

Internet User Classification (IUC) User Guide

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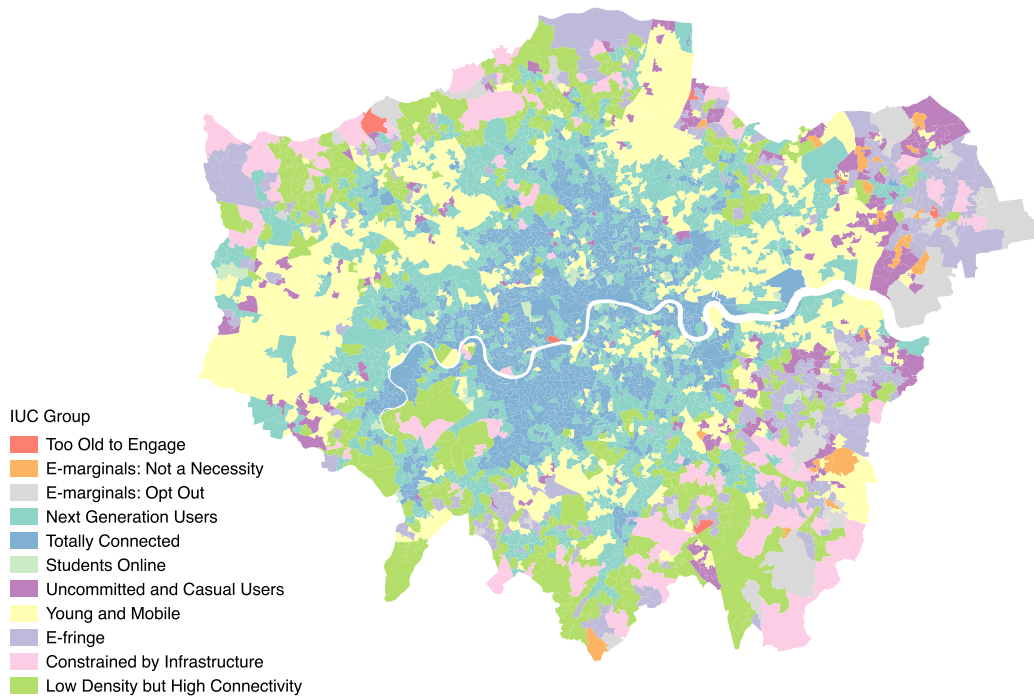
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1 Introduction

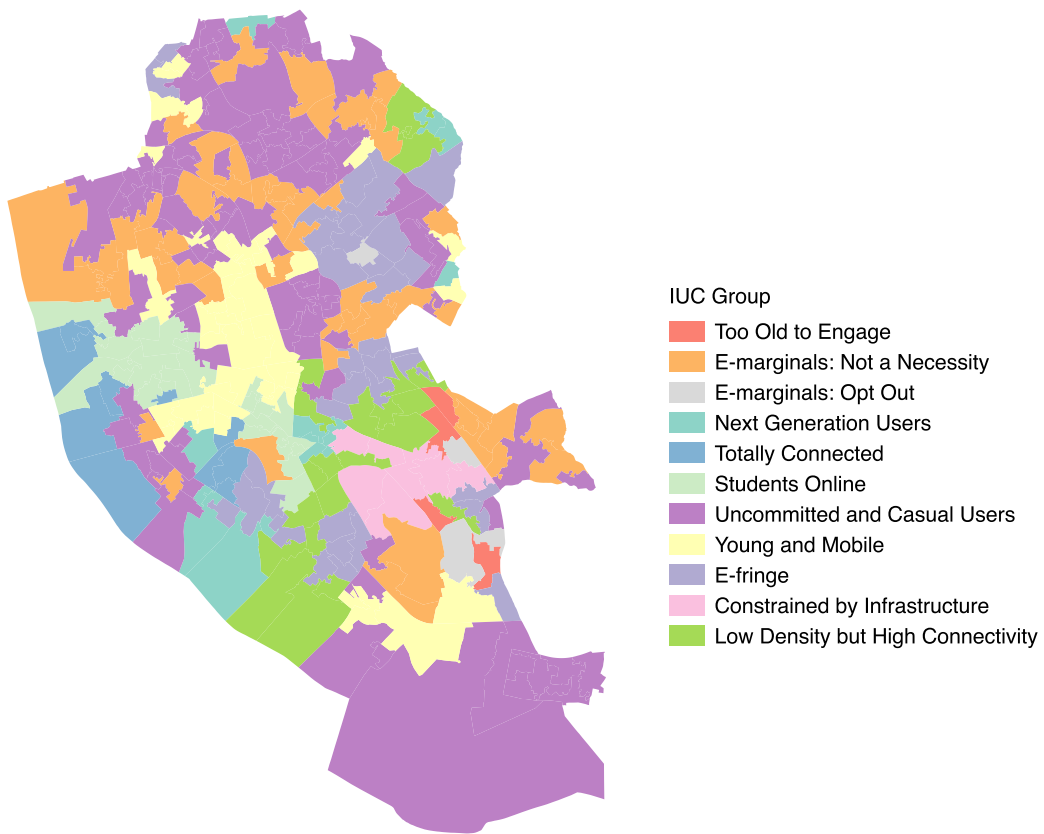
This bespoke geodemographic classification maps the geography of digital consumers within England by combining over seventy measures selected from survey and lifestyle data, alongside census and infrastructure performance statistics. This project forms an output of an ESRC funded PhD and research project, both undertaken at the University of Liverpool. This project aims to assist the profiling of customer databases, targeted marketing applications, policy delivery and strategic planning, where Internet use and engagement characteristics of a target population are of high importance. The Internet User Classification (IUC) has a two-tier structure comprising four Supergroups and eleven Groups that are used to classify all Lower Layer Super Output areas in England.

The table below details IUC Supergroup and Group assignments.

Supergroup	Group
1: E-unengaged	1a: Too Old to Engage
	1b: E-marginals: Not a Necessity
	1c: E-marginals: Opt Out
2: E-professionals and Students	2a: Next Generation Users
	2b: Totally Connected
	2c: Students Online
3: Typical Trends	3a: Uncommitted and Casual Users
	3b: Young and Mobile
4: E-rural and Fringe	4a: E-fringe
	4b: Constrained by Infrastructure
	4c: Low Density but High Connectivity



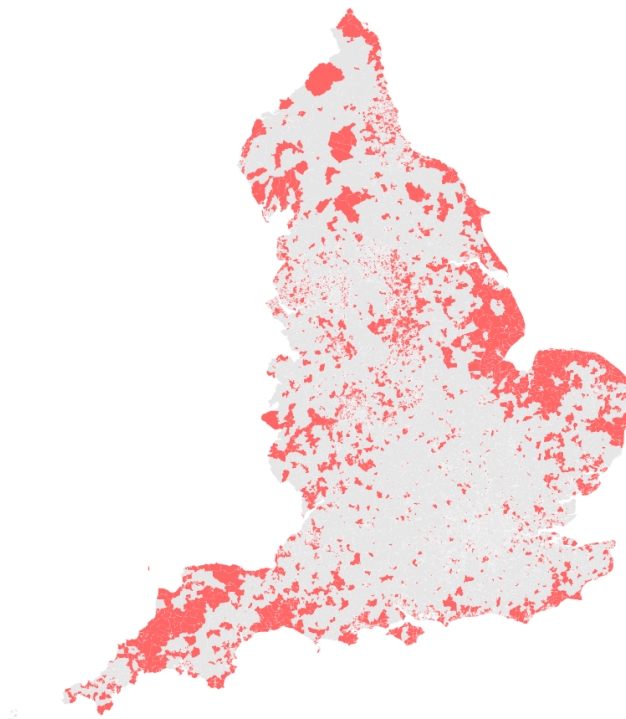
London by IUC Group



Liverpool by IUC Group

2 Pen Portraits: Supergroup Level

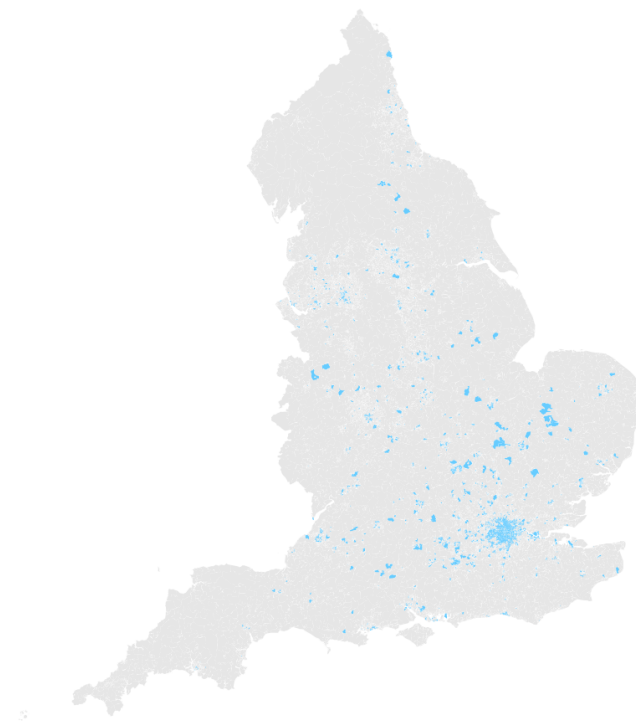
2.1 Supergroup 1: E-unengaged



Supergroup 1: E-unengaged National Distribution

The E-unengaged Supergroup display apparent low levels of engagement with Internet applications across all measures including; seeking information online, purchasing online, device ownership, general interest and mobile access. The age structure of the E-unengaged Supergroup is significantly skewed towards the elderly, with members most likely to be 60 plus. This Supergroup also has the highest proportion of residents aged 75 plus, of any Supergroup in the IUC. Members of this Supergroup generally favour traditional means of communication such as telephone and newspapers over their online equivalents. As such, device ownership including smartphones, tablets, e-readers, smart TVs and games consoles is far lower than the national average and the lowest of all Supergroups in the IUC. Infrastructure provision is in line with the national average, although usage falls far below, with Internet non-use significantly higher than the national average. Members of this Supergroup are most likely to be retired or to work in skilled trades or service occupations. Rates of higher-level (level three and above) qualifications are below the national average, most likely due to elderly populations. Geographically, this Supergroup tends to cluster around rural and coastal areas that attract elderly populations, although it is not uncommon for this Supergroup to also appear in urban areas, typically long-established suburbs as opposed to city centre areas. The E-unengaged Supergroup accounts for 24.8% of all Lower Super Output Areas nationally.

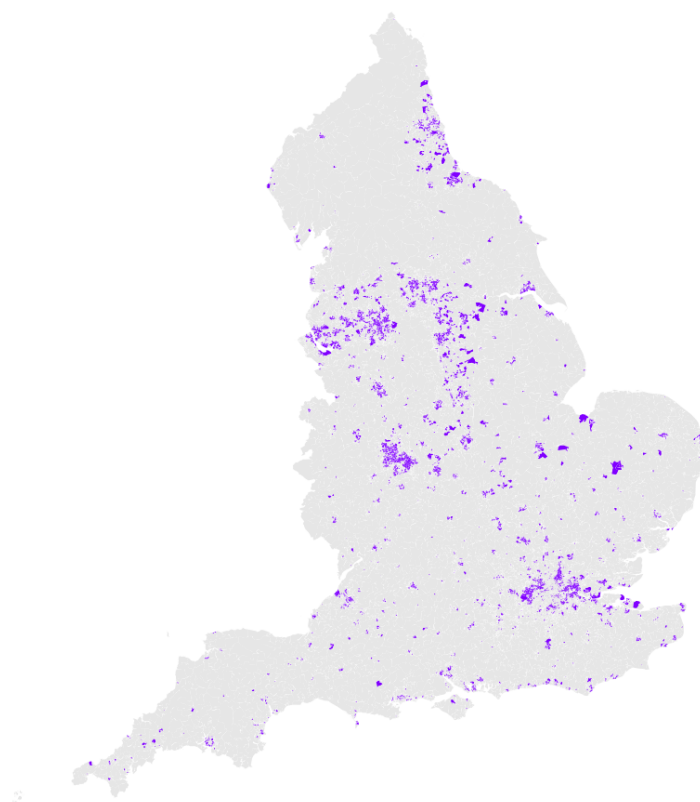
2.2 Supergroup 2: E-professionals and Students



Supergroup 2: E-professionals and Students National Distribution

The E-professionals and Students Supergroup display very high levels of engagement with Internet applications across all measures. Members of this Supergroup typically access the Internet using multiple devices, favouring access across mobile or fixed line Internet connections to ensure ‘always online’ connectivity. Seeking information is ‘online by default’ for this Supergroup, as are most everyday tasks such as banking, account and bill payments and food and grocery shopping. General interest in the Internet for information and entertainment is significantly higher than the national average. Mobile device ownership in this Supergroup is also higher than the national average, and the highest of all Supergroups in the IUC. Device ownership often extends to more recent types of device, such as tablet computers, smart TVs, e-readers and networked games consoles. Mobile phone ownership is high, with most users using smartphones to support email, social networking, navigation, mobile Internet access and third party apps. As would be expected, time spent online is higher than the national average within this Supergroup and the highest of any Supergroup in the IUC. In socio-economic and demographic terms, users are typically aged between 25 and 44 and highly qualified, in most cases to degree or higher-degree level and are likely to have found employment through the Internet. Equally, large numbers of full time students fall within this Supergroup and are typically aged between 18 and 24. Students within this Supergroup are characterised by very high levels of Internet usage, particularly through mobile devices such as smartphones and tablet computers. Geographically, this Supergroup tends to be found clustered within densely populated urban centres that have good Internet infrastructure and above average broadband performance. The E-professionals and Students Supergroup accounts for 16.7% of all Lower Super Output Areas nationally.

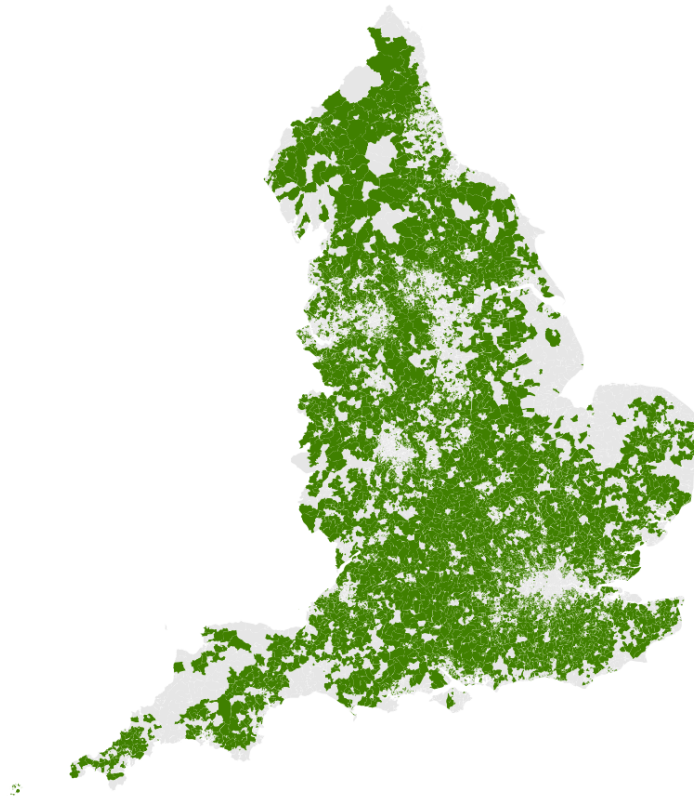
2.3 Supergroup 3: Typical Trends



Supergroup 3: Typical Trends National Distribution

The Typical Trends Supergroup displays levels of engagement that are the closest to the national average. Individuals are characterised by average engagement in terms of seeking information, device ownership and general interest in the Internet. Use of commercial applications such as online shopping, online banking and online bill payments are slightly below the national average and the use of mobile devices for Internet access is above the national average, in part because the younger individuals within this Supergroup favour mobile use. The Supergroup contains more individuals aged 10 to 17 of any Supergroup in the IUC. Members of this Supergroup who are of a typical working age are not highly qualified, and generally work in elementary or service occupations. Geographically, this Supergroup is clustered within and around urban areas, which in many cases also have higher than average levels of material deprivation. These areas are, however, well connected in terms of Internet infrastructure, and have above average broadband performance. The Typical Trends Supergroup accounts for 27% of all Lower Super Output Areas nationally.

2.4 Supergroup 4: E-rural and Fringe

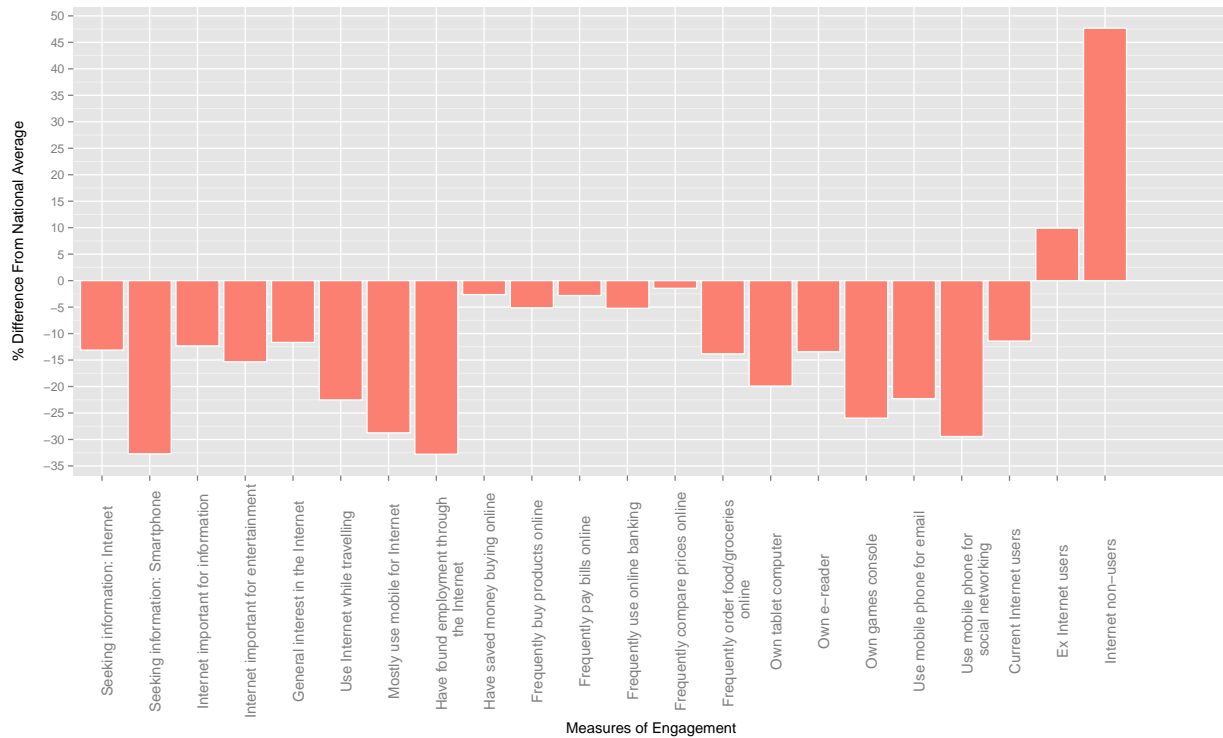


Supergroup 4: E-rural and Fringe National Distribution

Use of the Internet by members of the E-rural and Fringe Supergroup is constrained by poor infrastructure provision, typically because of their predominantly rural locations. Although engagement with Internet applications is only around the national average, this Supergroup display higher than average use of online shopping for products and groceries, online banking, online bill and account payments and price comparisons. This may in part arise because of the limited provision of these services locally. Fixed line broadband connections are used more than mobile broadband. Although mobile phone ownership is in line with the national average, the use of smartphones for data-dependent applications is significantly lower, given poorer infrastructure in these predominantly rural areas. The age structure within this Supergroup is middle aged to elderly with residents most likely to be aged between 45 and 75. Members of this Supergroup are generally well qualified and likely to work in managerial, professional or technical occupations. Device ownership is close to the national average, although devices such as e-readers are favoured over games consoles, consistent with the age structure of these areas. Performance of local broadband connections is below the national average, and the most constrained of all Supergroups in the IUC. The E-rural and Fringe Supergroup accounts for 31.5% of all Lower Super Output Areas nationally.

3 Pen Portraits: Group Level

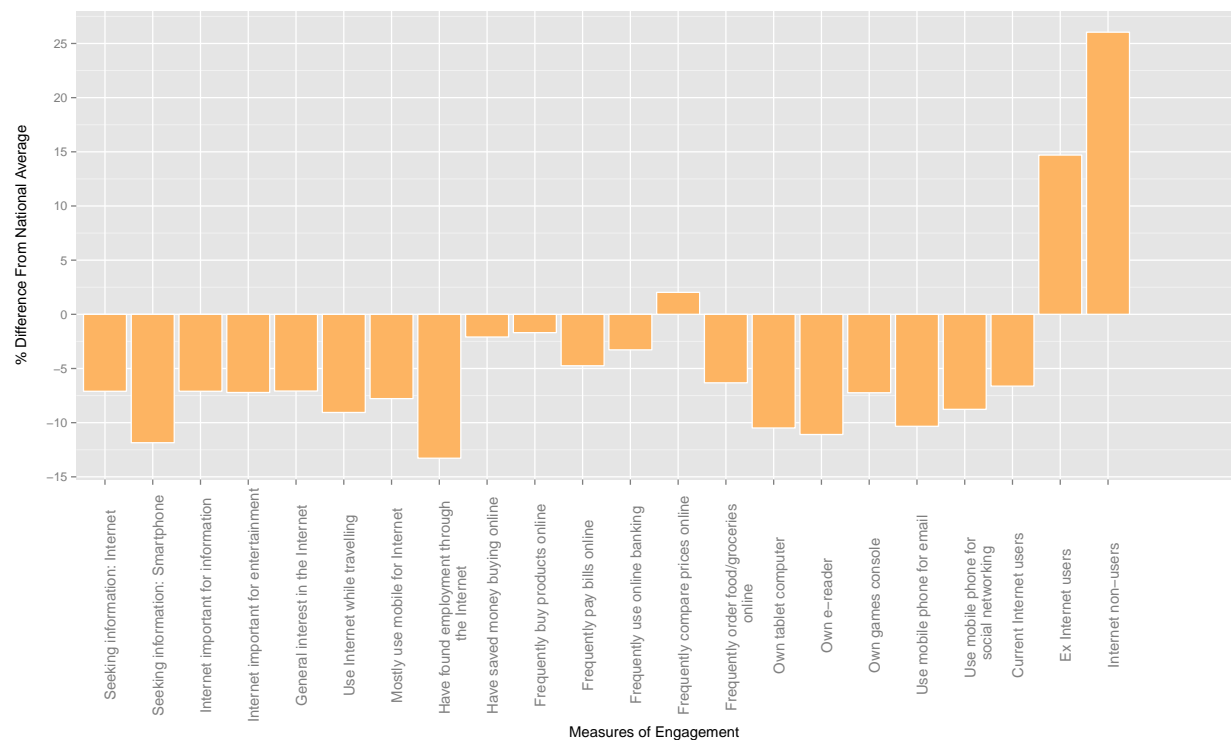
3.1 Group 1a: Too Old to Engage



Group 1a: Too Old to Engage: Group Characteristics

The Too Old to Engage Group is characterised by large elderly populations who show little or no engagement with the Internet across all applications. The proportion of residents aged 75 plus is higher than any Group in the IUC. As a result, Internet enabled device ownership is lower than the Supergroup average, and the lowest of any Group in the IUC. Abstinence from Internet use is higher than the Supergroup average and far above the national average. Enclaves of this Group are found in coastal and lower density rural areas that serve as retirement destinations. Infrastructure provision and performance is typically slightly below the national average. The Too Old to Engage Group accounts for 4% of all Lower Super Output Areas nationally.

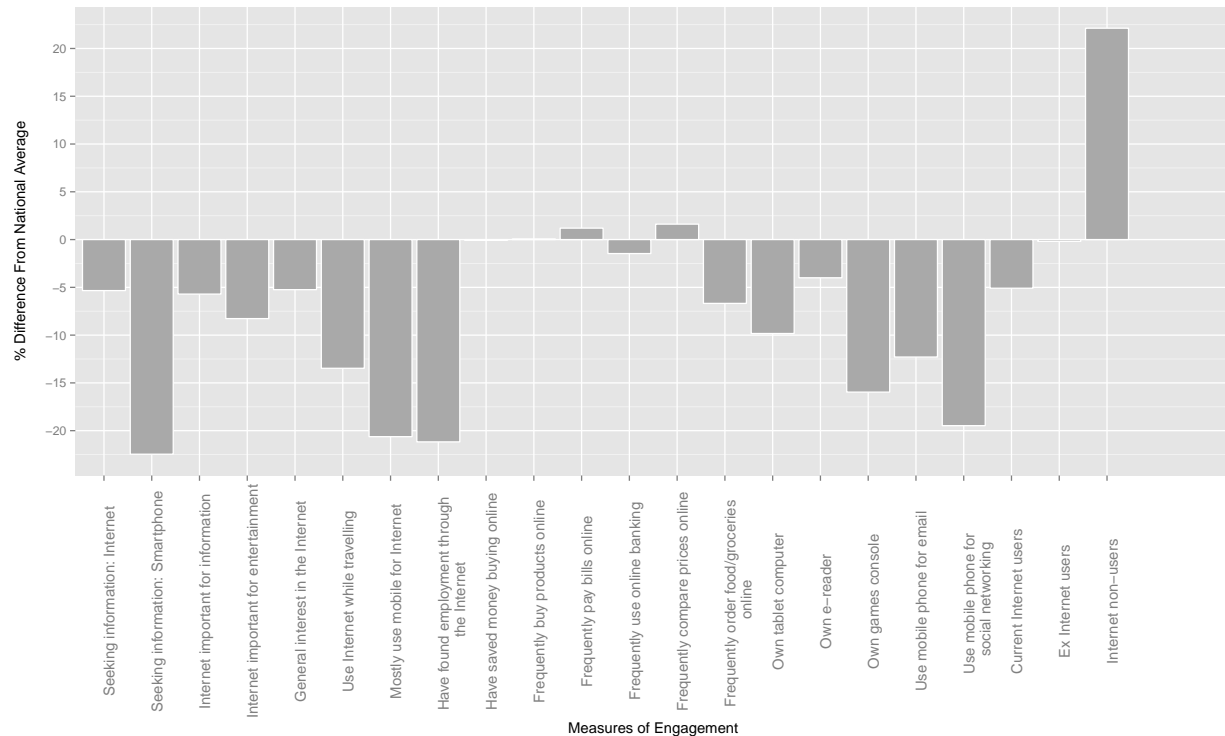
3.2 Group 1b: E-marginals: Not a Necessity



Group 1b: E-marginals: Not a Necessity: Group Characteristics

Members of the E-marginals: Not a Necessity Group typically have low engagement with Internet applications, lower than average qualifications and higher than average rates of employment in blue collar occupations that are not heavily reliant on digital skills. Of those that do access the Internet, many do so using a smartphone. Residents of this Group tend to be found within urban areas characterised by high levels of material deprivation, although infrastructure provision and performance are in line with the national average. The E-marginals: Not a Necessity Group accounts for 10.4% of all Lower Super Output Areas nationally.

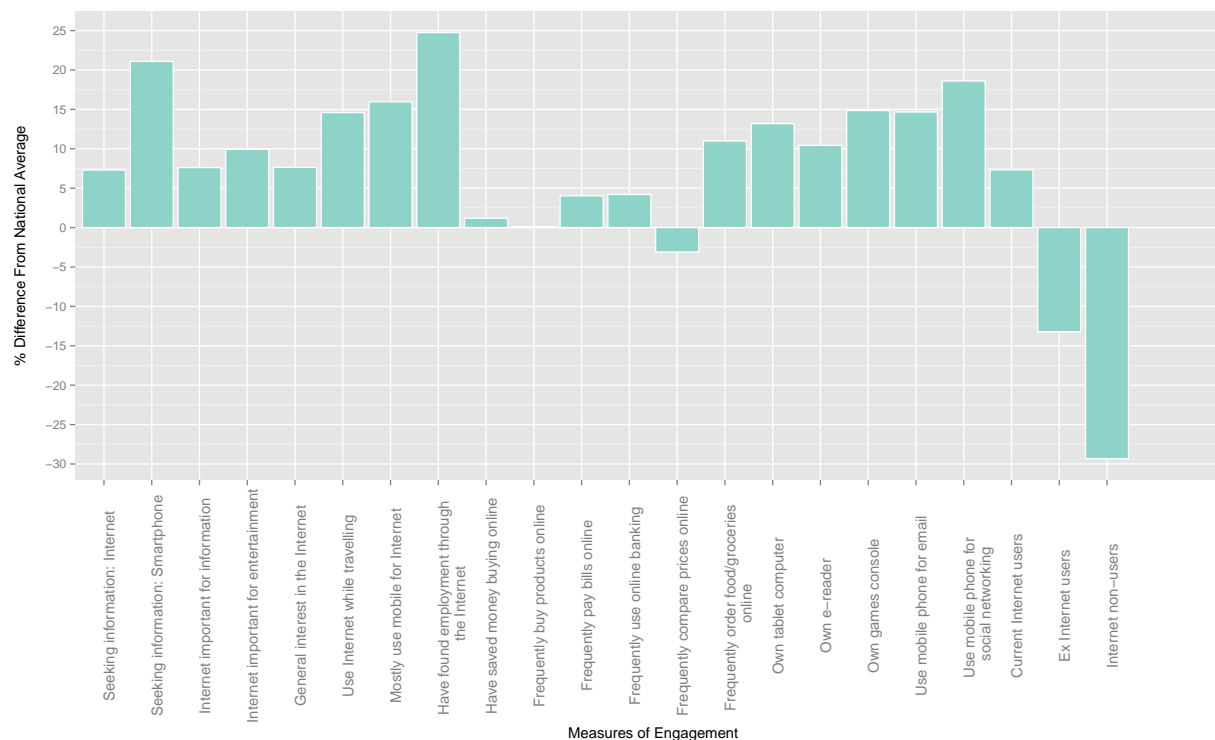
3.3 Group 1c: E-marginals: Opt Out



Group 1c: E-marginals: Opt Out: Group Characteristics

The E-marginals: Opt Out Group are characterised by low levels of engagement with the Internet for applications such as seeking information and entertainment, preferring instead more traditional media such as newspapers and television, in part reflecting the elderly demographic of this Group. Typically this Group is aged 60 plus, with significantly higher than average incidence of those aged 65 to 84. Geographically, this Group tends to be found in affluent rural and fringe areas that are more sparsely populated and where infrastructure provision and performance is below the national average. Access to the Internet through mobile devices is below the national average. Those who do choose to use the Internet tend to use it for price comparison and occasional online shopping. Levels of qualifications are generally above the national average, and those members who are not retired will typically be employed in senior managerial, professional or skilled trade occupations. Abstinence is significantly higher than the national average, but the lowest within the Supergroup. The E-marginals: Opt Out Group accounts for 10.4% of all Lower Super Output Areas nationally.

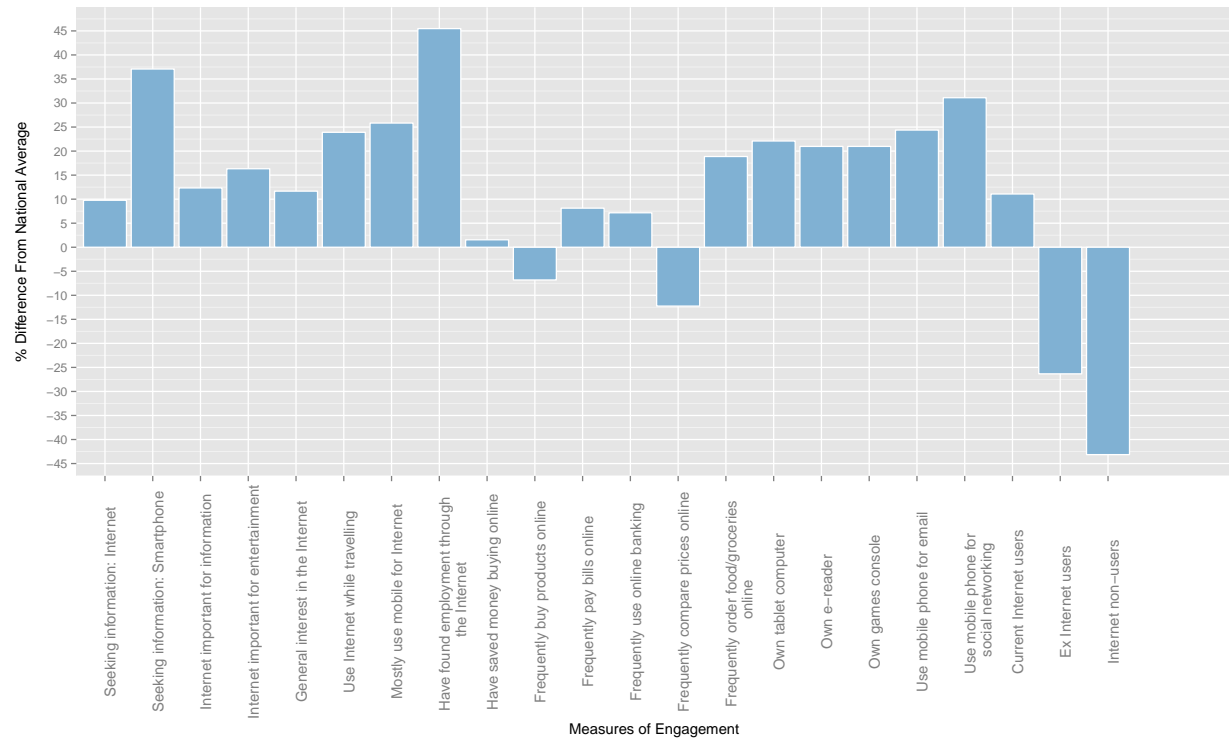
3.4 Group 2a: Next Generation Users



Group 2a: Next Generation Users: Group Characteristics

The Next Generation Users Group is characterised by high levels of engagement across all applications of the Internet. Members of this Group are heavy smartphone users and typically access the Internet on the move and for applications such as email, social networking and navigation. However, they favour fixed line connections for most other tasks such as general browsing and seeking information. Device ownership is higher than the national average, and members of this Group are likely to own several Internet enabled devices, such as tablet computers, e-readers and smart TVs. Levels of qualification are high within this Group, with higher than average rates of degree and higher degree level qualifications. The age structure is young to middle aged, with members of this Group most likely aged between 25 and 44, and in some cases with young children. Employment tends to be in managerial, professional and technical occupations. General interest in the Internet is above the national average. Members of this Group are found in affluent, higher density suburban and city fringe areas where infrastructure provision and performance is above the national average. Next Generation Users are the second most heavily engaged Group within the IUC, behind Group 2b: Totally Connected and account for 10.2% of all Lower Super Output Areas nationally.

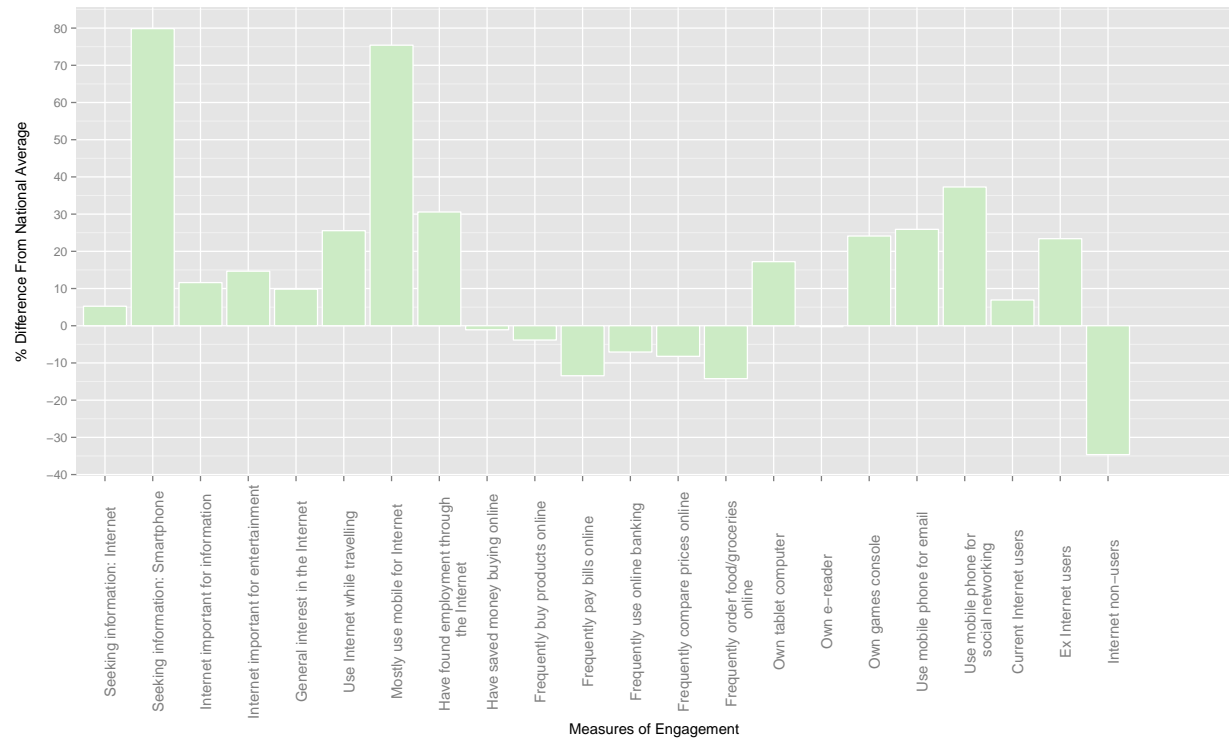
3.5 Group 2b: Totally Connected



Group 2b: Totally Connected: Group Characteristics

The Totally Connected Group is characterised by the highest levels of engagement within the IUC and score higher than the Supergroup and national averages for most measures of engagement. This Group displays a clear preference to use the Internet by default for almost all applications. Members of this Group access the Internet through multiple devices, whilst on the move and in the home to ensure seamless connectivity. As such, device ownership is significantly higher than the national and Supergroup averages and members of this Group own a wide range of Internet enabled hardware. Levels of qualification are significantly higher than the national average. Professional occupations are most prevalent, with the age structure of residents being young to middle aged, sometimes with young children. Geographically, this Group tends to be found in affluent city centre and city fringe areas that are densely populated and where infrastructure provision and performance is above the national average. Members of this Group show below average rates of online shopping, perhaps given good local retail choice. However, rates of online shopping for food and groceries are significantly above the national and Supergroup averages as this enables wider choice and convenience in highly populated areas. Totally Connected are the most heavily engaged Group within the IUC and account for 4.8% of all Lower Super Output Areas nationally.

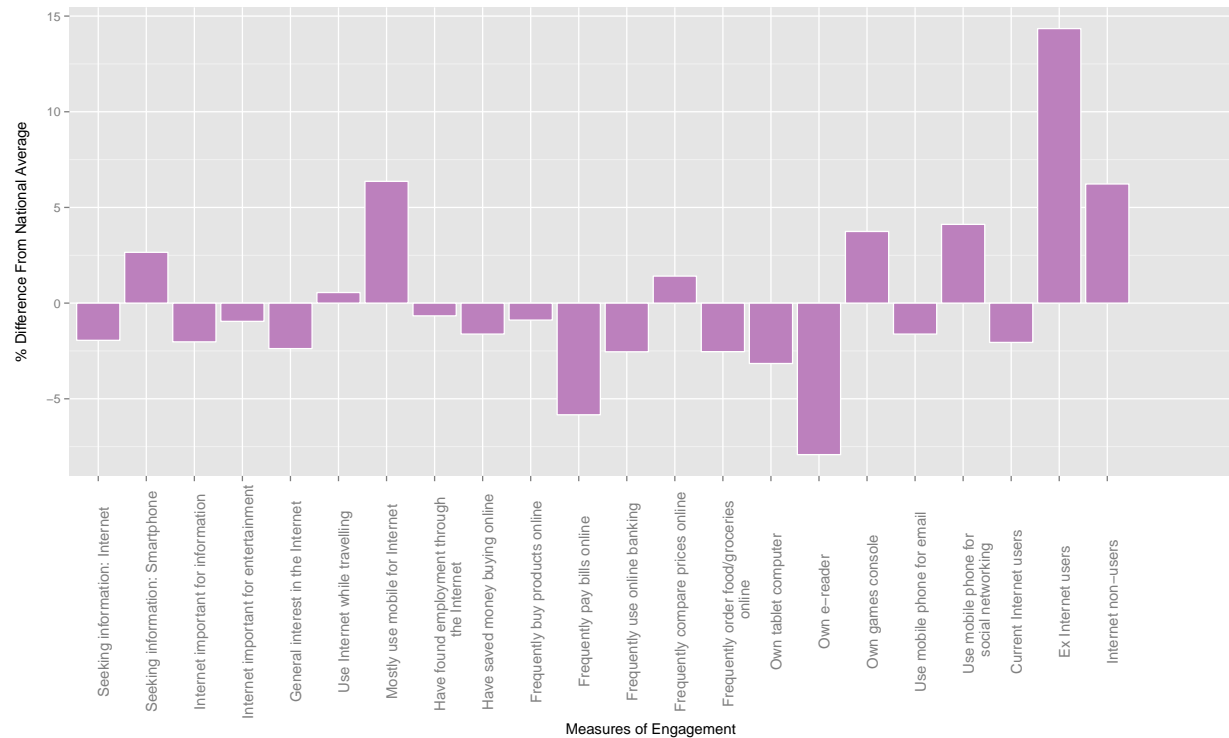
3.6 Group 2c: Students Online



Group 2c: Students Online: Group Characteristics

Students Online represents a small but very distinct Group that is comprised almost entirely of student areas. The Group is characterised by very high levels of Internet usage, particularly through mobile devices such as smartphones and tablet computers. Smartphones are the device of choice for electronic communication and are used for a wide range of applications including email, social networking, third party applications, web browsing and sharing photos and videos. Members of this Group are typically aged between 18 and 24 and are registered as full time students. Interest in the Internet for information and entertainment is above the national average, and a higher than average proportion of the local population is likely to have found, or to be seeking, employment through the Internet. With very high proportions of students in this Group, most members are likely to possess Level Three qualifications or above. Employment across all sectors is below the national average with the exception of sales and customer service roles, in which some students choose to work, most likely on a part-time basis to support their studies. Geographically, this Group is often found in the major urban conurbations, usually within city centres and university campus areas where there are highly concentrated student populations. Infrastructure provision and connection performance is above the national average in these areas. The Students Online Group accounts for 1.7% of all Lower Super Output Areas nationally.

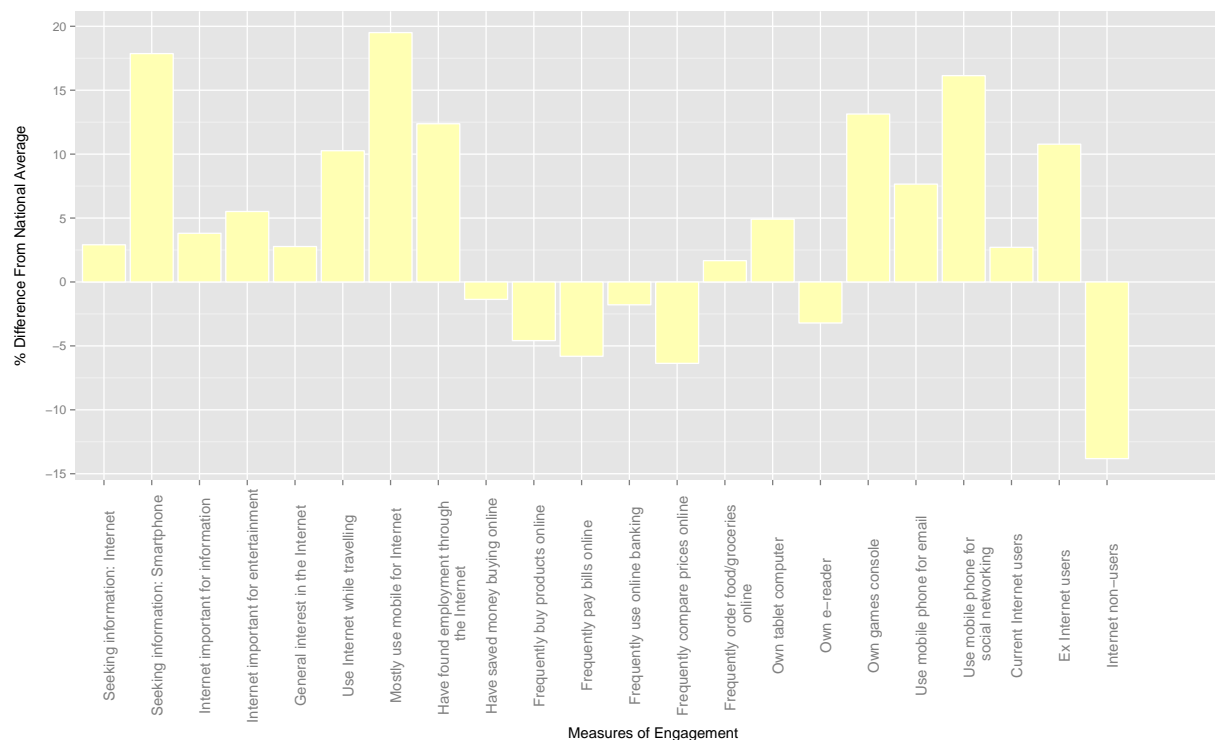
3.7 Group 3a: Uncommitted and Casual Users



Group 3a: Uncommitted and Casual Users: Group Characteristics

The Uncommitted and Casual Users Group are characterised by mixed levels of engagement with the Internet. Access to the Internet through smartphones is marginally above the national average and access through fixed-line connections falls marginally below. Members of this Group show below average rates for purchasing online but above average rates for price comparison and selling online. Age structure is generally young to middle aged, with higher than average proportions of young and teenage children. Qualifications tend to be of a lower level and members of this Group are most likely to work in service, sales and elementary occupations. Overall, abstinence from Internet use is marginally higher than the national average and general interest in the Internet falls shy of the national average. This Group also contains higher than average numbers of lapsed Internet users. Geographically, this Group tends to be found in major urban and city fringe areas that suffer higher levels of material deprivation, but where infrastructure provision and performance is above the national average. The Uncommitted and Casual Users Group accounts for 15.5% of all Lower Super Output Areas nationally.

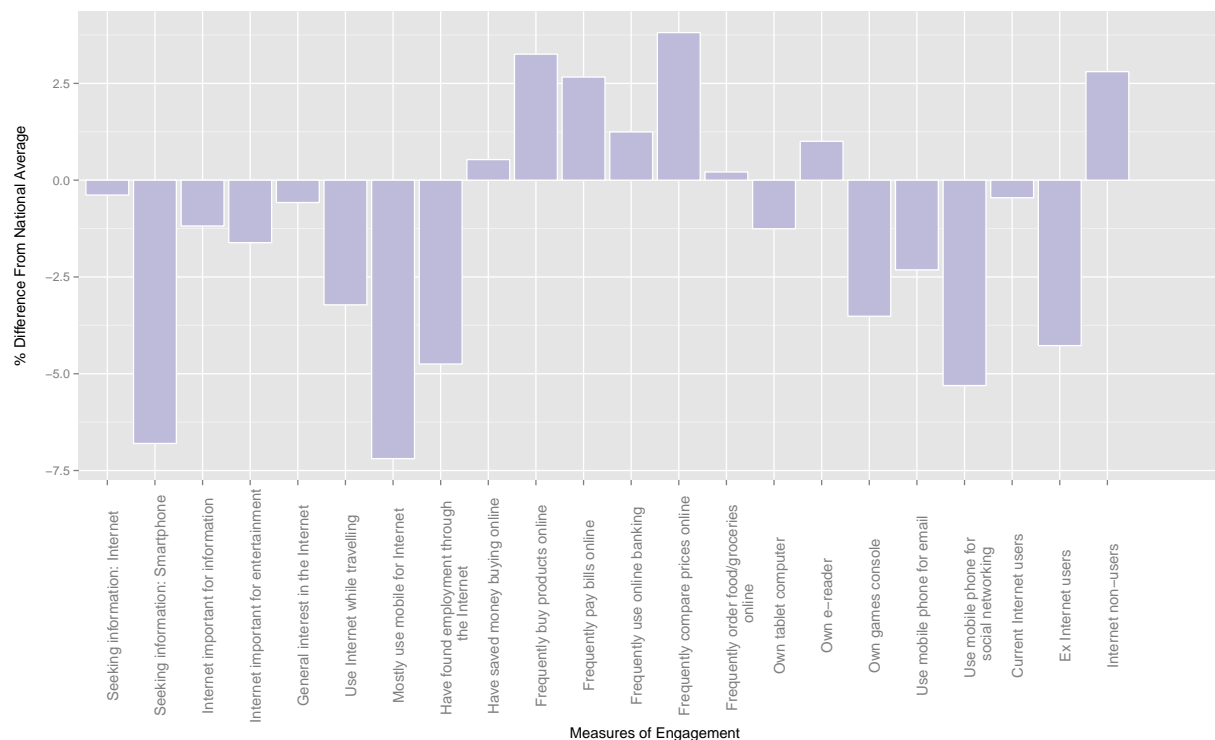
3.8 Group 3b: Young and Mobile



Group 3b: Young and Mobile: Group Characteristics

The Young and Mobile Group is predominantly young and has a tendency to access the Internet using mobile devices rather than fixed line connections. This Group is found in major urban conurbations where population density is above average and infrastructure provision is sufficient to support heavy mobile broadband usage. These areas are typically inner city or city fringe and experience mixed levels of material deprivation. As a Group there are higher than average proportions of young and teenage children and adults aged 25 to 44. Conversely, the proportion of adults aged over 45 falls below the national and Supergroup averages. All levels of qualification are below the national average and those who work are likely to be employed in elementary, sales or service occupations. Interest in the Internet for entertainment and information is above the national average, most likely reflecting the prevailing age structure. This Group displays a lower than average tendency to purchase online, and would be expected to shop locally in most cases. The Young and Mobile Group accounts for 11.5% of all Lower Super Output Areas nationally.

3.9 Group 4a: E-fringe



Group 4a: E-fringe: Group Characteristics

The E-fringe Group is distinguished by its location around the fringes of urban areas that are typically low density or semi-rural. Age structure is middle aged to elderly and there are fewer than average numbers of young adults aged 18-29, a group who are likely to have moved to more major urban conurbations. General interest in the Internet within this Group is slightly below the national average and the lowest within the Supergroup, rates of current Internet users are also below average and numbers of Internet non-users are above the national average. Members of this Group generally have mixed levels of qualifications, rates of level 1 to level 3 qualifications are all above the national average and incidence of persons with no qualifications is below average. Members are most likely to work in administrative and secretarial or skilled trade occupations. The most common uses of the Internet within this Group are paying bills and banking online, comparing prices and buying products, which score above the national average. Below average rates are recorded for seeking information and entertainment purposes, consistent with the age profile of this Group. Equally, ownership of Internet enabled devices is below average, with the exception of e-readers, which are popular amongst this Group. Infrastructure provision and performance is marginally below the national average but would be unlikely to limit access. The E-fringe Group accounts for 11.1% of all Lower Super Output Areas nationally.

3.10 Group 4b: Constrained by Infrastructure



Group 4b: Constrained by Infrastructure: Group Characteristics

The Constrained by Infrastructure Group is characterised by locations in low-density rural areas where there is poor provision and performance of local Internet infrastructure, both fixed line and mobile. This limits engagement with some online applications. Fixed line broadband performance falls significantly below the national average and is the lowest within the Supergroup as distances to local telephone exchanges are much higher. Distances to the nearest mobile base station for cellular and data coverage are also higher than the national average, and as such further constrains performance and usability. Perhaps as a result, the use of mobile broadband through devices such as smartphones or dongles is below average. Despite poor infrastructure, general interest in the Internet is in line with the national average and members of this Group display above average rates of purchasing online, comparing prices, online banking and paying bills, most likely as this saves travelling to a local retail centre to access these services. Internet enabled device ownership is again lower than the national average with the exception of e-readers, likely due to the prevailing age structure of this Group, which is middle aged and elderly. Those who are not retired are generally highly qualified and work in managerial, professional or technical occupations. Internet non-use is above average but reflects the prevailing age profile of the Group. The Constrained by Infrastructure Group accounts for 11% of all Lower Super Output Areas nationally.

3.11 Group 4c: Low Density but High Connectivity



Group 4c: Low Density but High Connectivity : Group Characteristics

The Low Density but High Connectivity Group is found in areas that are sparsely populated, typically rural and semi-rural areas, or areas with urban parkland. Despite disparate populations, this Group is generally well connected and displays the strongest infrastructure and performance characteristics within the Supergroup, generally falling in line with the national average. Internet use in general is higher across all applications than the Supergroup average, and this Group shows a higher than average propensity for ordering food and groceries online. These characteristics are representative of the prevailing demographic of well-educated workers (often with degrees or higher degrees) who work in high-grade professional occupations. Similarly, Internet enabled device ownership is above the national average, perhaps because local infrastructure is able to support this. Age structure is mixed, although members of this Group are most likely to be aged 45 to 59 with young or teenage children. General interest in the Internet is above the national average and is the highest within the Supergroup. As would be expected, rates of Internet non-use are below the national average. The Low Density but High Connectivity Group accounts for 9.4% of all Lower Super Output Areas nationally.

4 Queries and Further Information

Queries regarding the data and technical methodology that underpin the IUC can be sent to Dean Riddlesden (PhD, University of Liverpool) at:

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