

Accessibility

1. Internet Access

1.1. The Office for National Statistics have been producing statistics around internet users in the United Kingdom and the following figure shows the age groups using the internet the most and least.

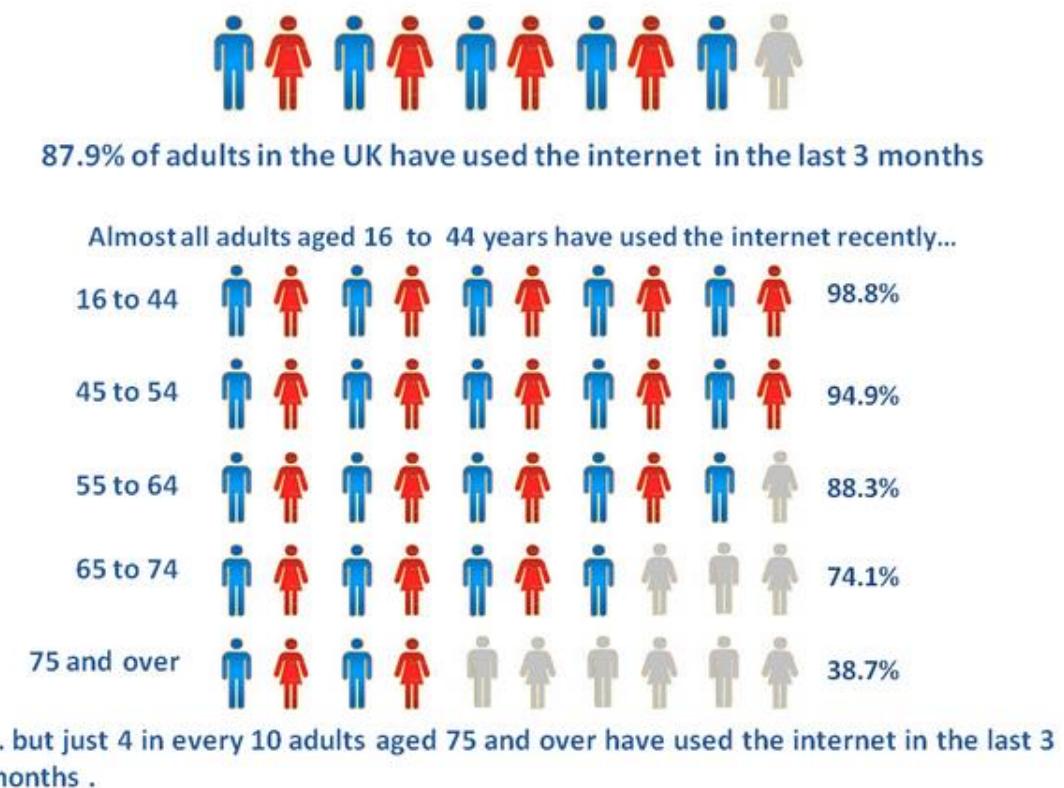


Figure 3: Recent internet users by age group, UK, 2016¹

1.2. When comparing Gloucestershire to the South West region and U.K. the county measures up favourably, especially from 2014 onwards where the gap seems to widen considerably. The following figure is taken from ONS studies into the proportion of people surveyed who are NOT using the internet – specifically those who last used the internet over 3 months ago and those who have never used the internet. Nationally, regionally and locally the percentages of people are declining due to more people using the internet and the increase in smart phone usage among many other factors. 7.9% of respondents in Gloucestershire admit to not having used

¹ Source: Office for National Statistics

the internet in over 3 months (or never used) compared against 12% in the U.K. and 10.1% in the South West region.

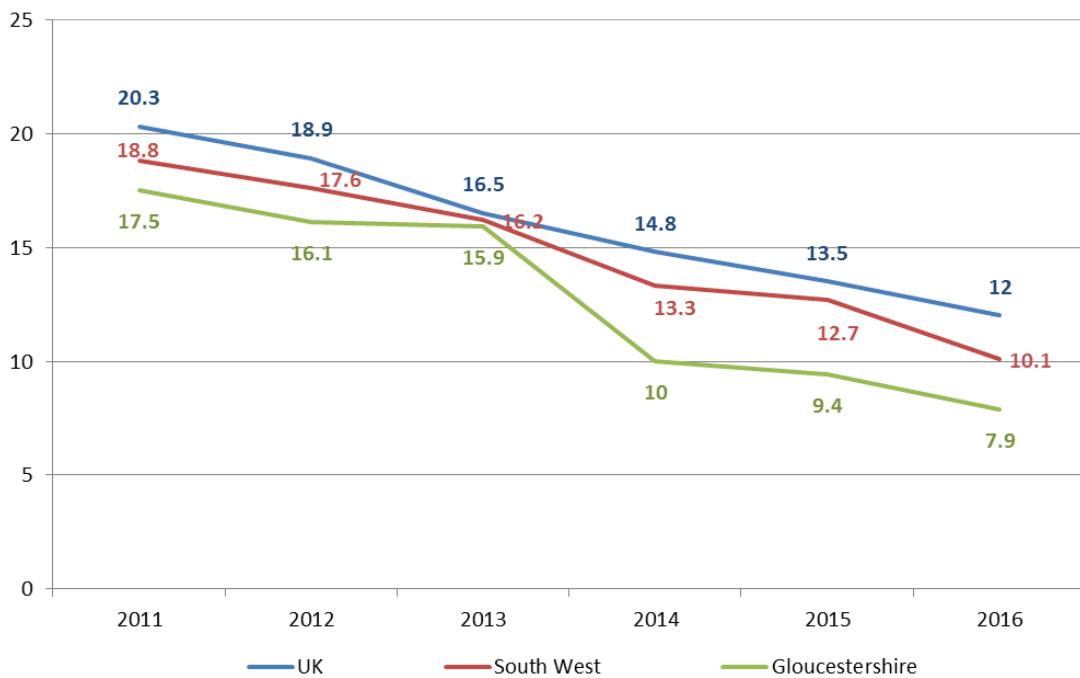


Figure 4: Lapsed internet users/internet non-users²

- 1.3. Moving council services online, the onset of Universal Credit and the move towards making all applications for any type of benefit online only, has prompted local authorities to explore and understand the need within their local areas.
- 1.4. *Fastershire*, a partnership between the county councils of Gloucestershire and Herefordshire, aim to bring faster broadband to the two counties and the “ultimate aim is that by 2018 there will be access to fast broadband for all who need it”³.
- 1.5. Whilst the broadband infrastructure develops, Gloucestershire County Council have produced a report⁴ around the likelihood of internet usage using ACORN⁵ and have identified sites around the county where free and secure internet is available (as well as computer training in the use of the internet) for those not owning computer equipment⁶. Working in

² *Ibid*

³ <http://www.fastershire.com/about-fastershire/strategy#home>

⁴ Report - <https://inform.goucestershire.gov.uk/viewpage.aspx?c=page&page=InsightOurResidents-Internet> and Interactive Atlas Report - https://inform.goucestershire.gov.uk/App_Customers/other/CustomerSegmentation/Internet/IA2014/atl.html

⁵ CACI Limited 2014

⁶ Google Map of Gloucestershire's Public Internet Access Points

partnership with district councils and the housing associations that operate in Gloucestershire we have been able to identify those residents likely to be most at risk of not being able to apply for Universal Credit.

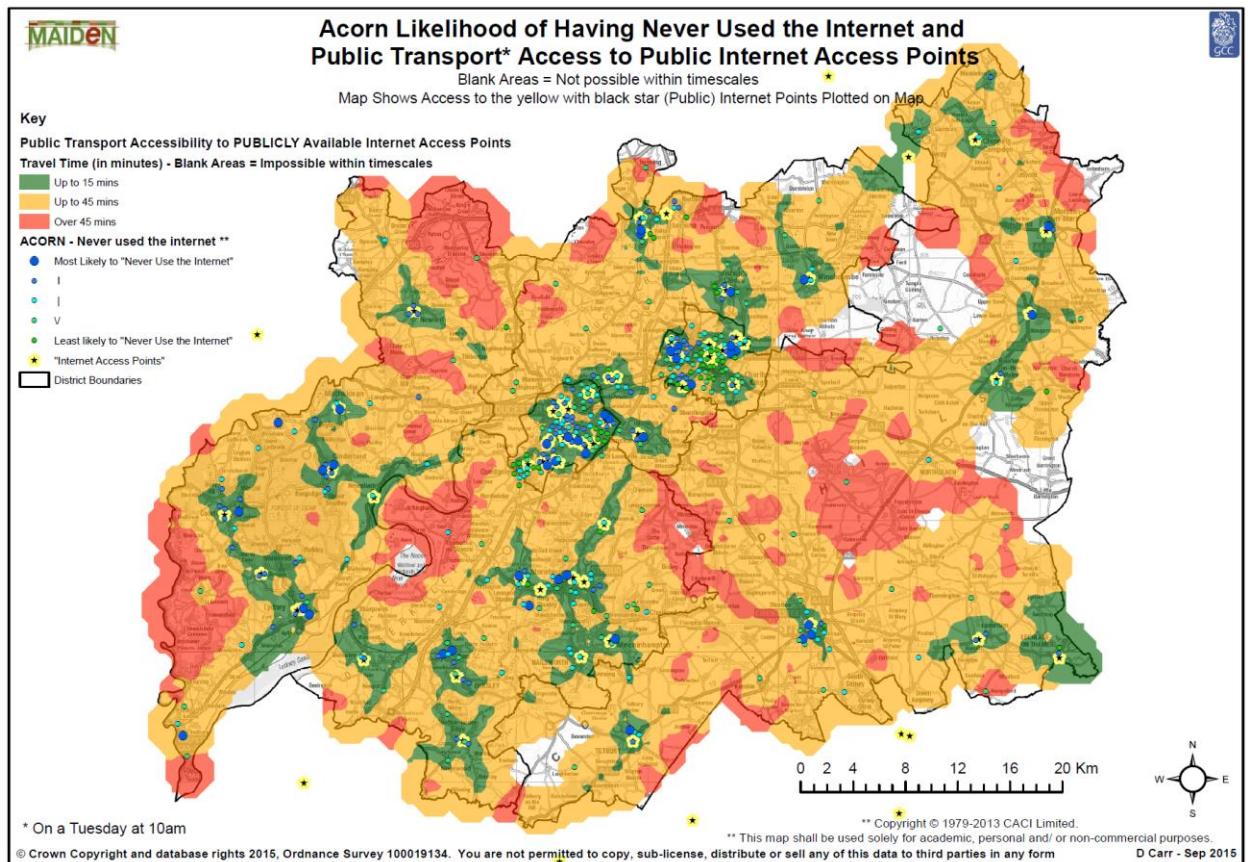


Figure 5: Map showing Publicly Available Internet, ACORN likelihood of “Having Never Used the Internet” and Public Transport Access to Publicly Available Internet

1.6. Figure 5 shows three layers of information:

- The location of publicly available *Internet Access Points* (yellow points with black star)
- ACORN customer segmentation information on likelihood of *having never used the internet* – the larger blue points are the centroids of the neighbourhoods that are most likely to never use the internet i.e. the most at risk group in this study.
- *Travel time* from all Gloucestershire postcodes to the nearest / quickest internet access point *using public transport*. Red areas are over 45 minutes away from their local internet access point and areas with no background colour are not able to get to their local internet access point using public transport.

- 1.7. The map shows that the most at risk groups (those most likely to have never used the internet) in the larger blue points are generally located near to, or within a 45 minute bus journey of, an internet access point. If these groups are unlikely to have never used the internet then it can be assumed that they are unlikely to own a home computer. As some public services are trending towards being online, the majority of this group will be able to access a community centre within 15 minutes (green shaded areas). Neighbourhoods of Kings Stanley, Ruardean and Sedbury (near Chepstow) identifies as likely to have never used the internet can access their local internet access point within 45 minutes.
- 1.8. Local internet access points include all public libraries and community centres where secure internet is available. Publicly available Wi-Fi points such as those found in cafes are excluded due to the nature of this study (applications for Universal Credit online) and Interpol's advice regarding the security risk of sharing personal/financial details using them⁷.

⁷ BBC Article: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-26469598>