



# The Internet in Britain 2007

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# The Internet in Britain: 2007

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# Introduction

The Oxford Internet Surveys (OxIS) are core to the research of the Oxford Internet Institute (OII) – a leading world centre for the multidisciplinary study of the Internet and society. The OII is a department within the Social Sciences Division of the University of Oxford, focusing on Internet-related research and teaching, and on informing policy and practice.

## The Internet in Britain

Launched by the Oxford Internet Institute in 2003, OxIS has become an authoritative source of information about Internet access, use and attitudes – and the difference this makes for everyday life – in Britain. Areas covered include: digital and social inclusion and exclusion; regulation and governance of the Internet; privacy, trust and risk concerns; and uses of the Internet, including social networking, entertainment and online education.

The OxIS 2007 survey is the third in a series, with previous surveys conducted in 2003 and 2005. Each has used a multi-stage national probability sample of 2000 people in the UK, enabling us to project estimates to Britain as a whole. OxIS has achieved a high response rate for all three surveys, reaching 77% in 2007.

|                       | 2003      | 2005           | 2007        |
|-----------------------|-----------|----------------|-------------|
| Fielded in            | June-July | February-March | March-April |
| Number of respondents | 2,030     | 2,185          | 2,350       |
| Response rate         | 66%       | 72%            | 77%         |

## Britain in a Global Context

OxIS provides the UK's link to the World Internet Project (WIP), an international collaborative project that joins over two dozen nations in studies of the social, economic and political implications of the Internet. More information about WIP can be found at:

<http://www.worldinternetproject.net/>

## Structure of the Report

The first part of this report focuses on describing users, ex-users and non-users, based on such attributes as their demographic characteristics, uses of, and attitudes towards, ICTs. The second part focuses on describing how people with different backgrounds use and think about the Internet.

A description of the methodology is available at the end of this report, and the full protocol for the interviews is available on the OxIS website at:  
<http://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/microsites/oxis/methodology.cfm>

# Executive summary

## Users and Non-Users

Internet **use has increased** at a gradual rate. Two thirds of Britons use the Internet and access it at home in 2007.

**Digital divides** continue to exist in 2007. Men, students, higher educated and higher income individuals are all more likely to use the Internet than women, retired, disabled, lower educated and lower income individuals.

Internet users are rapidly moving to **high speed connections**. The great majority of those with home access use a broadband connection.

The percentage of **ex-users** (people who used the Internet before but stopped using it) has remained the same at 5%.

The number of **non-users** (people who have never used the Internet) has decreased to a quarter of the population in 2007.

Ex-users and non-users have different **reasons for not using the Internet**. Ex-users are more likely to point to a lack of interest and access. Non-users are more likely to point to a lack of skill.

Ex-users are likely to have asked someone to use the Internet for them. They have a broader network of, and better access to, skilled '**proxy-users**' than non-users.

Internet users are more likely to come from households with access to a wide variety of **information and communication technologies (ICTs)** and have more positive attitudes towards ICTs and the Internet than those who do not use the Internet.

Internet users believe that individuals should play a role in **regulating** the Internet. Non-users see a greater role for government.

Internet users tend to consider themselves more **extroverted** and social than do non-users.

While Internet use in certain **lifestage** groups, such as students and people in employment, has gone up, in the retired group it has remained the same over the years at around a third of retired people.

## Patterns of Internet Use

**Internet users** in 2007 undertake more information, creative and social activities than they did in 2005. The only area in which use seems to have stabilised is in entertainment-related activities.

Gaps in **skills** such as in the ability to 'multi-task' and to 'figure things out for oneself' indicate that men and students are more confident than women and employed users. Retired users are the least skilled.

Making travel plans, looking for local events and news remain the most popular **information seeking activities**.

Using the Internet for everyday **learning** has increased in popularity.

The Internet is the **first port of call** for the great majority of Internet users when trying to learn about something new – more important than family members, colleagues or libraries.

Users have changed their **information search patterns**. In 2007, almost two thirds of users depended primarily on search engines to find information: up from one fifth in 2005.

Getting information about and buying products are popular **commercial uses** of the Internet, but doubts remain about quality assessment of the products bought online and the lack of face-to-face contact.

Downloading music and videos and playing games are the most popular **online entertainment activities** of the Internet.

According to a quarter of Internet users, the time they spend **watching TV is reduced** due to their use of the Internet.

Emailing remains the most popular Internet activity. Instant messaging is another popular **communication activity**.

Less than one fifth of users maintain a **social networking profile** or presence on the Internet.

People do not feel that the Internet intrudes on the **time they spend with family and friends**.

The Internet seems to **increase contacts with others**, especially those living further away.

**Meeting new people online** is especially popular with students. One third of student users have met someone online.

**Meeting online friends offline** is more popular with employed and retired Internet users than with students.

**Civic participation** is low. The most popular activity (signing online petitions) is undertaken by less than one tenth of Internet users.

The use of **e-government** services has increased; however, less than half of users say they have had any contact with government through the Internet.

**Gender** differences persist, although they are not large.

**Men** use the Internet more than women, especially for entertainment and content production.

**Women** tend to look for health information online more than men do, and are more likely to use the Internet to help their children.

**Lifestage** is associated with Internet use.

**Students** are the most active users of online entertainment and social networking sites.

**Employed users** are frequent users of financial services and information seeking sites.

**Retired users** are less active in all areas, with the exception of civic participation and financial services sites.





# I. Profiles of Users and Non-users of the Internet

General Access and Use

Digital Divides: Users and Non-users

Reasons for Non-Use

Access to Technologies

Media Use

Attitudes towards ICTs and the Internet

Attitudes towards Regulation

Unpleasant Experiences on the Internet

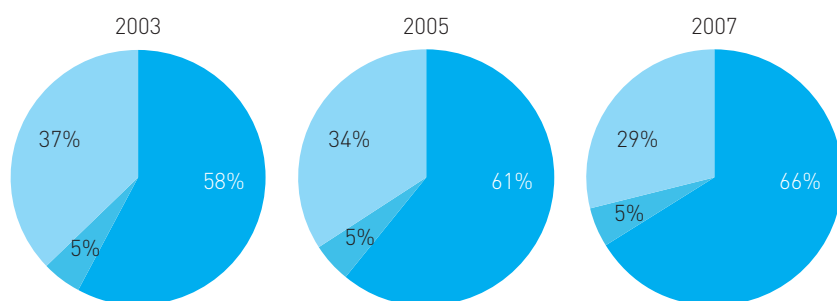
Psychological and Social Characteristics of Internet Users

## General Access and Use

In 2000, only about one third of Britons had access to the Internet. Many wondered if it was just a passing fad. By 2007, over two thirds have access to the Internet. For many Britons, it has become an infrastructure of everyday life. However, the increase in access and use of the Internet from 2003 to 2007 has been slow, if it has not reached a plateau. The greatest increase is in the rapid growth of broadband: more than four out of five Internet users now have this type of 'always on' connection at home. There is also evidence in 2007 of a growing trend of people starting to access the Internet more frequently from mobile handheld devices.

### Household Access (QH1)

■ Access at present ■ Access in the past ■ Never had access



OxIS 2003: N=2,029; OxIS 2005: N=2,185; OxIS 2007: N=2,350

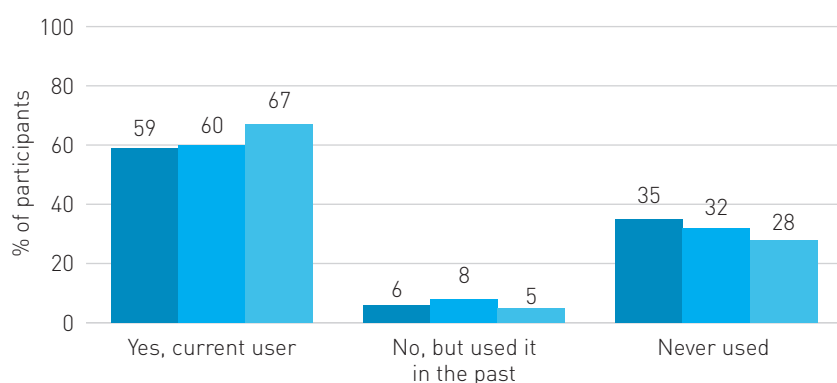
"Does this household have access to the Internet?"

Household Internet access in Britain shows an increase from 58% in 2003 to 66% in 2007.

From 2003 to 2007, the number of people who had access before but who do not currently have access has remained the same at about 5% of the population. By 2007, one third (29%) of households in Britain have never had access to the Internet.

### Internet Use by Individuals (QH19)

■ 2003 ■ 2005 ■ 2007



OxIS 2003: N=2,029; OxIS 2005: N=2,185; OxIS 2007: N=2,350

"Do you yourself personally use the Internet at home, work, school, college or elsewhere or have you used the Internet anywhere in the past?"

Internet use and home access are nearly equivalent: 67% of Britons use the Internet in 2007.

There is a stable group of ex-users: 5% to 8% have used the Internet in the past but do not use it currently.

"In which of the following ways can members of your household get access to the Internet at home?"

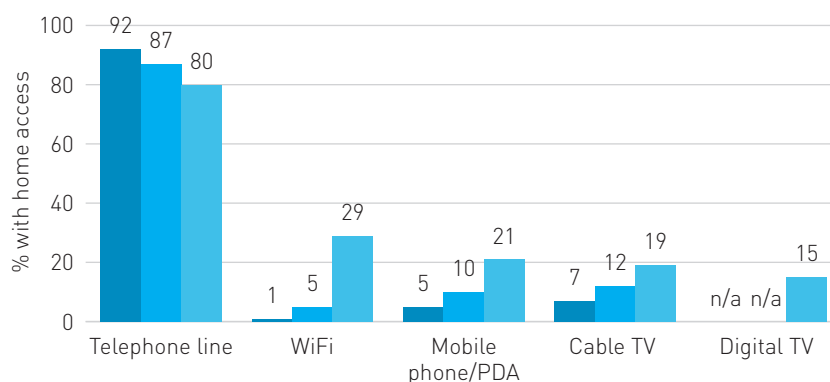
Proportionally, telephone connections to the Internet are in decline from 92% in 2003 to 80% in 2007, while cable connections have grown.

Wireless (WiFi) connections show the most rapid increase as a means to connect to the Internet, from 1% in 2003 to 29% in 2007.

One fifth (21%) of users now connect to the Internet using a handheld device, twice as many as in 2005.

#### Different Types of Access to the Internet in the Household (QH4)

■ 2003 ■ 2005 ■ 2007



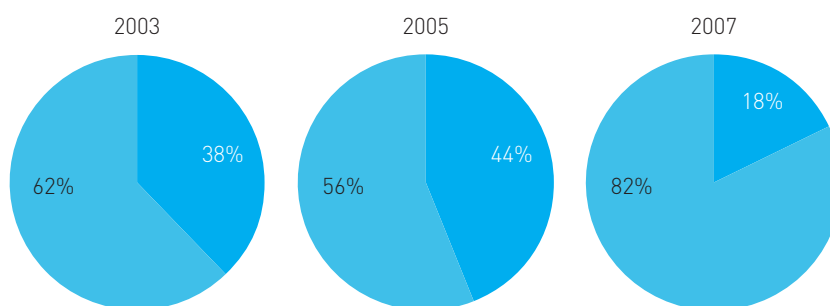
Individuals with home access. OxlS 2003: N=1,172; OxlS 2005: N=1,330; OxlS 2007: N=1,557

"Is this household planning to get access to the Internet at home in the next year?"

Amongst households without Internet access, the number that say they are planning to get access in the next year has dropped dramatically. Less than one fifth (18%) plan to get access in comparison to 44% in 2005. On this basis, household access is likely to increase by 5% or less in 2008.

#### Future Internet Access in the Household (QH2)

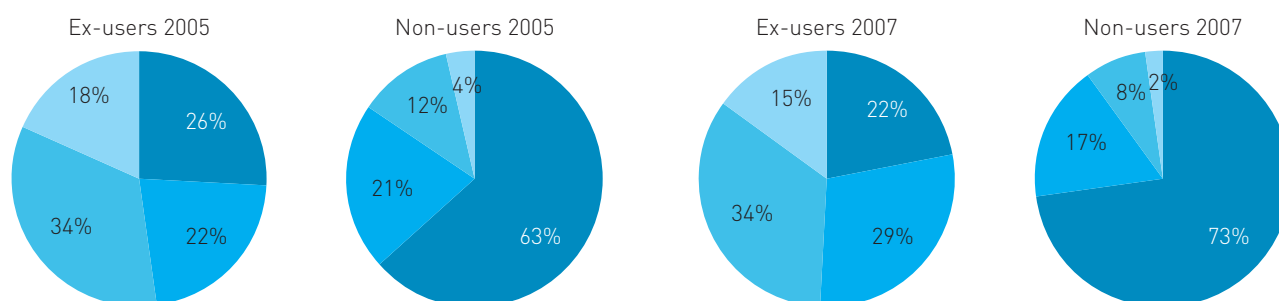
■ Probably or definitely ■ Probably not or definitely not



Individuals without Internet access at home. OxlS 2003: N=848; OxlS 2005: N=850; OxlS 2007: N=781

#### Likelihood that Ex-Users and Non-Users will get Internet Access (QE8 and QN5)

■ Definitely won't ■ Probably won't ■ Probably will ■ Definitely will



Ex-users and non-users. OxlS 2005: N= 876; OxlS 2007: N=773

"Are you planning to get access to the Internet in the next year or so?"

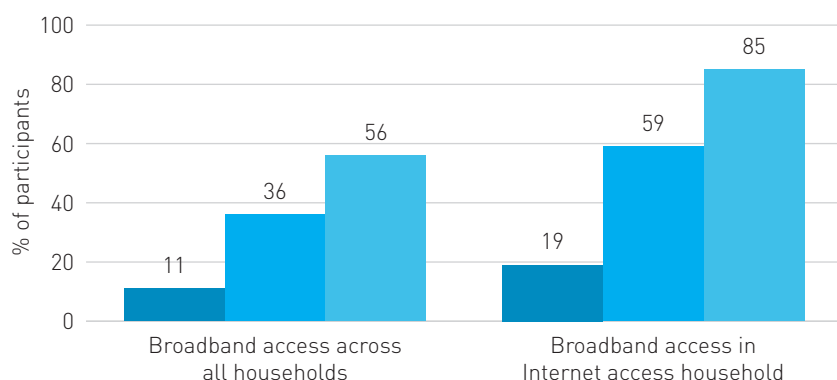
In 2007 and 2005, ex-users (who have used the Internet before) are more likely than non-users (who have never used the Internet) to get an Internet connection. In 2007, three quarters

(73%) of non-users say that they will definitely not get a connection and only a fifth (22%) of ex-users say the same.

Non-users have become less likely to get an Internet connection over the years: in 2007 one tenth (10%) of non-users said they probably or definitely would get one while in 2005 this was 16%.

**Broadband Access in the Household (QH5)**

■ 2003 ■ 2005 ■ 2007



OxIS 2003: N=2,029; OxIS 2005: N=2,185; OxIS 2007: N=2,350

Individuals with home access. OxIS 2003: N=1,172; OxIS 2005: N=1,330; OxIS 2007: N=1,557

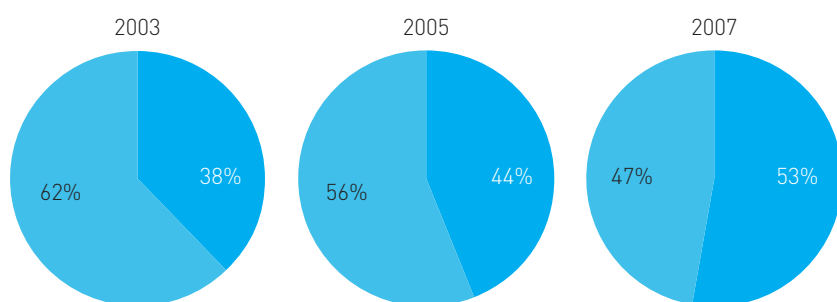
“Do you have a broadband Internet connection at home?”

Households in Britain have rapidly moved to broadband, with 56% of all British households accessing the Internet through broadband in 2007.

Dial-up connections have almost disappeared, with 85% of Internet households accessing the Internet through a broadband connection.

**Future Broadband Access in the Household (QH6)**

■ Probably or definitely ■ Probably not or definitely not



Individuals with narrowband access at home. OxIS 2003: N=872; OxIS 2005: N=534; OxIS 2007: N=228

“Is your household planning to get broadband in the next year or so?”

The number of dial-up connections could be reduced by half within the next year: 53% of those who currently do not have broadband plan to get a broadband connection in the next year.

## Digital Divides: Users and Non-users

The concern about digital exclusion is that socially and economically disadvantaged groups will have fewer opportunities to use the Internet than others. It is often argued that this type of digital exclusion will exacerbate offline differences in social and economic resources and disadvantage already vulnerable groups even further. On the other hand it could also be possible that the Internet, if access becomes ubiquitous, will close the existing gaps by offering opportunities to engage in activities previously unavailable to these disadvantaged groups.

OxIS 2007 shows that use and non-use of the Internet continues to be shaped by a set of divides, driven by socio-economic resources, and a set of 'digital choices' shaped by cultural differences. Gender, age, income, and ability gaps remain more or less constant and while the difference between students and those in employment has decreased, retired people are just as unlikely in 2007 as in 2005 to be on the Internet.

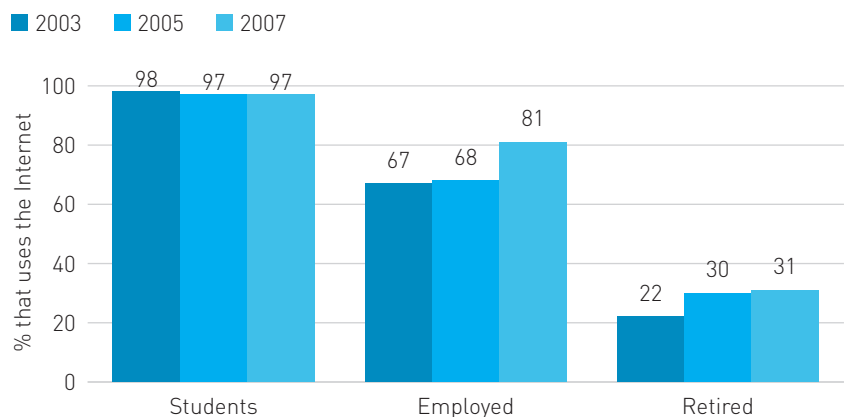
The effect of lifecycle persists in 2007 and seems to be one of the most important factors shaping Internet use.

In 2007, students are three times more likely to use the Internet (97%) than those who are retired (31%).

The largest increase in use has been amongst those who are employed, from about 68% in 2003 and 2005 to 81% in 2007, while the number of retired people using the Internet has remained stable between 2005 and 2007 at around 30%.

### Use by Lifecycle (QH19 by QD14)

"Which of these descriptions best describes your current situation?"



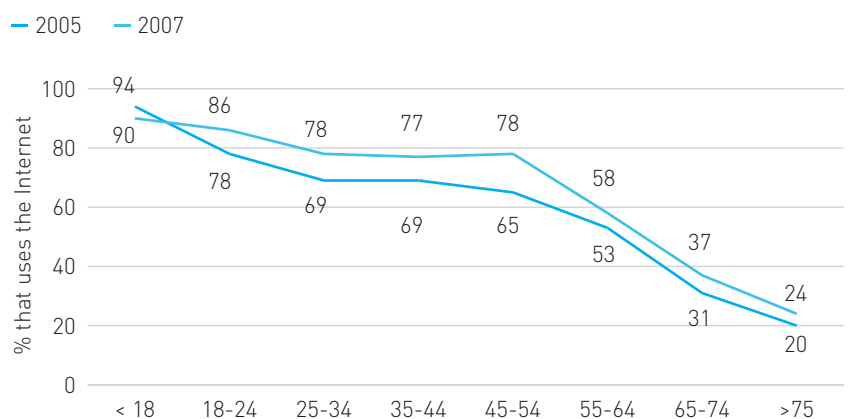
OxIS 2003: N=2,029; OxIS 2005: N=2,185; OxIS 2007: N=2,350 (Students: N=202; Employed: N=1,262; Retired: N=506)

Age remains one of the strongest correlates of Internet use. Older people use the Internet less than younger people.

While use for those between 18 and 54 has risen, the number of Internet users over the age of 55 has not greatly increased since 2005.

### Use by Age (QH19 by DQ1)

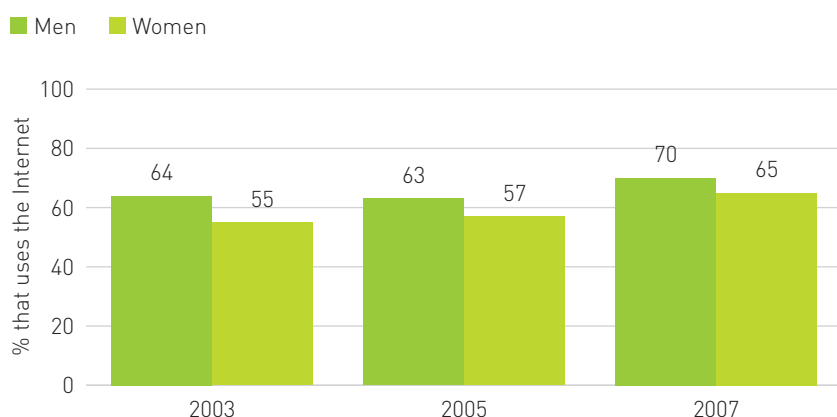
"In what year were you born?"



OxIS 2005: N=2,185; OxIS 2007: N=2,350

**Use by Gender (QH19 by QD3)**

Gender was observed by the interviewer



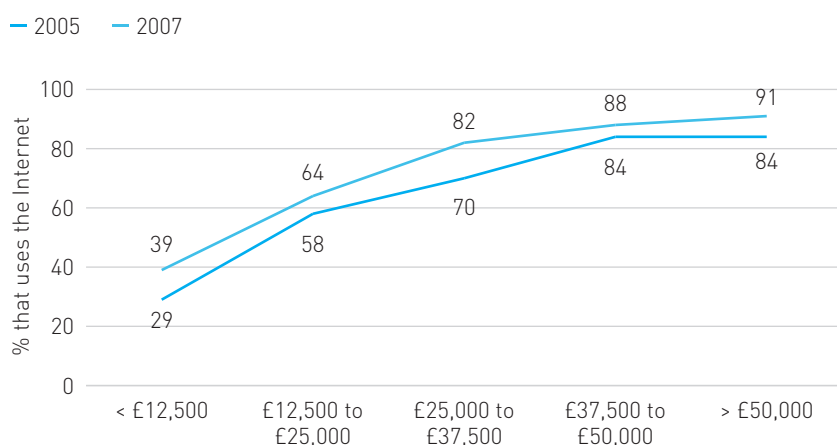
OxIS 2003: N=2,029; OxIS 2005: N=2,185; OxIS 2007: N=2,350 (Women=1,222; Men=1,128)

Gender divides continue to exist. In 2007 a slightly larger proportion of men (70%) than women (65%) use the Internet.

The difference between men and women in use was about five percentage points in 2005 and 2007, while in 2003 this difference was nine percentage points.

**Use by Income (QH19 by QD19)**

"Here is a card showing the range of incomes that people have. Which of the letters on this card best represents the total income of your household before tax?"



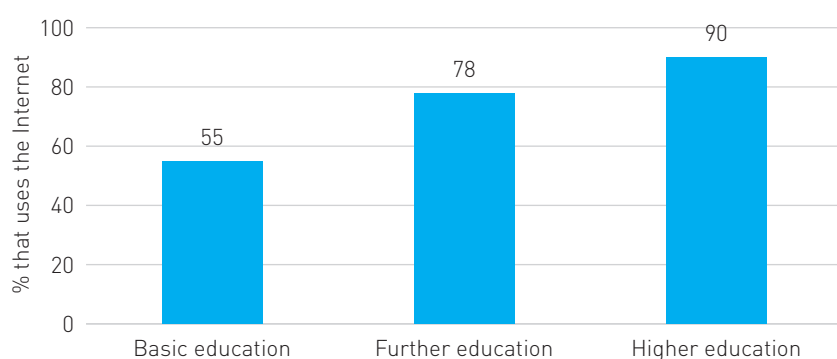
OxIS 2005: N=2,185; OxIS 2007: N=2,350

The percentage of users has increased between 2005 and 2007 across all income groups.

Those in the highest income category are more than twice as likely to use the Internet (91%) than those in the lowest income category (39%).

**Use by Education (QH19 by QD13)**

"What is the last type of educational institution [e.g. school, college or university] that you have attended or which type of educational institution are you attending now?"



OxIS 2007: N=2,350 (Basic: N=1,176; Further: N=640; Higher: N=405) (Note the same data are available excluding current students but percentages are very similar)

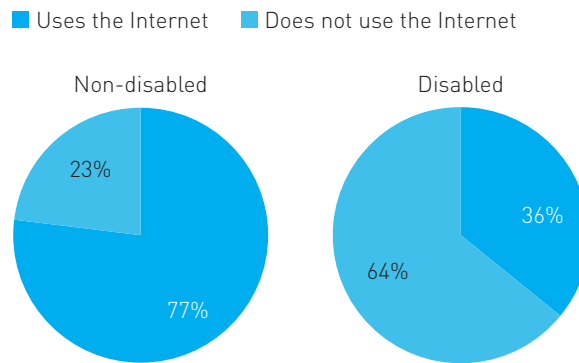
Education, like income, is strongly related to Internet use. Only half (55%) of those with basic education (up to secondary school) use the Internet while most (90%) of those with a higher (university) education use the Internet.

**Disability and Internet Use (QH19 by QD22)**

"Do you have a health problem or disability which prevents you from doing everyday tasks at home, work or school or which limits the kind or amount of work you can do?"

Those who indicate that they have a health problem or disability are half as likely to use the Internet.

A bit more than one third (36%) of those with a disability use the Internet while 77% of those without a disability use the Internet.



OxIS 2007: N=2,350 (Disabled: N=308; No disability: N=2,020)

## Reasons for Non-Use

In policy it is often assumed that a loss of access to the Internet is an important reason to stop using the Internet. The notion of 'experience technology' would similarly suggest that, once people have started using the Internet they will become more interested in using it, and that only external factors, such as a lack of resources, can stop them from using the Internet.

OxIS 2007 shows indeed that losing access and high costs are relevant reasons for ex-users to no longer use the Internet. However, among this small group of ex-users, the most prevalent reason to stop using the Internet is related to a lack of interest or perceived usefulness. Skills, worries about negative experiences and a lack of time also play a role, but are not as widely reported.

For non-users a lack of skills is a more important reason to not use the Internet than for ex-users. Thus while both ex-users and non-users are considered to be digitally excluded, the reasons for this exclusion could be different for these groups. In many ways, it is a matter of choice for ex-users, but a matter of fear or lack of knowledge (and thus not a positive choice) for non-users.

Those groups that are more likely to be non-users (i.e. women, retired and unemployed people) are less likely to say that a lack of interest is the reason for not using the Internet. For these groups a lack of access is a frequently mentioned reason, and similarly, a lack of skills or frustration with negative experiences is important.

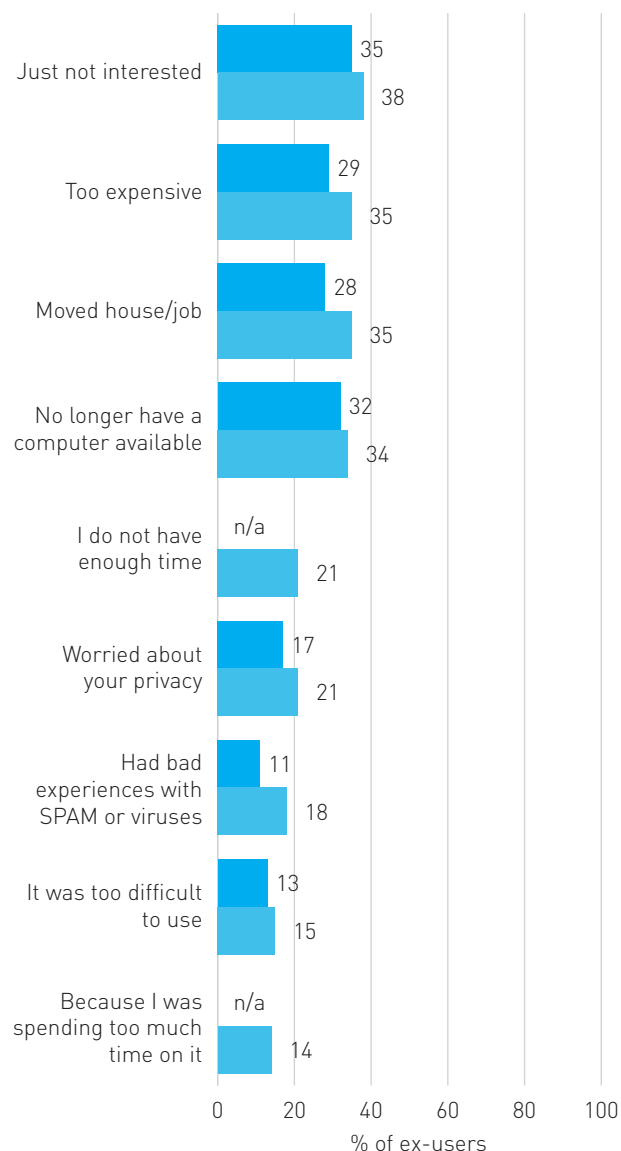
Retired non-users especially feel that the Internet is not designed to meet their needs. Unemployed non-users are the most likely to indicate cost as a reason for stopping their use of the Internet.

OxIS 2007 shows that not only are there differences between the reasons cited for exclusion in non- and ex-users, but also that different social groups have different reasons for not using the Internet. This suggests that there could be value in a range of digital inclusion strategies tailored to the specific social circumstances of these groups.



## Reasons Ex-Users Stopped Using the Internet (QE4)

■ 2005 ■ 2007

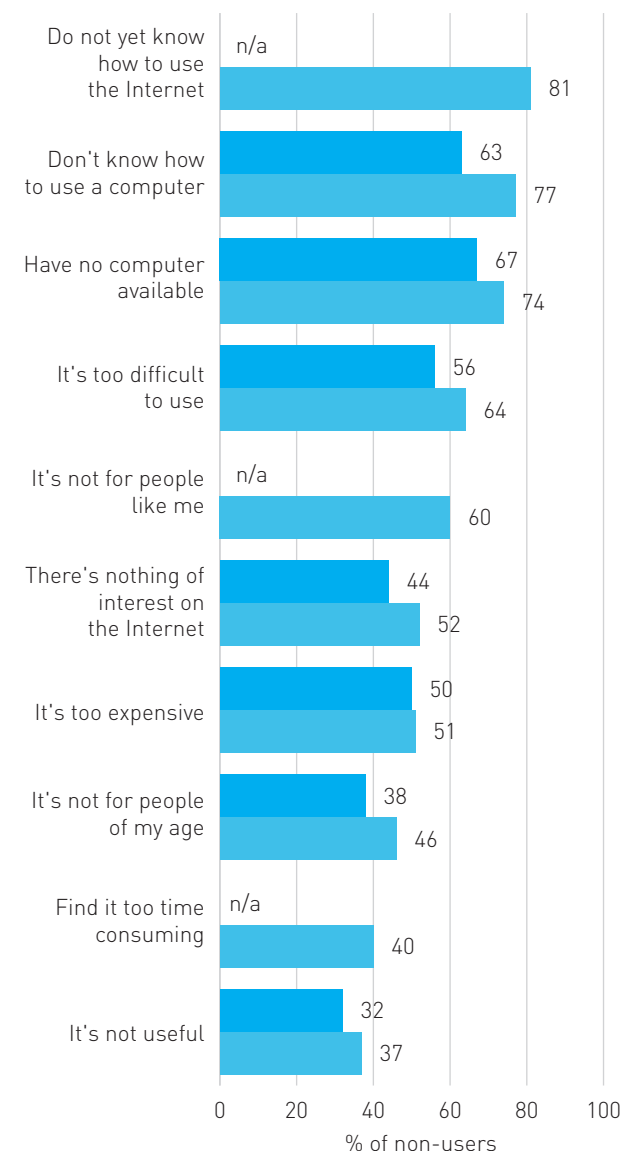


Ex-users. OxlS 2005: N=167; OxlS 2007: N=124

"People have given a number of reasons for stopping use of the Internet. We would like to know if any of these reasons were important to your decision."

## Reasons Non-Users Do Not Use the Internet (QN1)

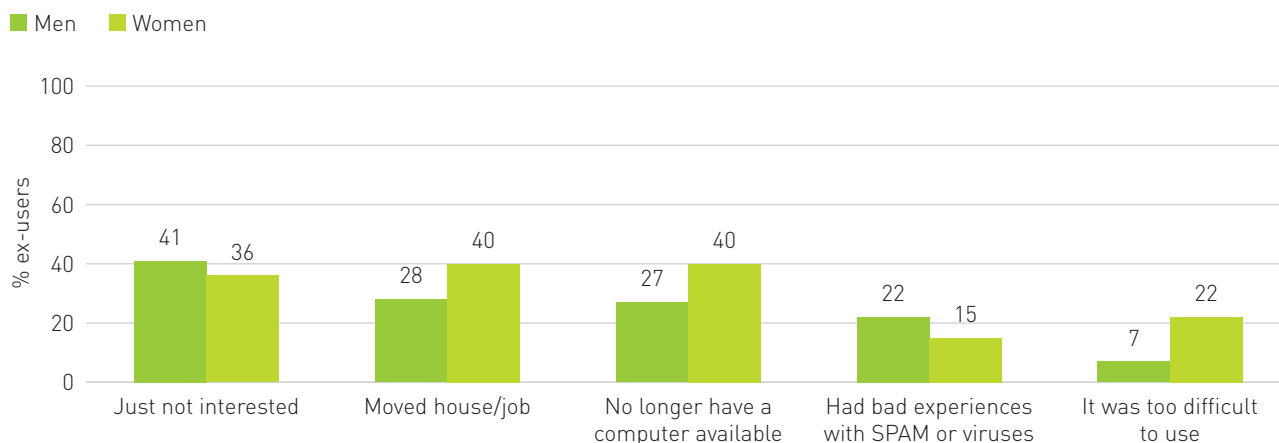
■ 2005 ■ 2007



Non-users. OxlS 2005: N=709; OxlS 2007: N=649

"I will read a number of reasons that some people give to explain why they don't use the Internet. Tell me all of the reasons that apply to you."

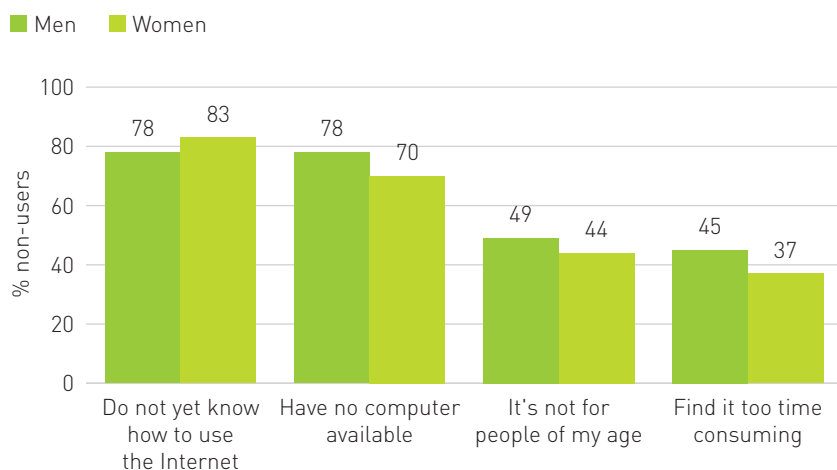
All reasons to not use the Internet have become important for a larger proportion of non-users and ex-users in 2007 than in 2005. While for ex-users the most important reasons to stop using the Internet were a lack of interest (38%) or the costs involved (35%), for non-users the most important reasons to not use the Internet were a lack of Internet skills (81%) and computer skills (77%).

**Reasons Ex-Users Stopped Using the Internet by Gender (QE4 by QD3)**

Ex-users. OxlS 2007: N=124

For male ex-users a lack of interest and bad experiences with SPAM were more likely to be a reason to stop using the Internet than for women: 41% of men indicated a lack of interest and 22% reported bad SPAM experiences compared to 36% and 15% of women.

For women, a lack of access due to moving jobs or house (40%), unavailability of a computer (40%), and a lack of skills (22%) were more likely reasons for stopping their use of the Internet than for men.

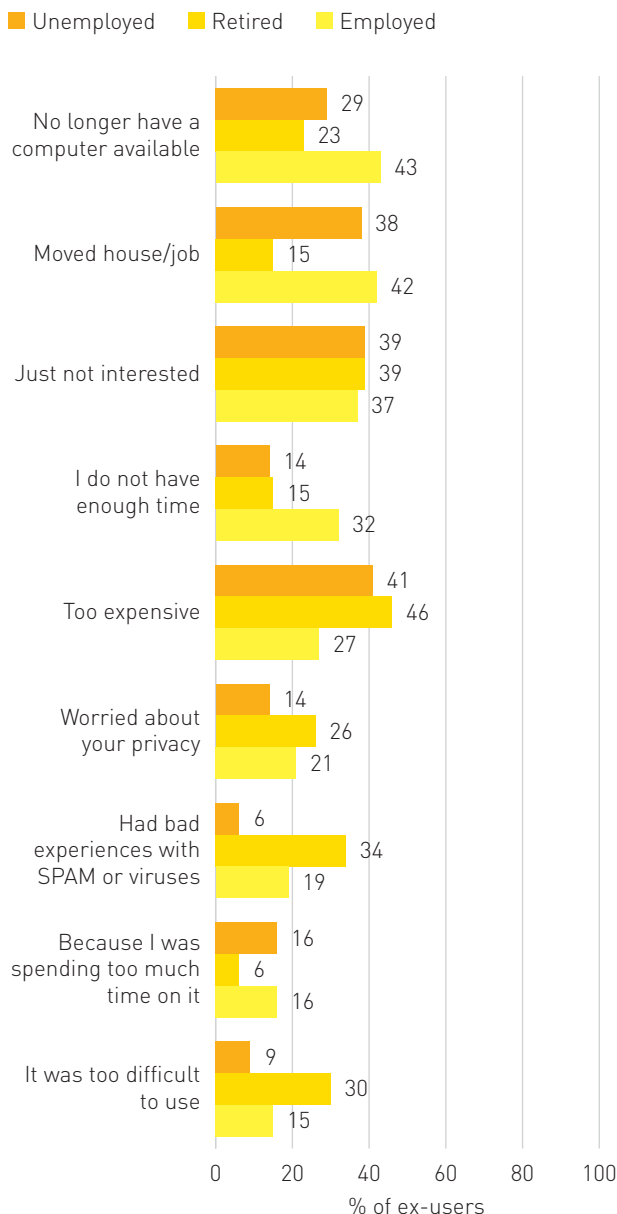
**Reasons Non-Users Do Not Use the Internet by Gender (QN1 by QD3)**

Non-users. OxlS 2007: N=649

Male non-users are more likely than female non-users to say that lack of access to a computer (78% v 70%) and the time consuming nature of the Internet (45% v 37%) are reasons to not use the Internet.

Women are more likely than men to lay the blame with themselves, saying they do not yet know how to use the Internet (83% v 78%).

### Reasons Ex-Users Stopped Using the Internet by Lifestage (QE4 by QD14)



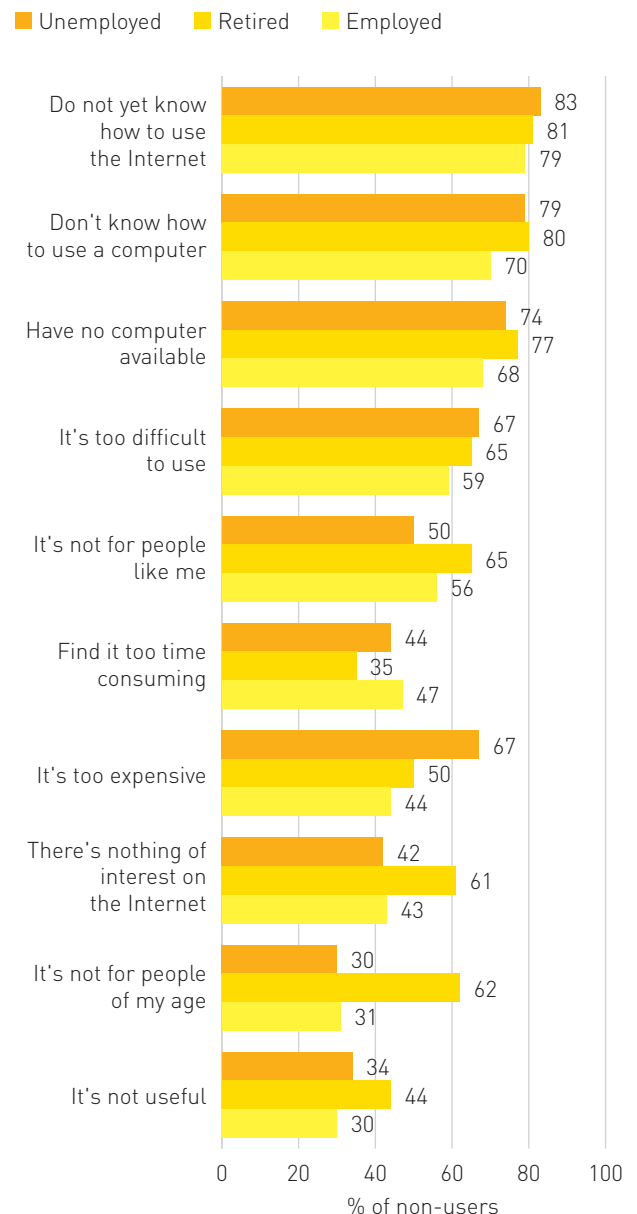
Ex-users. OxlIS 2007: N=124

For employed ex-users a lack of access and not having enough time were more important reasons for stopping use of the Internet than for retired and unemployed ex-users: 43% said they no longer had a computer available and 32% that they did not have enough time compared to 23% and 15% of retired and 29% and 14% of unemployed ex-users, respectively.

Retired ex-users are more likely than employed and unemployed ex-users to indicate that Internet costs (46%), worries about privacy (26%), bad experiences with SPAM (34%) and difficulties in using the Internet (30%) were reasons to stop using the Internet.

Moving jobs or house (38%), no longer having access (29%) and spending too much time on the Internet (16%) were important reasons to stop using the Internet for unemployed ex-users.

### Reasons Non-Users Do Not Use the Internet by Lifestage (QN1 by QD14)



Non-users. OxlIS 2007: N=649

In comparison to other groups of non-users, employed people have fewer reasons not to use the Internet. The most important reason for this group of non-users is not knowing how to use the Internet (79%), and not knowing how to use a computer (70%) or not having one available (68%).

Retired non-users are more likely to reason that the Internet is not for people their age (62%) and that it is not useful (44%) or interesting (61%) than the other lifestage groups.

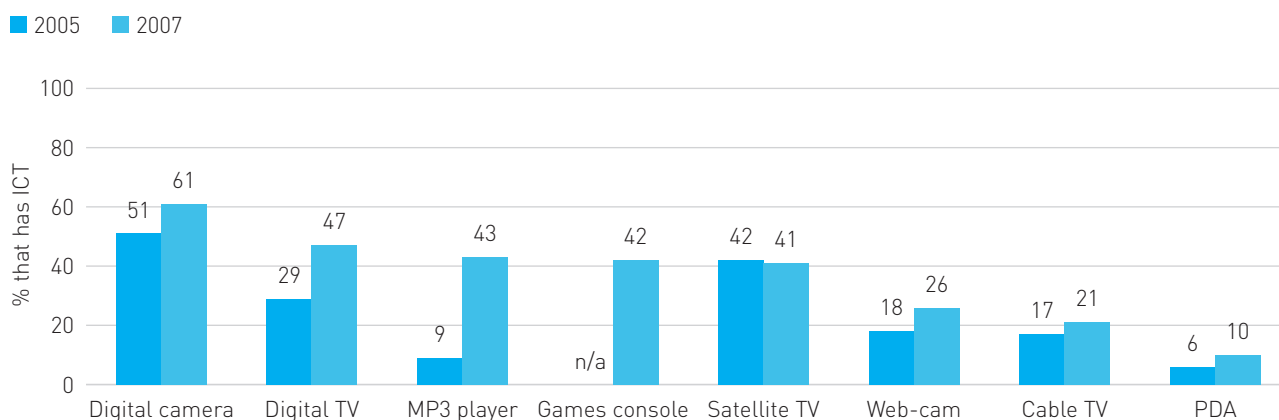
Unemployed non-users are more likely than other groups of non-users to say that high costs are the reason they do not use the Internet (67%).

## Access to Technologies

Individuals who take up a new communication technology (ICT) first – the early adopters – are more likely to have access to and use other ICTs as well. On the other hand, those who are less likely to take up a new technology – late adopters – are likely to be disengaged from other ICTs.

OxIS 2007 results confirmed the tendency in previous surveys for people with more Internet experience to be more engaged with ICTs. Internet users live in more ICT populated households and are more likely to use the advanced options provided by appliances, such as mobile phones, digital cameras and games consoles. The same is true for the frequency of computer use, which is still concentrated amongst Internet users. As in previous years, the use of computers is essentially equivalent to the use of the Internet, reflecting the continuing importance of personal computers in the household to the diffusion of the Internet.

### ICTs in the Household (QH15)

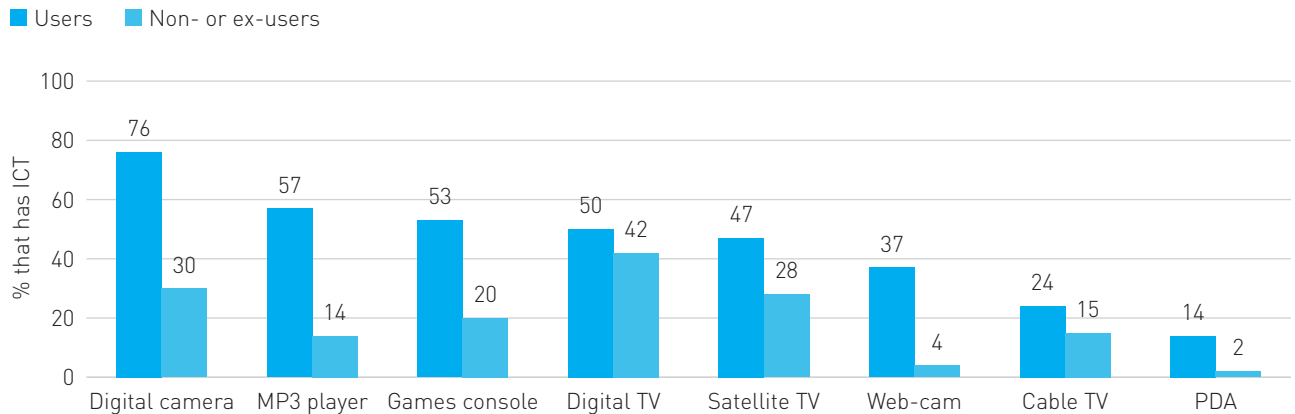


OxIS 2005: N=2,185; OxIS 2007: N=2,350

“Could you tell me if your household has:...”

From 2005 to 2007, the largest increase was in the number of individuals with MP3 players at home, from 9% in 2005 to 43% in 2007. Access to digital television at home has also substantially increased, from 29% in 2005 to 47% of households in 2007.

This is related to a policy to switch to digital TV on a national level and the availability of inexpensive (freeview) digital television access devices.

**ICTs in the Household by Internet Users and Non-Users in 2007 (QH15 by QH19)**

OxIS 2007: N=2,350

Internet users have more ICTs in the household than non-users. They are more likely to have digital cameras (76% v 30%), MP3 players (57% v 14%), games consoles (53% v 20%), and PDAs (14% v 2%).

Those who do not use the Internet are more likely to have digital (42%) or satellite television (28%) than other ICTs, being more TV oriented, while Internet users are more likely to have digital cameras and MP3 players than digital or satellite television.

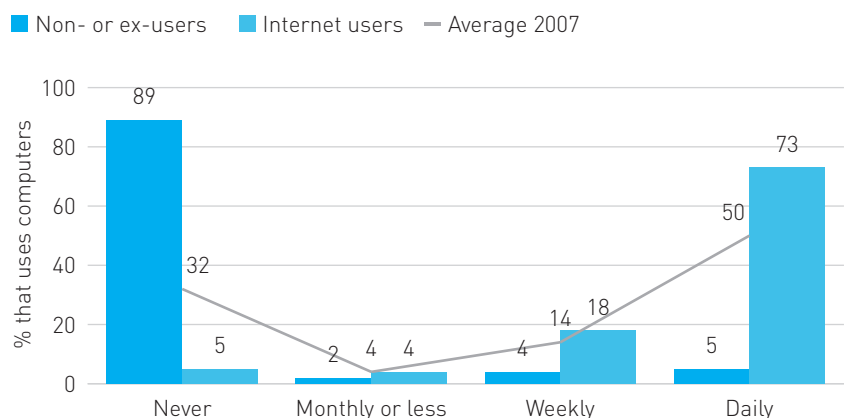
*"Do you yourself use a computer anywhere, whether or not it is connected to the Internet?"*

*"Whether it is connected to the Internet or not, how frequently do you use a computer?"*

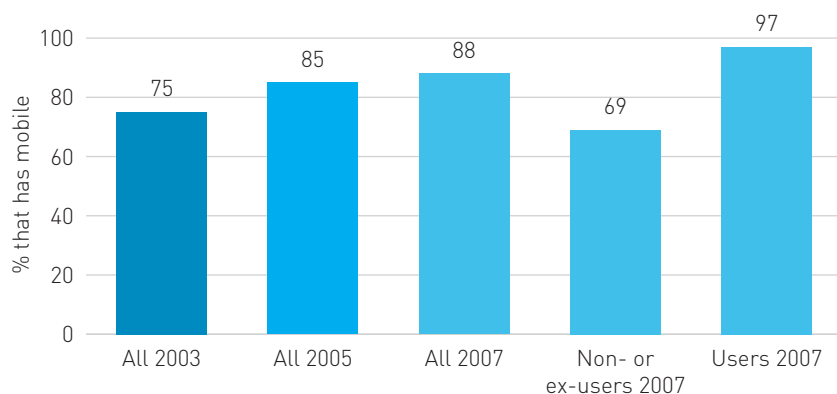
In 2007, a third (32%) of Britons say they have never used a computer.

Those who do not use the Internet are much less likely to use a computer. 89% of non- and ex-Internet users do not use a computer, while only 5% of Internet users say they do not use a computer apart from their Internet use.

The majority of Internet users (73%) use a computer daily, and a fifth (18%) use it weekly or less.

**Use of Computers by Internet Users and Non-Users in 2007 (QH10, QH11 by QH19)**

OxIS 2007: N=2,350

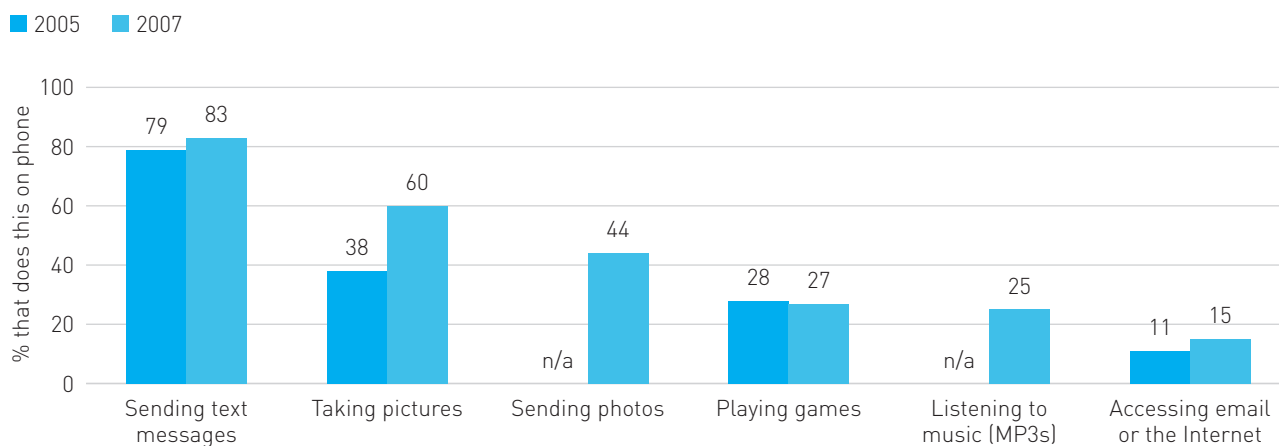
**Use of Mobile Phones by Internet Users and Non-Users (QH17 by QH19)**

OxIS 2003: N=2,029; OxIS 2005: N=2,185; OxIS 2007: N=2,350

**"Do you yourself have a mobile phone?"**

The presence of mobile phones has steadily increased. Three quarters (75%) of Britons used a mobile in 2003, compared to 88% by 2007.

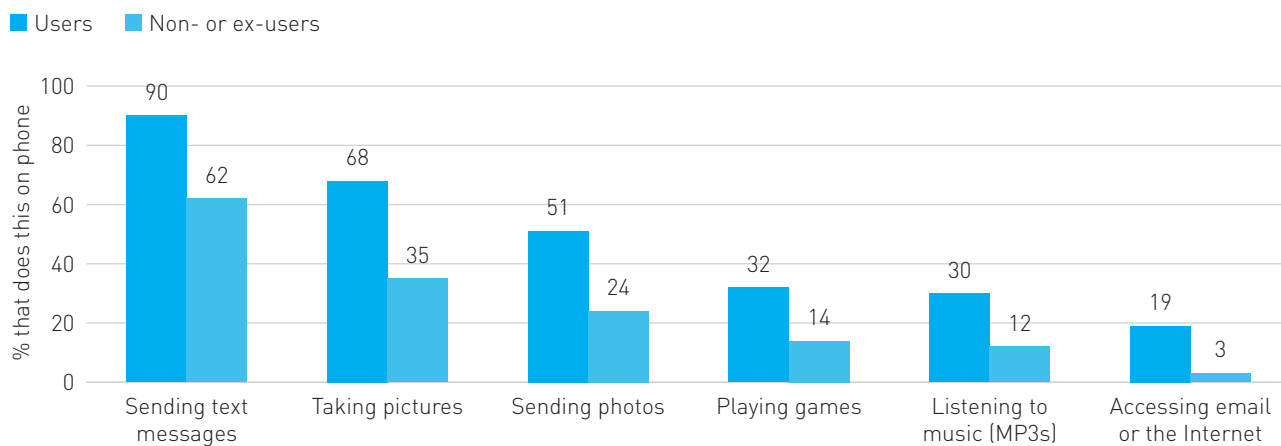
Internet users are almost certain to have a mobile phone. Almost all (97%) Internet users have a mobile, while just over two thirds (69%) of non-users have one.

**Use of Features on Mobile Phones (QH18)**

Mobile phone users. OxIS 2005: N=1,857; OxIS 2007: N=2,070

**"Besides making phone calls, do you use your mobile phone for ..."**

Almost two thirds (60%) of mobile phone owners use their mobile to take pictures in 2007, up from 38% in 2005. The other mobile phone applications were used to a similar extent in 2005 and 2007, although texting and email have become somewhat more prevalent in 2007.

**Use of Features on Mobile Phones: Internet Users and Non-Users in 2007 (QH18 by QH19)**

Mobile phone users. OxlS 2007: N=2,070

Internet users with a mobile phone are more likely to use their phone's added features, such as for sending text messages, playing games, taking pictures, sending photos and listening to music.

## Media Use

In the discussions about the convergence of technologies the Internet has been hailed as a medium which can embody and perhaps replace all other media. However, it is still unclear to what extent using the Internet can be used to complement rather than substitute for other media. Diversity of information resources and time-saving search engines are probably the most important features that make the Internet the preferred medium for information seeking, and easy access and interactivity make it popular for entertainment.

OxIS 2007 shows that the Internet is more important to Internet users for getting information than entertainment. A significant group of the population go to the Internet first for many types of information. This group is likely to experience significantly lower transaction costs for information seeking, particularly when compared with the (smaller) group who would rather make personal visits to find out the same information. Internet users depend strongly and almost uniquely on the Internet as a source of information, while non-users stick to traditional media such as TV, radio and also offline social contacts and networking.

This trend towards using the Internet as the first port of call raises important questions about the nature of people's knowledge. The ease of finding out about different issues on the Internet means that it is no longer as rational to store or memorise this information offline. This said, information and communication seeking are not simple matters of rationality and effectiveness – media habits and values play important roles in shaping the choices of individuals.

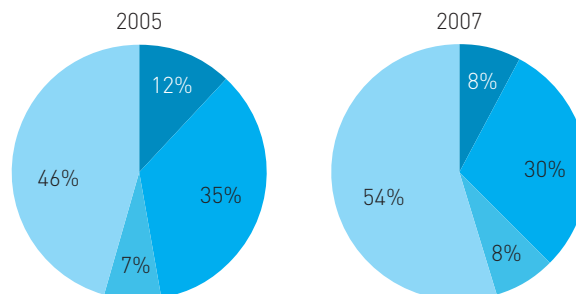


**Looking for Information on Different Media (QA7)**

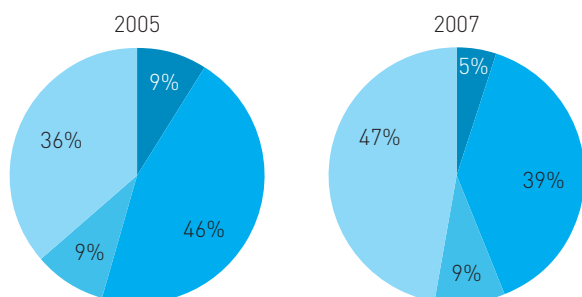
"Where would you go first, if you were ..."

■ Use the telephone ■ Personal visit ■ Directory book  
■ Use the Internet

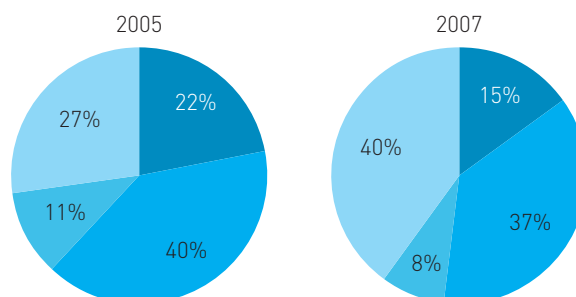
## Planning a trip...



## Looking for information about books....



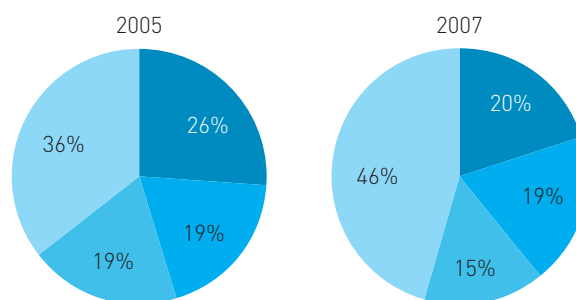
## Information about your local school...



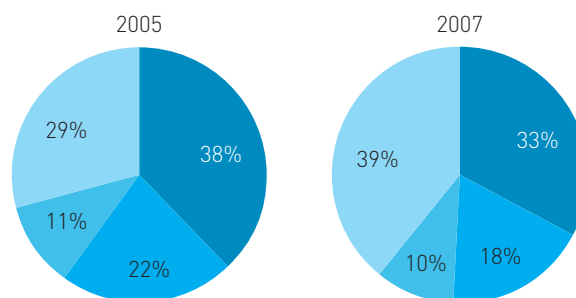
The number of people who would go to the Internet first when they look for information has increased strongly since 2005. In all categories, 8 to 13 percentage points more people use the Internet as a first port of call for information in 2007 than in 2005.

In 2007, people use the Internet first especially when they are planning a trip (54%), finding books (47%), finding the name of a local MP (46%), finding information about taxes (39%) or finding information about local schools (40%).

## Looking for the name of your local MP...



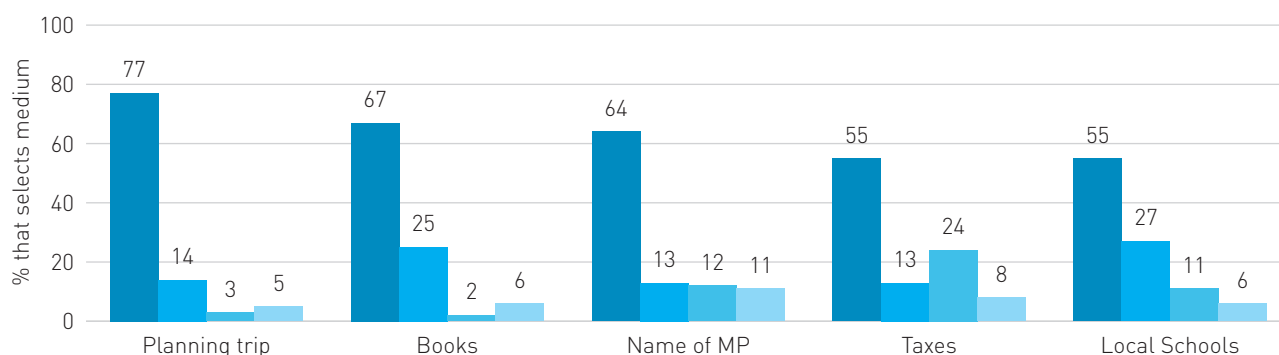
## Looking for information on taxes...



OxIS 2005: N=2,185; OxIS 2007: N=2,350

### Looking for Information on Different Media by Internet Users (QA7 by QH19)

■ Use the Internet ■ Personal visit ■ Use the telephone ■ Book or directory

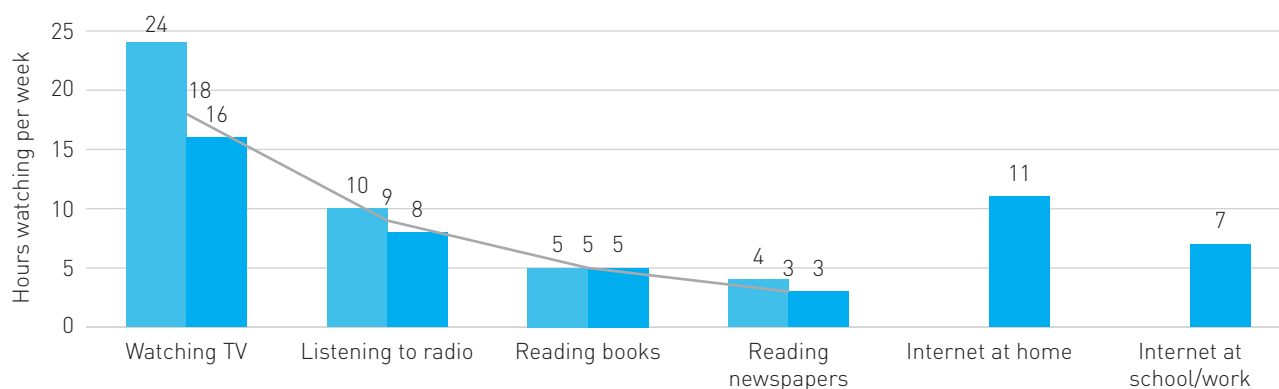


Current users. OxlS 2007: N=1,578

Users of the Internet depend strongly and almost uniquely on the Internet as the first medium by which they will look for information. Almost four fifths (77%) go there first for planning a trip, 67% go there for information about books, 64% for the name of an MP and 55% for taxes and information on local schools.

### Use of Media by Internet Users and Non-Users (QS5, QC7 & QC8 by QH19)

■ Non- or ex-users 2007 ■ Users 2007 — Average 2007



OxlS 2007: N=2,350

"During a typical week, including weekdays and weekends, about how many hours do you usually spend..."

People spend the most time watching TV (av=18 hrs/week). This is 7 hours more than using the Internet at home (av=11hrs) but users also spend 7 hours per week on the Internet at work or school.

Internet users also indicate spending more time watching TV (av=16 hrs/week) than using the Internet at home (av=11 hrs/week). All other activities, such as listening to the radio and reading books or newspapers, take up less of an Internet user's time.

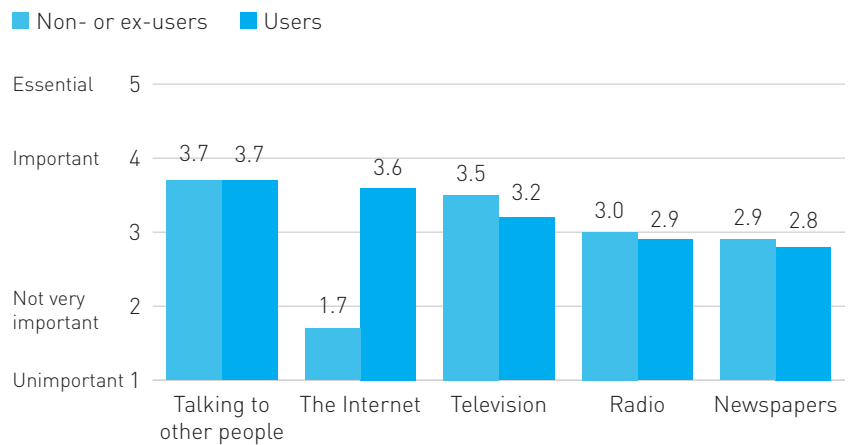
The largest difference between non-users and users exists in the number of hours of TV watched. Non-users say they watch on average 24 hrs/week while users say they only watch 16 hrs/week. There are only small differences between users and non-users in the time they spent reading books or reading newspapers.

"For information in general, how important is each of the following to you as a source?"

Internet users rate the Internet as an important information source (av=3.6), second only to talking to other people (av=3.7). The Internet is rated as more important than television, radio or newspapers for gathering information.

To gather information, non-users prefer talking to other people and television over radio and newspapers.

#### Average Importance of Media for Information by Internet Users and Non-Users (QA8 by QH19)



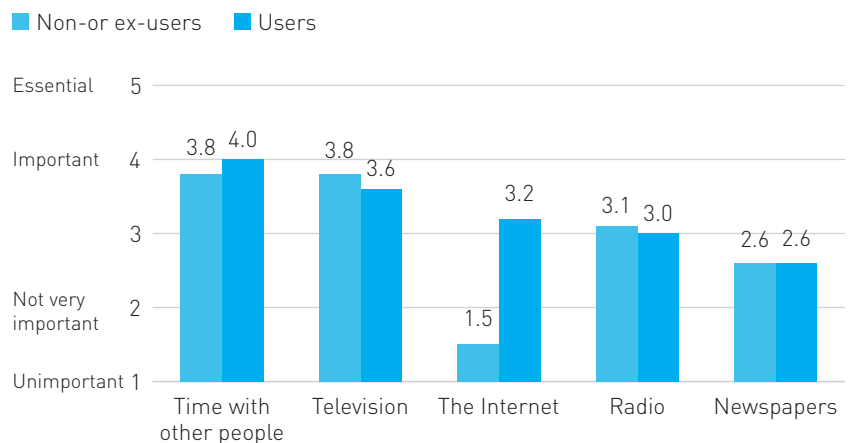
OxIS 2007: N=2,350

"For entertainment in general, how important is each of the following to you as a source?"

For Internet users, talking to other people (av=4.0) and watching television (av=3.6) are more important for entertainment than the Internet. The Internet is rated as more important (av=3.2) than radio (av=3.0) and newspapers (av=2.6).

There are no significant differences between users and non-users in the importance that they attach to different media for entertainment with the obvious exception of the Internet.

#### Average Importance of Media for Entertainment by Internet Users and Non-Users (QA9 by QH19)



OxIS 2007: N=2,350

## Attitudes towards ICTs and the Internet

Besides access to technologies and the use of other media, it is clear that the opinions of people about technologies will make them more or less disposed towards using the Internet. Those who are negative towards new technologies to start with are less likely to be motivated to start using the Internet, or will use it only in a limited fashion.

OxIS 2007 shows that people are in general positive towards the Internet and that they believe that the Internet and other ICTs have made life easier. However, people are not unrestrictedly optimistic. They also see addiction and frustration as part of the Internet use experience for some people.

While Internet content and the people who run the Internet are trusted, those who you can meet online are not as trustworthy according to both users and non-users. The largest concerns that people have about the consequences of Internet use are the protection of credit card details and concerns about privacy. In relation to the use of technologies, privacy concerns have gone up since 2005 and tend to be higher for non-users than for Internet users. Thus, those who do not use the Internet are more negative about technologies than those who use the Internet.

It takes time for people to develop shared norms about the appropriate uses of new technologies. People distinguish between different types of annoyances in relation to technologies, where spamming and gambling are seen as the worst type of offence and sending cards and jokes as almost always appropriate. More controversially, there is ambivalence about downloading music and books without paying for them.

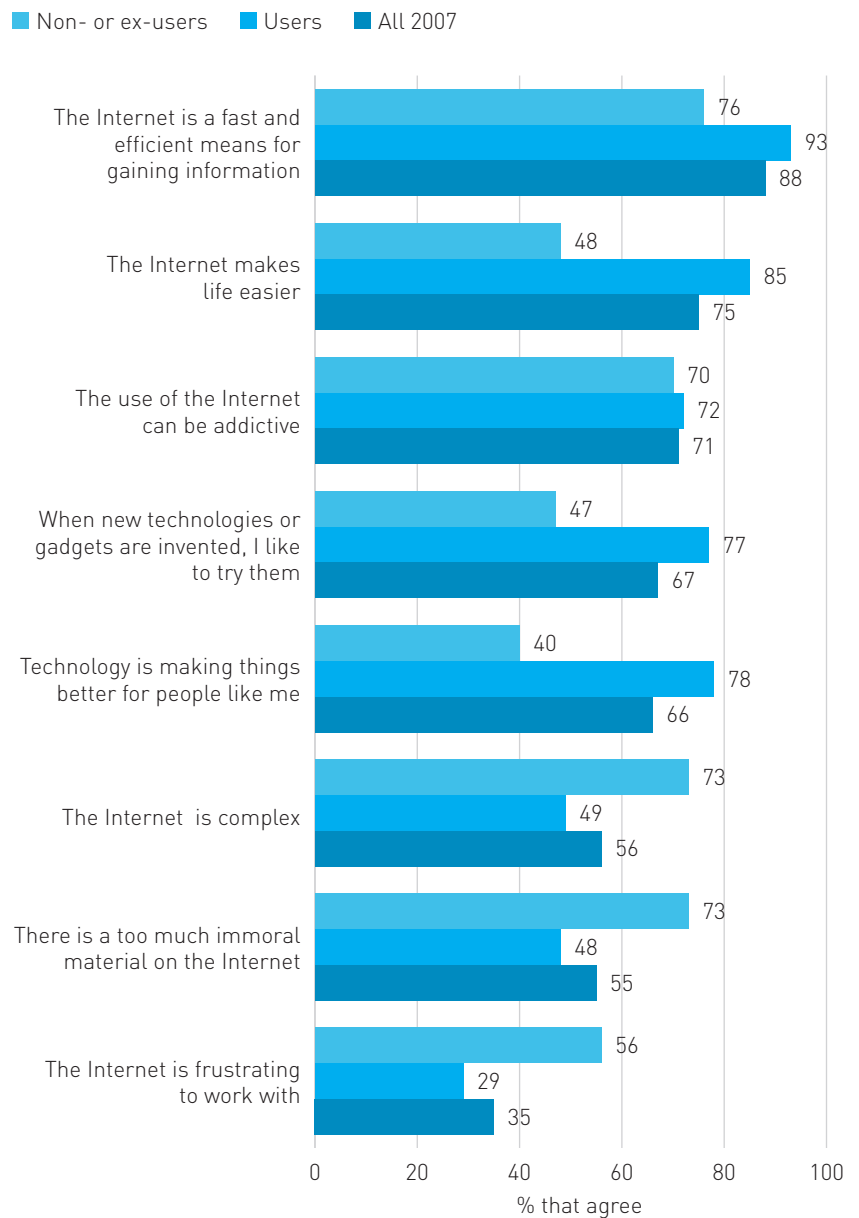
"Whether you use the Internet or not can you please tell me to what extent do you agree or disagree with each statement"

People are generally positive about the Internet and technologies. They think it is an efficient means of gaining information (88% agree), that it makes life easier (75% agree), and disagree that it is frustrating to work with (35% agree). However, they also agree that it can be addictive (71% agree), that there is too much immoral material online (55% agree) and that it is complex to use (56% agree).

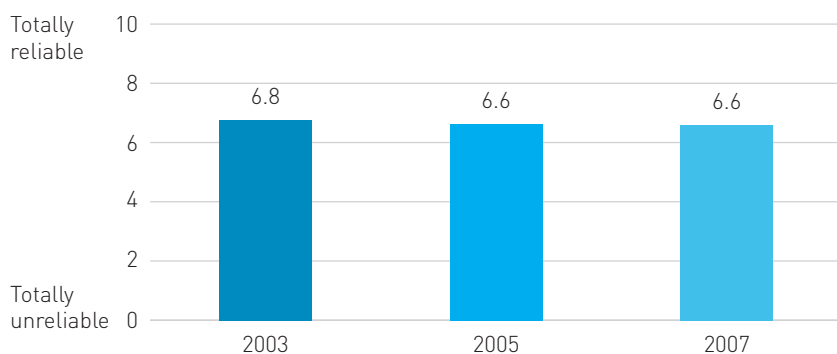
Internet users have more positive attitudes towards ICTs and the Internet than non-users. Non-users find it more complex and do not believe that ICTs make life easier or better.

The exception is that there is no difference between users and non-users in their perception of how addictive the Internet can be.

### Attitudes towards the Internet and Technologies by Internet Users and Non-Users (Q11, QB2 by QH19)



OxIS 2007: N=2,350

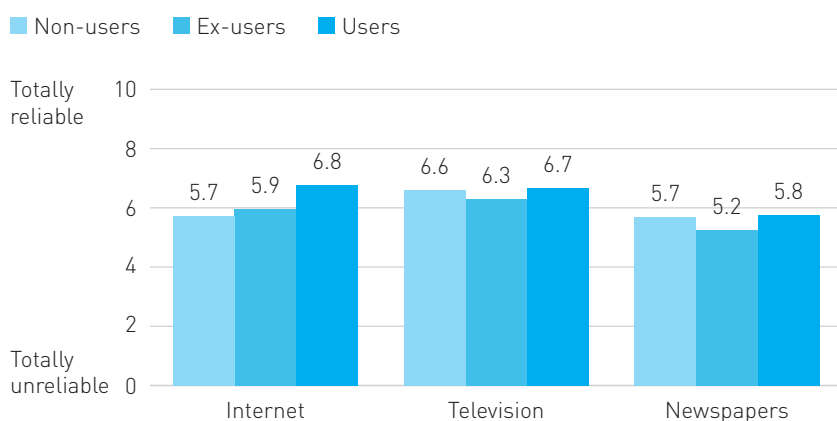
**Average Trust in the Internet (QA3)**

OxIS 2003: N=2,029; OxIS 2005: N=2,185; OxIS 2007: N=2,350

"How reliable would you rate the information found on the Internet? Rate on a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 is totally reliable and 1 is totally unreliable"

Trust in the Internet has remained stable and rather high from 2003 through 2007.

On a scale from 1 to 10 – from totally unreliable to totally reliable – the Internet is considered to be relatively reliable and accurate (av=6.6).

**Average Trust in Media by Internet Users and Non-Users in 2007 (QA1, QA2, QA3 by QH19)**

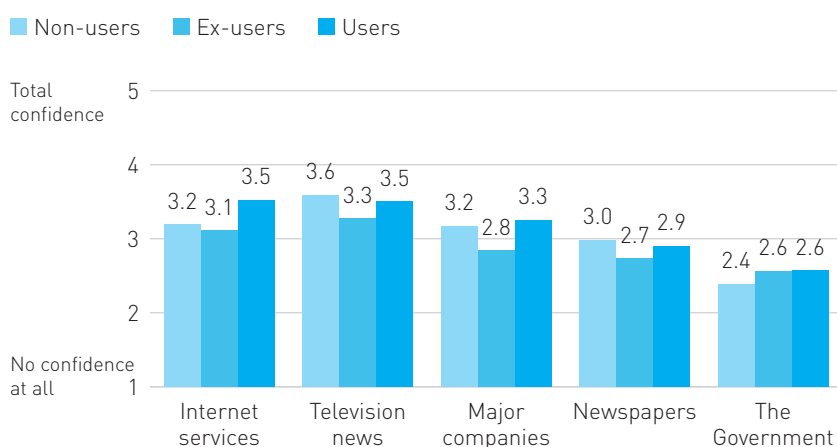
OxIS 2007: N=2,350

"With regard to the following media, how would you rate each of them on a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 is totally reliable and 1 is totally unreliable"

Users trust the information from the Internet more (av=6.8) than non- (av=5.7) or ex-users (av=5.9).

There is no difference between users and non-users or ex-users in their level of trust in other media.

The most trusted medium by users, non- and ex-users was television (av=6.7). Newspapers were trusted less (av=5.7) than television or the Internet.

**Average Trust in Organisations by Internet Users and Non-Users in 2007 (QA4, QA5 by QH19)**

OxIS 2007: N=2,350

"Now I'd like to ask you about some institutions. Please tell me how much confidence you have in the people running each. Use a 5 point scale where 1 means you have no confidence at all and 5 means you have total confidence."

Internet users trust the people running Internet services (av=3.5) and major companies (av=3.3) more than those running newspapers (av=2.97).

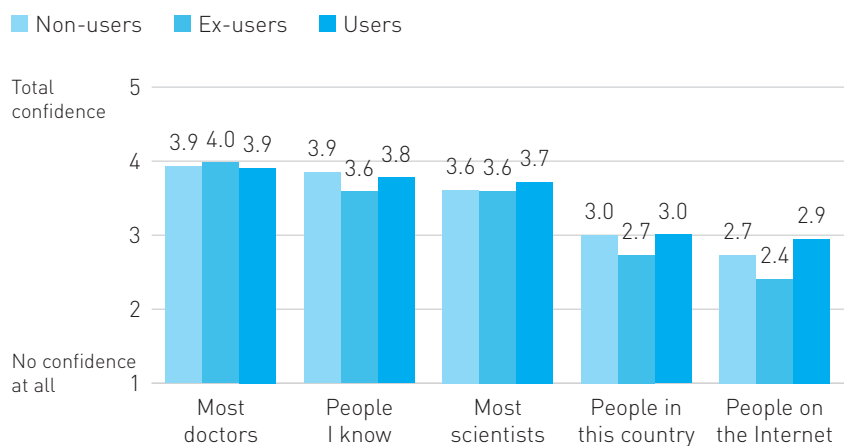
Non- and ex-users trust television news providers more than those who provide Internet services.

"Please tell me how much confidence you have in the following groups of people whether or not you have ever been in contact with them. Use a 5 point scale where 1 means you have no confidence at all and 5 means you have total confidence."

Of the individuals that people are in contact with, doctors are the most trusted (av=3.9) and people 'you can meet on the Internet' are the least trusted (av=2.9).

Internet users (av=2.9) and non-users (av=2.7) trust people on the Internet more than ex-users (av=2.4).

**Average Trust in People by Internet Users and Non-Users in 2007**  
(QA6 by QH19)



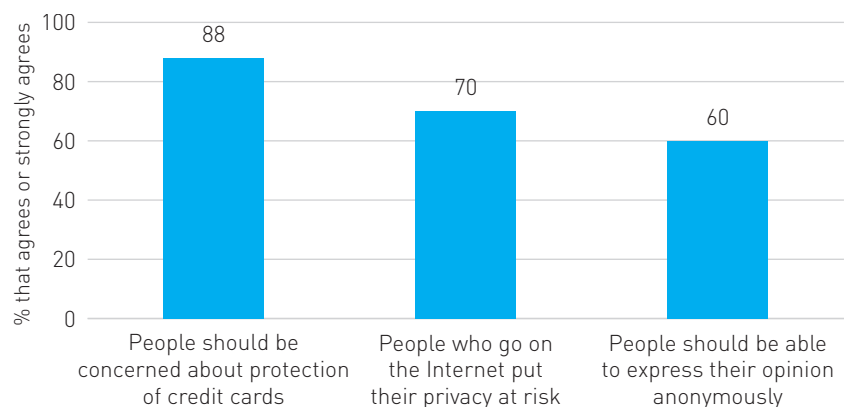
OxIS 2007: N=2,350

"Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements"

In 2007, many think people should be concerned about credit card fraud (88% agree); this is coupled with the idea that people put their privacy at risk by going online (70% agree).

In addition, people feel strongly about the right to anonymously express opinions even if they go against their personal beliefs (60% agree).

**Attitudes towards the Internet and Privacy in 2007 (QB2)**



OxIS 2007: N=2,350

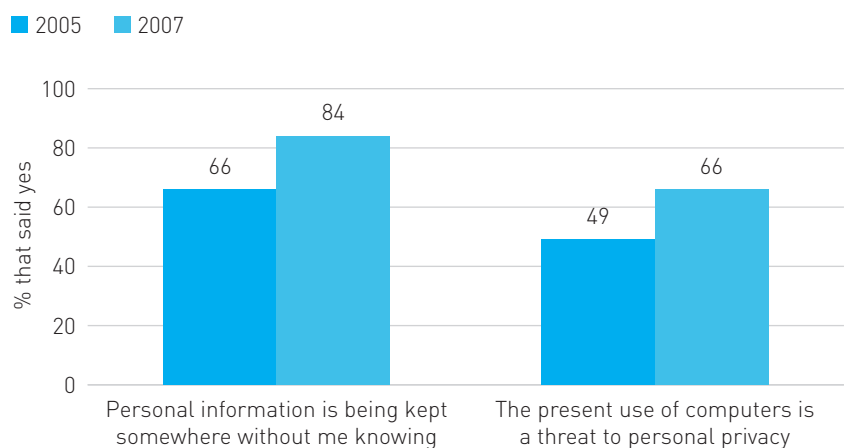
"Do you think that personal information about yourself is being kept in a file somewhere for purposes not known to you or would you say that is unlikely?"

"Do you think that the present use of computers and the Internet is a threat to personal privacy in this country?"

The belief that information about the person is kept somewhere without them knowing has become stronger. In 2005, two thirds (66%) believed that this information was "probably" or "definitely" kept, rising to 84% in 2007.

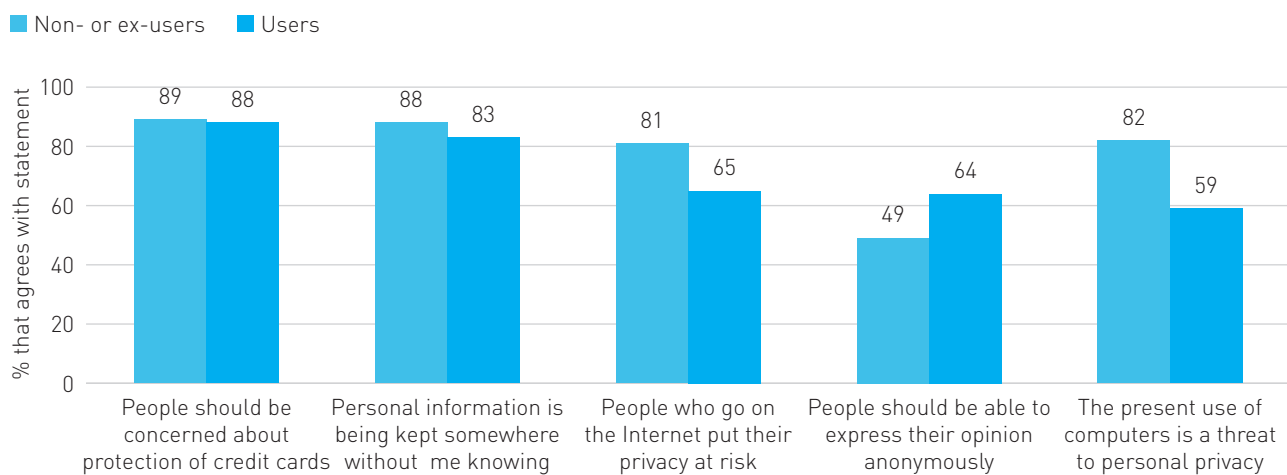
Similarly, the belief that computers are a threat to privacy has increased from 49% in 2005 to 66% in 2007.

**Attitudes towards the Internet and Privacy (QB4 & QB5)**



OxIS 2005: N=2,185; OxIS 2007: N=2,350

### Attitudes towards the Internet and Privacy by Internet Users and Non-Users (QB2, QB4 & QB5 by QH19)



OxIS 2007: N=2,350

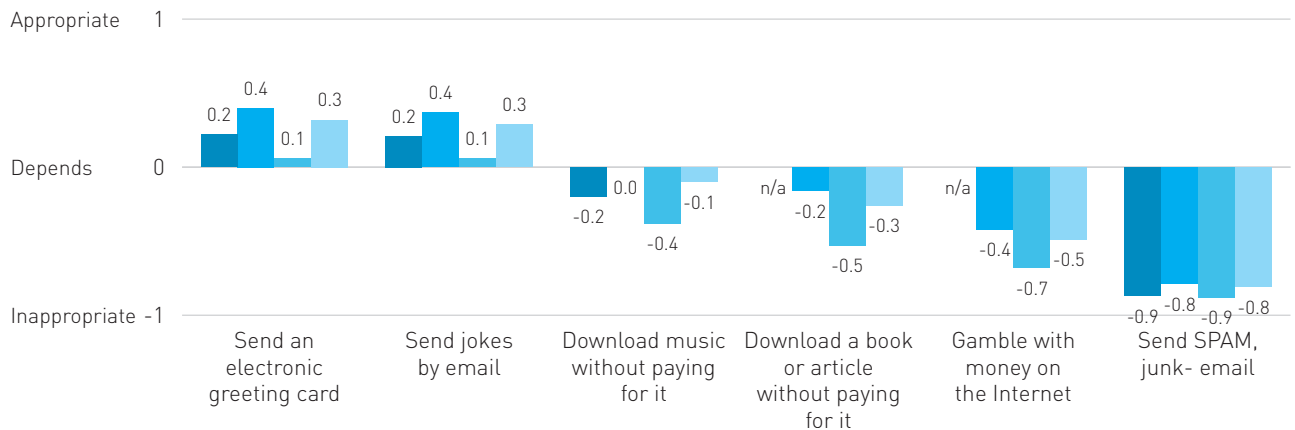
Non-users are more worried about threats to personal privacy by technology than users; 88% believe personal information is kept somewhere without the person knowing versus 83% of users, 81% fear using the Internet puts privacy at risks versus only 65% of users, and 82% of non-users believe that computers pose a threat to privacy versus 59% of users.

Users are more worried about threats to freedom of speech. Two thirds (64%) of users agree that people should be able to express their opinion anonymously versus only 49% of non-users.



**Judgement about Appropriateness of Activities by Internet Users and Non-Users (Q15 by QH19)**

■ Users 2005 ■ Users 2007 ■ Non- or ex-users 2007 ■ All 2007



OxIS 2005 (Current users): N=1,309; OxIS 2007 (All): N=2,350

“Do you think the following activities are appropriate, not appropriate or does it depend on the circumstances?”

In 2007, people think it is appropriate to send electronic greeting cards (av=0.3) and jokes (av=0.3), but think it is inappropriate to download music (av=-0.1) or books (av=-0.3) without paying for them, or to gamble online (av=-0.5), and all agree that it is very inappropriate to send SPAM (av=-0.8).

Internet users in 2005 thought it was inappropriate to download music (av=-0.2) without paying for it but in 2007 they argue that it depends (av=0.0). They also consider it more appropriate in 2007 than in 2005 to send electronic greetings cards (av=0.4) and jokes (av=0.4) by email.

Non-users and ex-users are less accepting of all kinds of electronic activities and communication. They consider it less appropriate than users to send electronic cards (av=0.1) or jokes (av=0.1), to download music (av=-0.4) or books (av=-0.5), or to gamble online (av=-0.7).

## Attitudes towards Regulation

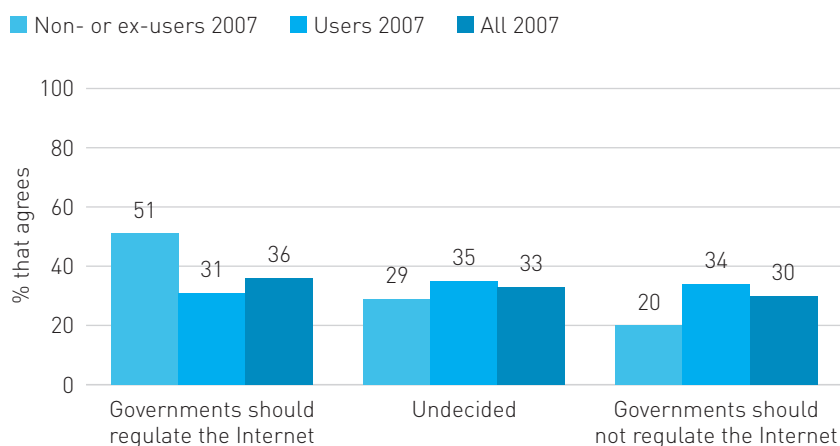
Those who debate regulation of the Internet argue either for official government regulation or for putting responsibility in the hands of the individual: meaning that parents and teachers should get involved in regulating the content that children are exposed to.

OxIS 2007 shows that Internet users are less keen on government regulation than those who do not use the Internet. It also shows that those who do not use the Internet think that a wide range of different actors should be involved in controlling Internet content for children, while users place the responsibility mainly with the parent.

It seems that non-use leads to greater perception of risk for children in using the Internet and therefore a more widespread concern about regulation.

Most people with children have rules as regards Internet use. However, the most effective rule according to educators (i.e. sitting with children while they use the Internet) is also the least applied one. More popular are rules that try to prevent contact risks, such as not giving out personal information or talking to strangers.

### Attitudes towards Government Regulation of the Internet by Internet Users and Non-Users (Q12 by QH19)



OxIS 2007: N=2,350

“Some people think governments should regulate the Internet; others think governments should not regulate the Internet. What do you think?”

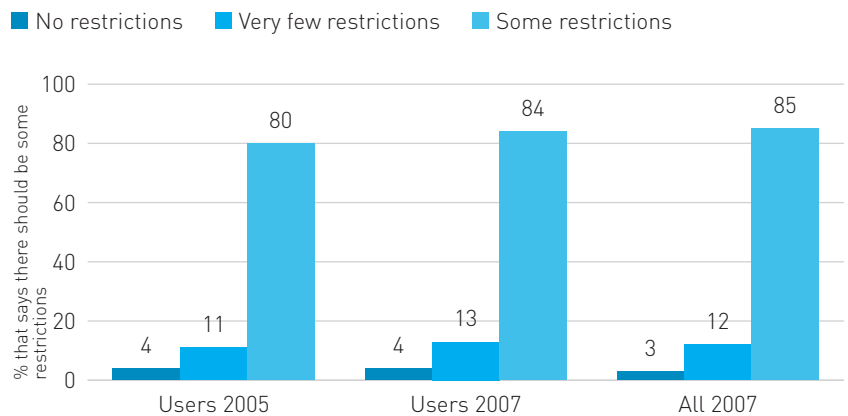
There is no consensus about whether the government should regulate the Internet. A bit more than one third of people (36%) think that it should, 30% think it should not and one third (33%) say it depends.

Non-users and ex-users think the Internet should be regulated by government to a larger extent than users. 51% of non-users think the government should regulate compared to 31% of users.

"Some people think that children's content on the Internet should be restricted, others think it should not be restricted. What is your opinion?"

There are no large differences between users in 2007 and 2005 in their opinions about restricting online content for children. Users and non-users agree that it is necessary to regulate Internet content for children (85%).

#### Attitudes towards Restricting Online Content for Children by Users and Non-Users (Q13 by QH19)



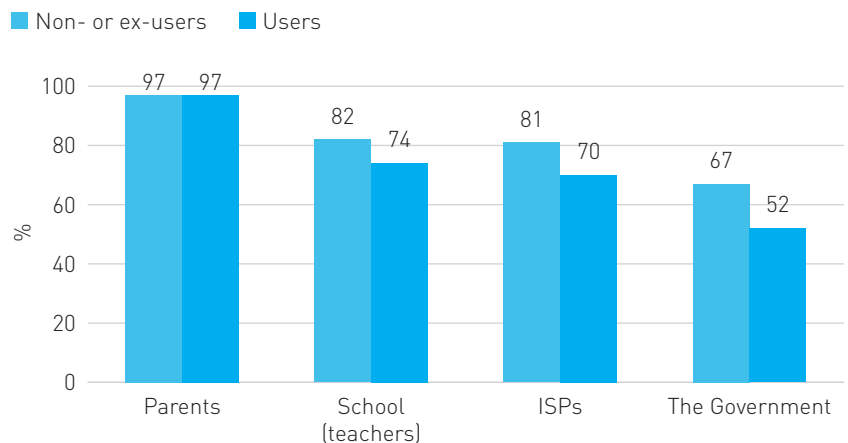
OxIS 2007: N=2,350

"If children's content was restricted, which of the following do you think should be responsible for making these restrictions?"

Most people think parents should regulate children's exposure to Internet content (97%). However, schools (74%) and ISPs (70%) are also assigned a great deal of responsibility by users. More than half (52%) of Internet users place some responsibility on government.

Non-users place more responsibility on schools, ISPs and government than users do.

#### Responsibility for Restricting Children's Content by Users and Non-Users (Q14 by QH19)



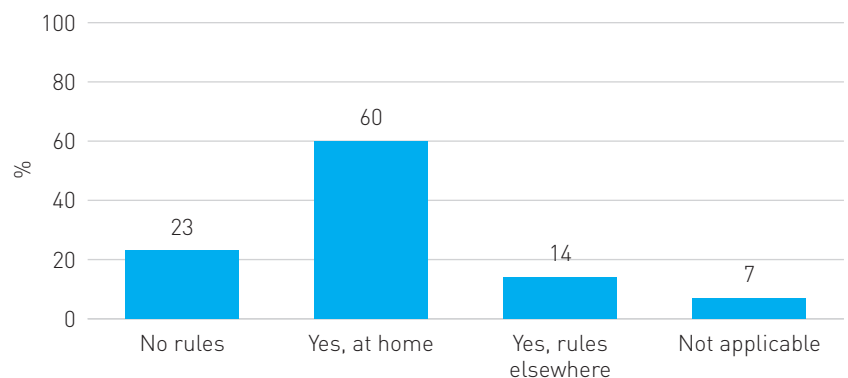
OxIS 2007: N=2,350

"Have you set rules for your children concerning Internet use?"

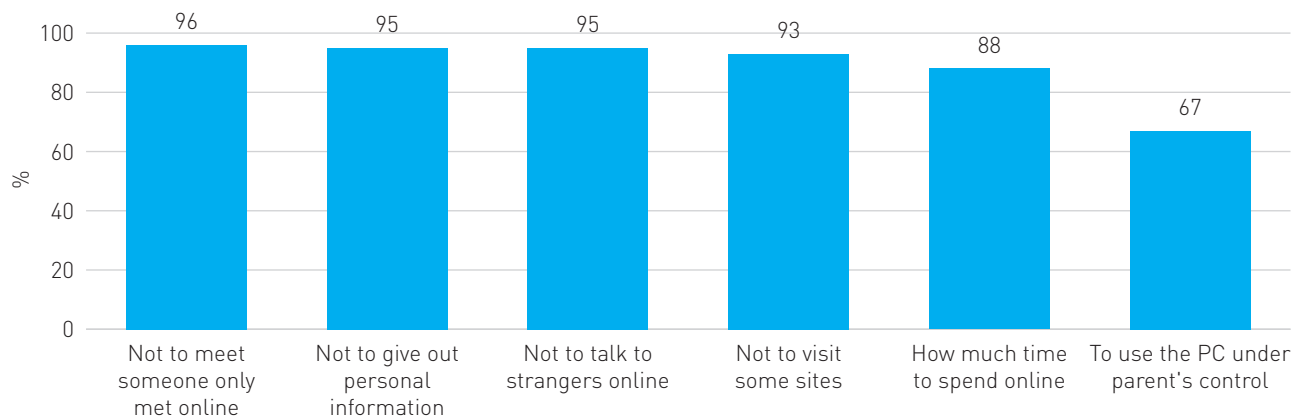
Most parents have rules about Internet use at home (60%), but not many extend these rules to outside the household.

Almost one quarter (23%) of parents do not have rules regarding the use of the Internet.

#### Parents' Restrictions on Internet Use (QD8)



Households with children who have access to the Internet. OxIS 2007: N=632

**Rules about Internet Use by Children (QD9)**

Households with rules about Internet use at home. OxlS 2007: N=389

“What rules have you set regarding use of the Internet?”

The rules aimed at protecting children from grooming are the most commonly applied. Around 95% of parents tell children not to meet people or talk to strangers online and not to give out personal information.

Rules that were traditionally applied to television viewing, such as restricting time spent using the medium (88%) and using it under a parent's supervision (67%) are also widely applied but to a lesser extent than rules relating to contact risks.

## Unpleasant Experiences on the Internet

Regulation of online content is difficult, since content producers often hide their origins or fall outside the jurisdiction of local or national government. There is debate as to whether government, ISPs or individuals, if anyone, should regulate what people come across online. One of the assumptions is that due to widespread Internet use and the professionalisation of those trying to harm people through the Internet, the problems of unpleasant or harmful experiences have grown over the last few years. This section deals with those experiences which might be harmful to the individual.

OxIS 2007 shows that contrary to what is commonly believed, most negative experiences do not seem to have increased since 2003: in fact, most have decreased or remained at a similar level. Those that did increase are related to financial matters and are more infrequent than annoying emails or virus attacks. What is clear is that Internet users have become more expert in dealing with these experiences and that they are therefore not as bothered by them. Notwithstanding negative experiences, most Internet users are positive about the Internet and its capacity to save time.

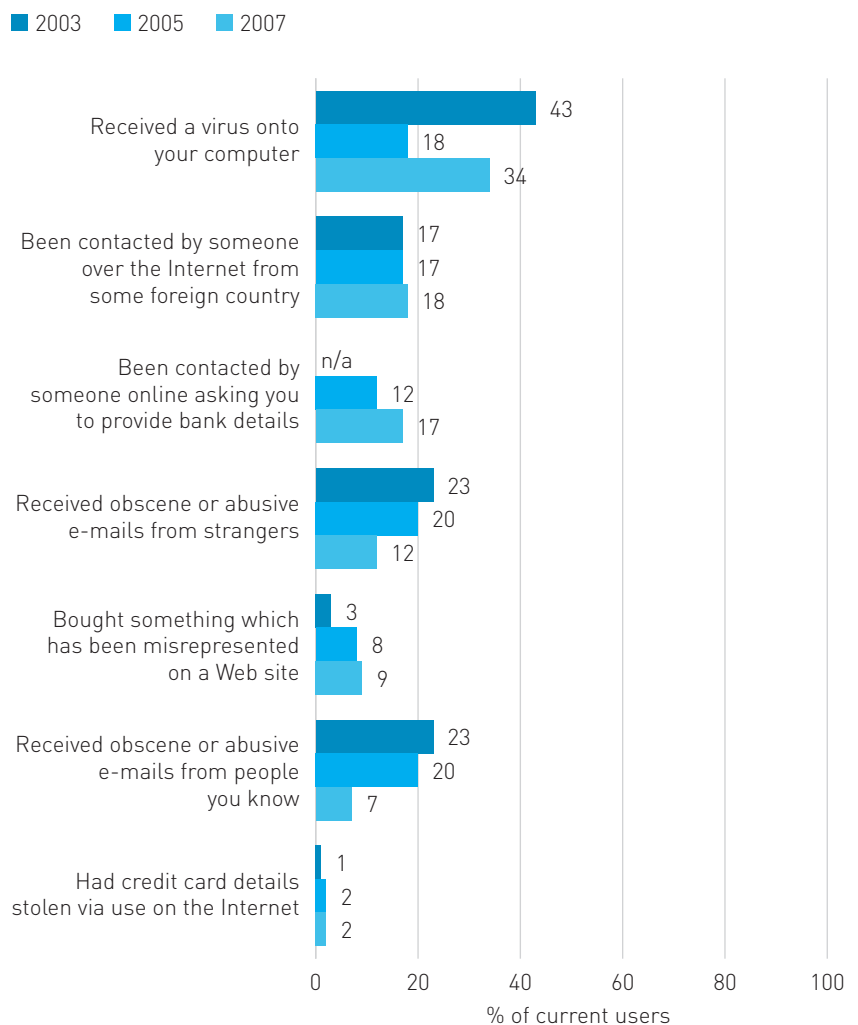
### "In the past year have you ...?"

The most frequently encountered undesirable experience with the Internet is receiving a computer virus – one third of users in 2007 (34%) say they have had this experience. This is followed by being contacted by someone in a foreign country (18%) and a request for bank details (17%).

Most encounters with undesirable experiences have gone down since 2003. The exceptions are receiving a computer virus, which is lower than in 2003 – when 43% had had this experience, but up considerably from 2005 – when 18% had this experience. The other exception is being contacted by someone about bank details, which has gone up from 12% in 2005 to 17% in 2007, reflecting the rise of 'phishing'.

Receipt of abusive emails from strangers and familiar people in 2007 is 19%: similar to 2005 when it was one fifth of users (20%) who experienced this and down from 2003 when 23% received these emails.

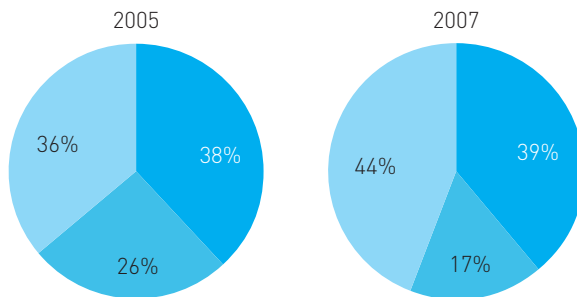
### Unpleasant Experiences Person Has Had on the Internet (QC13)



Current users. OxIS 2003: N=1,201; OxIS 2005: N=1,309; OxIS 2007: N=1,578

**Concern and Action in Relation to Bad Experiences when Using Email (QC12)**

■ Not concerned   ■ Concerned but have not done anything   ■ Concerned and have done something



Email users. OxlS 2005: N=1,208; OxlS 2007: N=1,463

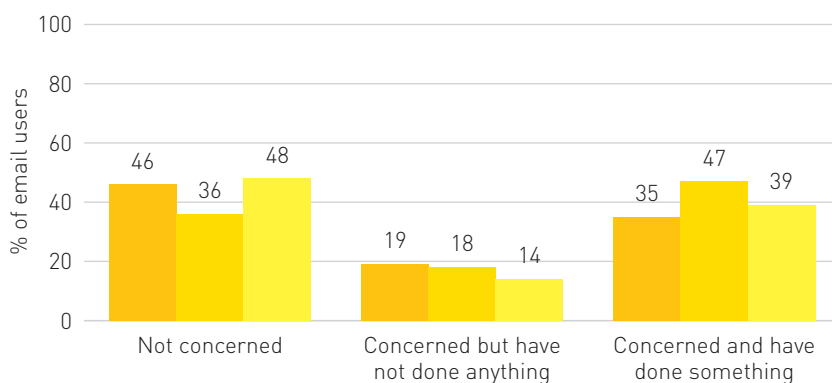
"How concerned are you about unpleasant experiences when using email? For example being sent obscene or otherwise unwanted emails? Have you done anything to prevent it such as installing a filter?"

Internet users in general are concerned about bad experiences when using email. 61% are concerned and most (44% or all users) have taken some action to prevent these bad experiences from happening.

Concern about bad email experiences has not changed much since 2005. In 2005 and 2007 around 38% were not concerned, but users are now more likely to have taken action. In 2007, 44% of users have taken action compared to 36% in 2005.

**Concern and Action in Relation to Bad Experiences when Using Email by Lifestage (QC12 by QD14)**

■ Students   ■ Employed   ■ Retired



Email users. OxlS 2007: N=1,463

Employed email users are more concerned about bad experiences when using email: only two thirds (36%) say they are not concerned compared with 46% of student and 48% of retired email users.

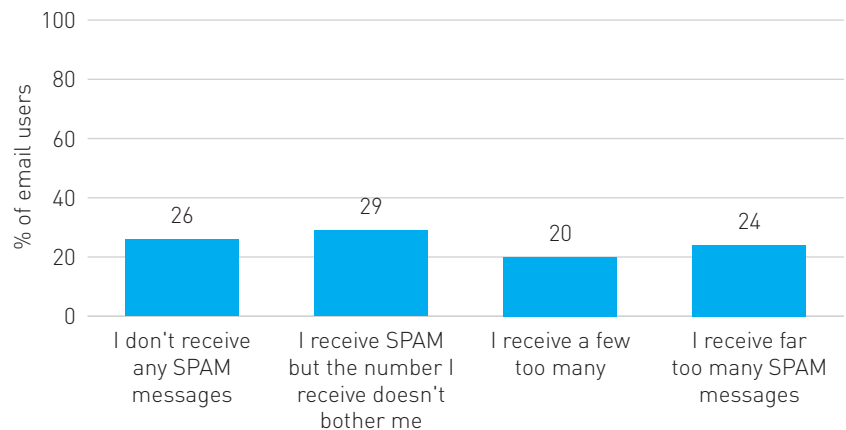
Employed users are more likely to take action against bad experiences through email (47%) than student (35%) and retired email users (39%).

"Which of the following most closely describes your attitude to receiving unsolicited email, sometimes called SPAM?"

A quarter of email users (26%) have indicated that they do not receive SPAM.

People are on average not that bothered by the SPAM they receive. About one third (29%) have received SPAM but are not bothered by it. A quarter (24%) of users think they receive far too many SPAM messages and a fifth (20%) say that they receive a few too many.

#### Attitudes towards Receiving SPAM (CQ10)



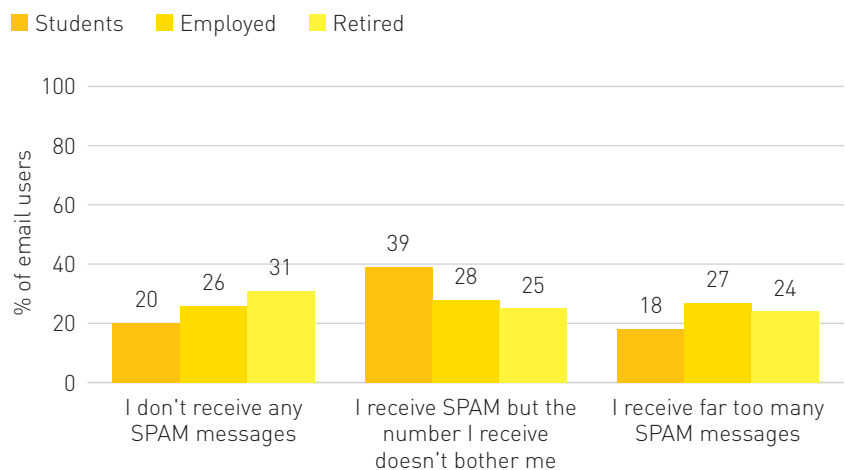
Email users. OxIS 2007: N=1,463

Students are the most likely to have received SPAM messages. 20% say that they have not received this type of message compared to 26% of employed and 31% of retired email users.

They are also the most likely to say that this does not bother them (39% of student email users).

Employed email users are the most likely to indicate that they receive far too many SPAM messages. 27% of employed email users indicate this compared to 18% of student and a quarter (24%) of retired email users.

#### Attitudes towards Receiving SPAM by Lifestage (CQ10 by QD14)



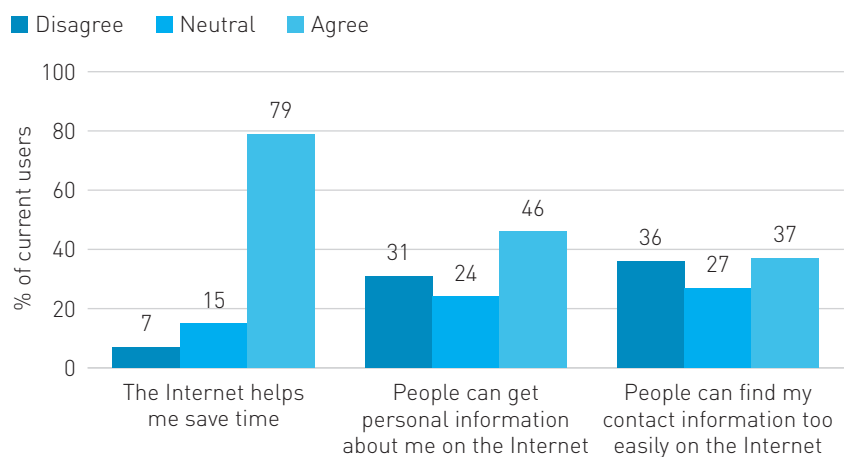
Email users. OxIS 2007: N=1,463

"Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with the following statements"

Users agree that personal information is easily available online for those who look for it (46% agree). They are divided about whether or not this is a problem: 36% disagree that contact information can be found too easily and 37% agree.

Users are positive about the time saving capacities of the Internet: four out of five users (79%) agree that the Internet helps save them time.

#### Attitudes about Effects of the Internet (QC22)



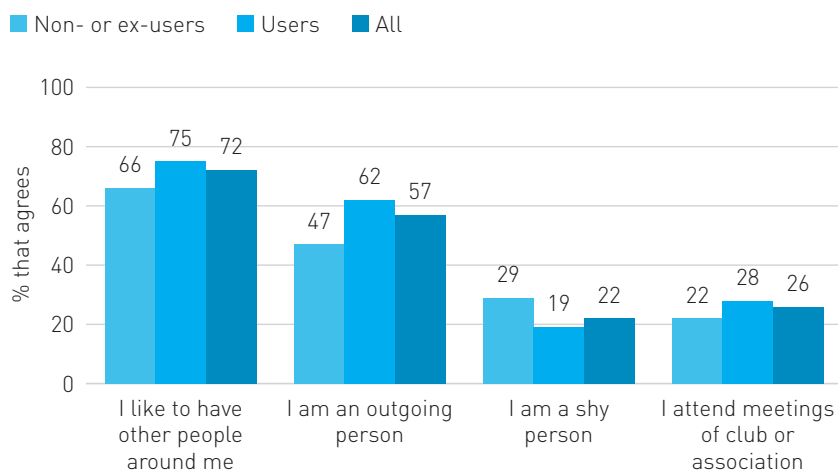
Current users. OxIS 2007: N=1,578

## Psychological and Social Characteristics of Internet Users

Some early research into the Internet indicated that Internet users were isolated and sought refuge in the Internet to avoid social problems in everyday life. The use of the Internet was assumed to lead to addiction and limited contact with others. However, current research has changed that perspective, and many argue that people online are psychologically just as varied as those offline and that people will behave in ways that correspond to this variety.

OxIS 2007 seems to suggest that users, instead of being isolated, use the Internet to reinforce their existing networks. The data show that Internet users in Britain tend to be more extroverted, feel more in control of their lives, and have broader social networks than non-users. The Internet is, for users, not a replacement of offline ways of contacting people (which they use just as often as non-users) but an additional tool to stay in touch with family and friends.

### Self-Confidence and Social Activities by Internet Users and Non-Users (QS1 by QH19)



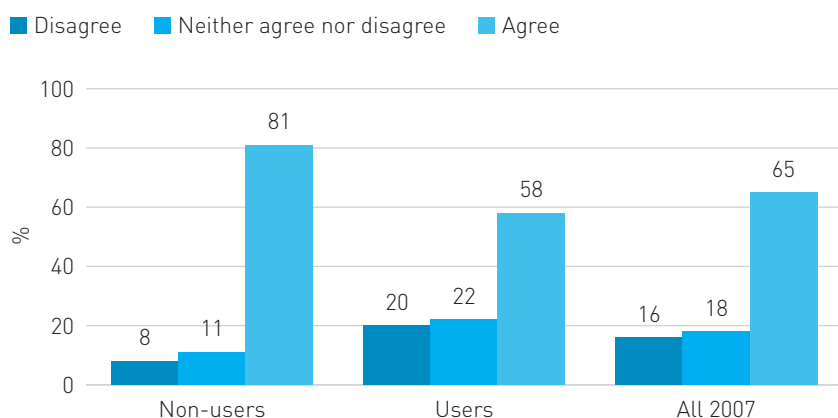
OxIS 2007: N=2,350

"I would now like to ask you a few things about yourself and the people you interact with in daily life. How much do you agree with the following descriptions?"

Users see themselves as more outgoing (62%) and less shy (19%) than non-users of the Internet (47% outgoing and 29% shy).

Users are more active socially than non-users. 28% of users attend meetings while only 22% of non-users do.

### Self-Confidence and Control over the Environment by Internet Users and Non-Users (QB1 by QH19)



OxIS 2007: N=2,350

"Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements: Society is getting harder to understand"

Non-users feel less in control over their lives and the world around them than Internet users. They believe society is getting harder and harder to understand: 81% of non-users feel that society is getting harder to understand in comparison to 58% of Internet users.

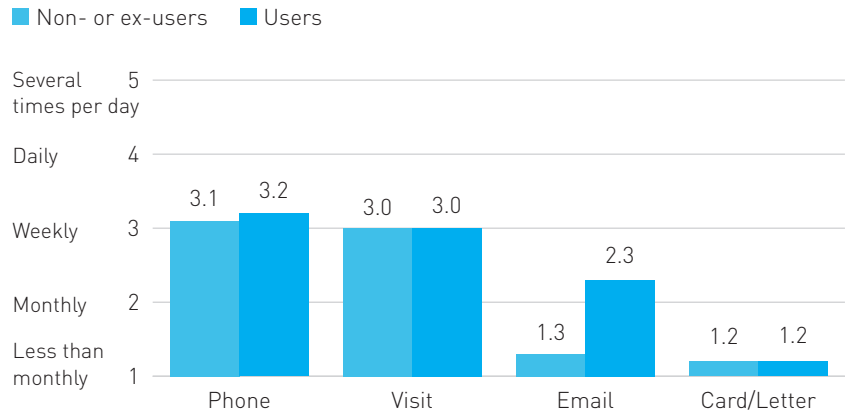


### Communicating with Family and Friends by Internet Users and Non-Users (QS2, QS3 by QH19)

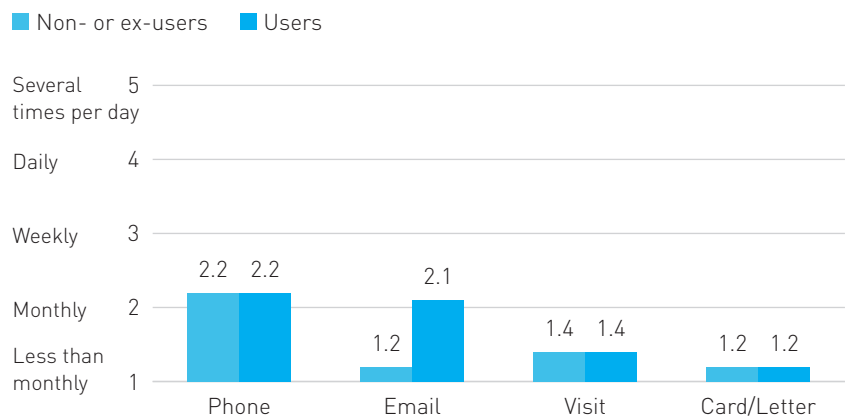
"How often do you contact family or friends who live **nearby** by...?"

Responses suggest that the Internet does not influence the contact that people have with family and friends through visits, phone conversations and written communication. However, in addition to visiting and phoning relatives, the Internet enables users to keep in touch by email as well.

There is little difference in the frequency with which people email friends and family who live far away and those that live close by. They tend to phone people who live nearby more than those that live far away.



"How often do you contact family or friends who live **far away** by...?"



OxIS 2007: N=2,350

## II. Patterns of Internet use

Usage History

Access to the Internet

Skills

Proxy Internet Use

Social Networking and Communication

Creativity and production

Entertainment and Leisure

Information Seeking

Learning

Civic Engagement and e-Government

Services and Commerce

## Usage History

Internet experience emerges as an important factor in determining the overall online literacy and presence of users. It is arguably also a valuable indicator of the propensity of users to migrate to faster connections. When Internet penetration becomes widely available, people with long Internet use histories are likely to migrate to faster, more reliable and “always on” connections.

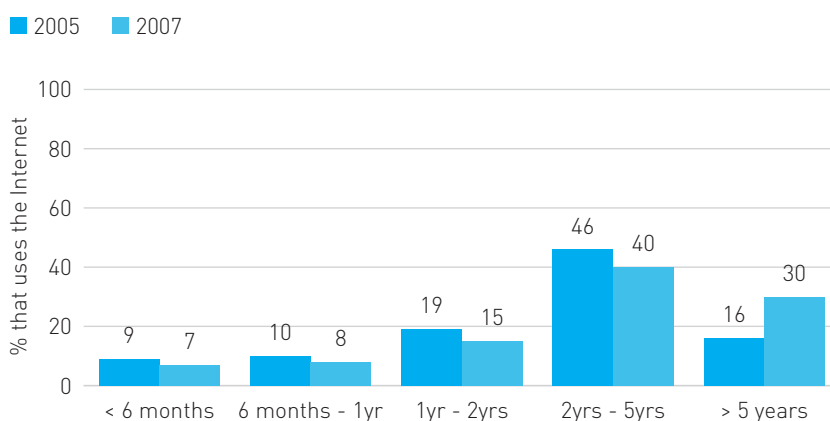
The year 2007 marked a significant change in the Internet user population in Britain. The percentage of users with more than 5 years of online experience increased significantly in comparison to previous years. In terms of usage history a gender gap still exists: men in 2007 have more years of access and use than women and have been using higher quality (ie broadband) access for a longer period of time.

While retired people are generally considered to be more digitally disengaged, OxlS 2007 suggests that retired users have a similar usage, but not access, history to students, while employed people have been exposed to the Internet and high speed connections for a longer period of time.

“How long has your household had an Internet connection?”

The number of people that have had access to the Internet for more than 5 years has doubled since 2005 from 16% to 30%.

### Years of Access to the Internet (QH3)

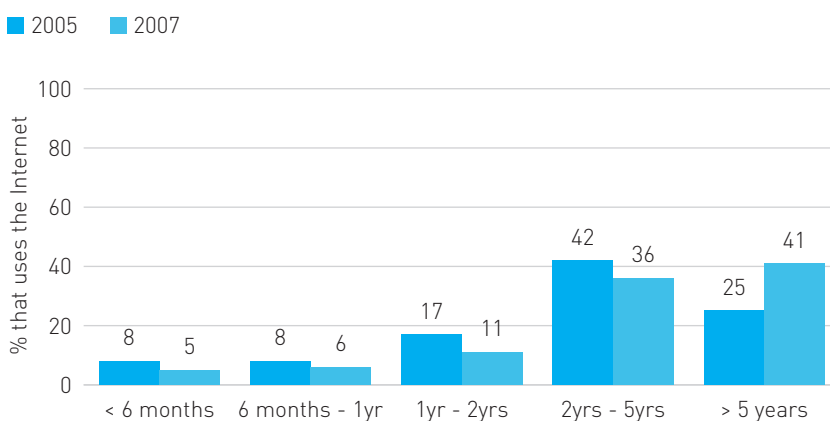


Individuals with home access. OxlS 2005: N=1,172; OxlS 2007: N=1,557

“About how long have you been using the Internet?”

People have now used the Internet for a longer period of time. While in 2005 only a quarter (25%) had used the Internet for more than 5 years, in 2007 this was 41%.

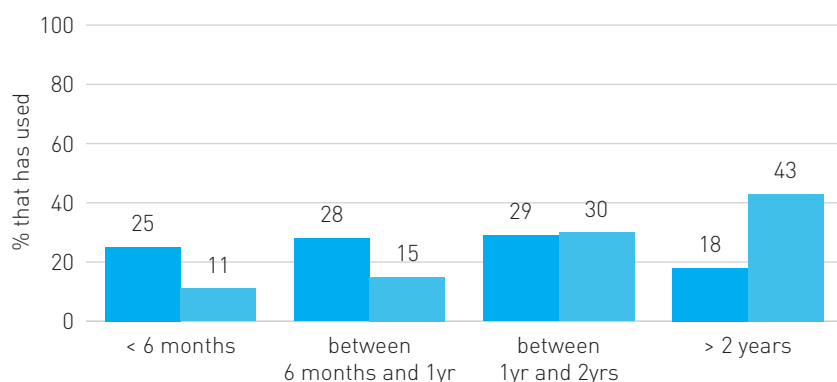
### Years of Use of the Internet (QC3)



Current users. OxlS 2005: N=1,309; OxlS 2007: N=1,578

### Years that People have had Broadband in the Household (QH7)

■ 2005 ■ 2007



Individuals with broadband access at home. OxlS 2005: N=784; OxlS 2007: N=1,319

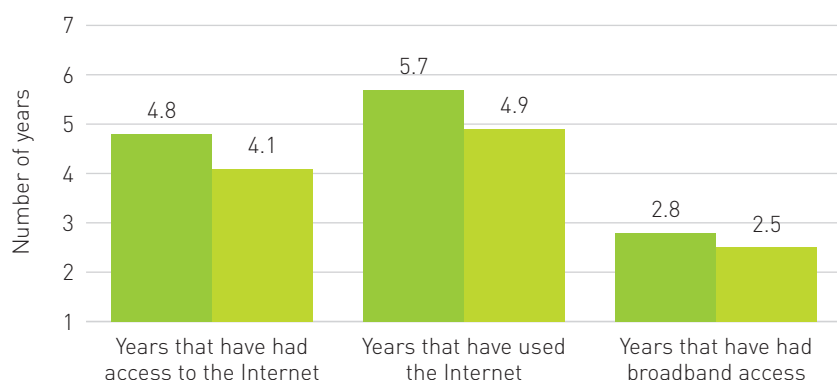
"When did you get a broadband connection in your household? About how many years ago?"

In 2007, the majority of those with broadband access have had access for more than two years (43%).

While in 2005 the majority (53%) had broadband access for less than a year, in 2007, this is only 26%.

### Access to and Use of the Internet by Gender (QH3, QC3 & QH7 by QD3)

■ Men ■ Women

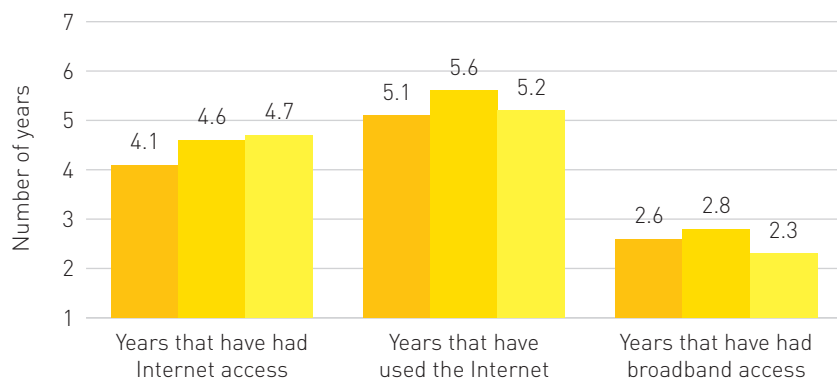


Individuals with home access. OxlS 2007: N=1,557 Current users. OxlS 2007: N=1,578 Individuals with broadband access at home. OxlS 2007: N=1,319

Men have had access to the Internet for longer (av=4.8 years), have used it longer (av=5.7 years) and have had access to broadband for a longer period of time (av=2.8 years) than women, who on average have had access to the Internet for 4.1 years, used it for 4.9 years and have had access to broadband for 2.5 years.

### Access to and Use of the Internet by Lifestage (QH3, QC3 & QH7 by QD14)

■ Students ■ Employed ■ Retired



Individuals with home access. OxlS 2007: N=1,557 Current users. OxlS 2007: N=1,578; Individuals with broadband access at home. OxlS 2007: N=1,319

Students have had access to the Internet for less time than the other lifestage groups (av=4.1 years).

Retired people have had access to the Internet for about the same time (av=4.7 years), but used it for less (av=5.2 years) and have had access to broadband for less time (av=2.3 years) than employed people.

Employed people have used the Internet (av=5.6) and have had access to broadband (av=2.8) for the longest periods of time.

## Access to the Internet

Having access to the Internet at different locations means that the Internet can be better integrated with a person's everyday life. Varied access often means a broader use of the Internet because different contexts offer different opportunities for use and stimulate different types of use (e.g. learning and information seeking at work or school, and entertainment and communication at home). A limited number of access points is said to be an important factor in determining digital disengagement by certain disadvantaged groups of users, such as the elderly. The lack of access at home, which offers the possibility to freely experiment with the Internet and related technologies, is especially assumed to constrain broader take up of the Internet.

Having access at home, which almost all users in Britain now have, plays an important role in getting people interested in using the Internet – nearly half of Internet users reported that their first experiences with the Internet were at home. Home access is especially important for retired people, who are more likely than other groups to have started using the Internet at home.

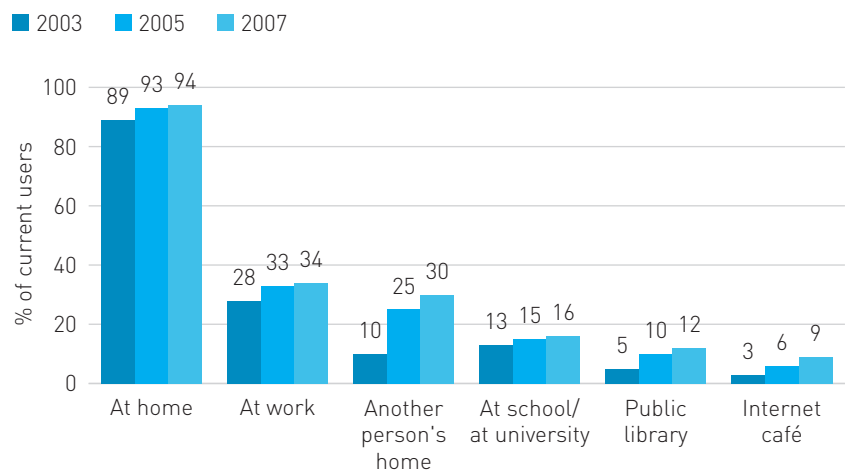
"Now, could I ask about all of the places where you access the Internet? Do you currently access the Internet...?"

In 2007, almost all (94%) users access the Internet at home.

The percentage of people who access the Internet from another person's home has tripled, from 10% in 2003 to 30% in 2007.

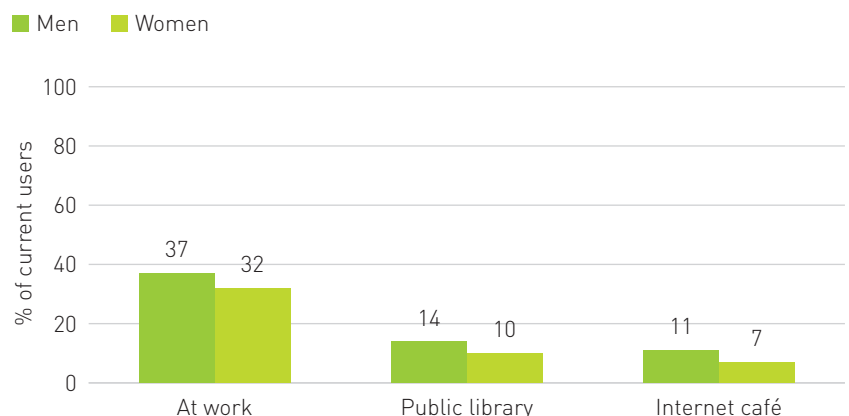
Internet cafés and public libraries have also become more important as access points. 9% of Internet users access the Internet at an Internet café and 12% at a public library.

### Locations of Use (QC2)



Current users. OxIS 2003: N=1,201; OxIS 2005: N=1,309; OxIS 2007: N=1,578

### Locations of Use by Gender (QC2 by QD3)



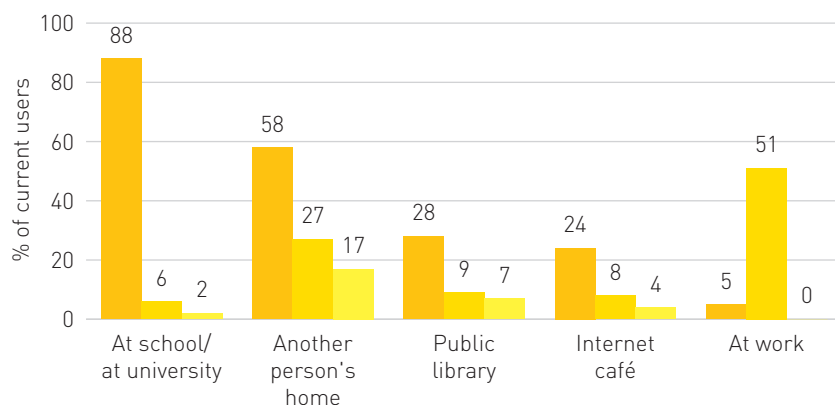
Current users. OxIS 2007: N=1,578

There are fewer differences between men and women in where they access the Internet. They are equally likely to access the Internet at home, at another person's home and at school (data not shown).

Men are more likely to access the Internet at work and at Internet cafés and public libraries.

## Locations of Use by Lifestage (QC2 by QD14)

Students Employed Retired



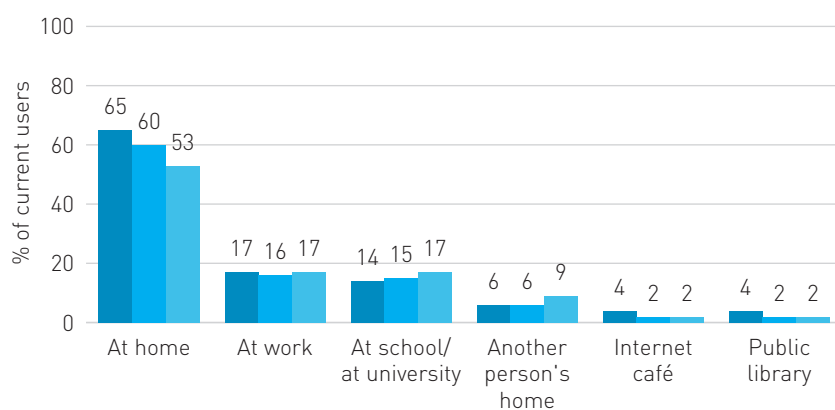
Current users. OxIS 2007: N=1,578

Besides the obvious differences (i.e. students access the Internet at school (88%) and employed people at work (51%)), students are also more likely to access the Internet at another person's home (58%), at an Internet café (24%) and in a public library (28%).

Retired users concentrate their use at either their own (not shown) or other people's homes (17%).

## First Use of the Internet (QC4)

2003 2005 2007



Current users. OxIS 2003: N=1,201; OxIS 2005: N=1,309; OxIS 2007: N=1,578

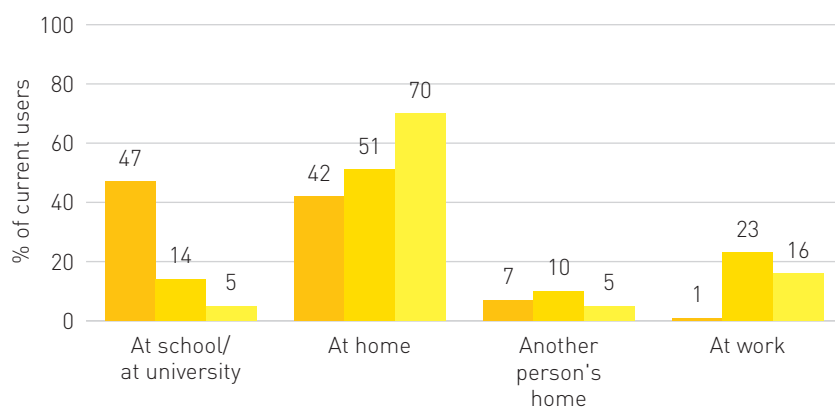
"Where did you start using the Internet?"

Users are less likely to say they have first used the Internet at home in 2007 (53%) than in 2003 (65%).

The number of people who started to use the Internet at another person's home has increased slightly from 6% in 2003 and 2005 to 9% in 2007.

## First Use of the Internet by Lifestage (QC4 by QD14)

Students Employed Retired



Current users. OxIS 2007: N=1,578

Retired people (70%) are more likely than students (42%) and employed people (51%) to have started using the Internet at home.

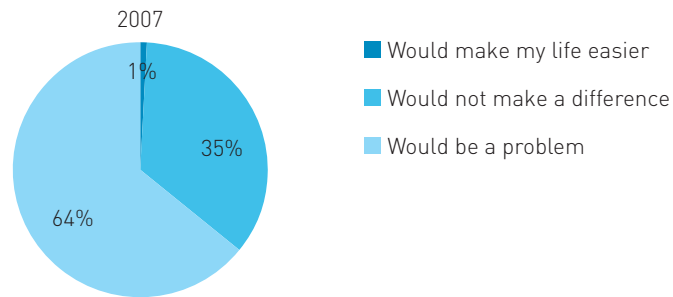
Employed people are more likely than the other groups to have started using the Internet at work (23%) or at another person's home (10%).

Students are the most likely to have started using the Internet at school (47%).

"If you would lose all access to the Internet from tomorrow onwards, would it be a problem for your everyday life, would it make no difference, or would it make your life better?"

Access to the Internet has a very important place in people's lives. In 2007, 64% of Internet users indicated that losing access would cause a problem to their daily life.

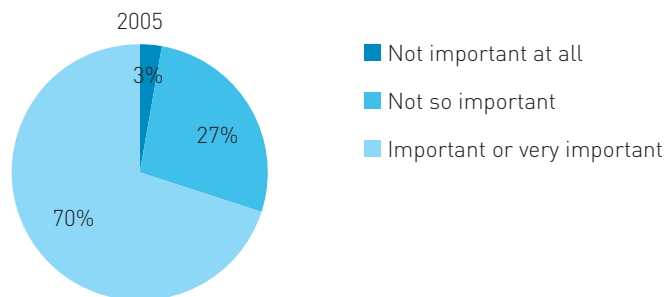
### Importance of Access to the Internet (QC37)



Current users. OxlS 2007: N=1,578

"Overall, how important is the Internet to your everyday life?"

In 2005, in response to a different question, 70% said that the Internet was important or very important to their daily lives.

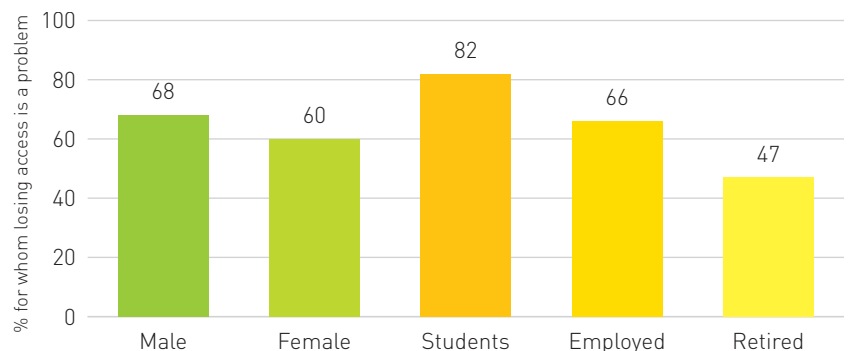


Current users. OxlS 2005: N=1,309

Losing all access to the Internet would be more of a problem for men (68%) than women (60%).

The importance of access to the Internet differs by lifestage. 82% of students say losing access would be a problem, 66% of those who are employed and only 47% of retired people indicate that this would be a problem.

### Importance of the Internet by Gender and Lifestage (QC37 by QD3 and QD14)



Current users. OxlS 2007: N=1,578

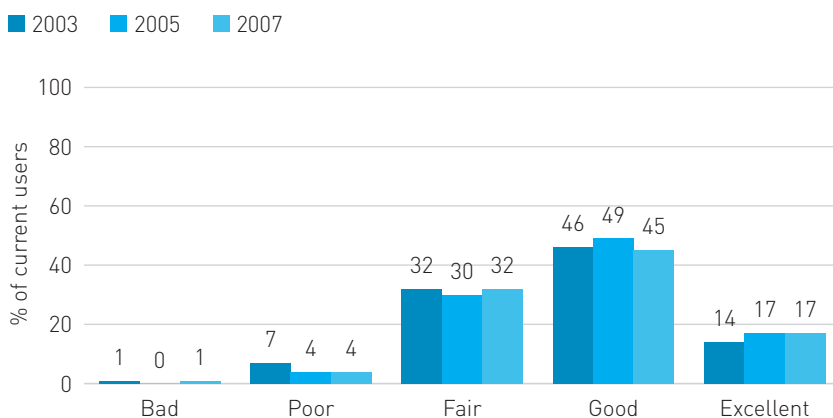
## Skills

One of the main determinants of achievement in educational and professional settings is self-efficacy – the self-rated ability to perform a task. It has been argued that believing in one's own skills is even more important than actual skill levels in determining success. This idea has been applied to Internet use, arguing that those with a greater belief in their own capacities to work with the Internet will achieve a broader and higher quality of use.

OxIS 2007 shows that in general the level of Internet self-efficacy has remained stable since 2003 and that Internet users rate their skills as good, which probably means that they think they can do with the Internet what they want to or need to do.

There are differences which suggest that some groups are less digitally skilled: women and retired users all tend to rate their ability lower than their counterparts and are less likely to multi-task.

### Self-rated Ability to Use the Internet (QC6)



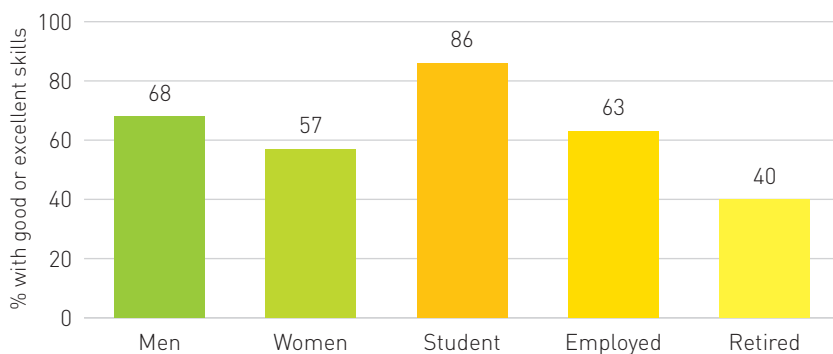
Current users. OxIS 2003: N=1,201; OxIS 2005: N=1,309; OxIS 2007: N=1,578

"How would you rate your ability to use the Internet?"

The way in which people rate their own Internet skills has not differed significantly over the years.

People are fairly confident in their Internet skills: one fifth (17%) rate their skills as excellent, a bit under half (45%) rate their skills as good and only a third (32%) as fair.

### Self-rated Ability to Use the Internet by Gender and Lifestage (QC6 by QD3 and QD14)



Current users. OxIS 2007: N=1,578

Men are more confident about their Internet skills than women. 68% of men think they have good or excellent Internet skills, compared to 57% of women.

Students are the most confident (86% say they have good or excellent skills) followed by those who are employed (63%).

Retired people have the lowest regard for their own skills (40%).



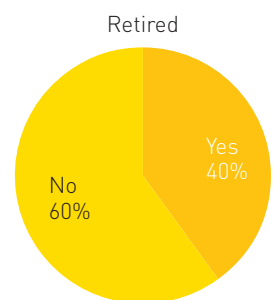
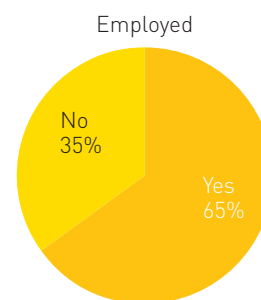
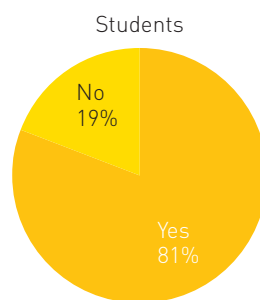
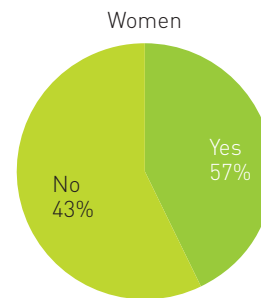
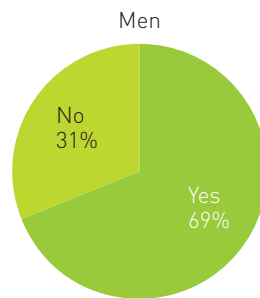
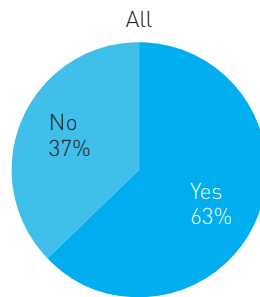
### Multi-tasking by Gender and Lifestage (QC1 by QD3 and QD14)

"Do you do more than one activity while you are online such as listening to music, watching TV or using the telephone?"

Most users (63%) do more than one thing at a time when they are online.

Men (69%) are more likely to multi-task than women (57%).

The largest differences exist between people at different stages in their life. Students are the most likely to multi-task (81%), followed by employed (65%) and retired people (40%).



Current users. OxlS 2007: N=1,578

## Proxy Internet Use

That people do not (know how to) use the Internet themselves does not mean that they do not have access to the services and applications that the Internet can provide. While some people feel they do not have the skills, access or the time to use the Internet, they often know someone who could do this for them.

OxIS 2007 shows that the groups who rate their own skills lower are also more likely to ask someone for help to use the Internet and, when they ask for help, the people they ask are more likely to be family members or friends. Men, students, and employed users are more likely to work things out themselves and to ask a colleague or someone at an educational institution for help. This suggests that those with higher confidence train themselves – learn by trial and error – and have a more professional network of support if they need help, while those with lower confidence tend to ask their immediate familiar social circle.

Ex-users tend to be excluded from the Internet to a lesser extent than non-users. Ex-users are more likely to ask for help, are more likely to know people who can help them out and the people they can ask for help come from a broader range of backgrounds, providing personal as well as professional advice.

Female ex-users are less likely to have asked someone to use the Internet for them but are more likely to know someone who could help them out. There are no differences between ex-users at different lifestages, but the differences between non-users are quite stark. Retired and unemployed non-users are a lot less likely to have asked for help and less likely to know someone. Family members and friends are most relied on for proxy use.

### Asking for Help (QC5)



Current users. OxIS 2007: N=1,578

["We are interested in the kinds of help people need to use the Internet. Do you..."](#)

Users tend to work things out for themselves before they ask for help in relation to the Internet. 78% say that they have worked things out themselves.

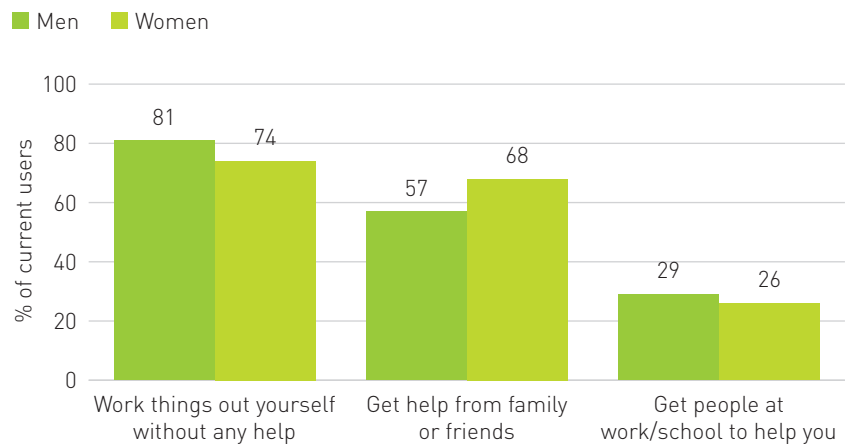
The most frequently used source of help is family and friends. 62% have asked these people for help. People at work are more popular sources of help (28%) than taking an official course (21%). The least common is to ask people in public spaces such as Internet cafés or public libraries for help.

Women are more likely than men to ask others for help. 81% of men say they worked a problem out for themselves without getting any help compared to 74% of women.

Women are more likely than men to ask family and friends for help (68%) and less likely to ask people at work (26%).

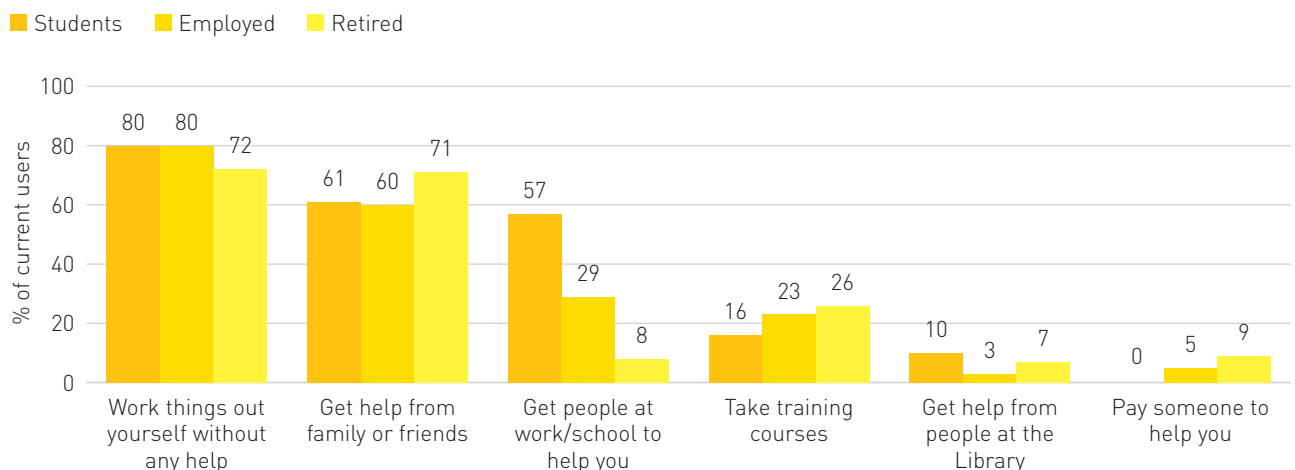
If men ask anyone for help it is likely to be a family member (57%), but they are still less likely than women to ask family members for help.

### Asking for Help by Gender (QC5 by QD3)



Current users. OxlS 2007: N=1,578

### Asking for Help by Lifestage (QC5 by QD14)



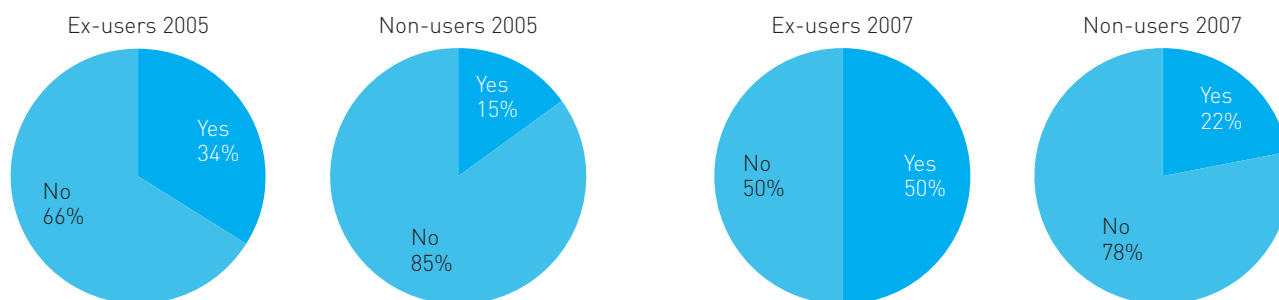
Current users. OxlS 2003: N=1,201; OxlS 2005: N=1,309; OxlS 2007: N=1,578

There is no difference between students and employed users in the extent to which they say that they work things out for themselves (80%), but retired users are less likely to say this (72%).

Retired users are the most likely to ask family and friends for help. They are almost as likely to ask these people for help (71%) as they are to figure things out for themselves. Retired users were also more likely than the other groups to take a training course. One quarter (26%) of retired users have taken such a course, in comparison to 23% of employed and 16% of student users. Similarly, they were the most likely to have paid someone to help them (9%).

Students are most likely to ask people at school for help (57%). Employed people were less likely to ask people at work (29%). Students are also the most likely to ask people for help in public spaces such as libraries (10%).

### Asking For Help to Use the Internet by Ex-Users and Non-Users (QE5 & QN2)



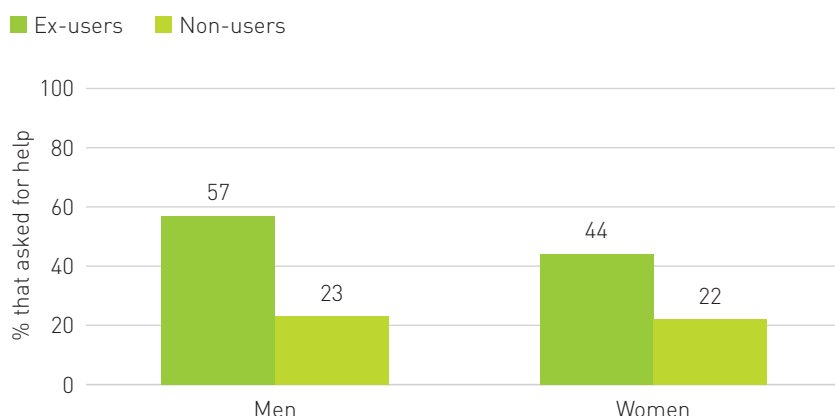
Ex-users and non-users. OxIS 2005: N= 876; OxIS 2007: N=773

"In the past year have you asked someone to send an email for you, or to get information or make a purchase from the Internet?"

Ex-users are more likely to have asked anyone for help in using the Internet in the last year than non-users. In 2007, half (50%) of ex-users asked someone to help them compared to 22% of non-users.

Ex-users and non-users were more likely to have asked for help in 2007 than in 2005. In 2005, one third of ex-users (34%) asked for help compared to 15% of non-users.

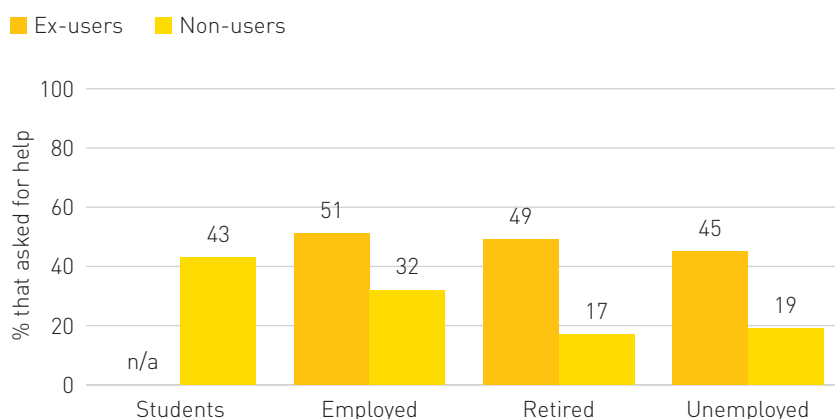
### Ex-Users and Non-Users Asking For Help to Use the Internet by Gender (QE5 & QN2 by QD3)



Ex-users and non-users. OxIS 2007: N=773

Male ex-users are more likely to have asked for help in using the Internet. More than half (57%) of male ex-users asked for help compared to 44% of female ex-users.

### Ex-Users and Non-Users Asking For Help to Use the Internet by Lifestage (QE5 & QN2 by QD14)



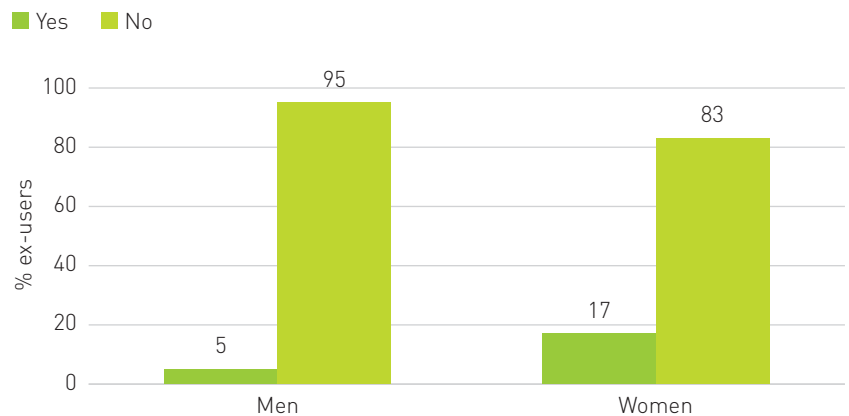
Ex-users and non-users. OxIS 2007: N=773

Student non-users are more likely (43%) than employed (32%), retired (17%) or unemployed (19%) non-users to have asked for help in using the Internet.

At all life stages, ex-users are more likely to have asked for help. Employed ex-users are slightly more likely (51%) than retired (49%) or unemployed (45%) ex-users to have asked for help.

### Reason Ex-Users First Used the Internet: 'To help my children' by Gender (QE3 by QD3)

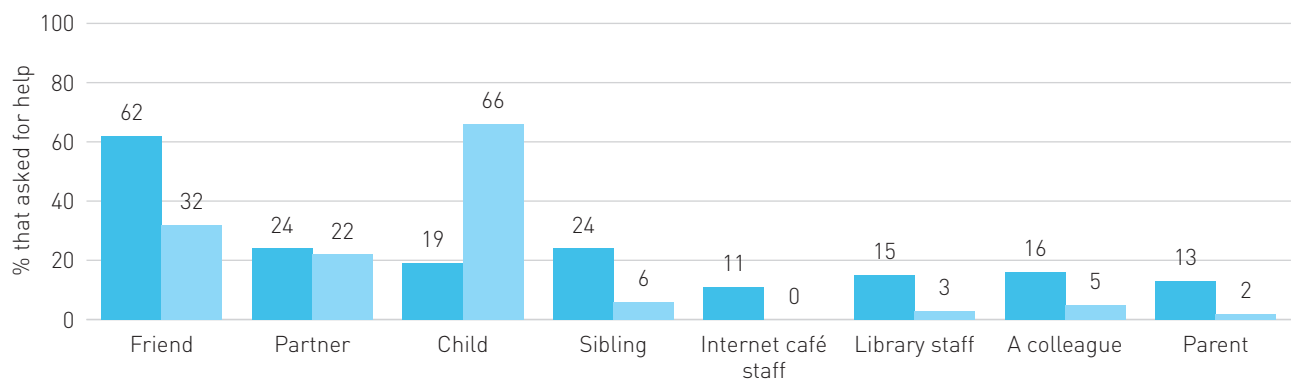
Female ex-users are a lot more likely (17%) to say that they used it to help their children than men (5%).



Ex-users. OxlS 2007: N=124

### Type of Proxy Users Accessed By Ex-Users and Non-Users (QE6 & QN3)

■ Ex-users ■ Non-users



Ex-users and non-users who have asked for help. OxlS 2007: N=618

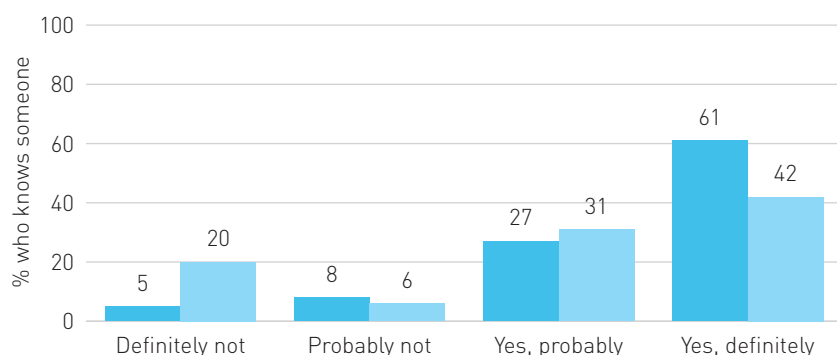
"Who have you asked for help on Internet related matters?"

The most popular person to ask for help for ex-users is a friend (62%). This is in contrast to non-users who are most likely to ask a child (66%).

Ex-users are also more likely to ask a sibling (24%), Internet café staff (11%), library staff (15%), a colleague (16%) or a parent (13%) than non-users, who are very unlikely to ask non-family members or friends for help.

## Current Availability of Proxy-Users to Ex-Users and Non-Users (QE7 &amp; QN4)

■ Ex-users ■ Non-users



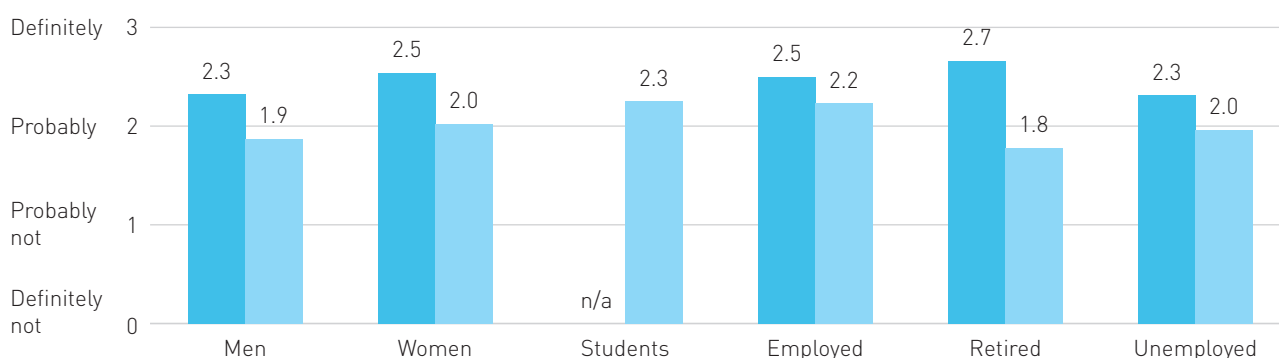
Ex-users and non-users. OxIS 2007: N=773

"If you needed to use the Internet to send an email or something now, do you know someone who could do this for you?"

Ex-users are more likely to know someone they can ask for help than non-users. 88% of ex-users know someone who could probably or definitely help them compared to only 73% of non-users.

## Current Availability of Proxy-Users to Ex-Users and Non-Users by Gender and Lifestage (QE7 &amp; QN4 by QD3 and QD14)

■ Ex-users ■ Non-users



Ex-users and non-users. OxIS 2007: N=773

Female ex-users (av=2.5) are slightly more likely to know someone who could help them use the Internet than male ex-users (av=2.3).

Student non-users are more likely to know someone who can help them out (av=2.3) than employed (av=2.2), retired (av=1.8) or unemployed non-users (av=2.0).

Retired ex-users are more likely to know someone who could help them use the Internet (av=2.7) than employed (av=2.5) and unemployed ex-users (av=2.3).

## Social Networking and Communication

One of the major changes in the Internet since 2005 has been the rise in popularity of social networking sites. This has enhanced existing possibilities for communicating and interacting with others, such as emailing, chatting and blogging.

Social networking adds to existing online communication opportunities by allowing for instantaneous interaction and networking around online material, and by facilitating the production of audiovisual content for private use, as well as storage and narrative broadcast uses with mass audiences. These applications have been labelled 'Web 2.0' applications by many.

OxIS 2007 shows that the traditional online communication applications, especially email and chat, remain as popular as they were in 2005. Internet users, particularly those who are retired, continue to see the Internet as a good way to keep in touch with people. There is no clear consensus on whether or not it is easy to interact with people online in comparison to offline. Social networking and blogging are less popular, but still one fifth of people create this kind of communicative content online. Against expectations – since women are (stereotypically) assumed to be more interested in communication – men undertake more communicative activities on average than do women. Unsurprisingly, all communication, and especially the social networking activities, are most popular amongst students and younger people.

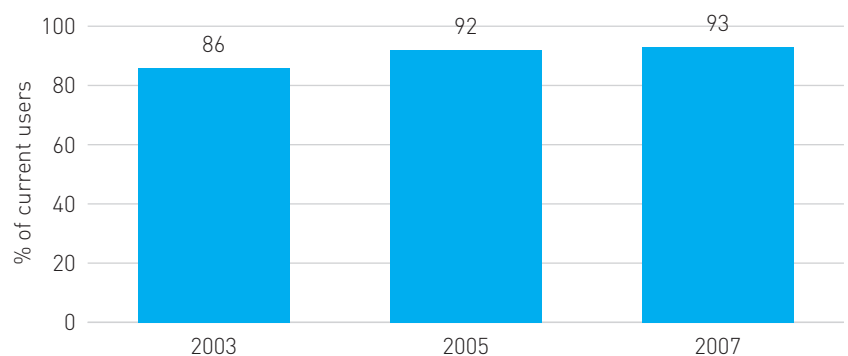
OxIS 2007 shows interesting results as regards the creation of new social ties based on Internet contacts. Women are less likely to make online friends and less likely to go and meet these new friends offline. While students are the most likely of all lifestage groups to make friends online, they are the least likely to then go on to meet them offline.

"Can you receive and send email? Do you have any email address?"

The staple of online communication is email.

The number of Internet users that have an email address has remained stable since 2005 at 93%, but has increased from 86% in 2003.

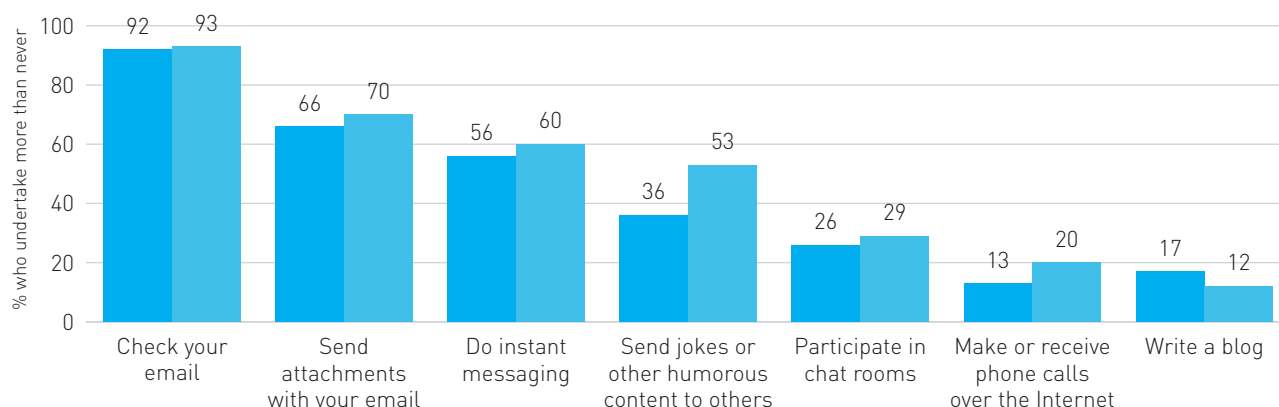
**Email Use (CQ9)**



Current users. OxIS 2003: N=1,201; OxIS 2005: N=1,309; OxIS 2007: N=1,578

**Communication Online (QC16)**

■ 2005 ■ 2007



Current users. OxlS 2005: N=1,309; OxlS 2007: N=1,578

**"How often do you use the Internet for the following purposes?"**

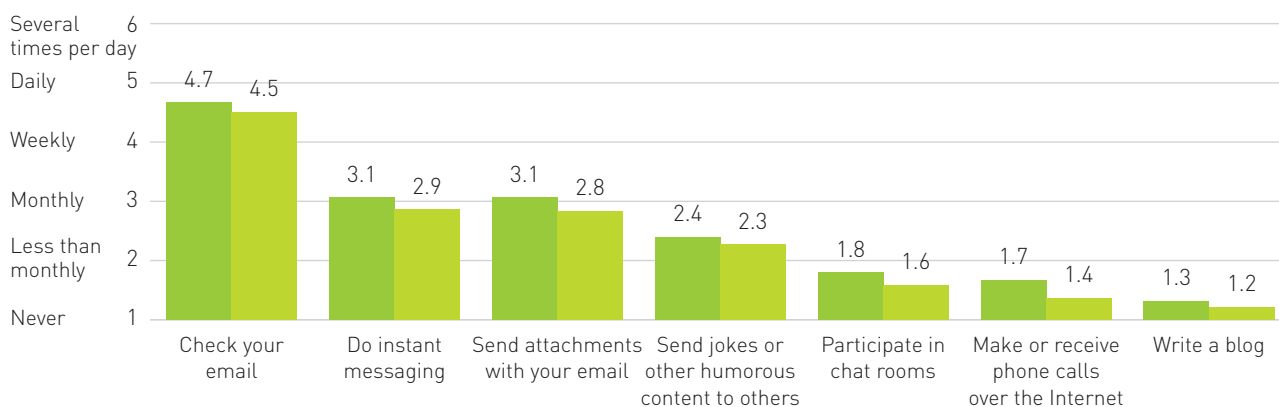
The traditional modes of communication are the most popular and their prominence has hardly changed since 2005: 93% of Internet users send emails, 70% send attachments and 60% use instant messaging. Chatting has been around for a while but has not increased much in popularity; about one third (29%) of the population uses chatrooms, an increase of three percentage points since 2005.

Sending jokes over the Internet has increased greatly since 2005 from 36% to 53%. The newer ways of communicating online such as receiving phone calls has increased by seven percentage points from 13% in 2005 to 20% in 2007.

Blogging on the Internet has decreased somewhat in popularity, from 17% in 2005 to 12% in 2007.

**Communication Online by Gender (QC16 by QD3)**

■ Men ■ Women



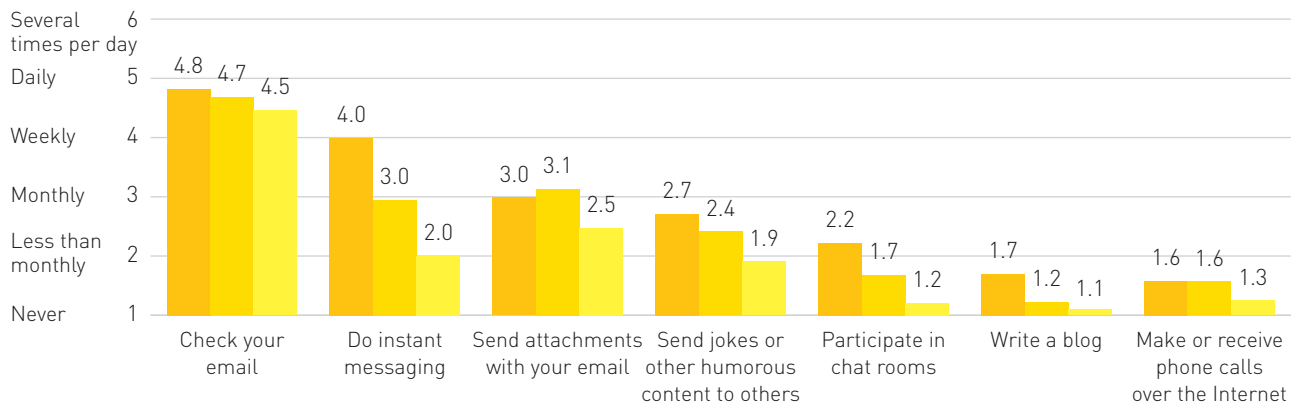
Current users. OxlS 2007: N=1,578

Men undertake all online communication activities somewhat more frequently than women, but the differences are not large.



**Communication Online by Lifestage (QC16 by QD14)**

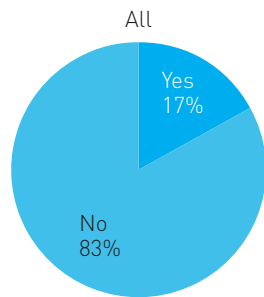
■ Students ■ Employed ■ Retired



Current users. OxIS 2007: N=1,578

Students undertake most communication activities more frequently than employed and retired people. The largest difference exists in participating in instant messaging (av=4.0), chat rooms (av=2.2), and writing blogs (av=1.7), which are far more prominent amongst student users than among other user groups.

While students participate at least once a week in instant messaging, employed users do so once a month (av=3.0) and retired users less than monthly (av=2.0). Although all groups participate on average less than monthly in chat rooms and blogs, retired users are a lot more likely to never blog (av=1.1) than are students.

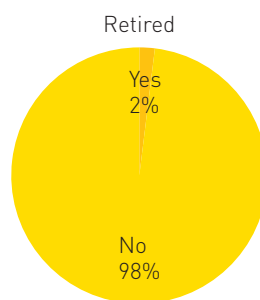
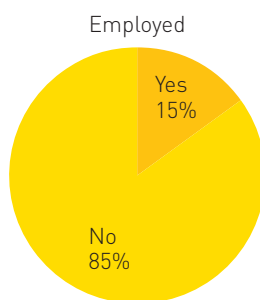
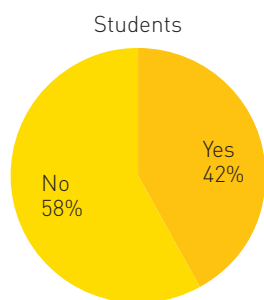
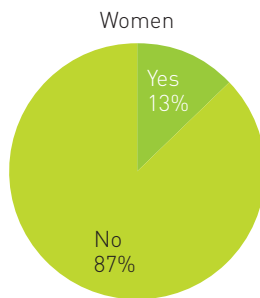
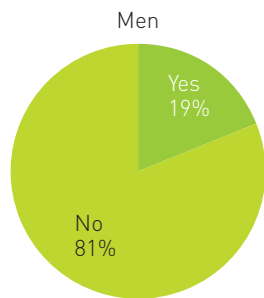
**Social Networking Profiles by Gender and Lifestage (QC14e by QD3 and QD14)**

"Have you done any of the following things on the Internet in the last year? – Created a profile on a social networking site such as YouTube, MySpace or Facebook"

Less than one fifth (17%) of Internet users have created a profile on a social networking site.

Men (19%) are more likely than women (13%) to have created an online profile on a social networking site.

The largest difference in the use of social networking sites is based on lifestage. Students are three times as likely (42%) as employed users (15%) to have a profile and almost no retired users (2%) have such a profile.

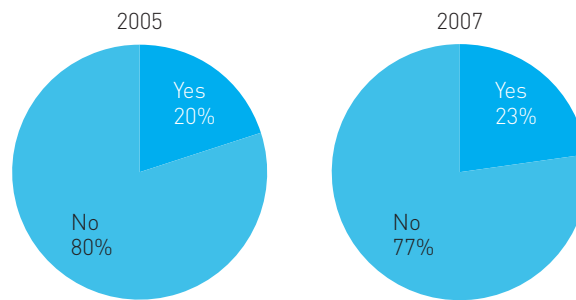


Current users. OxlS 2007: N=1,578

"Have you ever met new people on the Internet that you did not know before?"

People were just as likely to meet new people online in 2005 as in 2007. Less than a quarter (23%) of Internet users have met an online friend they did not know before going on the Internet.

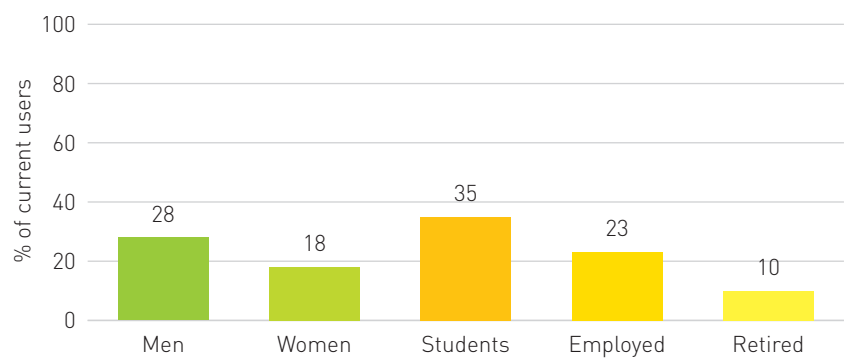
### Online Contacts (QC17)



Current users. OxlS 2005: N=1,309; OxlS 2007: N=1,578

Men (28%) are more likely than women (18%) to meet new people online. Students (35%) are more than three times as likely to make online friends than are retired Internet users (10%).

### Online Contacts by Gender and Lifestage in 2007 (QC17 by QD3 and QD14)

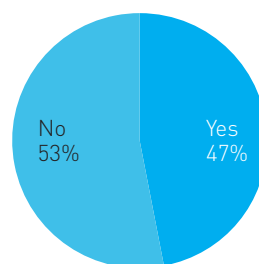


Current users. OxlS 2007: N=1,578

"Thinking back to all the people you have met on the Internet, have you gone on to meet any of them in person?"

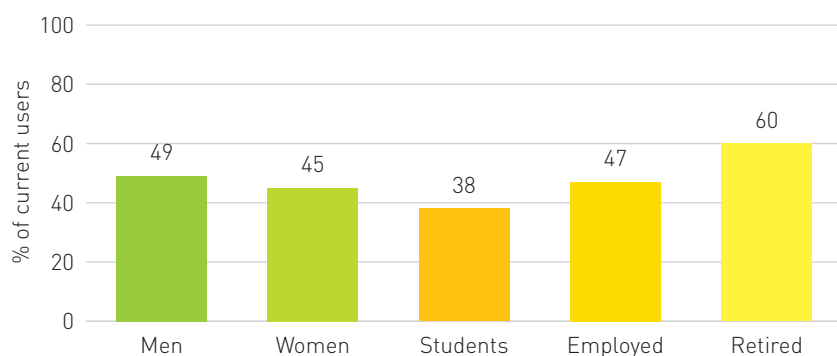
Half (47%) of those who have met someone online have gone on to meet them in person. This means that, in 2007, almost 12% of Internet users (half of 23%) have gone on to meet someone offline.

### Meeting Online Acquaintances Offline in 2007 (QC19)



Current users who met people online. OxlS 2007: N=359

### Meeting Online Acquaintances Offline by Gender and Lifestyle in 2007 (QC19 by QD3 and QD14)



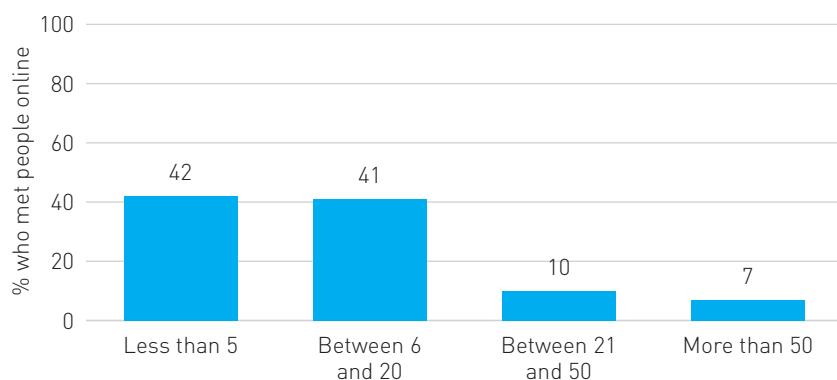
Current users who met people online. OxIS 2007: N=359

Men who have met someone online are more likely to go on to meet them in person (49%) than women (45%).

Of those users who have met someone online, retired users (60%) are more likely to go on to meet them in person than employed users (47%) and student users (38%).

Just over one tenth (13%) of all student users meet an online friend in person. One tenth (10%) of all employed users and 6% of all retired users have done the same.

### Number of Online (only) Acquaintances in 2007 (QC18)



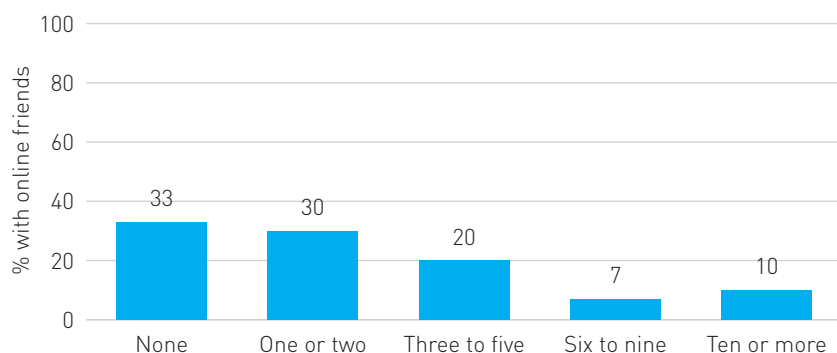
Current users who met people online. OxIS 2007: N=359

"How many people have you met on the Internet that you did not know before?"

On average, people have between 6 and 20 friends online but a large proportion (42%) of users have fewer than five friends who they met online and did not know offline.

Very few people have extensive online networks. One tenth (10%) have between 21 and 50 online friends and 7% have more than 50.

### Online Friends in 2007 (QC19)



Current users who met people online. OxIS 2007: N=359

"How many of these people, who you have met on the Internet, would you regard as friends?"

A third (33%) of those who have met people online do not consider any of these people to be friends. A similar percentage considers one or two of these people, who they have met online, to be friends.

The maximum number of people that anybody considered friends was 50, but, on average, people considered only one person a friend, of those who they had met online.

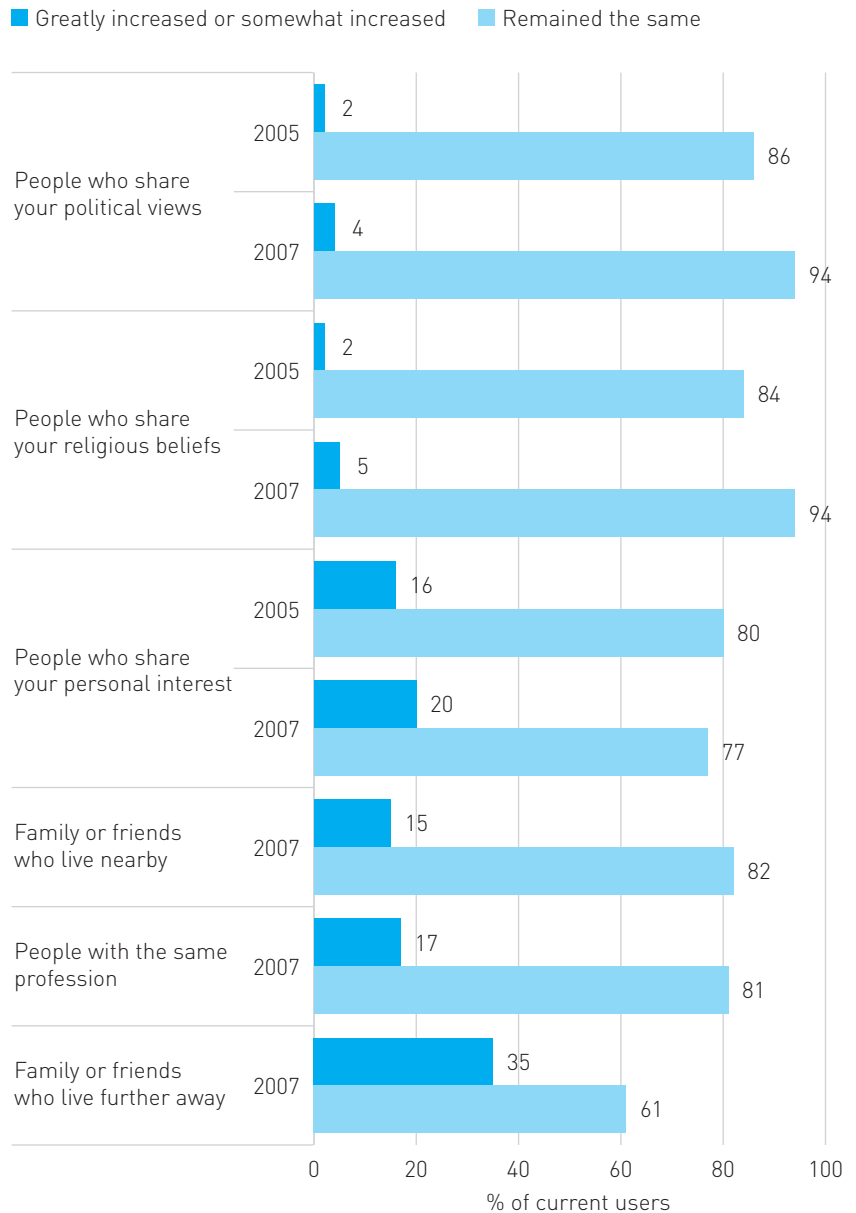
"Has the use of the Internet increased or decreased your contact with the following groups of people or has your contact remained the same?"

Most people do not think that access to the Internet influences the contact they have with friends or family members. If they do see an influence it is that the Internet has increased the contacts with their existing offline networks.

The impact of the Internet is greatest on the contacts people have with family members. In 2007, 15% said that access to the Internet has increased the contact they have with family and friends who live nearby, and 35% said it has increased their contact with family and friends who live further away. Similarly, 17% said the Internet has increased the contact they have with people with the same profession.

In 2005, 16% said that contact with people who share their personal interests had increased. In 2007, this proportion was slightly higher: 20% said their contact with people with similar interests had increased.

### Influence of the Internet on Offline Social Networks (QC21)

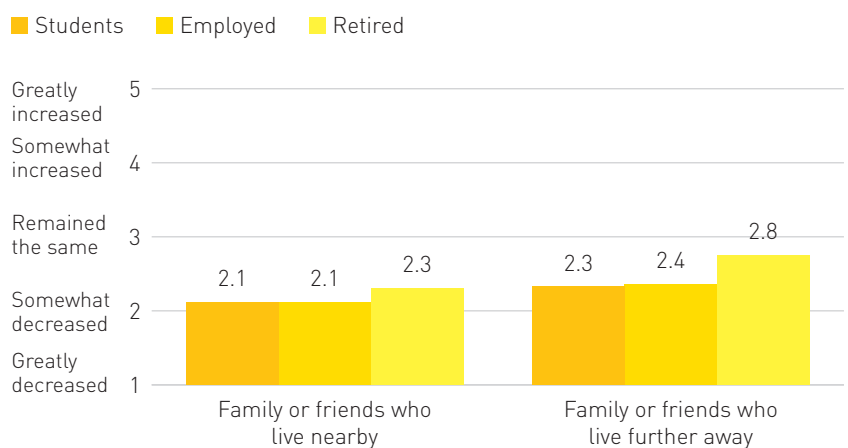


Current users. OxlS 2005: N=1,309; OxlS 2007: N=1,578

There are no gender differences in the perceived influence of the Internet on social networks.

Retired people are slightly more likely (av=2.3 for family and friends nearby and av=2.8 for family and friends further away) to say that their contact with family and friends had increased through their access to the Internet.

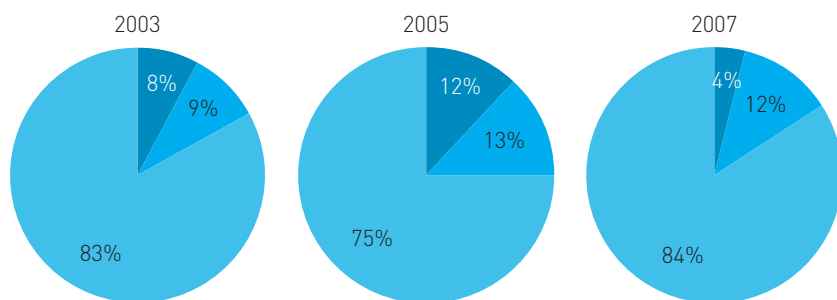
### Influence of the Internet on Social Networks by Lifestage (QC21 by QD14)



Current users. OxlS 2007: N=1,578

**Attitudes: Influence of the Internet on Social Networks (QC22a)**

■ Disagree ■ Neutral ■ Agree



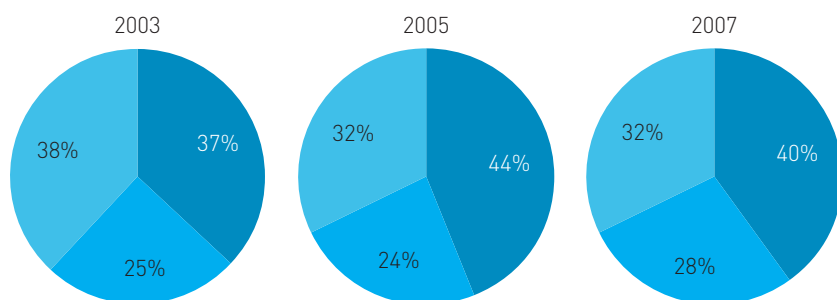
Current users. OxIS 2003: N=1,201; OxIS 2005: N=1,309; OxIS 2007: N=1,578

"Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:  
The Internet allows me to keep in touch with people"

People in general (around 84%) agree that the Internet allows people to keep in touch with each other. This is relatively unchanged since 2003, although there was a slight dip in 2005, when only 75% agreed with this statement.

**Attitudes: Influence of the Internet on Social Networks (QC22b)**

■ Disagree ■ Neutral ■ Agree



Current users. OxIS 2003: N=1,201; OxIS 2005: N=1,309; OxIS 2007: N=1,578

"Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:  
It is easier for me to meet people online than in person"

People are more ambiguous about the ease of meeting people online. A third indicate that it is easier for them to meet people online (32%) and 40% indicate that it is not easier. This has not changed to a great extent since 2003 and 2005.

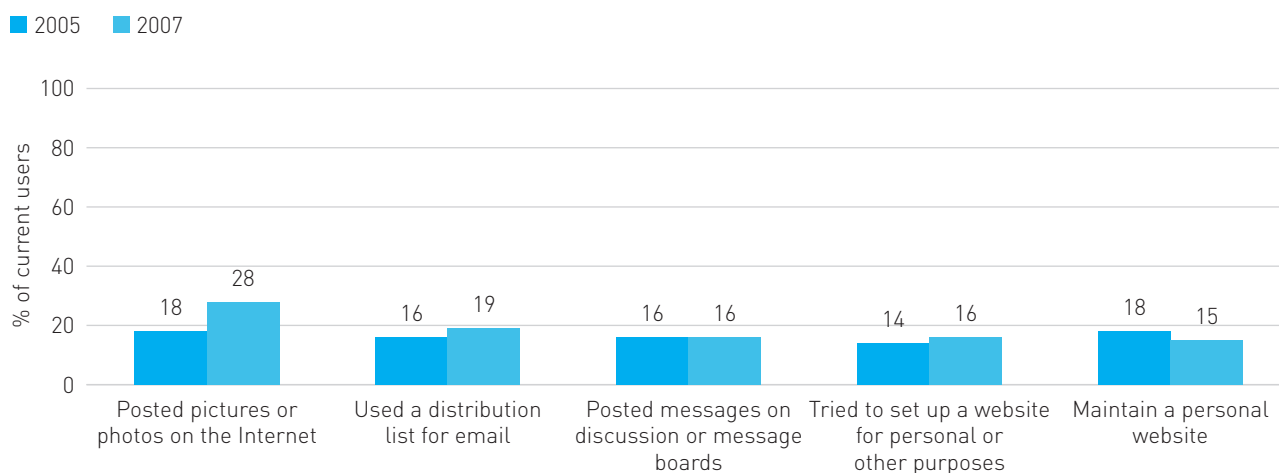
## Creativity and production

In discussions about Internet literacy, producing content is often considered an indication of high skill. Many websites have sprung up since 2005 that have made posting, sharing and creating online content easier than before. Many of these websites are social networking sites which involve active updating of content and on which postings are frequent and constantly renewed. There are of course also more personal or private sites on which people post images or stories that they share only with a select few of their friends.

OxIS 2007 shows that online content production has not yet reached a large proportion of users. Passive production such as posting pictures is most common, while those kinds of production that require more continuous activity such as maintaining a website or blogging are less popular. The digital gaps observed in access, skill and communication are also present here: men produce more content than women, but as before and perhaps unsurprisingly, lifestyle is the most important factor relating to online content production.

Students produce far more content than employed and retired users with the exception of contributions to online discussions. Since content production is considered to be an indicator of a high level of digital inclusion, students can be considered the most Internet literate and retired people the least.

### Creativity and Production Online (QC14 & QC15)

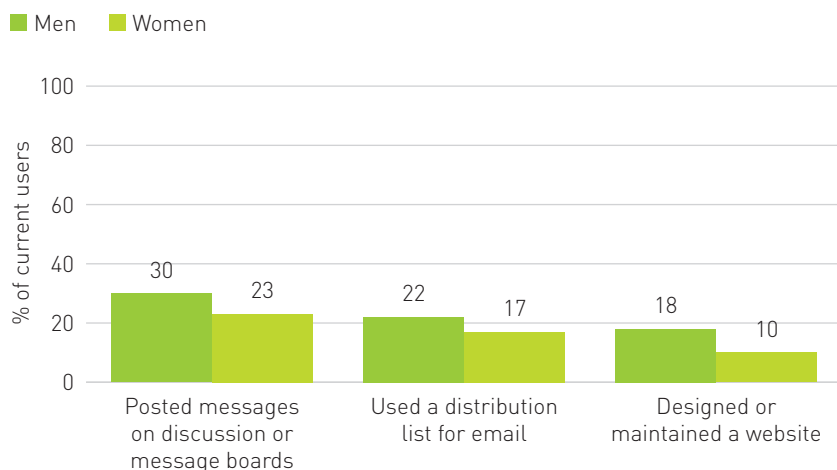


Current users. OxIS 2005: N=1,309; OxIS 2007: N=1,578

"Have you done any of the following things on the Internet in the last year?"

"Whether or not you have done so in the last year, have you ever tried to set up a website for personal or other purposes?"

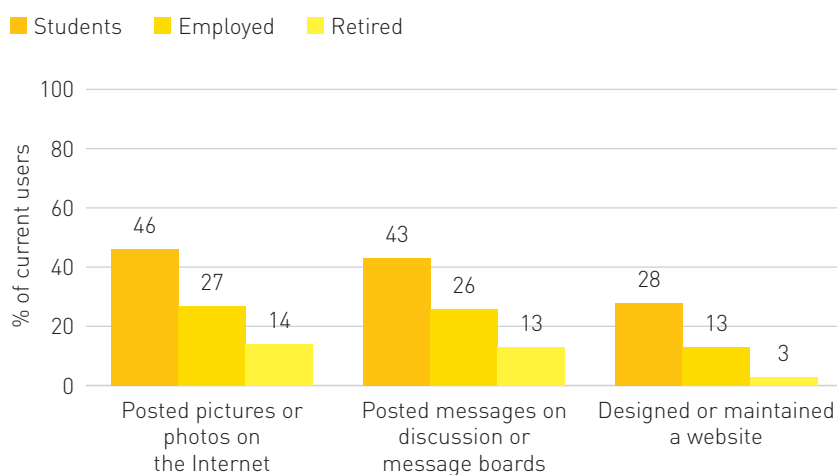
Users are more likely in 2007 than in 2005 to post pictures on the Internet. While in 2005 this was only 18%, in 2007 one third (28%) posted pictures, making it the most popular creative activity online. Other creative and productive activities were undertaken at the same level in 2005 and 2007. The only activity that was slightly less popular was maintaining a personal website.

**Creativity and Production Online by Gender (QC14 & QC15 by QD3)**

Current users. OxlS 2007: N=1,578

Men are more likely than women to create content or perform other production activities online.

Men are more likely to post on message and discussion boards (30% v 23%), to use email or distribution lists (22% v 17%), and to design or maintain a website (18% v 10%).

**Creativity and Production Online by Lifestage (QC14 & QC15 by QD14)**

Current users. OxlS 2007: N=1,578

Students are more likely than the other groups to undertake creative and production activities online. In comparison to other groups, maintaining a website (28%) is a larger part of a student's creative online activity.

Employed users are half as likely as students to undertake most creative activities. The most popular activities for employed users are posting messages on discussion boards (26%) and posting pictures (27%).

Retired people are the least likely to undertake creative activities online. They are far less likely to set up a website (only 3% have done so).



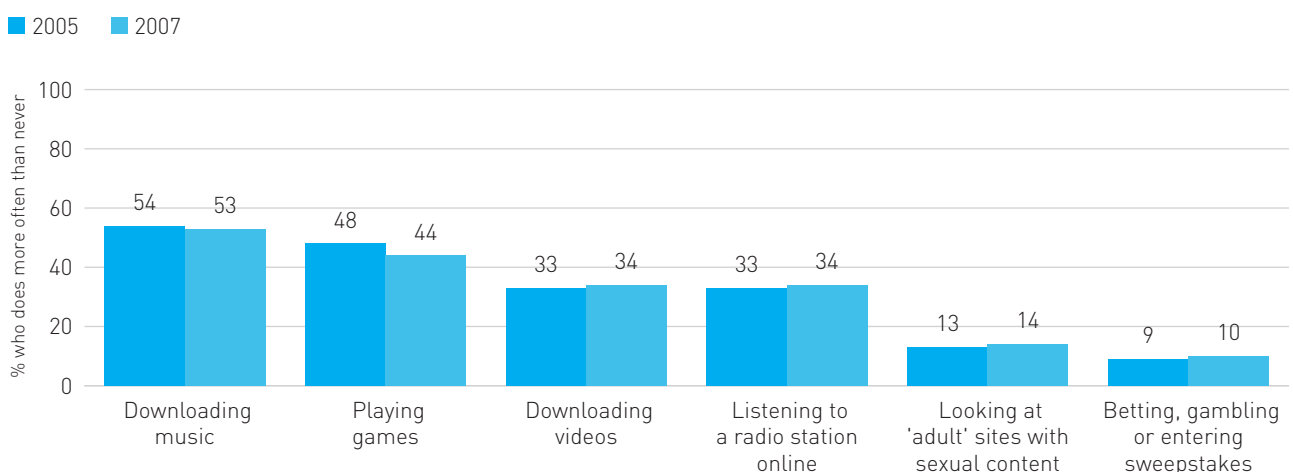
## Entertainment and Leisure

There is debate about whether engaging in online entertainment is a positive activity, especially in relation to young people, who can spend hours playing games and looking for music and videos. While parents and teachers often do not consider these uses desirable, there are many in education who consider play and entertainment a useful tool for learning if it involves the development of motor, cognitive, or other skills. On the other hand, entertainment activities, such as gaming and gambling, are often linked to Internet addiction. People are less worried about those who spend hours browsing for information than about those who spend hours playing games or gambling.

OxIS 2007 shows that there is not much change since 2005 in the time people spend undertaking leisure activities on the Internet. Many thought that an increase in speed, associated with the spread of broadband, would increase entertainment use, but this does not seem to have been the case. The same digital exclusion patterns appear with entertainment as for social networking. Gender is especially important in relation to entertainment. Men undertake more entertainment activities, as do students.

Users continue to say that the Internet has no influence on the way they spend their time with others, but they do consider that using the Internet takes away from time spent on other media, such as newspapers and books. This perception contradicts what was found in comparisons between users and non-users, whose responses suggest that non-users read newspapers and spend their leisure time in similar ways as Internet users, with the exception of television viewing, which non-users do for longer periods of time than users.

### Entertainment and Leisure Online (QC28)

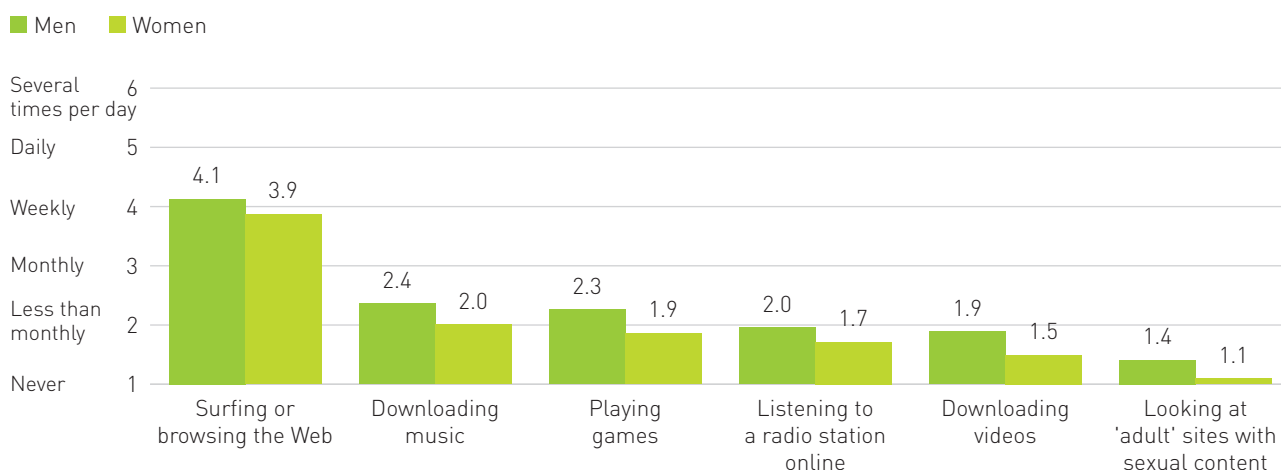


Current users. OxIS 2005: N=1,309; OxIS 2007: N=1,578

"How frequently do you use the Internet for the following purposes?"

There are only minimal changes between 2005 and 2007 in undertaking leisure and entertainment activities on the Internet. The largest difference is in playing games: 48% did this in 2005 compared to 44% in 2007.

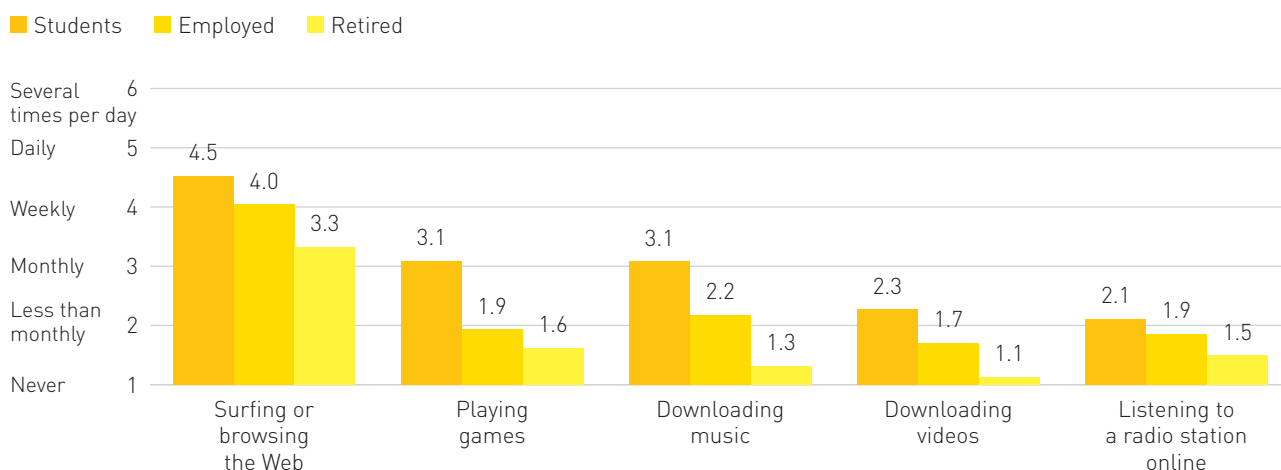
### Entertainment and Leisure Online by Gender (QC28 by QD3)



Current users. OxlS 2007: N=1,578

Men engage in entertainment and leisure activities online more frequently than do women. They spend more time surfing the web, playing games, downloading music and videos, listening to the radio and looking at adult sites with sexual content.

### Entertainment and Leisure Online by Lifestage (QC28 by QD14)



Current users. OxlS 2007: N=1,578

Students undertake a number of entertainment and leisure activities more frequently than employed and retired users. They are more frequent game players (av=3.1 v employed av=1.9 and retired av=1.6) and music downloaders (monthly v less than monthly and never).

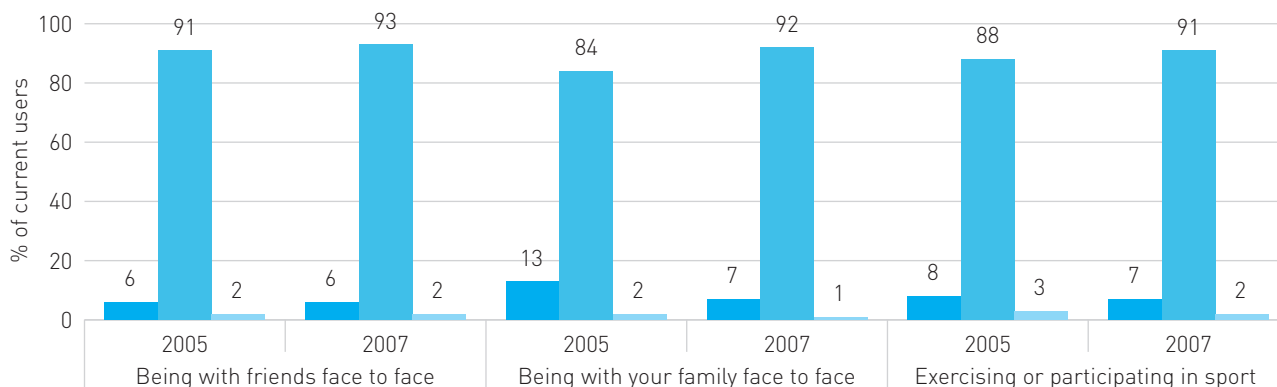
followed by downloading music (av=2.2) and playing games (av=1.9).

Retired users are most likely to never download music (av=1.3) or videos (av=1.1) and listen, on average, less than monthly to the radio online (av=1.5).

Employed users, like the other groups, undertake browsing and surfing most frequently (av=4.0) as an online activity,

### Perceived Influence of Internet Use on Social Activities (QC29)

■ Less than before person had Internet   ■ About the same   ■ More than before



Current users. OxIS 2005: N=1,309; OxIS 2007: N=1,578

“Do you engage in the following activities less than, about the same or more than you did before you started using the Internet?”

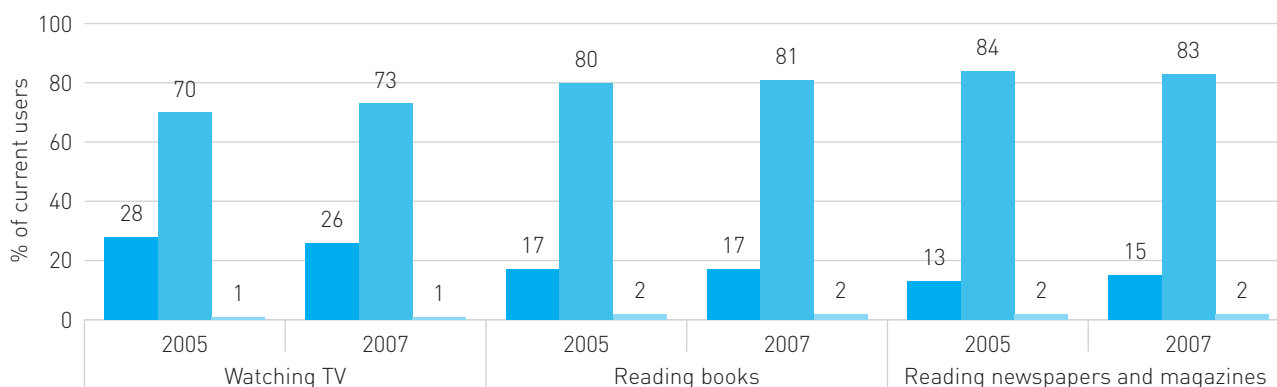
In general, users do not believe that the Internet influences the way they spend their leisure time with others. Those who do think it has influenced the time they spend on social activities, believe that the Internet has decreased the time they

spend with friends and family. In 2005, 13% thought that the Internet decreased the time they spend with family, while in 2007 only 7% thought the same.

Similarly, 7% thought in 2007 that the Internet had decreased the time they spend at exercising or playing sports while in 2005, 8% felt the same.

### Perceived Influence of Internet Use on Media Use (QC29)

■ Less than before   ■ About the same   ■ More than before



Current users. OxIS 2007: N=1,578

“Do you engage in the following activities less than, about the same or more than you did before you started using the Internet?”

Internet users believe that their use of the Internet has reinforced their existing patterns of leisure activities. Most say that the time they spend on these

activities has stayed the same. However, both in 2005 and in 2007 around 26% of users said they had watched less television due to the availability of the Internet and 17% said they spend less time reading books. Around 15% say that they read newspapers and magazines less often.

## Information Seeking

There is an abundance of information on the Internet. All kinds of information sources of variable quality can be found online. How people locate information online, what types of information people seek and for what purpose are all important questions.

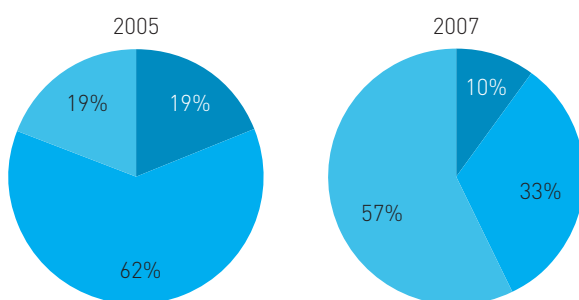
OxIS 2007 indicates that there has been a significant shift in the way people look for information online. In 2005, Internet users were more likely to use both search engines and specific pages they might bookmark to look for information. In 2007, Internet users were much more likely to primarily use search engines. This has important implications as search engines give prominence to some sites over others and do not cover the entire Internet.

The Internet is an increasingly important source for all types of information. In 2007 the percentage of Internet users who used the Internet to find all types of information was higher than in 2005. The most popular types of information were those associated with leisure activities such as travel plans and finding out about local events. In 2007, there was also a marked increase in the percentage of people finding health information online compared with 2005. There are some differences in the frequency with which different groups access information: men look for sports information more often than women, and students look for sports information and humorous content more often than employed or retired users. Health information is the only type of information women say they look for more often than men.

In 2007, around a third of Internet users read a newspaper online. This online newspaper reading does not replace offline reading completely. Men, employed, and retired users are more likely to read a newspaper online as compared to women and students.

### Ways to Look for Information Online (QC23)

■ Mainly go to specific pages   ■ Both about the same  
■ Mainly use a search engine such as Google



Current users. OxIS 2005: N=1,309; OxIS 2007: N=1,578

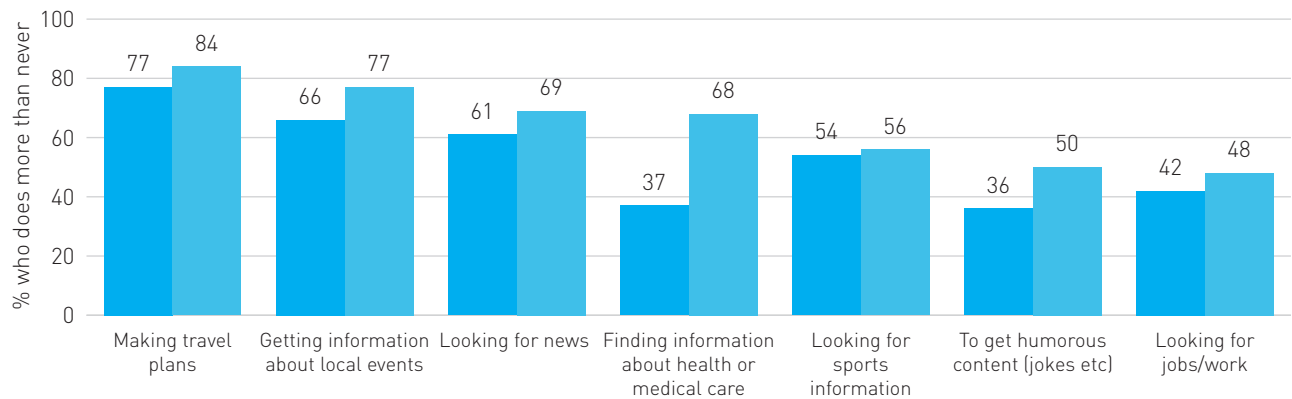
"In general, when you look for information on the Internet, do you go to specific pages, use a search engine, such as Google, or do you do both about the same?"

In 2007, Internet users are much more likely to focus on the use of search engines to find information than in 2005. Over half (57%) said they mainly used search engines in 2007 compared to 19% in 2005.

In 2005, users were more likely to use both search engines and specific pages to look for information: 62% did this in 2005 in comparison to 33% in 2007.

## Information Seeking Online (QC24)

■ 2005 ■ 2007



Current users. OxIS 2005: N=1,309; OxIS 2007: N=1,578

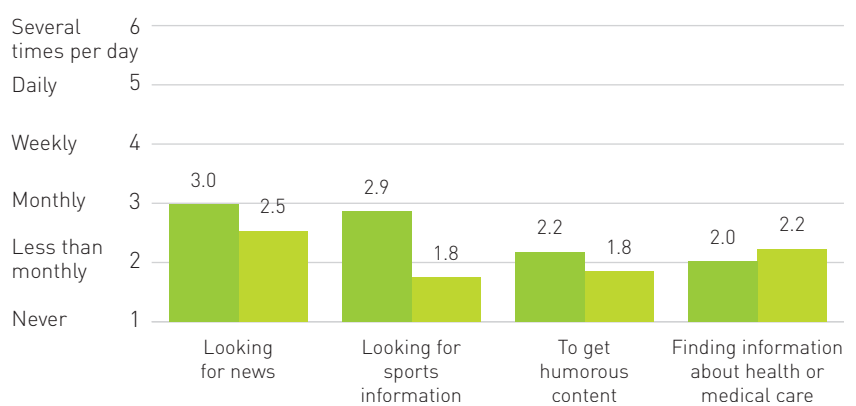
"How frequently do you use the Internet for the following purposes?"

People were more likely to look for all types of information online in 2007 than in 2005. The smallest increase was for sports information (56%).

The most popular types of information that people look for are travel plans (84%), local events information (77%) and looking for news (69%) and information about health and medical care (68%).

## Information Seeking Online by Gender (QC24 by QD3)

■ Men ■ Women



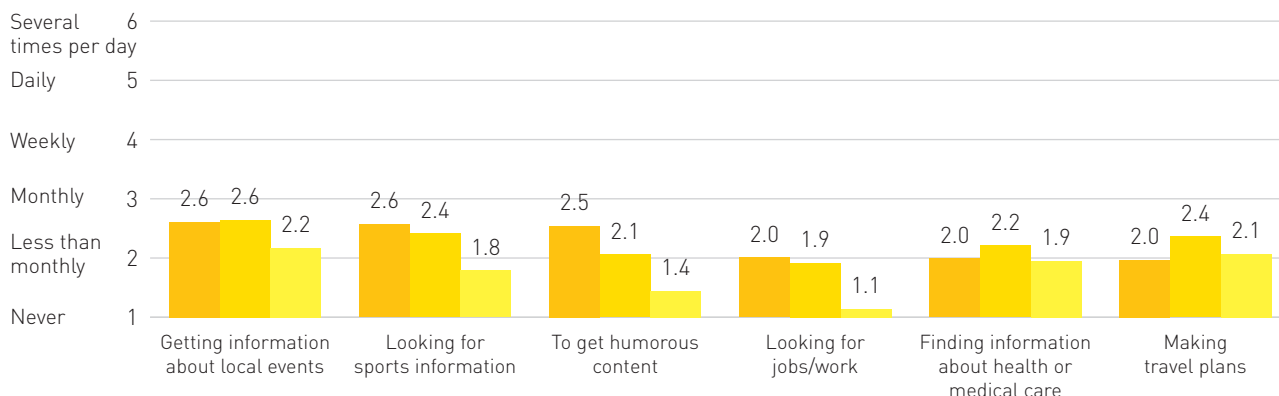
Current users. OxIS 2007: N=1,578

Men look more frequently for information in relation to news (av=3.0), sports (av=2.9) and humorous content (av=2.2) than women.

Women look for health information (av=2.2) more frequently than men.

### Information Seeking Online by Lifestage (QC24 by QD14)

Students Employed Retired



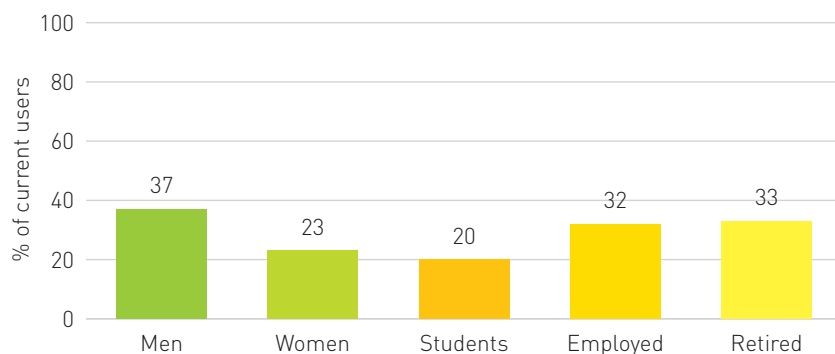
Current users. OxIS 2007: N=1,578

Students look more frequently than the other groups for sports (av=2.6) and humorous content (av=2.5) online. They are just as likely as employed people to look for local events (av=2.6) and jobs (av=2.0).

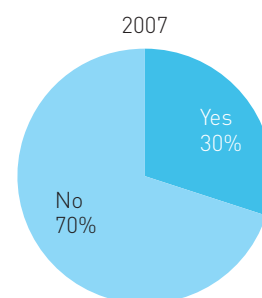
Retired users look the least frequently for all types of information. In comparison with other groups of users and activities, making travel plans (av=2.1) has a relatively greater weight in their online information seeking activities.

Employed users look for health information (av=2.2) and make travel plans (av=2.4) more often than the other groups.

### Reading of Online Newspapers by Gender and Lifestage in 2007 (QC25 by QD3 and QD14)



Current users. OxIS 2007: N=1,578



Current users. OxIS 2007: N=1,578

"Do you read any newspapers or news services on the Internet?"

One third (30%) of Internet users read a newspaper online. More men (37%) than women (23%) read online newspapers and students (20%) are less likely than employed (32%) and retired (33%) people to read online newspapers.

"Do you read any newspapers or news service online that you do not read in print?" (asked in 2005)

"Are any of these online newspapers or news services [you read] different from what you read in print?" (asked in 2007)

Half (49%) of those who read an online newspaper in 2007 said it was different from the one they read offline (not shown). This means that 15% of all Internet users – half of 30% who read an online newspaper – read a newspaper online that they do not read offline.

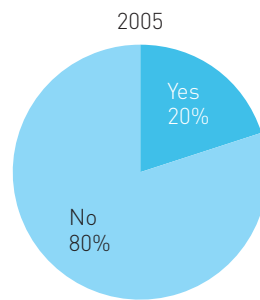
In 2005, one fifth (20%) of Internet users said they read an online news service that they did not read offline.

"Are any of these online newspapers or news services different from what you read in print?"

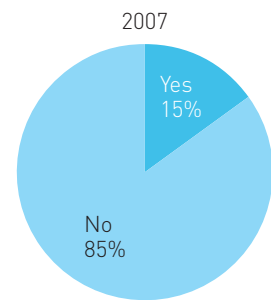
Men (52%) are more likely than women (45%) to read a newspaper online that they do not read offline.

Students (54%) and retired users (53%) are more likely to read a newspaper online that they do not read offline than employed users (49%).

### Unique Reading of Online Newspapers (QC26)

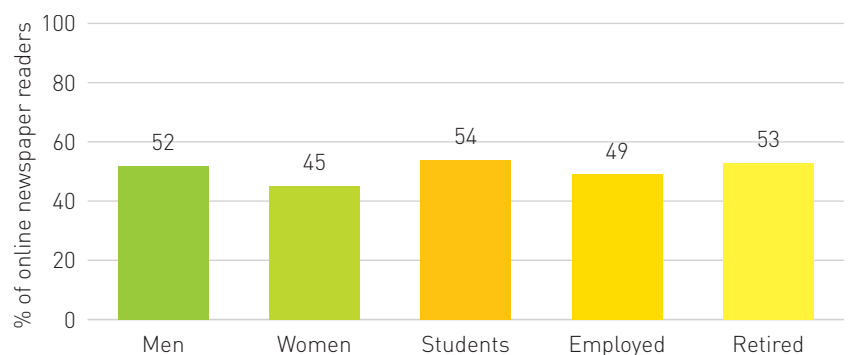


Current users. OxlS 2005: N=1,309



Current users. OxlS 2007: N=1,578

### Unique Reading of Online Newspapers by Gender and Lifestage in 2007 (QC26 by QD3 and QD14)



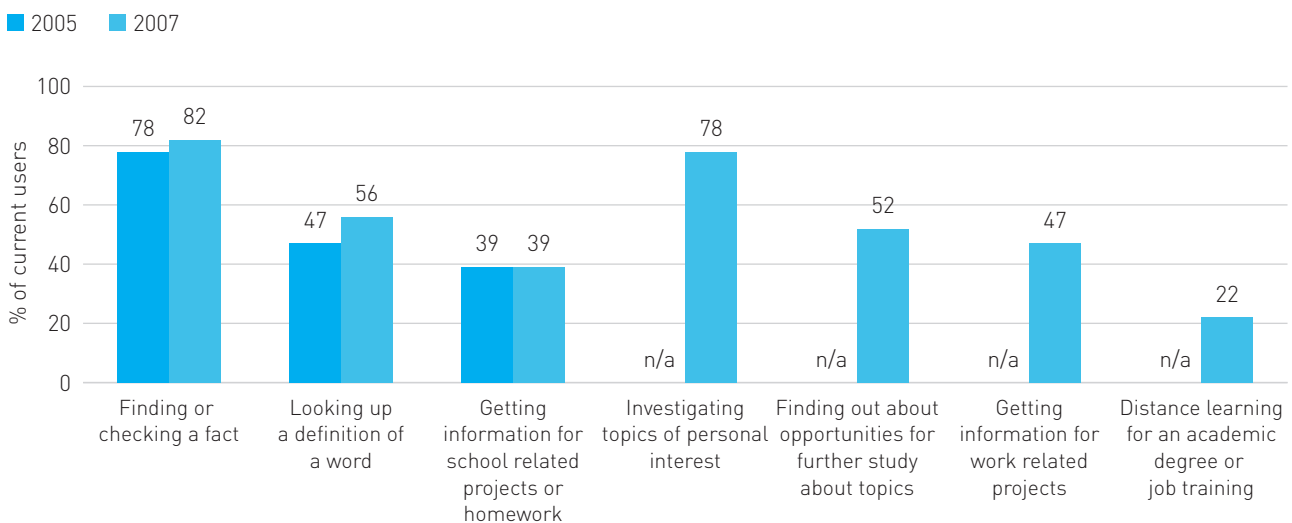
Current users who read online newspapers. OxlS 2007: N=467

## Learning

One of the aspects of the Internet that could provide opportunities to those who perhaps have a disadvantage in the offline world is the easy access to educational materials and the possibility to have custom made learning. There are many ways to use the Internet to learn, both formally and informally.

The number of people using the Internet for learning, broadly defined, is increasing. A high proportion of users use the Internet to investigate a topic of personal interest or to find or check a fact. The Internet is thus becoming the most prominent source for informal learning. Almost three quarters of Internet users go to the Internet first for information for a professional, school or personal project and just under a quarter of users have used the Internet for distance learning in order to read for a degree or participate in job training. This raises questions about the quality of online education in comparison to offline traditional learning and it also puts forward the question of information literacy: do people know how to distinguish reliable information and educational content and sources?

### Learning Online (QC34)



Current users. OxIS 2005: N=1,309; OxIS 2007: N=1,578

"How frequently, if ever, do you use the Internet or Web for the following purposes?"

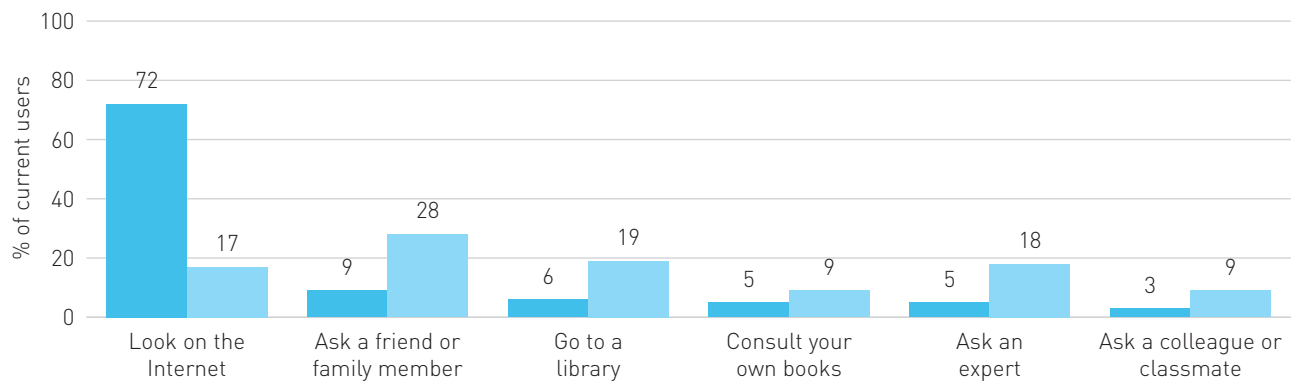
People were more likely in 2007 than in 2005 to use the Internet to learn informal matters such as looking for a definition of a word or checking a fact. The number of users who look for school and work related information in 2007 is equal to that in 2005.

The most popular type of learning is checking or finding facts (82%) and investigating topics of personal interest (78%). More formal learning, such as distance learning for a degree (22%) and information related to school and work (39%) are less popular.



### Choice in Learning Options (QC35a & b)

■ First ■ Second



Current users. OxIS 2007: N=1,578

"If you need to find good information about a topic or issue for a professional, school or personal project where would you look for it first? And if you were not able to find this information here, what would you do next?"

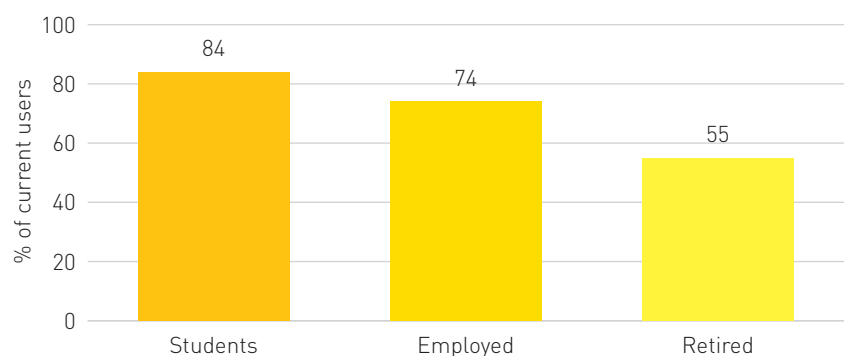
When researching a topic or issue, the Internet is the first port of call for most Internet users: 72% look on the Internet first before going anywhere else. As a second choice, friends or family members (28%) are the most popular sources of information.

Libraries are the third most frequently sought out source of information (6% as first and 19% as second choice).

"If you need to find good information about a topic or issue for a professional, school or personal project where would you look for it first? – The Internet"

Students are the most likely to go first to the Internet (84%) if they look for information, followed by employed users (74%) and retired users (55%).

### Internet as a First Choice for Learning by Lifestage (QC35a by QD14)



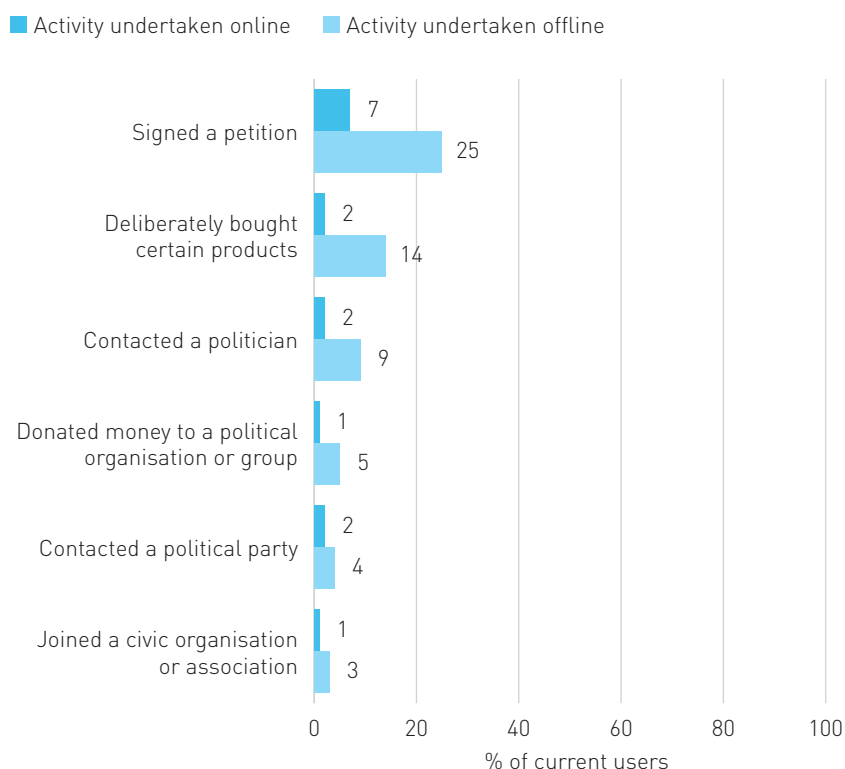
Current users. OxIS 2007: N=1,578

## Civic Engagement and e-Government

Easy access to political and civic information and knowledge stored on the Internet have been said to empower those who have distanced themselves from offline participation due to the remove they feel from traditional politics. The Internet is argued to allow users direct access to politicians and civic activities.

However, OxIS 2007 shows that the number of civic activities undertaken remains very low, with signing a petition by far the most common activity both online and offline. Meanwhile, the proportion of people interacting with government online has increased to one third in 2007. This percentage, however, is still low in comparison with other European or North American countries and very low in comparison with the figures for e-commerce. It is particularly noticeable how little difference the Internet appears to have brought to one of the most traditional of civic activities, given how low the figures are for any kind of interaction with elected politicians, either in terms of contacting them or looking for information about them.

### Online and Offline Civic Participation by Internet Users (QP2)



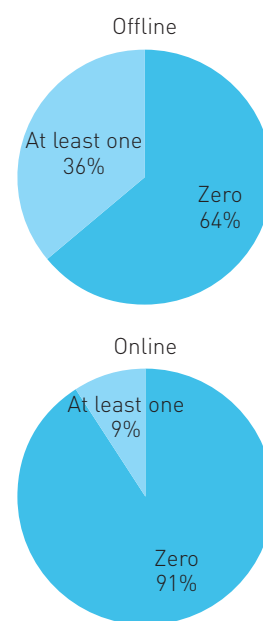
Current users. OxIS 2007: N=1,578

*"In the last year, have you done any of the following? [For current users only] Did you use the Internet to do this?"*

The most frequently undertaken activity is signing a petition – a quarter of Internet users (25%) have done this

offline and 7% have used the Internet to do this. Another civic action undertaken by a relatively large number of users is deliberately buying products: 14% do this offline and 2% have done this online. One tenth (9%) contacted a politician, but only 2% have done this online.

### Number of Civic Activities Undertaken Offline and the Number Undertaken Online



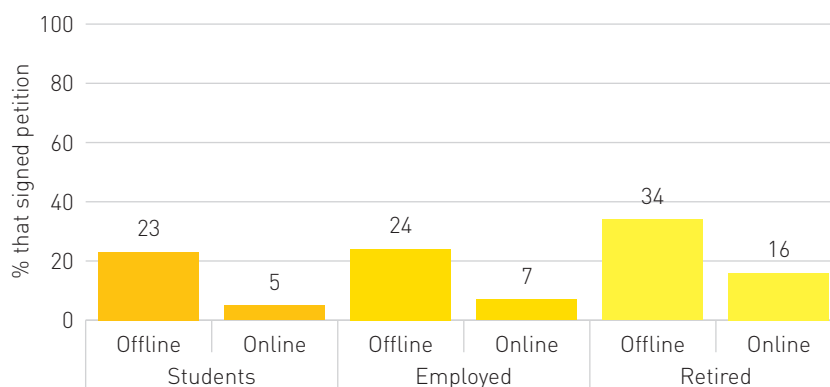
Current users. OxIS 2007: N=1,578

One tenth (9%) of Internet users have undertaken at least one civic action on the Internet, compared to two thirds (36%) of users who have done this offline.

"In the last year, have you done any of the following? [Current users only] Did you use the Internet to [sign a petition]?"

While only a third of retired people are online (in comparison to 97% of students), those who are online are more likely than students or employed users to be civically engaged. 16% of retired users have signed a petition online compared to 7% of employed users and 5% of students.

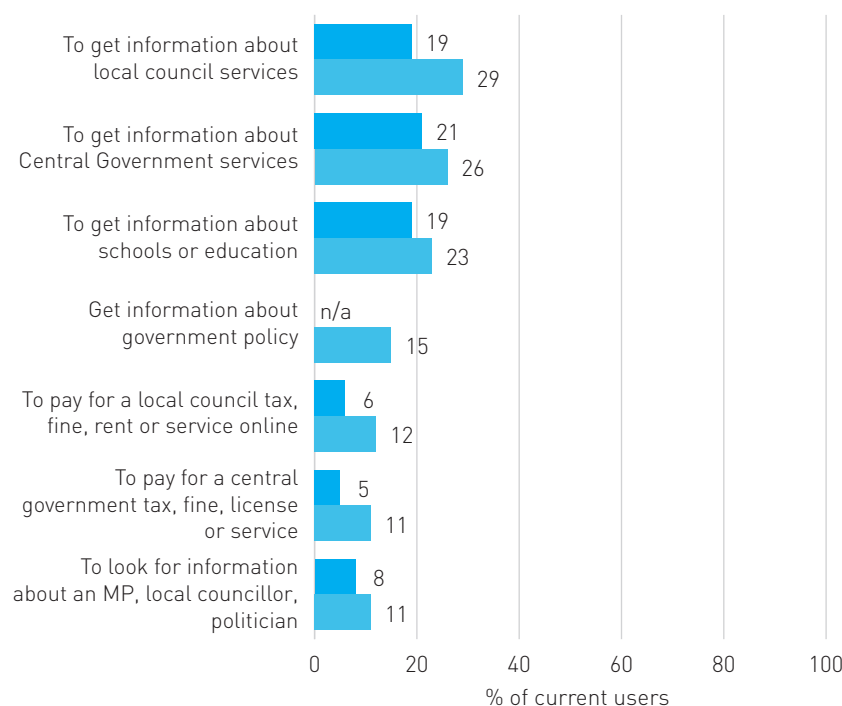
### Online Civic Participation – Signing a Petition by Lifestage (QP2 by QD14)



Current users. OxlS 2007: N=1,578

### Use of Online Government Services (QC32)

■ 2005 ■ 2007



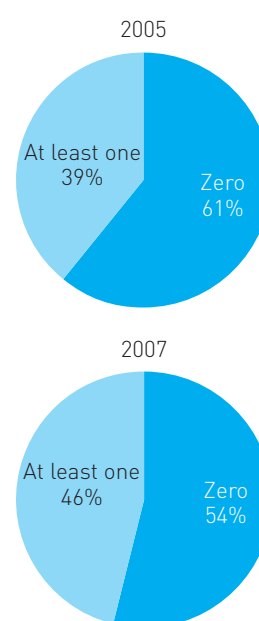
Current users. OxlS 2005: N=1,309; OxlS 2007: N=1,578

"Talking now about government information and services, have you used the Internet in the past year for any of the following purposes?"

The types of government service that are most frequently used are getting information about local council (29%) and Central Government services (26%). This has increased by ten percentage points and five percentage points, respectively, since 2005. Looking for

information about schools and education is undertaken by a quarter (23%) of the Internet users. All other activities, such as paying for taxes and looking for information about a local council are undertaken by around a tenth of users (11% to 15% do this online).

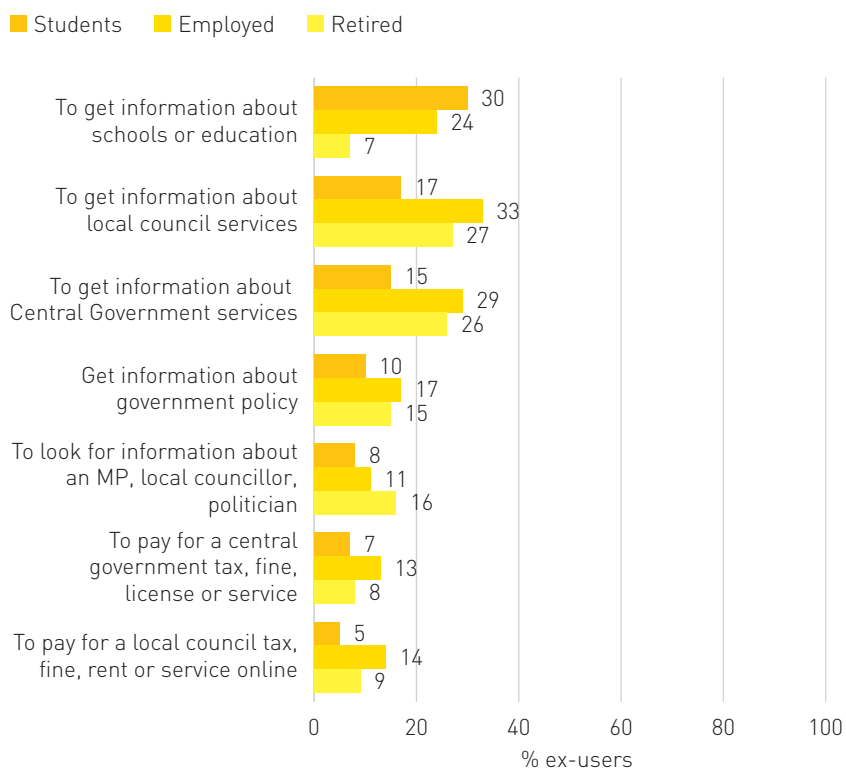
### Number of e-Government Activities Undertaken on the Internet



Current users. OxlS 2005: N=1,309; OxlS 2007: N=1,578

Use of online government services has increased somewhat since 2005. In 2005, almost 40% undertook at least one e-government activity online, while 46% say they undertook at least one activity in 2007.

### Use of e-Government Services by Lifestage (QC32 by QD14)



Current users. OxlS 2007: N=1,578

Student users are the least likely to use government services. The only exception is getting information about schools or education, which one third (30%) of students have done in comparison to a quarter (24%) of employed users and less than a tenth (7%) of retired users.

Employed and retired users are the most likely to use government services. Employed users are more likely to look for local council services (33%) and to pay taxes (13%), but retired users are more likely to look for information about a local MP (16%).

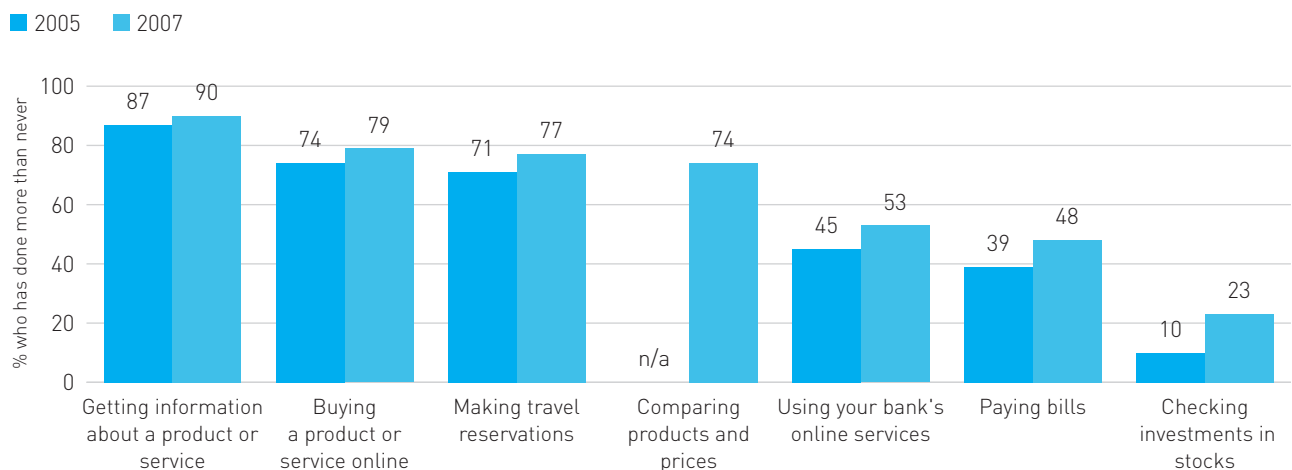
## Services and Commerce

One of the advantages that Internet users are assumed to have over non-users is the possibility to buy products and access services online which are more expensive or harder to access offline.

OxIS 2007 shows that users have increased their commercial activities since 2005. This propensity is reflected in the positive attitudes that they have towards the ease with which one can buy and compare products online. There is still room for improvement: especially in returning and checking the quality of products online, and addressing issues of trust, probably related to people's perception that the lack of face-to-face contact is a problem in online interactions.

Commercial activities are, unsurprisingly, undertaken more by employed users than by students. In financial management related activities, retired users are more active than students, but students undertake more buying activities. Lifestage was the only indicator that significantly influenced e-commerce activities: gender does not play a role for e-commerce activities in Britain.

### Buying and Using Services Online (QC30)



Current users. OxIS 2005: N=1,309; OxIS 2007: N=1,578

"Within the last year, how frequently have you used the Internet for the following purposes?"

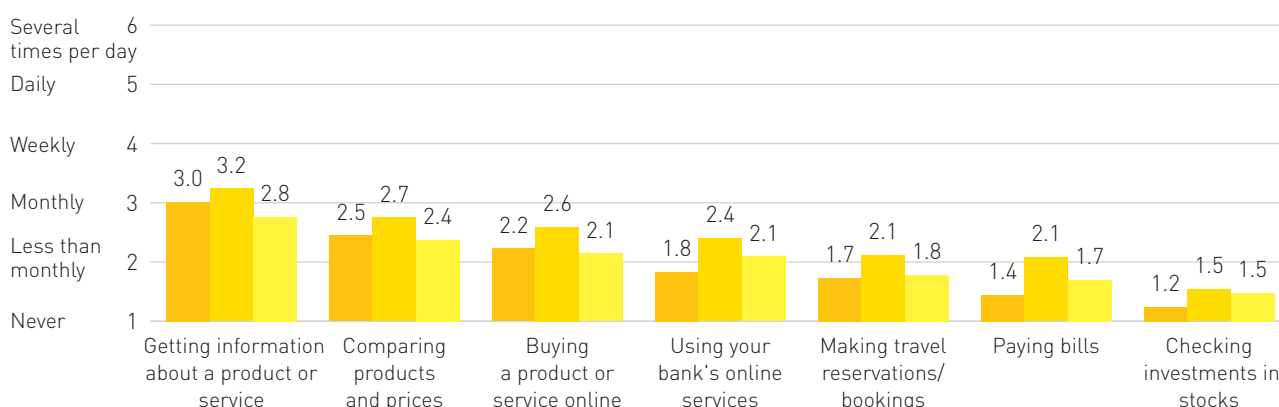
Also popular is the use of the Internet to compare products and prices. 74% of Internet users do this.

E-commerce is a growing area of activity. The most popular online commercial activity is getting information about a product online.

Internet users were more likely in 2007 than in 2005 to undertake e-commerce activities. This was particularly the case for making travel reservations (77% v 71%), paying bills (48% v 39%), using banks (53% v 45%) and checking investments (23% v 10%).

### Buying and Using Services Online by Lifestage (QC30 by QD14)

Students Employed Retired



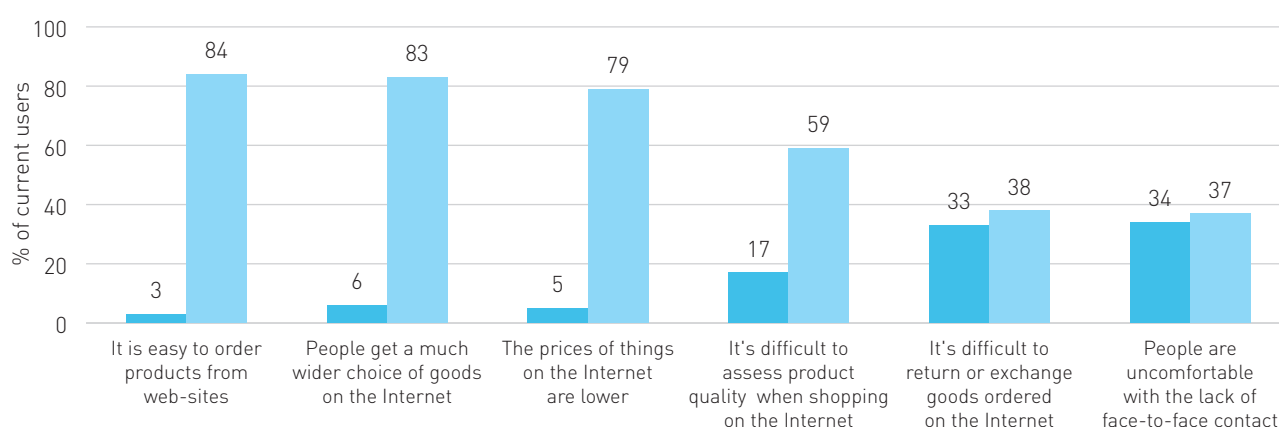
Current users. OxlS 2007: N=1,578

Employed users undertake commercial activities more frequently online than do users at other stages in their lives. They undertake product related information seeking activities more frequently (av=3.2), as well as buying (av=2.6), making travel arrangements (av=2.1), using online banking (av=2.4) and paying bills (av=2.1).

There are several activities that retired users do more often than students. These include online banking (av=2.1), bill paying (av=1.7) and checking investments (av=1.5). The latter they do less than monthly, at about the same frequency as employed users.

### Attitudes Regarding e-Commerce (QC31)

Disagree Agree



Current users. OxlS 2007: N=1,578

"Whether you shop on the Internet or not, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements:"

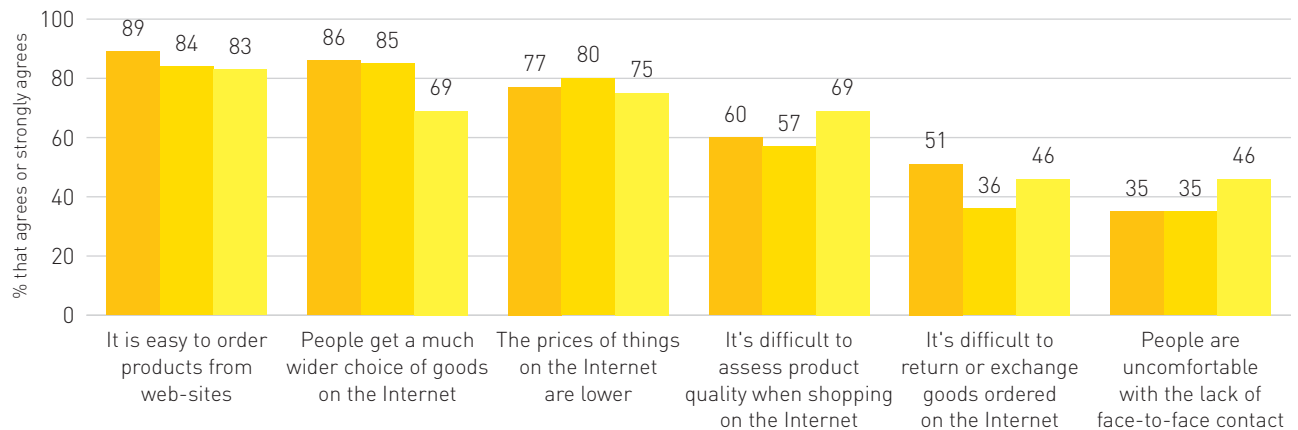
E-commerce is a growing area of activity. Internet users are positive about the commercial services that the Internet offers. More than half agree that: it is

easier to order products (84%), there is a wider choice of goods online (83%), and that prices are lower (79%). They are less satisfied with the possibility to assess quality. 59% think this is difficult and users are divided on whether or not it is easy to return goods (38% think it is difficult, 33% think it is not difficult) and

on whether lack of face-to-face contact is uncomfortable for online transactions (34% say people are not uncomfortable, 37% say they are).

**Attitudes Regarding e-Commerce by Lifestage (QC31 by QD14)**

■ Students ■ Employed ■ Retired



Current users. OxIS 2007: N=1,578

Student users are most positive about online commercial services. Student users agree more with the statement that it is easy to order products (89% agree), that there is a wider range of goods (86%) and that the prices are lower (77%). However, many also think – like retired users – that it is difficult to return goods (51%).

Retired users are the most negative and are more likely to agree that it is difficult to assess product quality online (69%) than employed (57%) or student users (60%). Retired users also seem bothered by the lack of face-to-face contact in online transactions: 46% assume people are uncomfortable with it compared to 35% of students and employed users.

# Methodology

One of the aspects that makes the Oxford Internet Surveys unique is the fact that they are conducted face-to-face. This has resulted in a high response and completion rate over the years. Since 2003, all OxlS surveys have been conducted in the field with respondents through door-to-door home interviews. The OII designed the survey instruments and research methodology. The personal interviews were conducted by ICM's trained interviewers. ICM is a full-service consultancy that specialises in behavioural and opinion research and which has accumulated a national team of interviewers with experience in face-to-face interviewing.

## Sampling

Sampling was based on a multi-stage random sampling design. First, a random sample of 175 paired Enumeration Districts (EDs), stratified by region, was selected. Then within each selected ED a random sample of 10 addresses was selected from the Postal Address File (PAF).

### First Stage: Selection of ED Sample points

- (1) Sampling points were allocated to each of the 10 Government Regions in proportion to the population in each region.
- (2) In each Government Region all EDs were paired with an adjacent ED that is most similar in terms of its ACORN type.
- (3) Within 2) above all paired ED with a combined population of 60 or more people were listed in descending order of ACORN type: the most affluent pair at the top of the list and the poorest pair at the bottom.
- (4) The populations of each set of paired EDs (of all adults aged 14+) were accumulated down this list. Using a random start and fixed sampling interval the required number of paired ED's was selected, giving each ED a probability of selection proportionate to its size.

### Second stage: Household selection

Within each selected ED, interviewers were issued with 10 randomly selected addresses from which they were expected to achieve a 60% response rate. A further three addresses were issued to be used only if six interviews could not be achieved with the original 10 addresses.

Out of a total of 3,500 addresses issued, 457 lay in areas that interviewers felt unable to work in. Overall, 3,043 addresses were visited by ICM staff.

### Third Stage: Random Selection of respondent

At each address, respondents for interview were selected by asking the person who answered the door if it would be possible to interview the person normally resident at that household (aged 14 or over) with the next birthday.



## Response rate

The results of the successful contacts made at each address are shown in the table below.

|  |      |      |
|--|------|------|
| Addresses visited  | 3043 | 100% |
| Productive interview obtained  | 2350 | 77%  |
| Refusal by person answering the door                                       | 497  | 16%  |
| Refusal by selected respondent including terminated interviews             | 74   | 2%   |
| Unable to contact after repeated visits to address during fieldwork period | 112  | 4%   |
| Not stated   | 9    | 0.3% |

The high response rate achieved on this survey was aided by the fact that respondents understood that the research was being conducted by a department of Oxford University and by the promise that £1 would be donated to the Red Cross for every successful interview by the University.

Reasons for refusal are given in the table below

|  |     |     |
|--|-----|-----|
| Not interested. No wish to participate | 351 | 61% |
| Too busy                               | 181 | 32% |
| Ill/Not well                           | 15  | 3%  |
| Away for duration of fieldwork         | 12  | 2%  |
| Not stated                             | 9   | 2%  |
| Don't know                             | 3   | 1%  |
| Total refusals                         | 571 |     |

## Questionnaire

The questionnaire is made up partly of the questions which are part of the World Internet Project (WIP) and questions unique to the OxIS and UK context. Many questions have remained the same since 2003 to enable comparisons between years, however, sometimes it was necessary to make small changes to the way in which a question was phrased, to reorganise the ordering of questions and to broaden the scope of who answered the questions. We have not seen major differences between years in the way in which respondents interpreted the questions. Please see the previous Internet use in Britain report (OxIS 2005) for more details on how the questions were asked in previous years. The questionnaire and methodology for all our surveys are available at: <http://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/microsites/oxis/>

## Weighting

The profile of the sample achieved and the targets to which the sample was rim weighted are shown in the table below.

| Gender | Unweighted | Weighted |
|--------|------------|----------|
| Male   | 41%        | 48%      |
| Female | 59%        | 52%      |

| Age   | Unweighted | Weighted |
|-------|------------|----------|
| 14-17 | 6%         | 6%       |
| 18-24 | 10%        | 10%      |
| 25-34 | 18%        | 18%      |
| 35-44 | 21%        | 18%      |
| 45-54 | 17%        | 16%      |
| 55-64 | 14%        | 12%      |
| 65+   | 15%        | 19%      |

| Social Economic Grade | Unweighted | Weighted |
|-----------------------|------------|----------|
| A                     | 2%         | 2%       |
| B                     | 14%        | 17%      |
| C1                    | 34%        | 30%      |
| C2                    | 18%        | 18%      |
| D                     | 21%        | 21%      |

| Govt office region       | Unweighted | Weighted |
|--------------------------|------------|----------|
| North East               | 5%         | 5%       |
| North West               | 11%        | 12%      |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 9%         | 9%       |
| East Midlands            | 7%         | 7%       |
| West Midlands            | 9%         | 9%       |
| Eastern                  | 9%         | 10%      |
| London                   | 16%        | 13%      |
| South East               | 13%        | 14%      |
| South West               | 8%         | 9%       |
| Wales                    | 6%         | 5%       |
| Scotland                 | 10%        | 9%       |

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