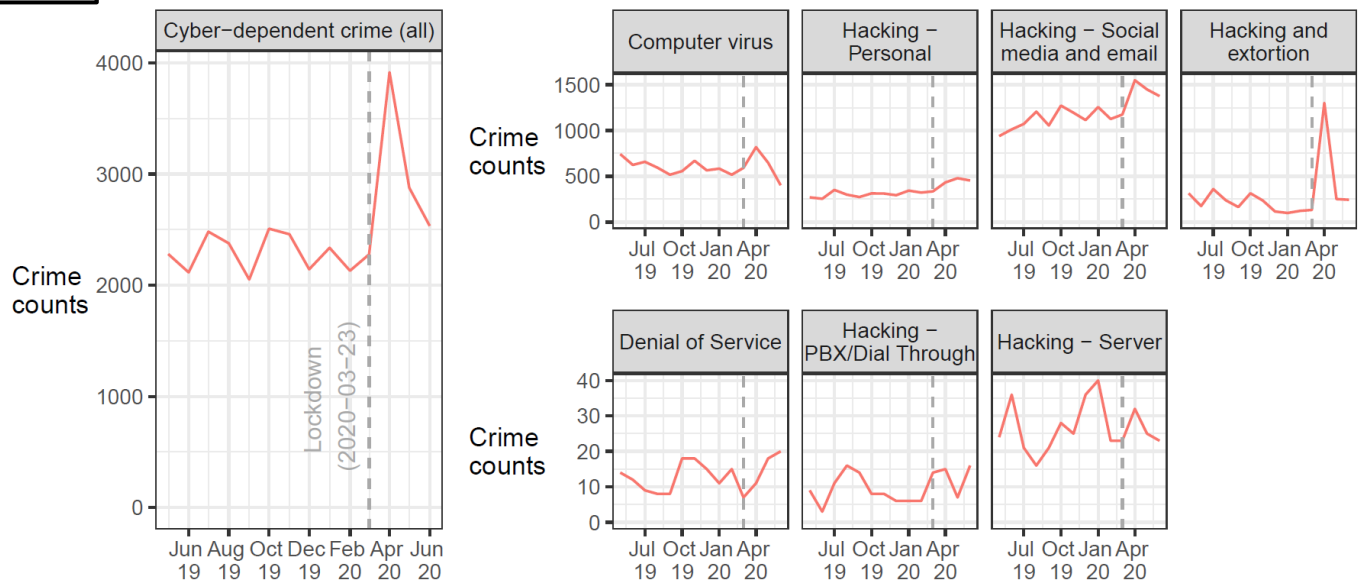
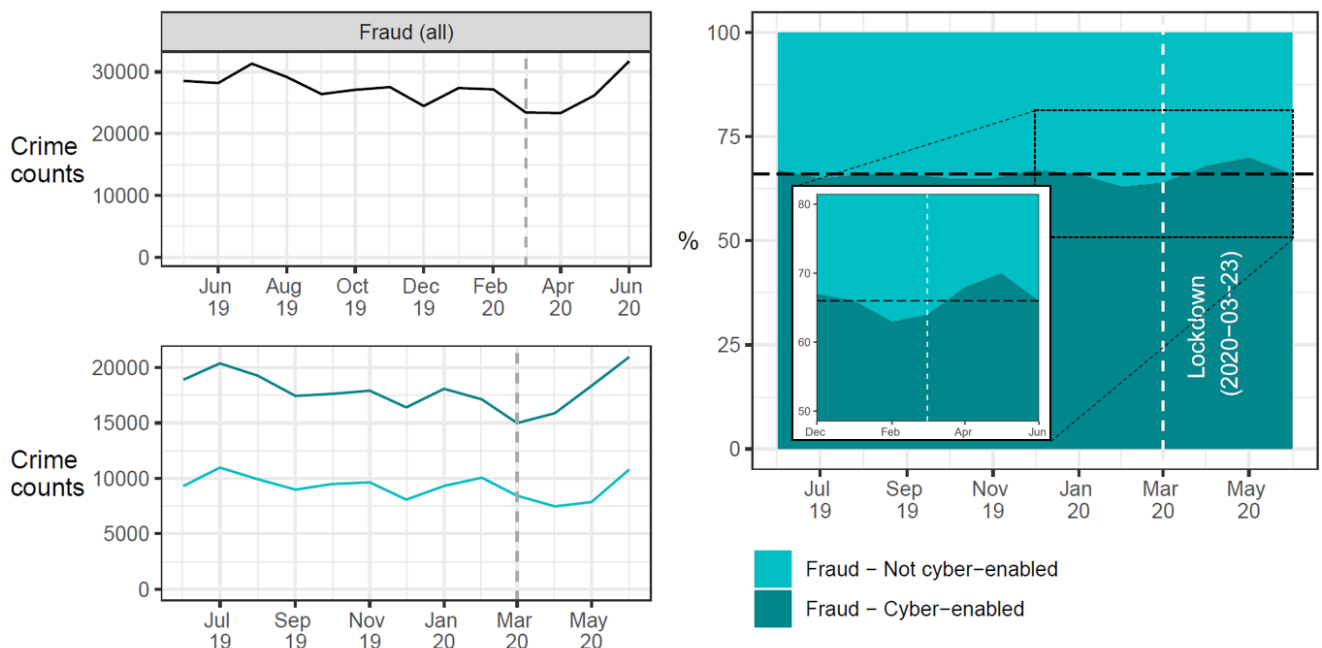


## Recorded Cybercrime and Fraud Trends in UK during COVID-19

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Lockdown and social distancing policies to reduce COVID-19 provoked large-scale changes in people's everyday lives. People spent more time at home and connected to the Internet. Cyber-dependent crime spiked during April in lockdown but returned to the long-term trend in June 2020. Fraud, which is numerically larger, showed less variation. *Data source: Action Fraud.*

**Fig.1****Trends in cyber-dependent crimes by crime type****Fig.2****Trends in frauds: Cyber-enabled and other**

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Fig.3

Trends in cyber-dependent crimes and online shopping frauds reported by individual victims and organisations

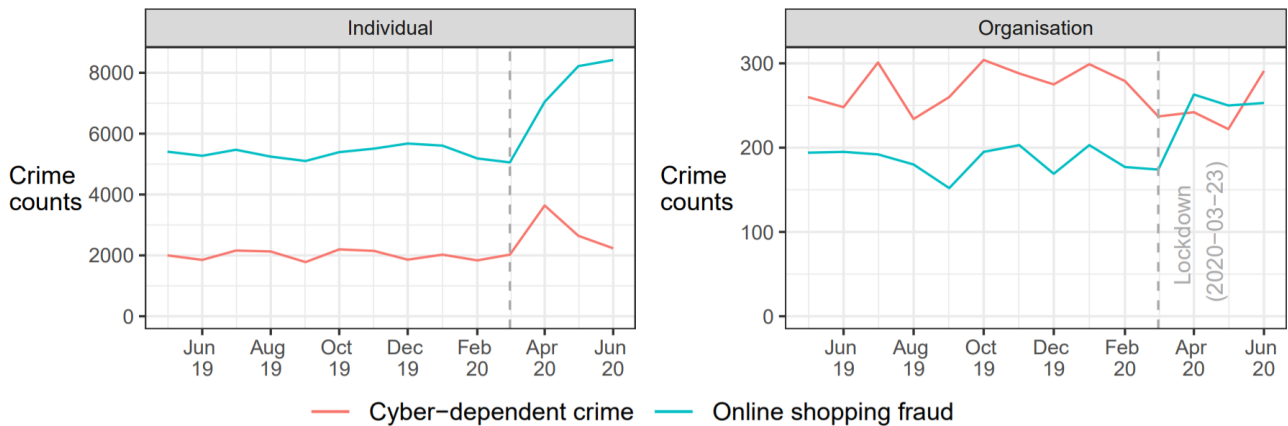
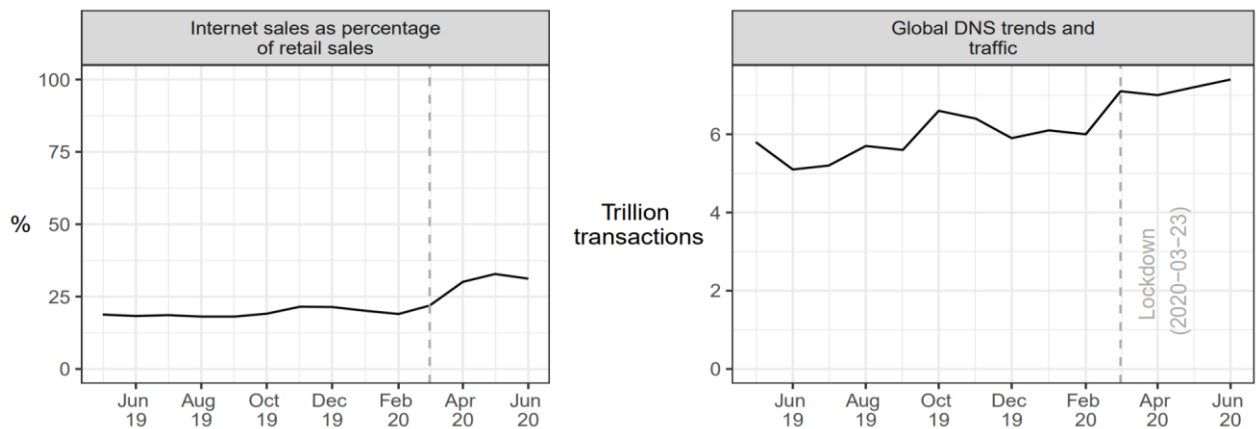


Fig.4

Increased Internet use during lockdown



**Fig. 1** shows that cyber-dependent crimes increased in the months with lockdown restrictions and began to 'bounce back' towards the long-term trend in June. Much of the rise was due to a five-fold increase in hacking with extortion, with smaller increases in hacking of social media and email, and in use of computer viruses. **Fig. 2** suggests pandemic-related change in fraud is less pronounced. Fraud may have decreased during early lockdown before increasing, but longer-term data is needed to clarify whether this was the seasonal trend. The proportion of fraud that was cyber-enabled changed only marginally, decreasing slightly before and increasing slightly after lockdown. The count of online shopping fraud increased during lockdown. **Fig. 3** shows that the increase in cyber-dependent crimes was due to reports from individual victims rather than organisations, while there was increase in the count of online shopping fraud reported by both individuals and organisations. While counts are informative, they do not show change in risk or account for how internet-related activities changed during the pandemic due to increased remote working, school, shopping and leisure: **Fig 4** provides some relevant indicators published by the [Office for National Statistics](#) and [Akamai](#).

Action Fraud is the UK National Fraud and Cybercrime Reporting Centre. Cyber-dependent crimes are those that can only be committed using computer systems. Cyber-enabled crimes are traditional offences that have increased in reach due to computer systems (e.g., online fraud, phishing scams). Frauds can be cyber-enabled crimes, whereas hacking, computer viruses and denial of service attacks are cyber-dependent offences (further details in [Home Office Counting Rules](#)). These crime types are under-reported.

Reference as: Buil-Gil, D., A. Moneva, S. Kemp, N. Díaz-Castaño and F. Miró-Llinares. (2020). Recorded Cybercrime and Fraud Trends in UK during COVID-19, *Statistical Bulletin on Crime and COVID-19, Issue 6*. Leeds: University of Leeds.

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