

GLOBAL EXPERIENCE

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The Experience of Russia and China in Addressing the Age Aspect of the Digital Divide



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Abstract. The process of demographic aging is global and irreversible, and the share of the elderly in the population of most countries will steadily increase. This sets strategic tasks of taking these trends into account in management, creating conditions for quality life of people in older ages. In the conditions of rapid digitalization of the economy and branches of the social sphere, the issue of integration of elderly people into modern processes, monitoring the dynamics and factors of inclusion, and creating conditions for leveling various kinds of related exclusion is acute. The aim of the article is to comparatively analyze the practices of digital inclusion of the elderly in China and Russia in order to identify opportunities to improve their effectiveness. We used a complex of general scientific methods and relevant empirical base, consisting of data from population censuses and statistics on the development of information and communication infrastructure in the countries under consideration. We show the current state of research on the problem of age digital divide in China, Russia and other countries. We outline the scale and main trends in the use of digital technologies by elderly people, which unite China and Russia and are expressed in the growing number of Internet users in older ages, the desire for more active use of mobile Internet and mobile apps. The main constraints and challenges for the elderly with inadequate digital inclusion are formulated. In the conclusion, the main directions of development and increasing the effectiveness of inclusion practices of the older generation in digital interactions are formed. The results may be useful for formulating management decisions for successful digital development in the countries under consideration.

Key words: digitalization, digital inequality, digital divide, digital divide age factor, elderly people, Russia, China.

Introduction

According to the UN's World Population Prospects 2022 report on population estimates and projections, the world's population will reach 8 billion on November 15, 2022, and the proportion of the population aged 65 and older will rise from 10% in 2022 to 16% in 2050, and triple and reach almost 30% by 2100. By 2050, the number of people aged 65 and older worldwide is projected to be more than double the number of children under 5 and about the same as the number of children under 12 years of age¹. The main reasons for this are falling birth rates and rising life expectancy. All countries will age at different rates. And no one knows today how society and the economy will adapt to this process².

¹ Five key findings from the 2022 UN Population Prospect. Available at: <https://ourworldindata.org/world-population-update-2022>

² Makurin A. (2021). Old, but not super. Why aging is scarier for mankind than atomic war. *Argumenty i fakty*, 13. Available at: https://aif.ru/money/economy/star_no_ne_super_pochemu_dlya_chelovechestva_starenie_strashnee_atomnoy_voyny

Global aging may take a number of decades and affect all societies, although in high birth rate countries its effects will only begin to be felt in the second half to the last third of this century. In addition, it is one of the very few future-oriented processes, about which we can say that it will materialize with almost one hundred percent probability. Global aging will have a multifaceted result, and a number of aspects of this process have not yet been explored at all or are even unclear. Moreover, humanity has no experience of such processes (Grinin, Grinin, 2020).

This raises questions for science about the study of elderly people's inclusion in various social issues, in particular in digital interactions, which are an integral part of modern life. And management faces a fundamentally new task of integrating this group into the digital society to reduce the prevalence of various types of social insecurity, unequal access to goods and services, discrimination, including in

the labor market. And the complexity of this task is that the group of older people who are “digital migrants” is fundamentally different from the “digital natives”. Thus, the first born after the digital revolution and accustomed to receiving information through digital channels (the approximate boundary is estimated as 1980) have more developed digital skills because it has been part of their daily life since childhood. And the second are people, born before these changes and forced to learn about digital innovations at different stages of adulthood and for different purposes. People who never adopted digital reality are also known as “Pre-digital Aborigines” (Prensky, 2001).

Taking into account the global and irreversible nature of the process of demographic aging, and the need to develop management tools for leveling the negative sides of this process, in this article we turn to the study of the experience of overcoming the digital divide in relation to the elderly residents of China and Russia.

The President of the People’s Republic of China, Xi Jinping, pays great attention to the development of digital China and has repeatedly made a number of important statements in this regard, emphasizing the need to make every effort to accelerate the process. According to the latest industry report, as of June 2022, the number of Internet users in China was 1.051 billion and the Internet penetration rate reached 74.4%; the country ranks second in the world in terms of Internet development or availability. In the digital society, especially against the background of the ongoing global pandemic, on the one hand, the social and economic importance of online learning, remote work, telemedicine and remote recreation is emphasized. On the other hand, the problems of social inequality caused by different degrees of high technology accessibility are becoming more acute. In the face of the impending wave of digitalization and the continuing aging of society, the question of

how to provide seniors with the ability to keep up with the times and bring smart technology into their lives is the core of our thoughts on this topic.

In Russia, this issue is also given a prominent role in digitalization management and scientific research. At the initial stages of the Internet technologies introduction (2000–2005), the country lagged far behind European and large Asian countries in terms of users’ share, and was in the same group with African countries. However, since 2013, the number of Internet users among Russian residents began to exceed the global average and has been growing ever since, raising the country’s status in the ranking of territories that have Internet access (Gruzdeva, 2020). At the beginning of 2022, there were 124630000 Internet users in Russia, which determines a penetration rate of 85.3%³.

The tasks of large-scale digitalization of the economy and society are currently being addressed in Russia through the implementation of the national project “Digital economy”, which involves accelerated introduction of digital technologies in the economy and social sphere, creating conditions for high-tech business, increasing the country’s competitiveness in the global market, strengthening national security and improving the life quality of people. Despite the prolonged stage of targeted financing, development of the regulatory and legal framework, increased inclusion of the population and public authorities in digital interactions, a number of risks and specific problems remain relevant, in particular they increase the risk of further lagging behind Russia and technological dependence on the world digitalization leaders (National Projects..., 2019).

The aim of the article was to comparatively analyze the practices of digital inclusion of the elderly in China and Russia in order to identify opportunities to improve its effectiveness.

³ According to Internet World Stats.

The objectives of the study included analyzing theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of digital age gaps in the world; considering the practices of using digital technologies by older people in China and Russia; providing an analytical assessment of the factors promoting the inclusion of elderly people in the digital society and their exclusion from it; generalize and systematize the practices of overcoming the digital age gap on the example of China and Russia.

Scientific novelty of the conducted research includes a theoretical aspect, because the authors analyzed studies on the topic of the digital age gap in China, Russia and other countries. Practical significance consists in generalizing the practice of overcoming the age aspect of the digital divide in China and Russia.

Materials and methods

The study used a set of scientific methods, in particular, comparative analysis, statistical analysis to realize the aim and objectives. To analyze the results, the methods of system-structural and cross-tabulation analysis are applied, and the “distance in time” method is used to assess the dynamics of gaps. The theoretical basis of the study is scientific works on the problems of age-related digital inequality, adaptation of older people to digital transformations of modern society, risks and benefits of increasing the inclusion of people of different ages in online interactions.

The object of the study is the policy in the sphere of reducing digital inequality, in particular, the age gap in China and Russia.

The information base of the study included the official data of the International Telecommunication Union, Internet World Stats, the collection “Information Society in the Russian Federation”, the data of selective federal statistical observation on the use of information technologies and information and telecommunication networks by the population, the Statistical Yearbook of China, the 49th statistical report on the development of the Internet in China, the data of the 7th Census of China.

Results of the study

Current state of the research in China, Russia and other countries

The widespread use of the Internet on a global scale and the growing digital connectivity have given birth to the concept of the “digital divide”, first coined in Alvin Toffler’s book Powershift (Toffler, 2003). The digital divide refers to the disparity between demographic and regions that have access to modern information and communications technologies and those that do not. Rene Lenoir (1974) proposed a theory of social exclusion, in which technological transformations significantly affect how older people live, what social roles they play, what social status they have, and the environment in which they live, creating a disconnect between the real and digital lives of older people (Silver, 1994). According to Ding Kaijie (Kaijie, 2009), the digital divide is a social exclusion in the information age. Zhong Xiangming and Fang Xingdong further developed the concept of “intelligent divide”, which refers to the evolved version of the main features of the digital divide in the new era. The “digital divide” by the elderly does not only refer to the difficulty of using the Internet to obtain economic benefits, but also emphasizes the fact that their lower ability to use digital technology deprives them of the right to participate in digital life (Xiangming, Xingdong, 2022).

Research on the digital divide in China has started to emerge in recent years and is generally not well established. Mou Tianqi et al. (Tianqi et al., 2021) showed that the digital access divide has been gradually bridged by the expanding network coverage in China, which has led to a continuous reduction in the cost of access, while the application divide is more pronounced due to the individual difference in Internet application capabilities. Ran Xiaosheng and Hu Hongwei (Ran Xiaosheng, Hu Hongwei, 2022) argued that differences in the utilization of Internet functions provide a possible explanation for the formation of health inequalities between urban and rural elderly. However, digital

technologies have changed the provision of public services across sectors including administration, education, and healthcare, providing a low-cost channel for sharing quality resources in rural areas (Haodong et al., 2020). Niehaves (Niehaves, Plattfaut, 2014) and others have shown that the age divide is more prevalent and invisible than the gender divide or the racial divide. Scholars (Joan, 2005) and (Ramon, Angel, 2016) have analyzed the predicaments brought about by the development of the digital economy on the aging population, including the economic divide, the access divide, the ability divide, the use divide, and the media literacy divide.

Some studies have found that the digital economy can increase income and reduce poverty, thereby alleviating income inequality, or it may lead to the widening of the income gap (Skiter et al., 2020). Others have found that the digital economy can improve the quality of life of nationals and reduce poverty through developing self-employment. The work (Kurantin, Osei-Hwedie, 2019) studied the relationship between the digital economy and poverty in Ghana. The author concludes that innovation capacity is a key factor in effective poverty reduction policies and that the digital economy can promote to its development. In addition, the U.S. has developed Digital Inclusion Programs and Connecting America: The National Broadband Plan, etc.; the EU has adopted an investment scheme called Senior Plus, which emphasizes that digital technologies should provide solutions for the EU and encourages social sectors and businesses to improve their digital accessibility through product and service innovation to meet the digital needs of older citizens.

In Russia, the issues of studying digital inequality have become relevant recently, and for the most part at the moment they are based on the postulates and methodological apparatus of foreign studies. Thus, the subject of many foreign and

Russian studies has been the uneven access to digital technologies (Gladkova et al., 2019; Gruzdeva, 2020; Shinyaeva et al., 2019; Nieminen, 2016; Ragnedda, Kreitem, 2018).

At the same time, the issues of digital inequality factors, especially at the local level (in the case of Russia, between and within regions and municipal entities), remain poorly studied. In addition, according to a number of authors (Zarubina, Vlasova, 2018), one of the urgent problems, related to the digitalization of society, is to understand the mechanisms by which the established, institutionalized forms of interaction in society, social perceptions, values and orientations will change in the new social context. Thus, some of the trends of modern digital development are those, which in one way or another are related to people of different age groups and generations: these include earlier initiation of children to digital resources (Shabunova, Korolenko, 2019), digitalization of workplaces, which is relevant for people of working age, aging of the population and associated barriers of digital participation on par with its increasing importance for people of older ages (Senokosova, 2018; Smirnykh, 2020). This predetermines the relevance of research in this direction.

When studying digital divides or barriers, modern researchers in one way or another address the age impact of PC and Internet users on its formation and scale (Volchenko, 2016; Shinyaeva, Slepova, 2019; Robinson et al. 2015; Yates et al. 2015). The age influence on the use of digital services, in particular financial services (Kuchmaeva, Arkhipova, 2017) and consumer behavior online has been proved (Gorelova, Serebrovskaya, 2021). The work (Varlamova, 2022) studied the dynamics of the intergenerational gap in access to the Internet and showed, that it is quite stable and in the absence of external shocks in the short term will remain within the existing boundaries.

The most frequently studied groups are certain population groups by socio-demographic characteristics, where age is a determinant: these are children, young people and the elderly (more often pre- and retirement age, third 60+ and fourth 75+ ages). For them, the level of digital skills is assessed as an important component for education, competitiveness in the labor market, addressing digital services, etc. (Smirnykh, 2020; Solomatina, 2020). Of particular research interest is always the extreme opposite groups: children and the elderly. For children, the digital environment is considered risky, its negative impact on health, academic performance and the emergence of addictions is becoming an important subject of study in sociology, psychology, pedagogy and demography (Shakirova, 2020; Chassiakos et al., 2016; Donelle et al., 2021). For the elderly, the possible benefits of their inclusion in the use of digital goods, in particular for improving the life quality, extending the period of employment, retraining in older age, are more often the subject of study (Bikkulov, Sergeeva, 2016; Anderson, Perrin, 2017; Mitzner et al. 2019). Moreover, medical research concludes the preservation

of stable cognitive function and longevity prolongation of elderly people when using Internet and computer (Berner et al. 2012). Despite the existence of research interest, a general picture of differences in access to ICT, availability of digital skills, privileges in the use of the Internet for elderly people, in particular, at the regional level has not been formed.

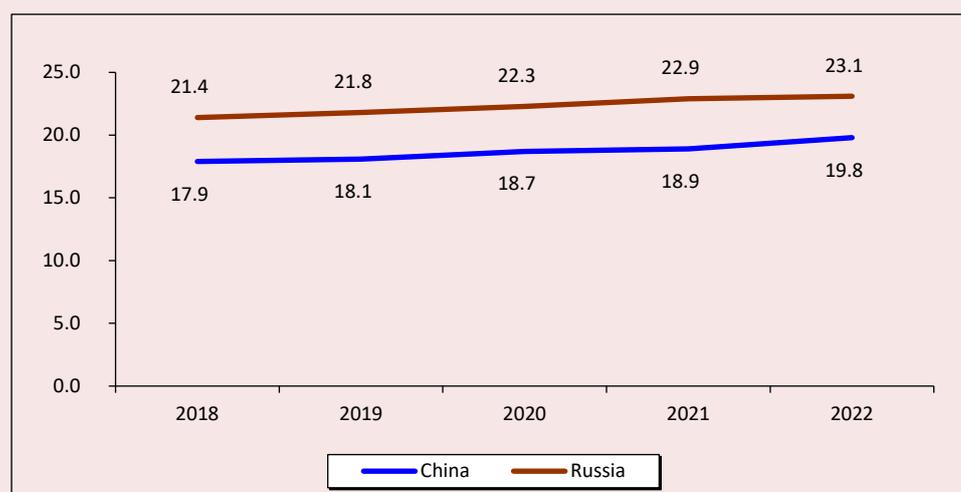
Thus, both in China and Russia, the research of digital divides is at the initial stage, and it is important to study their scale, factors of spread and search for tools to reduce them in order to level possible risks and improve the life quality.

Digital technology use by elderly

The first trend in the countries under consideration is the accelerated population aging and increased number of elderly Internet users.

In recent years, the population aging has continued to accelerate. Over the past 5 years, the share of the older population in China has increased by 1.9 p.p. to 19.8% in 2022 (Fig. 1). Demographic aging in Russia is deeper and the rate of increase is similar, between 2018 and 2022, the share of the elderly increased by 1.7 p.p. and amounted to 23.1% in 2022.

Figure 1. Share of the population aged 60 and above in the total population of China and Russia



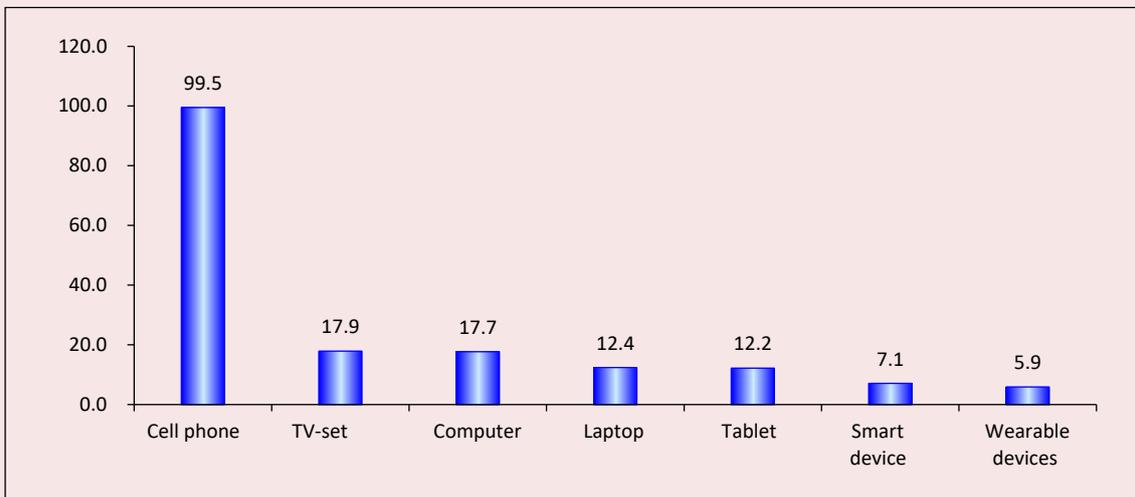
According to: data of the 7th Census of China, China Statistical Yearbook, Russia Statistical Yearbook.

Meanwhile, the number of elderly Internet users also continued to grow: as of December 2021, there were 119 million Internet users aged 60 or above in China, resulting in an Internet penetration rate of 43.2% among the elderly population⁴. In Russia in 2022, the share of Internet users over 60 years of age was more than 17.9 million people, the Internet penetration rate among the elderly population is 53%⁵. Over the past 5 years, the share of elderly Internet users in Russia has doubled: from 7.9% of the total population over 15 years old in 2018 to 15.2% in 2022. In general, positive trends in the inclusion of people of the older generation in the digital space, in particular, positive attitudes and trust in it in Russia are increasing. It is found, that it will take 4.2 years for young retirees (55–64 years old) and 7.4 years for people aged 65–74 to eliminate the intergenerational gap in digitalization and reach an Internet penetration rate similar to youth (Gruzdeva, 2022).

The second trend: Chinese researchers observe elderly people’s desire to use mobile devices to access the Internet. The proportion of elderly Internet users using cell phones to access the Internet has reached 99.5%, which is basically the same as the proportion of Internet users as a whole (Fig. 2). The proportion of senior citizens using smart home and wearable devices to access the Internet is less than 10%.

In Russia, 97.7% of the 60–69 age group use a cell phone, including for Internet use, a little less than 91.5% of the 70–79 age group and 67.4% of people over 80 years old. And the use of personal computers in older age groups is significantly lower, compared to young and middle-aged people. While in the latter two groups the proportion of those using a PC in the last 12 months is more than 87%, for people aged 65–74 years it is only 52%, over 75 years old it is 20.8%.

Figure 2. Devices used by elderly Internet users to access the Internet in China



Source: 49th Statistical Report on the Development of China’s Internet.

⁴ The 49th Statistical Report on the Development of China’s Internet. Available at: <http://www.cnnic.net.cn/n4/2022/0401/c88-1131.html>

⁵ Selective Federal Statistical Observation on the Use of Information Technologies and Information and Telecommunication Networks by Population. Available at: https://gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/business/it/ikt22/index.html

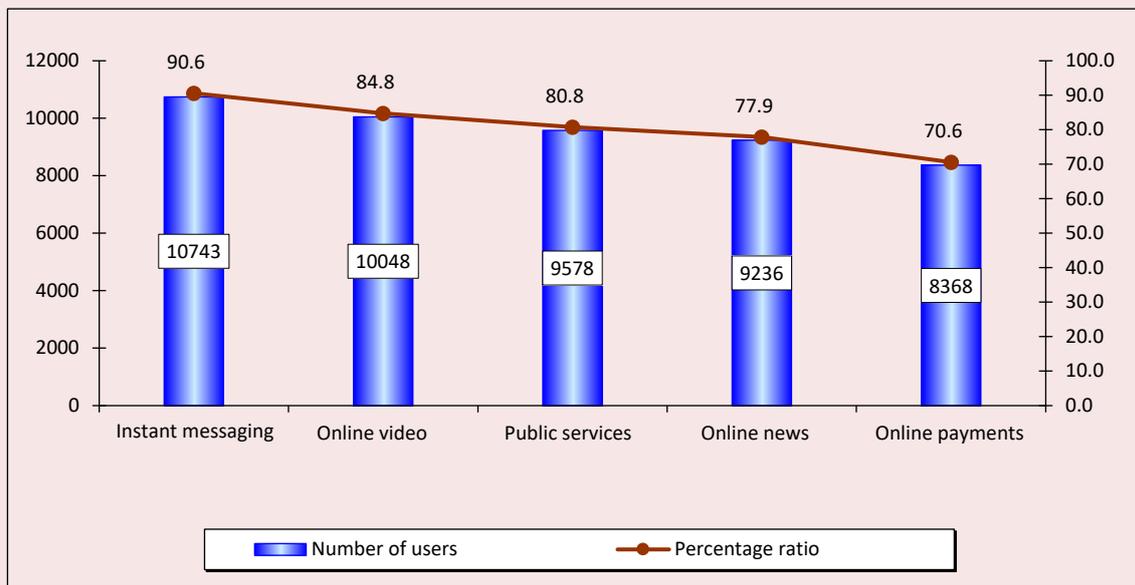
It should be noted that the desire for mobility is a global trend (Gruzdeva, 2020). On the one hand, this trend is dictated by the availability and convenience of mobile communication and the Internet, on the other hand, by the income opportunities in the purchase of personal computers, software upgrades, installation of wired Internet. Empirical data on the availability of PCs in Russian households show a positive picture: the number of PCs per 100 families has exceeded 100 for a long time, but these measurements do not take into account the obsolescence of equipment, the increasing requirements for devices for Internet surfing, watching video in high resolution and so on.

Some of the apps most frequently used by elderly Internet users in China include instant messaging, online video, government services, online news and online payments (Fig. 3). Among them, online news is the only app where the usage

ratio of the elderly group exceeds that of Internet users as a whole; that is, elderly Internet users are more actively following real-time events and trending news.

In Russia, the Internet usage practices of the elderly differ from other age groups: according to nationwide observations, people over 60 years are significantly less likely to use the Internet as a place to shop and receive state and municipal services online (Table). According to a regional survey conducted in the Vologda Oblast in 2021, elderly Internet users are less likely to use all categories of opportunities and prefer a personal visit to an agency to an online form of receiving public services (Gruzdeva, 2021). A significant role in this is played by a lower level of trust in online practices, elderly people are more likely to fall victim to scammers, they fear the loss of financial resources with insufficient experience in handling them in online payments and so on.

Figure 3. Apps most commonly used by elderly Internet users



Source: 49th Statistical Report on the Development of China's Internet.

Internet use practices of different age groups in Russia, 2022, %

Indicator	15–19	20–24	25–29	30–34	35–39	40–44	45–49	50–54	55–59	60–69	70–79	80 and older
Share of the population aged 15 and older, who used the Internet to order goods and/or receive services	52.2	71.6	74.1	73.2	71.1	66.4	60.0	52.4	42.9	24.4	8.6	1.8
Share of population aged 15–72, who used the Internet to receive state and municipal services	65.5	77.6	81.6	83.3	83.7	81.1	79.4	74.2	67.6	45.0	No data	No data

Source: Selective Federal Statistical Observation on the Use of Information Technologies and Information and Telecommunication Networks by Population. Available at: https://gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/business/it/ikt22/index.html

Digital inclusion or the “digital divide”: A dilemma for the elderly

Older people benefit less from the inclusive digital economy. Compared to young people, the senior population is significantly disadvantaged in terms of digital access and utilization, and the various economic opportunities brought about by digitally inclusive technologies often implicitly exclude many older groups, which reduces the digital participation and digital consumption capacity of the older population (Yifei, 2019). While the digital economy has led to significant automation and intellectualization of production, providing more opportunities for economic growth, it has also consequently caused technological unemployment and structural unemployment among the aging population (Chenxi, 2020). For example, in rural areas, automation and intelligent operations will inevitably deprive less-senior healthy elderly people of certain jobs in loading, transporting, farming, etc., putting this group of people at risk of unemployment. The brick-and-mortar stores that could be run offline by older people are being impacted by the rapid development of e-commerce and modern logistics, making senior retail workers more vulnerable to job losses (Zechi et al., 2016).

As a result of the pension reform, which began in Russia in 2019, the share of workers in older ages has increased, all of this has taken place in the

context of the economy digitalization, increasing demands for jobs and functions in a wide range of areas, from retailers (transition to new electronic labeling, new cash registers, payment terminals), social services workers, to high-tech areas. Thus, the share of “digital migrants” in the labor market has increased, and researchers have begun to note the formation of technoagism due to stereotypes and discrimination against elderly people, which in turn are followed by technostress in the workplace. This negatively affects labor outcomes and puts older workers in a vulnerable position (Karapetyan et al., 2021).

In general, the digital society brings great opportunities for development, but most older groups are limited by the stage of physiological development they are in, thus benefiting less from the inclusive digital economy compared to younger groups.

It is difficult to meet the needs of the elderly for age-friendly products. Some digital products on the market are designed without taking into account the special needs of the aging population (Hodong, 2020), which prevents consumer desires from being fully satisfied. Older adults often find themselves in a series of awkward situations, such as having difficulty completing online appointments for medical services and ticket purchases, being afraid to use self-service banking, and not easily receiving change when using cash for shopping (Xiaohong,

2016). The research data shows that relatively more senior Internet users can independently complete online activities such as showing health code/travel card, purchasing daily necessities and searching for information (69.7, 52.1 and 46.2% respectively); meanwhile, there are fewer senior Internet users who can independently complete online activities such as hailing a taxi, booking tickets and registering an appointment number for medical services. If they do not know how to use a smart device or an app, 55.7% of senior Internet users will “ask family members or friends for assistance”, 21.1% of them choose to “give up using it”, and 20.0% of them opt for “learn to use it by myself according to the instructions of the system”, which shows that senior Internet users are more dependent on external help.

The social participation channels of the elderly are relatively narrow. The development of digital technology has provided people with newer and more ways to participate in social activities, however, older generations are not active in learning about the new things and technologies around them, coupled with their physical conditions and other limitations. More often they will obtain information from traditional media such as television and radio in a one-way manner (Hongyan et al., 2020). Yet the digital society, which emphasizes two-way interaction, promotes human interaction, progress and innovation through cross-distributed data networks. Therefore, technological development affects the active or passive formation of “technophobia” among older people to a certain extent, thus affecting their social participation (Peng, Wenting, 2021). In recent years, the government and related departments, communities, and public welfare organizations have been enhancing the social participation of older people in the digital age through various activities. However, as of now, there are still problems such as inadequate activity management mechanisms and insufficient sharing of activity resources. Much more needs to be done in increasing the digital participation of older groups (Zechi, 2021).

As the elderly are not the principal users of smart devices, along with the inadequacies of digital education and popularization among the elderly, overall, the digital literacy of the elderly needs to be improved. In the face of the digital divide, some elderly Internet users also become “Internet-addicted” and fall into the “Internet traps” (Lili, 2014). A research report shows that among the elderly Internet users, some use mobile apps for more than 3 hours a day on average; 17.25% of the interviewed elderly people experienced online scam. Specific cases include being coaxed into buying fake health care products, believing in false medical information, being swindled into the “free online red pockets” fraud, and being lured into buying “high-yield” financial products. It is worth paying attention to the weaker ability of older people to filter information in the digital society – in the face of all kinds of information circulating on the Internet, 80% of the interviewed older people only trust their own judgment, while 60% of them will use websites or apps to verify the authenticity of the information. The lack of endogenous motivation of the elderly is also an important factor in determining the digital divide; most of the elderly do not have much desire to explore new things in the digital society and are not active in learning about, or using the smart devices and products, which leads to the further widening of the divide between them and the digital society (Yongai et al., 2019).

How can the elderly cross the digital divide

Bridging the digital divide for older adults must be done with a focus on overall care and more support. In the digital age, it is important to keep as many senior citizens as possible abreast of the times. The proposed measures can be divided into three groups, implying taking into account age characteristics when creating digital products, protecting the financial security of the elderly in digital interactions, and creating special training programs, including professional ones, for the elderly.

Taking into account age characteristics when creating software and gadgets

The government should actively promote projects and programs that take into account the peculiarities of the elderly population and aim to enhance the digital capabilities of the elderly, helping them to integrate into the digital society.

It is necessary to design and promote apps with caring version, seniors mode, or elderly mode that are easy to use by the older people (big fonts, big icons, big buttons and high volume, to address the difficulties of the elderly groups in reading, hearing, finding and learning when using the Internet; adapt to the elderly's Internet user behavior through "four simplifications", that is, simplify the user interface, simplify the structure, simplify the functions, and simplify the process). Apps should cover various functions such as news and information, social networking and communications, search engine, shopping, financial services, travel, medical and health care, etc., to better meet the online needs of the older people. When designing apps for shopping and travel, major Internet enterprises should streamline search, selection, payment and other functions and also the steps of using these functions for the elderly to realize the "one-click start" of the main functions.

Creation of technological innovations and research and development, intelligent products and services for the elderly is possible through government incentives, subsidies, project bidding, service purchase, etc. companies that take into account the physiological characteristics and needs of the elderly in the design and development of their products.

Protecting the financial security of older people in digital interactions

It is encouraged to introduce exclusive preferential rates for senior groups and reasonable reductions in communication costs such as cell phones and broadband service.

It is necessary to adopt measures aimed at strengthening support and supervision in order to create a safe digital environment for older adults. It is important to establish a credit system, improve the regulatory system, and introduce a corresponding institutional system to guarantee the safe participation of older people in the digital economy, crack down on online scams and unlawful acts to provide a trustworthy consumer environment. Older people are the main group suffering from digital disadvantage, therefore a designated financial fund should be set up for the reduction of digital poverty among older people, specifically for purchasing digital products, providing digital education services, improving information infrastructure, etc., to ensure fair opportunities for digital development. It is necessary to enhance the elderly's awareness of cyber information security, provide basic protection strategies, and offer legal protection for their personal information security, so as to create a safe and credible environment for their access to the Internet.

Educational programs for the elderly

It is important to actively expand the supply of education resources for elderly, innovate the development path of elderly education, consolidate the support service system of elderly education, encourage communities to carry out educational activities enjoyed by elderly groups, so that the elderly can appreciate the benefits and fun of the digital economy in the learning process. In Russian practice, successful educational projects on improving digital literacy of the elderly are supported by funds for NPOs and public structures support (Presidential Grants Foundation, Timchenko Foundation, etc.). Among other things, this indirectly solves the problem of intergenerational communication, since younger generations become teachers and elderly can use their improved skills to communicate with their families online.

For older people who want to find jobs, employment programs and appropriate training should be organized to get them acquainted with the digital economy features. Such programs have already been successfully implemented in Russia, including digital literacy courses within the framework of the national project “Digital economy”, universities of the third age/silver age (Saint Petersburg, Kursk, Kaluga).

Conclusion

The digitalization of everyday life and the economy brings both risks and opportunities to improve the life quality of the population and its individual groups. The older generation in terms of digital inclusion remains more vulnerable than younger people. At the same time, the scale of device and Internet accessibility for the elderly in Russia and China is quite high and continues to grow. The involvement of the state and civil

society in overcoming the age-based causes of the digital divide has had notable results. Increasing the effectiveness of work in this area is associated with the adaptation of digital services and gadgets to the characteristics of silver-age users, which may be inherent in representatives of other age groups due to individual cognitive features. One way or another, digitalization is part of our social reality and a promising trend of socio-economic development. Therefore, the policies of Russia and China, along with the goals of economic growth, set the aim of ensuring equal opportunities for all members of the digital society to maximize the benefits and reduce the digital divide.

In this regard, the policy of Russia and China, along with the goals of economic growth, sets the task of ensuring equal opportunities for maximizing the benefits and bridging the digital divide for all members of the digital society.

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