DIGITALIATORS - Digital upskilling for senior citizens, focused on their everyday necessary online transactions, especially after the pandemic

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DESK RESEARCH - ITALY

EUROPEAN DIGITAL LEARNING NETWORK ETS

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Desk Research – Digital Skills for seniors

Introduction

Digitisation is spreading rapidly and like wildfire in our daily lives, from the health sector to public administration. The real and tangible risk, however, is that of increasingly marginalising the less 'technological' groups. If they are not accompanied in appropriate courses of action, the elderly in particular are the victims of the so-called 'digital divide', i.e. the disparity in conditions that is created between those who have access to and are able to use the new technologies and those who, instead, remain excluded.

Early research shows that the biggest obstacle for the elderly in Italy is Spid (digital identity) and, in general, the advent of technology in public administration. According to the survey, a third of the sample believes that digitisation in the Public Administration has only partially facilitated the lives of elderly Italians, while only a small minority considers this technological 'revolution', represented mainly by Spid, to be useful. The discourse seems to be different in the health field: digitisation, accelerated and made necessary by the advent of the pandemic, is viewed with a more benevolent eye, with particular reference to electronic prescriptions. The new online tools have 'partly' or 'completely' facilitated drug requests and prescriptions, substantially limiting access to doctors' offices. On the other hand, for about 30 per cent of the people involved in the survey, health digitisation is not having a positive influence on everyday life, and the problem is evidently related to the impossibility or difficulty of accessing services via the web without the help of someone (according to the **Spi Cgil Veneto).**

Analysis in Italy of the level of ICT use among the elderly

Format Research's digitisation survey of IntesaSanPaolo, one of Italy's national banks, conducted on a sample of more than 1,500 people aged between 50 and 85, showed that the over-50s are increasingly technological. Almost 85 per cent own a smartphone, more than 61 per cent have a PC and around 21 per cent have a tablet.

The smartphone is used for making calls, using social networks and surfing the Internet. 94.8% of the over-50s are subscribed to one or more social networks (Whatsapp and Facebook above all), while only 5.2% do not use them.

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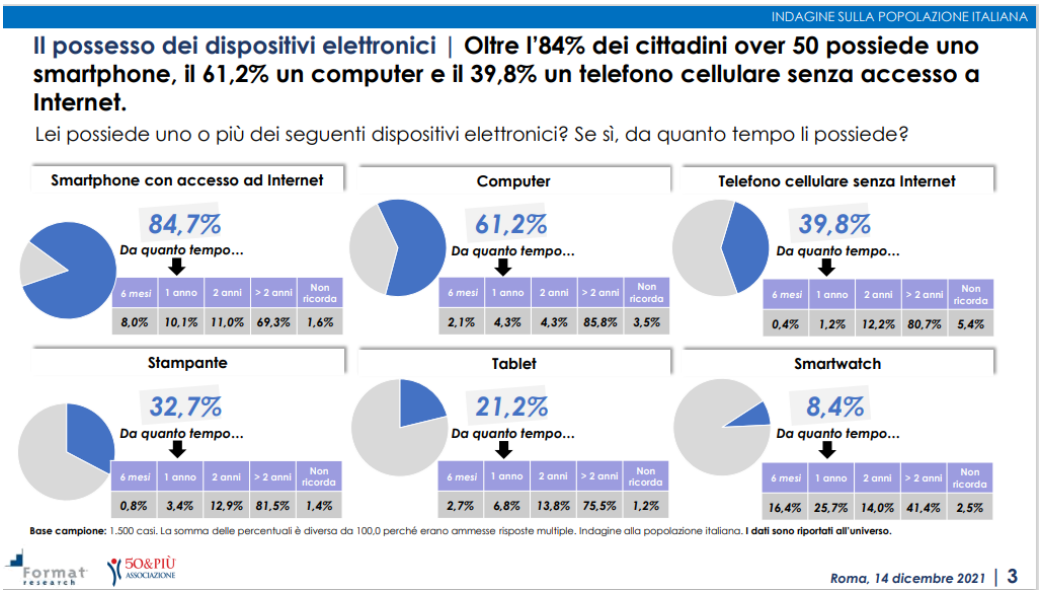

Through social networks, the over-50s communicate with loved ones (65%), distract themselves from personal problems (24%) and expand their network of relationships based on common interests (20%). 59% spend more than an hour a day on the Internet with a smartphone, the percentage rises to 66.2% when a personal computer is used.

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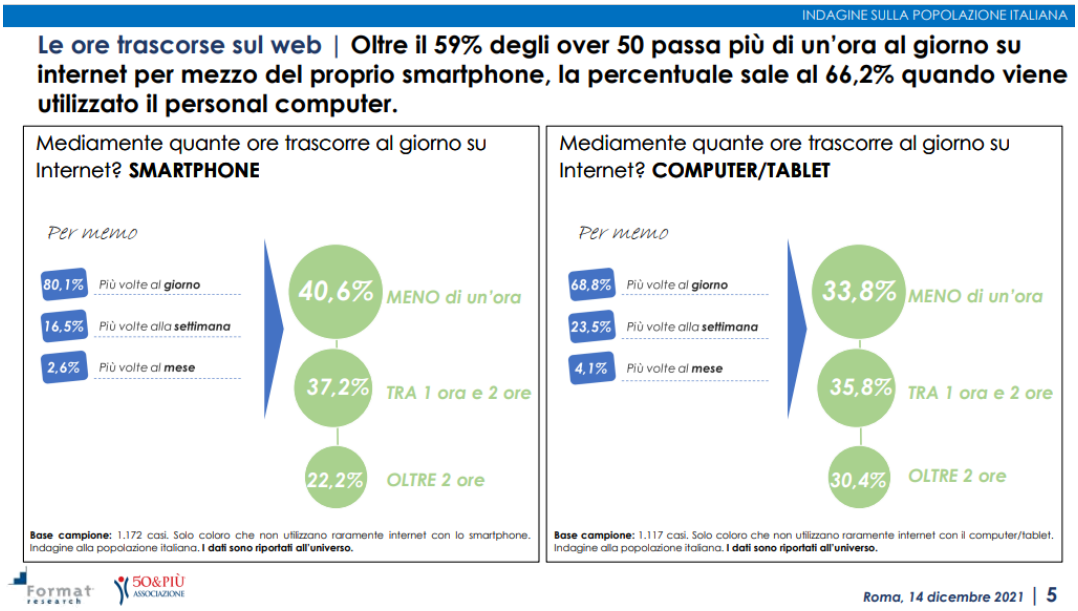

This is not without some difficulty. Technology attracts and is recognised by the over-50s population as an advantage, but this demographic group also needs to be warned of the dangers of the Internet and needs more skills.

68.1 per cent of the over-50s stated that they experience difficulties in using digital tools, rarely or often when they find anglicisms or technical definitions; 62 per cent stated that they have low skills in using technology.

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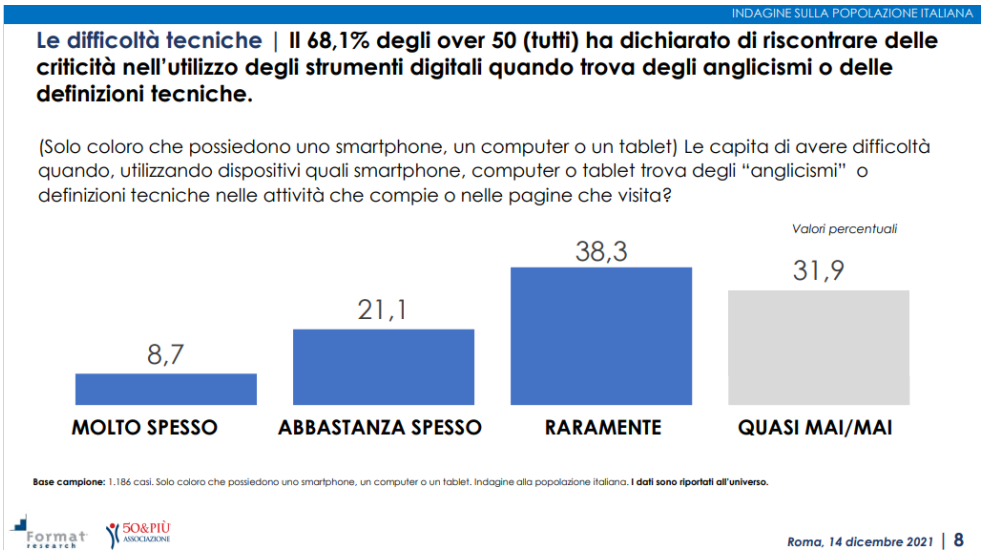

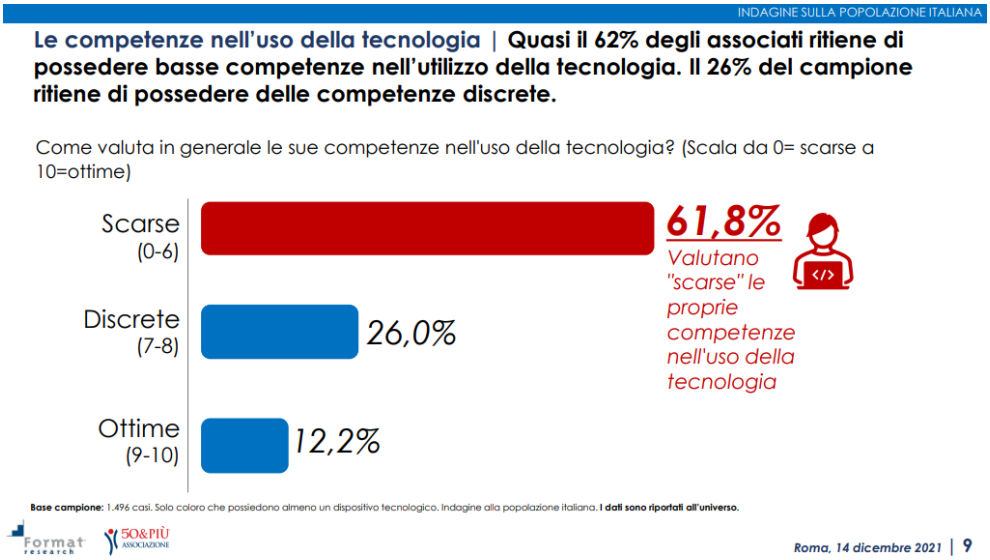

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One part of the survey was devoted to the use of telemedicine; almost 6% of the over-50s indicated that they had used telemedicine systems, the most frequently used services being tele-visiting and tele-rehabilitation.

It emerged that the main benefits of telemedicine in the near future are the possibility of using medical prescriptions on a mobile phone, reducing waiting times and having more timely treatment.

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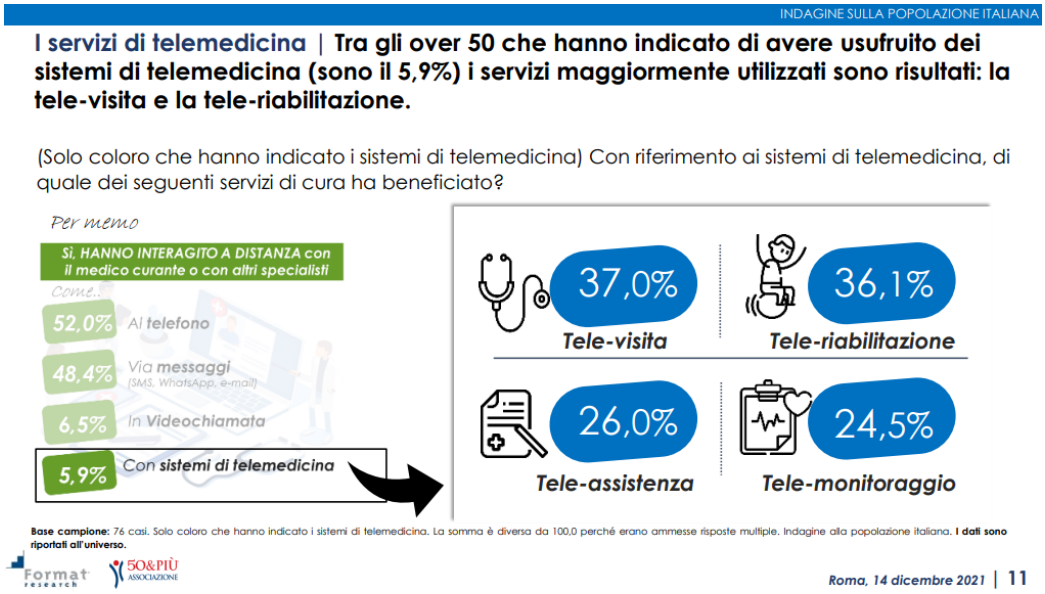
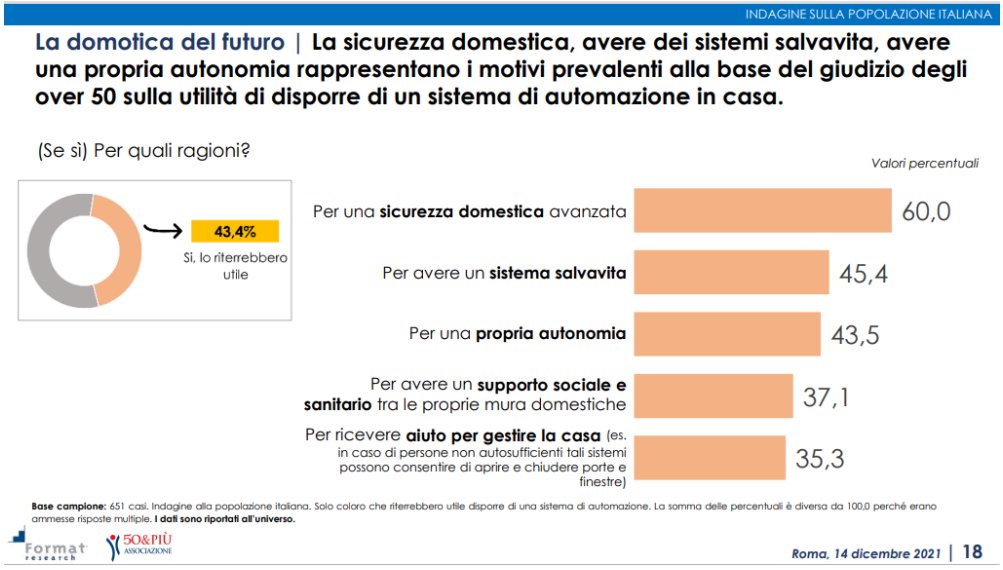


Among those who consider home automation useful (43.4%), the prevailing motivations are: home security, having life-saving systems and for own autonomy.



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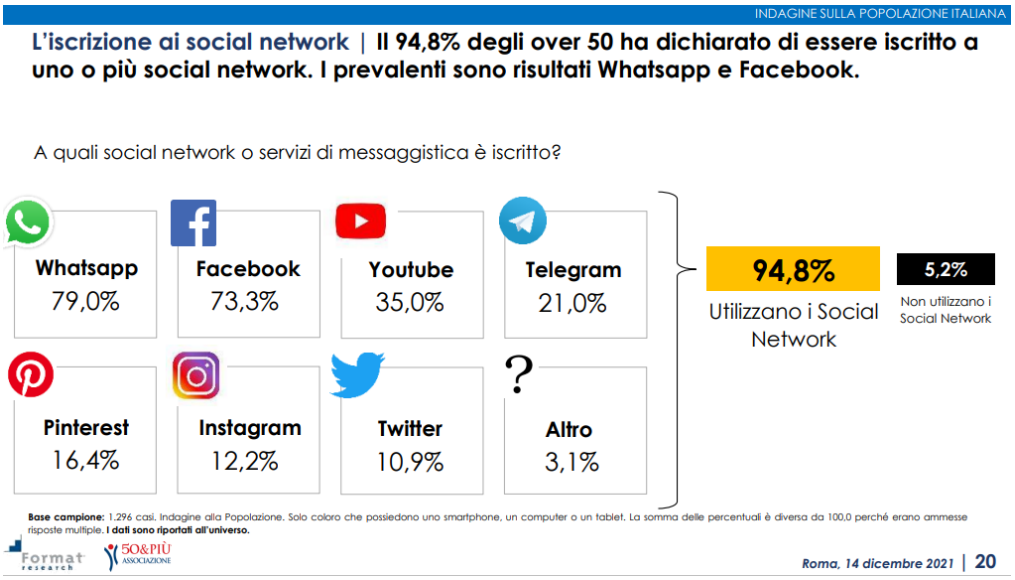
The outlook for the future is good. More than 61% of the over-50s believe that digital technologies applied to the field of health will enable or facilitate older people's lives.

In everyday life, technology is important for the majority of this segment of the population, but there remains some fear of social networks as tools that can increase the generation gap, as the over-50s do not know how to use technology to the full.



The Covid period has revealed some interesting data concerning digitalization

Since May 2020, the Department of Economic and Business Sciences and Law (Di.SEA.DE) of the University of Milan Bicocca has promoted research to try to answer precise questions: what are the skills of the over-65s with respect to the use of new technologies? With reference to this, what have been the changes related to Covid-19? Has the behaviour of seniors in purchasing and using digital services changed?

A multidisciplinary team of students and researchers completed a qualitative-quantitative survey, carried out by means of an online questionnaire, involving a particular group of over-65s: 328 citizens representative by gender and age group (divided into 65-74 and over 75), able to use and

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receive e-mails, who spent the first months of the pandemic - March/May 2020 - in the most affected regions (Lombardy, Veneto, Piedmont, Liguria and Emilia Romagna). The results of the study 'Seniors, new technologies, financial skills and COVID-19' were presented at an online conference on 7 May, which was also attended by experts and influencers.

The sociologist Emanuela Rinaldi (Scientific Responsible for the research) and the statistical researcher Mariangela Zenga presented the results of the work carried out, starting from the methodological point of view. First of all, the particularity of the sample analysed: a group representing the 'vanguard' of the Italian senior population in the field of digital skills. Moreover, the focus was on the changes linked to Covid-19 in the use of new technologies and on the use of online services (such as those of the public administration) and financial services (consumption and use of home-banking, credit cards, perception of changes in one's financial well-being).

Finally, the issue of online shopping and scams experienced received particular attention. For example, one in five has unwittingly purchased or activated services on websites or on the telephone (horoscopes, ringtones, etc.), while one in three has received emails asking them to reveal their credentials or passwords.

The programs available in ITALY to help older people to use eServices and develop ICT skills

1. Gioia+ Project

After the pandemic, a network of Tuscan associations and social cooperatives created the Gioia+ project. Its objective is to enable elderly people to use technological tools to reduce isolation and the risk of social exclusion. An intervention realised thanks to the Bando Riesco of the MPS Foundation.

2. SWAP

It is called SWAP and is an intergenerational exchange project between young and old aimed at improving the technological skills of older people; knowledge that has become increasingly indispensable in everyday life. The aim is to overcome what is called the 'digital divide', i.e. the digital divide that still tends to exclude a large section of the adult, non-technological population from access to citizen services. This morning, during a press conference at City Hall, the Municipal Councillor for Digital Innovation and Youth Angelo Gennaccaro presented the initiative financed by ANCI and promoted by the Municipality, UNIBZ, ARCI and Vision Tink Tank.

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3. NonniSmart

"Grandparents Smart" helps those in the Third Age to better respond to the needs of everyday life: "how can I get the SPID?", "how can I buy a train ticket?", "how can I ask about my pension?", "how can I subscribe to a newspaper?", "how can I make a solidarity donation?", "how can I recognise an online scam?", "how can I receive photos of my grandchildren on my mobile phone?", "how can I connect via video with my brother who lives far away?".

These and many other questions can be answered by knowledge of the basics of the digital world, which are presented in 20 videos, easily accessible online after registration, which is completely free of charge. The course is flexible and can be started at any time and provides continuous assistance in the face of doubts and difficulties. You will also be constantly updated in the face of any future digital knowledge needs.

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Nonni Smart, corso gratuito per insegnare agli anziani come usare al meglio smartphone e computer | GEDI Gruppo Editoriale

Un percorso di digitalizzazione "gentile" per gli anziani • Secondo Welfare

SWAP : un progetto per aiutare gli anziani ad entrare nel mondo digitale / Comunicati stampa / News / Città di Bolzano - Città di Bolzano (comune.bolzano.it)

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