

Older People & Communications Technology Qualitative Research

Presentation of Findings

Ofcom Consumer Panel & Futuresight
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Background

- Previous surveys have shown that ownership of home Internet access and Digital television (DTV) among those aged 55+ was significantly lower than national average
- High levels of ‘voluntary exclusion’, particularly in relation to Internet
- Qualitative research commissioned to understand the reasons
- Focus groups conducted around the UK – audience segmented into 3 types . . .
 - **‘Digitally disengaged’** No interest in technology
 - **‘Late adopters’** Mid-range interest
 - **‘Embracers’** High interest

Attitudes towards communications technology – First Thoughts

- Notable differences between the 3 segments
- *Embracers'* responses tended to be very rational and functional
- *Late Adopters* used words such as “wonderful”, “incredible”, showing a relationship with technology that seemed new and full of excitement
- The *Digitally Disengaged* used words such as “fear”, “complicated”, “another world”, “not for me”, giving an indication of their less comfortable relationship with technology

Revised Segmentation

	ORIGINAL	REVISED
USERS	Embracers Late Adopters	Absorbers Self Starters
NON USERS	Digitally Disengaged	Disengaged Rejecters

Rejecters and Disengaged

- Lots of consistency in the reasons why these non users had not got involved
- Only difference between the two was the Rejecters had decided not to be involved, whereas the Disengaged did not reject the idea outright and showed some interest in taking things further
- **Barriers** to take up were related to the following areas:
 - **Skills and ability:** no exposure, hardware, mountain to climb
 - **Motivation / information needs:** survived up to now, bad experiences
 - **Social / environmental issues:** throw away culture, lack of time, privacy / security, lack of social interaction, dependency / loss of dependency
- **Non factors:** age, health / mobility, economic factors, location

Conclusions

- This age group appears to fall into 4 segments – Absorbers, Self Starters, Disengaged and Rejecters
- The Disengaged are the really interesting segment – they currently feel excluded and, given the right circumstances, would like to get started.
- Attitude and character are key determinants - age, health and economics are non-factors.
- Starting points needed, including courses designed for older people, run by older people, and local community mentors
- Self Starters are ideal ambassadors having a unique insight into the difficulties faced by older people.

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