*00:00:00 Interviewer*

I just want to say thanks very much for taking the time to interview with me today.

*00:00:07 Interviewer*

What we're going to do is, a semi structured interview to explore some of the themes based on the answers that you gave to the survey.

*00:00:17 Interviewer*

It will probably take about somewhere between 30 and 45 minutes. If you have a lot to talk about, it'll take a little bit longer, but that's absolutely OK.

*00:00:27 Interviewer*

First of all, what I need to do is I need to get your consent to the interview. This is similar to what you've done for the survey, but it's a separate process (for the interview).

*00:00:37 Interviewer*

I just need to need to go through so this will probably take about 2 minutes so you can just listen to me and I will pause in case you have any questions you want to ask and then I will ask for your consent.

*00:00:50 Interviewer*

So are you OK for us to get started?

*00:00:50 Participant*

Yes, OK.

*00:00:57 Interviewer*

Great. So the study aims to explore the experiences of older adults and lifelong learning with specific focus on intergenerational exchanges and digital skills. Little is known about the concept of intergenerational learning in Ireland outside of formal learning environments and by taking part in this study, your insights will help contribute to our understanding of the contribution intergenerational learning can make to the lifelong learning and digital skills development of older adults. Are there any questions about that?

*00:01:26 Participant*

No, OK.

00:01:27 Interviewer

So the next questions are the consent statements, so I'll read them all out and then if you have any questions you can ask those as we get to the end of them.

00:01:38 Interviewer

#1, I confirm that I understand the information about the study that has been explained to me. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, asked questions and I've had these answered satisfactorily.

#2, I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my participation within two weeks of the date of the interview without giving any reason and my data will be removed.

#3, I understand that any information given by me may be used in future reports, academic articles, publications, or presentations by the researcher, but my personal information will not be included and all reasonable steps will be taken to protect my anonymity when I'm involved in this project. Anonymized data will be offered to Lancaster University Archives and will be made available to genuine researchers.

#4, I understand that my name will not appear in any reports, articles or presentations without my consent.

#5 I understand that interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed and that data will be protected on encrypted devices and kept secure.

#6, I understand that data will be kept according to university guidelines for a minimum of 10 years after the end of the study. And finally I agree to take part in the above study. So how does that all sound?

*00:02:59 Participant*

It all sounds OK.

00:03:00 Interviewer

OK fantastic. So the first set of demographic questions are just to confirm the information you've already provided about yourself in the survey and the reason the demographics are important is because this is an intergenerational study so looking at the different age groups is important to the research questions, so I'll read out what you, the information that you've got to me, and if there are any changes we can make note of that as we go through.

00:03:37 Interviewer

You told me that your age range is 75 years or over.

*Participant*

Yes

00:03:41 Interviewer

Your gender is male. Your Irish County of residence is Cork.

00:03:47 Interviewer

You live in an urban area of over 1500 people population.

00:03:56 Interviewer

You live up with more than one other person.

*Participant*

Yes

*00:03:56 Interviewer*

Now I just have a question here because you indicated an age group of one person as being 40 to 54 years but you said you live with more than one other person, so is there another age range there which should be included?

*00:04:14 Participant*

Yes, we have Leonie who is 78.

*00:04:21 Interviewer*

Lovely, that's it. Just to clarify, because there's there was two options. OK, fantastic and your highest level of formal education is a postgraduate diploma or degree.

*00:04:35 Participant*

Masters degree.

*00:04:36 Interviewer*

Masters degree perfect OK.

*00:04:54 Interviewer*

So, there are two research questions of interest to this study, and this first one just talks a little bit about informal and non-formal learning exchanges. It talks about digital technologies and the intergenerational aspect. So just to explain what we mean by non-formal so formal learning or formal education would complete in your case and the masters degree. And for anybody taking an adult education course, an evening course through a provider. So for example, the Cork ETB (Education and Training Board) would be considered non-formal education or non-formal learning and then of course there is informal learning that you pick up from, you know each other, family, friends and that kind of thing. So it's just important to distinguish between those. I suppose the first set of this set of questions will help me better understand your experience with digital technologies, devices and so on.

*00:05:53 Interviewer*

So I'll have done most of the talking at this point, so I suppose the first question, <PATRICK>. If you don't mind is could you tell me a little bit about your experience of using technology and how long have you been using it? What devices do you use and for what purposes?

*00:06:11 Participant*

Yes, you see I had my formal education finish really in 1995 in terms of formal education and at that stage digital and technologies were not that used, much used in fact at that stage, so it was really after that through my work and that, you know, I would have used CAD 3-dimensional CAD, and not so much using it myself, but certainly being present and understanding the engineering aspects of it. But then of course I mean the ordinary aspects of having a smartphone with all the various apps that are out you know. I mean, I've so many apps on my phone that I pulled down be it a, you know, birds, snakes, be it identifying trees or fish. Although I have all those apps on my phone.

*00:07:03 Interviewer*

So when did you first get a smartphone. Do you remember?

*00:07:06 Participant*

Well , I was one of the first people in Ireland like going back north, deployed the smart phones in the car which was digital, but it was so big it took up the whole boot of the car because when I set up my own business in 1986, I was required to have my office in the car.

So I mean the smart phone was really, when did the smart phones come in? My first smart phone I suppose would have been probably ten, fifteen years ago, I suppose.

*00:07:38 Interviewer*

And I'm trying to think because I would be familiar with the with the iPhone and when they came in, so it would have been, I suppose, about the mid 2000s.

*Participant*

So yeah, I think about like 15 years ago, OK? That time, yeah. So I've always had a smartphone from the time they were kind of freely available.

*00:07:53 Interviewer*

OK, and how did you adjust to using it? Because at that time would you have had Wi-Fi at home, or were you relying on the phone or?

*00:08:02 Participant*

We got Wi-Fi at the time... Well, we already had of course our laptops, you know.

So we had our laptops which required Wi-Fi, and we had that. We're going back a long time now, really, to have that, you know, yeah.

*00:08:17 Interviewer*

Yeah, absolutely. And what would you? What do? What do you remember getting?

*00:08:22 Participant*

Well, you see, I was in business. I had my own business which I set up in 1986.

Now, of course, Wi-Fi wasn't available at that stage because you were using fax machines and and telephone really, you know.

And I suppose that very soon after we got the fax machines and having paid a lot of money for them they become totally obsolete. Yeah, and I'd say within two years of that. So about 1980, before 1990 we would have been using smart digital technology, yes.

*00:08:53 Interviewer*

And would you have been hooking up to the phone line to get access to the Internet or whatever?

*00:09:02 Participant*

We would have been hooking up to the phone line for that, yes, but you see the people I was working in business with expected you to have that because if they wanted you to forward drawings to them or that, they assumed you had the technologies to do that.

So if I had somebody like in Pfizers or some of the engineers are saying, would you send on the drawing to me? Now sometimes I struggled to that stage because I had to pretend that I had all this capability and sometimes then I was depending on somebody else to help me to do this because to pull down the CAD drawings and then to understand the CAD drawing to send it to somebody who was very, or pretended to be very, you know, au fait. Don't forget you’re getting at a stage where this was cutting edge, where this was very new technology and the guys you were sending it to, you know so it was evolving very quickly at that stage.

*00:09:49 Participant*

So you kind of had to pretend that you're as smart as the guys that were there, you know, and sometimes you found out afterwards you were actually smarter because once they had the drawing in front of them, they didn't care how it arrived or anything. They didn't, as long as they had that drawing.

*00:10:03 Participant*

Yeah, they might then come back with even just pencil Marks and things and and just say I prefer the pike went there or that thing. Or it was actually a mirror image of what you sent me. Well, then I talked to the lads in the office and don't forget I had expertise in the office to do this.

*00:10:18 Interviewer*

Yeah, absolutely. So you're really learning on the fly and learning on the job.

*00:10:21 Participant*

Yeah, live when everybody was, yeah, you know. Unless you went and did a CAD programme course. Which we didn't. We learned on the job.

And you also had the ability to ring CAD up. The people who supplied it to us and that's how we did.

*00:10:32 Interviewer*

OK.

*00:10:36 Participant*

The same with the financial side of things. We used. You know I I've forgotten the name of it and we had an accounting package.

*00:10:48 Interviewer*

The name of the accounting package?

*00:10:51 Participant*

But then if any difficulties on those, we rank the people who supplied the package.

*00:10:55 Interviewer*

Would they have offered any training up front? The same with the CAD suppliers?

*00:10:58 Participant*

Yes, they came into the office and trained us, but it was more the lady in the office who did the accounts because she was the one in the end.

*00:11:05 Participant*

I mean, I always took the view. In fact, if there's somebody there who can do it, I don't need to be at the expertise that I can you know, yeah it can handle and if that's her expertise or she's learned hard to do it, then leave her at it and she was very good at it.

*00:11:18 Interviewer*

That’s brilliant and it really gives a good background.

*00:11:25 Interviewer*

So, do you think from a motivation perspective in getting started? Was it because you know you needed to use it from, you know, a work and business perspective and that just you just kind of, you know, went along with that? Or what was your motivation to use technology outside of the business in the workplace.

*00:11:44 Participant*

Well, I suppose it evolved from the business, really, the technology after that you know was simple enough like Excel or Word or you know or the various other apps that you’ve got but you know, they're rather simple once you have them on your phone. In terms of using them they're quite user friendly.

*00:12:08 Participant*

And then if I I get embarrassed sometimes when I look at my phone and see the number of things that I have and for whatever reason, you know what I mean? For example,

I use Kindle all the time on my phone.

*00:12:23 Participant*

So if I go to Kindle, identify my FB reader and then I have all my short stories for tonight and I draw them down. Now illegally, I've been drawing down rather than paying for them

*Interviewer*

And do you read them on the phone?

*00:12:37 Participant*

I read them on the phone because it's so much easier to read them on the phone here. You know I tend to read at night.

*00:12:44 Interviewer*

Easier than what else?

*00:12:45 Participant*

Than using a heavy book when I'm in bed.

*00:12:48 Interviewer*

OK, but just thinking about the size of the screen.

*00:12:51 Participant*

But I can make the screen bigger, you see (*shows interviewer the screen*). Oh, that's too big. Because then, in fact, when I scroll up through it, I'd be scrolling by the pages, too many pages. So I pinch to the point where I can read it comfortably and scroll up through and then on to the next page. And over the COVID period I read so many books that in my lifetime I haven't read as many books you know, mostly on Kindle, because if I'm using a heavy book like the life of Obama or something, which is quite a big book, you know. But on this it's even comfortable lying down in bed whereas with a book you’re turning pages, so in terms of comfort. Leonie (<PATRICK>’s wife) can't handle that, she prefers to have her book.

*00:13:33 Participant*

I don't know what that that's answering your questions or not?

*00:13:37 Interviewer*

Yes. It's interesting because I suppose being able to use both and what's more comfortable like that. I mean I have a book here that is for reading in the garden because I don't have a Kindle and the iPad doesn't work in the sun but I do have a couple of books that I'm reading on the on the iPad, so it's all down to use really and what you need it for and so on. So yeah, absolutely, that's I've never tried reading on the phone though.

*00:14:08 Participant*

I just find the weight of it and everything. It's so simple really.

*00:14:14 Participant*

Then I was teaching as well. I started teaching 19 hours as a part time teacher in Kinsale. It with the Further Education college there, teaching ecology. And I used Facebook to communicate with the students. You know, I found out the students at that stage, Further Education, they're not the most attentive students. And I felt an obligation to them to actually manage, because then we're trying to find themselves, where they were headed, where they will go. And so I made life easy for them.

Now, I wasn't at this “So where are you?” I used Facebook to actually send the lectures to all of them, whether they turned up or not.

*00:14:52 Interviewer*

Wow. And that was at a time when young people would have been using Facebook a lot, whereas they don't now and you'd be using TikTok now or something.

*00:14:54 Participant*

TikTok didn't exist, so Facebook was the thing to do.

*00:15:01 Interviewer*

OK wow.

*00:15:02 Participant*

Now I was reprimanded a couple of times by the externals for doing that. Because they should be turning up for lectures. I took the view that they’re not going to turn up for lectures anyway. So, if I can kind of get them through this year to try and find themselves and that they can come in and do an exam at the end of the year and get it, pass it, you know, a reasonable mark, then I've achieved something for them and maybe they then have found themselves to get on to the next stage. Now quite a few of them went onto UCC then after that, because they decided you know. Now, after a while that Facebook became such a menace that they were sending me so much stuff from you know, all over the world and they were then they were that type of student and then they were demonstrating in Sydney or demonstrating in London and I was getting all this stuff from them, you know. So I came off Facebook and I've never been back on Facebook since.

*00:16:02 Interviewer*

Yeah, with good reason. It served his purpose.

*00:16:03 Participant*

It served its purpose.

*00:16:08 Interviewer*

And yeah, I think that that that's an important thing as well. But I think what it does go to show as well. You know, with the shift to online teaching and with the with the COVID-19 pandemic. I mean it was, you know, a lot of people were doing it already, or basically managing a hybrid, kind of approach so you know maybe sharing material online we you know, delivering some lectures and so on, but yeah, it didn't just happen in 2020.

*00:16:32 Participant*

No, no, it didn’t. It was already there and there was a phase or form of it there.

*00:16:37 Interviewer*

That's great. OK, so I think we've covered off the motivation, so there was a question in this survey and it was just a like a series of statements and basically it was just to self-assess digital skills and confidence because as you know there are people who can be, or appear very confident, but they might not be skilled and there are people who might be skilled but not confident. And there can be people who are neither or both. This is a scale that I was given by an academic in Swansea and I found it quite useful because you could see the, you know, the pattern, so certainly with yours you're quite skilled and quite confident, so I think that was good. I didn't have any questions in relation to that.

*00:17:28 Interviewer*

So the one thing I did want to ask you if you were to look at all of those together, and if you were rating your digital skills and confidence, how would you on a scale of 1 to 5 from you know on skills not confident to very skilled, very confident? Where would you put that at?

*00:17:47 Participant*

Three both straight here.

*00:17:48 Interviewer*

About a three, why would you select three?

*00:17:51 Participant*

Well, I wouldn't be kind of so competent that you know that I could.... It’s hard to explain, you know, but I mean, I was competent in the things I needed to do, but if I went outside of the area in fact, or if it was a difficulty or something happened with my screen or something else like that, I'd have to ask somebody else to put it right for me.

*00:18:14 Participant*

So I mean, even Mary (*<PATRICK>’s daughter*) when she was in college and Mary, as you know has learning disabilities. But if I was doing a PowerPoint presentation and I had problems with the PowerPoint, I would say, “Mary come up here, I can't move that photograph from there to there, would you do it for me?”

*00:18:34 Participant*

“That's it, Dad.”

*00:18:35 Participant*

Now I didn't know how she did it, but as long as the photograph moved to that point, I didn't care after that, you know.

*00:18:40 Interviewer*

Yeah, well, I'd be the same absolutely. I do say is that there's always something we will come across that we don't know. For me now today it was the new printer so I was trying to print off my chapter that I've written but I didn't want to print off 31 pages. I wanted to print out pages 8 to 31 and it wouldn't let me do it. And I tried it a couple of times and I, you know, it just wasn't working. So I just printed out the whole lot, so I'm sure there's something at the back of that but I'm not going to be able to fix it, and I'm not going to...

*00:19:06 Participant*

Yeah, that's happening. So that happens me as well. Now Brian is very digitally competent, yes, and so you know I've always been able to, without leaving him feeling that he’s so important that I can't manage without him, you know.

*00:19:22 Interviewer*

I think that's lucky because you have that support in your household.

*00:19:29 Interviewer*

Because in in Ireland what they have is this programme called Digital Skills for Citizens. And it basically means every adult can have 10 hours of free training and if they if they need it. Is that something you would have ever availed of?

00:19:42 Participant

No, no, I don't think I need it really, you know. Even colleges from 1995 when I was there doing all the statistical thing and putting them all in fact together using a programme to do it.

00:19:53 Participant

You know once John O’Halloran, who was my tutor at the time showed me how to do it. I just did it, you know.

*00:19:58 Interviewer*

So, you've already mentioned that you know Brian and Mary can give you some support whenever you need to do something, but putting it on the other shoe is there anything that you can ever do to maybe help them out with something?

*00:20:16 Participant*

There were sometimes would be on the financial side of things, you know on Internet banking and that type of thing, you know now Mary wouldn't manage Internet banking, and nor would we let her, really, you know, because it's too, it's a bit too dangerous, you know.

*00:20:29 Interviewer*

Yeah, and I think that's a good point because when it comes to you know, all the literature would lean towards, you know, privacy, security. All the fraud that's going on at the moment, the scammers which is really quite quite scary, so I think it's yeah I think it. It makes sense that we're, you know that we're being careful and prudent about you know what we do with that kind of thing.

*00:20:59 Interviewer*

You've already said that Brian would probably be the first person that you'd go to if you needed any support and it works out that way. So does that mean then <PATRICK> that you don't need to go outside your household to, you know, your neighbourhood, your community for anything?t

*00:21:14 Participant*

Not really, no. I mean at this stage of my life I don't feel I need it anyway. Do you know what I mean? I have all the digital bits that I need to do what I want to live.

*00:21:26 Interviewer*

And if you had to ask Brian to help you out with something, how would you describe, how does that make you feel? You know when you've successfully managed to do whatever needed to be done.

*00:21:43 Participant*

It doesn't bother me at all. No, no problem that way at all. I mean, it also allows him to feel as if he has, you know, a little bit of one up on me.

*00:21:54 Participant*

We don't really, you know, I would say “Brian, reload that software firmware” or something like that. And he would do it. I also don't have the patience sometimes, you know, wait for this thing to load. Or if it's a problem on the computer and something has happened or it looks as if something, a bug has come in there somewhere. He’ll debug it. So, I'm not going to.

*00:22:17 Interviewer*

That makes all the sense in the world. OK, so that comes off the digital skills and confidence. And the next research question or theme is about perceived impacts to personal quality of life by being connected in a digital world, and we've already just talked about, you know fraudsters and scammers, and that kind of thing. So I want to kind of explore a little bit about the effects that technology can have on our quality of life, both positively and negatively. And then we'll just talk a little bit about the digital inclusion, the social inclusion aspect of it. So, the next set of questions are really to help just understand that a little bit better, so it's probably important that I try and explain what I mean for this study by quality of life and because it comes up and there's, you know, it could be, you know you might be very happy, but you might not be healthy and that might affect your quality of life.

It could be your general well-being and so on, and if you remember in the survey I asked you to complete a number of statements. So, these are based on the CASP-19 scale, which is a scale that's used by researchers to basically general self-assess, and that there's a score associated with each of these. And I can see from yours that you have a very positive outlook on life right he way across the board and so that's good and I don't have any questions specifically, but I do want you to come to just call that out at the outset.

So I suppose my first question is, do you think your use and experience of technology has had a positive impact on your quality of life?

*00:24:08 Participant*

I think so, yeah, I think so in terms of information you know. Even if you get into Chrome in the morning. In fact, you know “when did the Catholic Church first started hearing confessions?” You know, and you think they because God put them in the first place and then you look it up and you find no, it was only the 11th century they started putting it in, you know. So it's that kind of knowledge that when a thought that comes into your head, it's available to you straight away. Now whether you believe the information that is there onscreen are accepted from Wikipedia or Chrome or wherever the information, that's another issue. You know, because the facts may not be correct.

*00:24:47 Interviewer*

So because you already said in the survey that you like to explore independently and learn independently online. And obviously this is an example of how you do that. So how do you go about distinguishing fact from fake news?

*00:25:02 Participant*

I suppose a lot of the stuff I'd be looking at would be kind of technical, folklore.

And it's not the same thing or fake, you know. OK, if you're looking about vaccines or something like that that you'd have to think maybe this is fake news here. But I think the areas I'm actually looking at, there's not so much fake news in there. Also you come up with a lot of different opinions, so really, maybe it's not black and white, so you've got to make up your own mind which way you lean on it. You know?

*00:25:33 Interviewer*

That makes absolute sense. So, looking at the same question then from the other side of the coin. Is there anything about your use of technology that you feel has had a negative impact on your quality of life?

*00:25:47 Participant*

Not really. I suppose there is the worry in terms of the financial side of things that you'll be scammed. We’re with <*bank name*> and it goes through all this security and you have to believe that it is a secure system because you're putting everything there. So I frequently look at my accounts. I would look at my accounts at least once a week, just to see that there's nothing happening there. Yeah, you know that's my own feeling of security.

*00:26:17 Interviewer*

Yeah, that makes sense and would you do anything in the way of online shopping or anything like that?

*00:26:26 Participant*

Yeah we do a lot of online shopping, well not a lot now, but particularly during COVID when it wasn’t so easy. You know things like walking boots when, where, yeah, you know that type of thing, so easy.

*00:26:39 Interviewer*

And how would you locate the sites to make those purchases?

*00:26:43 Participant*

Well, if you just simply if you wanted a new swimwear, you just put down. You go into the swimwear. Just put it in and it'll come up under Amazon or Dunnes Stores or any number of other sites like outdoor pursuits and then you decide which you look at them all and then decide. Look for the sake of a £5/€5 togs t's hardly worth going to too much effort, you know.

*00:27:10 Interviewer*

You just mentioned hiking boots. So, for example, if you purchased your hiking boots traditionally from let's say Great Outdoors, would you go to Great Outdoors website to have a look for them?

*00:27:23 Participant*

I would yes. If I was happy with what I previously had got or the brand. You know if I was happy with the brands then I can see if Great Outdoors have it and then you see it's €50 for boots, I can't go too far around here, even if they fall apart after I purchased them, you know.

*00:27:40 Interviewer*

Yeah, this is true and I think with shoe sizes anyway, they tend to be more. You know you can, you can manage them or it's more realistic you know, as opposed to sometimes sizes just don't work like clothing, yeah. OK. Good.

So did you have any negative, any bad experiences of...?

*00:28:00 Participant*

No, no I haven't. I suppose maybe in terms of in bookings will be travel. We just love travelling or you know we always, I suppose for the last 15 years I suppose we've done our complete holidays completely digitally, digitally.

Both the airlines booking there, there's a booking the booking the car, all that being done completely, whereas before you went to travel agents.

*00:28:26 Interviewer*

And any anything that you would do differently or wouldn't do again based on any of those holiday experiences?

*00:28:35 Participant*

Not really. They've all worked out exceptionally well. You know, because it's quite a risk, you know. There was one occasion on a Ryanair site in Paris. I booked an overnight stay and the place was absolutely, utter filthy, rubbish, terrible place, you know, and I went back to Ryanair and told him that that shouldn't be on their site and they knocked it off.

*00:28:56 Interviewer*

Oh good.

*00:28:56 Participant*

They did, yeah.

*00:28:57 Interviewer*

I think it's all about the feedback and I think that's important as well that we have the, you know, the confidence and if something isn't right then don't just give out about it, do something about it, yeah.

*00:29:06 Participant*

No, we've done that very well. Yeah, you know, cars have always been at the airport waiting for us. You know, all of that OK.

*00:29:15 Interviewer*

So overall, it sounds like your use of technology for whatever reason has been positive. I have a couple of questions I just want to chat about in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic because you know, before then and in a previous study I did last autumn. It was a survey of university students mostly and out of 440 of them it turned out that 56% helped older family members with the digital communications during that first lockdown period, so that was really quite insightful. So, I'm interested to find out if before the pandemic you would have used any communications technologies to communicate with family and friends you know, scattered around the country or the world. And what would you have used?

*00:30:08 Participant*

Ever before COVID we were on WhatsApp.

And before that we were on Skype. As you know, Skype seems to have disappeared now but Skype because I have a brother in Sydney and a brother at that stage was in Ghana or somewhere and I've brother in London and I had a sister in France. So, it was the way of communication.

*00:30:27 Interviewer*

All this communication that way so it was there was no change. And WhatsApp does video calling as well, doesn't? Yeah, yeah, yeah. So I mean, back in the day when the costs of telephoning Australia were just crazy things altogether.

*00:30:41 Participant*

And then I WhatsApp my Irish friends. I WhatsApp the most evenings. Yeah yeah. Certainly, I would use WhatsApp probably 5 days, five times a week.

*00:30:54 Participant*

If we're using video it’s definitely handy.

*00:30:56 Interviewer*

That seems to be quite commonplace these days even down to things like where, you know, if you want to text somebody a photograph like the the telephone companies charge a fortune for that you know, whereas you can do with WhatsApp. OK you're probably giving up some of your data to Facebook and whatever. But you know, you just weigh these up, which is which is fair enough.

*00:31:15 Participant*

Yeah, so what?

*00:31:20 Interviewer*

OK, and now I just want to talk a little bit about community and volunteering. So, <PATRICK>, I know you're very active in your in your local community, so I want you to tell me just a little bit about the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had on your community and volunteering activities. Were you able to move any of those online? Did they stop? How was that period? Because it was quite a period of time and did technology do anything to help fill that gap that was there from a physical perspective?

*00:32:00 Participant*

I suppose the volunteering is because I'm on the Greens committee on the Golf Club and when we were shut down it gave me a great facility because we were near it of course as well to get out and do all the stuff on the course. I mean I was driving the tractors, cutting the trees, fixing the greens. There were about eight of us that did it, so we socially distanced, and we kept in touch on WhatsApp.

*00:32:26 Interviewer*

OK, brilliant so it was business as usual, pretty much.

*00:32:28 Participant*

I think it actually was better than usual because the course was available. Yeah, so that was fortuitous in a way, so the amount of work was done. And because we were within the radius of the of the you know, yeah.

*00:32:39 Interviewer*

Yeah, the 5K and the restrictions at the time.

*00:32:42 Participant*

Yeah, so it worked very well.

*00:32:44 Interviewer*

Excellent. So and I suppose like since then, so since the restrictions were, you know, were lifted and you know people are out playing golf as normal, so has it been a question of just continuing or going back to the old ways of working? Or how has that been working?

*00:33:02 Participant*

Obviously the course is not as available to us now in terms because there are people there but we're communicating in the same way through WhatsApp. Some of it is quite aggressive I wouldn’t want to..., smart stuff <laughs>

*00:33:16 Interviewer*

Actually, that's interesting because with WhatsApp. It's kinda like a group conversation for the most part, so is the tone different through WhatsApp than it would be if you were meeting face to face?

*00:33:30 Participant*

Not really, I mean, probably about clubs. Any club. There're always people who feel things could be done better, or they're smarter and maybe they're right, but at this stage that particular aspect is, but that comes up in everything as you know, whether it's tidy towns or whether it's anything, you know. So you have to work within the and try to be as diplomatic as possible. Although having said that, Leonie says to me I should count 5 before I write my text in our Whatsapp because you can't pull them back.

*00:34:02 Interviewer*

Indeed, I think that's it. I do think sometimes people, yeah, don't think before they you know press the send button and you know, may regret that. But I think whatever about being in a in a WhatsApp group with just a few people, it's where people do that, you know, in a public social platform. That's where that kind of thing gets very difficult. I think for sure.

OK, so, that is pretty much everything that I wanted to cover in relation to the questions that you had obviously completed for the survey and the themes that I wanted to cover off today, but I would like to just give the opportunity, maybe there's something else bearing in mind you know the nature of the study is all about intergenerational learning which can work both ways, and obviously you know you've shared that with me. How it works in in your household you know between between the generations. But is there anything maybe that I haven't covered off here that you might think might be relevant to this research and you'd like to share?

*00:35:11 Participant*

Hard to know. I mean I have friends who deliberately stay away from digital.

*Interviewer*

OK, do you know why?

*00:35:18 Participant*

That's a good question. They just simply probably let it too late at the start and now feel it's too difficult to get involved.

*00:35:26 Interviewer*

That's interesting that you should say that because the pilot interview that I did with somebody again in your own age group said you know “technology has passed me by“ and in his case I asked him, I probed it a little bit further, and in his case he was saying, well, you know, the wife does whatever I need to be done. So that brings in this notion of the the warm expert or the proxy user. But when it comes to proxy users, you do have to be careful because in Ireland there isn't any formal role in the UK, in England. For example the NHS you can have a formal proxy user. So somebody who would log onto your health accounts, you know, and that kind of thing. But we don't have that here. And I think in particular, where you have somebody to provide that support and you know between you, you manage it. I think that's OK, but there are, you know, many people in this country who live alone. And who don't have any household support or maybe don't have any community support, and I think that's an area that might need to be explained or explored further. To be fair, I think the public libraries are very good. They have a digital ambassador programme, but that means somebody has to go to the library to avail of that service, the same with this Digital Skills for Citizens scheme or you have to have the technology, you have to have an iPad. So you might have an iPad, but then you have to have the broadband to go with it, so I think there's a lot more of these peripheral things, and when it comes to the digital divide, you've got these different levels, so access is one but then use and how to use is another and so on. So what would you say to any of those people who've said "it's passed me by, I can't get on with it.” What would you tell them they're missing out on by not being connected?

*00:37:34 Participant*

Two of them that come to mind are priests. And you know, they just decided. And I still think in fact, the fact that they're on their own because most priests live on their own.

They're missing out on so much, but they're happy within themselves. Both of them are artists, and they've very competent artists and they feel I think they feel fulfilled in the paintings they do, and things like that and they just don't need. They feel themselves they don't need the digital support.

*00:38:04 Interviewer*

I think that's fair and as well, you know, because the I think the thing that's most concerning is that and you see this coming from government with various policies and strategies that I've been researching. It's go online. Go online. We saw this with COVID for information, Go online and then you had people going to, you know incorrect places. Or maybe not the best places. For example, instead of going to Gov.ie and they went to the Citizens information and landed in a whole lot of trouble regarding Golf Gate, as you know, and things like that, that just really, you know, don't make a whole lot of sense, but I think it should be optional and I think it should be a case of the government approach can be digital first, but not digital only. I think many agencies are just kind of like forgetting that. You try to ring up a a utility company, press 1, press 2, press 3, if you get through to somebody and you know you could be there like forever, the person might not be able to help you, so this is all part of technology that affects us. Whether or not we, we have a smartphone I think, or anything like that.

00:39:15 Participant

When I go to MyGov and can't get into it because they say my password is wrong but it is the password that was there.

It is the right password for the start, letting me in, you know, then you ring up wherever they're based, up in Sligo or somewhere.

And you ring them up and they say, you know you're on the screen, but I can't get in. Yeah, you know when you tell me what was your mother's maiden name, you know where did you go to school? What was your pet's name when you were growing up?

And all these things they ask you again, and it won't still come up. I still can't get in.

*00:39:58 Interviewer*

And what about managing passwords? How do you manage your passwords for all these various accounts that you have?

*00:40:04 Participant*

That’s a good question <laughs>. I write them down on the back of a piece of paper, but then I kind of try and encrypt them in a way that they look like telephone numbers or something like that. So, if anybody looking found them they’d work it through. But I wouldn't put my bank ones there, no, but my ordinary passwords, look, if somebody finds them so what?

*00:40:23 Interviewer*

I, you know, it's kind of like which ones are secure and just need to be and others are actually sitting here and others then are stored in the apple cloud. So every now and again it comes up and says oh, this password has been used and is in a breach and you're kind of going. Oh yeah, it's the same password right?

*00:40:42 Participant*

And I say OK if I want the Lotto and they come back and they say what's your password? You know I can't remember then they can't give you the money.

*00:40:50 Interviewer*

Wouldn't be long remembering it then, right? <laughs>

*00:41:00 Interviewer*

So, <PATRICK>, that’s pretty much everything I want to cover off. We’re just about 41 minutes. I'm going to stop the recording now and thank you for your time and I really appreciate it.

*00:41:07 Participant*

Anyway, I hope it helps.