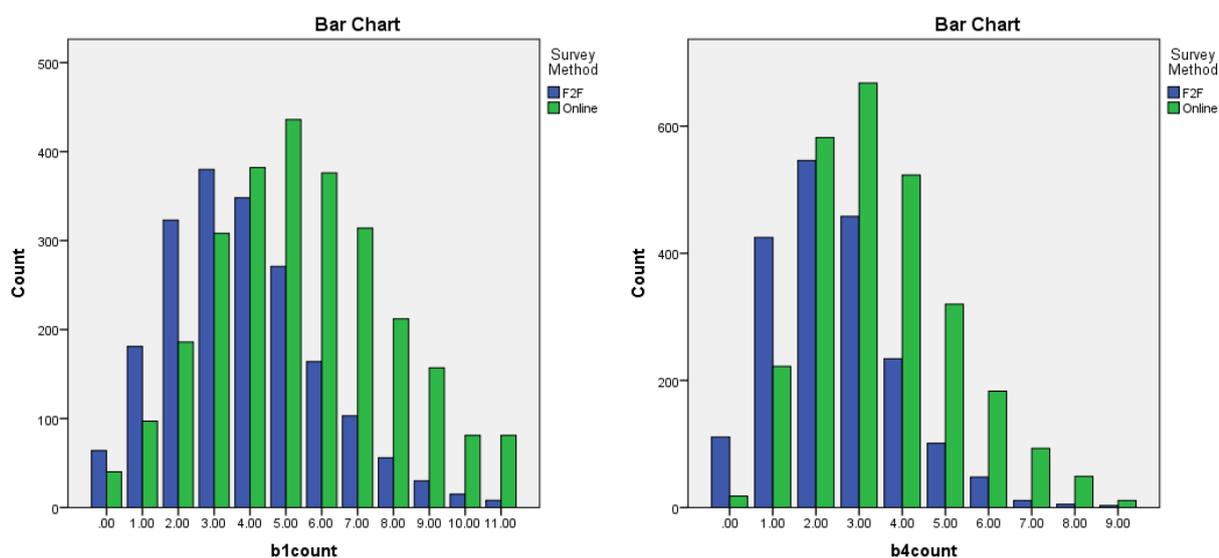
Weighting Category	Sub-group	Unweighted	Demographic weight
Ethnicity	White	78%	88%
	Mixed/multiple ethnic background	2%	1%
	Indian	7%	2%
	Pakistani	2%	2%
	Bangladeshi	1%	1%
	Chinese	3%	1%
	Other Asian background	1%	1%
	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	5%	3%
	Other ethnic group	1%	2%

C.2. Methodological weight

A second stage of weighting was used to correct for differences between the face to face and online methodologies and to realign the distribution of the face to face and online interviews.

As in previous surveys, online participants were more likely to have a larger range of interests (from question B1) and a greater number of technology devices in their households (from question B4).

The demographically weighted distribution of these two questions in 2018 is shown below:



In agreement with Ofcom, a methodological weight was developed and applied to the demographic weights. These weights remain consistent with previous years of this study.

In 2022, the online interviews accounted for 61% of interviews, with the face to face accounting for the remaining 39% of interviews. In agreement with Ofcom, the online interviews were downweighted to represent 55% of interviews, with the face to face interviews accounting for 45% of interviews. This was done to align the 2022 approach with previous and future years.

The final weighted sample profile is illustrated below:

Weighting Category	Sub-group	Demographic weight	Demographic + Methodological weight (Final Weight)
Nation	England	84%	85%
	Scotland	8%	7%
	Wales	5%	5%
	Northern Ireland	3%	3%
Gender	Men	49%	49%
	Women	51%	51%
Age	16-24	13%	14%
	25-39	25%	27%
	40-54	25%	25%
	55-74	27%	26%
	75+	10%	8%
	SEG	AB	22%
C1		30%	31%
C2		22%	21%
DE		26%	21%

The online data was weighted by nation/region, gender, age, working status and ethnicity to be representative of 'recent' internet users, as found in the ONS Internet Users research (published on 6th April 2020).

The initial unweighted sample and the weighted sample profiles are illustrated below:

Weighting Category	Sub-group	Demographic weight	Demographic + Methodological weight (Final Weight)
Nation	North East	4%	4%
	North West	11%	11%
	Yorkshire & the Humber	8%	7%
	East Midlands	7%	7%
	West Midlands	9%	9%
	East of England	9%	10%
	London	14%	13%
	South East	14%	14%
	South West	9%	9%
	Scotland	8%	8%
	Wales	5%	5%
	Northern Ireland	3%	3%
Gender	Men	49%	48%
	Women	50%	52%
Age	16-24	14%	14%
	25-34	18%	17%
	35-44	17%	16%
	45-54	18%	17%
	55-64	16%	16%
	65-74	11%	12%
	75+	6%	7%
Working Status	Employed	66%	63%
	Unemployed	34%	37%

Weighting Category	Sub-group	Demographic weight	Demographic + Methodological weight (Final Weight)
Ethnicity	White	88%	87%
	Mixed/multiple ethnic background	1%	1%
	Indian	2%	3%
	Pakistani	2%	1%
	Bangladeshi	1%	1%
	Chinese	1%	1%
	Other Asian background	1%	1%
	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	3%	3%
	Other ethnic group	2%	2%

D. Statistical reliability and significance

D.1. Effective sample size

This section details the variation between the sample results and the “true” values, or the findings that would have been obtained with a census approach. The confidence with which we can make this prediction is chosen to be 95%: that is, the chances are 95 in 100 that the “true” values will fall within a specified range. However, as the sample is weighted, we need to use the effective sample size (ESS) rather than actual sample size to judge the accuracy of results.

The following table compares ESS and actual samples for some of the main analysis groups from the combined online and CATI data:

Weighting Category	Sub-group	Actual interviews achieved	Effective sample size (ESS)
Nation	England	1,806	1,177
	Scotland	344	244
	Wales	337	246
	Northern Ireland	305	210
Gender	Men	1,336	738
	Women	1,449	803

Weighting Category	Sub-group	Actual interviews achieved	Effective sample size (ESS)
Age	16-24	442	198
	25-34	385	220
	35-44	520	271
	45-54	463	283
	55-64	412	245
	65-74	346	206
	75+	223	145
SEG	AB	664	346
	C1	861	484
	C2	534	311
	DE	725	415

D.2. Confidence interval

The table below illustrates the required ranges for different sample sizes and percentage results at the “95% confidence interval”:

Effective sample size	10% or 90% ±	20% or 80% ±	30% or 70% ±	40% or 60% ±	50% ±
1,547 (Total)	1.49%	1.99%	2.28%	2.44%	2.49%
738 (Men)	2.16%	2.89%	3.31%	3.53%	3.61%
484 (C1)	2.67%	3.56%	4.08%	4.36%	4.45%
220 (25-34)	3.96%	5.29%	6.06%	6.47%	6.61%
210 (NI)	4.06%	5.41%	6.20%	6.63%	6.76%

For example, if 30% or 70% of a sample of 1,547 gives a particular answer, the chances are 95 in 100 that the “true” value will fall within the range of +/- 2.28 percentage points from the sample results.

D.3. Significant differences

When results are compared between separate groups within a sample, different results may be obtained. The difference may be “real”, or it may occur by chance (because not everyone has been interviewed). To test if the difference is a real one – i.e. if it is “statistically significant” – we again must know the size of the samples, the percentages giving a certain answer and the degree of confidence chosen. If we assume “95% confidence interval”, the difference between two sample results must be greater than the values given in the table below to be significant:

Sample sizes being compared	10% or 90% ±	20% or 80% ±	30% or 70% ±	40% or 60% ±	50% ±
738 vs 803 Men vs women	3.21%	4.16%	4.68%	4.95%	5.00%
484 vs 311 C1 vs C2	4.60%	5.94%	6.68%	7.05%	7.12%

For example, comparing a score of 11% for Males and 14% for Females, the scores will need to be at least 3.21% different (using the table) to indicate a significant difference.