

Oxford survey on internet use in Britain

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The University's Oxford Internet Institute (OII) has released the OxIS Report 2007, the latest report in a series of Oxford Internet Surveys (OxIS) that examine internet access, use and attitudes in Britain.

A key finding is that a 'digital divide' continues to exist with retired users three times less likely to use the internet than students. Ex-users are most likely to have stopped going online due to a lack of interest and access, but non-users cited 'lack of skill' as the main reason for not using the internet. Internet users think the internet is as reliable as television, but those who do not use the internet trust the television more as a source of information.

Other interesting trends to emerge from the study are:

- 17 per cent of internet users currently maintain an online social networking profile
- 85 per cent of users in Britain use a broadband connection for home access
- One third of student users have met someone online, and 13 per cent have met a person offline who they first met online
- 93 per cent of all internet users send emails and as many as 60 per cent use instant messaging
- 72 per cent of internet users believe that 'the internet can be addictive'

Dr Ellen Helsper, OxIS coordinator from the OII, said: 'One of the issues that concern us most in relation to the internet in Britain is that we found that the 'digital divide' continues to exist. Men use the internet more than women for everything but health-related topics, and retired users are less likely to use it than students. It is important to know why this is the case and OxIS is the most valuable source for this type of information in Britain.'

OII publishes OxIS every two years to chart the changing attitudes and uses of the internet in Britain. The survey is sponsored by the British Library, Cisco, HEFCE, Ofcom, and Talisma. The OII, a department within the University's Social Sciences Division, is a leading centre for the study of the internet and society, which focuses on internet-related research and teaching, and on informing policy makers and practitioners.

The full OxIS Report 2007: http://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/research/oxis/OxIS2007_Report.pdf

Source: University of Oxford

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