

Older adults learning to use digital technology: A case study approach



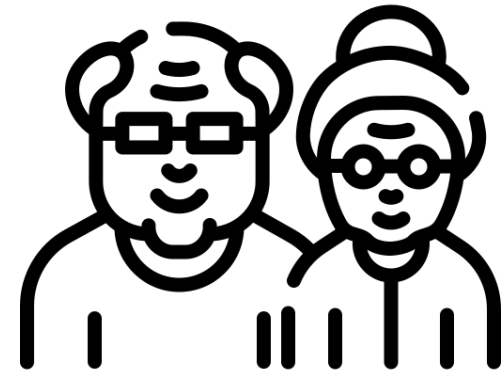
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On going research...



Introduction

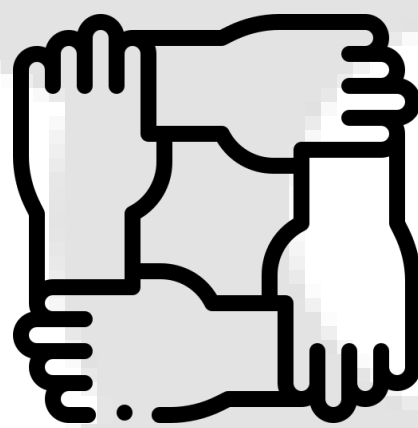
Older people are the largest group of individuals who are more likely to experience **digital inequalities** (Lloyds Bank, 2021; Ofcom, 2021).



Older adults get **support and influence from family members** but reported issues are highlighted (Luijkx et al., 2015; Portz et al., 2019; Tsai et al., 2015).



Community programmes to support older adults using technology have been explored (e.g., Czaja et al., 2012).



Collaborating Partner

Surrey Coalition of Disabled People (SCoDP)

Reducing barriers to living as full and equal members of the community



The **Tech to Community Connect (TtCC)** project provides digital devices, technology support and virtual groups to help reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation in people with care and support needs across Surrey

What has excited the Collaboration?

- **benefits for both** the collaborating partner and the **wider population**
- Working with the voluntary sector
- **Supporting the local community** throughout the research
- Collaboration provides a **different and innovative perspective** for the academic study of technology and older adults
- Better understanding of the project and **creating guidance** for how best to support older adults with technology

Aims

- To **understand the process** by which older adults **learn to and/or want to use digital technology** or **increase their digital skills** using community services
- to **understand why** older adults **reach out for assistance** with using digital technology



Methods

The **lead researcher**, Ayse Aslan, **volunteers** for the Tech to Community Connect project as a **Tech Angel** where she uses her role as a participant observer to conduct the research.

- **Longitudinal Participant Observation**
- **Recruitment promoted through SCoDP**
- **Data collected through Tech Angel Support Sessions**

Tech to Community Connect: The Journey

Volunteers become **Tech Angels** and Individuals (**Tech members**) are referred to the TtCC project



Tech members are **matched** with Tech Angels



Tech Angel **Support Sessions** are **organised**

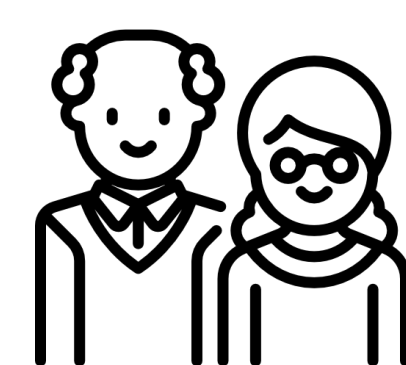
Goals or issues are **established and worked through** during the Tech Angel Support Sessions



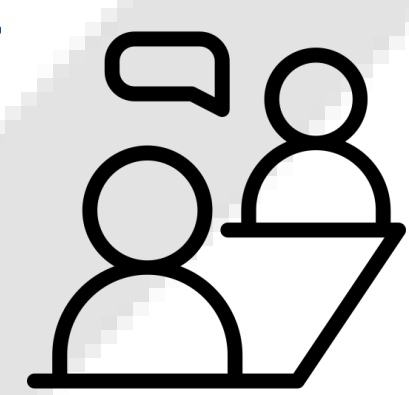
Tech Members are **'discharged'** from the project



Achievements so far...



- Provided **Tech support to several older adults** and helped them increase their digital skills over the past 12 months (6 months of active data collection)
- Recruited **5 participants** for my research project
- Lots of **fieldnotes** and **two interviews**



Reflecting on Collaboration

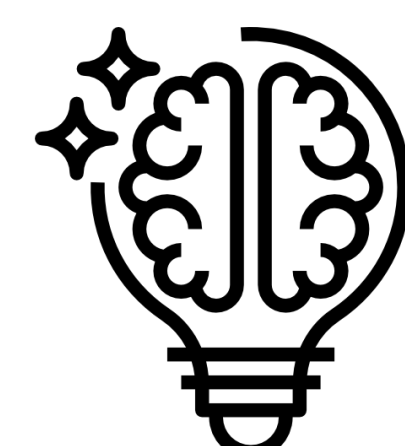
Positive yet challenging



Innovative approach



Providing real life support to the local community



Building networks and trusting relationships