eSafetyresearch

Encouraging the digital participation of older Australians through mentoring

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Encouraging the digital participation of older Australians through mentoring.

Research Foreword
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One of the great promises of technology is its ability to connect, enable and empower. As such, it is fantastic to see an increasing number of older Australians embracing digital technologies and improving their confidence online. Building digital literacy skills provides new opportunities to communicate, access essential services and engage with a wealth of information and ideas. We are committed to seeing these benefits extend to all Australians and this is a key driver of our research and programs at the eSafety Office.

For those of us who use digital technology as an essential part of our daily lives, we may forget how foreign it can be to older people who have lived much of their lives without it. While the digital chasm in Australia is narrowing, there are still clear disparities in internet usage between different segments of the population. Today, many of our older friends and relatives are struggling to adapt to the new digital environment and may be experiencing significant disadvantage as a result.

Our earlier research in this area showed that 23 per cent of Australians between 50 and 69 have limited or no digital literacy. For those over 70, more than half are not online at all. This lack of engagement is often driven by a fear of technology and the perception that it has no personal relevance to their lives. With basic services and utilities increasingly online, being digitally connected and engaged is now more important than ever.

Our latest research into the digital participation of older Australians finds that while most genuinely want to connect and learn, they face real barriers to doing so. The research explores the most effective ways for older people to develop these essential skills as well as the crucial role of intergenerational learning in helping mature Australians embrace technology.

The research also looks at the attitudes of younger people as the most trusted influences in the lives of older Australians. Despite common perceptions, young people are sharing their digital skills with their older friends and family members. In fact, 59% of those interviewed said they had helped an older person use technology.

The research suggests that on all sides of the intergenerational learning equation, the benefits are clear and there is an impetus to learn and connect. Indeed, no one wants their loved ones to be left isolated. Yet modern life is increasingly busy, and people may lack the structure or adequate support to make intergenerational learning a more prominent feature of everyday life.

The government has responded to these clear and pressing needs with the Be Connected initiative, which provides a range of support resources and outreach activities for learners and their mentors. The program emphasises the power of intergenerational learning to not only impart essential life skills, but also strengthen communities and alleviate some of the social isolation associated with low digital literacy.

The Be Connected program continues to play an important part in helping the eSafety Office improve the digital literacy of all Australians and make the online world a safer, more positive place for us all to enjoy. We hope this report also goes some way in fostering greater intergenerational engagement to ensure older Australians are reaping all the benefits technology has to offer.

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eSafetyresearch

Under Section 15 of the Enhancing Online Safety Act 2015, the Office of the eSafety Commissioner (the Office) has the following research functions:

- support, encourage, conduct and evaluate research about online safety for Australians
- collect, analyse, interpret and disseminate information relating to online safety
- publish reports and papers relating to online safety for Australians.

The Office's research program is underpinned by four key themes including:

1. tracking trends
2. support the development of Office resources and programs
3. inter-agency and international co-operation
4. program and resource evaluation.

This research fits under themes 1 and 2. Other research undertaken by the Office is available online at **https://esafety.gov.au/research**

For any Office Research enquiries, please contact **research@esafety.gov.au**

Acknowledgements and preface

This report is an edited and expanded version of a commissioned report prepared for the Office by Little Triggers Pty Ltd. The Office acknowledges and thanks the numerous people from across Australia who gave their time to participate in this research.

The purpose of this research was to:

- Identify the type of resources and support that family members, friends and peers need to teach new digital skills to older Australians over 70 years.
- Identify the level of support that family members, friends and peers may need to be confident in providing 'digital' support to loved ones aged 70 years and over.
- Obtain constructive feedback on the type of content and resources embedded in a new 'Be Connected' website.

Qualitative methodology was used to address these objectives. Two online forums were conducted with 90 participants, aged 30 to 59, who were family friends, relatives or peers of someone aged 70+. Participants in each online forum were presented with discussion topics over five days. This report summarises responses from the forums and provides some extra background and conclusions.

Further resources

The Office provides a range of resources and services to support the online safety and security of all Australians. Specific materials for older Australians include:
https://beconnected.esafety.gov.au/

'Understanding the digital behaviours of older Australians' summary of national survey and qualitative research. Office of eSafety, May 2018. Available at
https://esafety.gov.au/research

'Understanding digital behaviours of older Australians' full report; a report for the eSafety Commissioner, May 2018. Available at
https://esafety.gov.au/research

Key findings

- In this research, participants overwhelmingly believed that it is important for older Australians[1] aged 70+ to have better digital skills, largely for their own benefit. Perceived benefits of having better digital skills include having access to goods and services, being able to pursue personal interests, alleviating social isolation and providing more independence and confidence.
- The main barriers to helping older Australians gain better digital skills were identified as: a lack of time, patience, confidence and the potential logistical challenges, such as transport to venues. Other hurdles to overcome include a lack of interest and understanding among older Australians about the potential benefits of engaging with the digital environment. Cost may also inhibit access to the internet among older Australians.
- The factors that affect motivation when helping someone to learn new digital skills include: personal satisfaction, having adequate support, experiencing early success, identifying personal interests, and setting goals or having a clear purpose.
- A key first step in mentoring older Australians with their digital literacy was demonstrating how they could further their personal interest through improving their digital skills—there is no point moving to the next step if the older person is not convinced that their quality of life will be improved by learning this new skill.
- Mentors need good listening skills, awareness of older person's specific interests and needs, an ability to go at a slower pace or break the process down into steps and having time and patience.
- Responses to the 'Be Connected' network were overwhelmingly positive. It was seen to address some of the key barriers to mentoring, including lack of time, patience and fear of being scammed, and it also tapped into key motivations including personal satisfaction and level of support. A small minority of participants raised concerns about the time required, lack of interest among older Australians, mobility issues for older Australians expected to travel to lessons, and the adequacy of training for mentors.
- Relatives, friends and peers were generally positive about the suite of support tools proposed to support mentoring, however some tools were clearly more appealing than others. Table 1 below summarises the level of appeal of each proposed support tool.

[1] This study focused on mentoring older Australians aged 70+.

Table 1 – Support tool ratings

High appeal support tools	Moderate appeal	Low appeal
'Suggested activities' (apart from taking 'selfies') was the most appealing support tool. It gives relatives, friends and peers something tangible to work with and they can visualise how they could match activities to the older person's personal interests.	'Key principles on how to guide and inspire' was a favoured approach, but mainly for those with less or no experience. Some felt that they already had this capability and, based on early feedback, it was obvious many were already highly motivated. 'Tips on staying calm' was also appealing, but mainly among those who claim patience as a key barrier. 'Instructional Videos' were appealing, as long as they are not patronising—again because they were seen to be tangible, practical tools—but also because some saw the potential for older Australians to rehearse or practise skills on their own.	'Receiving notifications' was seen as unnecessary and possibly too intrusive, particularly if the older person was not a relative. 'Taking selfies' (which was one suggested activity) had low appeal, as while it may be fun, it was not seen to be relevant to most older Australians.

- Other suggestions for providing support to older Australians included: more advanced training options, website suggestions tailored towards personal interests, step-by-step guides for the most popular activities, a helpline or online support for mentors, content on safety and security, and different language options.
- Overall, it was identified that more needs to be done to help relatives, friends and peers to break down the barriers to mentoring older Australians. Both parties need positive feedback early in the mentoring and need to experience early success. Instructional videos need to work well in conjunction with suggested activities. Education on how much time is required to mentor older Australians may alleviate concerns about the time required. The 'suggested activities' tool has the greatest potential to overcome the lack of interest shown among older Australians.
- Messages about mentoring should be positive and recognise that the main motivation of most mentors is improving quality of life for older Australians.

Introduction

Background

In June 2016, the Australian Government announced a commitment to increase opportunities for older Australians to participate online by improving their digital literacy skills and online safety awareness.[2] Recent research has indicated that three quarters of people who are 'digitally disengaged' are aged 70+.[3] However some older Australians have expressed an interest in learning about topics including online safety, managing data files, using Wi-Fi safely, and accessing services and online interests.[4]

In 2017, a national survey of 3,000 young people aged 8–17 explored their experience in helping older family members use digital technology. That survey found that young Australians help older family members to acquire new digital skills, particularly around understanding the capability of digital devices.

Other key findings from the youth survey were as follows:

- Young people are more likely to show an older family member how to use technology than to actually do tasks for them online:
    - 40% of young people reported that older family members ask them to do things for them online. For teens aged 14–17 years, this is 55%.
    - 59% of young people reported showing an older family member how to use technology—again, this is higher for teens at 75% and youth from Cultural and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds, at 66%.

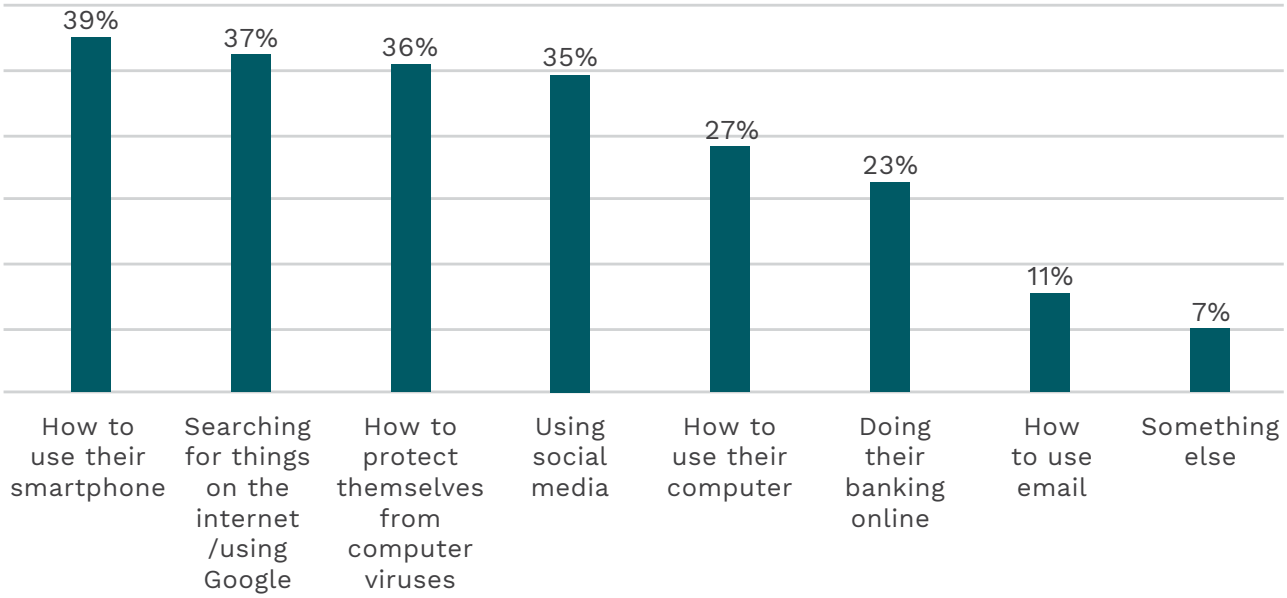
[2] The Australian Government's Digital Literacy for Older Australians program aims to improve skills, confidence and online safety of older Australians using digital technology.

[3] Understanding the digital behaviours of older Australians. Office of the eSafety Commissioner, 2018.

[4] The Australian Government's Digital Literacy for Older Australians program aims to improve skills, confidence and online safety of older Australians using digital technology.

- The main reasons young people have not assisted older family members by doing things for them online are because they believe they do not need to or were not asked. Very few young people (4% or fewer) reported not helping because it was too frustrating or because they could not be bothered. Results were similar in terms of teaching older family members to use technology.
- 50% of young people reported that they would be interested in a service that provides information and resources to help older family members learn how to use their devices and browse the internet. Those who speak a language other than English at home had even greater interest.

Figure 1: Young people's perceptions of older family members' internet interests



Source: Office of the eSafety Commissioner (2018). 'Youth digital participation survey', unpublished electronic data set.

There was a wide range of information that young people believed older family members would be interested in learning. Top mentions were: using a smartphone, searching the internet, using social media and gaining protection from viruses (Figure 1). These findings from the youth survey reflected a high level of correlation with findings from the survey of Australians aged 50 years and over.

Findings from the above research confirmed the proposition that support networks, both formal and informal, can assist older Australians to explore the internet, and can

[5] Breck, B.M., Dennis, C.B., & Leedahl, S.N. (2018). Implementing reverse mentoring to address social isolation among older adults. J Geront Soc Work, 61, 513-525/ doi: 10.1080/01634372.2018.1448030

provide the necessary know-how to use digital technologies. Family and friends may play an important role in supporting and mentoring older Australians who are learning new digital skills. Recent academic literature has also highlighted the social benefits of 'reverse mentoring' (younger people mentoring older Australians) for improving the social networks of older Australians.[5]

Aims and objectives

The Office is developing content for a smart device application (app) called 'Get Started' to help achieve the goals of the Digital Literacy for Older Australians program—encouraging families, friends and peers to help older Australians aged 70 years and over to use the internet. In association with this stream of work, the present research project was commissioned[6] to explore ways to encourage family members, friends and peers of older Australians aged 70 years and over to increase their online engagement and safe use of the internet. The objectives of this research were to:

- Identify the type of resources and support that family members, friends and peers need to address the challenges they face when they teach those aged 70 years and over new digital skills.
- Identify how much support family members, friends and peers require to be confident that they can be an ongoing 'digital' support to people aged 70 years and over.
- Obtain constructive feedback on the content and resources embedded in the 'Get Started' app under development.

Methodology

To meet the research objectives two online forums were conducted:

- forum 1 was a group of 45 people aged 30 to 59 who have a family member aged 70+
- forum 2 was a group of 45 people aged 30 to 59 who have a friend or peer aged 70+.

Participants in each online forum were presented with discussion topics over five days.

Further information about the methodology is in Appendices 1, 2 and 3.

[6] This report is an edited and expanded version of a report prepared by Little Triggers Pty Ltd for the Office of the eSafety Commissioner in 2017.

Main findings from the forums

Perceived importance of older Australians being online

Overwhelmingly, relatives, friends and peers all thought it was important for older Australians aged 70+ to have better digital skills in the context of the modern world. There was a general acknowledgement that access to goods and services is increasingly shifting online, so to ensure that they are not left behind, older Australians need to develop the skills and knowledge required to access these goods and services. In particular, the ability to take part in online shopping, internet banking and bill paying was seen by most as worthwhile skills for older Australians to learn.

'My Nanna lives 4 hours away. Most of her contact with us (her family) revolves around the use of technology. While a phone is a simple way of contact, the internet opens so many more doors. Being able to use the internet effectively is amazing. There are so many things that the internet can provide which would be beneficial for an older person who is getting less mobile e.g. internet banking, online shopping and Skype. I want those opportunities for her and think that they should be accessible to more people of the older generations.' (Female 30-39, relative)

Many participants felt that the internet can help alleviate the social isolation that some older Australians feel, by opening up opportunities to stay in touch with family and friends via email or platforms such as Skype, Facebook and Facetime.

'There are social advantages too. Staying in touch with friends and family is so much easier electronically.' (Female 50-59, friend/peer)

Some also looked beyond the more practical advantages of being online and discussed the potential for older Australians to use the internet to further some of their own interests. This included looking up information on hobbies such as recipes or gardening, or simply reading the latest news.

'The internet can help them save a great deal of time in perform (sic) some of their routine and mundane tasks. Additionally, it can provide them with information about their interests that they may not be able to get through other sources.'
(Male 50-59, relative)

Some participants argued that being able to use the internet gives older Australians a sense of independence and confidence, which can be liberating particularly for those who have mobility issues and are unable to easily leave their home.

'The internet opens up a whole new world to older people, especially those who might find it difficult to get out. Looking for social activities, tradespeople, and new products/services, doing shopping and banking, and keeping in contact with friends and family through email and Skype are the examples I can think of from the top of my head.' (Female 40-49, friend/peer)'

Finally, a few participants noted that learning to use the internet is important because it reduces dependence on family members.

'My mother is able to organise transport independently because she has been able to use a mobile phone. Previously she would rely on me to drive her to appointments or to perform weekly tasks. This caused many issues for us as I re-entered the workforce. She now has more independence and motivation to attempt new things since she has learnt to use this mobile device.' (Female 40-49, relative)

Experiences of teaching digital skills to older Australians

Regardless of whether it was a friend, peer or relative, most participants reported having helped someone aged 70+ to improve their digital skills. The most commonly taught skills were:

- connecting devices to the internet
- video calling such as Facetime or Skype
- social media
- Google
- internet banking or paying bills
- online shopping including eBay and Gumtree
- security and safety such as using antivirus software and avoiding scams.

'I have helped and continue to help a neighbour of 82 and another one is 79. I want to help them as it gives them endless possibilities from simply googling, to listening to music, reading, skyping, emailing, internet banking, sharing photos on Facebook. The opportunities are endless. It gives me a lot of satisfaction as I enjoy seeing them progress and getting excited over their small achievements.' (Female 50-59, friend/peer)

Based on their experiences, participants identified patience as a critical attribute when helping someone aged 70+ to learn digital skills. Their advice was to: repeat the lesson, leave written instructions and offer continual guidance.

'Very baby steps, explaining the terminology, step by step instructions, letting them make the mistakes, so I could show them it was ok, showing them how to go back without 'losing' everything which always seemed to be such a worry. Sometimes even written instructions until they learned and remembered how to turn on the computer and get into email, Facebook, Google, etc. I have also shown them Skype which seems to be a favourite.' (Female 50-59, friend/peer)

Barriers to helping older Australians develop digital skills

Participants identified a number of barriers, on both the part of the mentee and mentor, to helping someone aged 70+ to develop their digital skills. Overall, while these barriers were an issue for all, the study showed that those helping relatives tended to have more of a focus on emotional factors, such as frustration and patience. Those helping a friend or peer had a greater focus on practical considerations, such as access to appropriate technology.

Overall, participants identified that key barriers for older Australians to learn digital skills included:

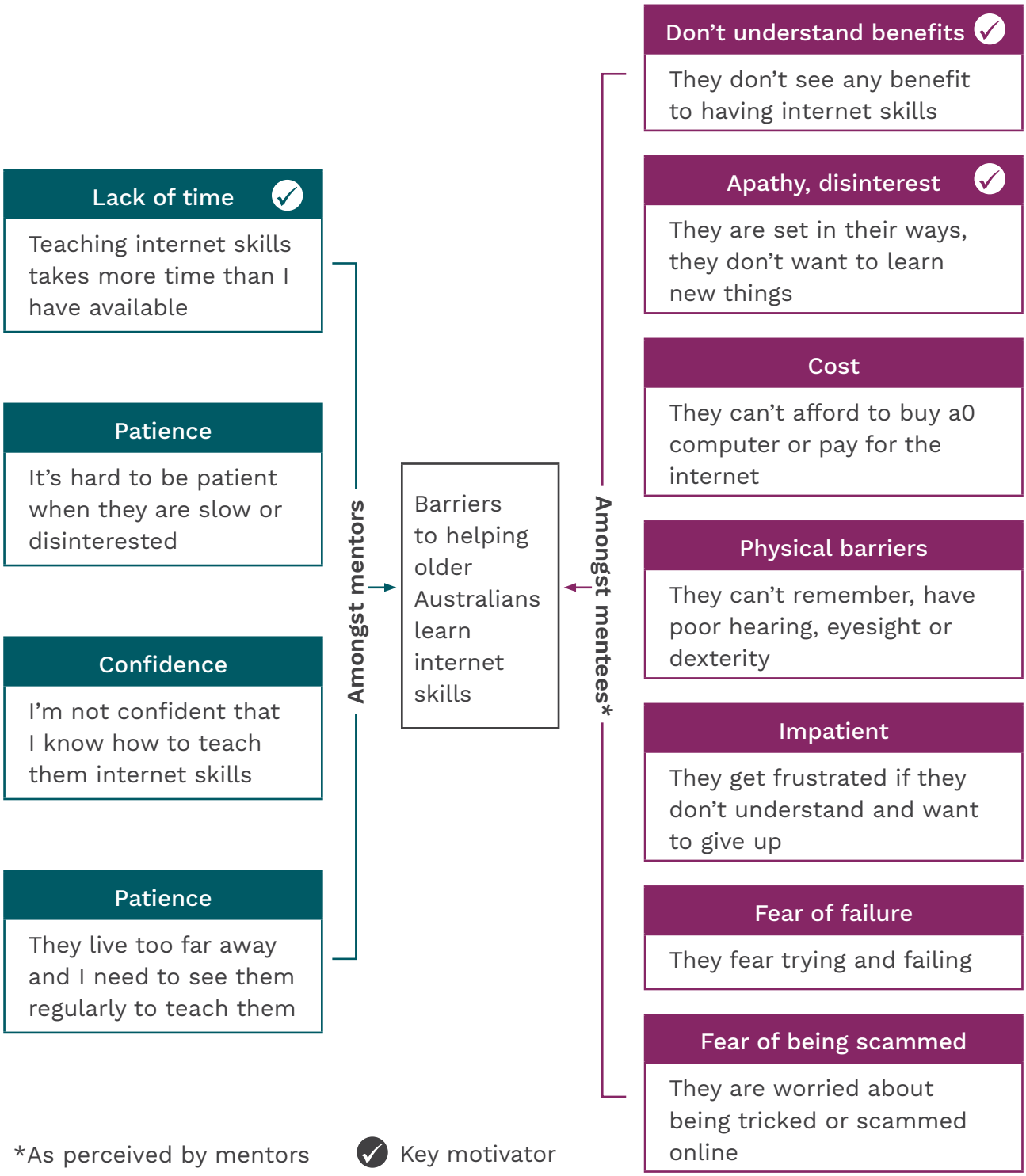
- a lack of understanding of the benefits of the internet and the potential it offers, creating an ambivalent attitude
- being 'set in their ways' and not wanting to change
- having trouble understanding technical terminology (there was evidence that males may be more likely to see this as a barrier than females)
- memory loss.

Other, secondary barriers identified by participants included:

- cost of devices and internet access
- patience and frustration
- physical issues such as poor eyesight, hearing, dexterity
- fear of doing something wrong
- fear of being scammed.

'Maybe cheaper internet, discounted or free laptops, tablets or phones for pensioners. I think this may provide a big incentive and encouragement for the elderly to become more interested, a lot of pensioners may not have a lot of money and are focused on just putting food on the table and paying the bills, so an extra expense would be seen as a deterrent to some.' (Male 40-49, relative)

Figure 1: Summary of barriers to helping older Australians learn digital skills



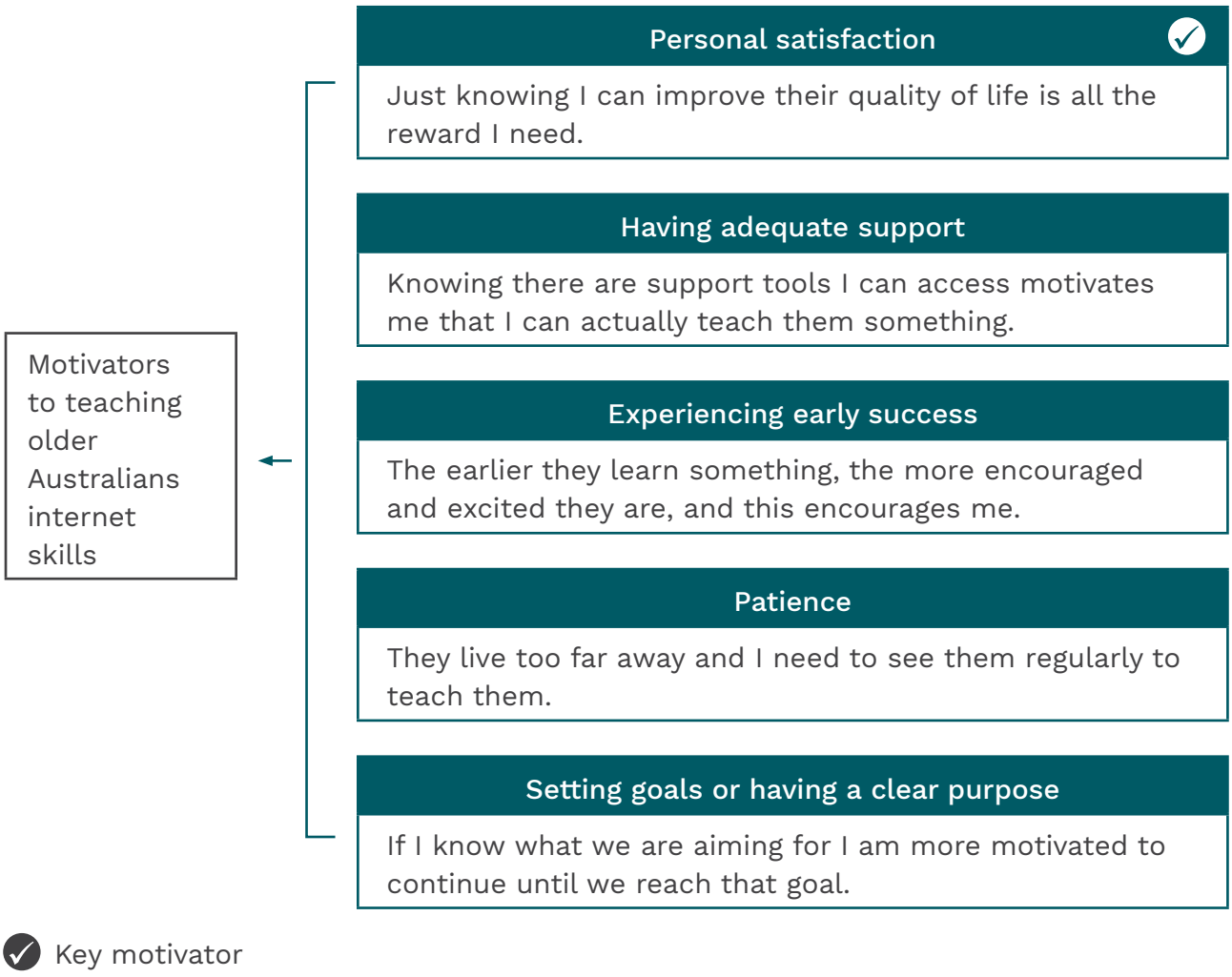
'I think with older people the fear of failure becomes greater. They don't even try because they don't want to look dumb... they have come to believe that they are too old to learn.' (Male 40-49, friend/peer)

For the mentor, barriers to assisting were identified as:

- Lack of available time was by far the biggest inhibitor — there was evidence to suggest this was a slightly bigger barrier for those aged 30-49, which could be related to the additional demands of having a family to look after.
- Logistically challenging e.g. living a long distance away — evidence suggested this was more of an issue for those living outside the main capital cities.
- Lack of patience — while an issue for all, there was evidence that this was more so for those with an older relative.
- Lack of confidence in their ability to teach.

'I know the basics, but for anything more complicated I generally need to ask my children or look it up. So I feel I can only help older people to a certain extent. I am not very good at problem solving any irregularities.' (Female 50-59, friend/peer)

Figure 2: Motivators to teaching older Australians digital skills



What motivates relatives and friends/peers to help older Australians develop digital skills?

The research showed that the strongest motivation to help a person aged 70+ develop their digital skills, was simply the personal satisfaction and reward from seeing them improve their quality of life. This was particularly the case for those with a relative aged 70+. Many did not appear to need additional motivation beyond this.

'I don't feel that I would need any external motivation to help an older friend or relative with the internet. I love the internet and the opportunities it provides so am more than happy to share what I know.' (Female 30-39, relative)

Regardless of whether they were referring to a relative, friend or peer, another key motivation for them was knowing they have access to useful teaching aids or training programs. This was because it improves mentor's confidence in their ability to teach successfully.

'Having courses where you can learn and show together at home, have a course that is aimed at their level.' (Female 50-59, friend/peer)

Having more time and more patience motivated relatives, friends and peers to help an older person learn how to use the internet.

'For me it is probably a lack of time as I am currently working 6 days a week. I think if I were more confident in my own internet ability, it might give me some motivation.' (Female 50-59, friend/peer)

Mentors who had access to the older person's technology appeared to better understand the needs of the mentee.

'Getting easy access to their computers to demonstrate what they need to do. Also giving them up to date computers at discounted rates would be good. They often have technology that is antiquated or no longer supported. (Female 50-59, friend/peer)

Having more time, and patience, were two of the most common factors in motivating a mentor to help someone for a longer period, rather than a once-off.

'It's both frustrating and fun to teach someone else new things. I think setting aside time is the biggest obstacle.' (Female 40-49, relative)

Being able to set goals, identifying specific interests and a purpose, as well as having measurable outcomes before commencing assistance, were also seen to be good long-term motivators. This was particularly the case for those mentoring someone other than a relative.

'If the person requesting help had a specific goal (e.g. 'I want to pay my bills through the internet'), I'd help them out for a longer period of time than if their goal was vague (e.g. 'I want to learn to use the internet'). I'd definitely look to understand what things the person thinks they can do online and share other things with them that they may not have thought of. If the person is showing a genuine interest, I'd suggest a few sessions on an ongoing basis to build their skills and confidence.' (Female 40-49, friend/peer)

What has been done in the past to motivate or inspire older Australians?

Mentors reported having tried a range of strategies to motivate or inspire an older person in the past, including:

- demonstrating to the older person how they could further their personal interests by taking part or learning
- emphasising the advantages of taking part or learning
- documenting the process, showing all steps along the way through to the final goal
- demonstrating the process themselves.

'I have always taken the tack of showing them the benefits of something. My father loves his scrabble but didn't want to play online ... but once he had seen my mother and I able to play from opposite sides of the city ... he was convinced and joined in the online scrabble.' (Male 50-59, relative)

Some expressed reservations about their ability to motivate older Australians, particularly their relatives.

'I've found it difficult to motivate my elderly parents, they seem stubborn or refuse to do anything unless they want to or need to. My father loves to use the 'old dogs can't learn new tricks' or I'm too old for that, as justification for not learning something new, the desire and motivation has to come from them.' (Male 40-49, relative)

How do mentors feel after inspiring or motivating older Australians?

Participants who succeeded in motivating an older person to learn something or achieve a task reported feeling:

- satisfied and happy
- a sense of achievement
- pride and contentment
- relief
- motivated to continue helping and/or follow up.

'Usually, I feel relieved and tired after a long session trying to teach my Dad. However, when I see my Dad's happy face, I feel elated, accomplished and rewarding.' (Male 30-39, friend/peer)

Mentors reported feeling frustrated or disappointed when they felt their older family member was 'putting up a wall' or was failing to accomplish given tasks

'It can be so frustrating when they put up the resistant wall and play the 'we are too old' to learn card.' (Male 40-49, relative)

In some cases, this resistance could be overcome when the relative was shown the direct benefits of using the internet, such as connecting to family and long lost friends via social media.

What could they do better to motivate or inspire older Australians?

While many felt that they would not have done anything differently, some noted the following factors may assist to motivate or inspire older Australians:

- put more time aside and be more patient
- be better prepared, do research and come up with a plan before embarking on helping them
- not push so hard: listen to what their relative/friend/peer needs instead of telling them what they need
- pause and consider the individual's key needs before helping
- take it slower and don't make assumptions about knowledge or ability
- break the process down into more manageable parts.

'Take time upfront and identify the things that are likely to generate interest before leaping in.' (Male 50-59, relative)

Reactions to mentoring ideas

Overwhelmingly, participants were in favour of inspiring older Australians to learn about the internet and putting them in contact with the 'Be Connected' network. The appeal of 'Be Connected' was largely based on the following reasons:

- the program encourages older Australians to undertake an active role in their own learning, reducing reliance on mentors
- its second phase offers an appealing delivery format by taking place in familiar environments e.g. library or aged care facility
- the program aims to build and sustain confidence among those aged 70+ and therefore helping with increased learning.

'I know she would feel more comfortable learning the basics with someone she already knows, such as myself. But once she knows how to do a few things and is ready for the next level, I think someone that actually knows what they are doing might be better for her!' (Female 30-39, relative)

Very few mentors had reservations about the 'Be Connected' concept, however some expressed concern about:

- having time available to help out in the initial stages of learning
- the motivation levels of their older relative to take part in training
- the older person's ability to physically attend lessons
- the capacity of trainers to have both knowledge about the technology but also an ability to deliver training in a patient, trustworthy manner that encouraged those wanting to learn.

'My motivation is to reduce the dependence that my parents have on me. This would seem to be another thing that I would have to do.' (Female 40-49, relative)

Desired support for mentors

Participants had suggestions about how to support mentors who are guiding older friends/peers through the early stage of learning digital skills. These included:

- a clear role description and online training or course for mentors
- a dedicated webpage with live chat support and an interactive forum to post general questions

- a hardcopy step-by-step guide, FAQs sheet and general information for mentors and participants
- using plain English and diagrams to help explain all points.

'I would really need some motivational carrots to dangle in front of the olds, they are quite happy with their lives and see no reason to change the ways they grew up with, and do business with.' (Female 40-49, relative)

Ideas for supporting mentors

In the discussion forum on day 3, a number of ideas were proposed for supporting mentors (see below and Appendix 3). The research canvassed a range of ideas and strategies that could be used to support mentors when teaching older Australians. These included:

- key factors or skills in successfully guiding and inspiring a relative/friend/peer to explore the internet such as active listening skills, showing interest and patience
- tips for staying calm during mentoring sessions such as using humour, taking deep breaths
- having variety in the suggested learning activities such as taking a selfie, using google search for information about a hobby, watching instructional videos about using the internet, keeping up to date with friends and relatives through the notification features in social media platforms.

Some ideas were more polarising than others, regardless of whether the mentor was considering the needs of a relative, friend or peer.

'I feel all these forms of support are crucial in achieving a result. Both the person learning and the one teaching need to feel relaxed and confident.' (Female 50-59, friend/peer)

Overall, mentors regarded the 'suggested activities' ideas as the most useful, followed by 'key factors on how to guide and inspire', and then 'tips on how to stay calm'. Some found 'instructional videos' most useful, while 'social media notifications' was the least favoured.

By age, participants aged 30-39 tended to be more passionate overall about the ideas suggested, while those aged 40-59 tended to raise more issues or questions about the ideas. More detail on feedback for each idea is provided below.

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[7] Note that 'taking selfies' as an activity was the exception – taking selfies was not a high appeal activity.

High appeal ideas for supporting mentors

Participants indicated the 'suggested activities' as the most appealing way to support mentoring, particularly amongst mentors[7] in the 30-39 age bracket. It was seen as fun yet practical, and likely to increase engagement. It effectively addressed the biggest identified barrier: overcoming the potential mentee's initial lack of interest. Giving the mentee a list of suggested activities significantly increases the chances of motivating them to learn more about the internet. The suggestion of using Google Earth to search for the house they grew up in was seen as particularly relevant and interesting to the mentee.

Moderate appeal idea — key principles on how to guide and inspire

'Key principles' and 'Tips on how to stay calm', together were seen to help create a good foundation and starting point for the mentor. These components helped overcome some of the key barriers identified, which were having the confidence to be able to teach an older person about the internet and having the patience to actually do so. As a result, guidance afforded by this support was particularly embraced by those uncertain of their own skill set, and those that questioned whether they would have enough patience. Some, however, questioned whether mentoring should occur, if the person was not confident of their skills.

'Being able to keep someone motivated and inspired to learn can be difficult. Enthusiasm is usually highest at the beginning of a course and gradually declines. Being able to maintain motivation should lead to more people completing the course and continuing to use the internet by themselves.' (Female 50-59, friend/peer)

Moderate appeal idea — tips on how to stay calm

This idea for supporting mentors was seen by many as being a useful foundation before setting out to teach an older person about the internet. For some, this related to the issue of not having enough time—when time is short, patience can run short, particularly if it is a relative rather than a friend or peer. However, some considered this idea was not useful because they believed they already held these skills.

'Staying calm and being patient are important parts of the process because I don't want to show that I am flustered by the training process. Nana won't want me to help her anymore if she senses that I am not enjoying it too.' (Female 30-39, relative)

Moderate appeal idea — instructional videos

'Amusing and fun instructional videos' was regarded by participants as another broadly appealing strategy to support mentors. Incorporating fun into a potentially tedious task would help drive motivation for both parties, while keeping the mood light. This idea held appeal given it potentially saves the mentor time and could help reinforce what has already been taught—if the videos reflect the suggested activities. Videos needed to mirror the content and learning activities as closely as possible.

There was some question about whether the videos would be interesting enough to hold the older person's interest. It was also noted as important that the videos did not come across as patronising.

'I think the videos would be the most useful, as my parents could use them over and over, until the information sunk in, and I wouldn't have to repeat myself. They could watch them with me initially, then review repeatedly as needed.' (Female 40-49, relative)

Low appeal idea — notifications

Very few participants liked the idea of 'notifications' as a way to support mentors. While some felt it is a good way to monitor progress, generally it was seen as intrusive—or triggered privacy concerns—particularly for those who were not related to the mentee. There was also evidence that males in particular disliked it more than females.

'I don't think I need to receive notifications when a relative has done an online activity. They will learn at their own pace and with practice will gain the confidence and know-how to do what they want to do. We can still assist them and I am sure they would let us know what they had achieved online.' (Male 50-59, relative)

Low appeal idea — taking a 'selfie'

The relevance of taking 'selfies' as a way to support mentoring was questioned by many, with the suggested activity seen as holding low appeal to older Australians. Further, while not specifically listed, participants had some concerns about helping older friends establish social media accounts. While some gave social media some merit for connecting family and friends, others cautioned that it could expose users to new threats including spam and unwanted intrusion/attention from strangers or trolls.

Other suggestions for supporting mentors

Participants made a number of other suggestions about supporting mentors, including:

- more advanced training topics
- suggesting websites that are fit for purpose e.g. shopping, news, internet security, hobbies, networking
- step by step guides e.g. setting up and using email or Facebook
- a helpline—telephone support, live chat online or an interactive forum to help answer any questions along the way
- online classes for older Australians or support groups to help with questions when the mentor is unavailable
- different language options
- a section addressing online safety and security.

Reactions to the Be Connected website

Generally, the 'Be Connected' website was seen as a very useful tool for people looking to help someone aged 70+ to improve their digital skills. Participants noted the that the key benefits of the 'Be Connected' website included that it:

- outlines the basics well—assumes little to no knowledge about computers
- covers a wide range of topics
- uses plain and easy to understand language
- has a good font size
- has appropriate imagery
- is generally easy to navigate (although not all shared this sentiment)
- offers easy to use printing functions
- contains videos as a method of communicating.

Participants in all age groups were interested in the 'Be Connected' website, however it appealed most to those aged 30-39. This may be due to the fact that this group highlighted time as a barrier and were possibly attracted to a model that promoted independent and self-guided learning. At the same time, there was some evidence that older Australians were slightly more likely to show concerns about the independent learning model, such as the potential for mentees to lack motivation and not be comfortable with being taught by a stranger in their own home. Participants offered the following suggestions for improvement:

- having content translated into different languages to assist those mentees from a non-English speaking background
- providing a chat option
- improving the ease of navigation
- ensuring the activities or topics are most relevant to the personal interests of mentees
- incorporating a 'NEXT' button on the website pages to clearly indicate the action required.

'The layout of the website is very inviting. For the topic about the absolute basics the little videos were great but the activities were not very engaging and there was quite a bit of reading. More interactive activities that includes lots of audio visual content may help to make the activities more accessible for older users.' (Female 40-49, friend/peer)

Do people feel encouraged to take part in the 'Be Connected' program?

Regardless of whether the mentor was assisting a relative, friend or peer, most saw the merit in the Be Connected initiative and would like to participate—time permitting. Knowing it is a government initiative also encouraged participation for some. The combined initiative, website and directional support (including guides, video, hints, activities and basic principles) provided a greater sense of confidence, positivity and achievability for mentors. For those mentors worried that their skills may be insufficient, the support proposed by the 'Be Connected' program appeared to allay concerns and boost willingness to participate.

'I've learnt that I do have the ability to help others and that it would be a very rewarding thing for both me and the person I help. It would also give me more confidence in myself and my abilities too.' (Female 50-59, friend/peer)

However, some participants were resistant to the mentoring model and gave the following reasons for this position:

- time constraints of the mentor
- some mentors may not have the requisite level of energy or patience to participate effectively
- concern about not wanting to force an older person to take part in something that they are not interested in
- the need for mentors to have access to content that matches the skill level of the mentees, noting that some people may not be starting from such a low base.

'I'm too busy and seriously don't have enough time for my own things. I will still help my mother but life is too fast for me to be patient enough for volunteering at this stage.' (Female 50-59, relative)

Perceived benefits of older Australians increasing their digital skills

At the end of the forum, participants were asked for feedback on two statements which described the benefits of older Australians improving their digital skills. These are:

Statement 1

It has been said that if Australians aged 70+ improve their internet skills it will make them more confident and independent, resulting in more social interaction and less social isolation. What are your thoughts about this statement? Why?

Many agreed with this statement in terms of digital skills affording older Australians greater confidence and independence in certain areas of their life. Having digital skills was seen to be imperative in maintaining contact with family and friends and being able to access goods and services online.

'Of course, it will make them more confident. All government services are online so it's imperative that 70+ have the skills to access all services. Although some might be reluctant, it is the future and nobody should be disadvantaged. Just to open skype and chat live to family, friends will make a lot of elderly feel less alone.' (Male 50-59, friend/peer)

Others questioned whether acquiring digital skills would empower older Australians to be more socially active and to be able to overcome social isolation. The statement arguably devalued the importance of face-to-face interaction. The internet, they argued, cannot solely be relied upon to deliver physical and emotional connections.

'I don't believe this statement. I know internet is good and has a magic of its own but nothing beats a personal interaction with another human being. Sometimes I believe we are too immersed in the virtual world and need to surface and communicate with our fellow human.' (Male 30-39, friend/peer)

Statement 2

It has also been said that there are direct benefits to people like you by acting now. That is, by investing some time now to help older Australians get online, they will be less dependent on you as they get older. What are your thoughts about this statement? Why?

Many agreed with this statement, as the internet was seen to be an effective tool in empowering individuals and affording them greater independence.

'I agree—I have selfish reasons for my parents to be able to use the internet! They will be less reliant on me and there will be fewer arguments if they don't have to ring me every time they have a question which could be answered with a simple search online.' (Female 40-49, relative)

However, there were also some opposing viewpoints, questioning the supposed shift in dependence. Some felt that while the internet can help with certain areas of confidence and societal integration, mentees would still need the ongoing support from the mentor regardless of whether it is a relative, friend or peer.

'I don't know about less dependent, but more confident about how to access services, connect with family and friends.' (Male 50-59, friend/peer)

Among many of those with an older relative, there was a feeling that they themselves still have a responsibility to assist their relative regardless of their level of skill in using the internet.

'I tend to agree, however being 'less dependent' isn't my end goal, my end goal is to help improve my mother's feelings of connection.' (Female 40-49, relative)

Some made the point that while the statement does ring true in part, older friends or peers would likely still rely on mentors for ongoing technical support.

'That's true. I think they will be less dependent on the basics but they will still need help with upgrades, software installs, and the worst of all, major changes to operating systems such as when Windows 8 came out.' (Female 40-49, friend/peer)

What could make it easier to support older Australians in improving digital skills?

Many participants felt the proposed support outlined in the discussion forum would be sufficient to make mentoring easier and had no further suggestions. The notion of a dedicated website was very appealing. The 'Be Connected' website was recognised as being a great tool to make it easier to support/mentor an older friend/peer, as it offers plain English explanations and structured learning.

'I think the website shown yesterday would be a great way for me to start as this site contains everything I could think of. I'd encourage older Australians to check their local library and local community newspapers, as there are free courses/ training available throughout the year in a lot of areas. I'd like ... a list of things to learn which can be printed out or step by step guides which could be printed out so that a senior could learn a little on their own when myself or others are not there to help.' (Female 50-59, friend/peer)

In order for any internet-teaching initiative to be widely successful, some felt it is critical to encourage older Australians to ask for help—to make them aware that it is understandable to feel that technology can be overwhelming. The aim here is to avoid making them feel inadequate or not intelligent enough to learn, and instead to empower them to improve their situation.

'I'd encourage older Australians to ask their children and grandchildren for help as a lot of times they are afraid to ask their family as they worry they will look silly if they don't grasp it fast enough.' (Female 50-59, relative)

As adequate technology and internet connection plans can be costly and hard to justify, particularly for those who are retired or on a pension, subsidising these costs for the 70+ population could make it easier for would-be helpers to offer support.

'If (he) had internet access at home, it would be a great first step. At this stage his start-up costs would be quite high (he doesn't have a computer/laptop or tablet nor internet access) so perhaps some information on how to get started without having to spend too much. Maybe even a small incentive to purchase a laptop would help.' (Female 40-49, friend/peer)

Finally, given the perceived prevalence of cyber security risks some raised the issue of internet security and safety. They noted that educating older Australians about risks needs to be part of any initiative.

'Any information about staying safe online (which is relevant for senior people) would be helpful. This could include guides about recommended anti-virus/malware programs, how to purchase products online from trusted websites, consumer rights, warnings about potential fraud/ fraudulent websites, how to avoid being scammed online, how to use the internet to file complaints against companies which do not honour their contractual/legal obligations (such as energy providers, for example).' (Male 40-49, relative)

Conclusions

This research shows that reverse mentoring (younger people mentoring older Australians) and peer mentoring can provide solutions to improving access to online activities for older Australians with low digital literacy. Further research is needed into how to improve access to online activities for the whole population, including research into how factors such as age, education, socioeconomic status, location[8], gender, and disability[9] can affect digital skills. Earlier quantitative research conducted by the Office with young people aged 8-17 years, and the qualitative research with adults aged 30-59, indicates there is considerable willingness among those with some digital skills to provide reverse and peer mentoring for older Australians who have low digital literacy.

The sample for this research study included relatives, friends or peers who either had previously helped an older person in learning digital skills or were interested in doing so in the future. This was done to ensure relevant feedback was obtained, deliberately excluding those who had little interest in the area and therefore so little to contribute. Further research could investigate how to encourage those with little or no interest in mentoring to also become involved.

As a qualitative research study, the key objective here was to identify issues and themes. Further quantitative research such as a follow-up study of the relevant population would help in estimating the population prevalence of people willing to act as a digital mentor. However, the Office's youth survey showed that over half of youth had helped older relatives with an internet activity, giving some indication of the potential scope of a market for a program like the 'Be Connected' app. This research highlighted some areas of difference between age groups and genders, but differences were minimal across all the areas explored in the forums.

In conclusion, this qualitative research study has shown that mentoring should be positive and should recognise that the main motivation of most mentors in assisting with digital literacy is improving quality of life for older Australians.

[8] Thomas, J., Wilson, C.K., & Park, S. (2018). Australia's digital divide is not going away. March 29, 2018, theconversation.com Retrieved 5 June 2018 from **https://theconversation.com/australias-digital-divide-is-not-going-away-91834**

[9] Leung, L. (2015). Bridging the digital divide means accommodating diversity. April 28, 2015. Retrieved 5 June 2018 from **https://theconversation.com/bridging-the-digital-divide-means-accommodating-diversity-40692**

Appendix 1

Methodology - Sample

Participants for this research were recruited by McNair YellowSquares, partnering with Little Triggers. The agencies also set up the online forums used for this research. Both are ISO accredited and members of AMSRS and AMSRO. All forums and surveys are programmed and hosted within Australia and all data is stored in secure Australian data centres.

Potential participants were initially contacted and administered a screening questionnaire to see if they qualified. All participants were required to provide contact details (to allow random audit checks, if necessary), informed that the research was for a Federal government department and that they risked being removed from the panel if they provided incorrect or misleading information. Once selected, participants were requested to visit the forum, confirm their main details and answer forum questions for a specific period of time (e.g. twice per day for 10 minutes at a time). This means respondents participated at a time which suited them.

A moderator interacted with respondents, posting original questions and, if necessary, probing individual responses. Stakeholders were provided full access to view responses anonymously. De-identified transcriptions from all forums were provided to the Office in Excel format. Each forum was open for up to 7 days. Participants were incentivised to take part in the forums using GiftPay vouchers.

Forum 1: n=45 family members of a person aged 70+ years

Age of family member	Number in forum
Aged 30 to 39	15
Aged 40 to 49	15
Aged 50 to 59	15
Total	45

Forum 2: n=45 friends or peers of a person aged 70+ years

Age of friend or peer	Number in forum
Aged 30 to 39	15
Aged 40 to 49	15
Aged 50 to 59	15
Total	45

The forums were split into two to maximise the insight gleaned from the research due to:

- the differences in the way people interact, based upon whether it is a family member or someone else
- differences of interest by the age of the forum participant.

Other key recruitment criteria included:

- a current internet user who engages in online activities several times per week or more
- mix of gender
- mix of cultural and socio-economic backgrounds
- mix of geographic areas including metro, rural and remote.

Screen for family, friends and peers

Participant information:

Name:_____

Contact Tel:_____ (work)

_____ (home)

_____ (mobile)

INTRO: We are recruiting on behalf of Little Triggers research. They are conducting a market research online forum about empowering and teaching older Australians skills to safely use the internet.

The online forum will comprise of yourself and 14 other people of a similar age group. It will run over 5 days. Participants are required to visit the forum in their own time while it is open. You will visit and participate in the forum multiple times over its duration and reply to new questions daily. As a thank you for participating, you will receive a gift voucher. Would you be interested in participating? IF YES: We have a few questions to ask you, to check whether or not you meet the eligibility criteria to take part.

IF NECESSARY: Should you wish to check the bona fides of the research company conducting this research, the Australian Market & Social Research Society can be contacted on 1300 364830.

This research is being conducted for an Australian Government agency – the Office of the eSafety Commissioner.

TERMINATION SCRIPT: Unfortunately, the quota for people who meet the same criteria as you has been filled. However, we value your opinion and should we have any cancellations or more spots become available we will contact you. Thank you very much for your time today.

S1. Have you ever attended a market research group discussion online or offline, or in-depth interview?

1	Yes	Go to S2
2	No	Go to S3

S2a. When was the last time you attended a market research group discussion or in-depth interview? Please include groups and in-depth interviews that you may have attended through other recruitment agencies.

1	Less than 12 months ago	Close
2	12 months or more	Continue
3	Never	Continue

S2b. Have you ever participated in research about how to teach older Australians aged 50+ to use the internet?

1	Yes	Close
2	No	Continue

S3. Do you or any members of your family/friends work in any of the following industries?

1	Market Research	Close
2	Media (e.g. TV/Radio/Newspaper or Magazine Publishing)	Close
3	Neither of these	Continue

S4. Do you have any family members, who you are in face-to-face contact with at least once per month, who are over the age of 70?

1	Yes	Continue
2	No	Continue

S5. Do you have any friends or peers, who you are in face-to-face contact with at least once per month, who are aged 70 and above?

1	Yes	Continue
2	No	Continue

PROG: IF NO TO BOTH S4 AND S5 THANK AND CLOSE. ELSE CONTINUE

S6. Which one of these statements best describes you?

1	I have taught a family member or friend aged 70 years or over skills relating to using the internet	Continue
2	I am open to the idea of teaching a family member or friend aged 70 years or over skills relating to using the internet	Continue
3	I have no interest in teaching a family member or friend aged 70 years or over skills relating to using the internet	Close

S7. How often do you personally use the internet?

1	Everyday	Continue
2	3-4 times per week	Continue
3	1-2 times per week	Close
4	Less often	Close

S8. Are you...?

1	Male	Continue
2	Female	Continue
3	Other	Continue

RECRUIT A MIX OF MALE: FEMALE FOR EACH AGE BRACKET. INCLUDE 'OTHER' SHOULD THEY ARISE.

S9. Please record your postcode

_____

RECRUIT A GEOGRAPHICAL SPREAD WHICH INCLUDES COVERAGE OF ALL STATES

S10. Is another language (as well as English) spoken in your home?

1	Yes	Continue
2	No	Continue

S11. What other languages are spoken in your home?

_____

S12. What is your annual household income before tax?
PLEASE TRY TO RECRUIT A MIX OF INCOME

1	<$30,000	Continue
2	$30,000 to $59,999	Continue
3	$60,000 to $79,999	Continue
4	$80,000 to $99,999	Continue
5	$100, 000 to $119,999	Continue
6	$120,000 to $149,999	Continue
7	$150,000 +	Continue
8	Unsure/withheld	Continue

Appendix 2

Forum breakdowns — friend/peer

Age	Gender	Location	H/h income	CALD
50-59	Female	Regional QLD	$60,000 - $79,999	No
50-59	Male	Regional QLD	Less than $30,000	No
40-49	Female	Sydney	$120,000 - $149,999	No
40-49	Female	Perth	$100,000 - $119,999	Afrikaans
50-59	Female	Regional QLD	$60,000 - $79,999	No
30-39	Female	Regional SA	$150,000 or more	No
30-39	Male	Sydney	Less than $30,000	No
50-59	Female	Brisbane	Less than $30,000	No
40-49	Female	N/A	$30,000 - $59,999	Samoan
30-39	Female	Perth	$60,000 - $79,999	No
40-49	Male	Sydney	$30,000 - $59,999	No
40-49	Female	Regional VIC	$60,000 - $79,999	No
30-39	Female	Brisbane	$80,000 - $99,999	No
50-59	Female	TAS	Prefer not to say	No
40-49	Female	Melbourne	$120,000 - $149,999	Lebanese
40-49	Female	Regional NSW	$80,000 - $99,999	No
50-59	Female	Sydney	$120,000 - $149,999	No
40-49	Male	Melbourne	$100,000 - $119,999	No
40-49	Female	Sydney	$100,000 - $119,999	No
40-49	Female	Regional VIC	Prefer not to say	No
50-59	Male	Adelaide	$60,000 - $79,999	No
40-49	Female	Sydney	$80,000 - $99,999	No
40-49	Male	TAS	$30,000 - $59,999	No
40-49	Male	Sydney	$80,000 - $99,999	No
40-49	Male	TAS	$60,000 - $79,999	No
50-59	Male	Adelaide	$30,000 - $59,999	No
40-49	Female	Sydney	$100,000 - $119,999	Arabic
50-59	Female	Sydney	$120,000 - $149,999	No
40-49	Male	Regional NSW	$100,000 - $119,999	Malayalam
40-49	Female	Perth	Prefer not to say	No
50-59	Male	Sydney	$60,000 - $79,999	No
30-39	Male	Sydney	$150,000 or more	Indonesian

Age	Gender	Location	H/h income	CALD
50-59	Female	Regional QLD	Less than $30,000	No
40-49	Female	Regional NSW	$60,000 - $79,999	No
50-59	Male	Melbourne	$150,000 or more	No
30-39	Male	Sydney	$150,000 or more	No
40-49	Female	Regional QLD	$80,000 - $99,999	Maithili
40-49	Male	Adelaide	$150,000 or more	No
40-49	Male	Melbourne	$80,000 - $99,999	Hindi
50-59	Female	Sydney	$100,000 - $119,999	No
30-39	Male	Sydney	$80,000 - $99,999	Vietnamese
50-59	Female	Sydney	Less than $30,000	No
40-49	Female	Sydney	$30,000 - $59,999	Tamil and Kannada
30-39	Male	Melbourne	$120,000 - $149,999	Mandarin
50-59	Male	Melbourne	Less than $30,000	No
50-59	Female	Melbourne	Prefer not to say	No

Forum breakdowns—relative

Age	Gender	Location	H/h income	CALD
40-49	Female	Sydney	$150,000 or more	No
50-59	Male	Adelaide	$120,000 - $149,999	No
40-49	Female	Adelaide	$80,000 - $99,999	No
40-49	Female	Melbourne	$80,000 - $99,999	No
40-49	Female	Melbourne	$80,000 - $99,999	Chinese
40-49	Female	Adelaide	$60,000 - $79,999	No
30-39	Male	Sydney	$100,000 - $119,999	Hindi
40-49	Male	Adelaide	$80,000 - $99,999	No
30-39	Male	Sydney	Less than $30,000	No
30-39	Female	Regional QLD	Less than $30,000	No
50-59	Male	Melbourne	$80,000 - $99,999	Vietnamese
40-49	Male	Sydney	Prefer not to say	No
30-39	Male	Sydney	$120,000 - $149,999	No
30-39	Male	Sydney	$80,000 - $99,999	No
40-49	Male	Sydney	$30,000 - $59,999	Russian
30-39	Female	Melbourne	$100,000 - $119,999	No
50-59	Female	Adelaide	$30,000 - $59,999	No

Age	Gender	Location	H/h income	CALD
40-49	Male	Sydney	$60,000 - $79,999	Portuguese
40-49	Male	Regional VIC	$100,000 - $119,999	No
30-39	Female	Regional VIC	$80,000 - $99,999	No
40-49	Male	Sydney	$60,000 - $79,999	No
40-49	Female	Melbourne	$30,000 - $59,999	No
30-39	Female	Regional NSW	$60,000 - $79,999	No
40-49	Female	Melbourne	Less than $30,000	No
30-39	Male	TAS	$80,000 - $99,999	No
30-39	Female	Regional NSW	$30,000 - $59,999	No
50-59	Male	Sydney	$120,000 - $149,999	No
50-59	Female	Melbourne	$30,000 - $59,999	No
50-59	Female	Regional VIC	$30,000 - $59,999	No
40-49	Female	Sydney	$100,000 - $119,999	Cantonese
50-59	Female	TAS	$30,000 - $59,999	No
30-39	Male	Brisbane	$150,000 or more	No
40-49	Male	Perth	$30,000 - $59,999	Vietnamese
50-59	Female	Regional VIC	$60,000 - $79,999	No
30-39	Female	Sydney	$120,000 - $149,999	No
30-39	Female	Melbourne	$120,000 - $149,999	Arabic
50-59	Female	Regional QLD	$120,000 - $149,999	No
30-39	Female	Regional NSW	$30,000 - $59,999	No
40-49	Female	Adelaide	$80,000 - $99,999	No
30-39	Male	Sydney	$120,000 - $149,999	Cantonese
40-49	Female	Melbourne	$100,000 - $119,999	No
50-59	Male	Brisbane	$150,000 or more	No
40-49	Male	Sydney	$80,000 - $99,999	Italian
50-59	Male	Perth	$150,000 or more	No
40-49	Male	Adelaide	$30,000 - $59,999	No
40-49	Male	Regional NSW	$60,000 - $79,999	No
40-49	Male	Regional NSW	$60,000 - $79,999	No
50-59	Male	Sydney	$30,000 - $59,999	No
50-59	Male	Sydney	$120,000 - $149,999	No
40-49	Male	Sydney	$100,000 - $119,999	Telugu
50-59	Female	Melbourne	Less than $30,000	No
50-59	Female	Regional VIC	Less than $30,000	No

Appendix 3

Discussion guide for forums

Hello everyone and welcome. (G,C and P) will be your moderators on here, asking you some questions over the next 5 days. We will be discussing your thoughts and feelings about supporting relatives, friends and peers who are 70+ years to build their digital skills and engage in more online activities. We are conducting this research on behalf of a Federal Government agency. If you don't understand some of the questions, that's fine – let us know and we will help. Please provide as much detail as you can in your answers. The most important thing to remember is to be honest and constructive.

Day 1 – About you and the importance of loved ones, friends and peers being online

1. Intro: Firstly, we would like to learn a little bit about you … Please tell us a bit about yourself: Which state you live in and a bit about your relative/friend/peer aged 70+ years.
2. How important do you think it is for your relative/friend/peer to have better digital skills? Why?
3. Have you ever helped someone aged 70+ improve their digital skills? Why/why not?
4. If have helped someone tell us what you did.
5. What do you feel are the main barriers that prevent you from helping your older relative/friend/peer improving their digital skills?
6. What are the main things that would motivate you to be more proactive in helping a relative/friend/peer develop their digital skills? Why?

Day 2 – Encouraging, guiding and mentoring of relatives, friends and peers

1. What would motivate you to help a relative/friend/peer for a longer period rather than giving one-off type of advice?
2. Here is an idea that has been put forward to get more relatives/friends peers aged 70+ years using the internet. (Present ideas)
    a. Firstly, someone that older Australians trust - such as you - helps inspire them to get going. There would be support tools available to you to help you guide older Australians through these initial stages.
    b. After inspiring older Australians to see the possibilities, you put them in contact with the 'Be Connected' network. This is a network of people who train older Australians face-to-face, at no cost. These partners are available through libraries, community centres and even in aged care facilities.

3. How do you feel about this idea? Could you see yourself taking part in this? Why/why not?
4. What kind of support would you like to help you guide your relatives/friends/peers through the early stage of learning digital skills?

Day 3 – Type of support required

We want to encourage people like you to guide your relative/friend/peers and help them learn some basic digital skills. Below are some different types of support you could access. Please read this and then answer the questions which follow.

a. Key principles on how to guide and inspire your relative/friend/peer (e.g. active listening, asking questions, showing interest, showing patience, etc.)
b. Tips on how to stay calm when helping a relative/friend/peer use the internet (e.g. find the funny side, deep breaths, remember it's only 15 mins of your time, etc.)
c. **Suggested activities** that are fun and easy for both you and the senior person you are guiding. For example:
    i. **taking a selfie** and posting it to social media (the mentor's social media account);
    ii. **using Google Earth** to find the house they grew up in;
    iii. **using Google** to search for info on a hobby or activity the senior enjoys.
    iv. **Instructional videos** for you and your relative/friend/peer, which are also amusing and fun to watch;
    v. You **receive notifications** when your relative/friend/peer has done an online activity, so you could watch their progress.

Day 4 – Motivational exploration

Thinking more broadly about helping motivate or inspire older Australians in general. In the past, what types of things have you done to motivate or inspire an older person to do or learn something, other than learning digital skills? Moderator will give examples if necessary, e.g. improving health or diet.

1. What types of things did you do to motivate them?
2. How did you feel after you had finished teaching or helping them?
3. With the benefit of hindsight would you have done it differently? How?

4. Please click on this link to have a quick look at the Be Connected website - **https://beconnected.esafety.gov.au/**. In particular, we are interested in your thoughts on the topic library and the first topic – "absolute basics".
5. How useful do you think this content might be for someone aged 70+ improve their digital skills? Why?

Day 5 – Final thoughts

Given what you have seen in this forum, do you think you might take part? Why/why not? Statement 1: It has been said that if Australians aged 70+ improve their internet skills it will make them more confident and independent, resulting in more social interaction and less social isolation.

- What are your thoughts about this statement? Why?

Statement 2: It has also been said that there are direct benefits to people like you by acting now. That is, by investing some time now to help older Australians get online, they will be less dependent on you as they get older.

- What are your thoughts about this statement? Why?
- Any last thoughts about what could make it easier to help and support your relative/ friend/peer?

THANKS AND END

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