



News Release

SOON IT WILL BE ESSENTIAL FOR EVERYONE TO HAVE BROADBAND

Nearly three-quarters of people with broadband at home say that they couldn't live without it and soon it will be essential for everyone, new research from the Communications Consumer Panel has found. The report, *Not online, not included: consumers say broadband essential for all*, is a key piece of research that is set to inform the content of the final Digital Britain report.

Communications Consumer Panel Chair Anna Bradley explains that the survey of over 2,000 adults shows that 84 per cent of people agreed that it should be possible for everyone in the UK to have broadband at home, regardless of where they live. Many people already see broadband as essential and even more believe that soon it will be essential for everyone:

"The tipping point will be when broadband does not just provide an advantage to people who have it, but disadvantages people who do not. Interestingly some people already feel disadvantaged: those who live in not-spots and those who have school-age children but do not have broadband at home."

"Our research provides clear support for the Government's proposed universal broadband commitment," Anna Bradley says. "But Government must make it clear what services and activities people will and will not be able to carry out with a download speed of 2Mb/s – and will need to keep this under review so that it does not become outmoded."

Consumers questioned in the survey supported broadband access for all and said that:

- It should be possible to have broadband at home, regardless of where people live (84% agree, 46% agree strongly).
- It is everyone's right to be able to have broadband at home (81% agree, 42% agree strongly).
- It should be possible also for people to gain the confidence and skills to make full use of broadband at home (80% agree, 32% agree strongly).
- It should be possible to access broadband at home, even if they have a low income (73% agree, 32% agree strongly).

The report also identifies which services consumers use the internet for. For example, nine out of ten (90%) internet users say that they use it for finding information, more than three-quarters use it for communications, seven in ten (71%) use it for transaction such as online banking and more than half (55%) use it for newer entertainment services such as downloading TV content.

When we spoke to older people and people on low incomes who did not have broadband they told us that they placed a lower value on having broadband at home and the benefits that it could bring. Some cited barriers such as the cost or that it is too complicated. Of those questioned 20% say that it would be 'nice to have', compared to the 42% who regard it as an 'essential'.

"There is an expectation in our research that in the future more services will be delivered solely online or provided offline in a way that penalises people who access them in this way, and that not having broadband at home will mean reduced options, opportunities and financial penalties. These findings make it even more vital for Government and industry to help consumers to get online and reap the benefits," Anna Bradley says.

"We now look forward to a universal service commitment that makes available throughout the UK the online services that consumers expect everyone to be able to access," Anna Bradley concludes.

Ends

NOTES FOR EDITORS AND CSEs

Read the report on the Panel's website:

<http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/smartweb/not-online-not-included/not-online-not-included>

The Communications Consumer Panel was established to advise Ofcom on the consumer interest in the markets it regulates. The Panel is independent and sets its own agenda. Visit www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk for more information. The Panel's members appointed by Ofcom are:

- Fiona Ballantyne (member for Scotland)
- Louisa Bolch
- Kim Brook (member for Wales)
- Colin Browne
- Roger Darlington (member for England)
- Maureen Edmondson (member for Northern Ireland)
- Leen Petre
- Damian Tambini
- Bob Warner

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