

Abstract

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Digital Exclusion among Older Adults in Rural Regions of Romania

The use of internet and digital technologies among aged generation grew in Romania in the last decade, from an outstandingly low level, to a level where we can already discuss about mass phenomenon. Researchers explored those areas, which are taken into possession by the elderly: from keeping contact, and consuming social media contents and news, to learning, online shopping, organizing leisure (entertainment and travel) and medical services. In case of the aged people, grandmothers are primarily responsible for using the web-based services to communicate with their grandchildren. This means especially the use of different devices (tablets) and social media (facebook), or online games jointly with the grandchildren, which is a passive use beside an active usage.

The aim of our presentation is to show preliminary findings of our recent research regarding digital practices of older adults in rural regions of Romania. We identify barriers in adopting digital technology as well as we map the support system that Romanian older adults rely on in gaining digital literacy.

As a theoretical background we use Helsper's (2012) corresponding fields model for the links between social and digital exclusion. This model hypothesises "how specific areas of digital and social exclusion influence each other".

In this presentation interviews with 65+ years old adults from rural regions of Eastern and Central Transylvania are used to explore the digital practices of the

Romanian older population and to reveal the influence of offline exclusion fields on digital exclusion.