# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive summary</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Introduction</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Access</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Understand and create</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Learning</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Media attitudes and behaviours</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Executive summary

This report is designed to give an accessible overview of media literacy among parents of children under 16 in the UK. The purpose of the report is to support people working in this area to develop and promote media literacy among this group. It is based on a much larger programme of research – Ofcom’s Media Literacy Audits, which were published in 2008.1

Access and use

Parents of under-16s are more likely than the overall adult population to live in households with digital television and the internet. In addition, those parents without access to the internet at home are twice as likely as adults more generally without home access to say they will get access in the next year. Affordability is the key reason among parents of under-16s for not having home internet access; this is more common among parents who are aged under 35.

While parents of under-16s are more likely than the general adult population to regularly use new media such as mobile phones, the internet and games consoles, regular use of more traditional media such as television and radio is at the same level as for all adults. Regular use of new media devices such as mobile phones and MP3 players is higher among parents aged under 35.

There is little difference between parents and the general adult population in the types of functions that the internet is used for and the typical volume of use. However, this masks some differences between younger and older parents of children under 16: younger parents are more likely to use the internet for creative activities such as social networking, and for entertainment, and more likely to use the internet for longer in a typical week.

Interest, confidence, concerns and judgements

Overall, parents of under-16s are more likely than all adults to be interested in, and confident in using, the services and functions available through digital television and mobile phones, but this greater interest and confidence is not evident for all aspects of the internet.

Parents of under-16s are more likely than all adults to be interested in being able to restrict access to television programmes or channels. However, while a majority of parents are interested in being able to restrict access to television content, parents of under-16s in C2DE socio-economic groups are less interested in this function than those in ABC1 socio-economic groups. One in five parents of under-16s say that they are interested, but not confident, in using this function; with females more likely than males to lack confidence (23% vs. 14%). Levels of interest in restricting access to television content do not vary according to the age of the child in the household.

Parents of under-16s are also more likely than all adults to be interested in using software to restrict access to websites. Although the majority of parents are interested in using this kind of software, one in four is interested, but not confident, in doing it. Females are more likely than males to lack confidence (32% vs. 19%). Parents of children aged 5-11 are more likely

1 http://www.ofcom.org.uk/advice/media_literacy/medlitpub/medlitpubrss/ml_emg08/
   http://www.ofcom.org.uk/advice/media_literacy/medlitpub/medlitpubrss/ml_childrens08/
   http://www.ofcom.org.uk/advice/media_literacy/medlitpub/medlitpubrss/ml_adult08/
to be interested in restricting access to websites, compared to parents of children under 5 or over 11.

Most parents who use the internet are very confident in finding what they want online. However, only a minority are as confident in being able to tell whether a website is truthful and reliable.

As with the general adult population, most parents of under-16s say they would make some kind of judgement about a website before entering personal details, and their reservations about entering personal details online match those of all adults.

Parents of under-16s have higher levels of concern about the internet and about gaming than the general adult population. However, this group is comparable to the general adult population in the extent to which they have any concerns about television, mobile phones and radio. Older parents of under-16s (those aged 35 and over) are more likely than younger parents to have concerns about television and the internet in particular.

**Funding and regulation**

Awareness of content funding and regulation across all parents of under-16s is comparable to the general adult population, but lower among parents aged under 35. Awareness of the television watershed is also lower among younger parents.

**Learning**

Parents’ interest in learning about digital technology generally is comparable to that among all adults. Asking friends or family, reading the manual and trial and error are the preferred methods of learning.
Section 1

Introduction

Media literacy enables individuals to have the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to make full use of the opportunities presented by both traditional and new communications services. Media literacy helps people to protect themselves and their families from the potential risks associated with services.

Ofcom’s definition of media literacy, developed after consultation with stakeholders, is:

‘the ability to access, understand and create communications in a variety of contexts’.

The promotion of media literacy is a responsibility placed on Ofcom by Section 11 of the Communications Act 2003 and Ofcom’s work to promote media literacy is intended:

- to give people the opportunity and motivation to develop competence and confidence to participate in communications technology and digital society; and
- to inform and empower people to manage their own media activity (both consumption and creation).

This report is designed to give an accessible overview of media literacy among parents of children under 16 in the UK. The purpose of the report is to support people working in this area to develop and promote media literacy among this group. It is based on a much larger programme of research – Ofcom’s Media Literacy Audits, which were published in 2008.

The key objectives of the Audit are:

- to provide a rich picture of the different elements of media literacy across the key platforms of television, radio, the internet and mobile phones; and
- to identify emerging issues and skills gaps that will help to target both Ofcom’s and stakeholders’ resources for the promotion of media literacy.

________________________

http://www.ofcom.org.uk/advice/media_literacy/medlitpub/medlitpubrss/ml_emg08/
http://www.ofcom.org.uk/advice/media_literacy/medlitpub/medlitpubrss/ml_childrens08/
http://www.ofcom.org.uk/advice/media_literacy/medlitpub/medlitpubrss/ml_adult08/
1.1 What we mean by media literacy

In order to monitor media literacy using research we used the following measures as proxies for some of the key areas of media literacy (see box below).

### Access
- Use, volume of use and breadth of use of media platforms
- Reasons for non-take up of services

### Understand and create
- Interest in, and awareness of, the digital features of the various media platforms
- Confidence in using the features available on each platform
- Knowledge of, and competence in using, content controls
- The ability of individual users to create their own content
- The ability of users to interact with the medium or with other users
- Knowledge of how elements of each media platform are funded
- Knowledge of regulation
- Trust in internet sites
- The extent and level of concerns for each platform

1.2 Research methodology and analysis

The Ofcom Adult Media Literacy Audit is a quantitative survey that involved conducting in-home face-to-face interviews with 2905 adults aged 16 and over throughout the UK. Fieldwork took place from October to December 2007. Parents of children under 16 account for 40% of all the adults that were interviewed for the Adult Media Literacy Audit. Fifteen per cent of the parents of under-16s that we interviewed had only pre-school age children (aged under 5), two in three (63%) had any children of primary school age at home (aged 5-11), and 21% had only children of secondary school age (aged 12 and over).

As might be expected, there is a clear link between the age of the children at home and the age of the parents that we interviewed. One in three parents aged under 35 (30%) only have children aged under 5 at home, and one in three parents aged 35 and over (30%) only have children aged 12 or over at home. A similar proportion of parents aged under 35 and aged 35 and over have any children aged 5-11 at home (63% vs. 62%).

The main points of reference in this report are between a nationally representative sample of the UK adult population and parents of children under 16. Where possible, within the sample of parents, demographic analysis is conducted by the age of the parent interviewed, and the household socio-economic group. A total of 1,215 interviews were conducted with parents of children under 16; 398 with a parent aged under 35 and 817 with a parent aged 35 or over.

Significance testing at the 95% confidence level was carried out. This means that where findings are commented on, there is only a 5% or less probability that the difference between the samples is by chance.

---

3 For more detail on the Media Literacy Audit and its methodology, see the full report and associated documents at [http://www.ofcom.org.uk/advice/media_literacy/medlitpub/medlitpubrss/ml_adult08/]
Section 2

Access

In this context, access refers to the ability to use, navigate and manage equipment, content and services, rather than simply the availability of services. Without access, people may have limited scope to develop skills and confidence that could benefit them in various aspects of their life. We then explore levels of actual use by individuals, reasons for using media platforms and preferred media activities, as this starts to give a richer understanding of this group’s overall media literacy.

2.1 Parents have higher levels of take-up of media devices at home

Parents of under-16s have **higher levels of access** to many media devices than adults overall: household ownership of digital radio (94% vs. 88%), digital television (90% vs. 82%), and the internet (73% vs. 62%) is higher among parents of under-16s than among UK adults as whole.

**Figure 1: Take-up of media platforms in the home**

Within the overall population of parents of under-16s, there are higher levels of access to the internet at home among certain groups:

- Home access to the internet is **higher** among parents **aged 35 and over** than among those aged under 35 (79% vs. 64%).

- Home access to the internet is **lower** among parents whose **children are aged under 5** (69%) than among parents who have any children aged 5-11 (74%) and those with children aged 12 and over (78%).

- As with the general adult population, parents of under-16s in **ABC1 socio-economic groups** are more likely to have access to the **internet at home** than those in C2DE socio-economic groups (88% vs. 56%).
2.2 Home access to the internet among parents of under-16s is likely to increase

People who did not have home access to the internet were asked whether they intended to get access at home in the next year or so. Those that did not intend to get access in the next year or so were asked why, and their reasons were categorised as either voluntary or involuntary. Voluntary reasons are dominated by a perceived lack of need for the internet, while involuntary reasons mostly relate to affordability or a lack of knowledge or understanding of the technology.

One in four parents of under-16s without home internet access say they will get access in the next year, which is twice the measure across all adults without home internet access (28% vs. 15%). In addition, parents of under-16s without internet access are more likely to say they are unsure whether they will get access in the next year compared to the general adult population (24% vs. 19%).

Among those who do not intend to get access in the next year, there is a skew towards giving an involuntary reason rather than a voluntary reason (29% involuntary vs. 19% voluntary) across those who do not have home internet access.

The intention to get home internet access in the next 12 months does not vary between younger and older parents of under-16s (27% vs. 28%). However, the skew towards involuntary rather than voluntary reasons for not intending to get access at home is more evident among younger parents (32% vs. 13%) than among older parents (26% vs. 24%).

Figure 2: Intention to get home internet access in the next 12 months

We can look in more detail at the reasons given by those who do not intend to get internet access at home in the next 12 months. While two in three parents of under-16s who do not intend to get internet access in the next year or so say they are not interested or have no

---

4 In order to report the relative importance of voluntary versus involuntary reasons, these have been calculated so that a) those shown as giving a voluntary reason include those who mentioned a voluntary reason but did not mention any involuntary reasons and b) those shown as giving an involuntary reason gave an involuntary reason, regardless of whether they gave a voluntary reason as well.
need for the internet at home, this is much lower than the measure for all adults (64% vs. 80%).

Having totalled all responses that we categorised as involuntary reasons for not getting home internet access, three in five parents of under-16s who do not intend to get home internet access give any involuntary reasons (61% involuntary vs. 39% voluntary). Two involuntary reasons stand out for parents of under-16s who do not intend to get home internet access, both of which relate to affordability: that getting the internet at home is too expensive generally (26% vs. 12% all adults) and that the monthly payment for the internet is too expensive (20% vs. 11%).

Figure 3: Reasons for not intending to get home internet access in the next 12 months (among those not intending to get access)

Younger parents of under-16s are more likely than older parents to say that they do not intend to get internet access because of reasons relating to affordability (50% vs. 39%) or because they don't know enough about it (18% vs. 4%)\(^5\).

2.3 Parents of under-16s are more likely to regularly use newer media

Parents of under-16s are more likely than adults as a whole to say they regularly use newer media such as mobile phones (89% vs. 77%), the internet (68% vs. 56%), and console/computer games (26% vs. 21%). They are also more likely to watch videos/DVDs (70% vs. 63%), and to listen to music on a hi-fi/CD/tape player (61% vs. 56%). Measures for parents of under-16s relating to regularly watching television or listening to the radio are comparable to the general adult population.

\(^5\) Note: these findings should be treated with caution, as they are based on a total of 71 interviews conducted with younger parents of under-16s who do not intend to get home internet access.
Within the population of parents of under-16s, the under-35s are more likely than those aged 35 and over to regularly use newer media such as a mobile phone (92% under 35s vs. 87% 35 and over), an MP3 player (32% vs. 23%), and to play console or computer games (32% vs. 22%). Older parents, meanwhile, are more likely than younger parents to listen to the radio (72% vs. 64%), but levels of watching television on a regular basis do not vary by the age of the parent.

There are some key differences regarding regular media activities across different demographic groups within the population of parents of under-16s:

- **Males** are more likely than females to read newspapers or magazines (77% vs. 68%), watch videos/DVDs (75% vs. 68%) and to play console/computer games (34% vs. 21%). These gender differences are consistent with those found within the overall population of adults.

- Those in ABC1 socio-economic groups are more likely than those in C2DE socio-economic groups to use a mobile phone (91% vs. 87%), use the internet (82% vs. 52%), read newspapers/magazines (75% vs. 67%), or listen to the radio (72% vs. 65%). These differences are also consistent with those found within the overall population of adults.

### 2.4 Younger parents are more likely to use the internet for creative activities

While parents of under-16s are more likely than adults as a whole to use the internet, there is little difference across the two populations in the types of activities the internet is used for on a weekly basis. As with the overall population of internet users, the three most popular uses of the internet among parents of under-16s are for communication (using emails, chat rooms, Instant Messaging), work/studies information and transactions (such as online banking).

However the overall population of parents of under-16s is less likely than internet users as a whole to use the internet for creative activities (16% vs. 22% of all adults) such as looking at social networking sites, downloading software, or maintaining a website. Age is a strong influence here: younger parents (aged under 35) are much more likely than...
parents aged 35 or over to use at least one creative function (29% vs. 9%). Younger parents are also more likely to use the internet for creative activities, compared to all UK adults (29% vs. 22%).

In addition, younger parents are also more likely than those aged 35 and over to use the internet for entertainment (32% vs. 19%).

Within the population of parents of under-16s who use the internet, there are some differences across the demographic groups:

- **Males** are more likely than females to use the internet at least weekly for work/studies information (55% vs. 38%), for news (30% vs. 19%) and for entertainment (27% vs. 21%). These gender differences in how the internet is used are also seen across all adults who use the internet.

- Those in **ABC1** socio-economic groups are more likely than those in C2DE socio-economic groups to use the internet for six of the eight types of activities: communication (81% vs. 65%), work/studies information (56% vs. 24%), news (29% vs. 13%), entertainment (27% vs. 18%), leisure information (14% vs. 9%), and public/civic information (12% vs. 6%). These differences between socio-economic groups in how the internet is used are also seen across all adults who use the internet.

As well as using the internet for a similar range of activities as all adult internet users, parents of under-16s use the internet for a similar number of hours in a typical week as the general UK adult population. Parents use the internet for an average of 11.9 hours per week, which is comparable to the average across all adult users of 12.1 hours per week. Within the population of parents of under-16s, some groups stand out as higher-volume users of the internet:

- Parents aged under 35, compared to parents aged 35 and over (13.6 hours per week vs. 10.9 hours per week)

- Those in **ABC1** socio-economic groups, compared to those in C2DE socio-economic groups (13.5 hours per week vs. 8.8 hours per week)
• **Males** compared to females (15.5 hours per week vs. 9.6 hours per week)

In each case these groups with a higher volume of use (younger, males, ABC1 socio-economic groups) are also found within the adult population as a whole.

2.5 **Parents of under-16s tend to use more than one media device at the same time**

While two in three (69%) adults say they ever use another media device while watching television, this rises to almost **four in five parents of under-16s** (78%). Parents of under-16s do not, however, differ from all internet users in the extent to which they use another media device while using the internet; with around three-quarters saying they ever do this (74% vs. 73%).

Using more than one media device at the same time is more common among **younger parents** (aged under 35) than among parents aged 35 and older, both for television (85% vs. 74%) and for the internet (81% vs. 69%).

**Figure 6: Using another device while watching television or using the internet**

![Chart showing usage of multiple devices](chart.png)

2.6 **Parents of under-16s would miss watching television the most**

To understand how much importance people attach to various media, we asked them to say which single media activity they would miss the most. Among adults as a whole, television is typically given as the medium they would miss the most (one in two say this). While parents of under-16s are also most likely to say that television is the medium they would miss they most (54%), they are **more likely** than adults as a whole to say they would miss using the internet most (15% vs. 12%).
Older parents (aged 35 and over) are more likely than younger parents to say they would **miss watching television** (57% vs. 50%). By contrast, **younger parents** (aged under 35) are more likely than older parents to miss their **mobile phone** (18% vs. 12%).

Other differences are evident within the population of parents of under-16s:

- **Females** are more likely than males to miss watching **television** (58% vs. 48%), while **males** are more likely to miss using the **internet** (20% vs. 12%). These differences between males and females are also evident within the general adult population.

- Parents whose children are **all aged under 5** are more likely to **miss their mobile phone** than those with any children aged 8-11 and those whose children are all aged 12 and over (22% vs. 13% vs. 8%).

- Parents in **C2DE** socio-economic groups are more likely than those in **ABC1** socio-economic groups to miss watching **television** most (60% vs. 49%), while those in **ABC1** socio-economic groups are more likely to miss using the **internet** most (20% vs. 12%). These differences between socio-economic groups are also evident within the general adult population.
Section 3

Understand and create

In this section we look at people’s understanding of media services and content. In particular, we focus on the degree of people’s interest in, and confidence in using, the services and functions available on different media devices. We also examine people’s experience of, and interest in, creating content and using the internet for creative functions, their awareness of funding sources and regulation, their levels of trust in media and caution when using websites, and their concerns regarding media and associated content.

3.1 Parents of under-16s have high levels of interest and confidence in using digital television services

Those who have multichannel television at home were asked whether they were interested in, and confident in using, four different interactive services.

Levels of confidence using digital television services are higher among parents of under-16s than among the adult population as a whole, with the exception of selecting different viewing angles or different matches for sports events (where responses match those from all adults). Across the four services, confidence in using at least one of the services is higher among parents of under-16s than among all adults (63% vs. 56%).

One of the four digital television services that respondents were asked about was restricting access to certain channels or programmes by setting a PIN code. While a majority of parents are interested in this service (58% vs. 43% of all adults), some parents are less interested. Parents of under-16s in C2DE socio-economic groups are less likely to say they are interested than those in ABC1 socio-economic groups (53% vs. 61%). Levels of interest in restricting access to certain channels or programmes do not differ by the gender or the age of the parent, or by the age of the children in the household.

At an overall level, one in five parents of under-16s (19%) state that they are interested but not confident in using the service to restrict access to channels or programmes by setting a PIN code; females are more likely than males to lack confidence (23% vs. 14%).
Within the population of parents of under-16s, there are no real variations by the age of the parent in their confidence in using digital television services. Interest in at least one of the four multichannel television services is, however, higher among those in ABC1 socio-economic groups than among those in C2DE socio-economic groups (77% vs. 70%).

3.2 Parents of under-16s have high levels of interest and confidence in using internet functions

Those who use the internet at home or elsewhere were asked whether they were interested in, and confident in using, nine functions associated with the internet. Across these nine functions, almost all parents of under-16s are confident in using at least one of them, and to the same overall extent as the general population of internet users (both 94%). While confidence across the functions is lower among parents of under-16s in C2DE socio-economic groups than among those in ABC1 socio-economic groups, this still accounts for over 9 in 10 (92% vs. 95%).

Levels of confidence did not vary between parents of under-16s and the general adult population across seven of the nine functions. There are two functions that parents of under-16s are more likely to be confident in using, compared to the UK adult population as a whole: finding out about local services (73% vs. 67%) and banking online (57% vs. 51%).

Interest in installing software to restrict access to websites is higher among parents of under-16s than among all UK adults (81% vs. 77%). Unsurprisingly, it is likely that the presence of children in the household accounts for the higher level of interest in filtering software. Interest in installing security features, however, does not vary to any particular extent between parents of under-16s and the general adult population. (84% vs. 82%).

As with the wider adult population, parents of under-16s are most likely to be interested in, but lack confidence in installing, security features (25% not confident vs. 25% of all adults) and installing filtering software (27% vs. 25%). For both of these internet functions, females are more likely than males to say that they lack confidence.
For the most part, levels of interest in the internet functions tend not to vary between parents of under-16s who are aged under 35 and those aged 35 and over. However, **younger parents are more interested** than older parents in the functions of listening to **radio** over a computer (48% vs. 39%) and joining in **debates** online (38% vs. 31%).

**Parents of children aged 5-11** are more likely to be interested in installing **security features** than those whose children are all aged under 5 and those whose children are all aged 12 or over (86% vs. 81% vs. 79%). Similarly, **parents of children aged 5-11** are more likely to be interested in restricting access to websites than those whose children are all aged under 5 and those who children are all aged 12 or over (84% vs. 77% vs. 74%).

There are some variations in parents of under-16s' levels of confidence using these internet functions by socio-economic group. **Higher levels of confidence** are more evident among those in **ABC1** socio-economic groups than among those in **C2DE** socio-economic groups for seven of the nine functions: using email (87% vs. 75%), buying things over the internet (78% vs. 70%), finding out about local services (76% vs. 68%), transferring photos (71% vs. 64%), banking online (62% vs. 48%), listening to radio online (42% vs. 30%) and joining in debates online (32% vs. 21%).

For most of these functions, parents in **C2DE** socio-economic groups are **less interested rather than less confident**. However, for two of the functions, those in **C2DE** socio-economic groups are more likely than those in **ABC1** socio-economic groups to say that they are interested but **not confident** in performing the task: using **email** (16% vs. 5%) and **banking online** (11% vs.7%).

There are also differences between male and female parents of under-16s in terms of confidence with using some of the internet functions. **Higher levels of confidence** are evident among **males** compared to females for five of the nine functions: transferring photos...
(76% vs. 64%), installing security features (70% vs. 52%), restricting access to websites (67% vs. 46%), listening to radio online (45% vs. 33%), and joining in debates online (36% vs. 23%). In all of these cases, females are more likely than males to say they are not confident with the particular internet function.

Lower levels of confidence with internet functions among females and those in C2DE socio-economic groups are also evident among the adult population as a whole.

### 3.3 One in two parents of under-16s use the internet for creative activities

In the research, people were asked about their interest and experience of various ‘creative’ activities. **One in two parents** of under-16s who use the internet at home or elsewhere (50%) have experience of using the internet for at least one of these seven types of **creative activities**, which matches the level of experience among all UK adults who use the internet (51%). The most common activity undertaken by parents of under-16s is **uploading photos** to the internet (42%), as with all adult internet users (43%).

Three of the seven creative activities see lower levels of experience among parents of under-16s compared with the general adult population of internet users: having a **social networking profile** (16% vs. 21%), **contributing comments to a blog** (15% vs. 19%), and **setting up a blog** (7% vs. 10%). In each case, experience of the activity is lower among parents aged 35 and over, with the levels of experience among parents aged under 35 matching the general adult population.

#### Figure 10: Experience of creative activities

Across the seven activities, **male** parents of under-16s are more likely than females to have **experience of creative activities** (55% vs. 47%), with much of this difference accounted for by experience of uploading photos to the internet (48% vs. 38%). This difference between males and females in terms of creative activities is also evident among the adult population as a whole.
There are some variations in experience of creative activities between parents of children in different age groups. **Parents whose children are all aged under 5 are more likely** to have experience of creative activities than those with children aged 5-11 and those whose children are all aged 12 or over (66% vs. 50% vs. 41%). This overall difference is mostly accounted for by experience of uploading photos to the internet (53% vs. 42% vs. 37%).

Experience of creative activities among parents of under-16s is also **higher** among those in ABC1 socio-economic groups than among those in C2DE socio-economic groups (53% vs. 44%). Experience of creative activities does not differ between the socio-economic groups for the adult population as a whole, and so this difference is particular to those who are parents of under-16s.

### 3.4 Over a third of parents with a social networking page have a profile that can be seen by anyone

Over half (56%) of parents of under-16s with a social networking site profile say that their profile can be seen only by their friends, which is comparable to the measure for all adults with a profile (49%). Similarly, having a profile that can be seen by anyone is comparable across parents of under-16s and all adults (38% vs. 45%).

Most of those with a social networking site profile (60%) visit sites at least twice a week, which is comparable to all adults with a profile (66%).

The top five uses of social networking sites among parents of under-16s do not differ to any extent from those among all adults with a profile: *talk to friends/ family I see a lot* (62% vs. 69%), *talk to friends/ family I rarely see* (60% vs. 65%), *look for old friends/ people I’ve lost touch with* (43% vs. 47%), *look at other people’s sites without leaving a message* (43% vs. 40%) and *talk to people who are friends of friends* (33% vs. 35%). However, compared to all adults with a social networking site profile, parents of under-16s are less likely to use these sites to *listen to music/ find out about bands* (13% vs. 29%). As with the general adult population, relatively few social networking site users among parents of under-16s use the sites to *talk to people they don’t know* (20% vs. 17%).

### 3.5 Most parents of under-16s have used the internet to access music and video clips

Among parents of under-16s who use the internet, most have ever used the internet to *listen to or download music* (56% vs. 57% of all adult internet users) or to *watch or download video clips* (52% vs. 54%), with one third having ever watched longer video content such as films or television programmes (36% vs. 38%). Each of these types of use of the internet is comparable with the measures for all adult internet users.

Around one in five parents of under-16s who use the internet access music or video clips online at least weekly (20% vs. 22% of all adult internet users).

**Younger parents** of under-16s (aged under 35) are more likely than older parents to have ever *accessed music* (63% vs. 52%), *video clips* (60% vs. 47%) and *longer videos* (44% vs. 31%) online. **Male parents** of under-16s (aged under 35) are more likely than females to have ever *accessed music* (63% vs. 52%), *video clips* (60% vs. 46%) and *longer videos* (43% vs. 32%) online. Responses do not vary in particular by the age of the child.

These differences by age and gender are also evident in the general adult population.
Figure 11: Frequency of viewing and downloading video and music content

3.6 Parents of under-16s have high levels of interest and confidence in using mobile phone functions

We assessed mobile phone owners’ levels of interest and confidence in using five functions on a mobile phone. Interest levels among parents of under-16s are higher than the general adult population for each of the five functions. Across these mobile phone functions, 93% of parents of under-16s with a mobile phone are interested in, and confident in using any of the services, which is higher than the measure of 88% for all adults.

Across all five functions, younger parents, aged under 35, are more likely to be confident undertaking each activity. Similarly, parents whose children are all aged under 5 are more likely to be confident undertaking the mobile phone functions than those whose children are aged 8-11 and those whose children are all aged 12 or over.
There are some variations within the population of parents of under-16s. Males are more interested and confident than females in accessing mobile phone operators' websites from their phones (40% vs. 29%). Those in ABC1 socio-economic groups are more interested and confident in sending text messages to more than one person than those in C2DE socio-economic groups (69% vs. 61%).

3.7 Awareness of media content funding among parents of under-16s matches all adults

Across television, radio and the internet, the extent to which parents of under-16s are aware of the main source of funding for programmes, stations and websites matches awareness among the general adult population. Around three in four parents of under-16s are aware of the main source of funding for television programmes; whether BBC television programmes (80% vs. 80% of all adults) or commercial television programmes (71% vs. 70%). Around three in five parents of under-16s are aware of the main source of funding for radio stations; whether BBC radio stations (59% vs. 62%) or commercial radio stations (55% vs. 56%). Less than half of parents of under-16s are aware of the main source of funding for websites; whether the BBC website (42% vs. 41%) or search engine websites (28% vs. 26%).

However, awareness of content funding for television, radio and the internet is lower among younger parents (aged under 35) than among older parents (aged 35 and over). This lower awareness of main sources of funding among younger parents is evident for both BBC content and commercial content. For example, focusing on the main source of funding for BBC content, awareness is lower among younger parents of under-16s regarding BBC television programmes (69% of younger parents vs. 87% of older parents), BBC radio stations (50% vs. 64%) and the BBC website (35% vs. 46%).

Lower awareness of funding among younger parents is also found within the general adult population. Awareness of content funding for television is also lower among those parents whose children are all aged under 5 than among those with children aged 5-11 and those
whose children are all aged 12 or over. For example, awareness of the main source of funding for BBC television programmes is highest for parents whose children are all aged 12 and over (92%) and lowest for those whose children are all aged under 5 (66%).

With the exception of BBC radio programmes, parents of under-16s who are aged 35 and over have higher levels of awareness of funding than the general adult population. For example, their awareness of the main source of funding for BBC television programmes is 87% of older parents, vs. 80% of all adults. As such, the overall measures of awareness for parents of under-16s are a mixture of relatively low levels for younger parents and relatively high levels for older parents.

In all cases, younger parents of under-16s are more likely to say they don’t know how content is funded than to give an incorrect response.

**Figure 13: Understanding sources of media content funding**

Parents of under-16s in **ABC1** socio-economic groups are more aware of media content funding than those in C2DE socio-economic groups. Awareness of media content funding is also higher in each case among male parents than among female parents. Higher awareness of content funding among adults in ABC1 socio-economic groups and among males is also evident in the general adult population.

### 3.8 Awareness of media content regulation among parents of under-16s matches all adults

Across television, radio, the internet and mobile phones, **parents of under-16s match the general adult population** in the extent to which they believe the **content** on each type of platform is **regulated**. The one exception to this is **gaming**, which parents of under-16s are more likely than all adults to say is **regulated** (33% vs. 29%), although there is still no consensus of opinion.
As with the general adult population, four in five parents of under-16s say that television broadcasts are regulated (82% vs. 79%) and three in five say that radio broadcasts are regulated (both 58%). Older parents, aged 35 and over, are more likely than younger parents to be aware that television content is regulated (87% vs. 82%) and that radio content is regulated (62% vs. 50%).

As with all adults, there is no consensus among parents of under-16s as to whether the internet or mobile phone content is regulated. Younger parents, aged under 35, are more likely than those aged 35 and over to believe that mobile phone content is regulated (25% vs. 20%).

Parents whose children are all aged under 5 differ from those with children aged 8-11 and those whose children are all aged 12 or over: they are less likely to say that television broadcasts are regulated (74% vs. 83% vs. 83%) and more likely to say that mobile phone content is regulated (32% vs. 19% vs. 23%).

**Figure 14: Whether believe platform content is regulated**

3.9 Parents of under-16s are unsure whether online content is regulated

Within the population of parents of under-16s and within the UK adult population there is confusion as to which particular types of internet content, if any, are regulated; half of all parents of under-16s (52%) and three in five of all adults (57%) are unsure. Responses from parents of under-16s do not differ from those of the general adult population. Within the overall population of parents of under-16s, younger parents (aged under 35) are more likely than older parents to be unsure whether these types of internet content are regulated (57% vs. 49%).
Parents whose children are all aged under 5 are less likely to be aware of the 9pm television watershed than those with any children aged 8-11 and those whose children are all aged 12 or over (69% vs. 85% vs. 87%). Parents of the youngest children are as likely as other parents to be aware that there is a watershed, but less likely to know that it starts at 9pm.

Awareness of the television watershed among parents of under-16s does not differ by gender, but is higher among those in ABC1 socio-economic groups than among those in
C2DE socio-economic groups (86% vs. 80%). This difference between the socio-economic groups is also evident within the general adult population.

### 3.11 Trust in content differs by platform

As with the UK adult population, parents of under-16s express different levels of trust in the content they see or hear depending on the type of platform\(^6\). A majority (62%) of parents of under-16s who listen to radio at home trust what they hear, with most of the remainder neutral. Less than half of viewers trust what they see on television (41%) or on the internet (42%), with the remainder broadly equally split between those who are neutral and those who do not trust what they see.

#### Figure 17: Trust in platform content: *When I watch/ listen to [platform] I tend to trust what I see/ hear*

There are some key differences within the population of parents of under-16s regarding trust in platform content;

- **Parents aged under 35** are more likely than older parents to say they do not trust what they encounter online (30% vs. 22%).

- **Parents whose children are all aged under 5** are more likely to say they do not trust what they encounter online, compared to those with any children aged 5-11 and those whose children are all aged 12 or over (33% vs. 24% vs. 24%).

- **Female** parents of under-16s are more likely than males to say they do not trust what they see on television (30% vs. 23%) or on the internet (29% vs. 18%).

- **Parents of under-16s in C2DE socio-economic groups** are more likely than those in ABC1 socio-economic groups to say they trust television content (45% vs. 37%).

\(^6\) This research asks about trust in the platform overall. Responses to this question may reflect the type of content people actually access through each platform, and responses may differ if particular genres of content were specifically focused on.
3.12 Few parents of under-16s believe they can tell whether websites are truthful and reliable

Parents of under-16s are no more confident in using the internet than the general adult population. As with all adults, parents are more likely to be very confident in finding what they want online (both 58%) than they are in using creative elements such as uploading photos or creating blogs (34% of internet users among parents of under-16s vs. 37% of all adult internet users).

As with the general population of internet users, just one in five parents are very confident in being able to tell if a website is truthful and reliable (19% vs. 20%).

Figure 18: Confidence using the internet

There are some differences within the population of internet users among parents of under-16s. Parents in ABC1 socio-economic groups make wider use of the internet than those in C2DE socio-economic groups, and these parents are also more likely to be very confident in finding content online (65% vs. 45%), using creative elements (37% vs. 28%), and telling whether a website is truthful and reliable (21% vs. 15%).

As reported earlier, male parents are more likely than females to use the internet for creative activities such as uploading photos. Males are also more likely to be very confident in using the creative elements of the internet (43% vs. 28%).

3.13 Most parents of under-16s say they check new websites before using them

Four in five (79%) parents of under-16s say they make any of the checks we asked about when visiting a new website, with the most common check being how up to date the information is, undertaken by almost half (46% vs. 49% of all adults internet users). The extent to which any of these checks are made and the types of checks made by internet users does not vary from the general adult population.
There are some differences in the types of checks made by younger and older parents of under-16s. **Younger parents**, aged under 35, are more likely to **ask someone else** if they’ve been to the site (44% vs. 30%), whereas **older parents** are more likely to check information across **other sites** (32% vs. 24%), or check to see who has **created** the page and their reasons for doing so (18% vs. 11%). Responses do not usually vary according to the age of the child, but those whose children are all aged under 5 are more likely to check the overall look and feel of the site than those with any children aged 5-11 and those whose children are all aged 12 and over (50% vs. 38% vs. 37%).

**Figure 19: Checks made when visiting new websites**

Parents in **ABC1** socio-economic groups are more likely than those in C2DE socio-economic groups to check **how up to date** the information is (49% vs. 40%), and to check the information across **other sites** (33% vs. 22%). **Female** parents are more likely than males to check information across **other sites** (38% vs. 30%).

**3.14 Most parents of under-16s make a judgement about a website before entering personal details**

**Four in five parents** of under-16s (80%) say they would make **some kind of judgement** about a website before entering personal details (for example based on signage within the site, personal instinct or peer information), which is **comparable to the general adult population** (77%).
The types of checks made by parents of under-16s vary across the different demographic groups:

- **Older parents** are more likely than younger parents to make judgements based on **professional signs** such as the kitemark, system messages or the padlock sign (53% vs. 48%).

- Parents in **ABC1** socio-economic groups are more likely than those in C2DE socio-economic groups to rely on **personal instinct** such as whether the site looks professional (49% vs. 42%).

- Those in **C2DE** socio-economic groups are more likely than those in ABC1 socio-economic groups to say they would make judgements based on **peer signs** such as recommendations from friends (29% vs. 22%).

- **Male** parents are more likely than female parents to say that they **do not make judgements** about websites before entering personal details (14% vs. 6%).

### 3.15 Parents of under-16s are likely to have some concerns about entering personal details online

When registering on a website, users may be asked to provide different types of personal details. Across five of the six types of personal information that we covered, **parents of under-16s match the general adult population** in terms of having **any concerns** about providing these personal details online. The one exception relates to providing **mobile phone details**; where parents of under-16s are **more likely to be happy** to do this than all UK adults (39% vs. 34%).
Within the population of parents of under-16s, some themes emerge regarding concerns about entering personal details online:

- **Younger parents** (aged under 35) are more likely than older parents to state that they would **never enter** their home telephone number (23% vs. 17%).

- **Parents whose children are all aged under 5** are more likely than those with any children aged 5-11 and those whose children are all aged 12 or over to state they would **never enter** their debit card details (25% vs. 16% vs. 13%) or their **credit card details** (22% vs. 13% vs. 11%).

- **Male parents** are more likely than females to be **happy to provide details of five of the six types**, the exception being a personal email address, where there is no difference by gender. This greater degree of preparedness among males to provide personal details online is also seen in the general adult population.

- Across three out of the six types of information, those in **C2DE** socio-economic groups are more likely than those in **ABC1** socio-economic groups to say they would never provide these details: entering credit card details (21% vs. 11%), entering debit card details (23% vs. 14%), and home address details (16% vs. 11%). This reluctance to provide personal details online among those in C2DE socio-economic groups is also seen in the general adult population.

### 3.16 Parents have most concerns about the internet

We asked people to tell us if they have any concerns about what is on television, radio, the internet, mobile phones or gaming.
Overall, **parents of under-16s are more likely** than the general adult population to have any **concerns about the internet and gaming**, and match the general adult population in the extent to which they have any concerns about television, mobile phones and radio.

**Parents** of under-16s have **most concerns** about the **internet**, and they are **more likely** than all **UK adults** to have concerns about the internet (74% vs. 63%). The top three concerns about the internet mentioned by parents of under-16s are: **sexual content online** (43% vs. 37% of all adults), **people masquerading as younger people online** (41% vs. 38%), and (unspecified) **content unsuitable for children** (32% vs. 27%).

Just over **half** of parents have any concerns about **television**, matching the level of concern across all UK adults (both 55%). The top three concerns about television mentioned by parents of under-16s are: **violence** (23% vs. 21% of all adults), **bad language** (17% vs. 16%), and **sex/nudity** (17% vs. 14%).

**One in three** parents of under-16s have any concerns about **gaming**, and this level of concern is **higher** than that found for all **UK adults** (35% vs. 30% of all UK adults). The top three concerns about gaming mentioned by parents of under-16s are: **violent content** (24% vs. 19% of all adults), **unsuitable for children** (12% vs. 10%), and **encourage children to stay indoors** (7% vs. 6%).

**One in three** parents of under-16s have any concerns about **mobile phones**, matching the level of concern across all UK adults (35% vs. 34% of all UK adults). Concerns about radio among parents of under-16s are also at the same level as the general UK adult population; with **one in ten** parents having any concerns about **radio** (11% vs. 12% of all UK adults).

**Older parents** of under-16s (aged 35 and over) are more likely than younger parents to have concerns about **television** (58% vs. 51%) and about the **internet** (79% vs. 65%). Results by the age of the parent do not vary for radio, mobile phone or gaming.

**Parents whose children are all aged under 5** are **less likely** to have any concerns about the **internet** than those with any children aged 5-11 and those whose children are all aged 12 or over (58% vs. 74% vs. 70%). Given the nature of parents’ concerns about the internet, it is likely that the lower levels of concern among parents of the youngest children are related to lower levels of use by their children.

By contrast, **parents whose children are all aged under 5** are **more likely** to have any concerns about **mobile phones** than those with any children aged 5-11 and those whose children are all aged 12 or over (46% vs. 34% vs. 32%). The types of concerns most likely to be mentioned by parents of under 5s relate to affordability, and so it may be that the higher levels of concern among parents of the youngest children relate to their own use rather than use by their children.
Figure 22: Concerns about media platforms

Within the population of parents of under-16s, there are some key differences across different demographic groups;

- **Females** are more likely than males to have concerns about **television** (59% vs. 50%), the **internet** (76% vs. 70%) and gaming (40% vs. 27%). Conversely, **male** parents are more likely than female parents to have concerns about **radio** (14% vs. 9%). In the general adult population females also have higher levels of concern than males about television, the internet and gaming.

- Parents of under-16s in **ABC1** socio-economic groups are more likely than those in **C2DE** socio-economic groups to have concerns about **television** (59% vs. 52%), **radio** (14% vs. 8%) and **mobile phones** (39% vs. 30%). Within the general adult population, concerns are also higher among those in ABC1 socio-economic groups.
Section 4

Learning

This section looks at parents’ experience of, and preferences for, learning about digital technology.

4.1 A minority of parents have experience of formal learning about digital technology

One in four parents of under-16s have experience of learning about digital technology through classes or another type of training, as is also the case for the general adult population (both 27%). Younger parents, aged under 35, are more likely than older parents to have experience of learning about digital technology (31% vs. 25%). Similarly, parents whose children are all aged under 5 are more likely to have experience of learning about digital technology than those with any children aged 5-11 and those whose children are all aged 12 or over (40% vs. 26% vs. 22%)

Almost all of the experience of learning about digital technology among parents of under-16s is accounted for by learning about using the internet (20% vs. 20% of all UK adults).

Several of the types of learning that we asked about related to setting controls to restrict access to websites, television programmes and mobile phone content. Experience of formal learning about each of these types of controls among parents of under-16s is low, at below 5% of all parents, and is no higher than among the general adult population.

Figure 23: Experience of learning about digital technology

Z9 – Thinking about the types of things you might learn about TV, the internet, mobile phones and so on... Can you tell me which, if any, of these have you learned more about through classes or any other type of training?

Base: All adults aged 16+ (2905 aged 16+, 1215 parents of under 16s, 398 parents aged under 35, 817 parents aged 35+)

Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in October to December 2007
4.2 A minority of parents of under-16s are interested in learning more about digital technology

One in three parents of under-16s are interested in learning more about any of the types of digital technology that we asked about, as is also the case for the general adult population (34% vs. 31%). While younger parents are more likely to have experience of formal learning about digital technology, interest in learning more does not differ between younger and older parents (34% vs. 35%).

Parents whose children are all aged under 5 and those with any children aged 5-11 are more likely to be interested in learning more about digital technology than those whose children are all aged 12 or over (38% vs. 37% vs. 25%).

Specific interest in learning more about controls to restrict access is slightly higher among parents than among the general adult population for content accessed via a mobile phone (5% vs. 3%) and for television content (4% vs. 2%), but does not differ regarding restricting access to websites (5% vs. 4%).

Figure 24: Interest in learning about digital technology

4.3 Parents of under-16s are most likely to prefer to learn about digital technology through friends and family or alone

All adults were prompted with a list of five ways of learning about digital technology such as digital television and radio, the internet and mobile phones, and asked to say which way they preferred.

Of the five options that we covered, three are preferred ways to learn about using digital technology by around half of parents of under-16s: asking friends or family (48% vs. 48%
of all adults), reading the **manual** (48% vs. 45%), and through **trial and error** (45% vs. 40%). Learning through **trial and error** is more likely to be chosen by parents of under-16s than by the general adult population as a preferred way to learn about digital technology.

Parents of under-16s are less likely than the UK adult population to say they prefer to learn by **attending a class or learning in a group** (5% vs. 6%). Almost all parents have at least one preferred way to learn about using digital technology (93% vs. 91%).

**Figure 25 Preference for learning about digital technology**

Within the population of parents of under-16s, there are some key differences across different demographic groups in terms of preferred ways to learn about using digital technology:

- **Older parents** (aged 35 and over) are more likely than younger parents to prefer to learn through **friends and family** (50% vs. 43%) or through **attending classes** (6% vs. 3%).

- **Parents whose children are all aged under 5** are more likely to prefer to learn through the **supplier/store** than those with any children aged 5-11 and those whose children are all aged 12 or over (22% vs. 12% vs. 15%).

- **Female** parents are more likely than males to prefer to learn through **friends and family** (57% vs. 32%), while **males** are more likely than females to prefer to learn through reading the **manual** (55% vs. 43%), **trial and error** (53% vs. 41%) or through the **supplier/store** (17% vs. 12%). These gender differences are also evident in the general adult population.

- **Parents in ABC1 socio-economic groups** are more likely than those in C2DE socio-economic groups to prefer to learn through reading the **manual** (54% vs. 40%) while
those in **C2DE** socio-economic groups are more likely to prefer to learn through **friends/family** (52% vs. 44%). These differences are also evident in the general adult population.
Section 5

Media attitudes and behaviours

As part of the 2008 Media Literacy Audit research, data about people’s attitudes and behaviours relating to communications technologies were analysed and a total of five segments were identified, based on the relationship people have with media devices. This section looks at how parents of under-16s compare to the general adult population in terms of this segmentation.

5.1 Six in ten parents of under-16s are in the top two most engaged segments

The research findings about people’s attitudes and behaviours were analysed and five segments across the adult population were identified, based on the relationship people have with media devices. The following table summarises the attitudes and behaviours of each of the five segments.

Table 1: Summary of attitudes to media services, by segment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>Engaged</th>
<th>Pragmatist</th>
<th>Economisers</th>
<th>Hesitants</th>
<th>Resistors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most likely to own and use...</td>
<td>Everything</td>
<td>Everything within reason – where they can see a benefit</td>
<td>Everything but the internet – with one eye on costs</td>
<td>A mobile phone, but probably live in households with things they don't use</td>
<td>Nothing, or only digital television</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most likely to say...</td>
<td>I couldn’t do without it. That’s clever – how do I get more out of it?</td>
<td>What use is it – will I use it?</td>
<td>I’d really like to be able to do that</td>
<td>Someone else does that</td>
<td>It’s just not for me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most likely to be put off because...</td>
<td>I have too many other things to do</td>
<td>I can already do that another way – why do I need this as well?</td>
<td>I can’t afford it</td>
<td>I don’t know where to start, I’m afraid of breaking it</td>
<td>I’d get no value or benefit from this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More likely to be...</td>
<td>Younger, ABC1, in metropolitan areas including deprived areas</td>
<td>Younger, C2DE, from metropolitan areas</td>
<td>Older (although 43% under 45, more women than men)</td>
<td>Older</td>
<td>Older</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures 26 and 27 show the segmentation based on all adults aged 16+ and the profile of how parents in particular are distributed between these segments. All analysis is based on the overall segmentation for all adults 16+.

The two segments that have the highest engagement with media services are the Engaged and Pragmatist segments. Six in ten parents of under-16s (62%) fall within these two most engaged segments, compared to half (51%) of all adults.

Compared to the general adult population, parents of under-16s are more likely to be in the Engaged segment (25% vs. 21%) or the Pragmatist segment (37% vs. 30%). Conversely, parents of under-16s are less likely to be Hesitants (26% vs. 31%) or Resistors (3% vs. 10%). The Economiser segment is the only one which is the same size across both populations (9% vs. 8%).
There are some key differences in the breakdown of segments across the two age groups within the population of parents of under-16s. **Younger parents**, aged under 35, are more likely to be in the *Engaged* segment (29% vs. 23%), or in the *Economiser* segment (11% vs. 8%) than those aged over 35. **Parents** aged over 35 are more likely to be *Pragmatists* (39% vs. 35%).

Within the population of parents of under-16s, there are some key differences across different demographic groups in terms of the segmentation;

- **Parents whose children are all aged under 5** or who have any children aged 5-11 are more likely to be in the *Engaged* segment than those whose children are all aged 12 or over (34% vs. 25% vs. 19%).

- **Males** are more likely than females to be in the *Engaged* segment (32% vs. 21%), while **females** are more likely than males to be in the *Hesitants* segment (29% vs. 22%). This difference between males and females is also evident in the general adult population.

- Those in **ABC1** socio-economic groups are more likely than those in **C2DE** socio-economic groups to be in the *Pragmatists* segment (45% vs. 28%) or the *Engaged* segment (31% vs. 18%), while those in **C2DE** socio-economic groups are more likely to be *Hesitants* (35% vs. 19%), *Resistors* (4% vs. 1%) or *Economisers* (15% vs. 4%). These differences are also evident in the general adult population.