



March 2020

## **Not like riding a bike:**

Why some older people stop using the internet

## Introduction

In an increasingly digital world, many people cannot imagine life without the internet. However, not only are there 3.4 million people aged 65+ who have never used the internet, but there are also a further half a million older people who have used it in the past but not recently. Surprisingly little attention has been paid to this group. At Age UK we wanted to find out more about

the reasons why some people are no longer online. We carried out a survey through our ‘Your Voice Engagement Panel’ and then undertook some follow-up interviews to explore this issue in more depth. We are extremely grateful to our interviewees for their time and for sharing their views and experiences with us.

## Summary and recommendations

It is sometimes assumed that over time internet use will become almost universal as future generations enter later life having been familiar with the internet at work or in their personal life. However, as shown by national statistics and our work with individuals, being able to use the internet is not like riding a bike – a skill that you gain and then retain.

Our interviews with Your Voice panellists who have stopped using the internet show that giving up can be a result of a number of factors which, over time, outweigh the benefits of being online. These include: difficulties in keeping up with changing technology, not having anyone to help when problems arise, health-related issues, lack of interest, and cost. Concern about scams is also a key issue which can be an overriding reason why people stop going online. Some people told us that nothing would encourage them to use the internet again, however among those who would consider starting again, having someone beside them to help was a key factor.

We could only scratch the surface of this important topic and much more research is needed. However, this short study suggests that if older people are to continue to benefit from digital technology for as long as possible, we need to:

- Invest in services that enable older people to maintain digital skills, as well as gain them. Age UK has considerable experience in providing digital inclusion services and a good understanding of the best ways to support older people. However, providing this can be resource-heavy, requiring ongoing contact and funding that focusses on quality rather than quantity of delivery to ensure real impact. It is very important that appropriate support is available to ensure that people don’t ‘drop out’ of internet use.
- Maximise digital skills while still in work. Employers and training providers should ensure that older workers have sufficient digital skills to be successful in modern workplaces. Although technology changes



over time, those who leave work with good skills are better placed to maintain and build on these.

- Ensure products and services are accessible to older people and those with health conditions and disabilities, and that people have support to be able to make the most of available technology.
- Tackle wider barriers that deter people from using technology, in particular reducing the risk of fraud and scams. While keeping safe online is an integral part

of digital training and support, the onus should not just be on individuals. Reducing fraud needs to be a national policing priority, backed by reforms to reporting and enforcement processes.

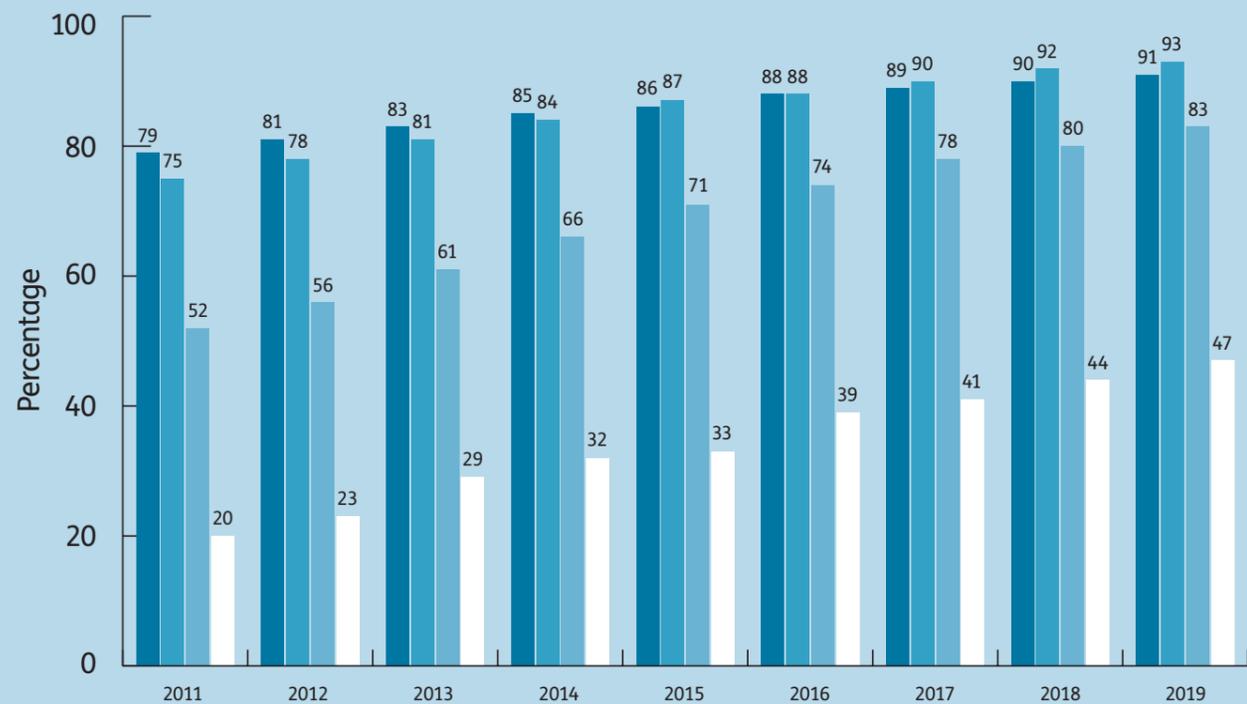
However, this study also reinforces our view that there will always be some people who cannot, or choose not to, use the internet. Public and private service providers need to ensure that there are suitable alternative ways to access essential services and support.

## Internet use among older people is increasing

Over time, the proportion of people in older age groups who use the internet has increased. This partly reflects people entering retirement having been familiar with digital technology at work or in their social life, and partly due to people gaining digital skills in later life. The latter group ranges from those who embrace new technology enthusiastically, to others who start to use the internet only reluctantly.

Whatever the drivers, we can see from the chart below that the proportions in the 55+ age groups using the internet have risen steadily. However, nearly one in six people aged 65-74 have not used the internet in the last three months, and among the over 75s this rises to just over half.<sup>i</sup> And while the proportion of the oldest age group using the internet has increased significantly over the last eight years, at current rates, it will still be many years before rates of digital inclusion are close to those of younger age groups.

Percentage of people who used the internet in the last three months by age



Source: Internet users, ONS.

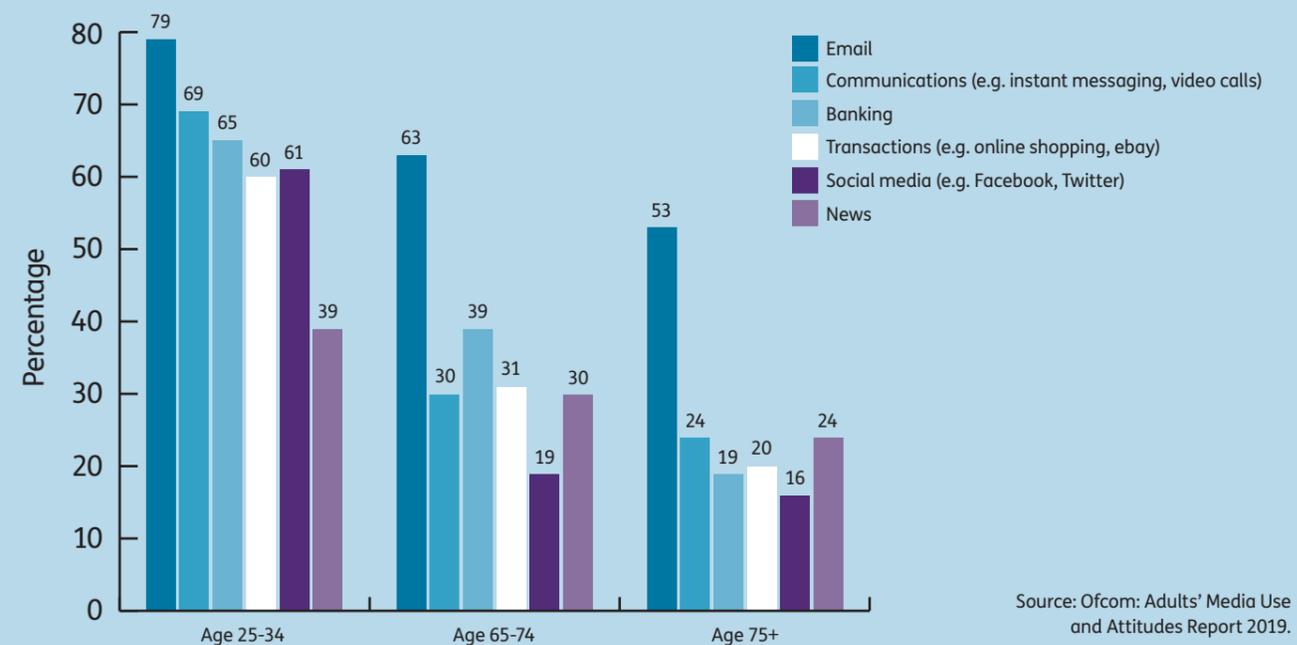
## Different levels of use

Describing someone as either an internet-user or a non-user only provides part of the picture. Ofcom, in its annual report on media use and attitudes, asks which of 15 types of online activity people undertake. These include activities such as communication, finding out information, accessing services, leisure activities, and uploading content. Among all adults who use the internet, 32% are defined as broad users (10-15 activities), 36% medium users (5-9 activities) and 28% narrow users (1-4 activities).<sup>ii</sup> Older internet users are more likely to be narrow users, so 41% of 65-74 year-olds and 54% of those 75+ engage in only one to four activities. The table below gives the proportions of older internet users

who had carried out various key activities in the previous week, compared to internet users aged 25-34.

Note that the figures in the chart below exclude people who say they never go online which, as seen in the previous chart, is around half of those aged 75+. So if we look at the whole population, and not just internet users, among all people aged 75+ around one in twelve had used social media and one in ten online banking in the previous week. In comparison, around six out of ten people aged 25-34 had used social media in the last week and a similar proportion had banked online.

Proportion of internet users who carried out certain activities in the last week



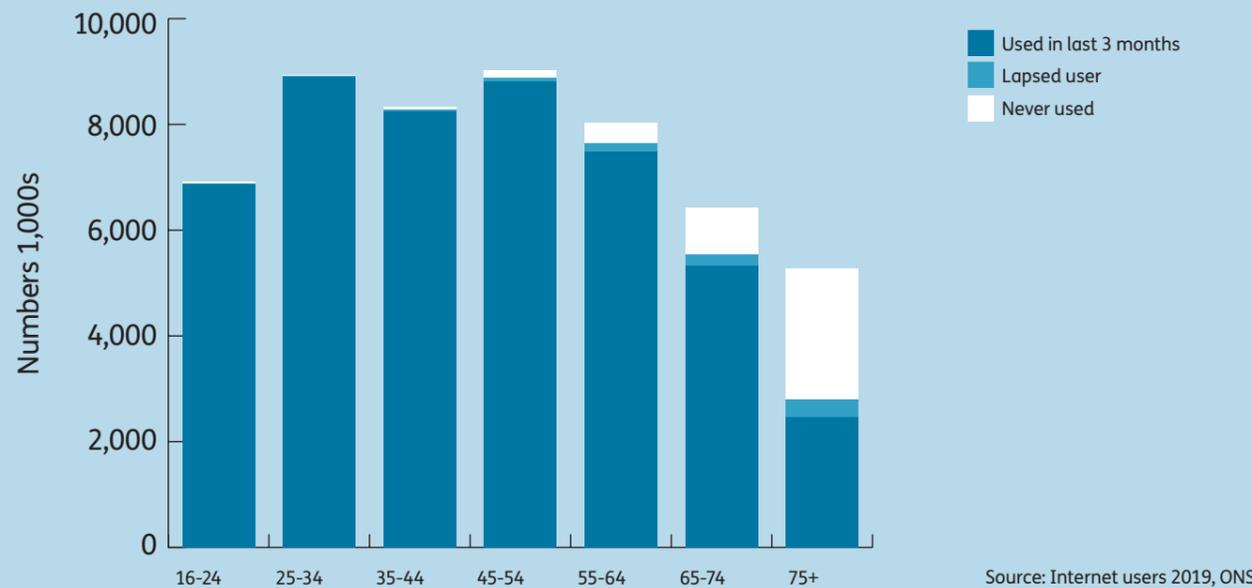
Source: Ofcom: Adults' Media Use and Attitudes Report 2019.

## Some people stop using the internet

While each year the overall proportion of people in older age groups using the internet increases, there are some that give up. The ONS refers to these as 'lapsed users', defined as people who say they have used the internet in the past, but not in the last three months. As can be seen below, the number of former users increases with age.

Over 800,000 people in the UK are lapsed users and most are in the older age groups: 150,000 are aged 55-64, 200,000 are aged 65-74 and 320,000 are aged 75+. The table below provides more information about numbers and percentages in the different categories of internet use among older people.

### Numbers of people in the UK who use the internet by age - 2019



## Internet use and non-use among older age groups in UK

	Used in the last 3 months		Used over 3 months ago		Never used	
	Millions	%	Millions	%	Millions	%
Age 65-74	5.34	83.2	0.20	3.2	0.87	13.5
Age 75+	2.47	46.8	0.32	6.1	2.48	47.0
All 65+	7.81	66.9	0.52	4.5	3.35	28.7

Source: Internet users 2019, ONS

## Why do people stop using the internet?

Although over half a million people aged 65+ have stopped using the internet there has been limited research in this area. Analysis of the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing found that over a ten year period, the onset of poorer health was associated with stopping internet use.<sup>iii</sup> There was also a study looking at challenges to sustaining digital engagement among older people who were still using the internet.<sup>iv</sup> This highlighted technology complexity and change, lack of

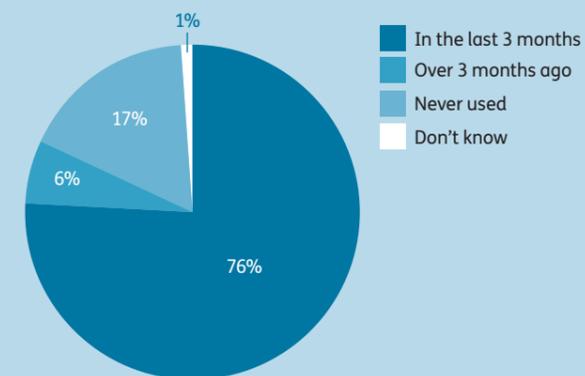
skills, age-related changes, and a lack of suitable support. However, we wanted to look more at those who had already given up being online and the impact this has had on their lives. We decided to explore this through questions and follow-up telephone interviews with members of Age UK's Your Voice Engagement Panel which consists of over 700 people aged 50+. More information about the Panel and this study can be found on page 19.

## Internet use

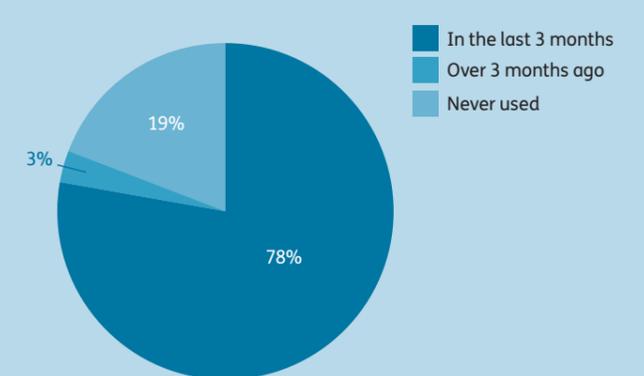
Although the Your Voice Panel is not designed to be representative of the UK population, as can be seen from the chart below, internet

use among panel members is broadly similar to that in the general population age 55+.

### Percentage of Your Voice Panel members using the internet



### Percentage of people 55+ in the UK using the internet



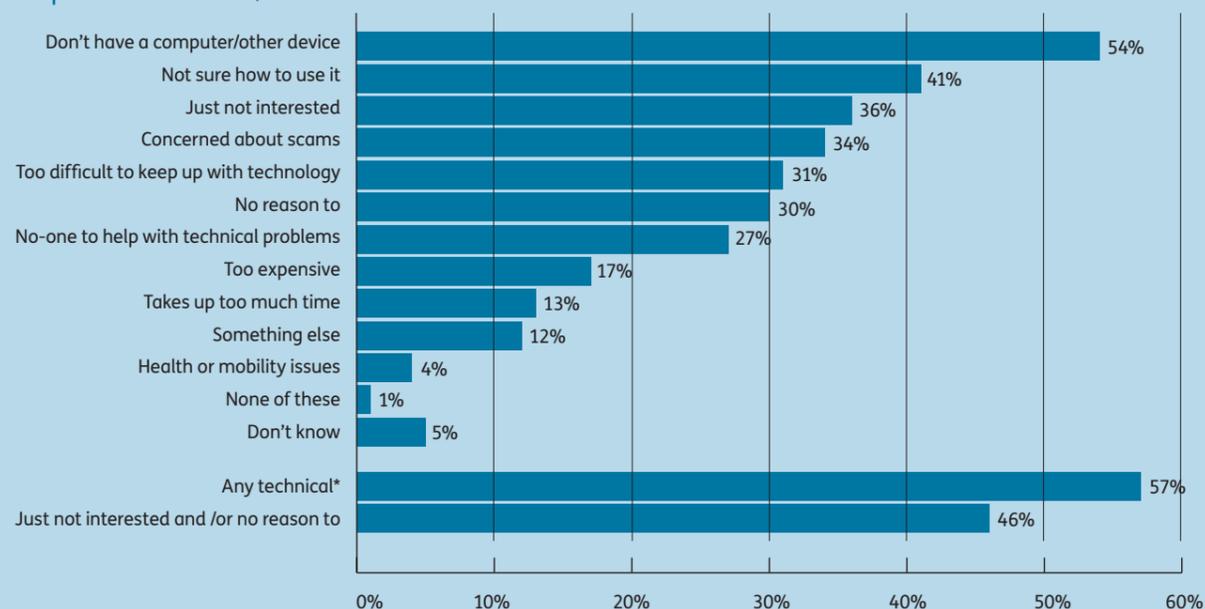
## Reasons for not using the internet

The 134 Your Voice panellists who had not used the internet in the last three months (including 35 who had previously used it) were asked why this was, and what, if anything, would encourage them to do so based on a prompted list. Well over half (57%) gave one or more technical reasons why they didn't use the internet. By this we mean they said they were not sure how to use the internet, they found it too difficult to keep up with changing technology and/or they did not have anyone to help with technical problems. Over half (54%) said they didn't have a computer or other device to access the internet on, and just under a half (46%) said they were not interested and/

or had no reason to use it. Scams were also an important concern (34%) and, to a lesser extent, cost (17%). The full responses are given in the chart below.

Although the sample size for those who had used the internet but not in the last three months was relatively low, they were more likely than those who had never used it to say it was difficult to keep up with changing technology (49% compared to 24%). Unsurprisingly they were less likely to say they did not have a computer (29% compared to 64%) or were unsure how to use it (26% compared to 46%).

### Reasons for not using the internet in the last three months (from promoted list)



\*Any technical: Not sure how to use it, too difficult to keep up with technology and/or no-one to help with technical problems.

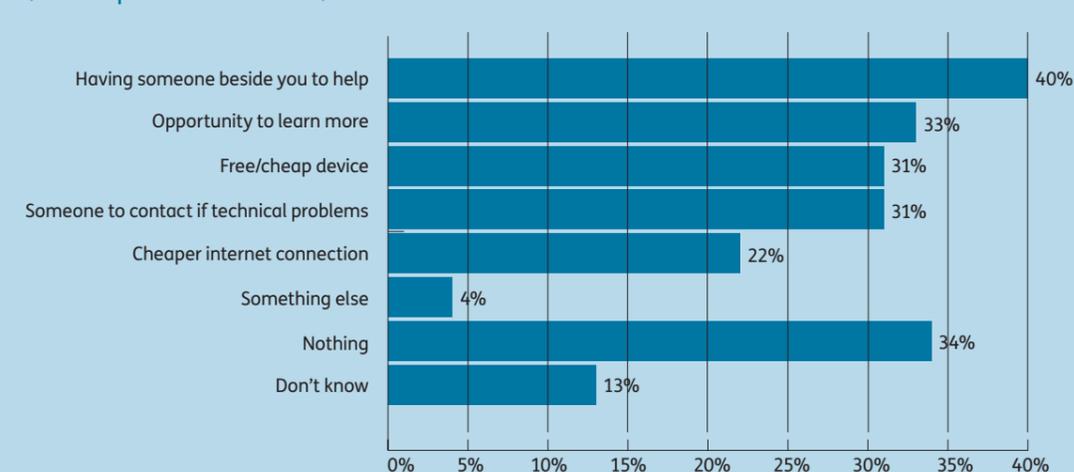
Source: Age UK's Your Voice Panel, 2019 (134 respondents)

## What would encourage internet use among those who had given up?

We also asked those who had never or not recently used the internet what, if anything, would encourage them to use it. Just over half (53%) chose one or more of the options presented to them – the most common being 'having someone beside you to help' (40%). Around a third (34%) said nothing would encourage them whereas the other 13% did not know or did not respond to this question. The chart below shows how people responded.

In general, responses were similar between those who had never used the internet and lapsed users, although those who had never used it were more likely to say that nothing would encourage them (39% compared to 20%) and less likely to say a cheaper internet connection would help (18% compared to 34%).

### What would encourage internet use? (from promoted list)



Source: Age UK's Your Voice Panel, 2019 (134 panel members)

## Exploring the reasons for stopping internet use

To explore views further, we carried out ten follow-up in-depth telephone interviews with Your Voice Panel members who told us they had used the internet in the past but not in the last three months. The interviewees, four women and six men, were aged from 70 to 90.

### Past internet use

Six of our interviewees had used computers and/or the internet at work, whereas the others had started after retirement. Four of those who had used it at work described this as part of their normal work routine – one woman said *‘I loved my job and that was part of it’*. However, two others had never felt comfortable. One woman said she had *‘hated’* using the computer and a man explained that he just never got to grips with computers when they were introduced in the office, saying he *‘didn’t know what to do, I just couldn’t fathom it out’*.

Those who had not used computers or the internet at work started to do so with varying levels of enthusiasm. One man said computers had just been coming in at work and he *‘tried to get one’*, but he wasn’t allowed to so he and his wife went on a course. Another who had worked with computers, but before the days of the internet, bought a computer and soon came to terms with it as he was *‘good at teaching myself’*.

For two others it was more that they felt they ought to – one man said he started to access the internet because *‘everyone said it’s good*

*to be able to’*, while a woman said she had got a computer *‘at my son’s insistence’*.

### How people used the internet and computers at home

The woman who told us she hated using the computer at work had decided that once she retired she would not use one again – and she hasn’t. Among the others we spoke to, the most common online activity before they stopped was searching for information, while about half had used it for communications such as email. Four mentioned buying things online and two had used internet banking. Interviewees also mentioned using a computer for offline activities such as writing letters, keeping lists, or, in one case, writing a book.

### Attitudes to using the internet and computers

Some of our interviewees originally saw the internet as part of their everyday life or something they got on well with and liked using. However, others had never been keen or had some difficulties or reservations – for them personally or more generally. For example, one man said he didn’t really enjoy using the internet, just saw it as a source of information. And a woman described the internet as a useful tool but felt people relied too much on computers and technology. She felt it could cause isolation and lack of real communication and said it was *‘infuriating’* when she went to see her doctor and he looked at the computer screen rather than her.

### Giving up using the internet

Most interviewees gradually withdrew from using the internet due to different issues and a lack of interest or relevance to them. However, concern about scams was the key issue for two people and an important one for others. The different contributing factors are explored further below but first we briefly summarise the reasons given by the ten interviewees for stopping using the internet.

- Never really got on with computers and changing technology at work, and after retirement still couldn’t get to grips with it, so decided to opt out.
- Problems with broadband and computer getting old, when lost connection decided to cancel contract. Also sight deteriorating.
- Experienced a banking scam, haven’t used a computer since.
- Concerned about increasing costs but also wife strongly against using the internet due to the risk of scams.
- A combination of reasons – bills going up and didn’t seem to be value for money, as well as concerns about scams. Prefer human contact to machines.
- Over time harder to use because of injury to arm and also harder to remember things and keep up with changes as not very technically minded. There are other ways to do things.
- Didn’t use very much, found keys difficult to use. Prefer doing things other ways. Also concerned about scams.
- Never liked using computer at work so stopped when retired. Prefer other ways – writing and going to shops where you can touch and feel things.

- Happy using computer at work but once she retired her husband did most things they needed online. After his illness and death, she had no interest in starting again.
- Never particularly enjoyed using it, had problems with internet connection which couldn’t get fixed, and also concerns about scams.

### Scams

In the Your Voice survey around a third of panel members who had not used the internet in the last three months gave concern about scams as one of the reasons why they had never used the internet or had stopped using it. Scams were also mentioned by several interviewees. For two, the risk of scams was the overriding reason for giving up – one man who had personally been a victim of a banking scam made an immediate decision never to use the internet or computers again while another said it was a key reason as friends had lost thousands of pounds. For others, concern about scams was a contributing factor or a general concern.

### Skills and technical issues

Among Your Voice panel members who had not used the internet in the last three months, issues to do with skills, keeping up with technology, and not having anyone to help with technical problems were common reasons why they were not online. These reasons also came up in the interviews. One man who never got on well with computers at work set himself up with a computer and broadband when he retired.

He had some support from friends but didn't like to keep asking for help. People said 'just play about a bit' but when he tried things went wrong. He thought about going to a class but felt he would be too slow and in the end gave up. Another interviewee mentioned that her grandson was very good with computers but 'he hasn't the patience' to explain things. Others talked about losing skills over time and not keeping up with changes - as one said 'if you don't use it you forget'. Another example is the woman whose husband had carried out online tasks such as banking and who told us that after his death she could not be bothered to try to start using it again.

People mentioned having to keep up with changes, for example, needing to relearn systems after getting updates. One man said he had a very old mobile phone but didn't dare get a new one as he wouldn't know how to use it.

Getting help when things went wrong was also an issue. One man who had enjoyed using the internet talked of the cost of having to call someone out from time to time. In addition, his computer was getting old and slow, he was fed up with all the adverts, and he had problems with his broadband. So when his connection went down altogether, he cancelled the contract.

#### **Cost**

The cost of equipment and broadband was a contributing factor for a number of people. A couple of interviewees talked about the

need to be careful with money and one said that she just didn't feel she used it enough to justify continuing to pay the rising internet bill. And, as in the example above, having to pay for help when there were problems was also an additional expense.

#### **Physical and cognitive impairments**

Physical problems can make using technology harder - one interviewee mentioned deterioration in eyesight and another difficulty typing due to a shoulder injury. Impairments that develop as people age may mean it is harder for them to stay digitally engaged, although in some cases the right equipment and support may help address some of these barriers.

For other older people, barriers may be due to memory problems, cognitive ageing or dementia. Even with normal ageing, the brain becomes less efficient at creating new memories, so learning new technology can become more challenging.

Due to the nature of this particular study we were not able to explore the impact of cognitive impairment on internet use. However, we know from other work that this is an important area for further consideration as demonstrated by the example below given to Age UK by a woman concerned about her father.

*A man in his 90s who was in the early stage of dementia had previously spent much of his time online, including carrying out financial transactions and banking. He found*

*it increasingly difficult to cope with updates to software which changed the processes he had been familiar with, as well as learning new tasks which previously he would have found simple. Eventually he lost the ability to carry out tasks he used to be able to do. He found all of this frustrating and upsetting and his banks in particular showed little awareness of how to adapt their practices to accommodate his issues.*

*Information given to Age UK from the man's daughter.*

Further work is needed to ensure that people affected by memory loss or reduced cognitive ability are supported to continue to use the internet if they wish to, and can do so safely, and can also continue to remain active and engaged even if they can no longer use digital technology.

#### **Importance of human contact**

While the factors above relate to difficulties and barriers to internet use, the former internet users we spoke to also talked positively about other ways to do things, or told us they had better things to do with their time.

One woman said you don't get the same emotional feedback communicating through machines - she prefers talking to people directly. She described a social club she helps run where there is a talk or activity but said that what people enjoyed most was chatting over a cup of tea afterwards. In a similar vein another woman also said she preferred to speak to people and liked going to the

shops, while another interviewee told us he preferred to ring the bank or go in person and speak to someone.

Some felt their lives were already busy enough without spending time online - one 90 year old described his active life saying he always finds there are 'not enough hours in the day' to do everything he wants to.

#### **Life without the internet**

Some of our interviewees shared their frustrations that there was an expectation that everyone can do things online and has an email address. One woman talked about the need for choice and how it 'enrages' her that some people have the attitude that if you don't use technology there is something wrong with you or you are 'losing your marbles'.

Other issues mentioned were: the time taken to arrange a doctor's appointment if you can't access the surgery's digital booking system, concern about health services going online, needing to wait for a family member to help, and accessing information.

There was an acknowledgement that things were sometimes cheaper online, which was 'annoying but that's how it is'. Another said internet access might save some money but that this wasn't a major concern for him and, in any case, you had to consider the cost of the internet.

Interviewees told us about alternative ways to do things. One woman said her doctor

expects people to order a repeat prescription online but as she can't and has mobility problems, she is on a list of people who are exempt from this and can ring instead. Another said that banking wasn't a problem because her local branch manager was 'fantastic', she has his number and he takes care of everything.

In general, people managed well without the internet. A woman who lived in sheltered housing had a relative who helped with grocery shopping but could normally get to the post office and local shops on her motor scooter, finding people were kind and helpful when she was out. Two others mentioned buying things through catalogues.

Overall, some didn't really see any downsides to not being online - one man said he was 'very happy without the internet' and another interviewee said 'I just feel as though I am alright as I am'. And while others did see disadvantages with not being online, they felt the decision was right for them. As one man said 'I shall put up with this, that's my choice'.

However, some comments indicated concerns going forward. One woman had been told her bank branch would close in two years which was a worry. Another was very clear that while the internet was a useful tool, people shouldn't be forced to use it - there needed to be other options.

#### **Does anyone use the internet on their behalf?**

Four participants had family members who sometimes did things online on their behalf, such as looking up information, buying items or booking tickets. Another two mentioned getting occasional help from a friend while the others did not have anyone who carried out online actions for them.

#### **Would anything encourage them to start again?**

Of the list of options given to the 35 former users who completed the Your Voice survey, the majority mentioned one or more things that would encourage them to use the internet again. However, among the ten interviewees we talked to in more depth there was limited enthusiasm for this. For example, one woman said she sometimes thought she should make an effort and try again but it was too much hassle and aggravation 'at my age'. Only three gave any indication that they might consider using it again - all linked to having the right one-to-one assistance. One said she might when her daughter comes to live with her because she would be on hand to provide support and encouragement, and two suggested that if there was someone who could come to their home and provide tailored support they might consider this.

## Lessons for the future

While we have only carried out ten interviews, they still provide valuable insights and give examples of views and experiences that will be shared by many people who are not digitally engaged. Unlike those who never used the internet, our interviewees have had some experience of the potential benefits that it can bring, but also the disadvantages.

The interviews emphasise the importance of ensuring people are protected against scams, and also show that giving up using the internet can be a result of a number of different factors which, over time, may lead people to decide that the benefits of being online are outweighed by things such as cost and practical difficulties, as well as a lack of interest.

We also found that, while there were some concerns and frustrations about increasing digitisation, people find ways to deal with these and, in general, were happy with the way they lived their lives. Indeed people often value the person-to-person contact that goes with traditional ways of communicating, shopping, banking and carrying out other day-to-day activities.

So overall, despite some concerns, the people we talked to did not feel they experienced any major difficulties from having given up using the internet. However, this could change if current trends towards reliance on digital technology continue. For example:

- Banks continue to close local branches, often citing a fall in transactions in branches

and an increase in online transactions, though as shown above only a small proportion of over-75s bank online.<sup>v</sup>

- Local authorities increasingly encourage people to access their services online. An Age UK mystery shopping exercise found that 41 out of 100 councils contacted in England told people they needed to access the internet in order to claim Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction.<sup>vi</sup> Fourteen of these did not offer support that would enable someone who has never used the internet to make a claim.
- More and more information is provided online. For example, the website GOV.UK is described as 'the best place to find government services and information'. Much of the information there cannot be accessed by telephone or in leaflet form.
- As people are encouraged to access health services online<sup>vii</sup> it may get harder for those who do not use the internet to do things such as make a GP appointment.

In order to ensure that those offline are not left behind, it is important that more is done to support digital engagement as well as providing alternatives for those who cannot, or do not wish to, use the internet.

## Tackling the barriers to staying online

### Support to remain digitally engaged

Our survey and follow-up interviews suggest that having available, ongoing support might encourage some people who have stopped using the internet to start again or help prevent people giving up. This could be through support to improve skills, technical help, assistance with equipment and connections, and help to find cheaper internet deals.

Having support that is tailored to someone's own needs and preferences is important – the three people we interviewed who indicated they would consider using the internet again all envisaged this being in their own homes.

Age UK has long run programmes to help people in later life gain the skills and confidence to use the internet. This includes the One Digital project, working in partnership with four other organisations to deliver better digital skills in the UK through supporting and inspiring trusted intermediaries or Digital Champions.<sup>viii</sup> Based on our experience, we have a good idea about what works. Some key points are:

- Learners need ongoing open-ended support, rather than a one-off intervention. This is to ensure that confidence remains and to help people learn and develop new skills, as well as to ensure retention of information learned in previous sessions. Ongoing support allows for repetition and

reflection.

- Structured, skills-focused courses don't work. Sessions need to be person-centred, and focussed on the interests and needs of the learner, rather than following a generic curriculum.
- One-to-one support is preferred by many, as they can develop a strong and trusting relationship with the volunteer. Groups can also sometimes be daunting for older people who spend a lot of time on their own.
- Home visits are more popular in rural areas and with older people who are housebound.

We could provide this support to many more older people if hard-pressed local organisations had the resources to be able to fund this. Home visits, one-to-one and ongoing support are all very resource-heavy, so funding requirements need to focus on quality, rather than quantity, of delivery to ensure real impact.

## Making sure people have the right technology and can continue to use it

As demonstrated by our interviews, some older people can find it difficult to keep up with the latest developments and updates, or find using equipment harder as they age. It is important that those designing websites and equipment take into account the characteristics and features that make them as user-friendly and accessible as possible for all users. Providers also need to consider continuity of service. Users should not have to face regularly purchasing new equipment or getting to grips with changes to systems if the technology they have is already meeting their needs.

The people we talked to referred to

computers, whereas most Age UK digital inclusion services now focus on using tablets and mobile phones – particularly as new phones with larger screens are now more accessible. One man we spoke to said he had heard tablets were easier than computers but had not had the opportunity to use one. Voice activated technology is also a development that may suit some older people. Part of the support that people need to remain digitally engaged is help to learn about what's available, including for those with health conditions and impairments. They also need the opportunity to try out different equipment and gain confidence with new technology.

## Entering retirement with good digital skills

Some of our interviewees only started to use the internet after retirement or had limited access to computers at work. Going forward more people will retire having used technology in the workplace, but there are still many people in their 50s and 60s who have limited skills. Employers and training

providers should ensure that older workers have sufficient digital skills to be successful in modern workplaces. Although technology changes over time, those who leave work with good digital abilities are better placed to maintain and build on these.

## Risk of scams

Keeping safe online is an important part of digital training and ongoing support. In Age UK's experience this needs to be included as an important element of all aspects of digital inclusion. This is also reflected in the Government's Essential Digital Skills Framework which sets out five essential skills

for life and work. One of these is being safe and legal, and this is seen as an important element of the other four – communicating, handling information and content, transacting and problem solving.<sup>ix</sup>

However, while individuals need to do their

best to be vigilant and protect themselves, more needs to be done to reduce the likelihood of people being targeted by fraudsters. Age UK is calling for a new national strategy to tackle the growing problem of fraud. While there is some good work already taking place, such as the National Trading Standards Scams Team, fraud should become a national policing priority, backed up by much stronger and better-coordinated partnership working

across police forces, trading standards, banks, and other local agencies to combat the rising threat from this type of crime. Banks have a major role to play in countering fraud. The recent voluntary agreement for potential reimbursement of banking scams where someone has been misled into authorising an online payment is a step forward, but regulators must monitor it to ensure that it really has teeth and leads to a reduction in this type of fraud.

## Will things be different for future generations?

It is unsurprising that internet use is currently lower in older age groups. The older someone is, the less likely they are to have been brought up using it, and the more likely it is they will have retired before the technology was common in the workplace. While some embrace new technology in later life, others do not - due to reasons such as a lack of interest, a feeling it's not relevant, security concerns, or costs.

It is sometimes assumed that over time, internet use will become almost universal as future generations enter later life having been familiar with it at work, or in their personal life. However, as shown by the national statistics, and from our work with

individuals, using technology is not like riding a bike - a skill that you gain and then retain. Digital technology develops all the time and those retiring now may find their knowledge and skills soon become out of date. People may also find they have no-one to turn to for support.

And while digital technology has the capacity to make life easier for some people living with disability and health problems, for some of us, changes that may occur as part of the ageing process (such as general cognitive impairment, or the loss of physical dexterity) may make carrying out some digital tasks more difficult.

## There must be appropriate offline access to essential support and services

We do not know what the future holds in terms of increasing use of digital technology, but the fact remains that there is currently a significant proportion of the older population (and some younger people) who cannot, or do not want to use the internet. They may either have never used it or, as with our interviewees, have given up. They may face barriers due to cost, limited skills, disability or declining health, lack of support, or have concerns about security, or they may have

made an informed decision that the internet is not something they want to use as part of their life.

Whatever the reasons, public and private service providers need to ensure that everyone has suitable ways to access essential services and to recognise there will be an ongoing need for non-digital alternatives.

## Age UK's Your Voice Engagement Panel

This is a self-selected panel of over 700 people aged 50+. It is not representative of the 50+ population and is particularly weighted towards those aged over 75 and those perhaps less likely to engage with other research or panels. 'Your Voice' aims to include 'seldom heard' voices and actively seeks to recruit carers, the older old, those with reduced mobility, those offline, those living in very rural areas or care homes, and those from minority groups.

The Your Voice survey field work took place in February/March 2019. We then carried out 10 follow-up telephone interviews with panellists who had told us that they had not used the internet in the last three months but had used it in the past. The interviews took place in May/June 2019.

## References

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- vi Age UK (2018), Everything is online nowadays. [https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/reports-and-publications/reports-and-briefings/active-communities/rb\\_may18\\_everything\\_is\\_online\\_nowadays.pdf](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/reports-and-publications/reports-and-briefings/active-communities/rb_may18_everything_is_online_nowadays.pdf)
- vii <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/gps/gp-online-services/>
- viii <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/our-impact/programmes/one-digital/>
- ix Department for Education (2018), Essential digital skills framework. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/essential-digital-skills-framework>

Age UK is a national charity that works with a network of partners, including Age Scotland, Age Cymru, Age NI and around 130 local Age UKs across England, to help everyone make the most of later life, whatever their circumstances.

Age UK provides expert, impartial information and advice on all areas of later life, through our national advice line, our website, and by supporting our local partners to give face-to-face advice.

Local Age UKs provide a range of services, which may include support to gain and retain digital skills. Age UK Advice can provide contact details for local organisations.

**Age UK free advice line: 0800 678 1602.**  
**Lines are open 8am-7pm, 365 days a year.**

**Age UK Advice [www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)**