BEFORE THE NetGen

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Introduction

Many elderly people find themselves in conditions of isolation and abandonment. Elderly over the age of 60 should receive attention that enables them to maintain their intellectual faculties in order not to marginalise them from society, to avoid them from deteriorating as well as recognising and enabling them to exercise their rights. The mental health of the elderly, through the socialisation of culture, will motivate adults to participate in their family, community and national surroundings. Could it be that the Internet could be one of the sources of wellbeing for the elderly if it is found that spending time in complex mental activities can improve brain health and delay cognitive damages?
Objective

We tried to identify the degree of technological and digital literacy of vets who started their studies 50 years ago and concluded them in 1962. This is a group of Mexicans who were born, grew up, developed and aged before the Web Generation when the written culture was the only predominant one. This was not an attempt to determine if they have already acquired the necessary competencies for the 21st Century: to find, evaluate and use information, but rather how and for what they use ITC.
Methods

Vets of class 1958-1962 with e-mail addresses were surveyed via e-mail.
Results (1) Sex of respondents by age group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Male (%)</th>
<th>Female (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>65-69</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results (2) Place of work if currently employed (N=100%)

- Private practice/consulting office: 25%
- University or research institution: 25%
- Consultant/advisor: 25%
- Own ranch: 25%
Results (3) Own a computer with access to Internet

Yes

100%
Results (4) Frequency of computer use

Daily  50%
Several times/day  50%
### Results (5) Usage of computer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chat</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search for professional/personal information</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music/video</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group discussions</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calls (Skype)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word processor</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social networks</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results (6) Familiarity of information sources

Keys:
1 = extremely familiar
2 = very familiar
3 = somewhat familiar
4 = Not very familiar
5 = never heard of

E-mail: 25 25
Search engine: 25 25
Online chat: 25
Online bookshop: 50
Specialised web sites: 50
Online news: 50
Online journals/magazines: 25 25
Libraries web sites: 25 25
Blogs: 80
Databases: 50
Online librarian: 50
Audiobooks: 25 25
Electronic journals: 50
Results (7) Electronic resources used more frequently

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dictionaries</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encyclopaedias</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital books</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online journals/magazines/newspapers</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Databases</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results (8) Information gathering before the Internet

- In a library: 50%
- In own books and journals: 100%
Conclusions

The elderly, while they may have the time to go through crisis and depressions because of health, economic or family reasons since they are no longer responsible for caring for their children or parents, or have job obligations, may maximise their mental conditions by keeping themselves intellectually active, that is to say by being *techy* adults—through the Internet.