digitol

Country Report

WP 2 - Context Analysis

Pro Arbeit – Kreis Offenbach - (AöR)

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Project Coordinator	Antonio Dell'Atti, antonio.dellatti@comunitabrianza.it, Consorzio Comunita Brianza
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Excutive Summary

Digitalisation has gained in importance in recent years, not only because of its rapid development, but also in its use in everyday life and in the professional context. More and more people are using modern technology to simplify their private and professional lives.

However, there are also risks involved, especially with regard to the use of media devices and the Internet. The Internet has become faster and more easily accessible compared to previous years. There is a risk that people who, for various reasons, do not belong to the digital society will experience immense exclusion in their lives. People in old age in particular are very much aware of this exclusion, as many of them have little experience of using digital media devices.

Especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, it became apparent that, in both private and economic contexts, the digital dimension of our society is of great advantage, but that it also brings about disadvantages. These challenges include disinformation or fake news that circulate on the Internet and are mistakenly taken to be true. This can not only damage people's health, but it can also be dangerous for peace in society and be of detriment to democracy.

The DIGITOL project aims to address these two challenges by helping older people to improve their digital literacy and by raising awareness of fake news on the Internet, so that people in old age are no longer excluded due to a lack of digital literacy and that harmonious coexistence in society with democratic values is guaranteed.

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1.DIGITOL and the relevance of digital literacy - an introduction

In the context of Covid-19, the importance of digital competences and digital literacy has again come into the limelight. As people stayed home, they faced challenges in terms of keeping up with work through online communication tools. But they also faced the challenge to stay healthy and informed when receiving and evaluating information about the pandemic that was being conveyed through both online and offline media channels. It quickly became apparent that disinformation and so called “fake news” at times spread faster through the internet than official, reliable and trustworthy information. Thus Covid-19 became a prime example for the spread of fake news and the effects this can have on society.

Beyond the issue of fake news, the Covid-19 crisis has highlighted to what extent our digitised environments increasingly rely on the Internet to inform, communicate, shop, but also to access services such as banking, tele-health services, governmental and administrative services, etc. Yet, despite the fact that older Europeans (55+) growingly use the Internet, their presence online remains low in comparison to other age groups.

Although efforts to support the digital inclusion of older adults should not rest in intensity, we believe the challenges of today’s Internet and the rapid development of fake news in the last decade require a renewal of how to approach digital literacy.

Developing digital literacy skills should expand beyond the acquisition of basic capacities in operating computers, tablets, and other smart devices into developing media literacy, critical thinking, and a proficiency to identify reliable online information.

The latter necessity gains prominence since fake news tend to hamper the public debate on topics of immense political importance, such as: climate change, displaced populations, social inclusion, fight against poverty, tolerance to diversity, and many more.

In this context, DIGITOL delivers a contribution to promoting EU common values, such as solidarity and diversity.

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This is achieved by developing and delivering an innovative digital literacy training with younger trainers and older learners. The project aims to make the Internet accessible and more respectful for all. Thus, DIGITOL will contribute to combating discrimination within the EU that are driven by xenophobia, populism, and homophobia by gathering younger and older people around the challenge to identify and contain fake news and online hate speech.

This report is the result of the first phase of the project and provides and analysis of the local, national and European context regarding digital literacy among older adults with a view to informing and guiding the further implementation of the project. As such it will present the results of a desk research on the state of the art of digital literacy in the project countries, namely: Bulgaria, Germany, Greece and Italy. It will also present the information, ideas and suggestions on all aspects relevant for the implementation of the project that were gathered through the direct engagement of stakeholders. This information was collected by means of an online survey, interviews among experts and direct discussions with groups of stakeholders through the method of the focus group.

In this first chapter, the objectives and the questions that have been guiding our analysis will be introduced. This will be followed by a section discussing the definition of key concepts regarding digital literacy and disinformation as they will be used throughout the report.

Consequently, a brief description of the methodology for data collection will be provided, outlining the methods and tools that form the basis for both collection and analysis of the data that will be presented in Chapter 3, 4 and 5.

In Chapter 3, the main results from the desk research will be outlined, focusing on information regarding the digital literacy landscape of the project countries with a focus on the situation concerning digital literacy among older adults.

In Chapter 4, the information gathered through the engagement of stakeholders will be presented and analysed, while Chapter 5 will provide a summary of the main findings that are relevant for the design and implementation of the Training-of-Trainers and the capacity building programme, and a general outlook on the relevance of the data for the project and beyond

1.1. Objectives and questions guiding our analysis

This project has received funding from the Erasmus+ programme under grant agreement No 612208-EPP-1-2019-1-IT-EPPKA3-IPI-SOC-IN

The research was guided by and intends to provide an answer to two main research questions.

The first is targeting the general situation and the opinion of both experts and older adults on the use of the internet and social media mong older adults. It could be phrased in the following way:

> Research Question 1: To what extent are older adults using the internet and social media and what would be their training needs concerning aspects such as digital literacy, digital competences, and fake news?

The second aims to identify the existing best practices for adult education and the teaching of media literacy and digital competences with a view to employing the most relevant during the implementation of the capacity building programme. It could be phrased in the following way:

> Research Question 2: What are some of the best practice examples for training initiatives and formats for teaching media literacy and digital competences and to what extent can they inform the design of the DIGITAL SOCIAL ACADEMY?

As a first step to approach these questions, it is important to briefly introduce the main concepts that form part of this analysis, i.e. digital literacy, media literacy, fake news and disinformation. These will be briefly discussed in the following. Consequently, the methodology used for gathering the data will be described before laying out an analysis of the main results.

1.2. Key concepts

DIGITOL provides an intergenerational approach to teaching digital literacy and media literacy in order to combat ‘fake news’. Especially ‘fake news’ is contested as a term so what is meant when referring to these concepts?

In order to provide clarity on these key concepts, the following will provide an outline and brief discussion of some of these key terms.

In recent times, ‘fake news’ has come to prominence in public debate and its effects on society and democracy have gained more and more attention. In the report of the independent High level Group on fake news and online disinformation (HLEG) (DG Connect, 2018: 10), the term ‘fake news’ is described as referring to a ‘spectrum of information types’. This includes so called ‘low-risk forms’ such as partisan political discourse and click bait headlines. However, it also includes more high risk practices such as the use of malicious fabrications using automated amplification techniques that are used by

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different actors for example to infiltrate grass roots groups or to influence and undermine democratic processes in EU countries (DG Connect, 2018: 10).

However, according to the High Level Expert Group (HLEG), the term is inadequate because it does not capture the complexity of disinformation and related practices such as fabricated or manipulated videos, organized trolling, targeted advertising and the like. At the same time 'fake news' is a misleading term, as it is at times being used by some politicians in order to dismiss coverage they do not agree with. For these reasons the high level group avoids the use of the term 'fake news' and instead suggest that the issue at stake is better described with the term disinformation (DG Connect, 2018: 10).

Hence, disinformation is being defined as 'all forms of false, inaccurate, or misleading information designed, presented and promoted intentionally to cause public harm or for profit' (DG Connect, 2018: 10).

While it can be harmful, it is to be distinguished from other forms of illegal forms of speech, such as defamation or hate speech which falls under the regulatory remedies of EU or national laws (DG Connect, 2018: 11).

For the purpose of this report and also for the purpose of the project at large, the definition of disinformation will be adopted as the main operating concept. However, due to the popular use and prominence of the term 'fake news' among the project partner's local stakeholders, the term 'fake news' will continue to be used interchangeably with disinformation, keeping in mind that the definition of disinformation and the concept of 'fake news' for our purpose will refer to the definition as suggested by the HLEG, and as described also in the European Commission communication on tackling on-line disinformation (European Commission 2018: 3-4) meaning 'verifiably false or misleading information that is created, presented and disseminated for economic gain or to intentionally deceive the public, and may cause public harm'.

According to the communication on tackling on-line disinformation (European Commission 2018: 1), such disinformation has the potential 'to erode trust in institutions and in digital and traditional media. It can furthermore harm democracies by hampering the ability of citizens to take informed decisions while supporting both radical and extremist ideas and activities (European Commission, 2018: 1). As such it may have severe effects on society, including threats to democratic political and policy-making processes and may even put at risk 'the protection of EU citizens' health, the environment or security' (European Commission, 2018: 2).

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Thus tackling disinformation and the spread of fake news is one of the main objectives of DIGITOL. In order to do so, DIGITOL promotes the teaching of Media Literacy and Digital Literacy. However, what is meant with those terms and how do they relate to tackling misinformation?

Again here, we rely on the definitions as provided by the European Commission.

According to the European Commission policy on Media Literacy: (Audiovisual and Media Services Policy, 2019), Media Literacy is understood to be the 'capacity to access, have a critical understanding of, and interact with the media' and 'enables citizens of all ages to navigate the modern news environment and take informed decisions'. Similarly, the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (2018: (59)) states, that Media Literacy refers to the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary for consumers to use the media effectively and safely.

Following the European Commission definition of Media Literacy (Audiovisual and Media Services Policy, 2019), it is important to note, that Media literacy concerns different media such as broadcasting, the radio and the press. It also includes different distribution channels that are operated through traditional media outlets, the internet as well as social media. Finally, Media literacy is also understood to be a 'tool empowering citizens as well as raising their awareness and helping counter the effects of disinformation campaigns and fake news spreading through digital media' (EU Commission policy on Media Literacy (Audiovisual and Media Services Policy, 2019).

When Media Literacy is mentioned in the context of the internet and social media, it may at times coincide with the term Digital Literacy. According to Law et al. (2018: 6), digital literacy includes competences that may be referred to variously as media literacy, information literacy, computer literacy, and the like. In this context 'Digital literacy is understood as 'the ability to access, manage, understand, integrate, communicate, evaluate and create information safely and appropriately through digital technologies for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship' (Law et al. 2018: 6).

Thus, media literacy and digital literacy are interrelated as they overlap with regards to the skills that refer to the technical use of information technology. In a way these technical skills can be regarded as key competence to access but also to interact with information that is available on various formats online such as social media or news websites, through the use of desktop computers, tablets and the like.

The overlap of media literacy and digital literacy is comprehensively portrayed in the European Digital Competence Framework (Kluzer, S., Pujol Priego, L.: 2018: 16). This framework sets out five broad areas of competence for European citizens. Already the first area refers to information and data literacy. This includes 'browsing, searching and filtering data, information and digital content'. It also includes

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the skills to ‘analyse, compare and critically evaluate the credibility and reliability of sources of data, information and digital content’ as well as the skills to analyse, interpret and critically evaluate the data, information and digital content’ (Kluzer S., Pujol Priego L.: 2018: 12).

This highlights the importance of information and media literacy when talking about the use of information technology and digital competences at large.

According to the authors (Kluzer S., Pujol Priego L.: 2018: 12) the Digital Competence Framework describes those competences that are crucial today ‘when using digital technologies in a confident, critical, collaborative and creative way to achieve goals related to work, learning, leisure, inclusion and participation in our digital society’.

In this sense, the digital competence framework provides a comprehensive reference point that includes both media literacy and digital literacy under the same umbrella, highlighting the interdependence of technical skills for the use of information technology and the more intangible skills for a critical understanding of and interaction with the digital information environment.

Thus it becomes clear, that both digital literacy and media literacy are key in combatting the spread of disinformation and fake news. However, this also means that tackling the disinformation challenge is not only a matter of improving technical skills for the use of new technological equipment. Even more so, it is a matter of improving the media literacy of citizens of all age groups so that they can become able to navigate the news environment safely in order to make informed decisions. In this sense it is media literacy, with all its facets, that can be regarded as the main important competence to be fostered when it comes to the combatting of all forms of disinformation.

Having clarified and discussed some of the key concepts that are being used throughout this report, the following section will briefly lay out the methodology of data collection before going ahead with the analysis of the research results and the conclusion on the recommendations for the design and the implementation of the capacity building programme.

2.Details on Data Collection

The first project phase is based on a well-founded data collection, which serves to take stock of the current framework conditions relevant to the project. The complexity and selection of the survey instruments should help to find as many answers as possible to the project priorities and target groups. Each project partner collected data and figures on the participation of older people in society, their

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knowledge and direct use of digital tools and social media, their level of information about the problem of fake messages, stereotypes that are more widespread due to misinformation. The data collection was carried out on the basis of the following methodological tools: Online research, online survey, consultation of stakeholders and focus groups. All partners complied with data protection rules when collecting data. These are anonymous procedures without storage of personal content or data. The different methods are described in detail below.

Online research

The online research at European level is based on a systematic literature review, an online data analysis on the topic of "older adults and their use of digital media" and a survey of other actors involved in the training of older people in this field. The aim of the literature review is to identify all relevant published and unpublished sources, studies carried out at international, national and regional level, which cover the current trends in digital literacy of people in old age. The focus is on positive and negative practical examples of training courses for older people in the countries of the project actors. In addition, this research served to identify public, private and non-profit organisations working with older people, which could act as potential local partners for the training phase of older people. A summary with a synthesis of the results can be found in chapter 3.

Online survey

The aim of the online survey was to establish the local usage behaviour of older people with regard to social media. For the survey, the online program "Survey Monkey" was being used. For this purpose, experts in the field of digital literacy training for older people as well as people aged 50 years and older were asked to complete the survey. Older people were asked about their own opinions on the use of social media and their use of the Internet and information on the internet. The experts were asked to assess the interests, competences and needs of older people and to name existing projects and examples that deal with the topic and the target group.

The online survey was sent to 1131 recipients by email, including information on data protection. For Pro Arbeit as a municipal job centre, this was the first targeted electronic online survey of customers by email and with the use of an online tool. A total of 59 people (both older adults and experts) took part in the survey.

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Expert interviews

In addition to the online survey, the written interviews of the experts took place. The interviews led to a further exchange with local stakeholders in order to supplement the information collected with local practices and needs of older people that were not identified during the online research. In addition, potential local partners were identified which could be relevant in the later project phases.

In total five experts have been interviewed. The survey took place online and was not anonymised due to the relevant assignment of the person to the stakeholder. The participants gave their consent for the use of the data for evaluation and reporting. The names and the institutions are only used for evaluation purposes and are not included in the report.

Focus groups

The focus group is a popular method to discuss the results of a study with the group of relevant stakeholders in order to retrieve further information. The discussion rounds have one basic objective: to gather general ideas and suggestions from the participants in order to review the project idea and to obtain important information for local implementation. As a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, all focus groups took place online and in smaller groups. The participants came from different sectors: older people, public institutions promoting the integration of older people, NGOs, non-profit and private companies promoting digital skills and the integration of different people, services and organisations for the engagement of young people, local authorities, etc. The first part of the event was dedicated to the project description and the results of the online survey. The participants were asked to discuss the results and their own experiences with older people and their use of social media. In addition, there was a discussion on the contents of the training programme for both older and younger people and further suggestions for the design and implementation of the intergenerational training programme. The results of the focus groups were documented in a protocol and are compiled in chapter 4.

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3.Digital literacy among older persons: an overview on the state of the art

A number of studies have dealt with the topic of media competence or digital competence in recent years. We are particularly interested in the competences of older adults, their digital usage patterns and also how they deal with disinformation.

In the following, some German studies are described and their findings are being summarised, concluding on recommendations for the design of the training programme.

A quotation from the European Council briefly reflects the latest research results and summarizes the subject in the following way:

"In promoting media literacy, special attention should be paid to the fact that different groups in society may have different needs and behaviours and different ways of accessing media. For example, children and young people often have a natural willingness to use new media and new technologies, while adults may have a greater wealth of experience that can be used to develop critical thinking about media content. Media literacy strategies must take full account of all these differences and promote communication between different groups and interests in society. At the same time, strategies to make technologies widely available and accessible to citizens should be pursued," (Council of the European Union 2009, 3)

That there are different needs and interests among the various age groups has been shown in the studies in Germany with differences occurring not only between the generations, but also within the age group of 50-75 year-olds.

As an introduction, it should first be noted that Germany is generally still a "developing country" for digital instruction and applications. In a comparison on the European level, it is in the middle range for Internet use (DESI 2020, 14).

This also became clear in the national studies on digital skills that have been reviewed. In more differentiated surveys, it has been demonstrated that different groups within the age cohort are more involved with digital media than others.

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3.1 General data on digital literacy and the digital divide

In the following we will discuss some of the existing studies on digital competences among older people:

Older people and the Internet

Although Germany is in the middle level in a comparison of countries, since 2012 and especially since 2015 the digital use of the Internet has increased with the development of smartphones in all age groups. This is shown in a study by ARD and ZDF (Frees & Koch 2019, 399 ff.) with a sample of 2009 participants from 2018. German-speaking citizens were interviewed by telephone via landline and mobile networks. The results from the year 2018 are given in more detail, therefore this study is used. The study is repeated every year with scientific support.

Since the study essentially aims to record media consumption, we will deal here with a few recorded characteristics that relate to the topic. In this context, the smartphone has become important as a digital medium.

In this regard, just over half of the 50-69 year olds use WhatsApp daily, compared to only a fifth of the over 70 year olds. Facebook and other social media are used much less by older people. Only one of the respondents to the survey that fell in the 50-69 age group uses Facebook or social media daily. Internet usage is also low: 28% of the 50-69 age group and 12% of the 70+ age group use the Internet daily, with the largest share of Internet usage being chat, email, messenger and Whats App.

In comparison, according to Frees & Koch (2019), a significant lead in knowledge can be assumed among 14-29 year-olds with 78 % of daily Internet use.

According to the above-mentioned study by ARD & ZDF (2018), Internet use has increased significantly in recent years due to the smartphone. However, there are no recent studies available yet.

If we interpret these results of this study, we can assume that the "older generation" is predominantly not yet involved in digital media use. For various reasons, older people have not yet wanted to get involved.

According to the Ärztezeitung and a survey by the Bertelsmann Foundation, they feel overwhelmed, the digital devices are too complicated for them, they have no confidence in the media or they simply

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lack practice or an incentive. But the more confident they feel engaging with digital media, the easier it is for them to avail the assistance applications from the health sector. (Ärztezeitung 2019, also DIVSI 2016)

Age group differentiation

A further study from 2016 by the SINUS Institute Heidelberg for the German Institute for Trust and Security on the Internet (DIVSI 2016, 13 ff) underlines the above-mentioned results with 48% of respondents over 60 years of age being offline and the realization that a differentiation must be made within the age cohort. The study subdivides the group of persons over 60 years of age; it emphasises that it contradicts reality if studies are only based on age. The differentiation within the age cohort is necessary in order to later arrive at a conclusive concept of targeted training.

According to DIVSI, surveys of 1091 participants with over 60 years of age were conducted in Oct/Nov 2015. The variables that aim to further characterize the age group are described as "age, gender, phase of life and education". A preliminary study with 2-hour interviews of a smaller target group and a 40-minute survey of the larger target group was carried out.

As a result of the above mentioned variables, in their study, they speak of "Internet milieus" (DIVSI 2016). In short, they conclude by dividing the age group into an "internet-close segment" and an "internet-remote segment". They state that 52 % of the over 60 year olds in Germany have "arrived" in the digital world. However, only 15 % of them were recorded as "sovereign intensive users" while the "internet-remote segment" corresponded to 47 % of the over 60 year old participants.

According to the above-mentioned survey (DIVSI 2016), in order to include users who are ”internet-remote”, work must be done to record and take into account the attitudes of this group, to provide them with access to digital media and training, and to create trust in the digital world. Scepticism about data security on the Internet is still great in 2015 of the survey. Not much is likely to have changed yet.

Different needs in the 60 Plus Group

This is also underlined by a small study in the form of a bachelor thesis by Lena Weber from 2018 (Weber 2018, 22-23 ff.) entitled: "Digital competence as a challenge to adults in the 21st century".

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In her online survey of 145 people between 28 and 67 years of age with an age focus between 48-67 years, few deficits were found. However, most of the respondents were employed persons who already have a digital background in their professional lives. Only the 65-year-olds and older respondents were still strongly represented as “offliners” with 52%, which also underlines the trend of the other studies.

In interpreting the results, the author describes that she, too, would differentiate the users and mentions the Digital Index of Initiative D21 e.V. or Treumann et al., who also find themselves on the line between digital offliners / hesitants or digital pioneers / enthusiasts. Here too, the needs of older people would have to be assessed differently. She advises to orientate oneself towards "...competence-oriented user groups...", i.e. what do older people need digital media for and how can they broaden their horizons here in order to open up further practical fields in their lives and also ensure security on the Internet.

Practical study with instruction

Another study of Digital-Mobil-Im Alter mit Telefonica from 2016 (Telefonica 2017, 9-13, 10, 22, 31) is briefly presented with a different focus of the previous results.

Here, 299 elderly citizens were not only interviewed, but also instructed in the practical handling of tablets by means of practical questions in dialogue and the results were subsequently evaluated in personal interviews and questionnaires.

"As part of the study, a total of 30 senior citizens' facilities in Berlin, Düsseldorf, Hamburg and Munich were equipped with up to 20 tablet PCs each with Internet access for eight weeks between May 2016 and May 2017". Here, too, it was found that age alone is not a variable for offline or online users, but that the following influences up to the age of 80 play a major role: Occupation, living situation, children/grandchildren, mobility, problems with hearing/vision/memory. All variables were examined.

78 % of the participants were aged between 60-79 years. 17 % of the older participants were over 80 years old.

With the various services of the tablet, pre-installed APPS were used in particular for email, travel information, games and timetables. According to a survey (Telefonica 2017), around 47% of the participants used the tablet several times a week. The tablet was used differently by the different age groups. For example, the over-80s preferred to use the telephone, while the over-60s preferred to chat and send e-mails. There were also differences between men and women. The women also preferred to use the telephone rather than chatting or sending emails.

Data security was also a major topic in the survey.

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"65 percent of the senior citizens surveyed expressed concerns about data security and cybercrime, 63 percent saw a problem with malware, and 54 percent expressed concern about unsolicited spam mail. (Telefonica 2017, 22)

The participant's mobility was also being supported by using the tablets. The participants were able to take the tablet with them on the road and get information about connections and the travel route. Game apps helped to practice dexterity, memory and manual skills.

The authors of the study recommend, based on the experience, "... to advertise more strongly among older people with the possibility of entertainment through games. Also, different types of games or games - from puzzles to card games to skill games - could be recommended from a list or, as we have done, installed in advance"(Telefonica 2017, 31)

In summary, this study clearly shows that exercising with digital media content also convinces older users and can support them in their lives, even if scepticism was initially great. The practical aspect with subsequent interviewing of the participants offered a more concrete and practical insight.

Disinformation/"fake news"

Education, gender and costs of digital devices are the criteria of the study by PwC (PWC 2019, 5-6 f.)

According to the survey (PwC 2019), users tend to become more informed about media use and the topic of fake news with increasing education. Among other things, the impact of fake news on the European elections was investigated with a sample of 1000 people (PwC 2019). The participants were between 18 and over 60 years old. Differences between men and women became apparent. Men were more informed in the use of media than women. With regard to fake news in particular, around a fifth of the participants over 60 years of age (21%) had received information relating to fake news through their personal networks while one in three had not yet received any information about how to deal with it. Nevertheless, according to a survey by PwC (2019), more than half of the respondents are critical of information on the internet. The other half of those surveyed see no danger.

Conclusion:

The above-mentioned studies have different focuses and were therefore selected to show a broader spectrum of current surveys on digital usage patterns among older adults. Several studies have surveyed Internet usage or collected data on smart phones and social media. These are very similar, so that repetition of the evaluations was avoided. The digital situation up to 2019 became clear and will be

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summarized again in 3.2. It is important to note that several variables ("Internet milieus") are increasingly influencing the digital use of media, and that more individualised support in training courses is particularly beneficial for older people in order to include more people, both frequent users and the "hesitant".

3.2 Digital literacy needs of older people

In the study by Svenja Noichl and Ulrik Schroeder from 2019 (Noichl & Schröder 2019 6) needs and requirements were identified. (Dagstuhl Declaration 2016 3 ff.):

How does it work? How do I use it? And how does it work?

"These three areas of use, office programs, communication and information search on the Internet were by far the most frequently cited among computer users. The following activities, online banking and online shopping, were only indicated by 18% and 17% of people respectively", followed by smartphone applications and especially Whats App. (Noichl & Schröder 2019)

In addition to the main use of digital devices in the form of communication and information, older people who already have experience with digital media are therefore very interested in understanding the handling (e.g. Whats App) and dealing with data security (passwords etc.).

In the case of competencies in older years, it should also be noted that reading and writing skills may be declining (Schmidt-Hertha, Bernhard, 2014, 92).

This may depend on the schooling received at an early age, on general practice up to old age and on the level of education.

In a survey it was found that the over 65-year-olds read the newspaper as a central medium, whereas the younger ones, even those under 65 years of age, often read the newspaper on the Internet or obtain information on the Internet.

Accordingly, reading and writing skills should also be taken into account in training courses.

Here some projects have already connected and offered training courses on tablets, e.g. playfully (see: Puzzles etc.) applied or practiced in various practical instructions on tablet via touch screen. (Germany secure on the net (DSIN), Digital chances 60+; Link to Digital Compass)

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It should be emphasized that the age cohort between 50-75 years of age must be viewed in a very differentiated manner. Many of the younger ones between 50-65 years (according to the above-mentioned studies) have quite good knowledge and feel confident.

The higher the level of education, the easier it is for them to inform themselves, learn and try things out. Especially data security and disinformation are also topics in which they would like to be further educated.

The other group of older people still needs to be introduced to the digital world. Here, it makes sense to address concrete everyday questions such as: how can I reach my family abroad? (e.g. via Skype) How can I research transport routes? Or health services? (Internet research, smartphone etc).

From simple questions like: Researching the Internet and using services, skype, making phone calls and connecting to Whats App, playing games to more complex topics such as online banking, shopping, enrolling in courses etc. and registering, questions can be dealt with in a constructive manner.

This should be playful (according to the study by DSIN) and very practically oriented and not least close to home, since mobility decreases with age (Schmidt-Hertha, Bernhardt 2016). Apart from some technical instructions, there is a great interest among older users to use digital media to expand their everyday life and to participate more in society and social life.

The greatest needs mentioned were

- stay in touch with family and friends: Email / WhatsApp / Skype
- expand your knowledge, stay up to date: online encyclopaedias / online television / reading newspapers
- entertainment and pastime: online games / game apps

When mobility, memory or social contact diminishes, digital media opens up a new field.

Self-esteem is a central concept, therefore confidence in the handling of digital media should be strengthened and learning -by-doing should take place (enabling didactics, learning didactics, definition and S.P.A.S.S.)

The Digital Compass (BAGSO, Digital Compass and Link) was developed on this basis.

Digital “Stammtische” (regulars’ tables) (DSIN, Digital Stammtisch with video) optimally combine the needs of older people:

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In this setting, the questions of the participants are answered technically and professionally by a volunteer coach or online via Skype, while on the other hand, the exchange takes place in “real live”, so that interpersonal activities take place and last but not least, the participant’s needs can be individually addressed.

Summary

In summary, on the basis of the available studies, it can be said that the majority of those over 60 years of age still need training and that the gap between younger and older people is still very clear. Some 60+ users are more informed and more practised than others. This depends on interest, motivation and incentives, but also on education. It is only in the age of 80+ that physical and mental problems increase and have an impact on learning new content as well as digital manipulation. However, even here successes can be seen, e.g. when motivation is very high or there is an incentive (grandchild) within the family, e.g. when 80-year-olds learn to skype with their family members or want to send Whats App.

As there are different levels of prior knowledge ("Internet milieus") and learning speeds between generations and within the age groups themselves, many people recommend as a starting point the individual's lifeworld and their experience. This means that the older people who are to be trained should be involved in the conception and planning of the training courses, as well as the younger trainers. Almost all previous studies have been based on online surveys in which participants "assess" themselves. This self-assessment could also be questioned because digital skills are often already a prerequisite for the survey. The gap could therefore be even wider in the number of unrecorded cases, because the surveys may only depict trends.

The study on tablets shows very clearly where one can practically start in the digital training field with older people. The digital applications can support them in their environment and daily routines and make them more independent. Obstacles could be removed immediately in "regulars' tables" or more individual training, and the content would then fit perfectly if the specific needs of older people were directly addressed. At the same time, data security should always be taken into account and critical thinking should be trained in parallel, since there is a clear gap in this regard.

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4.Consolidating older person's digital literacy: a review of our local findings

4.1. Needs for digital literacy – the professional's perspective

The majority of the experts who took part in the survey are active in general adult education, 25% of them in the priority work with job seekers and people with a migration background. In contrast, the participants of the individually interviewed experts (5 in total) are active in very different organisations with a focus on social and charitable work, as well as in educational organisations with a focus on the promotion of older, educationally alienated and educationally disadvantaged people. It is not clear from the survey to which age group the experts themselves belong and what the proportion of men/women is, as the same survey was directed both at experts and at older persons of the 50PLUS generation who were receiving unemployment benefits at the time. In the overall result of this survey 59 persons participated, 61% of whom are men. Most of the participants in the survey as a whole were in the 45-65 age group.

The following is a summary of the most important findings from the online survey:

Characteristics of adult digital learning at local, institutional level

From the answers to the question in which field of work of their organisations the surveyed experts are active, it can be seen that adult education is apparently predominantly regionalised, and in some cases even takes place and is addressed at a small local level (Q7).

A more global networking on the topic or even a worldwide exchange of information (e.g. in the sense of learning organisations) could not be derived from the results of the survey.

0% of the organisation representatives who took part in the survey represent the field of age policy. One possible thesis on this could be that digital education (of older people) might not be considered politically relevant and is more likely to be assigned to the leisure activities of older people (Q9).

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Learning contents taught

When asked which skills are taught in the context of digital learning opportunities, 33.3% cited the areas of general data literacy (focus on administration, searching/information), communication and collaboration (focus on social exchange and inclusion with identity management) and the answer area "I don't know" (Q15).

As a result, the focus of training and education here is on a more "user-oriented" transfer of knowledge.

At this point, it would also be interesting - in the context of a constructive/critical post-reflection for the preparation of the questions for this study - to find out how the general concept of dealing with digital media is generally understood! Did the participants in the survey also understand this to mean the critical examination/interpretation of offers/information in the sense of critical questioning and weighing up or do they rather understand it to mean the ability to operate and "switch" hardware and programs?

With a view to the further stages and milestones of the DIGITOL project (especially for the Training Academy), these considerations could possibly be of high relevance in order to start from the participants' individual understanding of where they stand with regards to digital media.

The nature of digital learning opportunities and pedagogical implementation/setting

Asked about the pedagogical approach or occasion most often chosen for digital training for older people, the experts cite informal education, formal education, vocational training, lifelong learning programmes and online/distance learning, with almost the same 33% of each. With 0%, intergenerational learning and the approach of voluntary knowledge sharing is not taken into account. (Q17).

Thus, in the context of this survey it remains unclear whether the media education offers previously indicated by the experts have predominantly formal educational reasons, are initiated by them and the participants are thus more likely to be "trained" (e.g. training courses for job-seekers to increase professional equality of opportunity etc.). If such an assumption were to be confirmed in later studies, educational approaches of this kind would correspond more to a pragmatic "compulsory context" rather than to a voluntary, intrinsically motivated acquisition of digital knowledge, which is a desirable goal, especially for older people.

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When asked what the greatest success factors for ongoing education and training concepts are, the experts named support to maintain the motivation of participants (almost 67%), followed by social skills and knowledge of the trainer and the quality of the training programme itself (Q18).

This very high share of the success factor "motivation retention" can often be carried along by the social skills of the trainer, as well as by the relevance of the training program (relevance = accuracy of the training contents from the perspective of the group of people to be trained!)

This result of the survey supports the assumption that it is not so much the mere imparting of knowledge by trainers that is relevant but rather the practically oriented taking up of the needs and requirements of the respective learning older persons.

When asked what difficulties exist in the implementation or further development of the offers, the answers here are scattered with approx. 33% over various reasons, ranging from the heterogeneity of the participants to financial issues. It is interesting to note that a high percentage (almost 67%) deposited the answer "I do not know" (Q19).

This could be evidence for the assumption that, despite good qualifications and high costs, there is still insufficient knowledge about which processes lead to a failure of the training.

When also asked about the success criteria of training courses, the survey again showed with a high percentage of 50% (besides 50% "I don't know") that maintaining motivation should be considered a prioritising factor in the design and implementation of digital training courses and that continuous monitoring of the course of training - particularly with regard to the actual uptake by participants - should become good practice for such settings. In this way, further developed knowledge from practice can be used to make adjustments during the training period and thus contribute to its success (Q26)

Continuing digital training programmes and their implementation

In a previous question on general digital literacy and skills (Q 15), the aspect "security and protection of data and other" was mentioned with 0%.

However, when asked about other additional digital training offerings, the subject areas of "security/protection of data" and "information and data literacy" were then given as 100% (Q 31).

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It is to be assumed that the teaching of data protection knowledge and information and data literacy is strictly based on the general basics and thus builds vertically on each other, rather than horizontally in parallel - according to the respective knowledge levels of the learners - and is dealt with and introduced thematically.

When asked about further digital training courses, experts confirm 100% that online media and the handling of online information are components of these training courses. The answer to the question of how these educational trainings are offered didactically is astonishing. Here, 100% stated that these training courses are provided via intergenerational educational formats (Q 32 and Q 33).

This result supports the previously assumed thesis that online media and the handling of online information (critical observation, security, recognition of fake news, etc.) is apparently not directly part of the "basic knowledge" of older people and that younger people are often called upon as "ambassadors and transporters as well as translators" for an open but also critical handling of online media and their information.

When asked about the success factors of these offers, the survey again resulted in the answer "I do not know" to 100%. Even in the setting of intergenerational digital learning there is apparently no precise idea of how learning content can be brought to the learners in a positive and sustainable way and which field-tested methodological approaches may have contributed to the success of the offer (Q34).

Assessment of digital skills and needs of older people and assessment of older people themselves

Of interest is the response quotient for the question whether older people have the basic skills to use the Internet/social media. This question is answered by 75% of the experts with "neither agree nor disagree". There seems to be no idea whether older people have the ability to use the Internet and social media (Q 41).

It would be interesting to find out where this indifferent assessment comes from and why these skills/non-skills are apparently not assessable in concrete terms. Do they derive from direct experience of practical learning settings in which the knowledge acquisition of older people could not be determined with certainty? Specifically, it remains open at this point whether this assessment is based on the (lack of) empirical knowledge of the interviewees or whether it is a matter of attributions/personal attitudes/prejudices or the like, in which the absorption and learning capacity of older people is considered to be limited.

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The experts' assessment of the statement "Older people would like to become more experienced users with regard to social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, etc.)" is surprising with 75% for "neither agree nor disagree". According to the survey, there is no reliable information on whether older people even feel the need for a more experienced use of digital social media. On the other hand, there are already studies[1] that show that many older people use or would like to use social networks for reasons of social bonding (Q 45).

This might require further research on these studies to find out whether the use of social networks is more related to digital communication media, of which only one specific one is selected and used at a time (e.g. WhatsApp, telegram etc.). This assumption suggests at least the answer to the question that follows, according to the experts, older people want to become 100% more experienced users with regard to digital communication applications.

At present, there seems to be little evidence at local level of whether older people themselves would like to become more experienced users of digitised services (tax payment, banking, e-shopping, public advice, etc.). The experts answered this question 75% indifferently ("I don't know") and 25% affirmatively (Q 47).

This question remains open even if the parallel survey of older people themselves is included in this survey: According to this survey, less than 25% overall ("agree/fully agree") indicate that they would like to have more practice in dealing with digitised services; almost 77%, on the other hand, have no desire for more practice or are not sure (Q 80). Here, further study results on surveys of older people themselves would be interesting: Do they avoid these forms of "digital support" because they may no longer make any personal relation or because they fear the technological hurdles?

Interest and training needs of older people in Fake News and assessment of the older people themselves

When asked whether older people are interested in the social challenge of disinformation and fake news, 25% of the experts agree with this statement, 25% disagree and 50% are indifferent (Q 49).

Here, too - as with other questions in the survey on the personal interest assessment of older people with regard to specific, more advanced digital knowledge - the high percentage of indifferent statements

[1] https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/fileadmin/files/Projekte/Smart_Country/DigitaleTeilhabe_2017_final.pdf

https://www.telefonica.de/file/public/1016/2017-Digital-mobil-im-Alter-So-nutzen-Senioren-das-Internet-Zentrale-Befunde-einer-Studie.pdf

https://www.bagso.de/fileadmin/user_upload/bagso/03_Themen/Einsamkeit/Fachkongress/BAGSO_broschuere_fachtagung_einsamkeit.pdf

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may reveal a **"lack of knowledge or awareness"**; a lack of knowledge about how older people work digitally (= which digital needs represent real learning needs that may not be met by the persons themselves are clearly expressed or demanded?)

In comparison, over 58% of the older people who took part in this survey stated that they were definitely interested in these challenges (agreement/agree completely); just under 22% of them stated that they had little or no interest (see Q49 and Q82).

At this point it would be interesting to find out for oneself, by asking the elderly people themselves, whether elderly people would be interested in false reports, if they refer to one of their favourite subjects/hobby/countries they have travelled or similar.

The professionals' assessment of the extent to which and in which specific areas older people could benefit from training reflects the level of interest of older people in almost all of the areas covered, at 100% in the IT areas selected, the assessment is reflected that older people could still benefit from almost every further application area. It is interesting to note here that only the profit from training to "sharpen critical thinking" was estimated by the specialists at only 75% (Q 53). It remains to be seen why this aspect in particular was considered less beneficial than all other mentions. Does this imply the assumption that sufficient skills are available here or are these skills possibly not considered to be so relevant in the age group?

With regard to the answers of older people themselves to the same question, a broader percentage distribution can generally be seen. However, if we look only at the categories "Recognition of fake news", "Dealing with and reacting to fake news" and "Sharpening critical thinking", the percentage ratio of these three possible answers to each other is altogether lower here than in the case of the answers given by professionals (Q 86). This could be interpreted to mean that older people are even better able to assess their educational concerns and needs than the skilled workers themselves.

When asked about possible difficulties that could lead to older people not being able to develop their digital skills, 75% of the experts cited a complete lack of training opportunities or a lack of training opportunities that would fit their needs, as well as a lack of opportunities for older people per se (Q 54).

This is astonishing because - in contrast to the high percentage of respondents who state that they work to a large extent in educational settings for older people (see Q9 and Q 14)- a high percentage say that a lack of offers or the possibility of taking advantage of training opportunities could mean that older people have no opportunity to develop their digital skills.

In contrast, the response of the older people interviewed to the same question shows a different picture (31.71% if the lack of accessible/affordable offers for the person is mentioned). In view of the focus of

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the persons participating in this survey (job-seeking older people on social assistance), this percentage is understandable (Q 87).

In the survey, 50% of the experts state, that older people discuss politics/social issues with family and friends (Q 58). In contrast, a high percentage of older people interviewed declare (55.56% agree; 35.56% fully agree) that they are certainly discussing these issues with their social networks (compare Q58 with Q 69).

With regard to the question of how older people react to politics/social issues on the Internet, the not clearly apparent meaning of the term "to react" in the context of the survey is to be viewed critically (Q 59). What is associated here with the term "to react"? Does this mean that older people comment on these topics, evaluate them, reflect further, select only what does not seem "strange" and "new" to them or exactly the opposite?

In order to be able to analyse more precisely both the percentage shares in the survey of professionals - compared with the answers of older people - it is first necessary to find out exactly what participant groups understood by this term in the same or different ways.

Analogous to the term "reacting" in the previously considered question, the question in Q 61 also arises: What does "cautious" mean in the context of the question of whether older people handle sources of information with caution: Does the questionnaire associate this with a critical, reserved or even wait-and-see approach?

Summary of the individual interviews

The following is a summarising analysis from the individual interviews with a total of 5 experts from different organisations with a focus on social and charitable work, as well as educational organisations with a focus on the promotion of older, educationally disadvantaged and educationally disadvantaged people:

These experts see a special digital educational need among people of the Generation 55Plus under the following constellations:

- People with little digital basic education and little media use at all in the course of their biography
- Materially/monetary poor people
- Sick and disabled people

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- Persons who, in the context of voluntary activities, perform important multiplier functions and can thus form interfaces with other users
- People aged 70 and over who have not used digital media in their professional life and have never taken an interest in digital media in their private life (thus not acquiring digital skills)

If one compares these statements with the survey results of the older people themselves, older people in the survey also show a partly very high self-confidence in the assessment of their own digital skills, even if they only have them in very specific digital areas (e.g. social communication media such as WhatsApp etc.). Moreover, people with a lower level of digital literacy often have only specific and thus one-sided knowledge that is used to a large extent for social communication (see also the survey results).

Senior citizens' organisations also point out that older people living in precarious monetary circumstances are only minimally digitally equipped in some cases and that the aspect of digital participation must therefore generally be given greater emphasis[2].

Multipliers in voluntary positions with high digital skills and abilities can, for example, pass on their knowledge at eye level and without formal training through neighbourhood and social work with a high degree of acceptance by the local residents.

When asked about the most important content for digital literacy training for older adults, the interviewees mentioned the following aspects:

- Training of skills to be able to distinguish fake news from reliable information ("crap detection")
- Training on the use of digital social communication channels to ensure social contacts
- Training on researching, finding and using information on health and care
- Training and explanation of the benefits of using everyday online services (e-banking, online medical services, shopping, etc.)
- Cross-generational training from young to old and vice versa, in order to create awareness and understanding for the concerns of other generations

Positive current initiatives on digital and media literacy (for other age groups) that could be transferred to older people were mentioned:

[2] https://www.wissensdurstig.de/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/bagso_themenheft_vielfalt_staerken_2019_web.pdf

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- Workshop on Information Literacy on the Net (see also chapter 4.3 "General training offers for digital literacy")
- The Pacific Northwest tree octopus (see also Chapter 4.3 "General training offers for digital literacy")
- Peer2Peer approaches
- Intergenerational training and qualification
- Project Media Scouts
- Project Digital Heroes (see also chapter 4.3 "General training offers for digital literacy")
- Educational events by police to raise awareness of fake news and trace its origin
- Small group work with exchange about Fake News
- General community learning settings (communication and community)

Asked about the key factors for the success of an intergenerational approach to digital literacy and the main motivating factors for participating young people, the experts made the following points:

- Good preparation of young people for the specific peculiarities and challenges which arise in the learning of older people and which must therefore be taken into account and known
- Sufficient patience as key soft skill among young people
- Previous reflection on the young people's own language use, as this may not be known to the older people
- To become aware that young people often take their digital skills for granted and that they find it much easier to use them than older people for whom such access can be "uncharted territory"
- Innovative, lively kick-off event that appeals to both generations
- Young people should not put themselves above older people with their knowledge and thus show arrogant distance (insecurity/rejection of older people possible or ("power struggles")
- Creating monetary incentives for young people
- Creating closeness to the world of life by communicating positive experiences in the respective families with regard to digital learning

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- Networking with other young people who already have previous experience of working with older people or, conversely, older people who already work with young people (e.g. through voluntary work, etc.)
- Addressing the young people on the emotional level and here going over the respective living environment ("what do you wish for your own grandfather/grandmother so that they can handle digital media more? What do you think they need for this to work and what advantages would that have for your grandparents?")
- High levels of respect for each other among participants of both generations
- Stamina of the young people for the whole training (no short "straw fires")
- The commitment shown through the work in the Academy is good and very positive in the CV of the young people

Asked about possible content topics that would be suitable for stimulating intergenerational discussions in the context of a training course, the experts named:

- COVID-19 and its effects, especially on climate change
- Fake news
- Right-wing populism, new political groups
- Religious and politically motivated terrorism
- Cyberbullying
- Discussions about current debates in Germany in general
- Problem of intergenerational contracts in view of demographic change (e.g.
- Future viability of the German pension system and the resulting challenges for young people)
- Family and leisure
- Environmental protection

Results from the focus groups

An online exchange of experience between experts on the subject of fake news twice manifested once again that a digital gap, which is not bound to the older generation in principle, often prevents equal opportunities with regard to the use and handling of digital media. The contributions in these two meetings also showed that currently a high level of competence acquisition is still necessary to recognise and perceive fake news and that there is therefore a high educational need. As the survey of older people

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also revealed, the experts' statements correlate to the fact that older people prefer and use digital applications for social contact rather than news portals. It is important to sensitize older people to potential dangers and, if possible, to let them practice the training content on their own digital devices. It is also important to include in training concepts that fake news are often related to hate speech and conspiracy theories. In the meantime, many fake news have become so complex that even experts sometimes have difficulties in uncovering them (e.g. deepfakes). The principle of having to form an opinion faster and faster makes the unchecked acceptance of fake news even more likely. In the experts' view, the tendency towards simplification (reduction of complexity) also promotes a fast, unfiltered reception and acceptance of fake news. The creation of "media literacy" and a debate culture can help to counteract these developments (e.g. event "Debate Tuesday, visual fake news https://www.mfk-frankfurt.de/termine/debatten-dienstag-visuelle-fake-news/).

Summary

In summary, it could be concluded from the various data collections that training of older people on fake news and related digital "pitfalls" (e.g. hate speech and conspiracy theories) should not be developed conceptually out of a necessity decided upon in advance by trainers. The needs and requirements of the older adults themselves often deviate strongly from the assumptions of the trainers/experts and must not simply be "imposed and prescribed" to the older adults who are digitally interested. Older people - regardless of their actual digital skills - are often very self-confident and often link their interest in digital education with the impressions they have gained through their life experience. It is important - both for older people and young trainers - to find out about these characteristics before planning training courses and then to incorporate them into the implementation process in order to motivate both sides to learn and experience something new.

4.2. Preferences for digital literacy

What do older people think about their digital skills and needs?

More than 60% of the older people who took part in the survey say that they have already been informed or have received digital training to enhance their digital skills (Q64). This basically shows a very high motivation and interest of older people to deal with digital media and to develop themselves in this area as well.

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What is interesting here is that the older persons indicate a higher level of interest in their self-assessment than is assumed by the surveyed experts themselves.

Digital training and courses

Almost 45% of older people in the survey say they know of digital training or courses they could take, and over 22% of them are undecided or do not take a clear position on this. Overall, there is a very broad and not specifically pronounced spread here (Q 66).

It is therefore possible that some older people do not (yet) have a clear idea of what their own digital training needs may still be, or where they could place their own digital knowledge

Discussion of information and its origin

When asked where older people get their information from politics and society, a wide range of media used is shown, from old-style (paper newspaper, television etc.) to modern digital technologies (Q68).

In the survey, more than 90% stated that they discuss social issues with family and/or friends. In the question on the assessment of older people by the experts, 50% of them stated that they had no clear opinion on this ("neither nor"); 50% answered "yes".

Thus, older people do not show an exclusive focus on where they get their information from. Apparently, they often stick to traditional, familiar media and mix them with modern digital information sources where appropriate. Discussions outside of family/friendly networks, on the other hand, are not found so frequently in the survey, so that here the uptake of information takes place on a broader level than the subsequent transfer of information to the environment.

Assessment of the own, personal user competence

Over 63% of older respondents stated that they find social media and the Internet user-friendly/intuitive; over 75% stated that they are not afraid of using social media and the Internet (Q74 and Q75).

Over 73% also see no need for more practice in using the Internet in general (Q77).

Asked about the need for more practice in using digital devices, over 58% of the older people (Q76) said no. This indicates a high level of self-perceived security in the use of digital devices. However, it must also be kept in mind here that probably only people with higher digital skills that were already

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available anyway took part in the online survey; other older people without these basic skills were not able to take part in the survey, so this result is not representative strictly speaking. The medium used for the survey thus quasi automatically only allowed for a target group with higher digital skills.

56% of the older persons surveyed regard the acquisition of digital skills as a prerequisite for being able to use relevant services of the modern, digitized world and thus to be able to participate more in their daily personal lives and in society (Q 81).

Recognizing Fake News

Almost 49% state that they know how to recognise fake news, while 24.39% each answer this question in the negative or do not arrive at their own assessment (Q 83). The older respondents thus rate their own competence to identify and assign fake news as quite high (Q 83).

This competence of being able to identify and recognise fake news well also correlates with answering the question to what extent older people judge their own ability to think critically. Almost 87% rate this ability as good in principle/at any rate (Q84).

When asked about the reasons why older people find it difficult to develop their digital skills, almost 32% cite a lack of training opportunities that are accessible or affordable (Q87). Other - unspecified - reasons are also given by over 29%. However, a closer analysis of the respective named reasons among these 29% indicates that these participants apparently no longer considered further training to be necessary due to a very good assessment of their own abilities

4.3. Teaching and training on digital literacy and their transfer potential to another public: older adults

In the course of the various surveys and interviews, the experts also pointed out interesting formats and projects for digital literacy training. Below are a few examples of these digital educational offers that were not primarily designed to appeal to older people when they were created. One exception is the "Digital Compass" (a project of the Federal Association of the Senior Citizens' Organisation BAGSO and Deutschland sicher im Netz e.V.).

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Workshop on Information Literacy on the Net

This is a ready-developed workshop concept that can be used by educational institutions to qualify their respective target groups on the topic of "information literacy on the net" and to transfer knowledge to the general public. Lecturers receive a modular package that allows them to successfully conduct courses with as little effort as possible. https://www.medienkompetenzportal-nrw.de/handlungsfelder/erwachsenenbildung/workshop-zu-informationskompetenz-im-netz.html

Digital heroes - Secure network helps e.V.

Mentoring programme in which young people coach other young people in media competence.

The concept aims to anchor Internet education permanently in everyday school life, refine professional qualifications such as the ability to work in a team and take responsibility, and strengthen one's own self-esteem - for example when pupils learn to recognise bullying situations, to evaluate and solve. In doing so, students and teachers are equally mediators of media competence. The project started in Frankfurt and is currently being extended to schools throughout Hesse.

The Digital Heroes are students in the 7th-9th grade who participate in the cross-school mentoring program. The heroes advise, give impulses and exchange ideas. They talk about digital topics related to the Internet and offer support in the prevention of online bullying. https://www.sicheres-netz-hilft.de/wissen/digitale-helden/

Mimikama - ZDDK Think first - then click

This is an Austrian association founded in 2011 with the aim of educating people about Internet abuse. https://www.mimikama.at/

Youth film competition Krass gegen Hass (Hessen)

Through a film competition of the Youth Welfare Office of the City of Offenbach/Main, young people between 10 and 16 years of age from the city and district of Offenbach/Main can make videos/films that deal with the topic of "Respect and tolerance in social networks" and that set an example of cohesion and acceptance beyond the problem. http://krassgegenhass.junetz.de/

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Digital Compass

The Digital Compass provides free services for senior citizens on the Internet and the like. At present, 75 locations are being set up across Germany, where Internet pilots support older people in trying out digital services for themselves. The Digital-Kompass is a meeting place for personal exchange, for on-site and online training and for obtaining materials. The Digital Compass is a project of the Federal Association of Senior Citizens' Organisations (BAGSO) and Deutschland sicher im Netz e.V. in partnership with the Consumer Initiative with funding from the Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection. https://www.digital-kompass.de/

The projects that are briefly describe here are mentioned because they represent tried and tested best-practice approaches and their conceptual approaches could, if necessary, be adapted/revised to provide a good service for older people.

4.4. Specific training programmes for older persons ' digital literacy

At local level, it is mainly district adult education centres that offer PC and smartphone courses for older people. These are predominantly designed specifically for the target group of older people and therefore only address a certain age group. A few providers have also expanded their offer to cross-generational courses within the framework of a general project "Jung hilft Alt" (e.g. Seniorenhilfe Dietzenbach). They also offer so-called "premium courses", which consist of a small group of only 3-5 participants, in order to be able to respond intensively to the needs of the individual course participants.

There are also senior citizens' guides with regard to digital practical life support offers, which, for example, introduce people to online food shopping and provide assistance (Caritas, Rödermark).

The Senior Computer Lab-Frankfurt is the only privately owned company that offers a wide range of services for IT questions and installations, especially for senior citizens and people of the 50PLUS generation.

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5.Conclusion and insights for the design of the DIGITOL Academy

Results from the various data collections and outlook

The various settings for data collection (survey of professionals and older people themselves, individual interviews, and exchange of experiences by experts) provided information in a variety of ways about initial conditions, self- and external assessments, as well as current learning approaches and focal points with regard to digital media in general and the critical-competence scope with false reports on the net. The following explanations should represent a quintessence from the information and ideas collected, which at best can be helpful for the further development of the DIGITOL project.

Older people themselves claim to obtain information through a wide variety of information channels. They like to mix both digital and "old-school" media, such as newspapers, television etc. They see themselves as being well informed in order to have a say in political and social issues. This information is preferably discussed among friends and family and probably less "outside" (= via digital social media). If information is exchanged and discussed in a very small, personal setting, the question arises: Do older people keep their opinions and attitudes on topics they have gained from this information to themselves and their closest environment? What do they do with it and how exactly did this particular positioning come about; where, how and, if applicable, to whom do they share it with others than their family and circle of friends if digital media are not or only slightly intensively used for this purpose?

The results of the survey and the interviews suggest that older people communicate social and political issues less anonymously on the Internet, but rather in their small personal environment via social communication media, which may include Whatsapp.

Older people show a self-confident self-image with regard to digital media. What remains open is whether the interviewees always understood the same thing, e.g. by "critical thinking". It is possible that the answers to questions with these terms, which are to be interpreted differently, are also based on different interpretations, such as I can also criticise, I always weigh everything very carefully, I question many things etc.

When people - regardless of their age - are asked about their own competences and abilities, these survey results always run the risk of containing highly "socially desirable" answers. Who likes to admit - even anonymously - that they do not know how to recognize fake news? Some answers indicate this, as they are sometimes paradoxical: For example, while a very high percentage of older people state that

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they know how to recognize fake news, a not significantly low percentage state that they can benefit most from training on fake news.

Findings from the surveys for practical implementation:

The survey shows that media work with older people is apparently still identified and dealt with in terms of content within the large field of adult education. Studies and scientific findings show, however, that the specific learning needs of older people cannot always be addressed in conventional learning settings of educational work with adults (learning speed, didactic approach to school, which is often rejected by older people, inclusion of previous biographical and life-world experiences of older people, informally acquired competences beyond proven qualifications).

The fact that professionals to a large extent did not express a precise knowledge of the concrete causes that make the implementation/further development of digital offers difficult suggests that in the case of training offers it is hardly helpful to look at input = output (which participant started and ended successfully?) alone, but rather to analyse processes **during the training process** (constant observation of the response of the learning group).

This can also become an important point to consider when planning the content and later implementing the DIGITOL Academy: The learners themselves are the resonance body for the trainers, by means of which they can see whether the knowledge imparted can be adequately absorbed by the target group and whether the interest remains!

This can also become an important point to consider when planning the content and later implementing the DIGITOL Academy: The learners themselves are the resonance body for the trainers, by means of which they can see whether the knowledge taught can be adequately absorbed by the target group and whether the interest remains!

Causal research for the acceptance/non-acceptance of digital offers is apparently not yet sufficiently in the focus of those involved. In addition to the pedagogical setting up of the learning concept, it may be necessary to make a prior investigation and then to provide accompanying feedback on the life-world biographical circumstances of both young and old in order to create motivating and meaningful learning settings that are accepted by both sides. In this way, the teachers receive valuable feedback from the addressees themselves and their actual needs and motivation patterns.

In chapter 4.2. with an analysis of the self-assessment of job-seeking people of the 50PLUS generation who took part in this survey, it also becomes clear once again that lifeworld-relevant and thus

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meaningful digital learning among older people is an extremely important aspect which - if it is not taken into account - can trigger negative learning experiences (e.g. an older person who is supposed to deal with digital social media and still prefers to maintain most social contacts in person or through the traditional telephone).

In this respect, it is certainly of great importance that people must first feel personally addressed and touched by the access to the topic of false messages. Only then interest in the topic and an idea of the fact that fake news also play a role in the personal life of the individual will develop.

Since the German survey focused on older people looking for work, who thus find themselves in a special, aggravating life situation, special attention should be paid in the further course of the project to which (digital) attitudes and self-images are expressed from which specific life situation.

The DIGOTOL project should, in particular, always take a self-critical look at the question of whether project ideas and their implementation of whatever vision may represent " a beautiful new generation-spanning digital training world" for the planners, corresponds to the opinion/assessment of the young lay trainers and the trainees themselves, that is to be always obtained in advance. In this way, catching an "echo" from the basis and thus clarifying the suitability of interventions offers a higher chance of ensuring that the participants of the training academy will benefit from it. In this way, the primacy of meaningful learning for each individual would also be given sufficient attention - a particularly important factor for older people who no longer accept and welcome everything that is "presented" to them!

Older people often deal with contemporary issues by mirroring/comparing/evaluating them on the basis of their own past life history. The way in which the person has experienced and mastered his or her previous life (coping strategies, resilience, perseverance) is also decisive. If these considerations prove to be correct, factors of this kind can also have a decisive influence on learning strategies in old age and thus be helpful in planning the DIGITOL Academy.

General outlook:

Digital education, in order to competently and arbitrarily express, position and transport opinions, is taking on a very important role here and should not be anchored as a "free choice" within the framework of a digital learning setting. This approach is to be questioned, since over the often quite long period of time that a user has to acquire a complete IT curriculum, he or she is already intensively and extensively on the internet and should have at least theoretical knowledge about its risks and fake news, even if he or she does not already have all the knowledge considered as "digital basic needs".

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So there are many dangers involved in the approach of always first having learners go through the digital standard beginners course (if an older person really wants to do this at all), and only afterwards begin touching on data protection and other contentious, manipulative and potentially dangerous issues of concern as a kind of "icing on the cake", so to speak.

Thus, a further possible point to reflect upon could be the question in what way and on what kind of needs assessments the local training opportunities for older people are currently being developed? Do participatory, empowering processes take place in this regard or are there only "ready-made, pre-planned training courses" available? Perhaps the reality looks quite different from the point of view of the lived-experiences of older people themselves…

With a view to older adults and the elderly, and in view of the ever faster development of digital communication and the news world, it will also be necessary to take into account that there cannot be a final digital competence at some point in a person's life. Rather, this could be understood as a cross-generational issue that should provide for digital learning and skill development processes in the sense of a life-long-learning. This would give children, young people and older adults the ongoing opportunity to ensure their digital connectivity not only by learning how to operate the latest smart devices, but also by being able to confidently manage the increasingly sophisticated "manipulation traps" of digital media and information landscapes.

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Annex

Annex 1: Questionnaire of the online survey

Date the survey was created: Sunday, March 22, 2020

Total number of responses: 59

Demographic analytics for Germany:

Gender

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
F	38.98%	23
M	61.02%	36
X	0.00%	0
TOTAL		59

Age

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
0-18	1.69%	1
18-25	5.08%	3
25-35	8.47%	5
35-45	10.17%	6
45-55	27.12%	16
55-65	30.51%	18
65-75	16.95%	10
75-85	0.00%	0
85-95	0.00%	0
95+	0.00%	0
TOTAL		59

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Organisations vs. Individuals

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Vertreter einer Organisation/Firma	11.86%	7
Privatperson	88.14%	52
TOTAL		59

Annex 2: Participants of the interview[3]

Organisation	Location	Website	Time of the Interviews
Representatives of five relevant local organisations	Dietzenbach, Kreis Offenbach und Region Frankfurt am Main	N/A	May 2020

Annex 3: Participants of the focus groups[4]

Organisation	Location	Website
RIAC Project Consultant	N/A	www.riac-project.eu/
VHS Dietzenbach	Dietzenbach	https://www.vhs-dietzenbach.de/
Jugendamt Stadt Offenbach, Koordinierungsstelle besondere Kooperationsprojekte Jugendhilfe Schule	Offenbach am Main	http://krassgegenhass.junetz.de/krass-gegen-hass-2020/
Kreis Offenbach – Fachdienst Volkshochschule/Weiterbildung	Dietzenbach	https://www.kreis-offenbach.de/Themen/Bildung-Schule/Kommunales-Bildungsmanagement
Digitale Helden	Frankfurt am Main	https://digitale-helden.de/

[3] In order to guarantee the anonymity of the participants, the names and the organisations are only used for evaluation purposes and are not included in the report

[4] In order to ensure data protection, this table mentions only those participating organisations whose representatives have agreed to be included in this list.

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ASB Mittelhessen, Projekt EVA	Offenbach am Main	https://www.asb-mittelhessen.de/unsere-leistungen/angebote-fuer-aeltere-menschen/senioren-asina
Pro Arbeit, Abteilung Jobcoaching	Dietzenbach	https://www.proarbeit-kreis-of.de/
BAGSO	Berlin	https://www.bagso.de/
Blickwechsel e.V. - Verein für Medien- und Kulturpädagogik	Göttingen	www.blickwechsel.org
Suchthilfe Zentrum Wildhof	Offenbach am Main	https://www.shz-wildhof.de/
Infocafe Neu Isenburg	Neu-Isenburg	http://infocafe.org/
Pro Arbeit, Projektstelle RoOF	Dietzenbach	https://www.roof-kreis-offenbach.de/
INBAS Institut für berufliche Bildung, Arbeitsmarkt- und Sozialpolitik GmbH	Offenbach am Main	https://www.inbas.com/ueber-uns.html
VHS Dietzenbach	Dietzenbach	https://www.vhs-dietzenbach.de/
Stadt Neu-Isenburg, Projekt „Alt hilft Jung am PC“	Neu-Isenburg	https://neu-isenburg.de/Pressemitteilung Projekt Jung hilf Alt
Universität des dritten Lebensalters, Goethe Universität Frankfurt am Main	Frankfurt am Main	https://www.uni-frankfurt.de/42584075/home

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Annex 4: Composition of the focus group

Datum	Anzahl der Teilnehmer	Genderbalance	Teilnahme durch Vertreter folgender Organisationsformen:
04.06.2020	9	Frauen: 5 (56%) Männer: 4 (44%)	Öffentliche Verwaltung (Bereiche Jugendhilfe, Weiterbildung, Jobcoaching) Gemeinnützige Vereine (Bereich Weiter- und Erwachsenenbildung) Karitative Vereinigungen Private Bildungsträger
05.06.2020	11	Frauen:6 (55%) Männer: 5 (45%)	Gemeinnützige Vereine (Bereich Medien- und Kulturpädagogik) Öffentliche Verwaltung (Bereiche Jugendarbeit und Soziale Arbeit) Öffentliche Bildungseinrichtungen Karitative Vereinigungen Private Bildungsträger und Forschungsinstitute Öffentliche Forschungseinrichtungen Politische Interessensvertretung für Senioren

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