

# Older Britons making less use of IT

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Britain's Office of Communications said older people and poorer households could benefit more from communications technologies.

In surveying 3,000 people nationwide, Ofcom's consumer panel found that older people were least likely to be aware of, understand, or own new communications tools.

"There have been some encouraging improvements since last year especially around people's awareness of digital TV and broadband, but it is clear that certain groups within society are not reaping full benefit from the communications market. Low-income households, for example, are less likely to have the internet or landlines, but spend proportionately more of their income on communications technology than the rest of the population and are least likely to switch suppliers," said Colette Bowe, chairman of the panel.

The study also found that low-income households were twice as likely as the national average to feel they could not use phones or the Internet due to cost.

"Of particular concern to us is that age continues to be the most significant factor in keeping informed with developments -- 77 percent of people over 65 say they do not keep informed about new developments and 73 percent of retired people. The Panel is conducting further research to understand the barriers and motivating factors for older people which we will release in July this year. Our research provides a vital stock take for the communications industry and shows

there are still problems which it needs to address," Bowe added.

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