

**August release (issued in September\*) for July findings - BB110 + BAB59**

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Road congestion holding  
back UK businesses

Three-quarters of businesses are being held back by congestion on the roads, according to a monthly internet survey run by The University of Nottingham Institute for Enterprise and Innovation (UNIEI).

Respondents to the UK Business Barometer (UKBB) survey said the traffic jams that routinely bring British roads to a standstill have reached a point where they are an impediment to success in business. Increased traffic congestion, together with insufficient public transport and increasing awareness of carbon emissions from vehicles, all contribute to increasing pressure on today's transport systems.

In light of this, another finding of the latest UKBB survey is perhaps not surprising – more than a quarter of respondents said they would prefer more home working by their staff, and 30 per cent said it would be practical for their staff to do so.

The latest survey, which runs in parallel with the UK Business Adviser Barometer (UKBAB) survey, also asked a series of questions about the use of the internet for sales and publicity. With a reported 80 per cent increase in online retail sales in July 2007 over July 2006, the internet is now becoming far more important as a marketplace for goods and services.

This is reflected in the finding that more than 90 per cent of respondents to the latest UKBB now have a website, and almost 60 per cent monitored the number of hits on their websites. About the same proportion were aware of measures that could be taken to optimise a website, so that it receives the maximum number of visitors through web searches.

However there is still more progress to be made – so far only 19 per cent have or are planning to have payment facilities within their websites.

Businesspeople were asked for their views on the latest senior government appointments intended to aid regional economic development. Appointments were made recently of ministers and shadow ministers for specific UK regions, who will act in support of Government Offices and Regional Development Agencies.

But those running small and medium-sized businesses were sceptical. Only 10 per cent of UKBB and eight per cent of UKBAB respondents thought that such appointments would benefit business 'highly' or 'relatively highly'. By contrast, 69 per cent characterised the benefits they would expect as 'very few' or 'none'.

The UKBB and UKBAB are run by The University of Nottingham and operate over the web to generate very rapid results. The surveys have unique software that enables results to be processed and posted on their respective websites immediately they arrive.

The survey results are published monthly and more information, including a press pack, can be found on the web at [www.ukbb.ac](http://www.ukbb.ac) and [www.ukbab.ac](http://www.ukbab.ac). Businesses and advisers wishing to contribute as panellists on the project should visit the appropriate Business Barometer website to register.

— Ends —

Notes to editors: The University of Nottingham is Britain's University of the Year (The Times Higher Awards 2006). It undertakes world-changing research, provides innovative teaching and a student experience of the highest quality. Ranked by Newsweek in the world's Top 75 universities, its academics have won two Nobel Prizes since 2003. The University is an international institution with campuses in the United Kingdom, Malaysia and China.

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