

# Being Smart Senior

---



## Be Smart Seniors

Corvus Kft.

2019. March

2018-1-HU01-KA204-047754



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

## Content

Introduction.....	3
Project background .....	3
Project target group .....	3
Project Goals .....	3
Purpose and background of the survey .....	4
Structure of the questionnaire, data collection .....	5
Expectations, hypothesis.....	6
The results of the survey .....	7
Personal data.....	7
Use of Internet .....	7
Learning preferences.....	12
Study questionnaire .....	15
Conclusions.....	17

## 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 the 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 Brändle (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, 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 the quality of life and can reduce intergenerational distance.

## 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 60+ adults to help them to acquire basic IT skills supporting their first steps using online services that ensure their individual lifestyles.
- Creating an online video repository as a collection on topics tailored for the needs of the project target group. These are 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 the use of them.

- Creating an online learning environment where older adults can easily find teaching materials tailored for 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 (e.g. 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, their expectations and learning preferences.

The results obtained here are intended to prove the concept of an intergenerational study model and to give guidance and focus to 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 the Internet
- Learning preferences
- Study questions

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

We used paper-based questionnaires, which significantly reduced the number of potential responses in order to get data from those members of the target group who are not familiar with the use of ICT tools because they could benefit most of this project.

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

We expect the majority of people in the target group to have an Internet connection. According to the Eurostat survey, more than 85% of European households have access to the Internet.

Based on our adult education experience, members of the older generation prefer to use traditional desktop devices, although modern smart phones are gaining ground in this age group, too.

As we assumed the members of the target group acquired their IT skills through non-formal learning, so their knowledge is often limited to the use of some programs, websites, and services. An exception to this is the age group 60-65, whose members are often active workers and usually experienced computer and Internet users.

As expected the target group members do not prefer formal learning paths (courses, trainings), but are willing to use the help of people or relatives who they trust. They prefer goal-oriented short curriculums focusing on a specific problem or task and need practising.

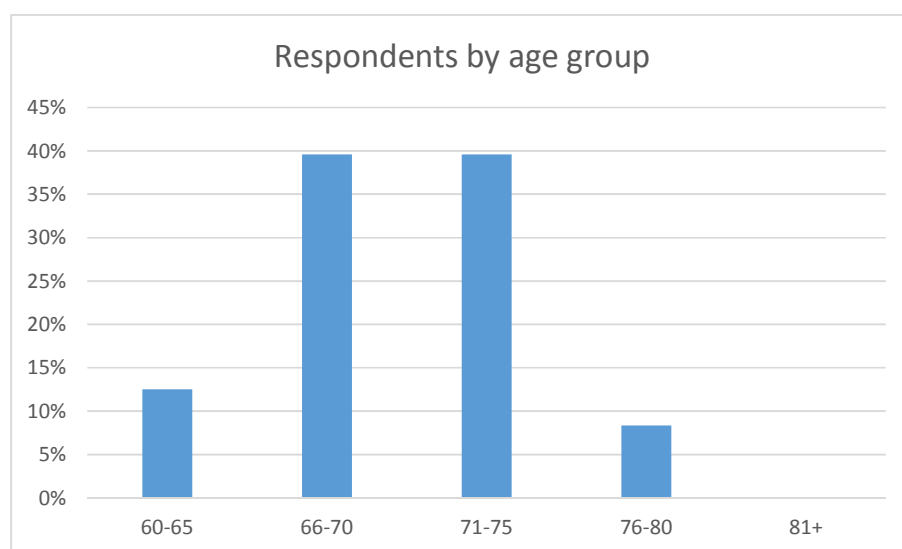
## The results of the survey

The most important findings and conclusions of the survey data in all participating countries are summarized below. The country specific results are published separately.

### Personal data

A total of 230 people completed the questionnaires, 63% of the respondents were women and 37% were men.

Respondents showed the following distribution by age group:



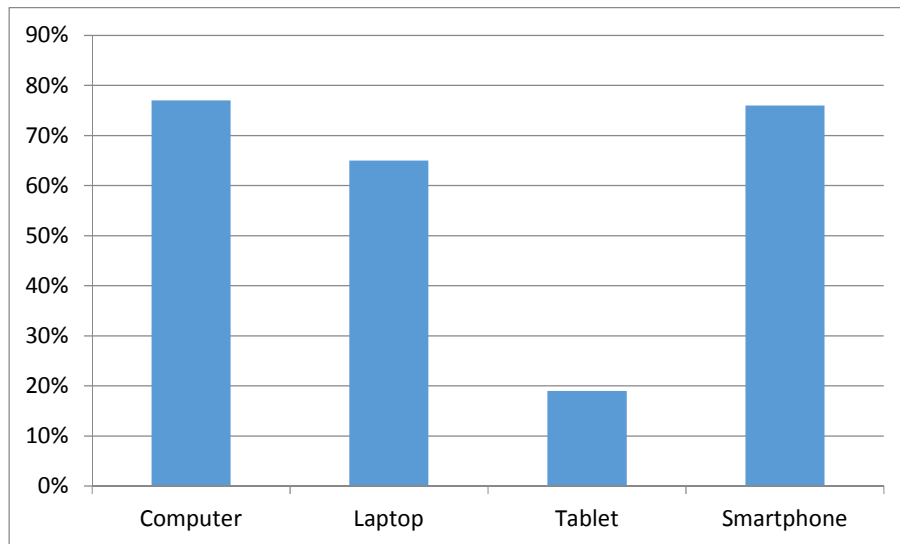
29% of the respondents completed at least secondary education. 18% are currently working, 72% are retired.

### Use of Internet

98% of the respondents had an Internet connection.

This data clearly does not represent the actual Internet access of the entire target group, but obviously we wanted to collect data from respondents who could later be potential users of the result of the project.

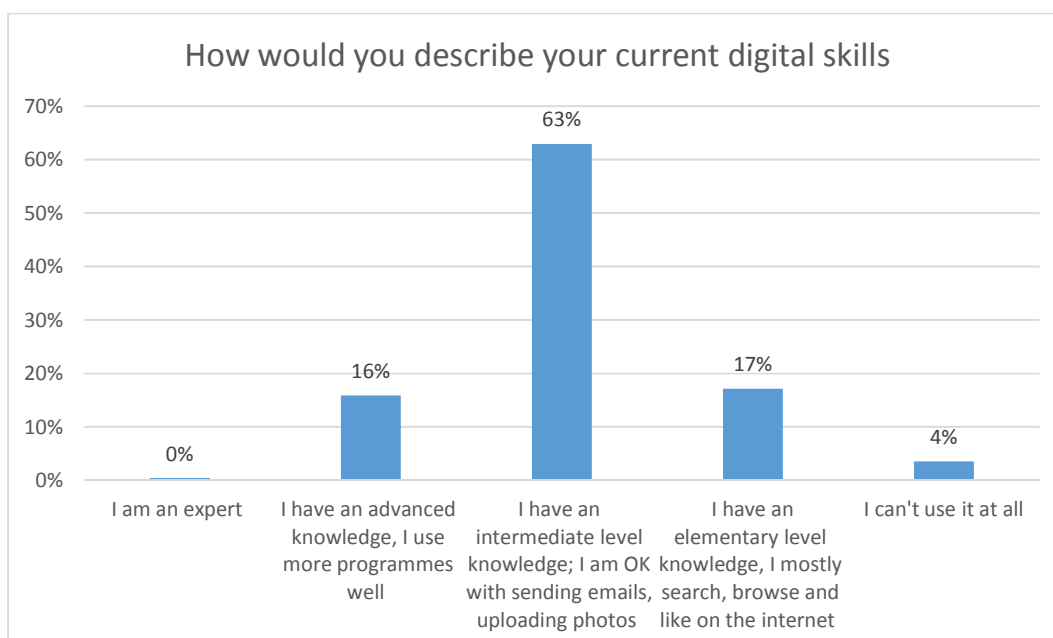
Respondents used different types of IT devices in the following proportions:



The respondents typically had more than one IT device. In the largest number traditional desktop computers are used, but beyond all expectation we have found that almost the same number of people have a smart phone, a clear explanation for this trend is the high number of people aged 66-75 in the sample.

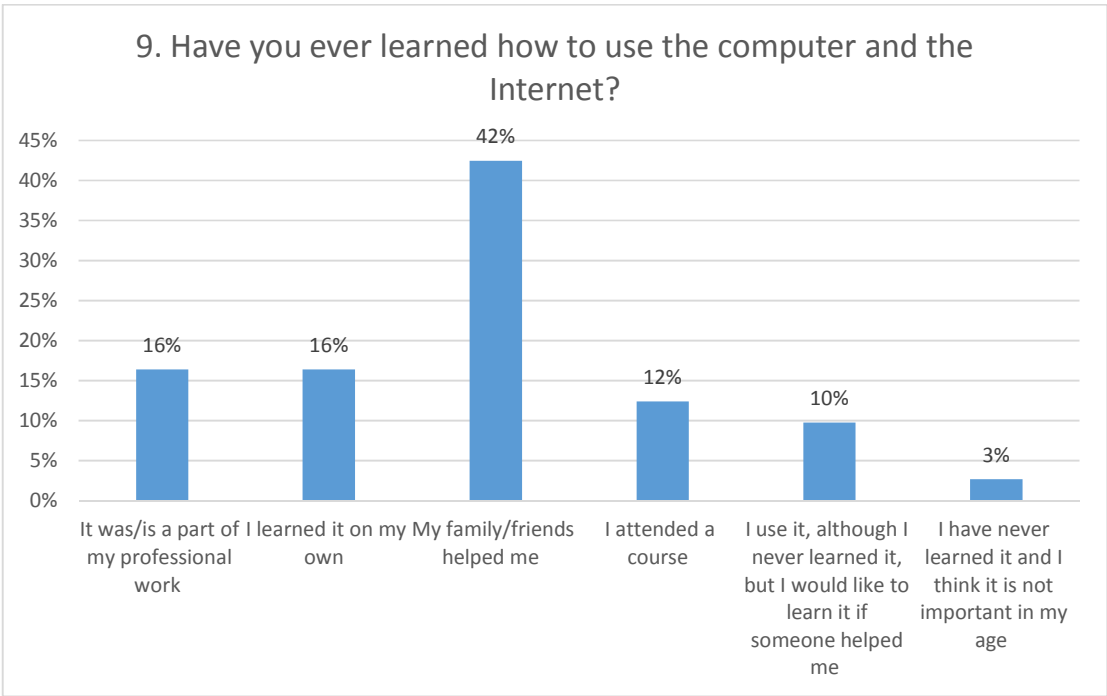
Noteworthy is the quite low rate of tablet users. This result is a key piece of information for defining the platform for development: although the rise of mobile devices is a clear trend, traditional desktop devices are still dominant in the target group.

The respondents rated their IT skills at 79% as medium or higher. In order to evaluate this data, it is important to point out that the existence of medium knowledge was tied to the knowledge of email sending and was entirely based on the self-assessment of the respondent which level was marked.

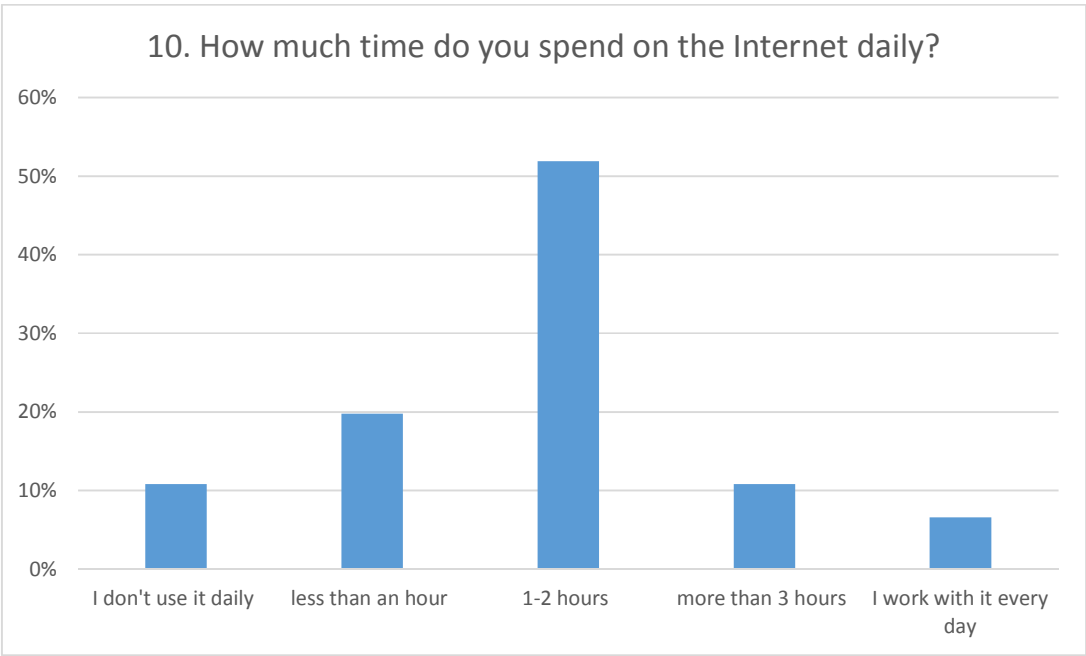




12% of the respondents had previously attended an IT course. 42% of them typically acquired their IT skills with the help of their family and friends.



95% of the respondents spend at least one hour daily using the Internet, while 11% do not use it on a daily basis. The rest of the respondents spend less than one hour online each day.



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

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

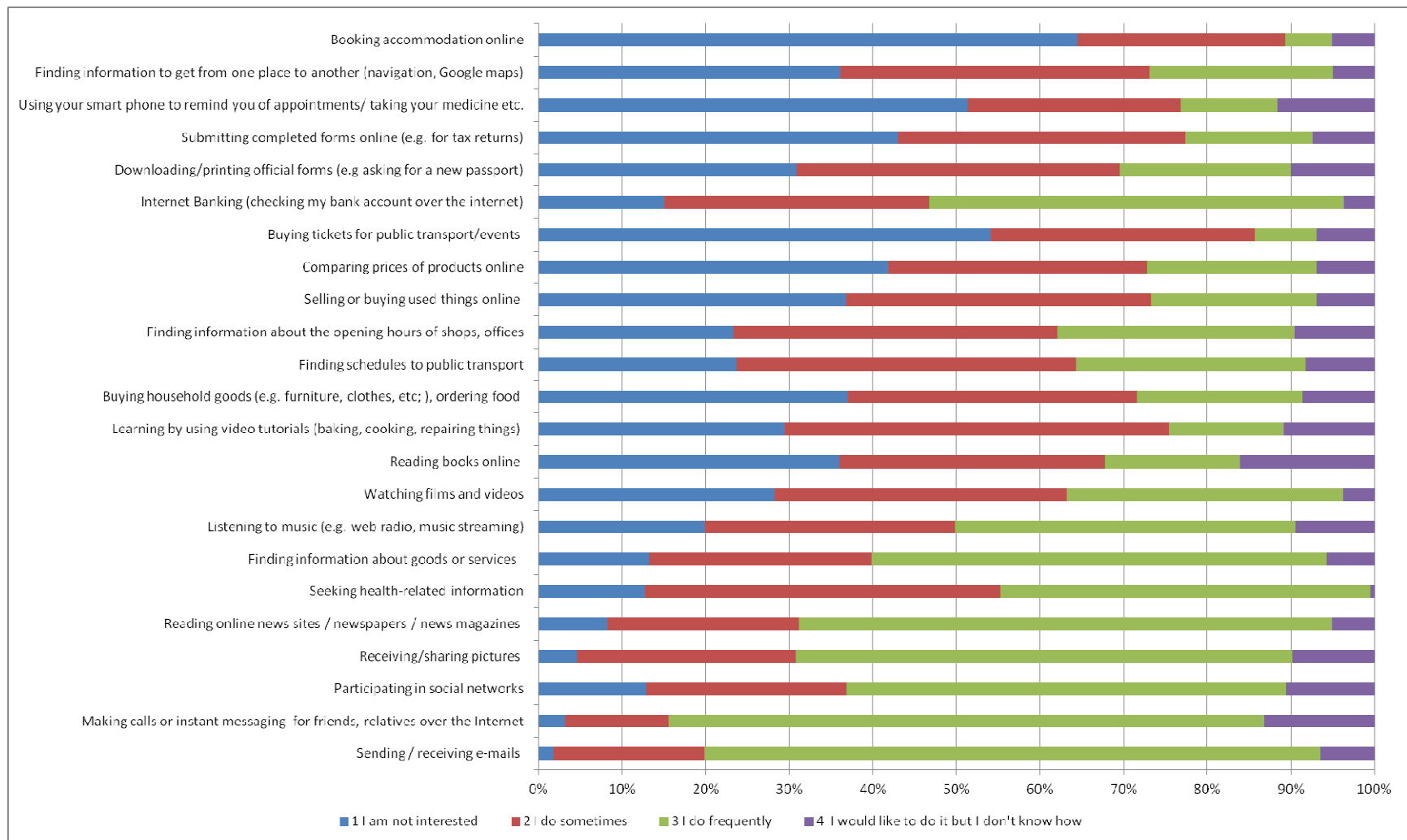
Of the listed online services, the respondents were given a four-degree scale to determine whether they were interested in the service, whether they used it rarely or more frequently, or whether they would use the program if they had the knowledge.

Of course, the most interesting for the project was the range of services where respondents expressed interest in using the service if they had the right knowledge.

The following services were included in this group: making calls online, participating in social networks, sharing pictures, reading books online, learning by using of video tutorials, finding information about the opening hours of shops, offices, downloading/using official forms and finally the reminder function of a smartphone.

We definitely do not have to make tutorials about search for health-related information as the respondents widely use these services.

The responses to areas of interest showed the following distribution:



## Learning preferences

The following group of questions looked at the respondents' learning preferences.

In the first round, we wanted to know what the respondents find important when they are learning new IT skills.

We have examined whether individual or group learning is more attractive to the target group and how detailed or goal-oriented knowledge they want. We also asked about the topic of self-study and length of time for learning.

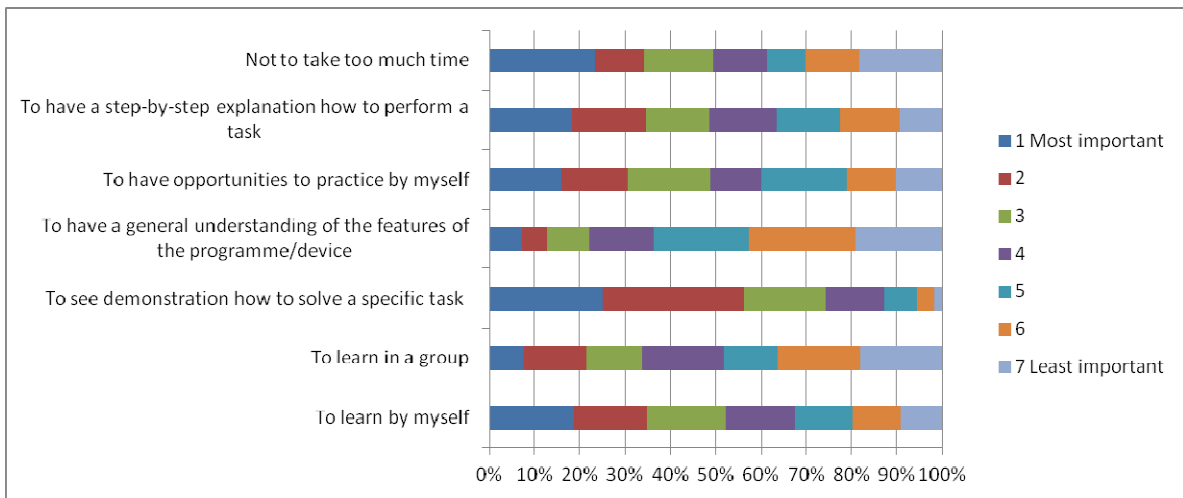
Based on the answers, the following statements can be made:

Interviewees prefer individual learning. They consider it important that they get a detailed presentation of the task, which is preferably a step-by-step guide.

The interviewees did not consider it essential to gain comprehensive knowledge about the use of a program or service, in fact they prefer practical, useful knowledge.

Many respondents considered the possibility of self-study to be important. Most of them would not like to spend too much time to learn new IT skills.

The distribution of responses to learning preferences is shown in the following chart:



The following questions of the survey tried to find out how the respondents prefer to acquire knowledge when learning new IT skills. The possible responses ranged from independent attempts to course attendance.

From the point of view of the planned developments, it was a critical element in these questions to know to what extent the respondents prefer to use the help of a younger relative, a friend, and whether they rigidly reject the use of online learning materials.

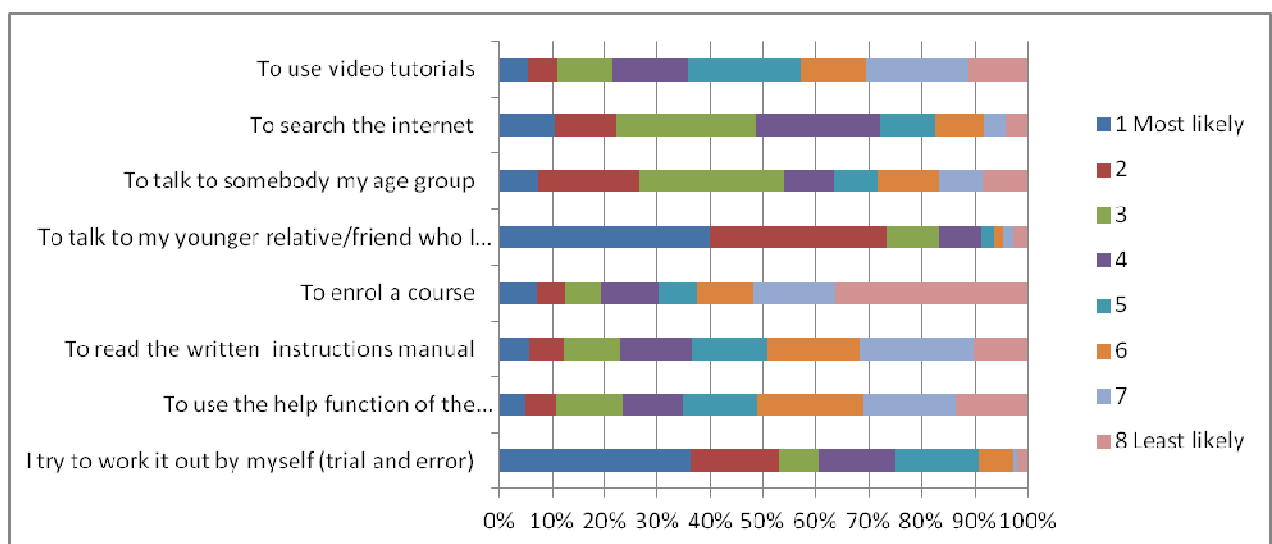
The most preferred method of learning is to ask a younger relative or friend. 40% of the respondent choose this as the most preferred way of studying new IT related skills. The second most preferred way is self study ("I try to work it out by myself"). The third most preferred way to search the internet.

The opinions regarding the use of an online video learning material are mixed among the respondents. Only 21% of them choose this in the top three on the preference list. 11% of them would not prefer this way of studying at all.

Looking at the data we have, we can conclude that the target group needs a combined form of education that allows them to acquire the necessary foundations with the help of a young helper or a course and after that if they have the well-established foundations, they can use the online forms of learning.

We have to highlight the high willingness on the side of the respondents to understand the things by themselves. This supports our project idea as a well-structured video learning curriculum can fit well into this independent, problem-solving learning attitude.

The questions and the distribution of the answers are shown in the following chart:

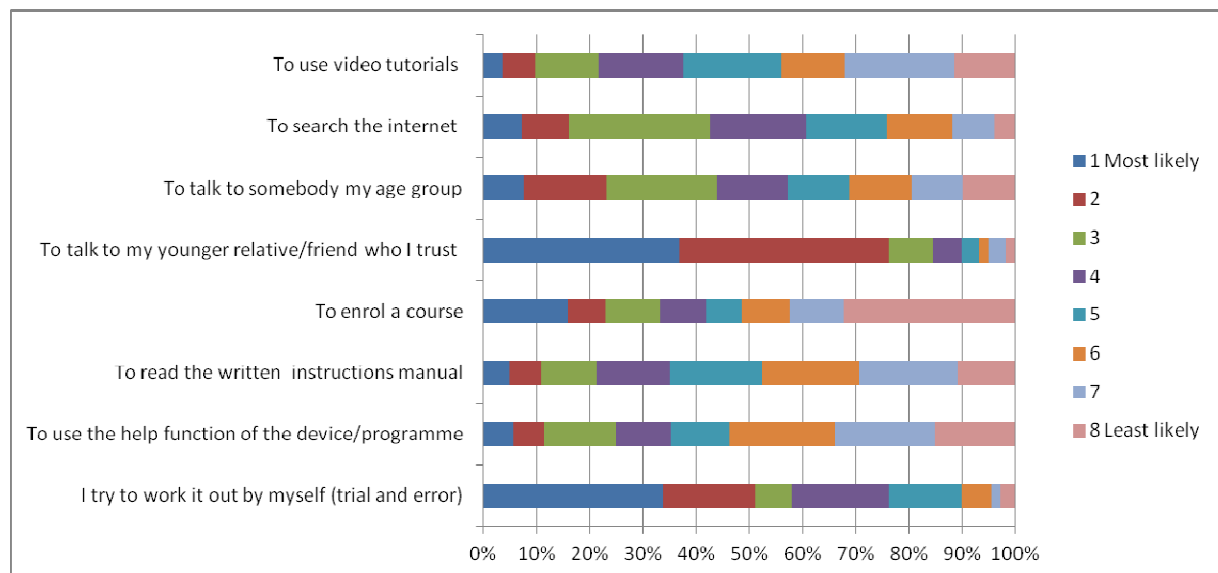


In connection with the previous question, we also asked the respondents which of the above detailed methods (irrespective of their likelihood of use) is the **most useful** according to their opinion.

We only found one significant difference in this response compared to our previous question about the probability of use. This was in the case of the option "to enrol a course". Only 7% of the respondents chose this option as the most preferred way of studying but 16% of them considered this as the most useful method of learning. This means that the respondents do not choose courses for some reasons (convenience, availability, health issues etc) although many of them think that this is a good way of learning new skills.

The most important data for the project is that using the help of a young assistant is by far the most useful for the respondents. At the same time, we also had to see that the low rates for the video learning materials are not a coincidence: 44% of the respondents said this learning method was one of the three least useful ones. There is obviously a need for a significant didactic innovation in order to produce curriculum that is better adapted to the needs of the target group.

The questions and the distribution of the answers are shown in the following chart:



## Study questionnaire

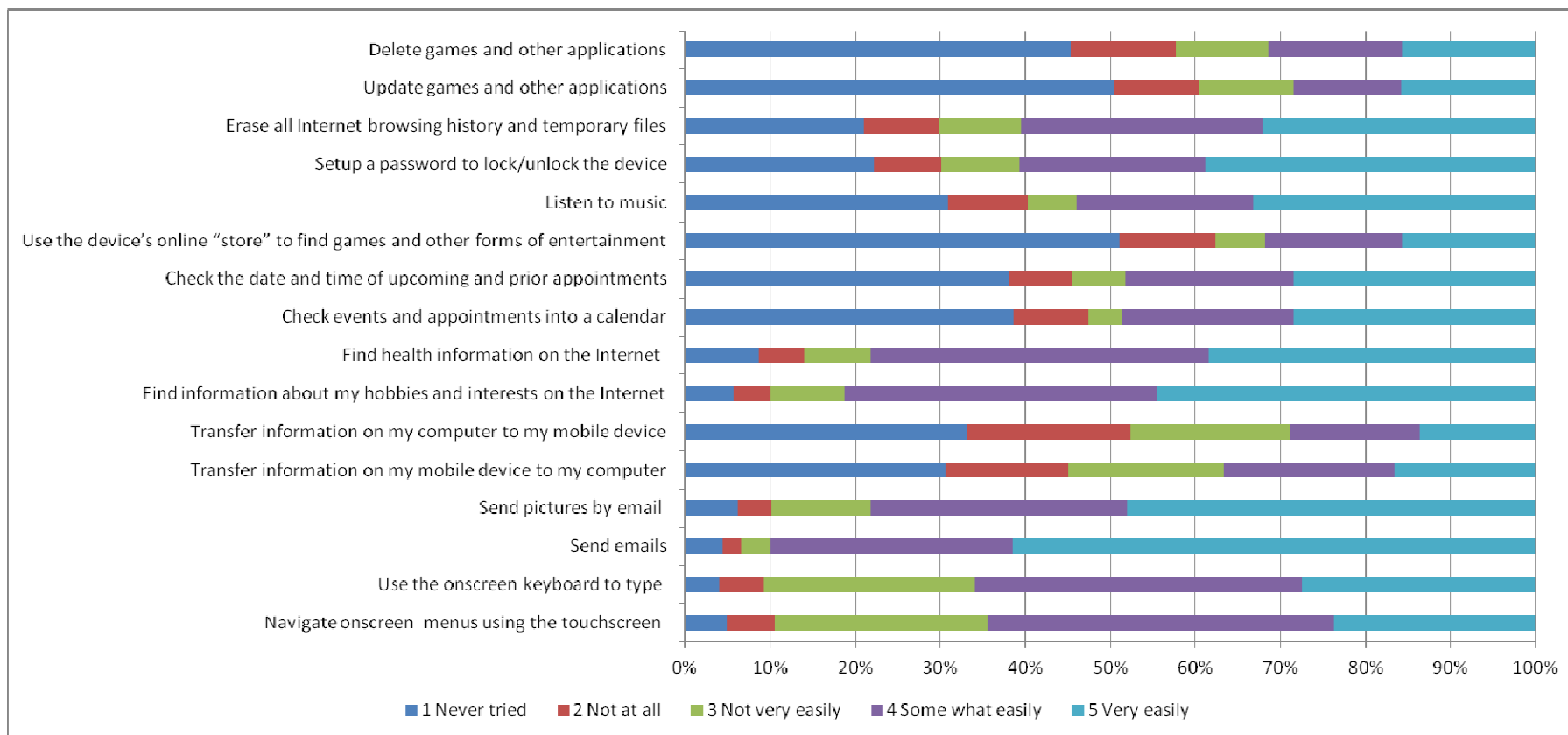
In this section we wanted to have a better insight of the computer skills of the respondents.

The 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 task.

Based on the data we received, the following statements can be made:

- The vast majority of respondents can confidently carry out basic tasks such as emailing or browsing. At the same time, there are hardly any questions where at least 10% of the respondents struggled with solving these basic tasks.
- Knowledge related to the mobile devices (although widely available) is typically weaker.
- The use of the touch screen is difficult for many respondents or they do not have enough experience.
- More complex tasks (deleting browsing history, updating programs) are a problem for many respondents or they do not pay attention to them.

The distribution of responses is in the following chart:





## Conclusions

The majority of the pre-survey hypotheses regarding the use of IT services by adults over 60 years of age were correct.

Compared to our prior expectations, respondents had a higher proportion of mobile devices, but usually they do not have the appropriate skills and knowledge to use these tools yet.

The use of desktop devices is still a major factor among the respondents, but there is a clear trend in this age group, which has already emerged among the younger ones, that mobile devices are becoming more widespread and are displacing traditional computers and laptops in terms of content consumption.

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

The aim of the project was to involve younger relatives in the development of basic IT skills for older adults with an intergenerational study model. Interviewees prefer this learning method and consider it effective. The added value of this learning model can be to reduce intergenerational distance and reduce age-based discrimination.

The success of the questionnaire survey drew the attention of the project implementers to the fact that it is an important task to attract older people effectively, to encourage the use of online video learning materials, and to promote the possibility of “easy home learning”.