

**Guidelines
for a »Social Web Skills« Training**





These Guidelines have been developed jointly during the GRUNDTVIG Learning partnership “Social Web Skills for elder people” by the three partners:



INTEGRA Human Development Institute, Velenje, Slovenia (project co-ordinator)



Gemeinsam leben und lernen in Europa e.V., Passau, Germany



AHAPunkt, Institut f. Erlebnistraining & Projektconsulting, Vienna, Austria



This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

© 2012 INTEGRA, Inštitut za razvoj človeških virov, Velenje, Slovenia



Table of contents

1.	Introduction.....	4
2.	Background.....	5
2.1	Digital Literacy for seniors living in a digital culture	5
2.2	Teaching older people ICT skills	5
2.3	Learning styles	6
2.4	Raising the interest	6
3.	How to find young tutors.....	7
4.	Preparatory course for the young tutors.....	8
5.	How to find senior participants	10
6.	Motivation for seniors	11
7.	Introductory lesson for seniors	12
8.	Training modules of social Web 2.0 applications	13
8.1	Internet Information pages and platforms	14
8.2	Newsletter.....	15
8.3	Blogs.....	16
8.4	Forums	17
8.5	Buying and booking online.....	18
8.6	Upload and view images	19
8.7	Watch and upload and videos.....	20
8.8	Text chatting	21
8.9	Skype (or other video communication).....	22
8.10	Social networks: Facebook, Twitter	23
9.	Learning concepts.....	24
9.1	Activity-based learning concept: The Buddy-System	24
8.2	Linking old to new – Web 2.0 and cooking recipes.....	25
10.	Conclusion & Outlook	26



1. Introduction

The European Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations 2012 especially calls upon communities to nurture the coexistence between generations which form the foundations of both our present and future. And it is in this context of changing society and newly formed multi-social and diverse environment that the project "Social Web Skills for Elder People" came into being. In the last decades, the world has changed in many different ways; its values have changed and interpersonal relations have changed as well.

Due to demographic changes and thereto related changes the issue of ageing and new agreements between generations has become one of the most public issues of European civil initiatives. Speaking of social demographic changes one cannot overlook the fact they are the reason for the society and its values to change. Longevity and the high share of elderly population on the one hand, and an increasingly negative attitude towards ageing on the other hand have been steering the requirements of civil society, especially in the direction of searching for more constructive models of coexistence between generations.

The main component of these social changes has been empathy which has transformed the cooperation between generations into a venue of bringing about new global culture whose quest is about seeing life through someone else's eyes. An important element of this quest is language – the quest which makes it possible to find a new dimension of communicating with others. And it is exactly at this point where the integration between generations finds itself at the moment – in the quest for mutual archetypal symbols which would bring us closer to one another. If we want to become an evolutionary community, we have to change by bearing in mind that we are social human beings who need each other in order to evolve and "build".

Consequently, in the next decade the structure of life has to be modified. Experience, wisdom and especially the exchange between generations has to be "rehabilitated". Due to all the changes we are a subject of until today; the future generations will probably develop their own rituals and concepts as well as their own priorities. These will, undoubtedly, be very different from the ones we are familiar with today.

The European doctrine of life-long learning and diversity mainstreaming joined three member states (Germany, Austria and Slovenia) in the framework of the mobility project entitled "Social Web Skills for Elder People", which for a year and a half weaved a network of integration and exchange of knowledge between generations. Undoubtedly, all those involved acquired knowledge that can be of further use. However, during the talks in the closing phase of the project, the social component was brought forward which Hans Peter Weska, project's active participant and member of the German partner, summarized with the following words: *"The most important outcomes of the cooperation between different generations are unquestionably those in the field of social skills – mutual understanding, empathy, communication and a joint venue we all help to co-create. We, the elderly have become confident in acquiring new – especially for younger generations so simple – computer skills. Together we created this special venue where this social exchange – through daily news, ability to solve problems, searching for joint interests and shared stories – has become an excellent tool of integration and mutual learning."*

Let this experience be the basis for the project on its further path of bringing different generations together!



2. Background

2.1 Digital Literacy for seniors living in a digital culture

Digital literacy is considered nowadays one of the essential skills to allow citizens to effectively exercise full citizenship.

The term “digital literacy” refers to the concept of “literacy” (reading and writing). The expression suggests that the abilities required to use the new technologies are similar – to some extent – to those required for reading and writing. At the same time, the term “digital” brings us closer to the core of ICT: that is, its binary and information-related nature.

Related to the concept of digital literacy, and particularly significant for elderly, is the concept of “digital divide”, meant as the gap between those who have access to and use the potentialities of ICT for their own achievements, and those who are not in a position to access or use these potentialities.

2.2 Teaching older people ICT skills

Whenever we want to teach older people, the pedagogical approaches should make use of their life experience. We must search ways to identify, acknowledge, value, use, share and build on this experience for the benefit of both individuals and groups of older learners. Successful learning for older people is informal, social and fun. Strict direction and formal evaluation should be avoided to make the feeling relaxed and thereby the situation not scary for participants.

All human beings have a natural propensity to learn; the role of the teacher or facilitator is to facilitate such learning. This includes:

- setting a positive climate for learning,
- clarifying the purposes of the learner(s),
- organizing and making learning resources available,
- balancing intellectual and emotional components of learning, and
- sharing feelings and thoughts with learners.

While teaching seniors ICT skills, it is important:

- to introduce topics to learners without covering them completely nor in too much detail;
- to introduce only simple cases and examples at first;

Seniors’ learning will be deeper if they associate a new concept to their existing knowledge and experience. Therefore it must be linked to experiences that the seniors have already. This can be achieved through a variety of mechanisms, e.g. lectures, exercises, discussions, etc. When introducing the concept, it helps to ask questions related to their own experiences in the area, e.g. "how do you ...?" "What if...?". Giving them a glossary of terms related to the new concept provides extra support, and linking entries to past experiences is



particularly helpful and supportive. After working on exemplary problems in groups, seniors can be encouraged to discuss their findings by relating them to their previous experiences.

2.3 Learning styles

Adult learners can be divided into three categories:

- “Learning oriented” learners pursue learning for its own sake. They are characterized by a seemingly insatiable curiosity and are avid readers who are engaged in lifelong learning.
- “Activity oriented” learners take part in adult education for reasons not related to learning a subject or improving a skill. These learners are interested mainly in the social aspect of the learning environment, such as making new friends, escaping boredom or carrying on a family tradition.
- “Goal oriented” learners participate in order to be able to do something better or to reach specific objectives.

In ICT courses, usually most learners belong to the last category as they are determined to get skills, which they can actively use.

2.4 Raising the interest

It is very important to raise the awareness of older people about the possibilities and benefits the internet can bring for them by various means so that their motivation to engage in learning would increase and that the learning experience would further facilitate their motivation to continue as active users of internet resources.

In our selection of contents, we have learned from the experience of those elderly people who have already found their motivation to become regular Internet users. We found out that regular Internet users most frequently use Internet for communication and for searching information about various topics. On-line banking and shopping are connected with bigger risks and are not yet very popular in many countries.

Thus, first of all it should be even more widely promoted to the older people how easy, fun and cheap it is to communicate with family and friends, but also to find new friends using Internet (e-mailing, having on-line calls, sending or uploading photos, participating in various on-line communities and forums, etc). Showing the Internet as a convenient and readily available source of all kind of information about the topics relevant for elderly people like health, local events, timetables, news, medical care, etc. can be also considered a very important motivator. Finally, it is very important to demonstrate to the older people that on-line services like booking, shopping, banking, etc., which need sharing delicate personal data like ID-numbers, credit card details, etc., can be trusted and are not too complicated to use but, on the contrary, can make their life much easier and many interesting or useful things more accessible



3. How to find young tutors

There are two problems in recruiting young tutors: First, the question is how to find some young people – preferably on a voluntary basis – who are willing and able to show older people the Web 2.0. The second problem is to make sure that they transfer their knowledge in a way that is understood by the seniors.

Which are the places where you can inform potential young tutors about their prospective job?

- schools (professional schools, vocational schools, regular schools)
- social media
- colleges of higher education, universities (e. g. via service institutions like internship mediation)
- information centre for youths
- youth clubs
- societies with youth organisations and with youths as members, like sports clubs)
- students residential homes
- educational institutions which offer courses for youths
- voluntary services

It has proved to be helpful if you prepare attractive information materials (e.g. a flyer) about your planned activities, in order to show the future tutors the framework of your “project”, so that they can take something with them and show or discuss it with their families and friends before they decide to work with you.

You should try to find more than one person, for several reasons:

- not each of them might be “didactically fit”. They cannot understand that senior learners require a much slower approach in explaining the computer world. We will explain this in more detail further below in the following Chapter “Preparatory course for the young tutors”
- not each of them might have time to act as tutor at a certain date
- some might lose interest after their first encounter with their senior learners

The suitable tutors for the target group are people between 16 and 24 years old. They bring advanced IT knowledge with them that means they are well trained in using the IT-System and the necessary software programs. They are best skilled in Social Media as well as human social competences.

In detail that means:

IT- Section:

- Facebook (cause of risks, to establish an own profile, to poste information and activities, to chat, invite friends etc.)
- To compose and deal with an own blog
- Skype (establish an own profile, invite friends, how to install a contact-talk or a group conference, how to create a videoconference)
- Other communication platforms
- Knowledge of interesting websites (e.g. Wikipedia, travel-sites, translation pages, senior meeting points etc.)



Social Competences

- Empathy (that means to adapt oneself to people who are more or less afraid of computer and social media, to understand their fears and reservations)
- Patience in explaining, use simple explanations, repeat things in multiple ways
- Motivation; encourage people in case of impatience and difficulties in understanding. Make sure to create curiosity and show passion for the interesting aspects and advantages in the field of Social Media
- Appreciation and respect for the Learners (in the way of “you are ok and I am ok”)
- Show interest for being keen on knowledge transfer (like positive facial expression)
- Demonstrate openness for experience

4. Preparatory course for the young tutors

We found out that it is very important to have a preparatory seminar for the young tutors beforehand to introduce them to the seniors’ world and way of thinking, as it differs a lot from their own. For this reason you should find an active senior to hold this lecture.

It is important that the tutors put themselves in the position of the senior citizens, try to see things from their perspective, and put themselves in their shoes. As an introduction, the senior could give them an insight of seniors’ way of thinking, their backgrounds and limits (“At your age I ...”, “When I had a problem I always talked to ...”, “We didn’t have...”)

We also have some additional advice for young tutors to create a positive atmosphere and to make the training a success:

- speak slowly and have a clear pronunciation
- speak up so that everybody can hear you
- don’t use English words and explain words that are self-evident to you (for example desktop, mouse, links, down- and upload, browser ...)
- make presentations short, use big letters and lots of explanatory pictures
- be aware about your appearance, if you look too “extreme” you create unnecessary barriers and cause prejudices
- be prepared for potential prejudices, fears and insecurities
- be aware that the learning process and their reaction are usually slower than yours
- be patient
- be prepared to explain things in various ways and many times
- respect them and treat them as equal, as a lot of times younger people patronize them and give them the feeling of being too old for ICT
- give seniors the opportunity to share their knowledge, expertise and experiences
- seniors’ approach is usually different than yours, they usually are scared to try things out on their own and just try it out



- create an atmosphere and attitude that seniors have no fears and are not embarrassed to ask “simple” questions
- inspire the elderly and encourage them to try things out
- don’t overwhelm the seniors with information and services available
- be aware of the fact, that the Internet is something normal in the life of young people, but it is usually a new, complicated, confusing world for seniors

Address the fears and worries of the seniors and take them seriously and explain how to avoid them. Here is a list of the most common worries:

- they are scared to “break” and destroy things, if they hit the wrong keys
- “strange” windows and questions (in English) suddenly appear and demanding answers they don’t understand (e.g. new updates, advertisement, scanning of the virus program)
- they don’t want to show that they don’t understand “simple” things and are ashamed to ask
- if the desktop doesn’t look the same as the last time, they are confused and don’t know what to do
- they are very protective about their personal data and are afraid of misuse
- they are afraid they might lose money, by ordering something accidentally/ unwillingly or someone abusing their accounts
- they are afraid of being left alone and having no one to ask, if problems occur
- they might have no confidence in their learning abilities, and think they might not understand ICT

The whole session should be fun and interactive. So as a tutor you should be flexible in your teaching methods and the session shouldn’t be teacher-centred but interactive and lively. Always adapt the session to the needs and interests of your participants.

But it is not only important to train the tutors to work with the seniors, but also to show them the benefits of working with seniors. Through this project they will

- experience how to teach
- improve their presentation, communication and social skills
- learn how to take responsibility
- gain the experience, that they and their skills are needed and appreciated
- get a reference for their CV and improve their employability
- fight prejudices about their own generation
- find new friends/ grandparents and get new connections/ networks
- improve their personal relationships within their own family
- learn and profit from the seniors (for example learn the different meaning of being a “friend”, data protection, personal experiences etc.)
- improve the intergenerational cooperation



5. How to find senior participants

Which are the places where you can inform potential senior learners about a new possibility to learn something about web 2.0?

- homes for seniors
- agencies for seniors, commissioners and advisory councils of senior citizens
- senior citizens associations and clubs
- adult education centres
- publication in “networks for senior citizens“
- church networks
- visiting and nursing services (welfare institutions)
- nursing staff
- doctors, family doctors and medical practices
- magazines that are read by older people
- family members
- press and public relations, mainly in local and regional media

Make sure that you get the permission to leave your flyers and information material in these places.

You should be aware that while distributing your leaflets, you might be asked questions, e.g. “I am interested, but I am afraid. Is this course right for me?” “How much computer skills do I need?” The information material should give sufficient answer to such questions.

The objective of this training is NOT to deliver a basic computer training. Therefore, participants must already have some computer skills. If not, advise them where they can get this basic training (training providers, tutors, communal programmes etc.), and tell them to come back to you after they have acquired these skills.

Your participants need an existing email account. If they don't have one, they will arrange this in one of the first training modules.



6. Motivation for seniors

There is a variety of motivational reasons for seniors to become acquainted Web 2.0 applications. Here are some of the most striking reasons that we have collected in the interviews with our participants:

- interest in new inventions and machines
- curiosity and more free time after retirement
- communication with children, other family members or friends abroad communication with children, other family members or friends I cannot visit so often
- presentation of their own products (stories, pictures, products)
- buying (books) and selling (e Bay)
- forced by circumstances (left a widow or widower)
- tragic experience – car accident, etc. - need of sharing with people with similar story
- post-production of digital pictures, scanning of pictures
- looking for new friends
- substitute for TV, radio or newspaper – news and newest gossip
- information about hobbies – discussion boards, clubs, groups of interest, etc.
- looking for a new partner on-line
- looking for everyday practical information (train departure, menu in ones favourite restaurant, etc.)
- medical interest – doctors, alternative medicine, health care webpages, etc.
- professional interest – research
- proving to myself that I am not so old and useless yet
- contact with people who live far away or cannot see each other
- experience of mastering computer makes the users experience self-efficacy and self-confidence and brings a new “kick into life”

Of course, they have also expressed concern about weaknesses:

- The software is still not intuitively manageable
- Sometimes it is in English and seniors don't know if it is possible to get a version in their language and how to do so.
- Clear guidelines with translation of the most common ICT abbreviation is missing or not easily available
- At some places there are still not enough competent and motivated trainers
- Many people don't know about the computer courses – they have been advertised in small groups
- Not all of the courses are for free
- Loss of motivation after the first unsuccessful try
- Experience of embarrassment in front of other course participants
- Internet as an anonymous space can be a source of frustration and negative experience (rude people)

We will show in the next chapter how the tutor can build on their motivation and help to overcome the fears and insecurities some learners have.



7. Introductory lesson for seniors

In the first session with the seniors you'll have to create an atmosphere of trust and joy. So start with introduction games to get to know each other. Then find out about the expectations, needs, interests and personal background of seniors to use this information in your future sessions.

Many older adults are reluctant to use the internet because of the risks they associate with the web. While you want to help them to overcome these fears, you should take these fears seriously and maintain some level of apprehension even if some fears might seem unjustified to you. Anyway, caution while being online is a healthy approach for all users, regardless of their age.

You have to prepare yourself for explaining how to avoid most risks. Your tips will both reduce fear and build respect for online safety. One powerful way of demonstrating that the internet is not dangerous per se is to give seniors a »voice« who use the internet already.

The most frequent fears are that providing a lot of personal information can be used for identity theft, that the computer becomes infected with viruses and that financial losses may appear through unauthorized money transfer from one's bank account or through mobile phone services. In chapter 4, you will find a list with the most frequent fears that we have encountered during our pilot workshops and courses.

The participants have to realize that in the virtual world there are bad things just like in real life. But as in real life, there are simple measures to avoid these risks, and by following your tips, they will be able to remain online safely.

You will also find information about safety aspects concerning certain Web 2.0 applications under their description in chapter 8.

Your initial training session could start with a »teaser«, such as entertaining videos and online pictures showing seniors using the internet. After that, you should give your participants an overview of the different services/products of Web 2.0 technology (see the short and simple introductions in chapter 8). While giving them this overview, make sure you'll meet the interests, expectations and level of understanding of the seniors.

There are two ways we recommend:

- a) choose one topic theme for the whole course, such as cooking, traveling, literature and explain each service/product with the help of this theme (e.g. information website about cooking, watching YouTube videos about cooking, reading cooking blogs, searching recipes ...)
- b) for each service/ product use examples, that are explicitly targeted at seniors, e.g. web portals for seniors, videos or blogs produced by seniors, online shops for seniors

Don't forget:

The social web training should be fun for the tutors and the seniors!



8. Training modules of social Web 2.0 applications

The following chapter deals with ten frequent and well-known Web 2.0 applications that we consider as useful also for the older generation. Each application can be taught in a separate module.

Each module contains a short introduction that explains why we find it useful to be included in these Guidelines, and a description that shows how the young tutor should explain the respective web 2.0 application to senior learners. These descriptions have been elaborated during the workshops by senior learners. As we have stated already further above, the tutor should avoid complicated and technologically oriented descriptions and underline the personal benefit that one can draw by using this application.

- Info platforms (1) and newsletters (2): The first two modules concern applications where the learner can remain rather passive. Here they should get more acquainted with internet search methods (especially Google)
- Blogs (3): they can also be considered as field for passive consumption, but they can also motivate learners to try it out by themselves.
- Forums (4): After having become familiar with information pages and blogs, we will show our learners that much information about a required theme can also be found in forums.
- Online-shopping (5): Once our senior learners are already acquainted with internet applications, it is time to show them how to buy things through the internet. However, we should also make our learners aware of the possible dangers of online-shopping.
- Pictures (6) and videos (7): Many relatives of older people do not live in their immediate neighbourhood, and grand-children usually do not bother to send pictures via mail to their older relatives.
- Text chatting (8): This is important for anyone who wants to engage himself/herself in dialogues in a certain area such as culture, or politics, but also in a field that should not be neglected: the search for partners.
- Skype (9) and Facebook (10): These are currently the “king’s disciplines” in the social web and deserve special attention. Skype can be used for making phone calls and chatting and Facebook is a social network that combines a lot of features: writing messages, chatting, uploading pictures and sharing information.



8.1 Internet Information pages and platforms

Why should it be taught?

In principle, information pages provide general information for all conceivable areas of life. There is an extensive offer for the generation over 50, but sometimes they do not want to be considered a separate group. However, each learner probably has one (or more!) areas of interest where we can show him/her how much information about this theme can be found.

The quantity of information available on the Internet can also lead to disorientation and confusion of the user. The vast information overload makes it difficult to get an overview and the information filtering is complicated by the complexity. The users must decide for themselves which information is useless or irrelevant. Therefore it is important to know how to obtain the desired information. The complicated structure and hypertext links may also act as a deterrent and lead the user astray. In addition, advertising banners come with a direct request to click, which are sometimes hard to distinguish from site content. It requires patience and time to get a feel for navigating through the Internet. Learners must become aware that nothing can happen by clicking and surfing through the Internet!

If you show search engines in the web, you will inevitably present Google. You might show your participants that Google offers everything from operating systems (for mobile phones, laptops and personal computers), software applications (Chrome, Picasa ...) to the devices that facilitate our activities (search engine, translator, maps ...) and connects us with other products (Gmail, Google Chat + technology). As a safety measure, you can show participants how to disable the searching history (www.google.com/history) and disable that history is stored and used for positional advertising.

You should also demonstrate that not all information is true and reviewed. Although Wikipedia claims that their content is being reviewed and always checked for assessing the authenticity of posts, it is not always a reliable source and should only be used to gain a first impression. You might also show the different quality of contributions in the various languages.

After the seminar the participants will have developed search strategies to use search engines efficiently. Gradually, they can discover their own continuing education and media literacy.

Practical exercise

Participants should familiarize themselves, depending on their interests, with certain platforms and explain them after fifteen minutes to a partner who does not yet know this page. The tutor acts as an expert and explains where and what the learner has found.

New pages should be found through search engines. The objective is that participants will develop research strategies to use search engines effectively. Moreover, they should be able to tell useful information from useless information.



8.2 Newsletter

Why should it be taught?

Newsletters can be helpful because they summarize selected information about a topic and are sent to interested persons who are subscribed by email. The contents of newsletters that one consciously chooses to one's interests and hobbies are mostly quite relevant.

Subscription of a newsletter requires one's email address, then the newsletter is sent automatically. Often the name is optional, otherwise no further personal data is necessary. It is also possible to unsubscribe the newsletter at any time, because at the end of each email there is an option "unsubscribe newsletter"

One should not order too many different newsletters, because that could lead to confusion in one's own email inbox

Practical exercise

After the participants have opted for a newsletter of their interest, they subscribe to a newsletter. The newsletter is then opened, read and then you can explain how to unsubscribe again.



8.3 Blogs

Why should it be taught?

The learners can still remain rather passive by just reading a blog, but they can also be motivated to try it out by themselves. After visiting several blogs, our learners will notice that the threshold to create one's own blog is not too high.

Blogs (by weB log = electronic logbook) are a form of publicly-run online diaries with a high entertainment value. The web-logger, or blogger, writes notes or thoughts. Basically, anyone can create a blog about him/herself and talk about him or herself and his/her everyday life. It is also possible to share experiences from abroad or traveling. In this way, the blogger's own creativity is expressed and the blog is a way to introduce them to the public. Through these new development opportunities (e.g. in form of poems, stories, drawings), one can learn a lot about one's personality, and perhaps even discover hidden journalistic skills in oneself.

A blog is also a good medium when, for example, a grandchild spends a year abroad and reports in a blog about his/her experiences and events. Thus, friends and family are constantly informed and provided with the most current information and pictures. However, regular maintenance and updating is necessary. There is the possibility of setting an automatic notification to be sent via email whenever a new entry is made.

Some people tend to publish (too) much about their private life, but this is ultimately their own decision.

Practical Exercise

Participants select a topic and then browse the various blogs. The task of this exercise is to obtain as much information as possible about the author.



8.4 Forums

Why should it be taught?

After having become familiar with information pages and blogs, we will show our learners that much information about a required theme can also be found in forums.

A forum is a virtual space for exchanging and archiving thoughts, opinions and experiences. Different themes and issues can be discussed. The registered users of the forum are trying to find answers to questions and sometimes develop common solutions. The communication in forums does not happen in real time, in contrast to the synchronous chat rooms, as the comments are entered in different time intervals and may drag on a discussion over a long period of time can. Not all the users are online at the same time.

Most of the forums are structured the same way (main topics and subtopics). Discussion contributions (postings) are posted by a person and can be read and replied by others. Several posts of the same subject are called thread or topic. By opening a new thread, a new topic can be opened for discussion.

Forums are essentially similar to a "bulletin board". A message is left that can be read by all participants and answered later. Forums allow the exchange of views with different people from different regions or countries. It is possible to gain new viewpoints, perspectives and to understand how views are influenced by cultural background and personal space. As the discussion is most of the time anonymous, it might be easier for some people to ask difficult questions and discuss topics that are not easily discussed in person.

It is not necessary to actively post a question. One can also enter a query in Google. The answer will automatically propose various sites and forums that address this or other similar questions.

Practical Exercise

Participants select a forum, register, post a question or comment on existing issues and stimulate discussion.

Is it possible to receive a satisfactory answer to one's own question by typing it into Google and finding a forum?



8.5 Buying and booking online

Why should it be taught?

Internet shoppers can make purchases from their home, which is a great advantage if one has a limited mobility. However, it is important to show how such orders work and which precautions are necessary in order to take away the fears older people might have by ordering something in the anonymous world of the internet.

Nowadays, everything is available on the Internet. The Internet has become a virtual marketplace that offers everything, e.g. food, furniture, clothing, electronics, books, etc. One can get detailed information about each product and compare prices. Sometimes, ordering online can be cheaper than buying things in the store.

In addition, many online stores also offer product and customer satisfaction reviews. This in turn creates confidence on the part of the customer if he recognizes the satisfaction of others. The viewed products are stored, so that later automatically generated product suggestions ("You might also be interested in") are made. When booking online, usually a credit card and the disclosure of banking information are necessary. Payment by invoice is also possible. The safety standards are now so high that hardly any misuse of data is possible. One should also consult the terms and conditions and read the fine print carefully. One should look for the check mark "Newsletter" if it is set and uncheck it if one does not want to receive this. But even if one receives a newsletter accidentally, a later cancellation is possible.

On travel portals, participants can search for specific travel reports, and get an idea of the respective destination and read additional reviews before booking. The opinion of those who were already there can be helpful and lead to a different decision. In this respect, the Internet is a modern, digital travel guide.

Practical exercises

- Look for the following products on Amazon: a book, a CD, a household item
- Read reviews (ratings)
- Compare Prices: select a product and carry out as many purchase steps as possible (note that most of the time an e-mail address is required)
- Travel plans: Participants search on the internet hotels, guest houses that they have already visited in reality and read reviews. In a second step, they plan an imaginary trip: they select a flight look at the official tourism site and search for potential hotels



8.6 Upload and view images

Why should it be taught?

Many relatives of older people do not live in their immediate neighbourhood, and grand-children usually do not bother to send pictures via mail to their older relatives. If the older person knows how to access virtual photo albums, however, they might receive a large quantity of electronic pictures that they would never receive otherwise. This way, they can be part of the other person's life.

Flickr and Picasa photo albums are public, where one's own photos and videos can be uploaded and commented on.

It is particularly useful that a high number of images can be viewed online, which can be interesting for example for distant living relatives.

Practical exercise

If the participants are interested, and if already an account for Google is available, public photo albums can be viewed or the participants' own photos can be uploaded.



8.7 Watch and upload and videos

Why should it be taught?

It is possible to watch many online-movies, news videos and video clips. Also music videos and concert videos are available online.

The largest portal for this is YouTube. This platform also facilitates the upload of one's own videos. Also, public broadcasters (RAI, BBC, ARD...) offer online videos to most of their contributions. These are sorted by topic and by date. Most of them are available only a short time, mostly one week.

Practical exercise:

Find on YouTube videos about a specific topic (e.g. interview with a favourite star, politician etc.)



8.8 Text chatting

Why should it be taught?

To know the basics about this application is important for anyone who wants to engage himself/herself in dialogues in a certain area such as culture, or politics, but also in a field that should not be neglected: the search for partners.

People of all age groups, but especially older people are using this medium, and therefore we find it necessary to show how it works, and to give advice what to do and what to avoid.

Chatting is a free electronic communication in real time. In contrast to a forum, participants have to be simultaneously connected to the Internet to get in touch with each other.

Chats are usually anonymous; the connection is made with a nickname (a name you choose for yourself), so that the threshold for strangers to get into contact with each other is significantly lower.

However, the written communication can also lead to misunderstandings easily. So one should pay particular attention to what they are writing. Under certain circumstances, an intended irony may remain hidden, and more explanations are necessary. Also, jokes are more difficult to communicate. Thus, it is important to make clear formulations. What was once written and sent, cannot be undone.

Practical exercise

The participants search chat rooms that are about a theme where their group of senior learners feels comfortable. After registration, they join the group and communicate among each other and with the unknown persons.



8.9 Skype (or other video communication)

Why should it be taught?

Many older people live far away from their grandchildren or even abroad. As we mentioned earlier, the younger generation is not very eager to write long letters, so this medium can help to intensify the communication, and also to reduce the costs for long distance telephone calls. Of particular interest is communication with image so that the persons receive simultaneously an impression of the living environment of their counterpart.

Skype helps us to be more connected with others. You can communicate with others for free by using headphones and a microphone, no matter in which country they are located. It is also possible to chat. It also allows conference calls, share files, pictures and applications and it can be installed on mobile phones.

Skype works basically like a telephone with an image when a camera is installed on the computer. Therefore, this type of communication is not anonymous, and in most cases, the interlocutors know each other personally. Don't accept contacts, you don't know, and do not accept any files if you are not a 100% sure that they are safe.

Practice exercise

Participants register in Skype and conduct a text chat, a voice chat and a video chat either with members of their family or with another participant of the group. It is important to explain what the participants need at home to successfully skype with someone else (headphones, camera, microphone).



8.10 Social networks: Facebook, Twitter

Why should it be taught?

Social networks are especially helpful if there is a desire to contact old friends or friends that have been out of sight for a long time. At the same time one can also get in touch with other unknown persons and make new friends.

But social networks are also an excellent way to intensify the link between grand-parents and grand-children who find it “cool” to have a grandmother whom they can contact on Facebook.

Facebook as a dominant social network enables us to keep in touch with colleagues, friends and family and it allows following your favourite bands, actors, singers, viewing videos, movies.

Facebook combines many features: one can create a profile which contains relevant information about oneself, pictures and videos can be uploaded, text messages can be sent, one can chat with friends and comment on other statuses, links, pictures etc. It is important so show the basic functions of facebook without overwhelming the learners. They should be aware of the fact that they decide what they want to share and what not.

How to avoid the risks of social networks?

When it comes to sharing information with others one of the most important questions is: what kind of private information do I share with others and how will it affect their perception of me? Of course, it is good to be open and direct but it is important to be aware that this information is always kept somewhere and might affect us. On Facebook you can always delete or change the settings for some or all posts. These settings affect the visibility of the messages. Through Facebook everybody can get our pictures and use them for a malicious purpose. Therefore, it is advisable to think twice before uploading something.

On the other hand, it is important to know that information about us can also be provided by our friends, too. It is important to have as much control over the publication of our friends and always communicate via private message. You should respect others by not uploading pictures of your friends if they do not want it.

Of course there is also a button: log post / picture or video clip, where we follow the instructions for forwarding complaints Facebook team. Other insults can be removed or log to team. In the worst case, you can temporarily remove your FB profile.

Practical exercises

- Register at Facebook
- Create a profile
- Look for people to write, make friends and answer requests from news and commentary
- Upload pictures
- Insert images, videos and links
- Get to know and understand privacy settings

9. Learning concepts

During the pilot phase, the partners organised several workshops and training events in Austria, Germany and in Slovenia. We found out that the two following approaches were helpful and lead to successful results:

9.1 Activity-based learning concept: The Buddy-System

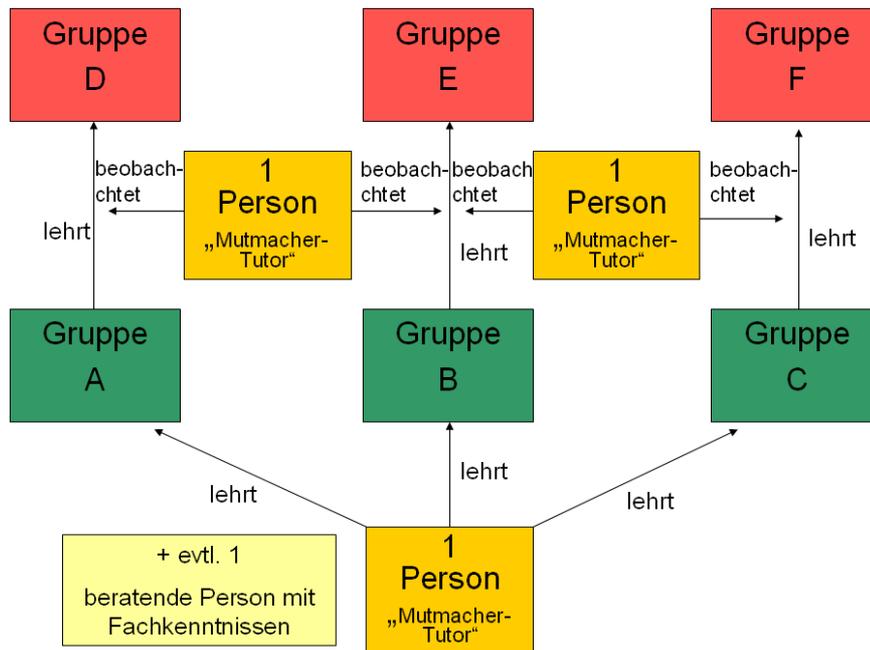
This is a holistic learning concept in which one person teaches smaller groups social web skills. The groups test their skills immediately by teaching another group. The tutor takes part in this step, observes and coordinates it. The relationship between tutor and study group is at a “buddy-level” which means that both parties work together, listen to each other and help each other with problems. Through this close and friendly contact between tutor and study group, the group learns more quickly how to use the internet.

The groups are divided in various practice areas, e. g.:

Group A: Facebook – Social Networks

Group B: surfing the internet (travel planning, recipes, online banking, etc.)

Group C: Blogs – Writing your own magazine



A brief explanation of the layout:

„1 person – inspiring tutor“: young tutor

„Group A, B, C“: relatively small group of senior citizens who confront the theme open-minded

„Group D, E, F“: group of elderly who possibly is more difficult to reach



8.2 Linking old to new – Web 2.0 and cooking recipes

Everybody's, but especially older people's learning is deeper if they associate a new concept to their existing knowledge and experience. Therefore, we have linked our learning concept explicitly to experiences that our participants already have. We achieved this through focusing on a theme in which all participants were highly interested – cooking recipes.

Their interest in collecting and exchanging cooking recipes helped to overcome the fact that learning too many new things often leads to a sense of rejection and then to stress. Therefore, we used an old wrapper to introduce new information. This helped our learners to recognize what they already knew and to make associations between the new information and existing knowledge.

When delivering training for seniors, we considered the following suggestions:

- to be sensitive to declining hearing and related problems for some older learners: help learners move closer to sound sources, use extra voice and media amplification
- to be sensitive to declining vision and related problems for some older learners (allow adequate time for adjustments when going from a light to dark area or vice versa, ensure that lots of light is available, reduce glare or direct sunlight, use high contrast on visuals and hand-out materials)
- to use combined auditory, visual and hands-on presentation modes.

In order to stimulate senior learners' interests and motivation it was important to show them the Web 2.0 learning as a process to reach their goal:

- They started with Google Chrome and Wikipedia and tried to find some interesting information about food they have chosen.
- At home seniors were searching for some old recipes and transformed them into simpler and healthier versions which will also interest a young generation
- Some participants ordered recipe books at Amazon
- For the communication between each other they used Skype, Twitter
- They also used email and sent some photos through it
- They learned how to open their own Facebook page and how to upload the recipes
- They processed photos with Picasa that were subsequently uploaded on Facebook.



10. Conclusion & Outlook

According to the findings of our partnership the following major success factors affected the learning outcomes and satisfaction of the tutors and senior learners:

- the learning contents were very short and well-defined
- there was enough time left for exercises and repetitions
- the atmosphere among tutors and senior learners was open and trustful and allowed to reflect and manage age related barriers
- there was a mutual exchange and transfer of knowledge, experience and skills that made the training not a “one-way” process.

Here are some examples from the feedback questionnaires of our participants:

- *it is a new way of getting to know people and having social contact*
- *I can talk to my children/ grandchildren via Skype*
- *It increases the seniors mobility (especially for immobile seniors)*
- *Easy access to information about everything I am interested in*
- *Information from internet makes my life easier and improves my quality of life*
- *Getting a cheaper price (for example for traveling, books etc.)*
- *A way to learn something new*
- *Via Facebook I know now, what my grandchildren do. We have a better communication now, I understand what they are talking about, we are closer now*
- *I exchange information/pictures/videos with my friends*
- *I don't feel lonely anymore*
- *I am more encouraged to use the many opportunities of the Internet*
- *I found friends I have lost*
- *Now I have people to ask, when I have any problems*
- *I never thought I can do it, but it is not that difficult.*
- *I found friends/ a partner via internet*
- *The barriers between generations fall down*
- *it is a new way of getting to know people and having social contact*

Finally, we want refer to a recent study: “What We Can Learn From 100 Year Olds”: A study of centenarians completed by US United Healthcare in 2010 shows that they are just as active both physically and socially as people half their age. The results show the importance of not only staying physically but also staying socially engaged. The internet can help with this.

- Half of the one hundred 100 years olds stated they exercised daily. 45% report walking as their favourite activity and 40% do exercises to strengthen their muscles. Other activities they enjoy include yoga, tai chi, bike riding, or sports.
- Social engagement as well as physical activity is an important part of centenarians day as 80% speak to friends or family every day, attend a social event and laugh or chuckle at something every day. They



eat healthy meals and sleep eight hours a night as well as participate in activities that keep their minds sharp.

- **Internet usage among 100 year olds has doubled between 2009 and 2010 from 13 to 25%. 56% report using it to share photos, 48% use email, 44% search for information, 4% use online dating sites and 1 in 10 have watched a YouTube video.**
- 12% report listening to music on an iPod or MP3 player and watched a program on a DVR

Demographic trends indicate that that the centenarian population will rise eight fold by 2050. That means that a considerable number of people who are 60 now will reach that age. This is just one more reason to ask seniors engage in Web 2.0 skills now and stay included in the next 40 years!