00:00:00 Interviewer

<CATHERINE> thanks a million for taking the time to chat with me today.

This is to follow up on some of your experiences from the content that you had given me when you completed the survey a little while ago. So the first thing I need to do is to tell you a little bit about this study and then to read out some statements and then ask for your consent to the interview.

Does that sound OK?

00:00:28 Catherine

Sure.

00:00:41 Interviewer

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 (schools and universities), by taking part in the 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.

00:01:03 Interviewer

I'm going to read out six statements now.

Number one. 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, ask questions, and have had these answered satisfactorily.

Number two, 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.

Number three, 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 research for reuse.

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

Number five, I understand that interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed and that data will be protected on encrypted devices and kept secure.

Number six, 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.

00:02:34 Interviewer

So, do you consent to take part, <CATHERINE>?

Catherine

I do.

00:02:38 Interviewer

Great, thank you so much for that. We had to get that out of the way. OK so I'm just going to go through the democratic and personal data that you offered just to confirm that nothing has changed or you know, maybe there might be something that might be different. It's easy to press buttons when we do these surveys and it doesn't always work out the way that we intend. So you've indicated that your age range is 65 to 74. Your gender is female. You live in County Cork. You live in an urban area with a population of over 1500 people. You live with one other person and your highest level of formal education is an ordinary bachelor's degree or national diploma. So, is that all correct?

Catherine

Yes.

00:03:33 Interviewer

So, this is a semi structured interview so it's not a list of questions that you're going to give answers to, that was for the survey. There are a few themes that are important to the to the research and this first one has a theme of lifelong learning. The question asks about informal and non-formal learning exchanges, and I think it's important to explain what I mean by that. Formal education or formal learning is our time at school, at university so typically a continuous cycle until our formal education ends. So, for some people it might be, you know, 15 or 16, the junior cycle, for others it might be the senior cycle, others it might be, you know, university at various levels. Then you have non-formal learning, so non-formal learning traditionally would be known as adult education where we would go to evening classes, for example, or maybe courses in the course of our work or anything like that. So, courses or learning that's structured in some way and offered by a provider. Then you have informal learning, which is where you know, just people, individuals and groups of people just learn together and learn from each other by sharing experiences and so on. So, all of those three make up lifelong learning. With that in mind, I'd like to ask you what lifelong learning means to you.

00:05:15 Catherine

I'd start by, you see, I didn't get as far as my Leaving Cert when I was a teenager, so I remember regretting it. I went to work and realising that I had missed out and that that regret bothered me at first. I think I remember about the age of 27 saying that's enough, forget the regrets, get on with you know. What does it mean to me? But even, during that period I was always going back to night classes, doing little courses, speeding up my typing, Irish classes, allsorts, anything that I think that was available at the time that I kind of liked.

It's informal you asked about, isn’t it? Now I would look back and say my informal learning really was my interaction with people and I was fortunate enough to have lived in England and in Canada and met a lot of people of different nationalities. And that might be informal, what it means to me.

00:06:38 Interviewer

Absolutely. And I think it's an important question to ask because it means something different to everybody.

00:06:46 Catherine

Yes, possibly yes.

00:06:48 Interviewer

And you know, for some people, it's getting qualifications and, just always doing something and that certificate is important. But to others it's about the learning and the certificate is not important and so on.

OK great. So, the next few questions will just help me understand your experience with digital technologies and devices if that's OK? So, can you first of all, can you tell me a little bit about your experience of technology, so you know, when did you start using technology? What kinds of technology or devices? What you've used it for? Any of that kind of thing that springs to mind.

00:07:33 Catherine

I guess I have to say that I was interested in getting in getting to use computers. I was working in the vets office and they had nothing. No computers, just before computer stage actually.

00:07:50 Interviewer

So, when would that have been? What decade maybe?

00:07:54 Catherine

It was from ‘79 to ‘84. And where did I go then? Anyhow I ended up in the credit union as Treasurer, volunteer Treasurer. And they had computers so... oh there was another guy who had a programme, would you call it a programme? Do you know, kind of a layout of when you're putting something (it would generate) a profit and loss?

00:08:33 Interviewer

So, like a spreadsheet or software package?

00:08:34 Catherine

Yes, a spreadsheet, that sort of thing.

And anyway, that was my base starting. But then I got it developed. I was able to type from my early years in the vocational school (in the tech), and that was a great plus actually, for us, getting back into computer world because a lot of our friends had got a convent school education and didn't have typing class <laughs>.

A little advantage or my age group and anyhow I got employed as a staff member by the credit union. And I ended up doing the work for the Treasurer, so I had to learn myself how to do spreadsheets and create them and was that the question?

00:09:30 Interviewer

Well yeah, it's just how you got started. OK, so you learned how to use spreadsheets, formulae etc. for accounting purposes by the sounds of it?

00:09:30 Catherine

Yes. That's it.

00:09:43 Interviewer

And that would have been for work at the time, So what about outside of work?

00:09:50 Catherine

Oh yeah, big time. See, having had my little experiences and bookkeeping jobs throughout my lifetime mostly, I'm ending up as Treasurer in most voluntary organisations.

And I wouldn't be doing anything manually in that regard. Now I'm the local Red Cross Treasurer and the Coaction Treasurer, and I'm in the Legion of Mary, and it's amazing how much activity is there to do.

00:10:23 Interviewer

And they all have accounts and they all need accounts looked after. So tell me, do you use Microsoft Excel for spreadsheets or what do you use for that?

00:10:24 Catherine

Excel, yes.

00:10:38 Catherine

What else could you use?

00:10:40 Interviewer

Google Sheets, I suppose. I think Excel would be the traditional tool of Accountants choice. I think that's for sure.

00:10:51 Catherine

And I did a few courses with Evelyn O’Donoghue to try and advance, but ..... <couldn’t catch this>

00:10:59 Interviewer

OK, so that's the local Education and Training Board (ETB) at the Sutherland Centre.

Catherine

Yeah.

Interviewer

So, you did Word and Excel there. What did you learn in the Excel course that you didn't know already for example?

00:11:18 Catherine

Not a lot, frankly, She made us familiar with Access, that's not Excel, isn't it?

00:11:28 Interviewer

Microsoft Access is a database. It's really for managing clients, customer lists, that kind of thing, so it serves a different purpose to Excel.

00:11:34 Catherine

Yeah, yeah.

But she showed me how to use that too, but it's it's true for you. I haven't used that much and it defeated me.

00:11:45 Interviewer

So just staying on that one. Do you remember what purpose Microsoft Access was being suggested to you for your requirements?

00:11:56 Catherine

It was part of the course.

00:11:58 Interviewer

So, it was a predefined course that you just went along to?

Catherine

Yes.

00:12:04 Interviewer

So were you able to say “I'm trying to figure out how to create a formula in Excel.” So could you bring along, I suppose, challenges that you might like help with?

00:12:19 Catherine

Yeah, that's a very good question, because I would have loved to develop that.

And no, you see we were all at different levels of competitiveness, so it was very standard across the board and she didn't take time out. And I nearly think that maybe she would like us to come back and create another course, but there wasn't room anyhow in that particular course.

00:12:45 Interviewer

Yeah, just remind me now, would you have had to pay for that class? Do you remember?

00:12:53 Interviewer

Actually, I think as an old age pensioner, I think I might have got it free.

00:13:03 Interviewer

Yeah, because they do offer some free classes and I wonder then do we kind of feel because we're getting it free that it might not be suiting exactly what our needs are, but you know, you might be slow to say because you're not paying for it.

00:13:19 Catherine

In fairness, I didn't think about not paying aspect, but I immediately sensed that I was being awkward asking too many questions.

00:13:24 Interviewer

OK.

00:13:30 Catherine

I didn't press it at all.

00:13:32 Interviewer

OK, so let's explore that a little bit and I'm thinking back to Excel and as an Accounting Technician myself Excel is our best friend and so on. But you know, there's always, you know, efficiencies and when we're volunteering our time we want to do everything as efficiently and as quickly, I suppose, as we can, but you know, did you have any community networks say Treasurers in other organisations that you could swap notes with or anything like that?

00:14:08 Catherine

Not really, the credit union would have been one place that might, but no, everybody was in their own little world.

00:14:21 Interviewer

OK I'm going to ask you just a little bit about your digital skills and confidence if that's OK. In the survey I had a number of statements and you were to agree or disagree or somewhere in the middle and there was one or two I did want to ask you about and one of them, the statement said “I can make phone calls and video calls online” and you didn't select either side of the agreements. You selected neither agree nor disagree. So I want to explore that a little bit with you <CATHERINE>. So why did you think that? Do you use the Internet for phone or audio or video calls?

00:15:12 Catherine

I have done on occasion. Well, with WhatsApp, would that be it? But not regularly. I don't like it.

00:15:23 Interviewer

OK. Why not?

00:15:26 Catherine

I think we always look distorted looking. That’s one reason and I'm more relaxed when I’m chatting without having to look at somebody and that sort of thing. Plus, I don't think that it's... I have a hearing deficiency and I can hear the other line better, the Internet lines, I suppose that would be depending would it, on the web?

00:15:51 Interviewer

OK. If you're using WhatsApp for a call it depends on if you have a good connection or not, whereas I think a traditional phone, you know, it's probably more reliable than anything else.

00:16:03 Catherine

That's the point, but the traditional aspect of mobile phone I can use.

00:16:12 Interviewer

Yes, OK. Do you use an iPhone or a different type of mobile phone?

00:16:19 Interviewer

A Samsung. It’s interesting because I used to have an iPhone. I thought they were superior and maybe they are, maybe they're not, but once I got into Samsung I couldn't risk now moving to get to get to learn (something different).

00:16:35 Interviewer

OK, and that's a good point as well, because the technology keeps changing, so have you had to...? So, just think back how many mobile phones have you had and how has the Samsung changed over those you know two or three? The features you know, the buttons, the size of the phone, that kind of thing?

00:16:59 Catherine

Oh well, I think I must have got it about five years ago, I got the smart phone. And then I have upgraded, I don't know, twice, I think.

00:17:16 Interviewer

OK, and does the upgrade come as part of the package that you have?

00:17:21 Catherine

No I need to buy my own. I think it’s much cheaper that way.

00:17:26 Interviewer

You're better off there.

00:17:30 Catherine

We get a free phone I think.

00:17:32 Interviewer

Well, it's free, but with the bill phone you're paying so much each month it actually covers the cost of it so and I think as well you're kind of limited to the options and you know some might suit better. So yeah, I'm just kind of wondering how we're, I suppose, enamoured to provider I suppose, and the manufacturer of the phone as to as to what we get.

00:17:57 Interviewer

OK, so that's the smart phone. Do you have any other devices at home that you would access the Internet on?

00:18:05 Catherine

Yeah, a tablet.

00:18:06 Interviewer

OK. What kind of tablet is it?

An iPad or ...?

00:18:11 Catherine

No, no, I couldn't mix. I wouldn't get an iPad.

It's simple, I think it's kind of like the Samsung. Would it be? Is it Lenovo I ended up with?

00:18:23 Interviewer

Right, so you have Android on the one side, which would be Samsung and Lenovo. And then you have Apple and the iphone etc on a different operating system (not Android).

00:18:32 Catherine

I think the shop I bought it told me, said to me that I’d understand this easier.

00:18:39 Interviewer

Yeah, yeah, absolutely.

00:18:42 Catherine

And interesting. Another point, I've got two friends about my age group who might be not as good as me with certain stuff. But they both got iPhones from their daughters or some family members. Anyhow, I can’t help them and that’s frustrating for me I’m so used to the Samsung. I don't know (the iPhone).

00:19:09 Interviewer

I would be the same. You know, if I'm volunteering with Age Action, don't give me an Android or a Windows user because I can't help them.

Catherine

Yeah.

Interviewer

I can help them with a MacBook or an iPad or an iPhone, but not anything else.

00:19:23 Catherine

And I think they’re at a loss because I'd be more around than their families are a lot of the time. But that's incidental.

00:19:31 Interviewer

Yeah, I think that's it. It's how you get started on one and then just kind of stick to it because I think change is difficult. So even whether it's the size of the phone, because they're getting bigger, or the buttons are in a different place, or something looks different. I mean that these are all challenges that I think that regardless of our age, we have to deal with, you know.

00:19:51 Catherine

Yeah, and also I'm told that Samsung are quite as efficient as the iPhone now, but that it wasn't designer. Would that be (the case)?

00:20:05 Interviewer

Well, I think the iPhone. It's a brand name isn't it?

00:20:07 Catherine

That's what I'm getting. But then you know it's (Samsung is) what I’m into now. And I don't think I'll change.

00:20:13 Interviewer

Yeah, and if it works and it functions and it serves your purpose, it’s absolutely OK.

OK, so we talked about your motivation about getting started with technology.

Setting that aside and can I just check that you're retired now from work?

Catherine

OK, so what's your motivation to keep using technology today?

00:20:35 Catherine

What's my motivation?

00:20:38 Interviewer

Yeah. Why for example, why would you look something up on the Internet on your phone for example?

00:20:42 Catherine

Out of curiosity and lots of reasons.

00:20:44 Interviewer

OK.

00:20:48 Catherine

A bit of general knowledge I might need a and million reasons <laughs>.

And also I suppose you could say, being involved in different voluntary groups, I have to use it, to be useful in these groups, and they're all signed up.

00:21:08 Interviewer

Yeah, this is true and that's important, so I'm going to skip over to that now because seeing as you brought it up. You've indicated, you know, your involvement in community groups and in volunteering work and so on. So, just sticking with that and you're in contact with people every week, I think in relation to your volunteering working or volunteering activity.

And so, I just wanted to ask, how do you stay in touch with, you know, the different groups and the different people? And you mentioned WhatsApp already. So, because communication is an important part of, you know, volunteering and community groups. So how do you manage your communications with the groups you're involved in?

00:21:59 Catherine

Well, I’ve ended up now on the senior board of management for Coaction.

We had two boards, the lower one is the fundraising section, so I've ended up (on the senior board). So, they do emailing. We were zooming during the pandemic.

00:22:18 Interviewer

How did you find Zoom?

00:22:21 Catherine

OK, I've got into it, but it wasn't, of course, as effective, I found.

00:22:27 Interviewer

OK, why would you say that?

00:22:31 Catherine

I was a new member, that was part of my problem.

And I lacked the acknowledgement of responses other than verbal.

00:22:45 Interviewer

OK, so the cues? physical cues, facial cues?

00:22:46 Catherine

You know what I mean. Look, you already do that now (hand gestures) and I can see your reaction.

00:22:56 Interviewer

It's not the same on a tablet screen.

00:22:59 Catherine

Plus, for first part of the time I wasn't comfortable getting into it and I was nervous

I wouldn't be able to, and they'd be gone, and I'd feel bad because I wouldn't be at the meeting, so there was a little bit tension for me alright.

00:23:19 Interviewer

And as a new member, did anybody give you any instruction or guidelines as to how to join? “Here's how the meeting takes place” as they would welcome a new member into a physical meeting. Was there anything like that?

00:23:34 Catherine

Indeed there was an effort to do that, and constantly telling me, asking if we had any problem and the two of them telephoned me to welcome me and talk about the organisation and did their best. I think because I half knew how to do it, alright, you see, and I knew I could do it. It was just the tension within me to make it.

00:24:00 Interviewer

It just wasn't your preference. I think that's fair enough.

OK, so that's Zoom because you're involved in a lot of groups and...

00:24:15 Catherine

Telephone costs a lot of interaction with others. You know meetings and that and emailing.

00:24:23 Interviewer

And did that take up again during that period, particularly the first lockdown, where you know, there was just nobody, was stirring outside their homes, and you know those who were underage could do the 2K. But that was it. So how did the work of those groups and continue and I ask that in terms of a meeting that can accomplish a lot. You get together for an hour, but when those meetings couldn't take place, and as you said, there was emailing and phone calls. Did that take up a lot of extra effort and time? Or how did that work for you?

00:24:58 Catherine

With that meeting, at those meetings, they were held at the senior board level. They were really conscientious with the charity regulator and everything has to be very proper, so they were working away. And we'd have our meetings and the business and email us with information or send out the agenda in the post. We had paper copies.

Then our other little meetings, the Legion of Mary, which we take quite seriously. But the meetings were suspended. And we didn't have any Zoom meetings.

00:25:35 Interviewer

And they were suspended for what? For the length of several months?

00:25:39 Catherine

Yeah, several months due to our age profile being high risk.

00:25:45 Interviewer

And that's what I was going to ask, because they would be in pretty much all an older cohort. What would be the average age?

00:25:53 Catherine

All over 60 anyhow.

00:25:55 Interviewer

And probably even older. And how was that? Because that's a very involved group and they do all sorts of great things. I mean, that must have been a loss for that period of time, was it?

00:26:14 Catherine

It was a loss. But I must be honest. In a way, the pandemic suited me. It was a break. I was able to stay at home. I wasn’t out at two or three meetings every week <laughs>.

On a selfish basis I felt the breathing space was good.

We had to stop visiting people. I think the loss to the community there, is still there.

00:26:45 Interviewer

So visiting hospital or homes or?

00:26:48 Catherine

So, all of that stopped and is still stopped. Even though we got back to meeting we can't go to home visits.

00:26:57 Interviewer

OK, so moving forward. Kind of post pandemic and having enjoyed the breathing space for a little bit but the challenges of the technology and keeping other things going. What's it like now a year on? You know, I'm not saying that everything is back to normal as you said, for some of your work just can't be done but overall have you, you know? Have you made any changes to how you, you know, volunteer your time? Or is everything kind of like, back to physical meetings? But maybe instead of a meeting once a week, there's a meeting once a month, or any changes like that? I'd be interested in where technology might have made a difference that your organisation might continue now, for example.

00:27:50 Catherine

Now that the senior board is back meeting physically now, and the fundraising group, Friends of Coaction, the lower board. They're two formal companies, but we haven't met. And we actually only met about two or three times on Zoom, and we're actually meeting next Tuesday night now, but we physically have to meet. So, and that's about it.

00:28:25 Interviewer

Yeah, so of course it should be socially distanced and ventilated.

00:28:28 Catherine

Yes, we have to do that.

00:28:30 Interviewer

OK, that's great.

I know you're involved in in a lot of groups, so I think that certainly makes a big difference to you know, the diversity of participants I have (for this study).

00:28:43 Catherine

That's true.

00:28:46 Interviewer

So, in terms of support with your digital devices. So, you said that you don't have any family members who could help you? So it sounds like you're the techie person in your household.

But you said you do, have friends in your neighbourhood or community members, and you indicated an age range of 25 to 39 years. So obviously you have somebody in mind in that age group, so I was wondering if you could tell me like, if you have a problem with your phone, what this person might do for you or help you out with, or any of your experience in that area.

00:29:58 Catherine

Well, it would be John's niece, she’s married to Dominic Hayes and Dominic actually has not moved onto a smartphone.

00:30:10 Interviewer

OK, and what age is he?

00:30:14 Catherine

37 or 8 or something like that, but he's a principal with a school, actually.

So if I was maybe applying for grants now or something like that and I want to be very certain that I’m getting it right he'd come over to my house and he we do it together. OK, you know, for more important stuff. If I was a little bit insecure, but perhaps his wife would help me with the telephone if I was stuck. I might pop into the phone shop too in town. Actually, when I was away my phone went black and I was bothered and upset so I think I found the phone shop but sure all he did was swipe the screen and when you're indoors, just the bright, the light had been turned off. I had pressed the buttons. I don't quite know how it happened, but he had it back.

00:31:13 Interviewer

So, any of the IT fellows will tell us, turn it off and turn it back on again.

00:31:19 Catherine

But I couldn't get it. I couldn't even get it when I kept pressing that (on/off button) and it was still black.

00:31:29 Interviewer

Yeah, sometimes we need to go to the professionals. That's what I would do as well.

00:31:34 Interviewer

OK so I'm just onto the last set of questions and these talk about quality of life and I'm interested in how technology positively or negatively affects your quality of life, so it helps, probably, because if you look at the dictionary for quality of life you'll find all sorts of you know, different explanations. So for this study, I'm looking at it in terms of our health, our well-being, and our happiness. So, you could be healthy, but you might not be happy.

So it's kind of like how all of those come together, so it's really how we like to interpret it ourselves and these statements, and actually came from a scale called CASP-19 for quality of life, so I didn't make them up. And you know, it's quite clear to see that you've got a very positive attitude in terms of your quality of life. I think that's great, so I want to ask you then specifically about technology and whether your experience of technology, has had a positive impact on your quality of life, just in relation to your health or well-being or happiness or any combination of those.

00:32:51 Catherine

I suppose it has. I’m delighted to be able to keep somewhat abreast of technology.

Plus the fact that I got hooked on games and it has been fantastic therapy <laughs>.

I've had to uninstall them several times because I was just addicted <laughs>.

00:33:12 Interviewer

Absolutely, and you haven't mentioned it yet, but I do know you’re undertaking an online degree course as well, aren't you?

Catherine

I am

Interviewer

So, tell me a little bit about that, because that surely must have a positive impact on your quality of life?

00:33:28 Catherine

Well, it's theology, which I would have a personal leaning to find out more about my religion and I’m an active Catholic so I decided to take this course and am halfway through it. It will, I hope to, achieve a higher honours degree. I can't even express what I want, but I think I’ll get the basic degree first and then I’ll do the honours degree.

00:33:58 Interviewer

And are you enjoying it?

00:34:00 Catherine

I am but there’s so much pressure at exam time and assignment time and then I breathe and I forget about all these worries and I go with it. So hopefully I can keep going. I have seven more modules to do.

00:34:15 Interviewer

OK, so that's your retirement project for now?

00:34:19 Catherine

Yes, but I think I genuinely will look around for something lighter perhaps, but that's of interest to me, because there are some lovely courses online, aren't there?

00:34:31 Interviewer

There are and do you use the online services of the county library, the public library?

Catherine

No.

00:34:40 Interviewer

OK, well they have access to, it's called universal class, and with your library card, do you have a library card?

Catherine

Yes

00:34:48 Interviewer

OK, well you can access all of these courses and they're all online, and they're short, because sometimes you just need something that's just a little bit different. And there are other platforms but I do have to say the county libraries are really, really good and they have a digital ambassador in each of these libraries, so you could actually go and say look, I've looked up this class (I'll send you the link) and I'd like to, you know, be able to do it and they'll show you how to get online if you don't know already, but you would probably be able to do that, so I think that's great and I think that's really important.

00:35:25 Catherine

That’s wonderful and new knowledge for me now, because I think you understood when I said that I look for something else, a little lighter that I’d be interested in.

00:35:34 Interviewer

There's quite a few of them like something just popped up in my feed and it's to because when I teach project management I teach about international cultures and stuff like that and there's a class called can't remember the name right now, but it's about cultural awareness or cultural communications or something like that and this one. Yeah, I can take it and you know, it probably wouldn't take a few hours. These ones are nice. They're called MOOCs. Massive open online courses. But yeah, the local library is a good way of doing that so I can share those details with you

00:36:11 Catherine

Isn't that's interesting, yeah?

00:36:12 Interviewer

Yeah, so looking at the other side of the coin, do you think your use and experience of technology has had any negative impact on your quality of life? So, you know it could be an online shopping experience? You know being defrauded? That kind of thing. So, something negative or something that really makes you feel, you know, unhappy about something. Have you had anything like that?

00:36:41 Catherine

Yeah. Well, some guy once found out my Facebook password formula.

The problem was that it was the word which is totally incidental and he texted me and kept saying “I know your password” and he named it. He said “I can get into all your important things” and he threatened me. And I ignored the threats because I thought he'd get into it and it eventually faded off because I trusted the bank sources that he couldn't get into that.

And they would be the important things.

BUT <emphasis> obviously every now and again he sporadically comes out and invites my friends. And they come on to me and say "<CATHERINE>, I'm being asked to be your friend again”, so I put it up every time, but somebody told me... that you can actually go in and reset something on Facebook? Do you know what I'm saying?

Interviewer

I don't.

Catherine

I deleted my password, I have a new password.

But he's still using the old one and he would have my list of friends on that.

00:38:13 Interviewer

Yeah, I suppose, because if somebody can hack into your account, that's what it sounds like, they can take the information that's there at the time. So, if he, and again I'm not an expert, but if he saved all those contacts then he still has them offline.

00:38:27 Catherine

That's it, that's my thinking too, but I tell, I put it up every time I put up a (post) and say “please ignore any weird messages from me” and they faded away.

00:38:37 Interviewer

And how did that make you feel?

00:38:39 Catherine

At the time I think I felt I was taking a risk, and that’s being straight now. It was a little bothersome, but I am a positive person by nature and I kept thinking that surely if he could get into it why didn’t he?

00:38:58 Catherine

Oh, another time a friend of mine was overseas and she emailed me for money and I nearly got caught that time. You know, she said she'd lost everything and you've heard those type of stories?

00:39:07 Interviewer

But it wasn't your friend. There was somebody impersonating her?

00:39:09 Catherine

Yes. I rang my own friend, a mutual friend and she said “Gosh, we can't let her stranded” but I had telephoned her husband and he hadn’t replied, and I was feeling bad, about to go to Western Union... but anyhow the husband got back to me and cleared the air that it was a scam, but unfortunately I think a friend of hers in Spain got caught for €2,500. So it just shows things like that happen.

00:39:43 Interviewer

Yes indeed. You've agreed to the statement that you know you understand how to keep yourself safe online, and I don't think that's fair. I wouldn't strongly agree either, because there's always something different, you know so...

00:39:55 Catherine

What did I say?

00:39:56 Interviewer

You said, you agreed to the statement “I understand how to keep myself safe online”.

00:40:02 Catherine

Do I? Yeah.

Interviewer

That’s based on what you said.

Catherine

Well yes, but I do my best to stay safe, yeah.

00:40:09 Interviewer

But we never know what fraudsters and scammers are going to come through with next, which is quite scary.

So, you mentioned about passwords. So, we have passwords for everything. How do you remember your passwords? Where do you store them? Tell me a little bit about that. Do you have A little black notebook?

00:40:29 Catherine

No actually.

I had to just change my email there lately because I was on Eircom that really. Did you know that?

00:40:38 Interviewer

Well, they started charging for email addresses.

00:40:41 Catherine

They weren’t a bit helpful (because I was paying Vodafone for the phone) anytime I had an email issue and anyhow I moved. And it was Dominic helped me set up the new (email). He gave me a suggested one and I'm using that for all my stuff. I know it isn't recommended.

00:41:12 Interviewer

I mean the way I think about it is because you can't remember them all. Now on the iPad or the Mac, it'll suggest a password and that's fine.

But invariably, if I try to use that, it might not work. So ,I just tend to make sure (by noting it somewhere). So, I think as long as we keep anything financial, the banking ones, kind of in our heads and totally different from anything else, I think that's probably about the best way.

00:41:25 Catherine

I'm glad that you do too.

00:41:37 Interviewer

But I wouldn't store, because sometimes like it'll suggest, oh, you're paying for something online? Oh do you want to save the card for next time? I would always say no.

00:41:47 Interviewer

And because I don't want Amazon, for example, I don't want them having my bank details.

00:41:52 Catherine

I got a phone call from Amazon yesterday morning. Didn't like it at all, but it was odd. I think she said to me...

I got an Amazon Echo, Alexa recently.

00:42:06 Interviewer

Yeah, that's very technologically advanced. OK, tell me about Alexa in a minute, we'll hold that one, but please continue.

00:42:14 Catherine

Lady on the phone, foreign voice said “we have deducted €79 out of your account, but if you want a refund...”

Anyhow, the first time I kind of put down the phone. She rang again and said “If you want a refund I will email you how you can download a form and apply for refund.”

00:42:39 Interviewer

A refund for what?

00:42:52 Catherine

Exactly. I don’t know.

I think one time in my life did I possibly? What's the company that gives books?

Interviewer

Amazon.

Catherine

Amazon, yeah, that's what I'm saying. Did I once try to and I never actually activated it and never bought books through it.

00:43:07 Interviewer

OK.

00:43:08 Catherine

But then I thought it was my little cousin got me that Alexa online.

00:43:16 Interviewer

OK.

00:43:20 Catherine

I gave him cash, he paid, so I thought to myself. So anyway, I ignored it and I looked into my bank account and they hadn't taken anything out of it so I left it.

00:43:31 Interviewer

Well, they shouldn't have your bank account, for security.

00:43:33 Catherine

They shouldn't, that’s right.

They shouldn't. And if I had said I'd like a refund, yeah, she'd have asked me for my bank account details.

00:43:46 Interviewer

Yeah, and here's the thing. With any of these ones to do with online shopping, I'm surprised that, I don't think that call was from Amazon.

00:43:55 Catherine

I don't either, I don't either.

00:43:57 Interviewer

Yeah, yeah, so it's a fraud call, potentially a scam call.

00:44:03 Catherine

I believe that, but like you can't totally. It has to be a scam because I don't think Amazon would do that.

Interviewer

No, they wouldn't.

00:44:08 Catherine

Yeah, but if this is a scam call they could be hackers, couldn’t they?

00:44:05 Interviewer

Yes, but what those scammers are doing is they're trying to get you to give over your bank details and once you do that, it's not that they're hacking into your bank account, you're giving them the information in good faith, thinking it's a genuine reason, and that's basically the problem.

00:44:30 Catherine

I think that too. The next thing that she would have asked, the next thing she did, was for my email address to send down the form or something so.

00:44:41 Interviewer

I think from a safety perspective it's all the same. You know, you can say “I can't talk now, I'll call you back” because if they're calling you should be able to go on to the Amazon website and get a number and they would say “No, we never called you” you know, so I think that's always important not to give anything away for our own security. If anybody is ringing us. If you don't know, or you feel anyway suspicious, just kind of say “OK, leave that with me, I will look into it and I will call you back.”

And then when you call them back, the legitimate company, and they will say no, we never tried to call you. And then you'll know it’s a scam.

00:45:13 Catherine

But I wouldn’t know where to get Amazon phone number.

00:45:17 Interviewer

Well, they don't (publicise one). Not on the websites because they don't deal in phones, that's the point.

00:45:20 Catherine

They don't of course. I thought it was big stuff too but I did keep it in my bank account and oversight they said €79.99 they had the amount and all.

00:45:37 Catherine

So I've had a good few little stories like that. I suppose most people had.

00:45:42 Interviewer

Yeah, all, I think so.

There's always the attempts. The question is, like the gentleman I was talking to this week and he gets the call to the landline about upgrading his Windows computer because it's causing problems somewhere else and he pretends to be hard of hearing and says “So you're going to come and wash my windows, will you bring your own water?”

00:46:01 Interviewer

Now I'm curious about Alexa. Talk to me about Alexa. How did Alexa come into your household?

00:46:11 Catherine

Well, I like gadgets and I was talking to my cousin’s child – he's about 40.

He brought me a Bluetooth speaker one time and it was handy when I'd be taking down lecture notes and stuff like that.

And then I said, oh yeah, because I've heard others having it and you can ask it anything. It's really a speaking Google kind of thing.

00:46:41 Catherine

So I got it, but I have, I mean it's there, but for some reason it started saying every night at 9:00 o'clock “time for bed” things like that, but it's handy for the alarm factor and I have it turn on the cooker because I tend to forget it. So I say “Alexa, I’m on my way home.”

00:47:01 Interviewer

OK, expensive alarm clock, mind you.

00:47:07 Catherine

It was €40, not astronomical. No, it was €100. But as I say and it would, we might ask it “will it rain today in Skibbereen?” and things like that.

00:47:24 Interviewer

Yeah, and does she get it right?

00:47:27 Catherine

Not greatly, but that's it. I don't know, but it also has the function I use. The To Do List or a shopping list if you just speak it into my phone when I go to town, so that's useful.

00:47:45 Interviewer

And how does that shopping list work then? So you say the list of shopping? And then how does it comes up with the list on your phone?

00:47:52 Catherine

Inside in the shop I look at this list.

00:47:57 Interviewer

Well, that's cool.

00:47:58 Catherine

It is and the To Do List, you would be hoping that if it had written everything down that you could take them off, but <CATHERINE>, I keep saying, is very disorganised and I am not a strictly structured organised person, but in that sense I make lists and I don't always check back.

00:48:22 Interviewer

Yeah, I'm a list person. I love lists. I like to keep them on different apps. I've one app or two and I would have a separate shopping list app with a you know To Do List to do the housework that never gets ticked off. You know they always are overdue.

00:48:36 Catherine

I do not myself, yeah, but I think that if I tried waiting to be organised I really wouldn't get anything done. I wouldn't do my study or anything else because I'd be so structured that it's not me.

00:48:49 Interviewer

I mean there are things we do have to structure some of our time, but not all of it.

00:48:53 Catherine

Should just get it to meet assignment deadlines and on certain things.

00:48:57 Interviewer

I thought so. <CATHERINE>, this has all just been fascinating and all the information that you shared with me and that covers off all the questions that I wanted to ask.

But is there anything that when you were thinking about this interview today that you said to yourself, I must mention, in relation to how you use technology or digital devices? Anything that we haven't covered off yet?

00:49:23 Catherine

I suppose I could say “what would you suggest that I do to help me to improve my skills a little bit further. Perhaps the library one? I might find some course and that would that be exciting.”

00:49:41 Interviewer

I think there's two things that you can do and I'll send you the details afterwards. I think you can sign up to Age Action and they will give you 5 hours of one-to-one tuition with somebody to match your needs, so if you can say I want to be able to do this on my Samsung phone, so that would be very specific or something that you would want to do, but they will sign you up for one hour a week for five weeks with somebody who will help you with that. So I think that's one. I'll send you the details on that.

00:50:12 Catherine

OK, so that’s excellent.

00:50:16 Interviewer

I'll also send you the information from the library about the Universal Class and activate your library card. Do you borrow books from the library online?

00:50:26 Catherine

No, but I used to so I’d probably go back up there to sort it out.

00:50:35 Interviewer

Once you have the card, yeah, I think that would be fine. Although to be fair, during the lockdown you didn't even have to.

You could set up your account, you didn't even have to go in there, I think it's worth asking them, so I'll send you those details, but I think specifically or it could be.

You could say to Age Action “Look I have Alexa and I want to know how to get the best out of her.” So give some thought to what you want. With the Age Action Getting Started programme and when it wasn't COVID you know you'd actually get together in a library or another location and you'd have that dedicated tutor and learner support, but obviously not at the moment. It would be whatever device you would bring. But now it's over the phone so you would have somebody you'll be talking to saying “Sandra, I want to do XY and Z” and I would say “OK, let's figure out how to do that together”, and I'd probably have my equivalent device here and we'd figure it out so, but for that, I think it's important to be clear about what you want to do so that they'll be able to match you up with somebody who will be able to help you, and you don't want to be in a situation of the blind leading the blind, right?

00:51:46 Catherine

I agree. But what's coming to mind there is about the formulas with Excel.

00:52:02 Interviewer

<CATHERINE>, at this point I'm going to stop the recording because I think this is just brilliant information and I've taken up so much of your time and will pick that up offline. So right now I am just going to stop the recording and thank you for your time today.