

Elders and the ITC use to communicate with children and grandchildren

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Why focusing on elders?

- ❑ 1 in 4 people is estimated to be 65+ in the next 20 years ([UN, 2013](#))
- ❑ Growing old - decrease in social interactions and family network
- ❑ Lack of contact with family members - negative impact on health and well-being ([Santanta et al., 2005](#)).
- ❑ Older adults are willing to invest time and to link with persons important for them (children and grandchildren) ([Lindley, Harper, & Sellen, 2009](#))

Older people -particularities in using ICT

- ❑ less use of the innovative services (photos, video sending, internet browsing ([Fernández-Ardèvol, 2011](#)))
- ❑ the content of communication is limited to basic information ([Santana et al. 2005](#))
- ❑ communication agencies (phone calls, emails) used in special occasions as birthdays and emergency situations

Hypothesis

- When important family members move abroad, elders would become (more) motivated to learn using ICTs in order to share daily-by-day experiences
- Regardless their social-economic background, grandparents are willing to learn advanced internet

Arguments

- “gratification niche of a medium”;
“gratification opportunity”
(Dimmick, Kline, & Stafford, 2000)
- evidence that elders’ ICT integration in everyday life routines is built up more from utilitarian approach rather than from the hedonistic one
(Loos, Haddon, & Mante-Meijer, 2012).

Method

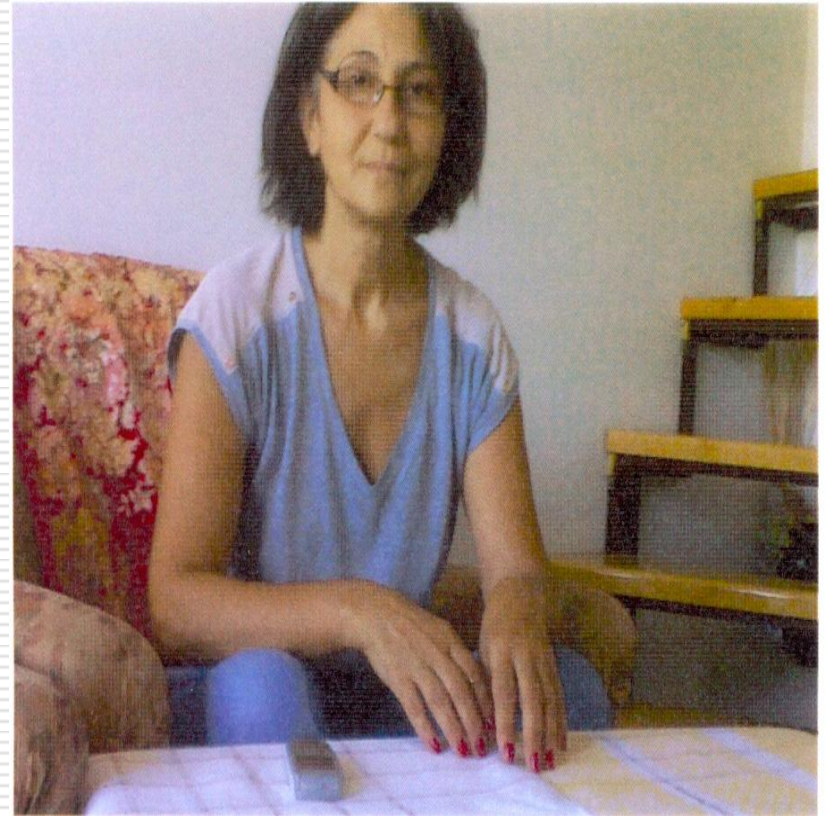
A set of case studies that follow the same methodological design and goals

- ❑ Barcelona (Catalonia, Spain)
- ❑ Romania, including Bucharest and rural areas
- ❑ Los Angeles (California, USA)
- ❑ Toronto (Ontario, Canada);
- ❑ Montevideo (Uruguay)
- ❑ Lima (Peru).

semi-structured interviews with 163 individuals aged 60+

Results

- using Skype or Messenger
- need to communicate with children and grandchildren abroad
- the perceived skills and ability to handle the device
- the initial experience with the device



general potential “to manage these things”

I tried for years. I'm very bad at this sort of thing. I took some lessons. I kept trying. My son got me something that I tried to use in my apartment [in the residency]. I'm very bad at that sort of thing. And I use it enough to know how to send an email. That's about it.

(Woman, 95, Toronto, Secondary Studies, retirement home)

Assisted – dependent –independent users

- ❑ elders from the rural areas and also those from the 70+ feel unskilled with the use of ICT
- ❑ felt helpless when children move abroad and communication is interrupted



Dependent users

Interviewee: First of all, I cannot use the Internet. But my son is talking by Internet with my daughter from Germany.

Interviewer: And you, how do you talk with her?

Interviewee: Through them: my son says to me... "I've talked with Flory, she said this and this". She calls me only on my birthday to congratulate

(Man, 73, secondary education, Bucharest)

More motivated to use ICTs to communicate

- professionally active elders but also those socially active
- women who were in charge of taking care of their grandchildren
- grandbabies -an important incentive to learn to use different services to record daily experiences with their grandchildren (internet browsing)
- Our data support “gratification niche” theory (Dimmick, Kline, & Stafford, 2000).

Discussion (1)

- Talking with children and grandchildren when family separated is an important motivator - “pushes” elders to learn more about the use of ICTs.
- Once motivation is lost (i.e. family members are back home) the interest in using a particular technology to communicate is diminished
- elders can be involved in a process of re-appropriation when the situation has changed

Discussion(2)

- A more dynamic model of technology appropriation:

Appropriation

Neglecting

-Re-appropriation

Contextual factors - different life stages:

- prior (pleasant or unpleasant) interactions with ICT
- Perception of their own ability to handle de device

- need to communicate with at long distance with a family member
- existence of alternative ways of communication that offered competitive gratifications
- level of social and professional activism
- possibility to have assistance in using the new technology