

## Older and Online

### Linking Older Australians to online products and services that can improve their daily lives

Sandra Haukka, Queensland University of Technology, 31 March 2010

#### BACKGROUND

The Australian Government and the private sector are investing up to \$43 billion over eight years to build the country's national broadband network. The Government aims to provide every person in Australia with access to affordable and fast broadband. Previous research and existing data on Internet connections and usage suggest that many older people will not have the skills, knowledge or interest to take advantage of the network. A Roy Morgan survey<sup>1</sup> found that only:

- 56% of people aged 65 and over had ever used the Internet
- 48% had a home Internet connection
- 30% had a broadband connection.

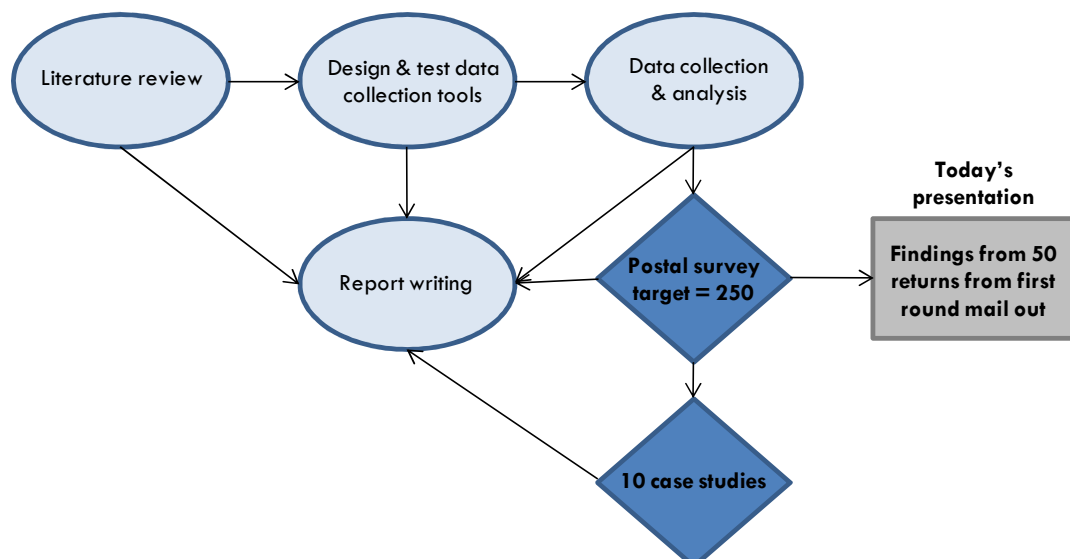
Yet, around 70% of older people who participated in the survey agreed with the statement that they “would like to use the Internet but feel intimidated by the complexity of it all”<sup>2</sup>.

#### THE PROJECT

In 2009, the auDA Foundation funded Queensland University of Technology to explore **what older Australians who do not or rarely use the Internet (non-users) know about the types of online products and services available, and how they might use them to improve their daily lives**. The project aims to address the following questions.

1. To what extent are non-users aware of what the Internet offers?
2. To what extent are non-users interested in using the Internet?
3. Do non-users find particular online products and services more useful than others?
4. What barriers are preventing non-users from using the Internet?
5. To what extent do non-users believe the “Internet is complicating their daily life” and the “Internet would improve their daily life”?
6. To what extent are non-users aware of Internet support/services that are available to them?
7. What support/services do non-users need to use the Internet?
8. Are there particular demographic features of non-users that influence the above?

The figure below shows the project's main activities:



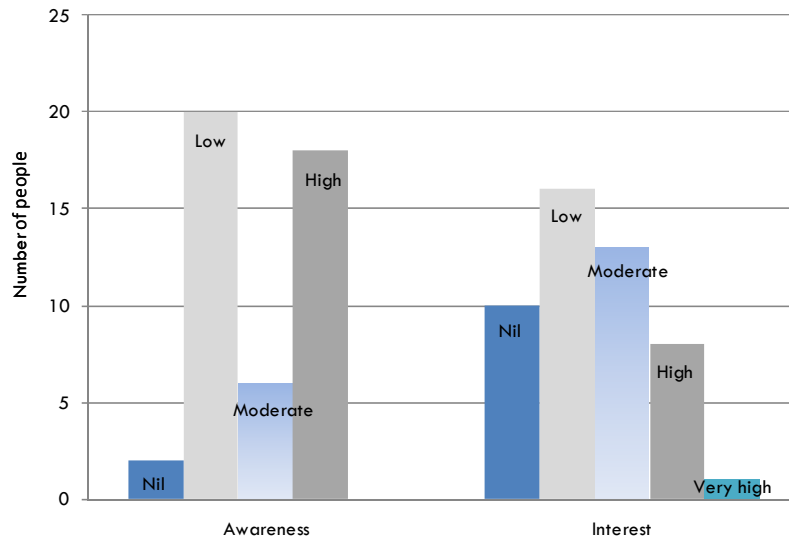
<sup>1</sup> Australian Communications and Media Authority (2009). *Australia in the Digital Economy. Report 2: Online Participation*. Retrieved 23 July, 2009, from <http://apo.org.au/research/australia-digital-economy-online-participation>

<sup>2</sup> Australian Communications and Media Authority (2009). *Australia in the Digital Economy. Report 1: Trust and confidence*. Retrieved 23 July, 2009, from [http://www.acma.gov.au/webwr/aba/about/recruitment/trust\\_and\\_confidence\\_aust\\_in\\_digital\\_economy.pdf](http://www.acma.gov.au/webwr/aba/about/recruitment/trust_and_confidence_aust_in_digital_economy.pdf)

## TODAY'S PRESENTATION

A key purpose of today's forum is to find out about the benefits of being online in later life. The forum's website states: *Everything is happening online – banking, shopping, keeping in touch with family and friends, dating, and even monitoring your health. If you're not online you might be missing out! And if you are online, there's so much more to discover!* Based on initial findings from 50 survey returns, this presentation aims to provide some insights into this purpose and statement.

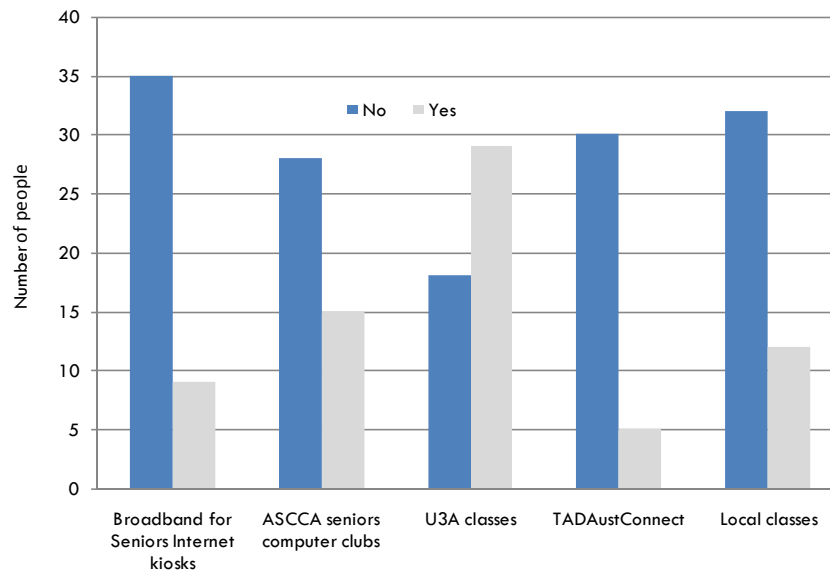
**Internet awareness and interest:** Awareness is more likely to be low or high whereas interest is more likely to be low or moderate.



**Main barriers to Internet usage:** Lack of skills/knowledge, confusion about the technology, security and viruses, no support/help, rely too much on family/friends, too expensive, and no Internet connection.

**Most popular uses (if they had skills/knowledge):** Communicating with friends/family, making cheap phone calls, accessing timetables and directories, making bookings/appointments, and finding information on health topics.

**Internet support/services:** More likely to have no awareness of Internet support/services except for U3A classes.



## Response to statements:

- *The Internet would improve my daily life?* Although more people indicated they agreed with the statement, over one half indicated they highly disagreed or disagreed with the statement.
- *The Internet is complicating my daily life?* More people indicated they highly disagreed or disagreed with the statement.

## PROJECT CONTACT

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