

# National Survey in Portugal by Caritas de Coimbra and Instituto Pedro Nunes



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## Introduction

The main purpose of the Digital Life Learning project is to develop a toolkit and training sessions to increase the digital competencies of older adults, with the active collaboration of young university students.

Through quantitative and qualitative analysis already existing, based on national findings about older adults' digital needs, conditions, and wishes, each country identified the major areas where older adults can improve their lives through digital skills to produce an overview of the four countries involved in the project.

In addition, to get a deeper understanding of the target group and test directly from the voice of those the project concern (citizens over 65), their digital weaknesses, difficulties, specific requirements, needs, fears, desires, the data provided by the national findings were enriched by questionnaires, carried out in each country, and collected in the presentation events.

These questionnaires have a replicable format aimed to analyse the needs of older adults, without imposing presumed needs from top to bottom but accompanying them in the expression and sharing of their true ones, involving them since the first phases of the project. All this information will be addressed in the toolkit (WP3) and provide a set of qualitative indications that will help shape the knowledge toolkit that will be distributed and taught to the students during the training (WP4).

This document moves forward to the identification of the needs and expectations of older adults in Portugal, collected by anonymous questionnaires.



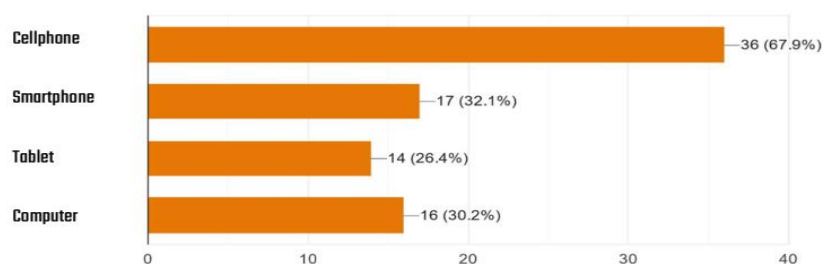
## Summary of Replies to the Older Adults Digital Literacy Assessment Questionnaire

The questionnaire collection was carried out between 23 March and 10 April 2023 at the Parish Council of Santo António dos Olivais, the Social Centre of São Pedro, the Community Centre of São José, and the Community Insertion Centre. The socio-demographic data collected showed that there were 53 participants between 65 and 74 years old and the group was composed of 41 women and 12 men.

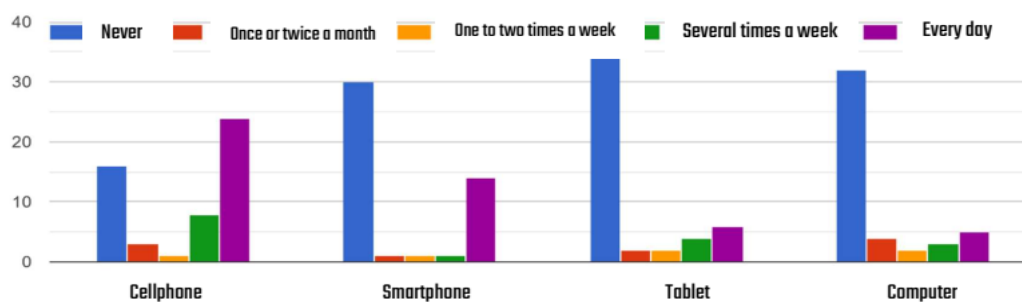
### SECTION I – Use of electronic devices

#### 1.1 Which of these following devices do you own?

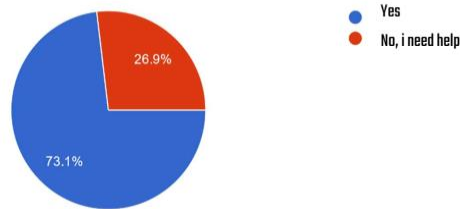
53 responses



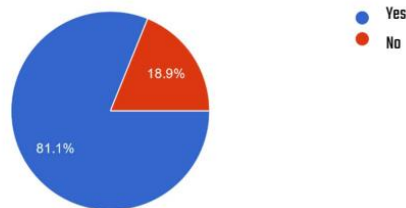
#### 1.2. How often do you use the following devices?



1.3. Can you use your devices autonomously?  
52 responses



1.4. Do you consider your devices age-friendly?  
53 responses

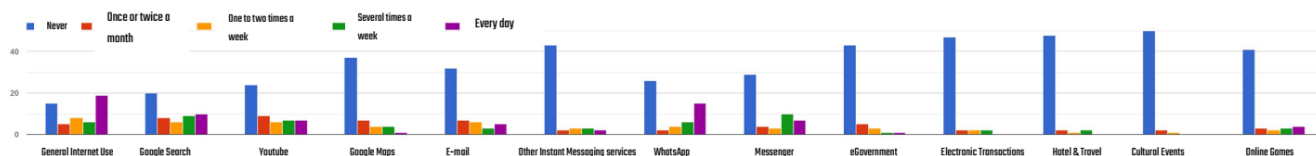


In section I we can analyse the distribution of the participants by the owners of electronic devices and frequency of use. 36 older adults reported that they use a cell phone, 17 use a smartphone, 14 use tablets, and 16 computers. Regarding the frequency with which they use their equipment, 24 people use their cell phones daily and 14 their smartphones and 32 never use a computer, and 37 never use a tablet. 73.1% use its equipment autonomously and 81.1% consider them to be age appropriate.

The ones that considered the devices age-unfriendly mostly identify, in the open question 1.5, the lack of preparation or knowledge (75%), mobility problems (12.5%), and problems related to the design of the applications (12.5%).

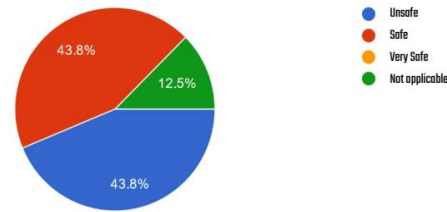
## SECTION II – Use of Internet Services

2.1. How often do you use the following:



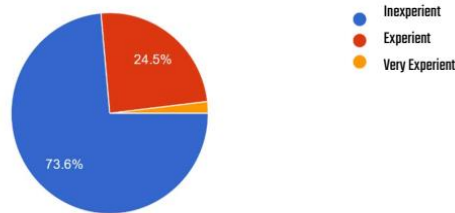
2.2. How safe do you feel when using the Internet?

48 responses



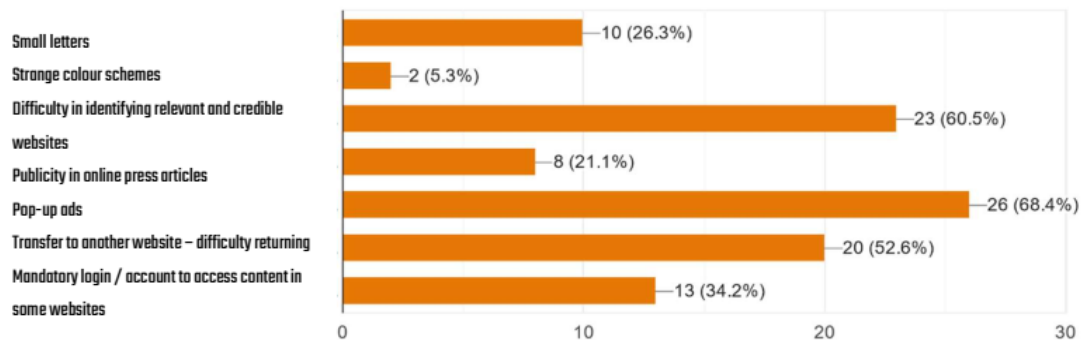
2.4 How experienced, as an Internet user, you consider yourself to be?

53 responses



2.3. Which of the following bothers you when Using the Internet?\*

38 responses



Regarding the general use of the Internet, 15 participants never use it, 5 do it once or twice a month, 8 once or twice a week, 6 several times a week, and 19 every day. 71.7% use the internet at least once a month, mostly to search on the Google search engine - 62% of respondents do it at least once a month, Youtube by 55%, while the percentage relating to the use of Google Maps decreases - it's used by 30% of the surveyed population.

The digital tools related to communication have the following usage rate: 40% use email, 19% use Viber or other instant messaging services, 51% use WhatsApp, and 45% Messenger.

Moving to the evaluation of the use of services on digital platforms, 19% use public services through the Internet, 9% book hotels and trips online, and 6% buy tickets for cultural events. 23% also refer to playing online games.

The feeling of safety divides the older adults proportionally: 50% feel safe and the other half insecure.

In question 2.3 *Which of the following bothers you when using the internet?* an open question, two major clusters were identified, one related to the accessibility and the other to the design of the applications:

Concerning accessibility, which includes requirements facilitating the understanding of the system and, consequently, the interaction with users, most of them with low computer skills and digital literacy level, refer to concerns and difficulty in transferring to another site or in returning to some they saw before, or constraints in following some instructions like doing a login to access an account.

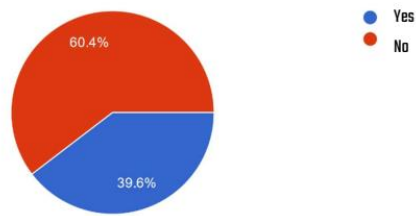
Regarding the design of the applications, the solution they meet in their devices, like the size of the text and numbers, or the colour scheme, were frequently indicated as small/difficult to view. In addition, the touch area for interactive elements is also often an impediment to good interaction. They also mentioned that some interaction icons, particularly those related to advertising, also hinder the use of digital applications, decreasing users' receptiveness to adopting the technological solution in their daily lives.

Although the levels of Internet usage are higher than 50% for some applications/search engines, in the self-assessment regarding the level of experience in using the Internet, 73.6% classified themselves as inexperienced, 24.5% as experienced, and 1.9% as very experienced.

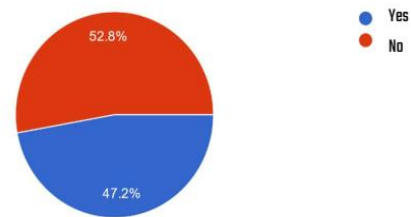
### **SECTION III – Information & Entertainment**



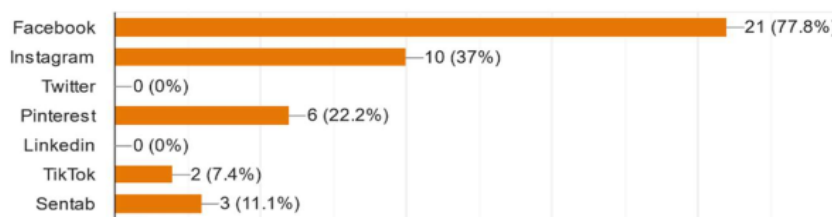
3.1. Do you read online news sites, newspapers or newsmagazines?  
53 responses



3.2. Do you use social networks (social media)?  
53 responses

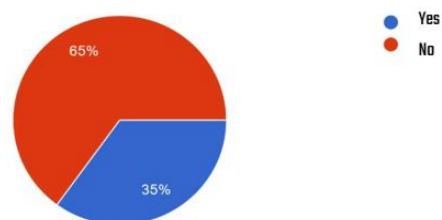


3.3. If so, which of the following social networks (social media) do you use  
27 responses

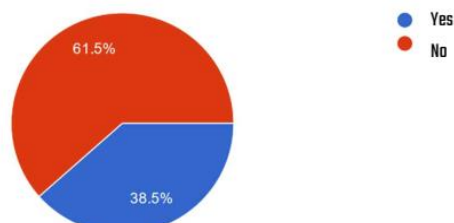


The percentage of internet users that access online information sites, newspapers, and other online news is 60%, a figure that decreases slightly to 53% when asked about the use of social networks. In this context, the social networks that stand out are Facebook (78%), Instagram (37%), and Pinterest (22%).

3.4. Are you familiar with sharing pictures and videos on social media?  
40 responses



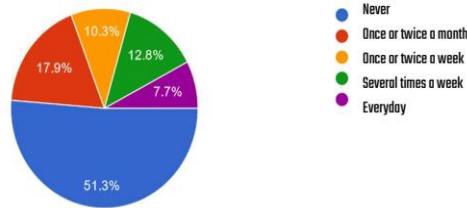
3.5. Do you know how to make a post on social media?  
39 responses





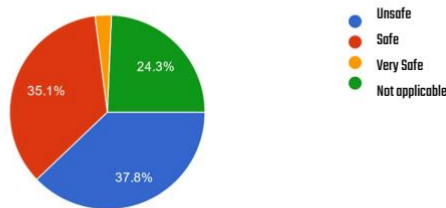
3.6. How often do you comment / like on social media?

39 responses



3.7. How safe do you feel when Using social media?

37 responses



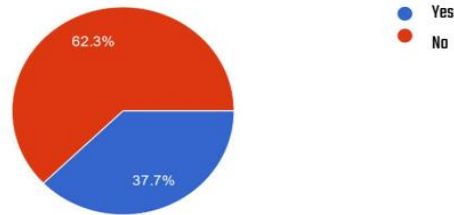
In the universe of respondents who use the Internet and social networks, 65% know how to share photos and videos, 62% know how to make a publication, and 51% never comment or post likes.

Regarding the perception of security of Internet users, about half of the respondents have security concerns when using social networks: 50% feel unsafe, 2% feel very safe, and 48% feel safe.

## SECTION IV – Communication Skills

4.1. Do you use the email?

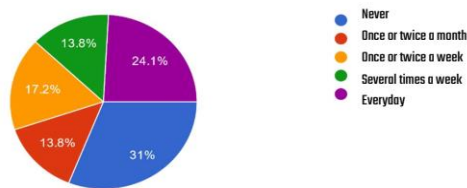
53 responses



4.2. If so, how often do you check your inbox?:

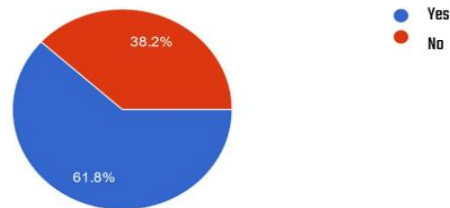
(email):

29 responses



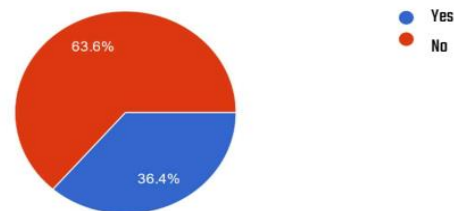
4.3. Do you know how to write an email?

34 responses



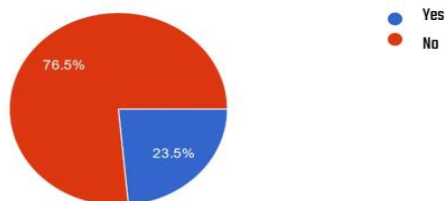
4.4. Do you know how to fill in all the fields of an email? (subject, cc, bcc)

33 responses



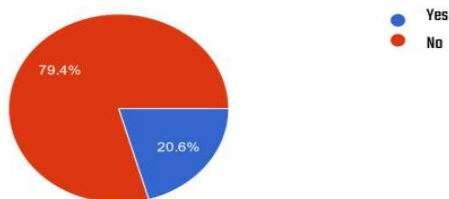
4.5. Do you know how to attach pictures, or other files, to an email?

34 responses



4.6. Do you know how to download pictures, or other files, attached to an email?

34 responses

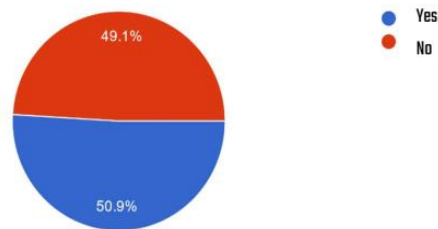


The survey results indicate that the proportion of users who communicate via e-mail is 38%, amongst which 24% check their inbox daily, 14% several times a week, 17% once or twice a week, 14% once or twice a month, and 31% never check it.

The percentage of older adults in this survey who know how to write an e-mail message is 62%, although only 36% can fill in all the fields (subject, cc, bcc), and 24% can attach photos or other files to messages. The percentage drops to 21% when asked if they know how to download attached photos or files.

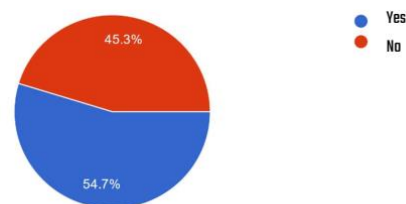
4.7. Do you know how to start a videoconference call?

53 responses



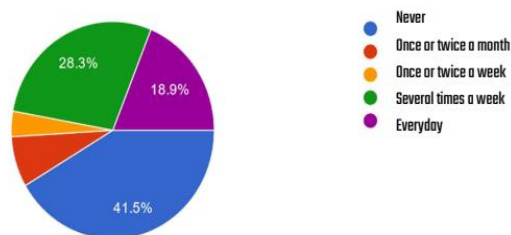
4.8. Do you know how to write an instant message? (Facebook, WhatsApp or other)

53 responses



4.9 How often do you use instant messages to communicate? (Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp or others?)

53 responses



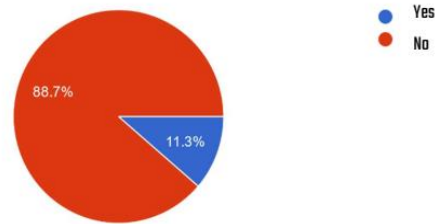
Digital communication skills are more focused on the ability to make video calls - 51% of the total respondents know how to make video calls, 55% know how to write and send instant messages through social networks, and within the sub-universe of these users of communication tools through social networks, 86% use them several times a week or daily.

## SECTION V – eGovernment



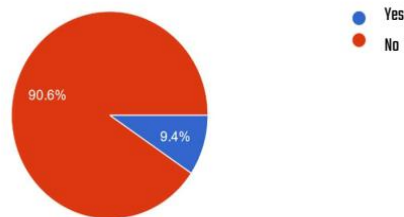
5.1. Do you use online public services?

53 responses



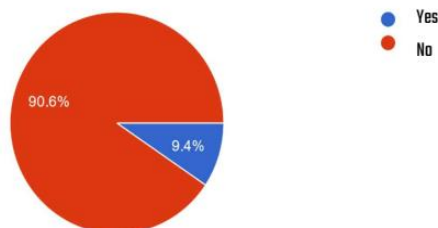
5.2. Do you use digital public services for tax issues?

53 responses



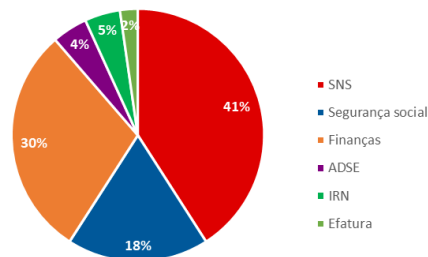
5.3 Do you pay public debts electronically?

53 responses



5.4 Which eGovernment service do you find the most useful?

22 responses

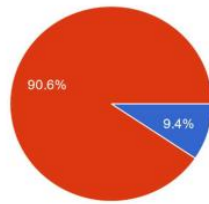


47 people don't use public services online, 48 don't use them for tax purposes or pay their tax obligations electronically.

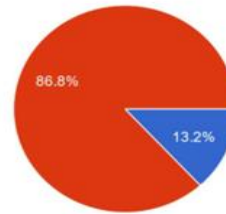
## SECTION VI – eHealth



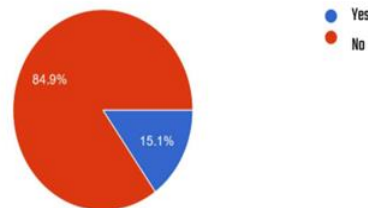
6.1. Do you use health apps?  
53 responses



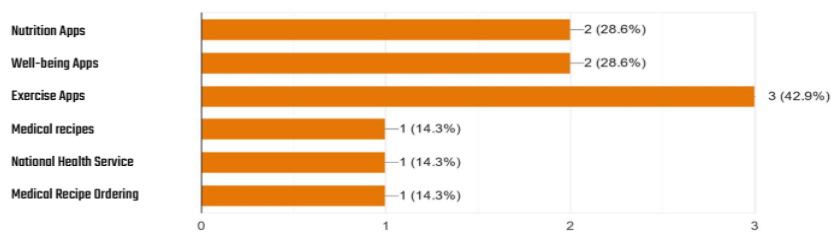
6.3. Do you know how to book a medical appointment online?  
53 responses



6.4. Do you know how to ask for medical recipes, and check your medical exams, online?  
53 responses



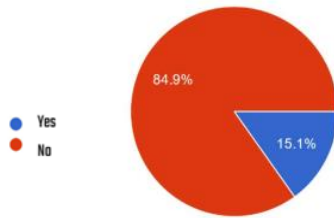
6.2. If so, of which kind?  
7 responses



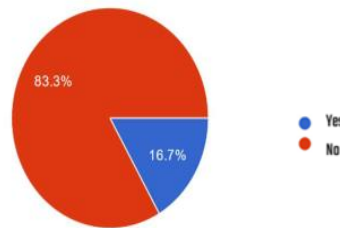
In the section related to digital competencies in health, it is visible that most respondents do not exercise these skills: only 9.4% use health apps, 13.2% know how to schedule appointments online, and 15.1% can request prescriptions or complementary medical diagnosis exams online. The 9.4% who use health apps refer to using exercise, nutritional, and well-being apps.

## SECTION VII – eBanking

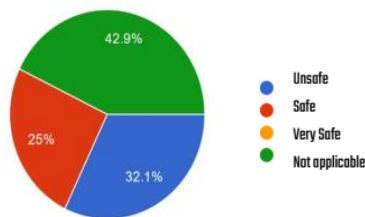
7.1. Have you ever used eBanking services?  
53 responses



7.2. Do you use eBanking services for daily transactions and purchases?  
30 responses



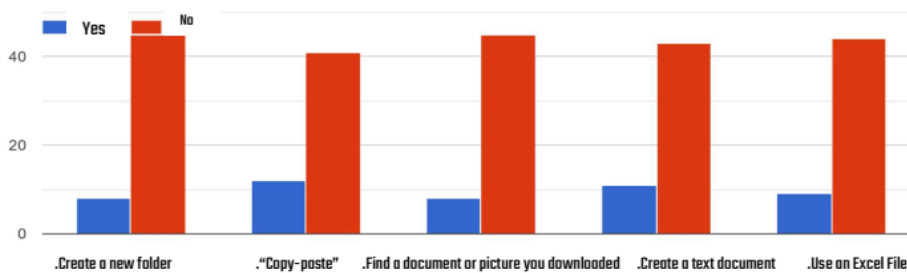
7.3. How safe do you feel using eBanking services?  
28 responses



Ebanking services are used by 15,1%, and less than 1 in five use e-banking services for daily transactions and purchases, and most of them feel unsafe using e-banking services.

## SECTION VIII – Tasks

8.1. Do you know how to:



Most older adults in this universe do not use tools to produce text material, edit spreadsheets, make graphics, or perform other tasks. Only 15% know how to create a new folder, 23% know how to copy-paste, 15% know how to find a downloaded document or picture, 20% know how to create a text document and 17% can use an Excel file.

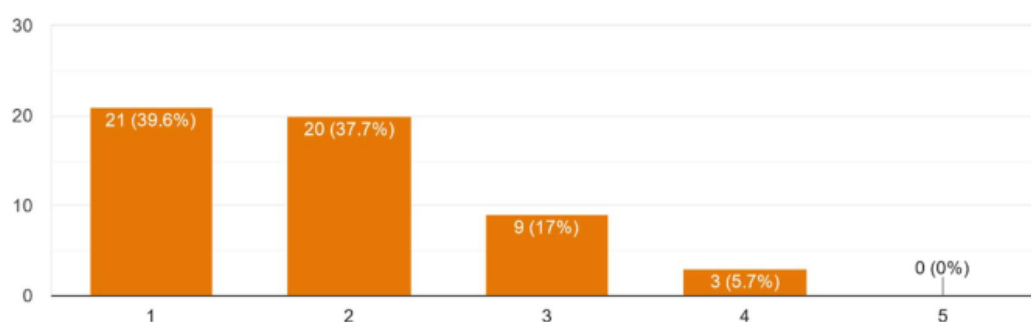


## SECTION IX – Digital Literacy Self-assessment

**9.1** Digital literacy refers to the ability to use technological tools effectively in your daily life. For digital literacy to be put into practice, you must know the new tools available, and understand them critically. Digital literacy also includes the understanding of the responsibilities, advantages and disadvantages of these new technological tools, the best way to use them, as well as their consequences and constantly evolving dynamics.

In this context, we would like you to indicate how good or bad your digital literacy is, in your opinion, on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is the lowest level, and 5 the highest level of digital literacy.

53 responses

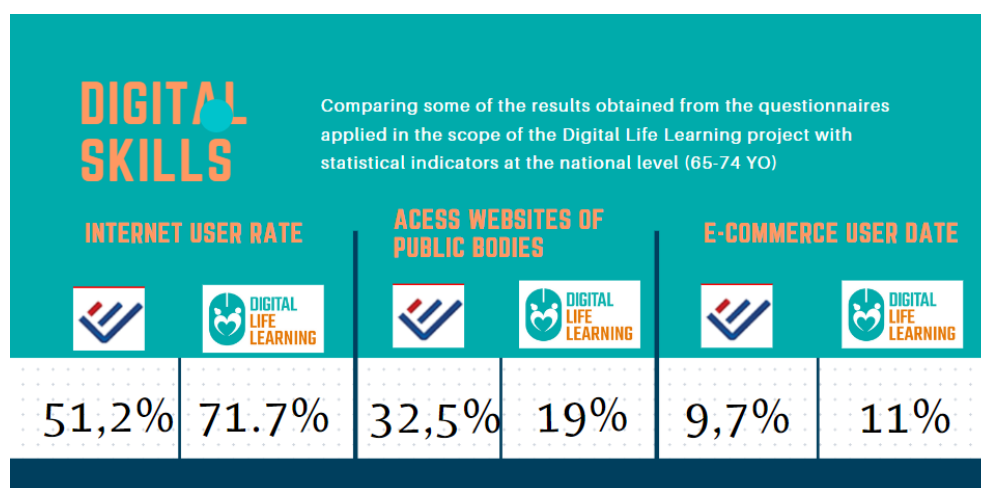


At the end of the questionnaire, each person self-evaluates their digital skills - the ability to use technological tools effectively in daily life, to know the new tools available, understand them critically, and also understand the responsibilities, advantages, and disadvantages of these new technological tools, the best way to use them, as well as their consequences and constantly evolving dynamics: 8 out of 10 assessed themselves as having very low or low digital skills.



## Comparing the replies from the Older Adults Digital Literacy Assessment Questionnaire to the National Data

The aim here is to compare some of the results obtained from the questionnaires applied in the scope of the Digital Life Learning project with statistical indicators at the national level. This comparison was limited by several issues, namely those related to the methods applied since the universe of older adults surveyed in Coimbra is very small (n=53), not random, and non-representative of the Portuguese population, and also because many questions were not quite the same.



Internet use rate is, according to INE, 51.2% for older adults in Portugal and higher in the older adults surveyed by Digital Life Learning, in Portugal, where 71.7% used the internet at least once a month. In 2022, almost one-third (32.5%) of people aged 65 to 74 in Portugal used the Internet to contact public bodies and access the websites or applications of these bodies, a higher percentage of users compared to the 19% that responded to the Digital Life Learning Inquire. When the focus of use is on e-commerce, the results are very similar: 9.7% of older adults in Portugal have used e-commerce, slightly less than the 11% of those surveyed through Digital Life Learning in Portugal.

## Conclusions

According to the National Statistics Institute (INE), Portugal's journey follows the path of other European countries, we are increasingly digital, but we are not (all) fully digital. Connecting with digital reality is more difficult for the older layers of the Portuguese population, which still reveals some lack of knowledge and misinformation regarding the correct use of the internet. Associated with age, it increases the probability of having difficulty understanding new technologies, lack of support and information, having a lack of digital knowledge, or having difficulty accessing applications, added challenges for those who started digital life in middle age.

Older adults interviewed in Coimbra use a mobile phone (62.2%) or smartphone (38.8%), independently (81.1%), 71.7% use the internet at least once a month, mostly to search on Google (61.2%) or to communicate: 50.9% know how to make video calls and 54.7% know how to write and send instant messages through social networks and 40% use email even though more than 50% feel insecure using the internet. The feeling of insecurity associated with the lack of digital skills may help to understand the low percentage of users of online public services (11.3%), namely the use of these services for tax purposes (9.4%), as well as the percentage of use regarding health applications (9.4%) and online banking services (15.1%).

Even though most of them consider themselves as users with low (37.7%) or very low (39.6%) digital skills, they revealed motivation and willingness to learn and increase their digital skills, namely those necessary to use better online public services related to health, finance, and social security.

