

Seniorenuniversitetet Uppsala, Sweden

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Easier and more fun to do it digitally

App, SMS, BankID, e-Mail, SVT-play, the web, social media, zoom, Google and internet banking are words we constantly hear. In shops, we can sometimes read signs with the text that they no longer accept cash but credit cards or Swish. Of course, for some what all this stands for and how it works, while others feel more insecure or perhaps completely outside the digital world.

Uppsala Senior University

Uppsala Senior University joins seven other European senior universities in the organization EFOS, European Fededation for Older Students at the Universities in an EU-funded project called SeLiD, Senior's Learning in the Digital Society, whose purpose is to investigate how to reduce seniors' possible exclusion in the digital society. The following article is based on the results of various surveys that have been distributed to USU members on three separate occasions and which are precisely about the members' relationship to the digital world. We will in the future call them *The Letter Survey*¹, *The Circle Survey*² and *The Tuesday Survey*³, respectively,

Why learn more about the digital world?

We who work with the SeLiD project want to show that things can be easier when using different services online. During the ongoing pandemic, the need has also grown compared to before, when, for example, you can no longer pay for a bus ticket on board. Meetings that previously took place physically are now being launched online. Many have discovered that you can order medicine, food and maybe a bottle of wine online.

Easier but also more fun

In the letter survey, many express joy at being able to communicate with children, grandchildren, relatives and friends online. Seeing your loved ones while talking gives something beyond the traditional phone call. Nearly half of the respondents also appreciate that it is so easy to take photos with their mobile phone and then be able to pass the pictures on to others. Almost half of the respondents say they benefit from various digital services and believe that they mean new opportunities for seniors, but more than a third feel anxious or uneasy about the digital development and they feel excluded. We want to help overcome that feeling!

¹ *The letter survey*. A questionnaire together with a stamped reply envelope was sent in October 2020 by post to those USU members who did not have an e-mail address in our member register.

² *The Circle survey*. All teachers and participants in USU's distance learning circles were invited in the autumn of 2020 via e-mail to answer a web-based survey.

³ The so-called *Tuesday questionnaire* was distributed to the participants at one of USU's Tuesday lectures in February 2020. The purpose is to map the needs for education and support. A similar survey was conducted at all senior universities included in the project.

Digital study circles work well even if the social is lacking

The participants in digital study circles in the autumn of 2020 had very limited technical difficulties and in the cases where they occurred, it was mainly at the start of the course. A quarter of the participants perceived the audibility as better compared to in the room, but about as many believe that it is better in the room and half that it is equivalent. About half of the participants believe that dialogue and learning do not differ between digital circle and meetings in the room. Avoiding access to premises is considered important by a third of the participants. On the other hand, a clear majority believes that social cohesion in connection with the circles is important. In a weighted assessment of audibility, dialogue, learning and convenience, two thirds of the participants prefer meetings in the room.⁴

Practical, efficient and entertaining are the three keywords you express in the Tuesday survey

Almost all respondents stated that they had a university education. A large majority stated that they had a so-called smartphone and almost all had access to the Internet at home. The most popular things you could do with your phones, tablets and PC were to google, do banking, communicate with friends and relatives and take photos. 40 percent did not see any obstacles to their computer use. In summary, the respondents from Tuesday's lecture were largely "inside" the Digital Society!

Why important with BankID?

Other things that are highlighted in the surveys are that those who are not in the habit of using e-mail do not have a BankID either. If you do not have a BankID, you are automatically excluded from many services: communicate with healthcare, order goods, book tickets, Swish, Internet banking and more. You also do not like to google but use encyclopedias and thus miss current events, new ways of presenting the answer such as sound and film, which characterizes modern search engines. Identification via BankID means that you can also access many new services via the network offered today. Frequent use of these services provides an ever-increasing skill, which means that you can take advantage of services that you did not know before or that did not yet exist.

Earlier digital experience from working life...

... Is not entirely safe of use. A lot is different. Computer management is simpler now but also much more potent and useful for seniors. In addition, you avoid many discipline-demanding chores. You do not have to keep a book of personal finances, insert pension information, declarations, insurance statements and more in bulky folders. The feeling of discomfort when placing a physical address book or almanac is gone. The monitors become larger and easier to handle for stiff fingers and for blurred vision. You can control a lot with the voice like "Wake me up at 08:15!". More in that way is on the rise. It is just a matter of accepting lifelong learning, which you can enjoy a lot and which compensates for insidious disabilities and limitations. But you need to constantly practice your skill. Knowledge is a moving goal - BUT everything just gets less difficult and easier to use for more and more things!

⁴ See also Member Magazine January 2021, pages 10-11

Exclusion

Some results of the surveys are that some respondents feel a kind of exclusion. We have identified these on a scale from red to green. On the red side are those who, for various reasons, cannot take advantage of the Digital Society's services. But they may be able to get help from more knowledgeable relatives, neighbours or friends whom they can certainly trust when they help over the kitchen table with e-identification or e-mail. Then the situation for those who cannot master a smartphone will be so much better. But it is everyone's own responsibility to start this fairly simple process from exclusion before it's too late.

Where are you?

1. Complete exclusion. Does not have a computer / tablet / smartphone. Does not use the Internet and has no ambitions to do so.

Some exclusion. Have a PC, tablet or smartphone but do not dare to use them for financial transactions.

3. In the border country. Has e-mail that is rarely used and uses internet banking without BankID. Can receive SMS.

4. Inside the Digital Society (DS). Has BankID. Uses email. Can google to some extent. Send and receive SMS / MMS. Has an ambition to learn more in the field.

5. Advances in the DS. Uses BankID for an increasing number of different services. Communicates via email, text message and social media.

6. Full inside the DS. Uses Kivra, My government post. Has BankID. Uses e-commerce of various kinds (can book, order, pay, etc). Have a habit of acquiring new knowledge through various search engines. Has accepted lifelong learning in the field. Masters Casting, Bluetooth, SVT Play, YouTube, government and various organizations' chat functions.

Courses

In April, we will offer a pilot course for some beginners in "smartphone use". Based on that course, we want to acquire knowledge of how to best teach the new technology, without going the detour via conventional personal computers. Here we take help from the organization "SeniorNet". We will return later with results from the evaluation of the course structure and our continued work in the area.

EFOS – When Europe open up

During the pandemic, the SeLiD project has only had digital meetings, but now we hope to be able to conduct them as physical meetings and also in connection with EFOS meetings. As a USU member, you are always welcome to participate in these meetings at your own expense, which usually consists of two days of deliberations and lectures as well as half a day of cultural experiences in the area. Dates have not been set yet, but we are tentatively planning meetings in:

Dresden, Germany (September)

Alicante, Spain (December)

Magdeburg, Germany (March 2022)