

**National Institute of Adult Continuing Education**  
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**Press Release**

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**MILLIONS OF ADULTS LACK ACCESS TO COMPUTERS AND INTERNET  
- NEW RESEARCH SHOWS**

Over one-third (36%) of adults do **not** have access to a computer and over two-fifths (42%) lack access to the Internet. These are the headline findings of the Annual Media Literacy Survey 2008 from NIACE (the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education) to be published today – Monday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2008 – at a joint NIACE/Ofcom Media Literacy Conference in London.

The survey - which examines adults' ability to access, understand and create a variety of media – also shows that more men (67%) than women (62%) have access to computers and the Internet (61% for men and 56% for women). However for those that do have access, sending emails (77%) is the most popular activity, even more so than general surfing (65%).

Four-fifths (80%) of adults have 'no interest' in publishing media – including blogs, podcasts, videos, own web pages or photographs in a public album - on the Internet. The most popular for those who are interested is 'publishing their own web pages'. However while three-quarters (75%) of adults have never published media on the Internet, one in five (20%) have. The most popular activity is uploading photographs to a public album. The least popular (1%) is 'creating and uploading a podcast', and 'contributing to a Wiki'.

With reference to other media over two-thirds (70%) of adults are 'satisfied' with the amount of choice and variety on television including almost two-fifths (17%) saying that they are 'very satisfied'. This compares to over one-quarter (26%) feeling 'dissatisfied', including just over one-in-twenty adults (6%) feeling 'not at all satisfied'.

Four-fifths (81%) of adults watch television for more than 6 hours a week and almost one-third (32%) watch for more than 20 hours a week. The common stereotype of men flicking between channels with the remote seems to have some truth. Nearly

one-third (30%) of men admit to 'switching around a lot when they are watching television', compared to less than two-fifths (18%) of women.

However over two-fifths (41%) of women say they have 'favourite regular programmes but don't watch much else', compared to less than three-fifths (27%) of men. And although over four-fifths (83%) of adults have access to a DVD player over two-thirds (68%) of adults spend no more than two hours using them a week.

Robin Blake, Head of Media Literacy, Ofcom, said, "People without the skills to use new communications technologies run the risk of being excluded socially, politically and financially. We all need to help people develop their media literacy to build confidence to benefit from the many opportunities available in this digital world. That's why we are so pleased to be working with NIACE to promote media literacy."

Rachel Thomson, NIACE Lead Officer for Media Literacy, said, "What we see and hear from the media shapes our sense of reality and our understanding of the world around us. Yet significant numbers of adults remain on the wrong side of the digital divide. Television continues to play an important role in our leisure time. Too often, however, assumptions are made about people's ability to participate in the virtual world. Considerable effort is needed to ensure that those who are already marginalised do not become yet further disadvantaged."

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**Notes to Editors**

1. The Annual NIACE Media Literacy Survey 2008 is authored by Alan Tuckett, Fiona Aldridge and Hayley Lamb. Copies are available to journalists, please contact Ed Melia, NIACE Press Officer, on 0116 204 4248 or 07795 358 870 or email [ed.melia@niace.org.uk](mailto:ed.melia@niace.org.uk); or Marie Koupparis, NIACE Assistant Press Officer on 0116 204 4279 or 07824 481 499 or email: [marie.koupparis@niace.org.uk](mailto:marie.koupparis@niace.org.uk)

2. The findings of the Annual NIACE Media Literacy Survey 2008 will be made public at the joint NIACE/Ofcom Conference – *Media Literacy: Opening Access to Adults* to be held at the Thistle Marble Arch in London on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2008. More information available at: <http://www.niace.org.uk/Conferences/medialiteracy.htm>
3. NIACE conducts a survey on adult participation in learning every year. This analyses both current engagement in learning and plans for take up of future learning. The 2008 survey, interviewed a weighted sample of 4,932 adults, aged 17 and over, in the UK. A range of questions was asked on adult participation in learning, on attitudes towards learning, on literacy, numeracy and language skills and on media literacy.
4. The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) is the leading non-government organisation for lifelong learning in England, and exists to encourage more and different adults to engage in better-quality learning of all kinds. It campaigns for, and celebrates the achievements of, all adult learners.