



Oxford Internet Survey (OxIS) 2009 Report Released: Internet Use and Online News

A new survey into how British people are using the Internet in 2009 suggests that the proportion of people reading online newspapers has doubled since 2007.

The Oxford Internet Survey (OxIS) 2009 carried out by the Oxford Internet Institute at the University of Oxford, shows that nearly six out of ten (58%) Internet users said they read a newspaper or news online, compared to three out of ten (30%) two years ago. The survey also shows, however, that most users are continuing to read print versions of newspapers as well as reading online news.

OxIS 2009 questioned 2000 people from across Britain and found that 30% of Internet users believe that the Internet is the most important place to go for information, compared with television (11%) and newspapers (7%). Of the non-users surveyed, nearly a quarter (24%) think the television is the most essential source for information, with 12% opting for newspapers. For Internet users, the most trusted medium is the Internet, while non-users and people who no longer use the Internet said they trusted television and radio the most.

More men (62%) than women (52%) said they read online newspapers. However, only 4% of Internet users who read a newspaper said they only read it online, which the report suggests shows that online news is complementing rather than substituting more traditional media.

OII Research Fellow, Dr Ellen Helsper, said: "The Internet has become the most popular tool for people who seek quick answers and bite sized information, this reflects how central the Internet has become to people's everyday lives in a short time period. Nevertheless, television is still considered more important for entertainment and also by many for information. In the next few years we might see the Internet surpassing television in importance; in 2009 this was not yet the case."

OII Director, Professor William Dutton, said: "The risk is that the increasing centrality of the Internet and Web—to telecommunications, to broadcasting, to news, and more—will attract regulation and the potential for inappropriate or over-regulation. Regulation could undermine the very qualities of the Internet that have made it one of the most significant innovations since the printing press."

The Internet is also influencing our perception of the amount of time we spend on other media—with nearly a quarter (23%) of Internet users surveyed saying that it has resulted in their watching less television. One in six people who use the Internet say it has led to their spending less time reading newspapers (17%) and books (16%).

Other areas covered in the OxIS 2009 Report include digital and social inclusion and exclusion; regulation and governance of the Internet; privacy, trust and risk concerns; and uses of the Internet. OxIS provides the UK's link to the World Internet Project (WIP), an international collaborative project involving over twenty research institutes and universities worldwide.

The OxIS surveys have been carried out by the Oxford Internet Institute every two years since 2003.

The OxIS 2009 Report

Dutton, W.H., Helsper, E.J. and Gerber, M.M. (2009) Oxford Internet Survey 2009 Report: The Internet in Britain. Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford.

Download [PDF, 1.9MB]: http://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/research/oxis/oxis2009_report.pdf

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Notes for Editors

OxIS surveys were undertaken in 2003, 2005, 2007 and 2009 of nationally representative random samples of 2000 people in the UK. By comparing different datasets over time, careful predictions about the future of the Internet are made in relation to how the Internet is affecting our society. <http://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/microsites/oxis/>

The Oxford Internet Institute is a department within the Social Sciences Division of the University of Oxford. It is a leading world centre for the multidisciplinary study of the Internet and society, focusing on Internet-related research and teaching, and on informing policy-making and practice. <http://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/>

Professor William Dutton is Director of the OII, Professor of Internet Studies, University of Oxford, and Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford. He was previously a Professor in the Annenberg School for Communication (USC), which he joined in 1980, where he was elected President of the Faculty. He was National Director of the UK's PICT Programme from 1993 to 1996. He has been Chair of Ofcom's Advisory Committee for England since February of 2009. <http://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/people/faculty.cfm?id=1>

Ellen Helsper is a Research Fellow at the OII responsible for the design, analysis and coordination of the Oxford Internet Surveys (OxIS) and World Internet Project (WIP) Surveys. She sits on the International Advisory Board of the EU Kids Online project (2006-2009), which examines European research on cultural, contextual and risk issues in children's safe use of the Internet and new media across 21 countries. She is the UK Government Special Advisor on digital inclusion for Wales and author of the Digital Inclusion report (2008) for the Department of Communities and Local Government. <http://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/people/faculty.cfm?id=106>