Technical Notes

Essential Digital Skills methodology

Sample

Ipsos MORI interviewed 4,233 participants aged 15+ years in the UK (Great Britain and Northern Ireland) via their face-to-face Omnibus. Data are weighted to represent the UK population in terms of age, social grade, region and working status within the gender variable, and additional profiles on tenure and ethnicity using PAMco data.

Fieldwork dates

10th-27th January 2020

Fieldwork methodology

The Ipsos MORI face-to-face Omnibus (also known as CAPIBUS), was used as the methodology for the Essential Digital Skills study. CAPIBUS interviews a nationally representative sample of those aged 15+ in Great Britain. An additional sample of interviews in Northern Ireland was then conducted to ensure UK representivity (n=150). CAPIBUS uses face-to-face interviewing to ensure no online bias and is conducted in-home rather than on the doorstep, which engages respondents and fundamentally improves the quality of responses.

The sample design incorporates a range of variables to ensure a robust, representative and consistent sample is achieved on a weekly basis. CAPIBUS uses a unique and rigorous sampling method – a form of random location sampling, using a control method applied to field region and sub-region over a robust number of sample points to ensure a good geographical spread. Interviewer quotas are set for gender, age, working status and tenure to ensure the sample is nationally representative – the CACI ACORN geodemographic system is used in the selection process.

The use of ACORN ensures all types of areas are fully represented and the selection of respondents is largely taken out of the hands of the interviewers, helping to eliminate any possible bias in the sample caused by interviewing people all with the same background. CAPIBUS uses a 'rim weighting' system which weights to the latest set of census data or mid-year estimates and NRS defined profiles for age, social grade, region and working status – within gender and additional profiles on tenure and ethnicity. Only a limited amount of corrective weighting is therefore needed to adjust the final results on our Omnibus survey, so that they are in line with the national demographic profile.

Essential Digital Skills calculation

The Essential Digital Skills report is based on data collected to help understand if people would be able to do a range of tasks in either a work setting or in their personal lives. These are grouped into six questions: Foundation, Communicating, Handling Information, Transacting, Problem Solving and Being safe and Legal online.

To achieve the Foundation skill, you must be able to complete all of the seven 'tasks' included in this question.

To achieve any of the skills in a 'Life' context you only need to be able to complete one tasks from that skill question in your personal life, but you also must have the Foundation skill. If you have all five Life skills (as well as Foundation, you are classed as having 'Life EDS'. Across all five skills there are a total of 29 Life Tasks.

If you are employed, for each of the Life skills you have achieved, you are then able to achieve the equivalent work skill question, by being able to complete one task from that skill question in your working environment. As with Life EDS, if you can complete all five Work skills then you have achieved Work EDS. Across all five skills there are a total of 12 Work tasks.

UK Representivity and Population Estimates

This report includes the numbers of people we have inferred to be in a particular group by extrapolating from our research data (for example, the number of those 15+ in the UK with all seven Foundation tasks is 84% which we have extrapolated to represent an estimated 45.5 million people). Total population figures are taken from the most recently published estimates provided by the Office for National Statistics (2018 mid-year stats for the UK). For the Essential Digital Skills data, percentages are applied to a population base aged 15+ (54,513,000). Total working population figures are taken from the most recently published estimates provided by the Office for National Statistics (2018 mid-year stats for the UK), weighted to the Labour Force Survey stats (Labour Force Study Aug-Oct 2019). For the Essential Digital Skills data, percentages are applied to a working population base aged 15+ (32,801,000). Sources can be found below:
ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/articles/overviewoftheukpopulation/august2019
ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/timeseries/mgrz/lms

Whilst every care has been taken to ensure the robustness of our data, our data accuracy is limited by its sample size, and therefore there is a margin of error that exists around any figures reported. All significance testing is calculated at the 95% confidence level, with the 95% confidence interval to be used for all population extrapolations. This means that the population size of any group, actually lies in a range which we have calculated and included in this set of appendices.

Impairment classification

The following question was asked to the respondents in the survey to establish impairment status:

'Do any of these condition(s) or illness(es) affect your ability to carry out day-to-day activities?
Select all that apply'
1. Addiction, e.g. drugs, alcohol, gambling
2. Vision, e.g. blindness or partial sight
3. Hearing, e.g. deafness or partial hearing
4. Mobility, e.g. walking short distances or climbing stairs
5. Dexterity, e.g. lifting and carrying objects, or using a keyboard
6. Learning, understanding or concentrating
7. Memory, e.g. forgetting conversations or appointments
8. Mental health e.g. depression, anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)
9. Stamina, breathing or fatigue
10. Socially or behaviourally (associated with a mental health condition, or with a developmental disorder like autism or ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder))
11. None of these conditions severely affect my ability to carry out day-to-day activities
99. Don't know
97. Prefer not to say

In the report, nets were created such that 'Has an impairment' is a combination of any impairments (codes 1-10); 'Sensory (sight or sound)' is a combination of vision and hearing (codes 2 or 3), 'Physical' is a combination of mobility, dexterity and stamina, breathing or fatigue (codes 4, 5 or 9) and 'Learning or memory' is a combination of learning and memory (codes 6 or 7).

Employment classification

The following question was asked to the working respondents in the survey to understand their workplace:

Which of the following best describes the industry your company operates in?
1. Telecommunications
2. Technology
3. CPG/FMCG
4. Retail
5. Financial Services
6. Not for Profit
7. Manufacturing & Automotive
8. Travel
9. Media & Advertising
10. Government
11. Education
12. Medical
13. Public service
14. Engineering
15. Service industry
16. Something else (specify)

Which if any of these activities do you regularly do at work?
1. I sit at a desk
2. I deal with customers or clients directly e.g. face-to-face, email, phone, social media
3. I usually work in the same location as my colleagues
4. I use technology at work e.g. computer, tablet, smartphone
5. I work in the same location every day
6. I handle other people's data/information
99. None of these

Essential Digital Skills statements

Foundation Skill

- I can turn on a device and log in to any accounts/profiles I have
- I can use the available controls on a device (e.g. mouse, keyboard, touchscreen etc)
- I can use the different menu settings on a device to make it easier to use (e.g. change the font size to make it easier to read)
- I can find and open different applications/programmes on a device
- I can connect a device to a Wi-Fi network
- I can open an internet browser to find and use websites
- I can update and change my password when prompted to do so

EDS for life

Communicating Skill

- I can set up an email account
- I can communicate with others digitally using email or other messaging applications (e.g. WhatsApp or Messenger)
- I can use word processing applications to create documents (e.g. a CV or a letter)
- I can share documents with others by attaching them to an email
- I can communicate with others using video tools (e.g. Facetime or Skype)
- I can post content on social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, Instagram or Snapchat) for example messages, photographs, video etc.

Handling Information & Content Skill

- I can recognise what information or content may, or may not, be trustworthy on websites/apps
- I can use search engines to find the information I'm looking for (e.g. search for news using a browser such as Chrome, Internet Explorer or Safari)
- I can use bookmarks to save and retrieve websites and information
- I can store information online and access content from a different device (e.g. using the cloud)
- I can organise my information and content using files and folders (either on my device, across multiple devices, or on the cloud)
- I can use the internet to stream or download entertainment content (e.g. films, music, games or books)

Transacting Skill

- I can set up an account online that enables me to buy goods or services (e.g. Amazon account, eBay, John Lewis etc.)
- I can access and use public services online, including filling in forms (e.g. Vehicle tax, Voting registration, ordering repeat prescriptions, booking doctor appointments)
- I can use credit/ debit cards or other forms of online payment to buy goods/services online (e.g. PayPal, WorldPay)
- I can upload documents and photographs when this is required to complete an online transaction
- I can manage my money and transactions online securely, via websites or Apps (e.g. bank account)

Problem Solving Skill
- I can use online tutorials, web chat, FAQs and forums to solve problems
- I can use online tutorials, web chat, FAQs and forums to improve my skills in using the internet and digital Apps/ products/services
- I can use the internet to find information that helps me solve problems

Being Safe and Legal Online Skill
- I can assess the risks and threats involved in carrying out activities online and act accordingly (e.g. use security software)
- I am careful with what I share online as I know that online activity produces a permanent record that can be accessed by others
- I make sure not to share or use other people's data or intellectual property without their consent
- I can respond to requests for authentication (e.g. reactivate an account when I've forgotten my password)
- I can keep the information I use to access my online accounts secure, by using different and secure passwords for websites and accounts
- I can set privacy settings on my social media and other accounts
- I can identify secure websites by looking for the padlock and 'https' in the address bar
- I can recognise and avoid suspicious links in email, websites, social media messages and pop ups and know that clicking on these links is a risk
- I can update my computer security systems when necessary to prevent viruses and other risks

EDS for Work

Communicating Skill
- I can use digital collaboration tools to meet with, share and collaborate with people (e.g. Skype/Google docs/ Dropbox etc)
- I can set up and manage an account on a professional online network / community, (e.g. LinkedIn, Total Jobs, Indeed)

Handling Information & Content Skill
- I can access, synchronise and share information across different devices (e.g. manage a calendar or appointment system via phone or desktop

Transacting Skill
- I can manage digital records and financial accounts (e.g. expenses, budgets) through digital systems
- I can access salary and expenses information digitally, including password protected payslips

Problem Solving Skill
- I can use the internet to find information that helps me solve problems
- I can use appropriate software, including a spreadsheet, to manipulate and analyse data
- I can use different digital tools to improve my own productivity i.e. saving time or working more efficiently

Being Safe and Legal Online Skill

- I can assess the risks and threats involved in carrying out activities online and act accordingly (e.g. use security software)
- I am careful with what I share online as I know that online activity produces a permanent record that can be accessed by others
- I make sure not to share or use other people's data or intellectual property without their consent
- I can respond to requests for authentication (e.g. reactivate an account when I've forgotten my password)
- I can keep the information I use to access my online accounts secure, by using different and secure passwords for websites and accounts
- I can set privacy settings on my social media and other accounts
- I can identify secure websites by looking for the padlock and 'https' in the address bar
- I can recognise and avoid suspicious links in email, websites, social media messages and pop ups and know that clicking on these links is a risk
- I can update my computer security systems when necessary to prevent viruses and other risks

Essential Digital Skills Survey Unweighted Sample Sizes

Page 40 & 47

2020 Sample Sizes
East Midlands 292
East England 389
London 610
North East 199
North West 435
Scotland 372
South East 557
South West 289
Wales 215
West Midlands 327
Yorkshire and the Humber 398
Northern Ireland 150
England 3,496
UK 4,233

Page 41

75+ 499
15-34 1,258
No formal qualifications 543
University degree 1,474
Working full-time 1,383
Retired 1,207
Sensory (light or sound) impairment 332
No impairment 2,995
Widowed, Divorced, Separated 690
Single 1,255
Household income <£17,499 891
Household income £50,000+ 715
Male 2,198
Female 2,031
White 3,682
BAME 541

Page 42

No impairment 2,995
Have an impairment 1,099
Learning or memory 269
Sensory (light or sound) 332
Physical 600

Page 48

No formal qualifications 543
University degree 1,474
65+ 1,157
15-24 650
Working full-time 1,383
Retired 1,207
Physical 600
No impairment 2,995
Widowed, Divorced, Separated 690
Single 1,255
Male 2,198
Female 2,031
Suburban 1,014
Metropolitan 1,041
White 3,682
BAME 541

Page 53

2020 Sample Sizes
East Midlands 155
East England 200
London 380
North East 94
North West 193
Scotland 159
South East 316
South West 124
Wales 88
West Midlands 122
Yorkshire and the Humber 208

Northern Ireland 78
England 1,792

Page 54

No formal qualifications 112
University degree 993
65+ 104
35-54 923
Part-time 464
Self-employed 270
Physical impairment 115
No impairment 1,730
Widowed, Divorced, Separated 214
Married/ Living as couple 1,312
White 1,807
BAME 306
Male 1,154
Female 961

Page 55

Finance services 92
Retail 235
Public Service 199
Technology 104
Manufacturing & Automotive 119
Services 301
Construction 60

Those who sit at a desk 957
Those who use technology at work 1,332
Those who handle people's information 1,015

Mid-market (1000-5000) 190

Part-time 464
Full-time 1,383

Essential Digital Skills Population Estimates Confidence Intervals

Foundation Skill Extrapolations – based on ONS 2018 mid-year stats for the UK 15+

Source	Reference	Percentage results	Estimated Grossed Figure (millions)	Lower Confidence Interval	Upper Confidence Interval
Page 38	Can do Foundation	83.51%	45.5	44.9	46.1
Page 38	Increase in can do Foundation 2020 vs 2019	2.26%	1.3	1.0	1.5
Page 38	Do not have Foundation	16.49%	9.0	8.4	9.6
Page 38	Cannot do any Foundation tasks	8.69%	4.7	4.2	5.2
Page 56	Employed but can do no Foundation tasks	1.31%	0.7	0.6	0.9
Page 56	Employed and can do between 1 and 6 Foundation Tasks	1.97%	1.1	0.9	1.3
Page 56	Retired but can do no Foundation tasks	6.18%	3.4	3.0	3.8
Page 56	Retired and can do between 1 and 6 Foundation Tasks	4.64%	2.5	2.1	2.9
Page 56	Unemployed but can do no Foundation tasks	1.18%	0.6	0.5	0.8
Page 56	Unemployed and can do between 1 and 6 Foundation Tasks	1.21%	0.6	0.5	0.8

Life and Work Skills Extrapolations – based on ONS 2018 mid-year stats for the UK 15+

Source	Reference	Percentage results	Estimated Grossed Figure (millions)	Lower Confidence Interval	Upper Confidence Interval
Page 46	Can do all 29 Life tasks	53.08%	28.9	28.1	29.8
Page 56	Have EDS for Work	28.74%	15.7	14.9	16.4
Page 56	Employed, and have EDS for Life but not Work	24.89%	13.6	12.9	14.3
Page 43 & Page 49	Retired and lack EDS for Life	11.95%	6.5	6.0	7.1
Page 43	Have EDS for Life	78.50%	42.8	42.1	43.4
Page 43	Do not have EDS for Life	21.50%	11.7	11.1	12.4
Page 56	Employed and have the Foundation Skill but not EDS for Life	3.27%	1.8	1.5	2.1
Page 56	Retired and have EDS for Life	10.88%	5.9	5.4	6.4
Page 56	Retired and have the Foundation Skill but not EDS for Life	1.13%	0.6	0.5	0.8
Page 56	Unemployed and have EDS for Life	13.98%	7.6	7.1	8.2
Page 56	Unemployed and have the Foundation Skill but not EDS for Life	0.62%	0.3	0.2	0.5

Foundation Tasks Extrapolations – based on ONS 2018 mid-year stats for the UK 15+

Source	Reference	Percentage results	Estimated Grossed Figure (millions)	Lower Confidence Interval	Upper Confidence Interval
Page 39	I cannot use the different menu settings on a device to make it easier to use	13.66%	7.4	6.9	8.0
Page 39	I cannot connect a device to a Wi-Fi network	12.32%	6.7	6.2	7.3
Page 39	I cannot update and change my password when prompted to do so	12.11%	6.6	6.1	7.1
Page 39	I cannot find and open different applications/programmes on a device	11.94%	6.5	6.0	7.1
Page 39	I cannot turn on a device and log in to any accounts/profiles I have	10.77%	5.9	5.4	6.4
Page 39	I cannot open an Internet browser to find and use websites	10.06%	5.5	5.0	6.0
Page 39	I cannot use the available controls on a device (e.g. mouse, keyboard, touchscreen etc.)	9.41%	5.1	4.6	5.6

Life Tasks Extrapolations – based on ONS 2018 mid-year stats for the UK 15+

Source	Reference	Percentage results	Estimated Grossed Figure (millions)	Lower Confidence Interval	Upper Confidence Interval
Other	I cannot communicate with others using video tools	24.73%	13.5	12.8	14.2
Page 44	I can set up an email account	79.34%	43.3	42.6	43.9
Page 44	I can communicate with others digitally	79.26%	43.2	42.6	43.9
Page 44	I can attach documents to an email and share	78.85%	43.0	42.3	43.6
Page 44	I can create documents using word processing applications	77.49%	42.2	41.5	43.0
Page 44	I can communicate with others using video tools	75.27%	41.0	40.3	41.7
Page 44	I can post content on social media platforms	74.58%	40.7	39.9	41.4
Page 44	I can set up an account online that enables me to buy goods or services	78.68%	42.9	42.2	43.5
Page 44	I can use credit/debit cards or other forms of online payment to buy goods/services online	79.03%	43.1	42.4	43.7
Page 44	I can access and use public services online, including filling in forms	77.21%	42.1	41.4	42.8

Page 44	I can upload documents and photographs when this is required to complete an online transaction	77.33%	42.2	41.4	42.9
Page 44	I can manage my money and transactions online securely, via websites or apps	76.56%	41.7	41.0	42.4
Page 44	I can use the Internet to find information that helps me solve problems	79.31%	43.2	42.6	43.9
Page 44	I can use online tutorials, web chat, FAQs and forums to solve problems	73.10%	39.9	39.1	40.6
Page 44	I can use online tutorials, web chat, FAQs and forums to improve my skills in using the Internet and digital apps/products/services	72.42%	39.5	38.7	40.2
Page 45	I can use search engines to find the information	80.39%	43.8	43.2	44.5
Page 45	I can recognise what information or content may, or may not, be trustworthy on websites/apps	77.45%	42.2	41.5	42.9
Page 45	I can use the Internet to stream or download entertainment content	75.99%	41.4	40.7	42.1
Page 45	I can organise my information and content using files and folders	75.30%	41.0	40.3	41.8
Page 45	I can use bookmarks to save and retrieve websites and information	74.26%	40.5	39.8	41.2
Page 45	I can store information online and access content from a different device	72.81%	39.7	39.0	40.4
Page 45	I am careful with what I share online as I know that online activity produces a permanent record that can be accessed by others	79.00%	43.1	42.4	43.7
Page 45	I can respond to requests for authentication	78.96%	43.0	42.4	43.7
Page 45	I make sure not to share or use other people's data or intellectual property without their consent	77.60%	42.3	41.6	43.0
Page 45	I can keep the information I use to access my online accounts secure, by using different and secure passwords for websites and accounts	78.46%	42.8	42.1	43.4
Page 45	I can recognise and avoid suspicious links in email, websites, social media messages and pop ups and know that clicking on these links is a risk	77.66%	42.3	41.6	43.0
Page 45	I can assess the risks and threats involved in carrying out activities online and act accordingly	76.18%	41.5	40.8	42.2
Page 45	I can set privacy settings on my social media and other accounts	75.79%	41.3	40.6	42.0

| Page 45 | I can identify secure websites by looking for the padlock and 'https' in the address bar | 76.30% | 41.6 | 40.9 | 42.3 |
| Page 45 | I can update my computer security systems when necessary to prevent viruses and other risks | 75.17% | 41.0 | 40.3 | 41.7 |

Work Skills Extrapolations – based on ONS Labour Force Study Aug-Oct 2019

Source	Reference	Percentage results	Estimated Grossed Figure (millions)	Lower Confidence Interval	Upper Confidence Interval
Page 50	Total employed without EDS for Work	52.24%	17.2	16.4	17.8
Page 50	Employed, and have Foundation and Life EDS but not Work	41.37%	13.6	12.9	14.3
Page 54	Employed and have a physical impairment	5.45%	1.8	1.5	2.1

Work Tasks Extrapolations – based on ONS Labour Force Study Aug-Oct 2019

Source	Reference	Percentage results	Estimated Grossed Figure (millions)	Lower Confidence Interval	Upper Confidence Interval
Page 51	I can use digital collaboration tools to meet with, share and collaborate with people	54.30%	17.8	17.1	18.5
Page 51	I can set up and manage an account on a professional online network/community,	53.90%	17.7	17.0	18.4
Page 51	I can access salary and expenses information digitally, including password protected payslips	55.73%	18.3	17.6	19.0
Page 51	I can manage digital records and financial accounts	52.84%	17.0	16.6	18.0
Page 52	I can use the Internet to find information that helps me solve problems	60.15%	19.7	19.0	20.4
Page 52	I can use appropriate software, including a spreadsheet, to manipulate and analyse data	56.05%	18.4	17.7	19.1
Page 52	I can use different digital tools to improve my own productivity i.e. saving time or working more efficiently	55.92%	18.3	17.7	19.0
Page 52	I can access, synchronise and share information across different devices	57.67%	18.9	18.2	19.6

Page 52	I make sure not to share or use other people's data or intellectual property without their consent	59.61%	19.6	18.9	20.2
Page 52	I can respond to requests for authentication	59.27%	19.4	18.8	20.1
Page 52	I am careful with what I share online as I know that online activity produces a permanent record that can be accessed by others	58.99%	19.4	18.7	20.0
Page 52	I can keep the information I use to access my online accounts secure, by using different and secure passwords for websites and accounts	58.38%	19.2	18.5	19.8
Page 52	I can recognise and avoid suspicious links in email, websites, social media messages and pop ups and know that clicking on these links is a risk	58.27%	19.1	18.4	19.8
Page 52	I can assess the risks and threats involved in carrying out activities online and act accordingly	57.08%	18.7	18.0	19.4
Page 52	I can identify secure websites by looking for the padlock and 'https' in the address bar	56.85%	18.7	18.0	19.3
Page 52	I can update my computer security systems when necessary to prevent viruses and other risks	54.00%	17.7	17.0	18.4
Page 52	I can set privacy settings on my social media and other accounts	52.71%	17.3	16.6	18.0