
Children and parents: media use and attitudes report 2023

Annex 1: Sources and methodologies

Contents

Section

A1. Background	1
A2. Ofcom's Children's and Parents' Media Literacy Tracker	2
A3. Additional Ofcom research	5
A4. External research sources	8

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 2023**¹ is designed to give an accessible overview of media literacy among children aged 3-17 and their parents. Sections dedicated to children's media use by age, and by gender, have been included. Data tables showing any differences relating to limiting/impacting conditions and financial vulnerability have also been published on our Statistical Release Calendar 2023².
- A1.4 This 2023 report provides an update to the report on children's media literacy published in 2022.³
- A1.5 This 2023 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.

¹ [Children and Parents: media use and attitudes 2023 report](#)

² [Ofcom's Statistical Release Calendar 2023](#)

³ [Children's Media Use and Attitudes 2022 report - Ofcom](#)

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

Methodology

- A2.1 The Children's and Parents' Media Literacy tracker is an annual quantitative tracking survey which has been running since 2005.⁴
- 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 research was conducted face to face, in-home using Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI). However, in 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it was not possible to conduct the research in this way. Therefore, during that year the survey was converted to two surveys which were conducted via a mixture of post-to-web and online panels. This methodology continued in 2021, however, following a complete review the surveys were adapted to become three distinct surveys (see A2.4 below). The latter suite of 2021 surveys and methodologies continued in 2022, enabling comparability of the research findings between these years. An online-only approach is appropriate for this survey as virtually all parents of 3-17-year-olds are online.
- A2.4 In the interest of developing research needs and interests, the survey has been split into three surveys since 2021:
- **Children's online behaviours and understanding (COBA):** Two waves a year, delivered via online panels, with a sample of c. 6,795 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 5th-27th May 2022, and the second wave 3rd-24th November 2022.
 - **Children's online knowledge and understanding (COKU):** One wave a year, delivered via online panels, with a sample of c. 2,087 children aged 8-17. The fieldwork was conducted 13th October - 14th November 2022.
 - **Parents only:** One wave a year, delivered via a mix of online panels and post-to-web surveys, using a sample of c. 2,526 parents of children aged 3-17. The mixed

⁴ This survey was not conducted in 2006 or 2008.

methodology enabled us to be able to reach a broader sample of respondents. The fieldwork was conducted in 3rd October - 30th November 2022.

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% level⁵, meaning that there is only a 1% or smaller probability that the difference between the samples is by chance.
- A2.6 Our 2022 survey methodology is unchanged from that used in 2021 and we can make comparisons year on year where there is consistency in the question text. Before 2022, comparison is not possible due to survey reorganisation and changes to data collection due to the impact of the pandemic.

Duplicated data

- A2.7 Where questions were asked in multiple surveys, for example in the case of online device use, we report figures from our Parents only survey.⁶ This is because the mixed methodology of the Parents survey means the data is more likely to reflect a true picture of online habits, due to the post-to-web element that allows households with more limited or infrequent access to the internet to respond.

Nations' analysis

- A2.8 Data for each UK nation is included in the published data tables.⁷ As with the UK overall, the change in methodology may have affected the results therefore advice is to treat with caution.
- 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 in the next table. The weighted profile is also shown in brackets for each survey and nation.

⁵ Testing at 99% can be a preferred methodology when using mixed mode to recruit and interview respondents. The rationale is that the mixed effect means that there are unquantifiable design effects due to the fact that online panels may be attitudinally different to those responding to push to web or encountered face-to-face. Testing at a higher-level means those design effects are accommodated for and there is certainty that any reported differences by demographic are significant.

⁶ Selected questions were asked on multiple surveys for routing purposes.

⁷ Children's Media Literacy data tables 2022, which include data by UK nation: [Statistical release calendar 2023 - Ofcom](#)

	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
Parents only	46% (82%)	19% (9%)	17% (5%)	18% (4%)
COKU	67% (82%)	12% (9%)	11% (5%)	10% (4%)
COBA	63% (82%)	14% (9%)	14% (5%)	9% (4%)

A3. Additional Ofcom research

Children's Media Lives

- A3.1 Children's Media Lives⁸ 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 8-17. 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. This size sample continued in 2022.
- A3.2 The majority of interviews for wave 9 (2022) were conducted online via video call. However, to build rapport with interviewees, face-to-face interviews were conducted with the four new participants recruited for the wave 9 sample. Face-to-face interviews were also conducted with two other participants due to their access needs.
- 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 do each day. They also undertook two 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 45-minute follow-up interviews⁹, 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.

Adults' Media Literacy Core Tracking Study

- A3.4 The Adults' Media Literacy Core Tracking Survey addresses key measures (such as internet access and ownership and use of devices) from a UK nationally representative sample of adults aged 16+, so including the views of those who do not go online.
- A3.5 In 2022, 3,651 interviews conducted through a mixed method approach, 2,130 face-to-face in-home/on the doorstep interviews were completed as well as 1,521 online interviews. Fieldwork took place from 23rd September – 9th November 2022.

⁸ [Children's Media Lives - Ofcom](#)

⁹ The four new participants in wave 9 were not asked to complete the follow-up interview

News Consumption Survey 2022

- A3.6 Ofcom’s News Consumption Survey is an annual quantitative tracking study. The purpose of this research is to inform understanding of news consumption across the UK and within each UK nation. This includes sources and platforms used, the perceived importance of different outlets for news, attitudes towards individual news sources, and international and local news use.
- A3.7 Alongside Ofcom’s annual News Consumption Survey, conducted among adults aged 16+, a further 1,001 online interviews were carried out with children aged 12-15 across 2021 and 2022.
- A3.8 In total, 500 interviews between 5 November and 6 December 2021 have been combined with 501 interviews between 6 March to 4 April 2022 for reporting purposes. Each wave of fieldwork was undertaken in three stages:
- Stage 1: parents of 12–15-year-olds are targeted using an online panel.
 - Stage 2: Parents are screened to ensure a representative sample was recruited.
 - Stage 3: The parent asks their (qualifying) teen to complete the rest of the questionnaire.
- A3.9 Quotas are set by age, gender, and socio-economic group (SEG).¹⁰

Technology Tracker

- A3.10 Ofcom’s Technology Tracker is an annual survey that tracks the attitudes and behaviour of UK consumers with respect to residential telecommunications, broadcasting and the internet.
- A3.11 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.

Cross-Media Platform Tracker

- A3.12 Ofcom’s carries out a Cross-Media Platform Tracker for adults (those aged 16 and over) and teens. The Children’s Media Use and Attitudes report 2023 includes data from the Teens Tracker. The purpose of this research is to understand teens’ media activities and the devices they use to consume content.
- A3.13 As in previous years, interviewing was conducted online (via a panel) with teenagers aged between 12-15 in the UK. A total of 1,000 interviews were completed with 12–15-year-olds in 2022. Interviewing was conducted across two waves:
- Wave 1 fieldwork from 8 June to 20 June 2022 – 500 interviews

¹⁰ 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](#)

- Wave 2 fieldwork from 12 October to 24 October 2022 – 500 interviews

A3.14 Overall quotas were set for gender within age, nation within age, and socio-economic group within age.

BBC Children's Performance Tracker

A3.15 Ofcom has conducted an annual quantitative tracker since 2017 among adults aged 16+, and since 2021 this includes parents of children aged 3-7 and children aged 8-16. The research is designed to measure audiences' (and parents') own views on the BBC's performance. The main research objectives are to:

- understand the public's perception of the BBC's delivery of its Public Purposes;
- understand the public's views on the importance of the Public Purposes;
- evaluate the BBC's performance in comparison to traditional and emerging competitors; and
- understand brand awareness of the BBC in the wider market context (e.g. where do people go first to find content).

A4. External research sources

The Insights Family¹¹

- A4.1 The sample used by The Insights Family (which is collected continuously over the course of a year) is by age and gender and is nationally representative. Broken down by country, they survey about 400 children aged between 3 and 18 years old, and about 200 parents of children between the age of 1-16 every week. This equates to around 21,000 children and 10,500 parents per year, per country.
- A4.2 The survey data collected were uploaded to a real-time data portal, which allows users to view, analyse and interrogate the data by age, date and gender.
- A4.3 The Insights Family carries out two children's surveys, each focusing on a different part of their lives:
- Survey 1 focuses on children's gaming behaviours, identifying the latest trends in their attitudes to gaming, their gaming behaviours and engagement.
 - Survey 2 focuses predominantly on children's non-digital lives, such as hobbies, interests, and what products they are buying and consuming.
- A4.4 Survey 1, with the data collected between 1st Jan 2022 and 31st December 2022. The sample sizes for these periods were c.10,200 kids.
- A4.5 Survey 2, with the data collected between 1st Jan 2022 and 31st December 2022. The sample sizes for these periods were c.10,200 kids.

CHILDWISE¹²

- A4.6 The CHILDWISE Monitor Report 2023 is based on data collected from September to November 2022, from 2,802 children and young people aged between 5-18, from 62 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 were weighted to restore representation by age and gender, using separate weight matrices for the overall sample and each of the sub-samples.

¹¹ The Insights Family: <https://theinsightsfamily.com/>

¹² CHILDWISE: <http://www.childwise.co.uk/>

BARB¹³

- 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 use: the BARB panel, and device-based census data for online TV viewing.
- A4.11 The BARB panel is made up of over 5,400 homes (including 200 broadband-only homes) that are representative of household type, demographics, TV platform and geography. There are just under 11,600 people living in these homes, and viewing by any guests is also tracked. All the panel’s viewing on TV sets is measured via audio matching, and viewing of VoD (including BVoD, SVoD and AVoD) and video-sharing platforms is measured across devices via a meter attached to the households’ WiFi routers.
- 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.

¹³ [BARB | Broadcasters Audience Research Board](#)