Large services: Ipsos Iris data on service reach

In our Protection of Children and Illegal Harms consultations, whether some proposed measures are recommended for services can depend on whether those services are 'large services'. We propose to define a 'large service' as a user-to-user service or search service with more than 7 million monthly United Kingdom users.[1]

Ofcom does not have a definitive list of such services and does not currently have the full data to determine this. Some stakeholders have asked us what data we hold which relates to service size.

Ofcom publishes some data which may be indicative of whether some services are likely to be a 'large' service. Ofcom's Online Nation 2023 report includes a look at UK visitor reach of websites and apps. An Online interactive dashboard is published alongside this report which contains a wider visitor reach for services lists. This can be found on Ofcom's Communications Market Report 2023: Interactive data webpage (fifth dashboard down the page).[2]

In considering how this visitor reach data can be related to our proposed definition of 'large' services, there are a number of important points to bear in mind:

- **Brands and services**: The visitor reach data is sourced from Ipsos Iris, which is the UKOM-endorsed measurement of UK online audiences aged 15+.[3] The data points do not necessarily correspond to a 'service' in scope of the Online Safety Act ("Act"). For example, organisations and brands in the interactive tables could consist of a number of services as they are defined under the Act.
- **User-to-user or search services**: The report and dashboard include some website and apps that will not be user-to-user services or search services and hence are not regulated services in scope of the Act.[4] Even where some brands have a user-to-user service, it may be that not all visitors of the website/app visited the user-to-user part of the website/app and therefore the visitor numbers to that part of the website/app could be smaller than the total website/app visitor number.
- **Age of users**: The Ipsos Iris data shows adults (18+ years) and, separately, 15-17 year olds, across smartphone, tablet and computers/laptops. The proposed definition of 'large service' for the protection of children and illegal harms codes would also include younger children. So while a service might not have 7 million monthly users when considering only those aged 15 years and over, it could have 7 million monthly users when all users are considered.
- **Measured usage period**: The Ipsos Iris data shown in the interactive tables relates to usage at a point in time (May 2023). The definition we proposed for user numbers in our Protection of Children and Illegal Harms consultation involves considering a 12 month average.

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[1] We explain why we propose to define 'large service' as a service with a number of monthly UK users that exceeds 7 million (Volume 5, Section 14). We describe how we propose services calculate user numbers Annex 7 and the equivalent wording in Annex 8.

[2] The "Online" data is part way down the webpage. Within the Online section, the button labelled "Online use – website and apps" includes "Top Organisations" tab and "Online Sectors – Top services" tab, both tabs contain UK visitor reach data.

[3] UK Online Measurement (UKOM) defines and governs the UK standard for audience measurement across PC, tablet and smartphone. For more details of the Ipsos Iris dataset see pages 104-105 in Ofcom's Online Nation report, November 2023.

[4] We explain what services are in scope of the Act in Chapter 3 in Volume 1 of the illegal harms consultation.