



Office for
National Statistics

Analysing UK Leisure Time for the Digital Age/Economy

Chris S Payne, Rhian Jones, Callum
Thomson, Laura Harding

Content

- Rationale
- Defining leisure time for the 21st century
- UK Time Use Surveys
- Results and impact
- Conclusions

Why investigate leisure time?

- Publishing statistics on the division of unpaid work in the UK
- Policy editor of prime-time BBC Television current affairs programme picks up on ONS time use analysis on unpaid work, but their interest is leisure time
- The question – are weekends still the preserve of the middle classes, following up on previous research (Gershuny; year unknown) which showed this to be the case
- Relevance for well-being (See Haworth and Lewis, 2005) – extending the ONS ‘beyond GDP’ work programme.

What modern issues might describe how leisure different today compared to 15 years ago?

- Screen time
- Loneliness
- Obesity/inactivity
- 'Zero hours' employment, unsociable hours

...Objective and subjective understanding required

- To what extent have modern socio-economic characteristics changed the quantity or quality of leisure in the UK?

UK time-use surveys (most recent)

- 2000/01 UK TUS (ONS; HETUS compliant)
- 2005 ONS Omnibus (light diary)
- 2014/15 UK TUS (CTUR/NatCen; Gershuny and Sullivan, 2017; HETUS compliant)

2000/01 time diary instrument

Time am	What were you doing? Please record your main activity for each 10 minute period. Enter one main activity on each line	What else were you doing? Write in most important activity you were doing at the same time eg looking after children, listening to the radio or having a drink	Where were you? eg at home, at friends in car, on bus, train, cycling, walking	Were you with anybody? Please mark the boxes				
				Alone	Children up to 9 living in your household	Children aged 10 to 14 living in your household	Other household members	Other persons that you know
7.00 - 7.10				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.10 - 7.20				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.20 - 7.30				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.30 - 7.40				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.40 - 7.50				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.50 - 8.00				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.00 - 8.10				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.10 - 8.20				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.20 - 8.30				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.30 - 8.40				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.40 - 8.50				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.50 - 9.00				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2005 light time diary instrument

[illegible]

2014/15 time diary instrument

Example

- Record your main activity for each 10-minute period
- Only one main activity on each line!
- Distinguish between first and second job, if any.
- Distinguish between travel and the activity that is the reason for travelling.
- Don't forget the mode of transport or location and whether you were using a smartphone, tablet or computer.
- Please remember to record who you were with.

- For each 10-minute period, please write in how much you enjoyed this time on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 meaning you didn't enjoy it at all and 7 meaning that you enjoyed it very much.
- For example, if you didn't enjoy an activity at all then you would write 1 in the box.

This includes children aged 8 and over

Day 1
Time: 7am – 10am
Morning

Day 1
Time: 7am – 10am

Time: 7am–10am Morning (am)	What were you doing? Please write down one main activity.	If you did something else at the same time, what else did you do?	Did you use a smartphone, tablet, or computer?	Where were you? Location, or mode of transport	Were you alone or with somebody you know? Mark all relevant boxes								How much did you enjoy this time? 1 = not at all 7 = very much
					Alone	Spouse / partner	Mother	Father	Child aged 0-7	Other person	Others you know		
7am-7.10	Woke up the children		<input type="checkbox"/>	At home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5
7.10-7.20	Had breakfast	checked emails	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	↓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	6
7.20-7.30	" "	Talked with my family	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5
7.30-7.40	Cleared the table	Listened to the radio	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
7.40-7.50	↓	↓	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	↓
7.50-8am	Helped the children dressing	Talked with my children	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8am-8.10	" "	↓	<input type="checkbox"/>	↓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	↓
8.10-8.20	Went to the day care centre	↓	<input type="checkbox"/>	on foot	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Use an arrow or quote marks to record that an activity lasted longer than 10 minutes.

Definition of leisure time

Includes:

- **Participatory activities** (e.g. religion, unpaid meetings when not in position of trust)
- **Social life and social entertainment** (e.g. parties, clubs, pubs, visiting friends, socialising over the phone)
- **Culture and cultural entertainment** (e.g. visiting concerts, museums, libraries, wildlife or historical sites)
- **Resting, time out**
- **Sports and exercise**
- **Hobbies, games and computing**
- **Mass media** (e.g. TV, radio reading)
- **Travel** associated with leisure

Excludes:

- **Personal care** (eating in, sleeping, washing)
- **Paid work or study**
- **Unpaid work** (childcare, adult care, housework, transport unrelated to leisure)

Why use time-use data?

Advantages

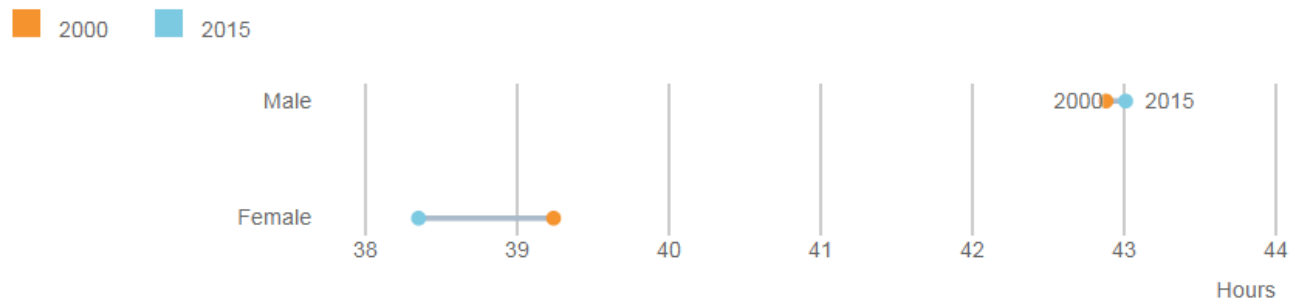
- Accuracy
- Completeness
- Context
- Richness
- Comparability

Disadvantages

- Not annual
- Non-response
- Sample size limitations making some cross-tabs unavailable
- More complex to analyse

Headline results – how does leisure breakdown across different groups in the UK?

Leisure hours taken per week, by sex, 2000 and 2015



Source: 2000 and 2015 UK Harmonised Time Use Survey

What about other sub-groups of the UK population?

Figure 12: Mean total daily leisure time by work status and sex, UK, 2015

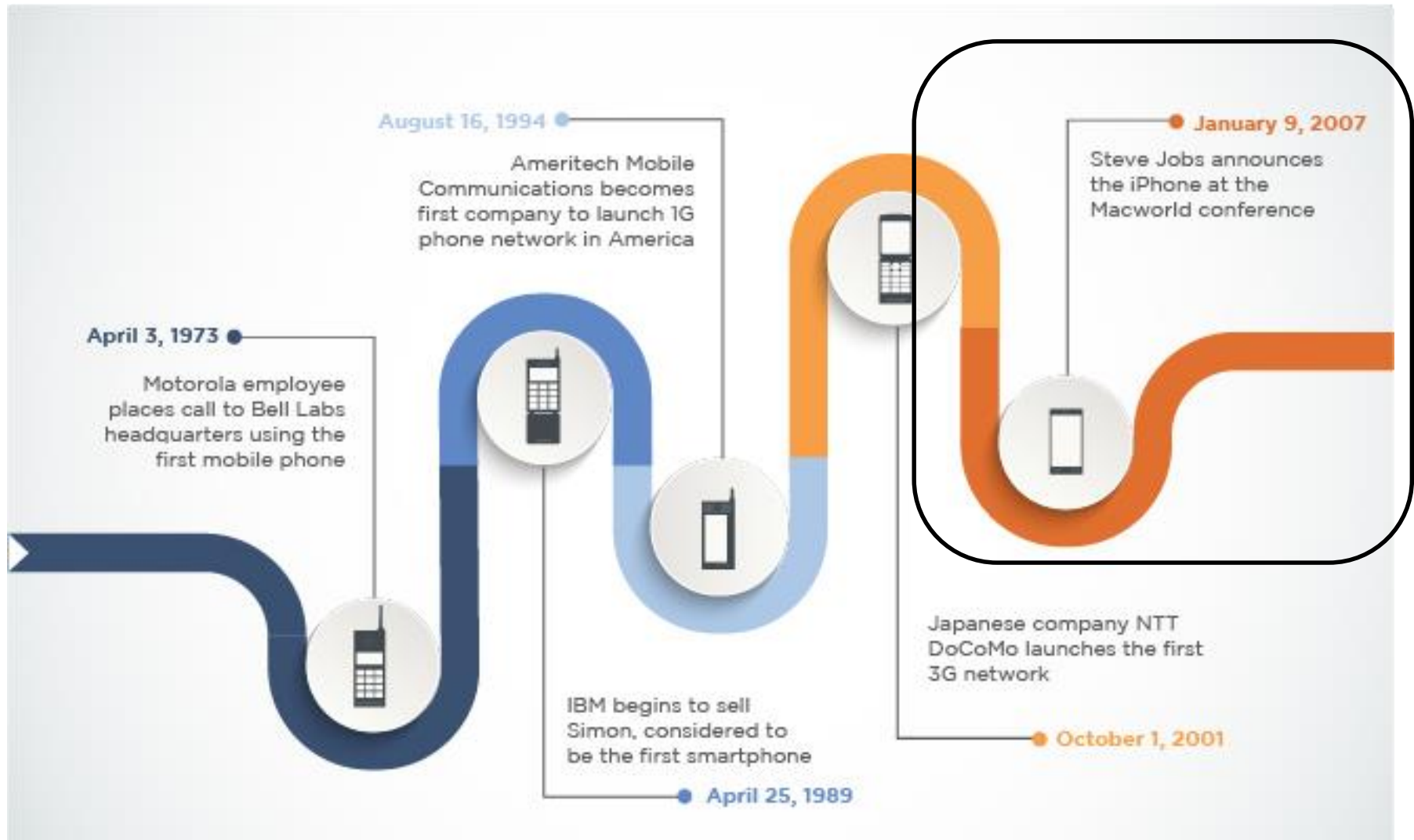


Source: Harmonised European Time Use Survey, 2015

Modernisation of time-use (1)

UNDERSTANDING THE QUALITY OF LEISURE TIME

The birth of smart devices and the rise of device use



Source: Sciencenode.org; Copyright © 2018 Science Node TM

Socio-economic impact of smart devices

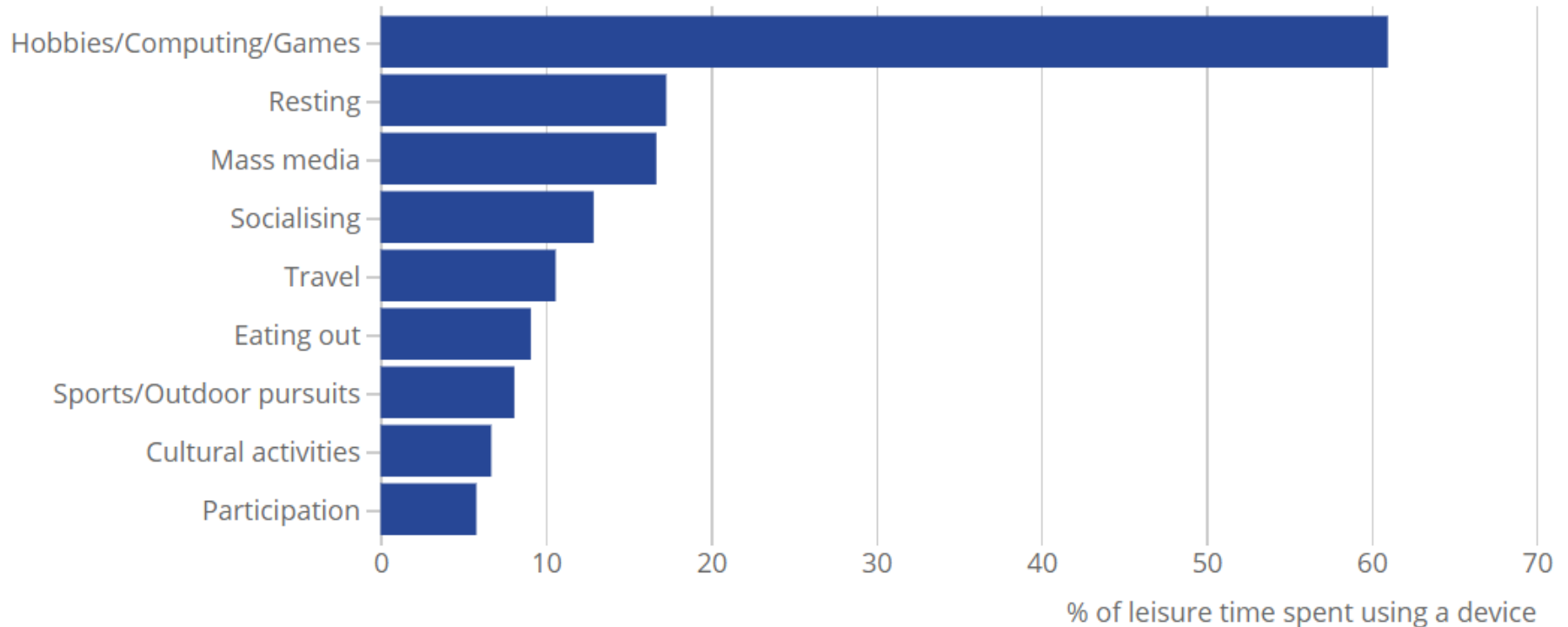
Table 2: Comparing consumption time of information by computing and devices with expenditure on information processing equipment

year	Average time spent computing or using devices per diary day	Average time computing per diary day	Average time computing on days when computing took place	Volume of information processing equipment purchased	Volume of telephone and telefax services purchased, including internet data use
	Minutes	Minutes	Minutes	£ millions	£ millions
2000	7.0	7.0	83.8	366	12263
2015	164.9	21.0	70.0	5971	21265
Change %	2249	198	-16	1531	73

Note: Expenditure estimates are chained volume measures - seasonally adjusted

Device-use and leisure time

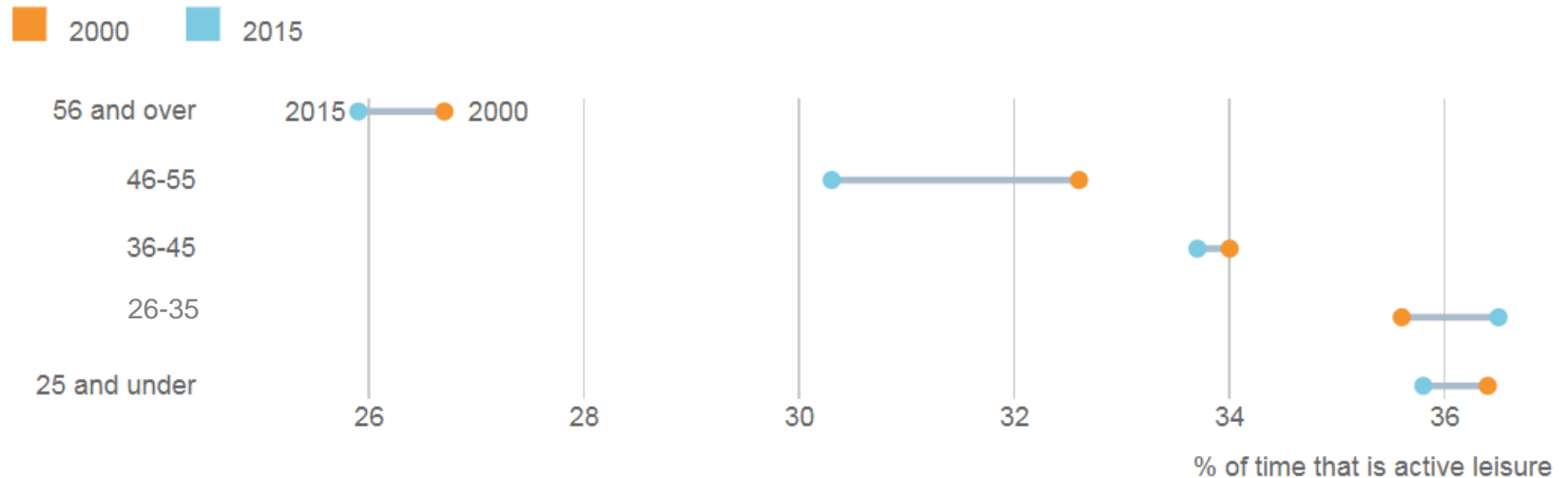
Device and leisure time use broken down by activity



Source: [2015 UK Harmonised Time Use Survey](#)

Active vs non-active leisure time

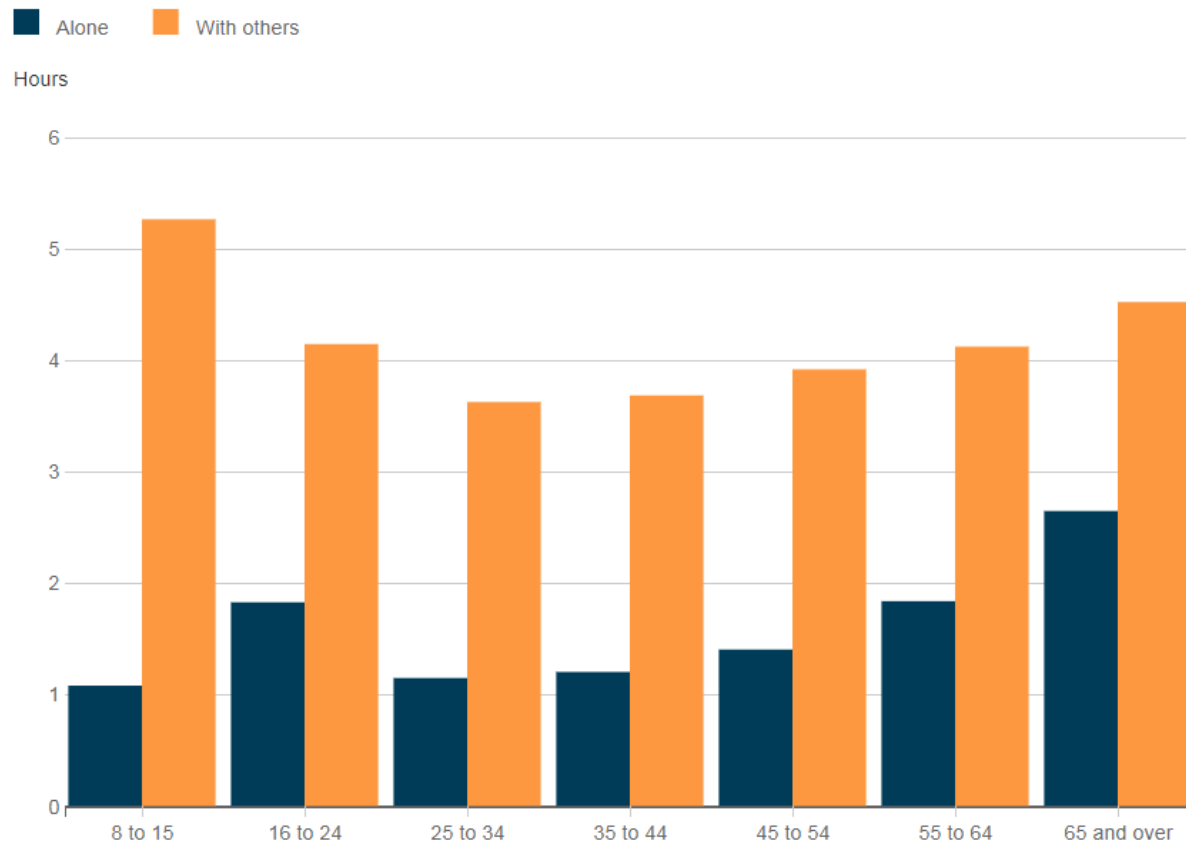
Change in active leisure since 2000



Source: 2000 and 2015 UK Harmonised Time Use Survey

Leisure time alone

Leisure time spent alone and with others per day, by age group;
UK, 2015



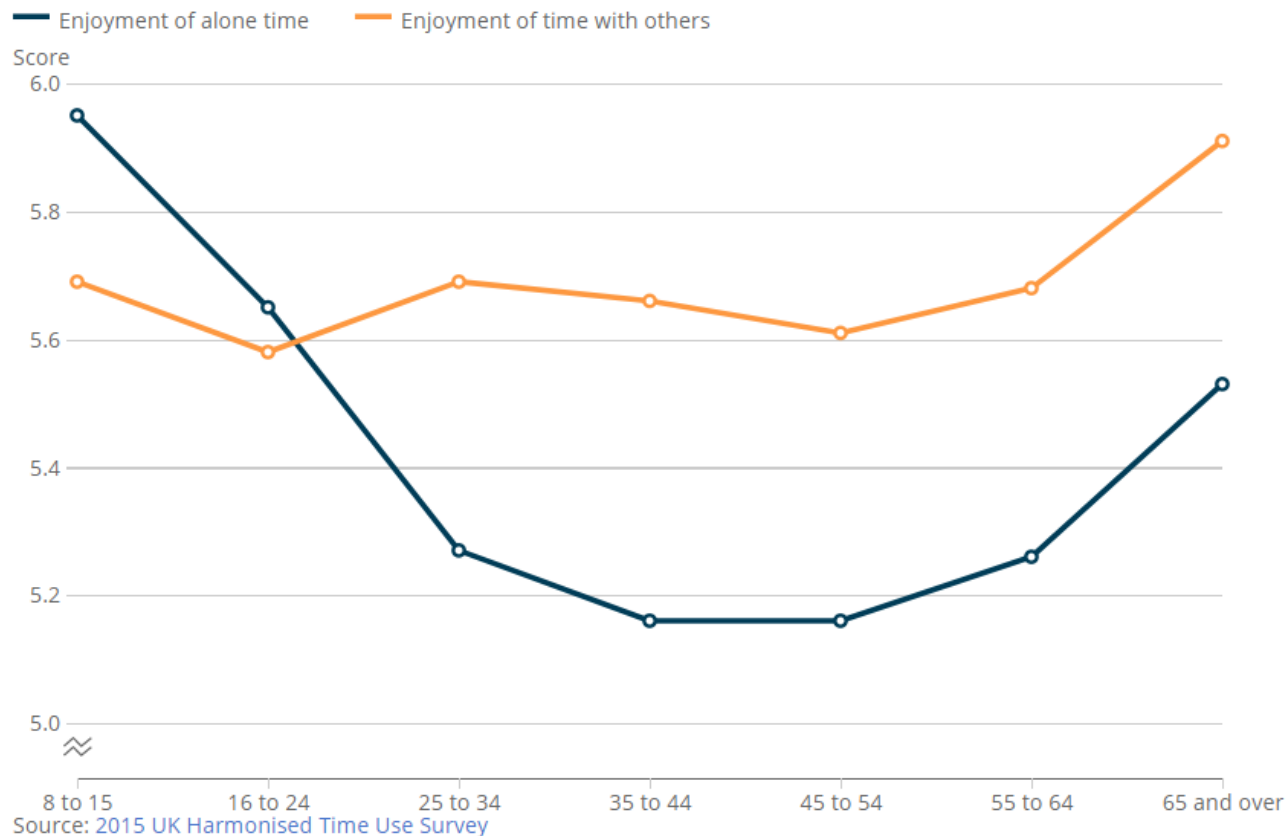
Source: [2015 UK Harmonised Time Use Survey](#)

Modernising time-use (2)

HOW DO PEOPLE FEEL ABOUT THEIR LEISURE TIME?

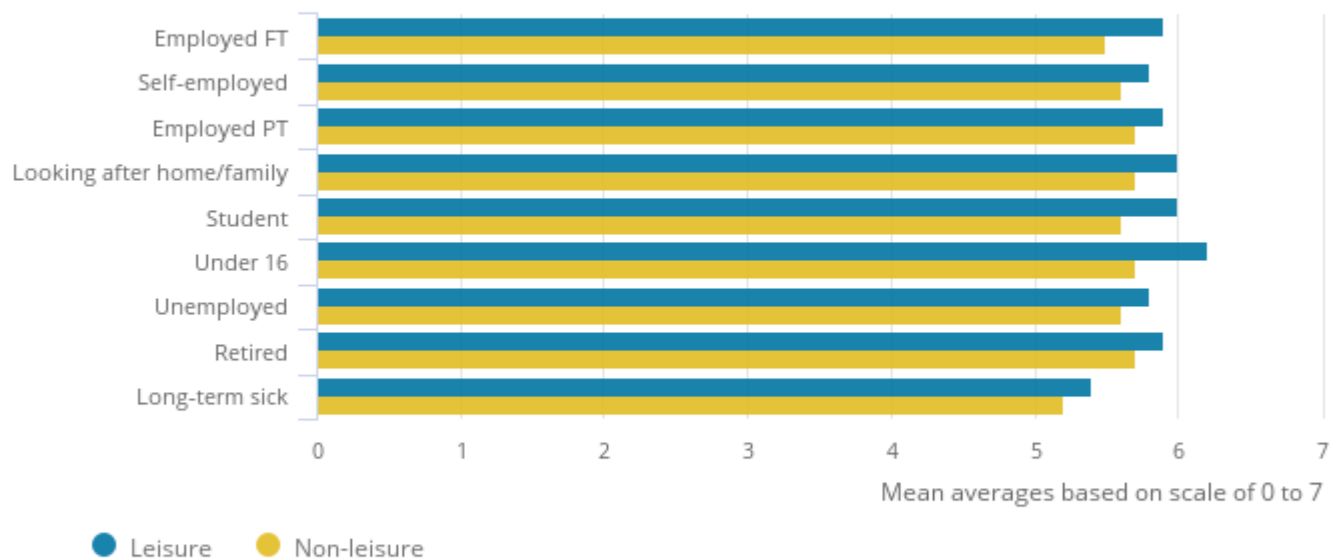
Enjoyment of time alone

Enjoyment of time alone and with others, by age group (on a scale from 0 to 7); UK, 2015



Enjoyment of leisure time

Figure 13: Mean enjoyment of leisure or non-leisure time by work status, UK, 2015



Source: Harmonised European Time Use Survey, 2015

Immediate media impact (1)

LEISURE – "Anyone of the fairer sex would be able to tell you this already, but official statistics have confirmed that men spend more time relaxing than women" reports [The Times](#), following Tuesday's [Leisure time in the UK: 2015](#) release. Similarly, [The Guardian](#) notes "Men spend six hours and nine minutes a day on leisure pursuits, compared with five hours and 29 minutes for women", The piece continues, "The gender gap is greatest in north-west England, where men spent an average 36.2 hours a week engaged in leisure activities, seven hours more than women. The smallest gap was in Northern Ireland where the time spent was identical for men and women...The majority of leisure time for both sexes was spent consuming mass media, the ONS said, such as watching TV, reading, or listening to music." [PA](#) reported that "ONS statistician Christopher Payne said women may take less leisure time because they tend to do more unpaid work, including childcare, volunteering and cleaning. But women spend longer socialising, with both sexes spending roughly the same time eating out and resting, according to the survey." [The Telegraph](#) said that "Women have less time for hobbies because they spend more time on chores than men." Also in [The Sun](#), [Daily Mail](#), [Daily Star](#), [Western Mail](#), [Express](#) and [Evening Standard](#).

25.10.17

LEISURE – "The dirty truth about the division of labour – It's an age-old argument, but as official statistics confirm that men spend more time relaxing than women, one couple keeps score," [The Telegraph](#) reports. Using Tuesday's [leisure time in the UK: 2015](#) bulletin, Tanith Carey notes "No man wants to be married to a woman who exudes seething irritation every time he wants to have fun. But the news that the Office for National Statistics has found that men spend more than 40 minutes more a day on leisure time than women sums up our – and the lion's share of our married friends' – arrangements." The [New York Daily News](#) adds "Men have a lot more leisure time than women." Also in [BT](#) and on the ITV Loose Women show.

26.10.17

Immediate media impact (2)

TECHNOLOGY - "Growing obsession with mobile phones and iPads has led to 13 per cent drop in time spent with friends over last 15 years" says the [Mail](#) reacting to yesterday's Visual.ONS release [Young people spend a third of their leisure time on devices](#). "Women have a total of 38 hours per week of leisure time, with the figure for men higher at 43 hours. Men aged up to 25 were the most intensive users of devices such as mobile phones, tablets, e-readers and laptops, with 35 per cent of their time spent that way." Meanwhile The Telegraph reports "Despite its name, social media may be making us less sociable. But one age group is bucking the trend. Older millennials are the only group who have successfully harnessed online apps and platforms - and are spending more time actively socialising than they were before." The piece goes on to say "It's possible that with increased device use, people are becoming less likely to go out of their way to meet up and socialise," the ONS said."

10.12.17

LEISURE – Covering yesterday's [Visual.ONS piece on leisure time](#), [The Telegraph](#) reports "Women have less leisure time than 15 years ago – as men take more for themselves." Figures from the "Office for National Statistics suggest that the amount of time men spend on leisure activities rose from 42.88 hours in 2000 to 43 hours a week in 2015." The article notes "The ONS said the data suggests there is a growth in inequality between men and women when it comes to taking leisure time." The [Mail Online](#) says "Men have 43 hours of leisure time a week – almost five hours more than women – and it's because they never help with housework," while [Business Insider](#) goes with "British men spend nearly 15% more time relaxing than women." The Daily Mirror quips "Men win on fun time," while The Sun leads with "Men 'win' in leisure." [Bloomberg](#) adds "Britain's ladies see less leisure as men enjoy extra five hours." Also in the Daily Express, Daily Star, [Metro](#), [Yahoo](#), [Belfast Telegraph](#) and [The Huddersfield Daily Examiner](#).

10.1.18

Immediate media impact (3)

PRODUCTIVITY AND LEISURE – “Donald Trump’s ‘exec time’ is the secret to achieving peak productivity,” the [Evening Standard](#) reports. “Office culture and higher expectations mean that for many of us working ‘9 till 5’ is often the bare minimum. No wonder, then, that news that President Trump, works just a five-hour day was met with shock this week.” Using Tuesday’s [Visual.ONS piece on leisure](#), the paper adds “New research by the Office for National Statistics reveals that men have five hours a week more free time than women, and the gap is widening.” Also in [The Telegraph](#).

11.1.18

LEISURE – Jemima Lewis in [The Telegraph](#) remarks “Equality will dawn when galloping gourmets do the washing-up.” She adds “Newly released figures from the Office for National Statistics showed that British women have five hours less leisure time every week than men, because we do so much more housework.” The [New York Post](#) also picks up the story: “Men get way more leisure time than women, data shows.” Also in the Evening Standard.

12.1.18

LEISURE – Karren Brady in The Sun quips “It’s time to divi up chores.” She says “Ladies. Prepare to be irate. Figures from the Office for National Statistics show that men have 43 hours of leisure time a week – five hours more than women. The reason? They do less housework. Obviously, part of the problem is that we’re gluttons for punishment.” Also mentioned in The Sunday Telegraph and The Sun’s Fabulous section.

15.1.18

Future policy impact

- If it matters to people, it should matter to policy(!)
- Quantitative evidence with which to hold policy makers accountable
- Accompanies a wide ranging evidence base being built at the Office for National Statistics to inform the 'beyond GDP' debate.
- A new minister for loneliness has been appointed in the UK - Tracey Crouch is apparently the world's first minister for loneliness.

Summary of findings

- Traditional time-use diary design still highly relevant
- However, modern measures are in demand and add tangible value to time-diary data
- Data on device use is lacking and time-use data collection is highly suited to this task
- Asking respondents how they feel about their time adds a qualitative dimension to quantitative data, and has worked well within the UK 2014/15 time-use survey

References

- Gershuny, J., Sullivan, O. (2017) *United Kingdom Time Use Survey, 2014-15*. Centre for Time Use Research, University of Oxford. [data collection]. UK Data Service. SN: 1828.
- ONS (2017). *Leisure time in the UK: 2015*. Office for National Statistics, Newport.
- ONS (2017). *Article: Young people spend a third of their leisure time on devices*. Office for National Statistics, Newport.
- ONS (2018). *Article: Men enjoy five hours more leisure time per week than women*. Office for National Statistics, Newport.
- ONS (2018). *Article: Brits spend 29% of their leisure time alone*. Office for National Statistics, Newport.