Accessible digital services for older adults

Professor Niall Hayes
Accessibility to digital services

- An increase in digital government / NGO services can result in access challenges for older adults.
- **Meaningful access** must focus on the **situated practices** of access to services.
- Technology can support existing and enable new **pathways to accessing** services.
- **Intermediaries** can play an important role in facilitating meaningful pathways to access.
Framework for the Design of Accessible Digital Services

Access to what?

Stage 1: Everyday Practices
Stage 2: Necessary Conditions
Stage 3: Pathways to Access
Stage 4: Modes of Access

Co-creation Methodologies
Conditions of Access to Digital Services

- **Technological infrastructure and costs**: e.g. provision of internet access, cost of access.
- **Attitudes/feelings**: e.g. such as fear & lack of trust.
- **Skills and support**: e.g. training and family support are especially effective.
- **Meanings and motivation**: e.g. what services may be especially meaningful/relevant to older adults in a specific setting?
- **Socio-economic conditions**: e.g. income, education, employment.
- **Device design**: e.g. such as screen size, interactivity and interface.
- **Demographic/personal conditions**: e.g. gender and marital status, rural and age.
“It is difficult to find out what is taking place in all the different villages and in the main town. If I do find out something is going on, I then need to find out how to get there, what the facilities are, what the weather will be and who else might be going.”

Margaret, 78 years old Widow, Lives in rural village location.
(Inter)Linking pathways to access...

Social Event

- Of Interest?
- Dress?
- Weather?
- Finding event knowledge of?
- Budgeting / Cost

Volunteering opportunity?

- Self-drive
- Private
- Lift
- Transport
- Public
- Schedule
- Schedule / Time?

Location/venue

- Toilet facilities?
- Disabled access?
- Heated?

- Parking
- Available?
- Bus stop
- Return?
Modes of Access

1. **Independent Access**
   - Move up to mediated access
   - If need be, move to mediated access

2. **Mediated Access**

3. **Absent Access**
“Most of my friends do not have internet access. They did not use technology in their working lives as they were either farmers or manual workers. They still just ring people up or ask their children or grandchildren to use technology for them.”

Jack, 80
Conclusions: Pathways of Access

- Focus on access to meaningful services that are rooted in the everyday practices of older adults.
- Pathways to access are specific to individual older adults. As such, personalisation is very important.
- Pathways to access are not static and will change for older adults over time.
- Intermediaries can be a very effective mode of sustained access.

This project has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 693319.

This material reflects only the author’s view and the Research Executive Agency (REA) is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.