

The average UK consumer now sends 50 texts per week which has more than doubled in four years with over 150 billion text messages sent in 2011. Almost another ninety minutes per week is spent accessing social networking sites and e-mail, or using a mobile to access the internet, while for the first time ever time spent on calls on both fixed and mobile phones has declined.

Ofcom's Communications Market Report 2012 shows that traditional forms of communications are declining in popularity, with the overall time spent talking on the phone falling by 5% in 2011. This reflects a 10% fall in the volume of calls from landlines, and for the first time ever, a fall in the volume of mobile calls (by just over 1%) in 2011. **Teenagers and young adults are leading these changes in communication habits, increasingly socialising with friends and family online and through text messages despite saying they prefer to talk face to face.**

**These changes also reflect the rapid increase in ownership of internet connected devices, such as tablets and smartphones. Tablet ownership has jumped from 2% to 11% in 12 months, while one in ten UK adults now has an e-reader. Two fifths of UK adults now own a smartphone, with the same proportion saying their phone is the most important device for accessing the internet.** Smartphones are also affecting people's shopping habits, encouraging online bargain hunting or Robo (Research offline buy online) shopping with over half of smartphone users claiming to use their phone in some way when out shopping. Internet connected 'smart TVs' are also growing in popularity with 5% of UK households now owning one, giving consumers the ability to 'Turf' - both watch TV and surf the web. The report reveals that UK households now own on average three different types of internet-enabled device such as a laptop, smartphone or internet-enabled games console with 15% owning six or more devices. James Thickett, Ofcom's Director of Research, said: 'Our research reveals that in just a few short years, new technology has fundamentally changed the way that we communicate. Talking face to face or on the phone are no longer the most common ways for us to interact with each other. In their place, newer forms of communications are emerging which don't require us to talk to each other especially among younger age groups. This trend is set to continue as technology advances and we move further into the digital age.'