

Changing Face of the Web - A Ten Year Review - UK - July 2010

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What is this report about?

The last decade has been characterised by rapid technological change, not to mention growing penetration of high-speed broadband internet access. This has revolutionised UK society as a whole. Today's consumers own increasing numbers of gadgets, from MP3 players to computers. At the same time, they are spending more time online, from chatting to friends on social networks to buying products on e-commerce sites. This report will track and discuss the underlying factors that have contributed to these trends. It will also analyse how these have affected consumer attitudes and behaviours and look at how web habits will evolve going forward.

What have we found out?

- In 2009 brands spent half a billion pounds on internet advertisers, up from £114 million in 2002. Growth reflects the increased reach of the internet, but also the increasing creative freedom of broadband to deliver rich media campaigns, such as online video ads.
- Social networks have grown in popularity because they are compelling places to connect and socialise online. However, for some, social networks are also research tools - with 15% of respondents saying they use them to ask for information and advice from friends.
- Gadgets such as the Apple iPod have been lauded as examples of technology that anyone can use. However, only 29% of internet users feel gadgets are easier to use compared to five years ago, a reflection of the rapid rate of change and innovation in the market today.
- Between 1998 and 2009, the number of e-shoppers rose by 23 million, the amount spent in the last six months increasing from £195 to £589. This is a mark of the increased quality and range of e-commerce sites, not to mention growing trust when it comes to shopping online.
- Despite the trend towards convergence in new technology, only 16% of respondents say they require fewer gadgets as a result. This is because multifunctionality comes at a price premium - as is the case with the latest smartphones - making converged devices less accessible to the mass market.
- The importance of technology in consumers everyday lives is reflected in research which found only 13% of internet users claimed to know 'nothing' about the latest gadgets. By comparison, the majority of respondents (70%) knew a little bit to an average amount.

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