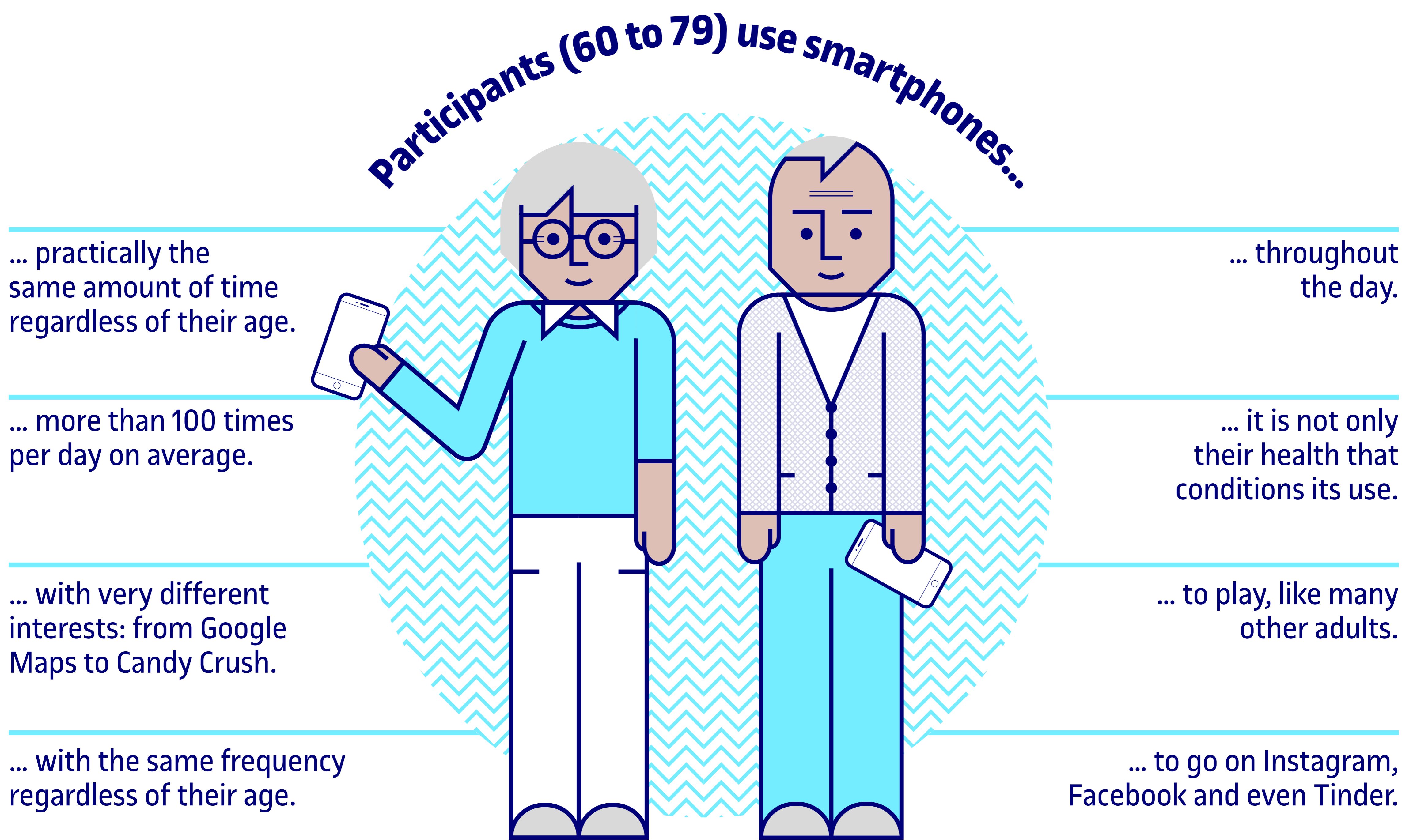


Why it is easier to slay a dragon than to kill a myth about older people's smartphone use

We collected smartphone activity logs over four consecutive weeks (28 days) between February and May 2019 in Canada, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden. The total sample included older adults aged 60 to 79 (N=303).



Myth #1

FAKE

Old people don't like or are unable to interact with technology

If so, why are they so attached to their smartphones throughout the day?

If older individuals weren't attached to their smartphones, they wouldn't use them much. However, participants use their mobile phones (they turn the screen on) more than 100 times per day on average.

Such usage is distributed throughout the day, marked by the social uses of time (sleeping, lunch, etc.).

Myth #2

FAKE

The older you are, the less you use your smartphone

Data split by age group (60-69, and 70-79) challenges the idea that older people use their smartphones less.

We found no age differences neither in the usage throughout the day nor in the duration of the smartphone session along the day.

Myth #3

FAKE

Old people are homogeneous

They are not. They are heterogeneous, as different older individuals use different apps in their everyday lives, and use them with different intensities

Selected apps show diverse usages and differences in popularity, illustrating that the activities and communication interests enabled by smartphones are heterogeneous.

Myth #4

FAKE

There is nothing to be learned from older people's digital habits

The way older people use their smartphones changes over time, due to different digital and life interests. Particularly, their digital practices are different from those of the adult population.

Myth #5

FAKE

Old people are defined by their medical conditions, and so are their digital needs

The types of apps the participants use appears to be shaped not only by their medical conditions, but also by personal interests, social life, shopping and citizenship.

Myth #6

FAKE

Old people don't use their smartphone to play, they don't need fun

They do play, as the two examples show (Candy Crush and Pokémon Go). And those who play games spend more time on gaming than on other activities.

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