



## Briefing

# Facts and figures about digital inclusion and older people

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## Introduction

Digital technology is playing an increasing role in our lives, and for many people, it is essential to the way that they socialise, work, shop, manage their finances, access services, and get entertainment. However, not everyone is online while others only use the internet in limited ways. Although many older people fully embrace the digital world, digital exclusion increases with age. Age UK believes that people should be supported and encouraged to get online, but those who cannot, or do not want to do so should be able to access services and support in a way that suits them. This briefing provides a range of statistics and information about the levels of digital engagement and skills among older people, and the activities they carry out online. Further information about Age UK's work around digital inclusion is given at the end of this briefing.

## Summary of key statistics:

### Internet use

- 29% of people aged 75 & over in the UK, around 1.7m, do not use the internet.
- 9% of people aged 65 to 74, around 0.6m, do not use the internet.
- 18% of people aged 65 & over, around 2.3m, do not use the internet.

### Digital Skills

- 49% of people aged 75 & over in the UK and 29% of people aged 65 to 74, are unable to complete all eight of the tasks required to set someone up for success online.
- 33% of people aged 75 & over in the UK and 13% of people aged 65 to 74 in the UK, do not have the skills required to thrive in a digital society in day-to-day life.
- 37% of people aged 65 & over in the UK are unable to complete all eight of the tasks required to set someone up for success online; with 20% not having the skills required to thrive in a digital society in day-to-day life.

## **Online activities**

- 88% of regular internet users in the UK aged 75 & over and 94% aged 65 to 74 browsed the internet at least once a month.
- 84% of regular internet users in the UK aged 75 & over, and 90% aged 65 to 74 used the internet at least once a month for emails.
- 45% of recent internet users in the UK aged 75 & over and 58% aged 65 to 74 used the internet for online shopping at least once a month.
- 52% of recent internet users in the UK aged 75 & over and 65% aged 65 to 74 used the internet at least once a month for online banking.
- 57% of recent internet users in the UK aged 75 & over and 70% aged 65 to 74 used the internet at least once a month to look at and/or post on social media.
- 19% of recent internet users in the UK aged 75 & over and 33% aged 65 to 74 used the internet at least once a month to stream music or video.
- 28% of recent internet users in the UK aged 75 & over and 32% aged 65 to 74 used the internet at least once a month for gaming.

## **Mobile phone use**

- 67% of people in the UK aged 65 & over and 88% aged 55 to 64 use a smartphone.
- 26% of people in the UK aged 65 & over and 9% aged 55 to 64 use a standard mobile phone.
- 7% of people in the UK aged 65 & over and 3% aged 55 to 64 do not use a mobile phone.

## Prevalence of internet use among older people in the United Kingdom over time<sup>1</sup>:

The proportion of people regularly using the internet has been increasing and yet a considerable number of older people are not internet users or use it rarely. Among people aged 75 & over in the UK, around one in three (2 million) do not use or rarely use the internet, compared to around one in ten (750,000) 65 to 74 year olds and around four percent (380,000) of 55 to 64 year olds.

### *Number of people online (aged 75 & over) in 2021-22:*

- Around three-in-ten (29%) people aged 75 & over in the UK in 2021-22, the equivalent of around 1.7 million, have not used the internet for personal use or has no access to the internet.
- Around 4% of people aged 75 & over in the UK in 2021-22, the equivalent of around 220,000, use the internet less than once a month for personal use.
- Around two-in-three (68%) people aged 75 & over in the UK in 2021-22, the equivalent of around 4.1 million, use the internet at least once a month for personal use.

### *Number of people online (65 to 74 year olds) in 2021-22:*

- Around one in ten (9%) people aged 65 to 74 in the UK in 2021-22, the equivalent of around 620,000, have not used the internet for personal use or has no access to the internet.
- Around 2% of people aged 65 to 74 in the UK in 2021-22, the equivalent of around 125,000, use the internet less than once a month for personal use.
- Around nine in ten (89%) people aged 65 to 74 in the UK in 2021-22, the equivalent of around 5.9 million, use the internet at least once a month for personal use.

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<sup>1</sup>Authors analysis of Understanding Society: Wave 13, 2021-2022. [data collection]. 18th Edition. UK Data Service. SN: 6614, DOI: [10.5255/UKDA-SN-6614-19](https://doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-6614-19). Available via UK Data Service (<https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/>)

### *Number of people aged 65 & over online in 2021-22:*

- Around one in six (18%) people aged 65 & over in the UK in 2021-22, the equivalent of around 2.3 million, have not used the internet for personal use or has no access to the internet.
- Around 3% of people aged 65 & over in the UK in 2021-22, the equivalent of around 330,000, use the internet less than once a month for personal use.
- Around four in five (80%) people aged 65 & over in the UK in 2021-22, the equivalent of around 10.1 million, use the internet at least once a month for personal use.

### *Number of people online (55 to 64 year olds) in 2021-22:*

- Around 3% of people aged 55 to 64 in the UK in 2021-22, the equivalent of around 280,000, have not used the internet for personal use or has no access to the internet.
- Around 1% of people aged 55 to 64 in the UK in 2021-22, the equivalent of around 95,000, use the internet less than once a month for personal use.
- Over nine in ten (96%) people aged 55 to 64 in the UK in 2021-22, the equivalent of around 8.3 million, use the internet at least once a month for personal use.



## Devices used by older people in the United Kingdom who are online<sup>2</sup>:

- At the end of 2023, among people aged 65 & over in the UK who go online:
  - Around three in four (74%) used a smartphone to go online; and for around one in six (17%) this was the only device they used to go online.
  - Around three in five (61%) used a desktop or laptop computer to go online; and for one in seven (14%) this was the only device they used to go online.
  - Around half (49%) used a tablet to go online; and for almost one in ten (8%) this was the only device they used to go online.
- At the end of 2023, among people aged 55 to 64 in the UK who go online:
  - Around nine in ten (91%) used a smartphone to go online; and for around one in five (20%) this was the only device they used to go online.
  - Around three in five (61%) used a desktop or laptop computer to go online; and for 5% this was the only device they used to go online.
  - Almost half (47%) used a tablet to go online; and for around 2% this was the only device they used to go online.

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<sup>2</sup> Ofcom. January 2024. *Adults' Media Literacy Tracker. Adult's Media Literacy Core Survey 2023 Data Tables. Table 33.* [online] Available at <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/data/statistics/statistical-release-calendar-2024#AMLT2023>. Accessed 16<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

## Digital Skills among older people in the United Kingdom<sup>3</sup>:

The Essential Digital Skills (EDS) framework was created in 2018 and has been measured by Lloyds Banking Group, on behalf of the Department for Education, since 2019. In 2022 it was updated to reflect more accurately the current technological landscape and opportunity for digital activities. The EDS framework is made of three components – the Foundation Level, Essential Digital Skills for Life and Essential Digital Skills for Work.

### *The Foundation Level:*

- Around half (49%) of people aged 75 & over in the UK in 2023, around three in ten (29%) aged 65 to 74, and around one in seven (16%) aged 55 to 64, are unable to complete all eight of the tasks required to set someone up for success online.
  
- Among people aged 75 & over in the UK in 2023:
  - around one in four (24%) are unable to turn on the device and enter any account login information as required
  - around one in five (19%) are unable to use the available controls on their device (such as mouse, keyboard, touchscreen, trackpad)
  - around one in four (27%) are unable to use the different settings on my device to make it easier to use (e.g. adjust font size, volume settings, brightness of screen, voice activation or screen readers)
  - around one in three (32%) are unable to find and open different applications/programmes/platforms on their devices (e.g. opening a web browser, messaging applications)
  - almost two in five (38%) are unable to set up a connection to a Wi-Fi network on my devices (e.g. when at home, work, out in public or visiting family and friends)
  - around one in four (24%) are unable to open an Internet browser to find and use websites (e.g. Safari, Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, Microsoft Edge)

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<sup>3</sup> Lloyds Bank. 2023. *2023 Consumer Digital Index. The UK's largest study of digital and financial lives. Essential Digital Skills Data Tables* [online] Available at <https://www.lloydsbank.com/banking-with-us/whats-happening/consumer-digital-index.html>. Accessed 21st February 2024.

- around one in four (24%) are unable to keep their login information and passwords for a device and any accounts secure (e.g. not shared with anyone or written down or left prominently near a device)
  - around one in four (24%) are unable to update and change my password when prompted to do so
- Among people aged 65 to 74 in the UK in 2023:
    - around one in ten (9%) are unable to turn on the device and enter any account login information as required
    - almost one in ten (8%) are unable to use the available controls on their device (such as mouse, keyboard, touchscreen, trackpad)
    - around one in eight (12%) are unable to use the different settings on my device to make it easier to use (e.g. adjust font size, volume settings, brightness of screen, voice activation or screen readers)
    - around one in seven (14%) are unable to find and open different applications/programmes/platforms on their devices (e.g. opening a web browser, messaging applications)
    - around one in six (18%) are unable to set up a connection to a Wi-Fi network on my devices (e.g. when at home, work, out in public or visiting family and friends)
    - around one in ten (10%) are unable to open an Internet browser to find and use websites (e.g. Safari, Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, Microsoft Edge)
    - around one in seven (14%) are unable to keep their login information and passwords for a device and any accounts secure (e.g. not shared with anyone or written down or left prominently near a device)
    - around one in nine (11%) are unable to update and change my password when prompted to do so

- Among people aged 65 & over in the UK in 2023:
  - around one in seven (14%) are unable to turn on the device and enter any account login information as required
  - around one in eight (12%) are unable to use the available controls on their device (such as mouse, keyboard, touchscreen, trackpad)
  - around one in six (18%) are unable to use the different settings on my device to make it easier to use (e.g. adjust font size, volume settings, brightness of screen, voice activation or screen readers)
  - around one in five (21%) are unable to find and open different applications/programmes/platforms on their devices (e.g. opening a web browser, messaging applications)
  - around one in four (25%) are unable to set up a connection to a Wi-Fi network on my devices (e.g. when at home, work, out in public or visiting family and friends)
  - around one in seven (15%) are unable to open an Internet browser to find and use websites (e.g. Safari, Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, Microsoft Edge)
  - around one in six (17%) are unable to keep their login information and passwords for a device and any accounts secure (e.g. not shared with anyone or written down or left prominently near a device)
  - around one in six (16%) are unable to update and change my password when prompted to do so
  
- Among people aged 55 to 64 in the UK in 2023:
  - around one in twenty (5%) are unable to turn on the device and enter any account login information as required
  - around one in twenty (5%) are unable to use the available controls on their device (such as mouse, keyboard, touchscreen, trackpad)
  - around two in twenty-five (8%) are unable to use the different settings on my device to make it easier to use (e.g. adjust font size, volume settings, brightness of screen, voice activation or screen readers)

- around two in twenty-five (8%) are unable to find and open different applications/programmes/platforms on their devices (e.g. opening a web browser, messaging applications)
- around two in twenty-five (8%) are unable to set up a connection to a Wi-Fi network on my devices (e.g. when at home, work, out in public or visiting family and friends)
- around one in twenty (5%) are unable to open an Internet browser to find and use websites (e.g. Safari, Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, Microsoft Edge)
- around two in twenty-five (8%) are unable to keep their login information and passwords for a device and any accounts secure (e.g. not shared with anyone or written down or left prominently near a device)
- around two in twenty-eight (7%) are unable to update and change my password when prompted to do so

## *Essential Digital Skills for Life:*

- Around one in three (33%) of people aged 75 & over in the UK in 2023, around one in eight (13%) aged 65 to 74, and around one in eleven (9%) aged 55 to 64 do not have the skills required to thrive in a digital society in day-to-day life<sup>4</sup>.
- Among people aged 75 & over in the UK in 2023:

### *Communication:*

- almost two in five (38%) are unable to set up accounts which help me communicate online (e.g. email, social media, forums)
- around one in four (23%) are unable to communicate with others digitally using email or other messaging applications (e.g. WhatsApp or Messenger, direct messaging on social media such as Instagram, Facebook etc)
- around half (50%) are unable to use software to create, write or edit documents (e.g. Microsoft Word/ Google docs/ Pages for a CV/letter)
- around two in five (39%) are unable to share files or links with others by attaching to an email, uploading to a website or an application (e.g. proof of address/ identity, sharing an image, or link via WhatsApp)
- around one in three (34%) are unable to make and receive video calls (e.g. Facetime, Zoom, Facebook Portal or WhatsApp call)
- almost half (46%) are unable to post messages, photographs, videos or blogs on social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok, Twitter or Snapchat)

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<sup>4</sup> To thrive in a digital society day-to-day is to have the skills required to be digitally proficient in day-to-day life, which is defined as a person being able to do at least one task within each of the five Life skills of Communication, Handling Information and Content, Transacting, Problem Solving and Being Safe and Legal Online.

### *Handling Information and Content:*

- around one in three (32%) are unable to recognise what information or content online may, or may not, be trustworthy (e.g. fact checked information, "fake news" or assess the trustworthiness of a company based on customer reviews)
- almost one in five (23%) are unable to use search engines to find information I'm looking for (e.g. search for news, the weather, train times)
- around two in five (38%) are unable to store and back up photos, messages, documents or other information (e.g. iCloud, Google Drive, Dropbox, OneDrive, desktop or storage drive)
- almost three in five (57%) are unable to use the cloud to access content from different devices (e.g. smartphone, tablet, laptop and desktop)
- around two in five (40%) are unable to use the Internet to stream or download entertainment content (e.g. films, TV series, music, games or books through services like YouTube, Spotify, Netflix, BBC iPlayer)

### *Transacting:*

- over one in three (36%) are unable to set up an account online that enables me to buy goods or services (e.g. Amazon, eBay, supermarkets or other retailers)
- around three in ten (31%) are unable to fill in forms online to access the services I need (e.g. Voting registration, ordering repeat prescriptions, booking doctor appointments, booking train tickets or beauty appointments)
- around one in three (32%) are unable to buy goods/services online using online payments (e.g. Debit/ credit card, PayPal, Apple Pay, Google Pay, Worldpay)
- almost two in five (38%) are unable to manage my money and transactions online (e.g. View balance or transfer funds via Internet or transfer funds via Internet or mobile banking app, manage spending through PayPal account, manage payments on finance plan)

### *Problem Solving:*

- almost three in ten (28%) are unable to use the Internet to find information that helps me solve problems (e.g. by using search engines, web chat, FAQs and forums)
- over two in five (43%) are unable to use the Internet to improve my skills and ability to do new things (e.g. using online tutorials, learning platforms and how-to guides)

### *Being Safe and Legal Online:*

- around one in four (25%) are unable to act with caution online and understand that there are risks and threats involved in carrying out activities online (e.g. use anti-virus software, classify and share information securely or avoid certain types of websites such as piracy websites)
- more than half (53%) are unable to set privacy and marketing settings for websites and my accounts (e.g. managing social media privacy settings, managing cookie settings, updating contact preferences)
- around two in five (39%) are unable to follow data protection guidelines online (e.g. following data storage and retention guidelines, not sharing or using other people's data or media such as movies or music without their consent)
- more than one in three (35%) are unable to respond to requests for authentication for online accounts (e.g. resetting my password when I've forgotten it, two-factor authentication, using a remote access key or an authenticator app)
- more than one in three (37%) are unable to identify secure websites (e.g. by looking for the padlock and 'https' in the address bar)
- around one in five (24%) are unable to recognise suspicious links and know that clicking on these links or downloading unfamiliar attachments is a risk (e.g. spam/phishing emails, texts, pop ups)
- around two in five (41%) are unable to update my device software/ operating systems when necessary to prevent viruses and other risks (e.g. enabling automatic updates, or installing when prompted to do so)
- around two in five (42%) are unable to identify secure Wi-Fi networks to connect to (e.g. Wi-Fi networks where a unique password is required, trusted source or padlock next to Wi-Fi network)



- around one in four (26%) are unable to be careful with what I share online as I know that online activity produces a permanent record that can be accessed by others (e.g. publicly shared photos, forums, personal information or opinions)
- Among people aged 65 to 74 in the UK in 2023:

*Communication:*

- around one in five (20%) are unable to set up accounts which help me communicate online (e.g. email, social media, forums)
- around one in nine (11%) are unable to communicate with others digitally using email or other messaging applications (e.g. WhatsApp or Messenger, direct messaging on social media such as Instagram, Facebook etc)
- almost three in ten (28%) are unable to use software to create, write or edit documents (e.g. Microsoft Word/ Google docs/ Pages for a CV/letter)
- around one in five (20%) are unable to share files or links with others by attaching to an email, uploading to a website or an application (e.g. proof of address/ identity, sharing an image, or link via WhatsApp)
- around one in six (16%) are unable to make and receive video calls (e.g. Facetime, Zoom, Facebook Portal or WhatsApp call)
- around in one four (26%) are unable to post messages, photographs, videos or blogs on social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok, Twitter or Snapchat)

*Handling Information and Content:*

- around one in six (17%) are unable to recognise what information or content online may, or may not, be trustworthy (e.g. fact checked information, "fake news" or assess the trustworthiness of a company based on customer reviews)
- almost one in ten (10%) are unable to use search engines to find information I'm looking for (e.g. search for news, the weather, train times)
- around one in four (24%) are unable to store and back up photos, messages, documents or other information (e.g. iCloud, Google Drive, Dropbox, OneDrive, desktop or storage drive)

- around two in five (39%) are unable to use the cloud to access content from different devices (e.g. smartphone, tablet, laptop and desktop)
- around one in five (20%) are unable to use the Internet to stream or download entertainment content (e.g. films, TV series, music, games or books through services like YouTube, Spotify, Netflix, BBC iPlayer)

*Transacting:*

- around one in six (17%) are unable to set up an account online that enables me to buy goods or services (e.g. Amazon, eBay, supermarkets or other retailers)
- around one in six (16%) are unable to fill in forms online to access the services I need (e.g. Voting registration, ordering repeat prescriptions, booking doctor appointments, booking train tickets or beauty appointments)
- around one in seven (14%) are unable to buy goods/services online using online payments (e.g. Debit/ credit card, PayPal, Apple Pay, Google Pay, Worldpay)
- almost one in five (19%) are unable to manage my money and transactions online (e.g. View balance or transfer funds via Internet or transfer funds via Internet or mobile banking app, manage spending through PayPal account, manage payments on finance plan)

*Problem Solving:*

- around one in eight (12%) are unable to use the Internet to find information that helps me solve problems (e.g. by using search engines, web chat, FAQs and forums)
- around one in four (24%) are unable to use the Internet to improve my skills and ability to do new things (e.g. using online tutorials, learning platforms and how-to guides)

### *Being Safe and Legal Online:*

- around one in eight (12%) are unable to act with caution online and understand that there are risks and threats involved in carrying out activities online (e.g. use anti-virus software, classify and share information securely or avoid certain types of websites such as piracy websites)
- around three in ten (29%) are unable to set privacy and marketing settings for websites and my accounts (e.g. managing social media privacy settings, managing cookie settings, updating contact preferences)
- around one in six (17%) are unable to follow data protection guidelines online (e.g. following data storage and retention guidelines, not sharing or using other people's data or media such as movies or music without their consent)
- around one in six (17%) are unable to respond to requests for authentication for online accounts (e.g. resetting my password when I've forgotten it, two-factor authentication, using a remote access key or an authenticator app)
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- around one in eight (13%) are unable to recognise suspicious links and know that clicking on these links or downloading unfamiliar attachments is a risk (e.g. spam/ phishing emails, texts, pop ups)
- around one in six (18%) are unable to update my device software/ operating systems when necessary to prevent viruses and other risks (e.g. enabling automatic updates, or installing when prompted to do so)
- around one in five (21%) are unable to identify secure Wi-Fi networks to connect to (e.g. Wi-Fi networks where a unique password is required, trusted source or padlock next to Wi-Fi network)
- around one in eleven (11%) are unable to be careful with what I share online as I know that online activity produces a permanent record that can be accessed by others (e.g. publicly shared photos, forums, personal information or opinions)

- Among people aged 65 & over in the UK in 2023:

*Communication:*

- around one in four (26%) are unable to set up accounts which help me communicate online (e.g. email, social media, forums)
- around one in seven (15%) are unable to communicate with others digitally using email or other messaging applications (e.g. WhatsApp or Messenger, direct messaging on social media such as Instagram, Facebook etc)
- over one in three (36%) are unable to use software to create, write or edit documents (e.g. Microsoft Word/ Google docs/ Pages for a CV/letter)
- over one in four (27%) are unable to share files or links with others by attaching to an email, uploading to a website or an application (e.g. proof of address/ identity, sharing an image, or link via WhatsApp)
- over one in five (22%) are unable to make and receive video calls (e.g. Facetime, Zoom, Facebook Portal or WhatsApp call)
- around one in three (33%) are unable to post messages, photographs, videos or blogs on social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok, Twitter or Snapchat)

*Handling Information and Content:*

- almost one in four (23%) are unable to recognise what information or content online may, or may not, be trustworthy (e.g. fact checked information, "fake news" or assess the trustworthiness of a company based on customer reviews)
- around one in seven (15%) are unable to use search engines to find information I'm looking for (e.g. search for news, the weather, train times)
- around three in ten (29%) are unable to store and back up photos, messages, documents or other information (e.g. iCloud, Google Drive, Dropbox, OneDrive, desktop or storage drive)
- over two in five (45%) are unable to use the cloud to access content from different devices (e.g. smartphone, tablet, laptop and desktop)

- over one in four (27%) are unable to use the Internet to stream or download entertainment content (e.g. films, TV series, music, games or books through services like YouTube, Spotify, Netflix, BBC iPlayer)

*Transacting:*

- around one in four (24%) are unable to set up an account online that enables me to buy goods or services (e.g. Amazon, eBay, supermarkets or other retailers)
- around one in five (21%) are unable to fill in forms online to access the services I need (e.g. Voting registration, ordering repeat prescriptions, booking doctor appointments, booking train tickets or beauty appointments)
- around one in five (20%) are unable to buy goods/services online using online payments (e.g. Debit/ credit card, PayPal, Apple Pay, Google Pay, Worldpay)
- around one in four (26%) are unable to manage my money and transactions online (e.g. View balance or transfer funds via Internet or transfer funds via Internet or mobile banking app, manage spending through PayPal account, manage payments on finance plan)

*Problem Solving:*

- around one in six (18%) are unable to use the Internet to find information that helps me solve problems (e.g. by using search engines, web chat, FAQs and forums)
- around three in ten (31%) are unable to use the Internet to improve my skills and ability to do new things (e.g. using online tutorials, learning platforms and how-to guides)

*Being Safe and Legal Online:*

- around one in six (17%) are unable to act with caution online and understand that there are risks and threats involved in carrying out activities online (e.g. use anti-virus software, classify and share information securely or avoid certain types of websites such as piracy websites)
- almost two in five (38%) are unable to set privacy and marketing settings for websites and my accounts (e.g. managing social media privacy settings, managing cookie settings, updating contact preferences)

- around one in four (25%) are unable to follow data protection guidelines online (e.g. following data storage and retention guidelines, not sharing or using other people's data or media such as movies or music without their consent)
  - over one in five (23%) are unable to respond to requests for authentication for online accounts (e.g. resetting my password when I've forgotten it, two-factor authentication, using a remote access key or an authenticator app)
  - around one in four (25%) are unable to identify secure websites (e.g. by looking for the padlock and 'https' in the address bar)
  - around one in six (17%) are unable to recognise suspicious links and know that clicking on these links or downloading unfamiliar attachments is a risk (e.g. spam/phishing emails, texts, pop ups)
  - around one in four (26%) are unable to update my device software/ operating systems when necessary to prevent viruses and other risks (e.g. enabling automatic updates, or installing when prompted to do so)
  - around three in ten (29%) are unable to identify secure Wi-Fi networks to connect to (e.g. Wi-Fi networks where a unique password is required, trusted source or padlock next to Wi-Fi network)
  - around one in six (16%) are unable to be careful with what I share online as I know that online activity produces a permanent record that can be accessed by others (e.g. publicly shared photos, forums, personal information or opinions)
- Among people aged 55 to 64 in the UK in 2023:

*Communication:*

- around one in seven (14%) are unable to set up accounts which help me communicate online (e.g. email, social media, forums)
- around one in fourteen (7%) are unable to communicate with others digitally using email or other messaging applications (e.g. WhatsApp or Messenger, direct messaging on social media such as Instagram, Facebook etc)
- around one in four (19%) are unable to use software to create, write or edit documents (e.g. Microsoft Word/ Google docs/ Pages for a CV/letter)

- around one in eight (13%) are unable to share files or links with others by attaching to an email, uploading to a website or an application (e.g. proof of address/ identity, sharing an image, or link via WhatsApp)
- around one in ten (10%) are unable to make and receive video calls (e.g. Facetime, Zoom, Facebook Portal or WhatsApp call)
- around one in six (17%) are unable to post messages, photographs, videos or blogs on social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok, Twitter or Snapchat)

*Handling Information and Content:*

- around one in seven (14%) are unable to recognise what information or content online may, or may not, be trustworthy (e.g. fact checked information, "fake news" or assess the trustworthiness of a company based on customer reviews)
- around two in thirty-three (6%) are unable to use search engines to find information I'm looking for (e.g. search for news, the weather, train times)
- around one in six (17%) are unable to store and back up photos, messages, documents or other information (e.g. iCloud, Google Drive, Dropbox, OneDrive, desktop or storage drive)
- around three in ten (29%) are unable to use the cloud to access content from different devices (e.g. smartphone, tablet, laptop and desktop)
- around one in seven (14%) are unable to use the Internet to stream or download entertainment content (e.g. films, TV series, music, games or books through services like YouTube, Spotify, Netflix, BBC iPlayer)

*Transacting:*

- around one in eight (12%) are unable to set up an account online that enables me to buy goods or services (e.g. Amazon, eBay, supermarkets or other retailers)
- around one in ten (10%) are unable to fill in forms online to access the services I need (e.g. Voting registration, ordering repeat prescriptions, booking doctor appointments, booking train tickets or beauty appointments)
- around one in eleven (9%) are unable to buy goods/services online using online payments (e.g. Debit/ credit card, PayPal, Apple Pay, Google Pay, Worldpay)

- around one in eight (12%) are unable to manage my money and transactions online (e.g. View balance or transfer funds via Internet or transfer funds via Internet or mobile banking app, manage spending through PayPal account, manage payments on finance plan)

*Problem Solving:*

- around one in eleven (9%) are unable to use the Internet to find information that helps me solve problems (e.g. by using search engines, web chat, FAQs and forums)
- around one in seven (15%) are unable to use the Internet to improve my skills and ability to do new things (e.g. using online tutorials, learning platforms and how-to guides)

*Being Safe and Legal Online:*

- around one in eleven (9%) are unable to act with caution online and understand that there are risks and threats involved in carrying out activities online (e.g. use anti-virus software, classify and share information securely or avoid certain types of websites such as piracy websites)
- around one in five (21%) are unable to set privacy and marketing settings for websites and my accounts (e.g. managing social media privacy settings, managing cookie settings, updating contact preferences)
- around one in six (16%) are unable to follow data protection guidelines online (e.g. following data storage and retention guidelines, not sharing or using other people's data or media such as movies or music without their consent)
- over one in eight (12%) are unable to respond to requests for authentication for online accounts (e.g. resetting my password when I've forgotten it, two-factor authentication, using a remote access key or an authenticator app)
- around one in seven (15%) are unable to identify secure websites (e.g. by looking for the padlock and 'https' in the address bar)
- around one in eleven (9%) are unable to recognise suspicious links and know that clicking on these links or downloading unfamiliar attachments is a risk (e.g. spam/phishing emails, texts, pop ups)



- around one in eight (12%) are unable to update my device software/ operating systems when necessary to prevent viruses and other risks (e.g. enabling automatic updates, or installing when prompted to do so)
- around one in seven (14%) are unable to identify secure Wi-Fi networks to connect to (e.g. Wi-Fi networks where a unique password is required, trusted source or padlock next to Wi-Fi network)
- around one in fourteen (7%) are unable to be careful with what I share online as I know that online activity produces a permanent record that can be accessed by others (e.g. publicly shared photos, forums, personal information or opinions)

## *Essential Digital Skills for Work:*

- Almost two in five (38%) people aged 65 & over in the UK in 2023, and almost three in ten (30%) aged 65 to 74 do not have the skills needed in the workplace.<sup>5</sup>
- Among people aged 65 to 74 & over in the UK in 2023:

### *Communication:*

- Around one in five (20%) are unable to communicate in the workplace digitally using messaging applications (e.g. Email, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Slack, Internal Intranet, WhatsApp)
- over one in three (37%) are unable to use workplace digital tools to create, share and collaborate with colleagues (e.g. Microsoft Teams, OneDrive, G-Suite, Office 365, WeTransfer, DropBox, WebEx, Slack)
- over two in five (44%) are unable to set up and manage an account on a professional online network / community / job site (e.g. LinkedIn, Total Jobs, Indeed)

### *Handling Information and Content:*

- around one in three (33%) are unable to follow your organisation's IT policies when sharing information internally and externally (e.g. classifying emails / documents. Encrypting sensitive information, sharing appropriate information on social media)
- around three in ten (31%) are unable to securely access, synchronise and share information at work across different devices (e.g. manage email, calendar or appointment system via different devices)

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<sup>5</sup> To have the skills required to be digitally proficient in the workplace, one must be able to do at least one task within each of the five Work skills of Communication, Handling Information and Content, Transacting, Problem Solving and Being Safe and Legal Online.

### *Transacting:*

- around one in three (32%) are unable to complete digital records on behalf of, or within your organisation (e.g. absence management, holidays, timesheets, expenses, tax returns)
- around three in ten (29%) are unable to access salary and tax information digitally (e.g. password protected payslips, P60, P45)

### *Problem Solving:*

- over one in five (23%) are unable to find information online that helps you solve work related problems (e.g. Search Engines, IT helpdesk, software providers, peer networks)
- over one in three (36%) are unable to use appropriate software that is required of your day-to-day job (e.g. spreadsheets, online booking systems, HR management, workflow or sales management)
- around three in ten (30%) are unable to improve their skills and ability to do new things at work using online tutorials, learning platforms and how-to guides (e.g. LinkedIn Learning, YouTube, IDEA, Skillssoft, internal learning platforms)
- almost half (48%) are unable to improve their own and/or the organisation's productivity using digital tools (e.g. Trello, Microsoft Projects and Planner Slack)

### *Being Safe and Legal Online:*

- over one in five (22%) are unable to act with caution online and understand that there are risks and threats involved in carrying out activities online (e.g. use anti-virus software, classify and share information securely or avoid certain types of websites such as piracy websites)
- around two in five (39%) are unable to set privacy and marketing settings for websites and my accounts (e.g. managing social media privacy settings, managing cookie settings, updating contact preferences)
- around one in four (26%) are unable to follow data protection guidelines online (e.g. following data storage and retention guidelines, not sharing or using other people's data or media such as movies or music without their consent)

- over one in four (24%) are unable to respond to requests for authentication for online accounts (e.g. resetting my password when I've forgotten it, two-factor authentication, using a remote access key or an authenticator app)
  - around three in ten (29%) are unable to identify secure websites (e.g. by looking for the padlock and 'https' in the address bar)
  - around one in five (21%) are unable to recognise suspicious links and know that clicking on these links or downloading unfamiliar attachments is a risk (e.g. spam/ phishing emails, texts, pop ups)
  - almost three in ten (28%) are unable to update my device software/ operating systems when necessary to prevent viruses and other risks (e.g. enabling automatic updates, or installing when prompted to do so)
  - around three in ten (30%) are unable to identify secure Wi-Fi networks to connect to (e.g. Wi-Fi networks where a unique password is required, trusted source or padlock next to Wi-Fi network)
  - over one in five (24%) are unable to be careful with what I share online as I know that online activity produces a permanent record that can be accessed by others (e.g. publicly shared photos, forums, personal information or opinions)
- Among people aged 65 & over in the UK in 2023:

*Communication:*

- Over one in five (22%) are unable to communicate in the workplace digitally using messaging applications (e.g. Email, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Slack, Internal Intranet, WhatsApp)
- Almost two in five (38%) are unable to use workplace digital tools to create, share and collaborate with colleagues (e.g. Microsoft Teams, OneDrive, G-Suite, Office 365, WeTransfer, DropBox, WebEx, Slack)
- over two in five (45%) are unable to set up and manage an account on a professional online network / community / job site (e.g. LinkedIn, Total Jobs, Indeed)

### *Handling Information and Content:*

- over one in three (36%) are unable to follow your organisation's IT policies when sharing information internally and externally (e.g. classifying emails / documents. Encrypting sensitive information, sharing appropriate information on social media)
- around one in three (34%) are unable to securely access, synchronise and share information at work across different devices (e.g. manage email, calendar or appointment system via different devices)

### *Transacting:*

- around one in three (34%) are unable to complete digital records on behalf of, or within your organisation (e.g. absence management, holidays, timesheets, expenses, tax returns)
- around one in three (33%) are unable to access salary and tax information digitally (e.g. password protected payslips, P60, P45)

### *Problem Solving:*

- around one in four (24%) are unable to find information online that helps you solve work related problems (e.g. Search Engines, IT helpdesk, software providers, peer networks)
- over one in three (37%) are unable to use appropriate software that is required of your day-to-day job (e.g. spreadsheets, online booking systems, HR management, workflow or sales management)
- around one in three (32%) are unable to improve their skills and ability to do new things at work using online tutorials, learning platforms and how-to guides (e.g. LinkedIn Learning, YouTube, IDEA, Skillsoft, internal learning platforms)
- around half (52%) are unable to improve their own and/or the organisation's productivity using digital tools (e.g. Trello, Microsoft Projects and Planner Slack)

### *Being Safe and Legal Online:*

- over one in four (24%) are unable to act with caution online and understand that there are risks and threats involved in carrying out activities online (e.g. use anti-virus software, classify and share information securely or avoid certain types of websites such as piracy websites)
- around two in five (41%) are unable to set privacy and marketing settings for websites and my accounts (e.g. managing social media privacy settings, managing cookie settings, updating contact preferences)
- over one in four (27%) are unable to follow data protection guidelines online (e.g. following data storage and retention guidelines, not sharing or using other people's data or media such as movies or music without their consent)
- over one in four (27%) are unable to respond to requests for authentication for online accounts (e.g. resetting my password when I've forgotten it, two-factor authentication, using a remote access key or an authenticator app)
- around three in ten (29%) are unable to identify secure websites (e.g. by looking for the padlock and 'https' in the address bar)
- around one in four (24%) are unable to recognise suspicious links and know that clicking on these links or downloading unfamiliar attachments is a risk (e.g. spam/ phishing emails, texts, pop ups)
- around three in ten (29%) are unable to update my device software/ operating systems when necessary to prevent viruses and other risks (e.g. enabling automatic updates, or installing when prompted to do so)
- around one in three (32%) are unable to identify secure Wi-Fi networks to connect to (e.g. Wi-Fi networks where a unique password is required, trusted source or padlock next to Wi-Fi network)
- over one in five (26%) are unable to be careful with what I share online as I know that online activity produces a permanent record that can be accessed by others (e.g. publicly shared photos, forums, personal information or opinions)

- Among people aged 55 to 64 & over in the UK in 2023:

*Communication:*

- around one in six (18%) are unable to communicate in the workplace digitally using messaging applications (e.g. Email, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Slack, Internal Intranet, WhatsApp)
- around three in ten (30%) are unable to use workplace digital tools to create, share and collaborate with colleagues (e.g. Microsoft Teams, OneDrive, G-Suite, Office 365, WeTransfer, DropBox, WebEx, Slack)
- around one in three (34%) are unable to set up and manage an account on a professional online network / community / job site (e.g. LinkedIn, Total Jobs, Indeed)

*Handling Information and Content:*

- around one in four (24%) are unable to follow your organisation's IT policies when sharing information internally and externally (e.g. classifying emails / documents. Encrypting sensitive information, sharing appropriate information on social media)
- almost three in ten (28%) are unable to securely access, synchronise and share information at work across different devices (e.g. manage email, calendar or appointment system via different devices)

*Transacting:*

- over one in four (27%) are unable to complete digital records on behalf of, or within your organisation (e.g. absence management, holidays, timesheets, expenses, tax returns)
- around three in ten (31%) are unable to access salary and tax information digitally (e.g. password protected payslips, P60, P45)

*Problem Solving:*

- over one in five (23%) are unable to find information online that helps you solve work related problems (e.g. Search Engines, IT helpdesk, software providers, peer networks)

- around one in four (24%) are unable to use appropriate software that is required of your day-to-day job (e.g. spreadsheets, online booking systems, HR management, workflow or sales management)
- over one in five (23%) are unable to improve their skills and ability to do new things at work using online tutorials, learning platforms and how-to guides (e.g. LinkedIn Learning, YouTube, IDEA, Skillsoft, internal learning platforms)
- over two in five (45%) are unable to improve their own and/or the organisation's productivity using digital tools (e.g. Trello, Microsoft Projects and Planner Slack)

*Being Safe and Legal Online:*

- over one in five (23%) are unable to act with caution online and understand that there are risks and threats involved in carrying out activities online (e.g. use anti-virus software, classify and share information securely or avoid certain types of websites such as piracy websites)
- over one in three (36%) are unable to set privacy and marketing settings for websites and my accounts (e.g. managing social media privacy settings, managing cookie settings, updating contact preferences)
- around one in four (24%) are unable to follow data protection guidelines online (e.g. following data storage and retention guidelines, not sharing or using other people's data or media such as movies or music without their consent)
- over one in four (27%) are unable to respond to requests for authentication for online accounts (e.g. resetting my password when I've forgotten it, two-factor authentication, using a remote access key or an authenticator app)
- almost three in ten (28%) are unable to identify secure websites (e.g. by looking for the padlock and 'https' in the address bar)
- over one in five (22%) are unable to recognise suspicious links and know that clicking on these links or downloading unfamiliar attachments is a risk (e.g. spam/ phishing emails, texts, pop ups)
- around three in ten (30%) are unable to update my device software/ operating systems when necessary to prevent viruses and other risks (e.g. enabling automatic updates, or installing when prompted to do so)
- over one in four (27%) are unable to identify secure Wi-Fi networks to connect to (e.g. Wi-Fi networks where a unique password is required, trusted source or padlock next to Wi-Fi network)



- over one in five (22%) are unable to be careful with what I share online as I know that online activity produces a permanent record that can be accessed by others (e.g. publicly shared photos, forums, personal information or opinions)

## Activities recent internet users in UK carry out online during 2020-21<sup>6</sup>

### *Browsing:*

- Among regular internet users in the UK aged 75 & over, almost nine in ten (88%) use the internet at least once a month for browsing websites, with around five percent (5%) never using the internet for this activity.
- Among regular internet users in the UK aged 65 to 74, over nine in ten (94%) use the internet at least once a month for browsing websites, with around three percent (3%) never using the internet for this activity.
- Among regular internet users in the UK aged 65 & over, around nine in ten (92%) use the internet at least once a month for browsing websites, with around five percent (5%) never using the internet for this activity.
- Among regular internet users in the UK aged 55 to 64, over nine in ten (97%) use the internet at least once a month for browsing websites, with around one percent (1%) never using the internet for this activity.

### *Emailing:*

- Among regular internet users in the UK aged 75 & over, over four in five (84%) use the internet at least once a month for emailing, with around one in eight (12%) never using the internet for this activity.
- Among regular internet users in the UK aged 65 to 74, around nine in ten (90%) use the internet at least once a month for emailing, with around one in fifteen (7%) never using the internet for this activity.
- Among regular internet users in the UK aged 65 & over, almost nine in ten (88%) use the internet at least once a month for browsing websites, with around five percent (5%) never using the internet for this activity.
- Among regular internet users in the UK aged 55 to 64, over nine in ten (93%) use the internet at least once a month for emailing, with around one in twelve (9%) never using the internet for this activity.

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<sup>6</sup> Authors analysis of Understanding Society: Wave 12, 2020-2021. [data collection]. 17th Edition. UK Data Service. SN: 6614, DOI: 10.5255/UKDA-SN-6614-18. Downloaded 21st February 2023. Available at <https://beta.ukdataservice.ac.uk/datacatalogue/studies/study?id=8806>

### *Online shopping*

- Among regular internet users in the UK aged 75 & over, under half (45%) use the internet at least once a month for online shopping, with around three in ten (30%) never using the internet for this activity.
- Among regular internet users in the UK aged 65 to 74, over half (58%) use the internet at least once a month for online shopping, with around one in six (18%) never using the internet for this activity.
- Among regular internet users in the UK aged 65 & over, more than half (53%) use the internet at least once a month for browsing websites, with over one in five (22%) never using the internet for this activity.
- Among regular internet users in the UK aged 55 to 64, around seven in ten (69%) use the internet at least once a month for online shopping, with around one in nine (11%) never using the internet for this activity.

### *Online banking:*

- Among regular internet users in the UK aged 75 & over, around half (52%) use the internet at least once a month for online banking, with around two in five (43%) never using the internet for this activity.
- Among regular internet users in the UK aged 65 to 74, around two in three (65%) use the internet at least once a month for online banking, with around three in ten (30%) never using the internet for this activity.
- Among regular internet users in the UK aged 65 & over, around three in five (60%) use the internet at least once a month for browsing websites, with more than one in three (35%) never using the internet for this activity.
- Among regular internet users in the UK aged 55 to 64, around three in four (75%) use the internet at least once a month for online banking, with around one in five (20%) never using the internet for this activity.

### *Social Media:*

- Among recent internet users in the UK aged 75 & over, over half (57%) use the internet at least once a month for looking at and/or posting on social media, with more than one in three (36%) never using the internet for this activity.
- Among recent internet users in the UK aged 65 to 74, around seven in ten (70%) use the internet at least once a month for looking at and/or posting on social media, with around one in four (24%) never using the internet for this activity.
- Among recent internet users in the UK aged 65 & over, around two in three (65%) use the internet at least once a month for looking at and/or posting on social media, with more than one in four (38%) never using the internet for this activity.
- Among recent internet users in the UK aged 55 to 64, around four in five (81%) over half (57%) use the internet at least once a month for looking at and/or posting on social media, with around one in seven (14%) never using the internet for this activity.

### *Streaming:*

- Among recent internet users in the UK aged 75 & over, around one in five (19%) use the internet at least once a month to stream music or videos, with around seven in ten (72%) never using the internet for this activity.
- Among recent internet users in the UK aged 64 to 74 & over, around one in three (33%) use the internet at least once a month to stream music or videos, with over half (55%) never using the internet for this activity.
- Among recent internet users in the UK aged 65 & over, more than one in four (28%) use the internet at least once a month to stream music or videos, with around three in five (61%) never using the internet for this activity.
- Among recent internet users in the UK aged 55 to 64, around half (49%) use the internet at least once a month to stream music or videos, with around two in five (39%) never using the internet for this activity.

### *Gaming:*

- Among regular internet users in the UK aged 75 & over, more than one in five (28%) use the internet at least once a month for gaming, with around seven in ten (69%) never using the internet for this activity.
- Among regular internet users in the UK aged 65 to 74, around one in three (32%) use the internet at least once a month for gaming, with over three in five (63%) never using the internet for this activity.
- Among regular internet users in the UK aged 65 & over, around three in ten (31%) use the internet at least once a month for browsing websites, with around two in three (65%) never using the internet for this activity.
- Among regular internet users in the UK aged 55 to 64, more than one in three (37%) use the internet at least once a month for online banking, with over half (57%).

## Smartphone use among older people in the UK<sup>7</sup>

- At the end of 2023, among people aged 65 & over in the UK:
  - around two in three (67%), the equivalent of around 8.5 million, personally used a smartphone.
  - around one-in-four (26%), the equivalent of around 3.3 million, personally used a standard mobile phone.
  - around one-in-fourteen (7%), the equivalent of around 890,000, did not use or were unsure if they used a mobile for personal use.
- At the end of 2023, among people aged 55 to 65 in the UK:
  - almost nine in ten (88%), the equivalent of around 7.6 million, personally used a smartphone.
  - around one in ten (9%), the equivalent of around 780,000, personally used a standard mobile phone.
  - around one in thirty-three (3%), the equivalent of around 260,000, did not use or were unsure if they used a mobile for personal use.

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<sup>7</sup> Ofcom. January 2024. *Adults' Media Literacy Tracker. Adult's Media Literacy Core Survey 2023 Data Tables. Table 20.* [online] Available at <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/data/statistics/statistical-release-calendar-2024#AMLT2023>. Accessed 16<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

## Further information about Age UK's digital work

Age UK works locally and nationally to support older people to gain and extend digital skills. In our view, most older learners need ongoing support, tailored to their needs and preferences, and often this is most effective when delivered on a one-to-one basis. An effective approach is using Digital Champions who are staff and volunteers who have been trained to have the skills and knowledge to support older people in their community to gain digital skills and stay safe online. More information about can be found on our website and many local Age UK organisations also run their own digital support services<sup>8</sup>.

However, as mentioned at the start of this paper, Age UK believes that those who cannot or do not want to get online should still be able to access the support and services they need. We have carried out a range studies to explore digital exclusion and its impact for older people. For example, our work has: looked at the difficulties that those who do not use the internet have in accessing local authority services and considered the impact of the pandemic for older people who were not online. See Age UK's website for policy and research reports<sup>9</sup> and for information about Age UK's Offline and Overlooked campaign which aims to ensure that everyone can access the services they need - so that being offline doesn't mean being overlooked<sup>10</sup>.<sup>[iii]</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/our-impact/programmes/digital-skills/> and <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/services/in-your-area/it-training/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/our-impact/policy-research/publications/reports-and-briefings/> Reports on digital inclusion and exclusion are found in the 'Active Communities' section.

<sup>10</sup> <sup>[iii]</sup> <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/our-impact/campaigning/offline-overlooked/>