DIGITAL SKILLS
Exchange of best practices between digital mediation players !

Guide to "Inclusion" | Fact Sheet 3

CYBER SÉNIOR

FACT SHEET 3

Training older people to use digital technologies

Cyber_Sénior
CENTRO DE INCLUSÃO DIGITAL

PRESENTATION

Cyber Senior is a European project that aims to strengthen the digital skills of older adults to promote their social inclusion, independence, and active participation in society. Led by a consortium of partners from different European countries, the project develops accessible educational resources, tailored training modules, and innovative tools to support older adults in their digital learning. By drawing on an intergenerational and inclusive approach, Cyber Senior helps reduce the digital divide and combat isolation, while promoting the knowledge and experiences of older adults in an increasingly connected world.

The Cyber_Senior | Digital Inclusion Center is an initiative of the Dr. José Lourenço Júnior Foundation, located in Abiul, Pombal, Portugal. The main objective of this project is to train seniors in the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), promoting the digital and social inclusion of older people.

CYBER SENIOR

IN A FEW WORDS

It aims to train seniors to use new technologies effectively, through certified training delivered by students, under the supervision of IT and new technology instructors. This methodology is based on an intergenerational vision of active aging.

IN A FEW NUMBERS

Cyber Senior's vision focuses on promoting equal opportunities and social inclusion for older people, advocating for the need for everyone to have access to the dynamics of civil society, with the aim of promoting full and informed citizenship.

Would you like to know more?

http://

https://cyber-senior.pt/

RESULTS AND IMPACTS

The importance of continuing education and lifelong learning is essential to promote active and healthy aging.

Overcoming the digital barriers faced by older adults and adapting teaching methodologies to their needs is crucial to ensure effective and meaningful learning.

LESSONS LEARNED AND ADVICE

Expand access to the initiative to more regions and audiences, allowing a greater number of seniors to benefit from the training.
Introduce modules on advanced digital tools, based on participants' interests and technological developments in society.
Collaborate with local and technological institutions to strengthen the project's impact and ensure the sustainability of its activities.

OBSTACLES AND SOLUTIONS

Many older adults have limited knowledge about using digital technologies, making it difficult for them to integrate into the digital world. Some participants are reluctant to adopt new technologies, either due to concerns about unnecessary expenses or fears about security and the risk of digital fraud.
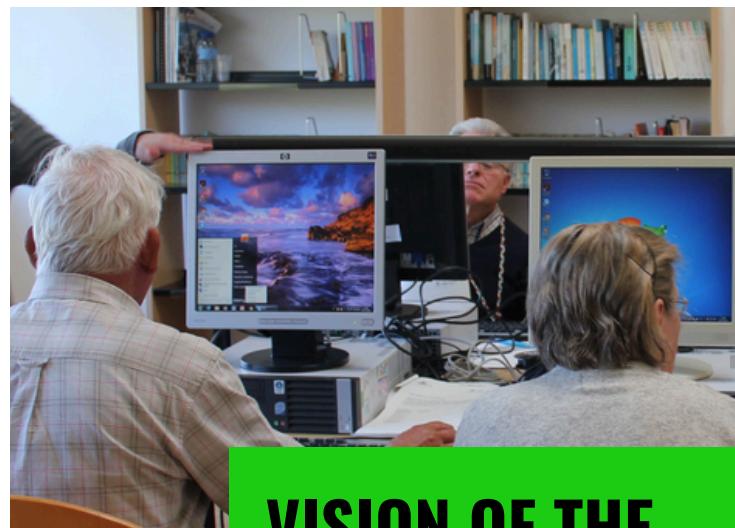
Solutions implemented:
The project offers training sessions tailored to the individual needs of older adults, focusing on basic functions such as smartphone use, internet navigation, and managing essential applications.

Information sessions on online safety are held, teaching participants how to identify and avoid potential digital fraud, thus strengthening their confidence in using technology.

VISION OF THE FUTURE

The Cyber Senior project's vision is to promote the digital inclusion of seniors by fostering their autonomy and improving their well-being. Among its initiatives, the "Saúde em Casa" pilot project enabled non-institutionalized older people to monitor their health at home using new technologies and adapted tools. Furthermore, the Foundation is a member of the Ageing@Coimbra consortium, which values the role of seniors in society and promotes practices that foster active and healthy aging. These actions demonstrate Cyber Senior's commitment to integrating digital technologies into the daily lives of seniors, thus strengthening their social inclusion and quality of life.

POSTURE OF THE DIGITAL MEDIATOR

As a digital mediator, supporting older adults in learning digital skills requires a patient, caring, and reassuring approach.

This group often faces a double barrier: time (decades spent without using digital technology) and fear (of making mistakes, not understanding, or disturbing others).

These seniors sometimes have a weakened self-image due to technological acceleration. Many feel overwhelmed, excluded from digital services, or cut off from their loved ones, especially when they live alone or in institutions. They did not grow up with digital tools, and some have even developed a form of rejection or mistrust toward them.

Creating a suitable learning environment is fundamental: this means providing a safe environment, where no question is considered "stupid," where everyone's pace is respected, and where every small step forward is valued. Support should be based on concrete and useful situations: knowing how to view medical results online, chat with grandchildren via a videoconferencing app, spotting an email scam, or using a GPS device on your phone.

The format should be simple, repetitive, and illustrated. The use of visual aids, reminder cards with pictograms, and real-life scenarios facilitate understanding. Working in pairs with younger people or other more advanced seniors can strengthen the dynamic of mutual support and give new meaning to learning.

Digital support for older adults isn't just about imparting technical know-how; it's also about restoring a form of autonomy, reviving self-confidence, and reconnecting with today's world.
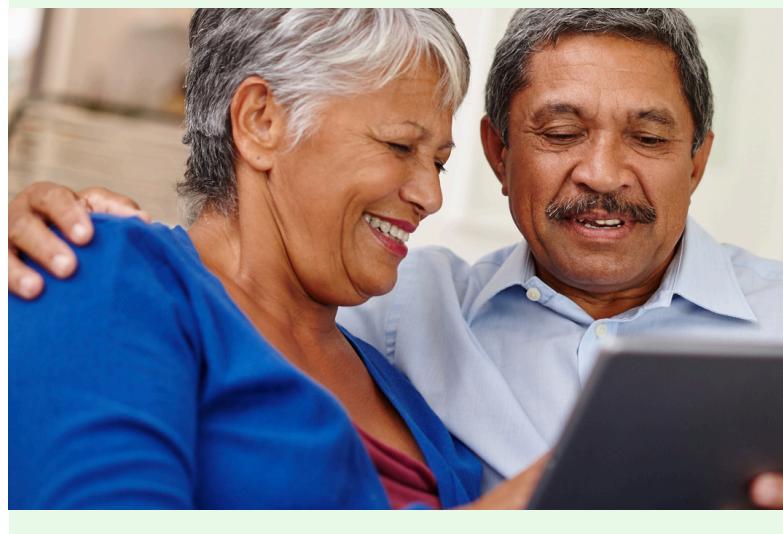
SPECIFICITIES TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT

- **Diverse profiles:** Some seniors already navigate on a tablet, others have never used a mouse. The starting point varies enormously.
- **Relationship with time:** Learning requires slowness, repetition, and, above all, concrete action. Going too fast risks losing motivation.
- **Low digital self-esteem:** Many feel they are "too old to learn" or "not cut out for it." It's necessary to constantly reassure and recognize each progress.
- **Overwhelmed by technology and jargon:** Terms like "browser," "application," or "cloud" are often confusing. The language must be simplified, visual, and even gestural.
- **Social and emotional isolation:** Some also come for the human connection. The workshop becomes a place for sociability, as much as a place for learning.
- **Listening and adaptation:** Workshops must be based on their real needs: calling a loved one by video, avoiding scams, managing a medical file. It is these uses that give meaning to learning.