Short summary on the results of the Be Smart Seniors (BESS) project's survey on the use of IT services by adults over 60 years of age in Slovenia

Content

Introduction

The Be Smart Seniors (BESS) project is supported by the European Union's Erasmus + Education, Training, Youth and Sport program between October 2018 and September 2020. The Tempus Public Foundation is responsible for coordination Erasmus + applications in Hungary.

The project consortium consists of the following organizations:

Corvus Kft. - Project Coordinator (Hungary)

Andragoski zavod Maribor - Lyudska Univerza (Slovenia)

CareerSuli Educational Foundation (Hungary)

TURUN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU (Finland)

Pensioners Association Pécs (Hungary)

Anthropogogik Brand (Liechtenstein)

Prompt-H Ltd. (Hungary)

Project background

The European Union considers the aging of the society to be the greatest challenge that all European countries, including Hungary, must tackle in the 21st century. Modern online services, info communication technologies can help older adults to keep in touch with younger generations, maintain their autonomy, improve their lifestyles and create new opportunities, interactive relationships. With the right IT skills, these technologies can become an important tool for maintaining quality of life and can reduce intergenerational distance (Ageism).

Project target group

The target group of the project is adults over 60 years of age, primarily in the countries implementing the project.

Project Goals

The project partnership has set four goals:

- Developing an intergenerational study model that primarily involves young relatives of older adults to help them to acquire basic IT skills.

- Creating an online video repository as a collection on topics tailored to the needs of the project target group. These short teaching materials, with special pedagogical and

andragogical approach, focusing on international and country-specific topics. Their aim is to introduce services and technologies to older adults in order to teach them use of them.

- Creating an online learning environment where older adults can easily find teaching materials tailored to their needs. The interface will be suitable to serve community and communication functions as well.

- A brief guide for the target group on how to make their own teaching materials about their hobbies with simple tools, how they can share their memories with others (eg in the form of a blog), giving their knowledge and life experience to younger generations on a particular topic.

Purpose and background of the survey

The survey presented in this summary serves to justify the project, justify its professional foundation, and prove the validity of the preliminary hypotheses.

The survey examines the use of IT tools by older adults and their learning preferences.

The results obtained here are intended to prove the concept of intergenerational study model and to give guidance and focus of the curriculum development.

Structure of the questionnaire, data collection

The questionnaire contained 99 questions that are organized in the following topics:

- Demographic data

- Use of internet

- Learning preferences

- Study questionnaire

The survey was carried out in December 2018 and January 2019 in all participating countries.

In Hungary, members of the Pensioners Association of Pécs, employees of the KOA Foundation and Corvus Ltd. worked on the survey especially in the region of Pécs and Budapest.

We used paper based questionnaires in order to get data from those members of the target group who are not familiar with the use of ICT tools.

With the help of the experts of the University of Turku we managed to prepare a well-defined, professional questionnaire to identify the motivations, areas of interest, and abilities of the target group. The results of the questionnaire evaluation can provide us with a clear view of the orientation and needs of the elderly in line with the project objectives. We tried to include respondents who can become potential users of the curriculum to be developed in the future due to their age, family background and IT equipment.

Expectations, hypothesis

In our adult education centre and other life circles, we mostly have contacts with seniors who remain active even after retirement. However, it is hard to say that they equally embrace the ICT although it could prove very helpful to them.

We expect to get at least some of the insight which are the skill that the seniors possess and use often and on the other side which functionalities the use rarely or never. We plan to use these result as a basis for identification of topics for video tutorials.
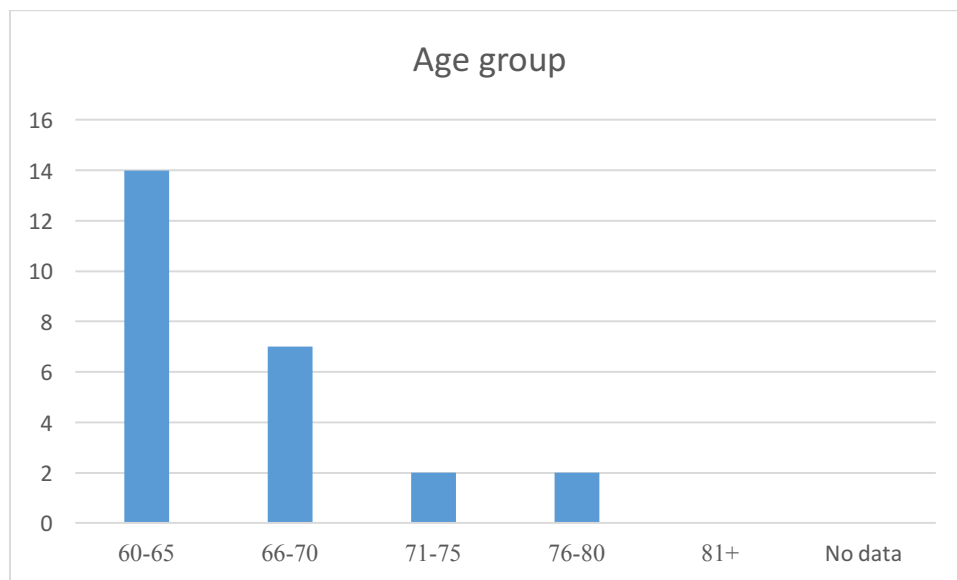
The results of the survey

The most important findings and conclusions of the survey data are summarized below.

Personal data

A total of 25 people completed the questionnaires.

60% of the respondents were women and 40% were men.

Respondents showed the following distribution by age group:

92% of the respondents completed at least secondary education, 88% are retired.
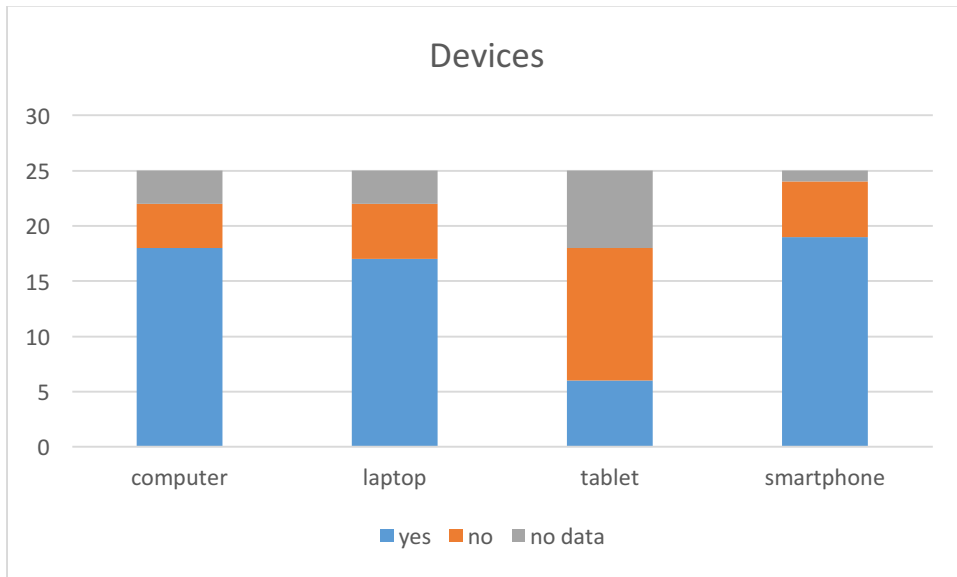
12 of them live in a village and 11 of them live in a small town.

Personal data show that the 60-70 age group are over-represented among responden

Use of internet

All of the respondents had an internet connection.

Respondents used different types of IT devices in the following proportions:

Devices

A stacked bar chart titled "Devices" with a y-axis ranging from 0 to 30 in increments of 5. The categories on the x-axis are computer, laptop, tablet, and smartphone. The legend shows: yes (blue), no (orange), no data (grey).

- computer: yes ≈ 18, no ≈ 4, no data ≈ 3 (total 25)
- laptop: yes ≈ 17, no ≈ 5, no data ≈ 3 (total 25)
- tablet: yes ≈ 6, no ≈ 12, no data ≈ 7 (total 25)
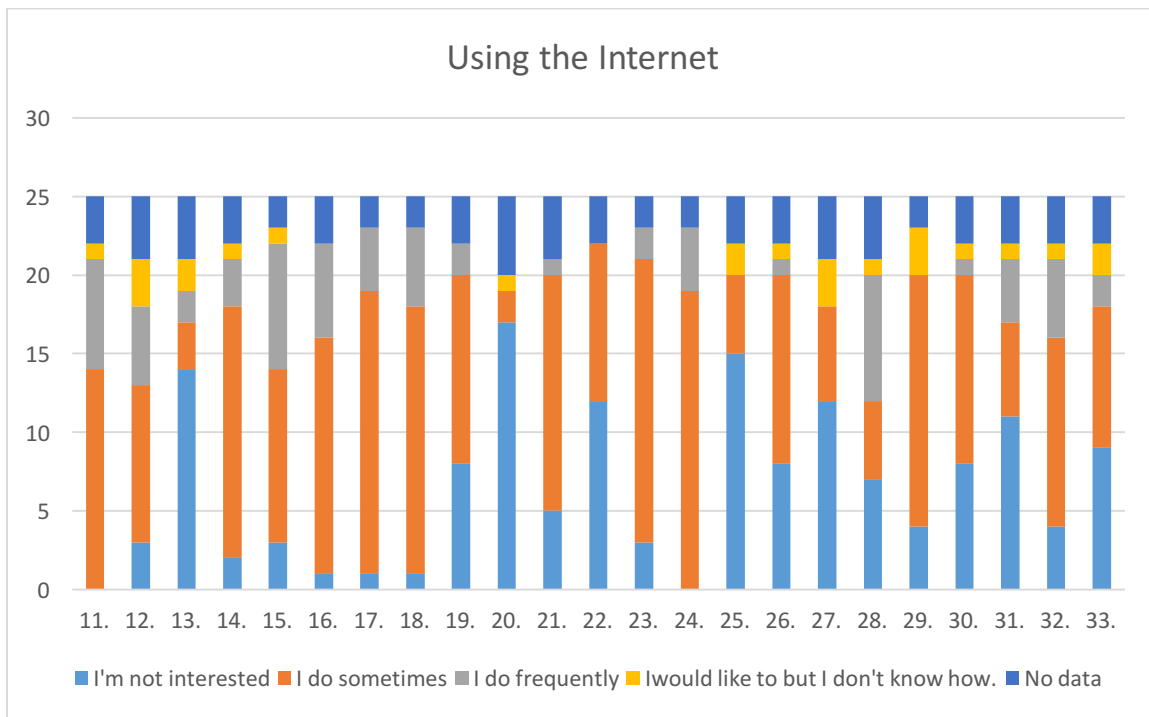- smartphone: yes ≈ 19, no ≈ 5, no data ≈ 1 (total 25)

Respondents typically had more than one IT device. In the largest number smart phones are used with computers and laptops closely following.

Noteworthy is the low rate of tablet users. This result is a key piece of information for defining the platform for development: smart phones have grown most popular in our target group and computers need also be taken into consideration.

With more than 20 questions in the questionnaire, we tried to map the online services that respondents use regularly or with the right knowledge they would use.

The information gathered here is primarily used to select topics for online video tutorials development.

Of the listed online services, respondents were given a four-degree scale to determine whether they were interested in the service, whether they used it rarely or more frequently, or whether they would use the program if they had the knowledge.

Using the Internet

Legend: I'm not interested · I do sometimes · I do frequently · I would like to but I don't know how. · No data

11. Sending / receiving e-mails
12. Making calls (including video calls) or instant messaging for friends, relatives over the internet, for example, via Skype, Messenger, WhatsApp, Viber
13. Participating in social networks (creating user profil, posting messages or other contributions to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.)
14. Receiving/sharing pictures
15. Reading online news sites / newspapers / news magazines
16. Seeking health-related information (e.g. injuries, diseases, nutrition, improving health, etc.)
17. Finding information about goods or services
18. Listening to music (e.g. web radio, music streaming)
19. Watching films and videos
20. Reading books online

21. Learning by using video tutorials (baking, cooking, repairing things)
22. Buying household goods (e.g. furniture, clothes, etc;), order food
23. Finding schedules to public transport
24. Finding information about the opening hours of shops, offices
25. Selling used things online
26. Comparing prices of products online
27. Buying tickets for public transport/events
28. Internet Banking (checking my bank account over the internet)
29. Downloading/printing official forms (e.g asking for new passport)
30. Submitting completed forms online (e.g. for tax returns)
31. Using your smart phone to remind you of appointments/ taking your medicine etc.
32. Finding information to get from one place to another (navigation, Google maps)
33. Booking accommodation online

Marked in blue are the topics that the respondents expressed their interest in. 15 out of 33 may be selected for making a video tutorial of the procedure of use. Topics that the higher interest was expressed in are making calls or instant messaging, participating in social networks, selling used things online, buying tickets for public transport and downloading or printing official forms.

The topics that the respondents are practicing frequently are, for example, sending/receiving e-mails, making calls, reading on-line news, seeking health related information and internet banking

Stu

dy questionnaire

In this section we wanted to have a better insight of the computer skills and skills of the respondents.

Respondents had to use a five-grade scale (not tried, I'm not capable, not easy, relatively easy, very easy) to define how confident they can accomplish a certain basic IT tasks.
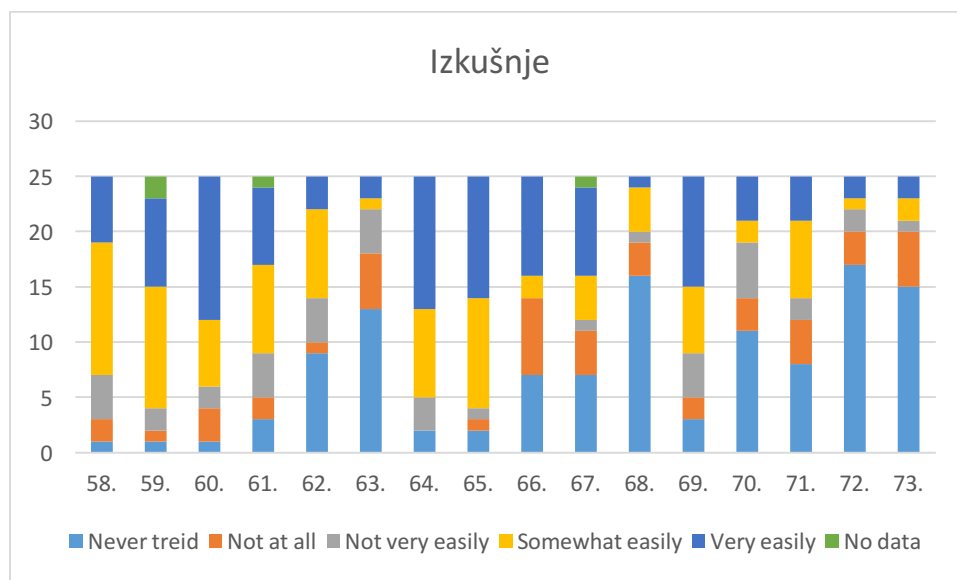
1. Mobile Device Basics – I can
58. Navigate onscreen menus using the touchscreen
59. Use the onscreen keyboard to type
2. Communication – I can
60. Send emails
61. Send pictures by email
3. Data and File Storage

62. Transfer information (files such as music, pictures, documents) on my mobile device to my computer
63. Transfer information (files such as music, pictures, documents) on my computer to my mobile device
4. Internet – I can
64. Find information about my hobbies and interests on the Internet

65. Find health information on the Internet

5. Calendar - I can

66. Check events and appointments into a calendar

67. Check the date and time of upcoming and prior appointments

6. Entertainment – I can

68. Use the device's online "store" to find games and other forms of entertainment (e.g. using Apple App Store or Google Play Store)

69. Listen to music

7. Privacy – I can

70. Setup a password to lock/unlock the device

71. Erase all Internet browsing history and temporary files

8. Troubleshooting & Software Management

72. Update games and other applications

73. Delete games and other applications

The share of respondents using either touch screen or smart phone is similar but more of them consider using touch screen quite difficult.

In case of almost every skill, some respondents expressed the complete lack of knowledge regarding ICT related tasks. The only exception was the skill of finding information about hobbies and interests on the Internet.

More complex tasks related to games and applications such as deleting or updating seem to be the most difficult for the respondents. Also a lot of them are not comfortable with working with e-calendar.

The respondents expressed the following opinions regarding the use of ICT:

Mnenja

Legend: A lot, Enough, Few, Not at all, No data
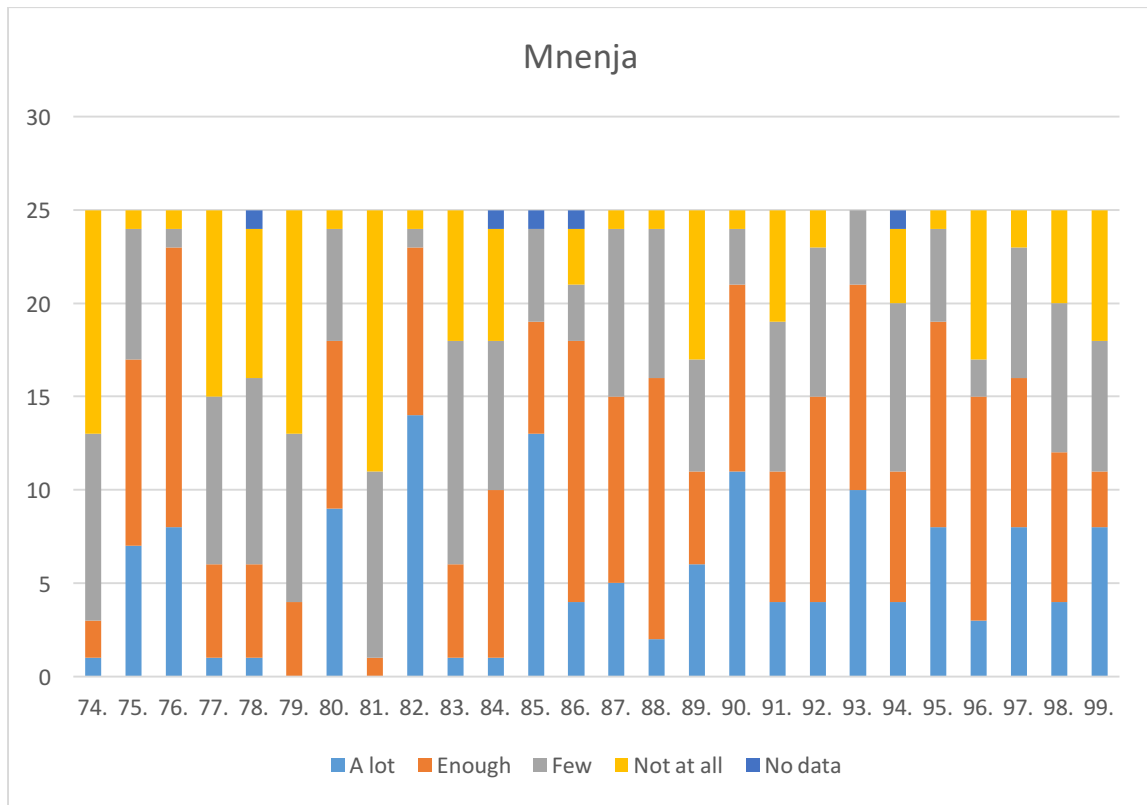
74. I think using computers makes me feel nervous
75. I think computers can be entertaining
76. I like the idea of using computers
77. I think computers can be boring
78. Computers make me feel clumsy
79. I think computers scare me
80. I think using computers can be nice
81. Computers make me feel worth
82. I think it is important to know how to use computers
83. I think computers bring people close to each other
84. I think using computers is very difficult
85. I think computers control the world too much
86. I think computers are too complex
87. I think computers make life comfortable

88. I think I have difficulties to understand computers
89. I am worry about touching something that breaks the computer
90. I think computers separate people
91. I think computers complicate life
92. I think I'm able to use computers
93. I think using computers requires dedication
94. I think using computers is very easy
95. I think it is difficult to control/understand what the computer does
96. I think computers make me feel I am not up-to-date
97. Computers help me to continue learning new things
98. The computer allows to connect with family and friends
99. The computer makes paperwork easier

According to the response rates, almost all respondents believe it is important to know how to use computers. They fell inclined to use the computers because they are aware of their importance even if they feel that computers control the world too much on and they are difficult to use. However, they are mostly not afraid of using them. In general, they like the idea of using ICT and find it entertaining.

It is interesting to see that in majority they do not express the opinion that computers bring people together but the opposite.

From their answers one can get the impression that they accepted ICT technology into their lives at least in some extent although they did not integrated into their lives as younger generation did. They associate learning how to use it with hard work and dedication

Conclusions

The survey directed us to some topics that the respondents wish to benefit from. We also suggest demonstrating the use of tablet to them since they are already quite familiar to use smart phones. It would be a good idea to demonstrate on a practical examples how ICT technology connects people (finding a long lost friend on aa social network, for example).

The majority of respondents have the knowledge of basic tasks such as emailing, browsing, and using search engines, but there is a significant group in almost every area where some basic knowledge is missing.

Younger generations teaching their older relatives should be made aware of or trained to help them overcome any psychological or other obstacles during the learning process.