00:00:00 Interviewer

I’ll just set it to record in case I forget it.

00:00:05 Interviewer

What I need to do <NORAH>, is because this is the first time we've been in touch, I need to tell you a little bit about what the study is about. I need to go through some consent statements, that all takes about two or three minutes.

00:00:20 Interviewer

And then we go into a few different sets of questions.

00:00:24 Interviewer

The first set of questions is just, you know, age range, gender, county, a few things like that.

00:00:31 Interviewer

Then there’s a set of question that talks about the themes and this is what you want to talk about I know, the lifelong learning, the mature student, all that kind of thing, so I think you'll probably have a lot to say in relation to that.

00:00:44 Interviewer

And then I have some questions about not being connected, not being online and how it affects quality of life, positive and negative. So that's really the structure of it. I don't think it'll take more than 45 minutes I would say <NORAH>, but does that sound OK?

00:01:10 Participant

That's OK.

Just rereading the information that came in from Age Action. I just like to know what I was getting into really. I would be one of these people that got my degree and a cert as well. And I would be curious about things like that.

00:01:31 Interviewer

Well, I'll tell you plenty more about it. And if there's any questions that you have for me in relation to it, then we can go through those as well. I'm a PhD student, a mature student, like yourself. I'm doing it at Lancaster University, it's a four-year PhD programme. Two years were modules, and so I've those two years down and now I'm in the third year, started in January, so I'm working on my PhD research, on my thesis, which I hope to submit at the end of next year so it's a busy time. You'll know that from being a mature student yourself, so there's a lot to do, but that's just a little bit about me.

The study, and I've always been interested in this area, it aims to explore the experiences of older adults and lifelong learning with specific focus on intergenerational exchanges and digital skills, and little is known about intergenerational learning in Ireland outside of formal learning environment, so you know, teachers being one generation, pupils, students being another and so by taking part in the study then any insights that you can give me will help to contribute to our understanding of the contribution intergenerational learning can make to lifelong learning and skills development of older adults.

00:03:00 Interviewer

At a high level that's vaguely what it's about, <NORAH>.

00:03:05 Participant

Yes, I can understand it.

00:03:07 Interviewer

OK, so I have seven statements here. I'm just going to read out slowly and you can just be thinking about them. If you have any questions, just stop me. And then at the end I'll just ask if you're if you're happy to proceed. So these are just standard statements that we have to go through to make sure that it's an ethical study and that you're agreeing to chat with me about it.

00:03:28 Participant

OK.

00:03:29 Interviewer

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 if I'm involved in interview, 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 (that's me). My personal information will not be included and all reasonable steps will be taken to protect my anonymity when 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 6 <interruption as Rainbow the golden retriever was eating her bed and needed to be stopped>

00:05:32 Interviewer

A bit of light distraction.

So OK, number five, I was saying that the 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 number seven, I agree to take part in the above study.

So are there any questions that are jumping to mind there on any of that <NORAH>?

00:06:03 Participant

No, I can understand what you said, the anonymity, that would be fine. Yes, it's most like more or less than I understand???

*<The recording software did not pick up this response clearly so if anything is misrepresented it can be caught when the participant reviews the transcript>*

00:06:18 Interviewer

What I would say then as well is that whatever information you give me, I'm not mentioning any names. I'm just interested in what you say and looking for patterns and themes from the interviews and stuff like that. So I roll it all up. I don't know how yet, mind you, but I will. It's all really interesting. So yeah, that's where it's at. It's all ethically approved.

00:06:41 Interviewer

OK. Let me take a sip of tea now.

00:06:46 Participant

You might need something stronger I think <laughs>.

00:06:48 Interviewer

Probably later, but no, I'm fine for now <laughs>.

OK, so the first set of questions is just to tell me a little bit about yourself, <NORAH>, so I'm just going to call out the age ranges of the people I'm looking for in this study. So you can tell me which range in if you like.

00:07:08 Interviewer

Are you 55 to 64, 65 to 74, 75 years or older?

00:07:14 Participant

75 years and older. I’m 79.

00:07:16 Interviewer

Lovely. Well, you don't sound a day over 40.

00:07:22 Participant

People say I'm way younger than what I am and I act it as well <laughs>.

00:07:26 Interviewer

Well, there you go.

00:07:29 Participant

When I was younger, when I was only 15 I was taken to be very 24 and I really got away with a lot of things when I was younger. But then as I got older I got younger looking <laughs>.

There was an advantage to it.

00:07:47 Interviewer

Yeah absolutely, Oh my goodness, that's great.

OK so I have that one. Gender, <NORAH>?

00:07:55 Interviewer

Female.

00:07:56 Interviewer

I’m laughing because I said this to a lady the other day and she started laughing, you know, because I said “male, female, other or prefer not to say” and she started roaring laughing and said “I think I’m a female” <laughs>.

00:08:10 Interviewer

But again, she was very funny because before when I was asking her the age range, she said, “well, I'm 83” and I said, “well, I was only going to ask you the range” and she said “I know some people don't like to tell their age but I don't mind”, she was great.

00:08:27 Interviewer

And what Irish country do you live in <NORAH>?

00:08:30 Participant

Cork.

00:08:31 Interviewer

Brilliant. Up Cork. Absolutely brilliant. For a couple of months I was just wondering was I contacting the right organisations and the right groups as I wasn't hearing back from them and I was wondering was I going to get anything at all? Now I'm really, really happy the way it’s turning out.

00:08:50 Interviewer

My next question, <NORAH>. Do you live alone or do you live with other people? One other or more than one other?

00:08:54 Participant

No. I live on my own.

00:08:57 Interviewer

OK like myself.

00:08:59 Participant

No wonder I'm younger <laughs>.

00:09:00 Interviewer

Yeah, well, this is what I'm saying to myself.

OK, and your highest level of formal education?

So what I mean by formal education is when we left school or college, without a break. So when we left for the first time, when was that, <NORAH>?

00:09:21 Participant

I left school after my Inter cert then I went to Skerries college to do a commercial course.

00:09:31 Interviewer

OK.

00:09:32 Participant

I did the matric (*matriculation exam*)

00:09:35 Participant

And I picked the year I was going for an interview with Aer Lingus and they were looking for Leaving cert.

So I got the papers of the Leaving cert and I found out all the answers and when they asked me a question, because there were no computers at the time, they asked me did I have my Leaving cert. I said I did because I had all the answers that they asked. I said I did German and I knew German wasn't spoken much in Ireland at the time, very little, and I got the job.

00:10:20 Interviewer

You got the job. Fair play. Well that was creative, for sure, Oh my God.

00:10:26 Participant

A white lie, but it wasn’t really. I was always studying. I was always doing things. I was curious.

00:10:35 Interviewer

Yeah. But even at that you know, for example, you know you'd say that even just you know, getting the access to the papers and learning the answers. That's all learning like, it might not be a piece of paper, certificate education. But it was all about learning you know.

00:10:54 Interviewer

That was your first foray into lifelong learning <laughs>.

00:10:57 Participant

It was yeah. Then I went on and did a higher diploma. It was the year of study given to older people and then we did two years at that and after getting that then we went on and then did a degree. I did the degree and then I got on the higher diploma and then they wanted me to do, not a PhD.

00:11:20 Interviewer

A masters?

00:11:22 Participant

In entrepreneurship.

00:11:27 Participant

Then COVID started and then I just kind of dropped out.

00:11:34 Participant

But I did a lot of courses, probably looking at all the certificates because I was very involved with Toastmasters.

00:11:40 Interviewer

So <NORAH>, take me back now just a little bit because I want to get this in my head sequentially.

So you did the commercial course, you did the interview with the fake Leaving cert.

Now tell me a little bit about your work experiences before you went back to college.

00:12:03 Participant

I got a job with Roches Stores in town and then I had so many different jobs like I got some other different jobs. I was always working in the sense I was still studying and still going to school. Then after school I had a job in different shops.

Then when I left Roches Stores it was to go to London. I wanted to go to America to work with Pan American Airlines but I didn’t get the job with Pan Am because I wasn’t old enough. I looked older.

00:12:39 Interviewer

They wanted proof? <laughs> You’re so funny.

00:12:46 Participant

Then British Eagle came into Cork and I got the job at Cork airport. Then I worked with Aer Lingus at Heathrow airport.

00:12:58 Participant

Then I worked at part-time in Rome just to help out, there was only two flights a week out of Rome and Zurich, back to Dublin.

00:13:09 Interviewer

So, that’d where the Italian comes from?

00:13:13 Participant

I did Rome you see and I was married to an Italian.

00:13:16 Interviewer

OK. I can understand that and why you’re picking to speak Italian, not Irish when you get the scam calls <laughs>.

00:13:27 Participant

Then I was in Rome and then my eldest daughter came, she was born.

00:13:35 Participant

My husband was working with BEA, before they joined to become British Airways and he was working. And then I joined a party, a political party for women to get paid maternity leave in Rome so I was out protesting.

And I joined this group <neither the recording software nor I picked up the name>, a branch of the communist party, fighting for equal rights for women.

00:14:08 Participant

And then after that, when I was in America we could pay 10% and travel around.

I went to America, then I crossed from Canada to the United States and I was turned back because they could see quite a few parties that I had joined, for women, branches of the communist party.

00:14:39 Participant

I went back to Rome. I fought the American embassy. When I was in London I was doing law and I picked up an awful lot of law, criminal law. So I was able to talk with the embassy and they gave me a visa for the United States that could pass from passport to passport without any problem.

00:15:13 Interviewer

Oh my goodness, that's just amazing, wow.

Well, they’re all lifelong learning experiences, that's for sure. Goodness.

00:15:25 Participant

When we were very young there was no television. There was a radio and I just loved listening to the radio and then reading, I loved every book and I was very interested.

After the war, all the different types of torture that they did to the Jews and everything, so I learned more from the books than I did at school, because the teachers in school, the nuns.

I think, like me, young girls were thrown into the convent and the nuns were teaching and if you had a child could answer and argue with them. If (the nun) would say something and you knew they were wrong because you could have read it in a book, checked it out, then they would go mad and then you’d get a belt of something.

00:16:19 Interviewer

That's right. That was what it was like back in those days pre-1982 I think, when corporal punishment was made illegal. But not that long ago really.

00:16:29 Participant

One day in school this young, this other girl in my class had this 64-page love comic. Now she got terrified when she saw this nun who was a terrible bully. She gave me the book because she was targeted and then the nun came along and she hit me with the thing, gave me an awful wallop. And I wanted to catch it and hit her with it, but I decided I wouldn't do that because I'd be in trouble with my mother and my father as well. Anyway, she said “I want to see your mother” and then my mother came to the school. She started to shout at my mother and my mother wouldn't take anything because they were quite educated as well. And then my mother said to me “<NORAH>, were you reading that book?”

I said “no, mam, I wasn't reading the book. I was holding the book because the person that owned the book was afraid of her, I wasn’t.” She said “you should be a barrister” and I said “more than likely I will, I’ll check it out.”

00:17:37 Interviewer

Oh my gosh, that's amazing.

00:17:39 Interviewer

<NORAH>, I just want to pick up on something there because both your parents were educated, I think you said. You probably got more of your childhood learning from home than you did from school, did you?

00:17:53 Participant

Well, I got a lot of it from that and now still things that I can do like electrical work and everything. My father, everything that he would do, he taught us how to do it.

00:18:04 Interviewer

Yeah, yeah.

00:18:07 Participant

And crosswords and books to read on everything, and then he explained things. So, my mother and my father didn't get third level education. My mother was very young when she got married.

00:18:22 Interviewer

That's great and you can just sense it. And that's why I'm very interested in the whole intergenerational aspects of how children and young people learn from their adjacent generations which would be like their parents’ generations and then their non-adjacent generations like their grandparents, how these learning exchanges work and that kind of thing. Because it's not all homes and it's not all parents would have that capacity or interest.

I went to primary school in the 70s. And you know, it was really a case of like the parents sent you to school to learn and like that it was the nuns. You'd probably learn more from outside of that environment if you have the right support, which is exactly what you had from what you're saying, you know.

00:19:18 Participant

We were brought up to respect people “as high as the highest and as low as the lowest” not to look down on anyone.

00:19:26 Participant

And I remember my brother-in-law was made an officer in the Canadian army and my mother and father went to Canada when he was being made an officer. And then this colonel was there and he said to my mother and father “I heard that some toilets are about 40 feet from the house in Ireland”, and then my mother quite calmly looked him and she said, “Yes.... and you’re full of it.”

00:20:00 Interviewer

Oh yeah, absolutely <laughs>.

So tell me, fast forward to when you got married and with your own family.

Just from that lifelong intergenerational learning. Because I should explain this probably a little bit.

So intergenerational learning is between generations and it's part of lifelong learning. And I think this is where it can get a bit confusing because the policies, the education policies of the Irish Government, so when they talk about lifelong learning, their policies will tell you differently, that it's not lifelong at all, it's just to get you skilled in something else so that you can re-enter the labour market. So to me that's not lifelong at all. For me lifelong is obviously the formal education you know, which is at school and college until we left.

And then you've got non-formal learning which is organised learning, so whether it's a night class or whether it's a a community group or a group like Age Action brings a speaker in, all of that kind of stuff is non-formal.

And then you've got the informal learning, which in many ways can be peer-to-peer. It can be within families, across friends, community, so it's not organised in any formal way.

00:21:24 Interviewer

In my head as you're speaking of your experiences, I'm trying to categorise these into the different ways, but I do have to ask you <NORAH>, what does lifelong learning mean to you then?

00:21:39 Participant

For me lifelong learning is for instance, my daughter said to me, she was about your age, and .... then one day she said to me “I'd love a ballet doll.”

00:21:59 Participant

I got the pieces together and the whole lot, put them on the body of the doll and then I gave it to her and she looked and was delighted with it. She said “you’re very good, you can do things so easy.” And I had the doll made, it was finished, even down to the very shoes. I used a book mark, ribbon from a book mark for the ballet shoes. It was the same colour that I wanted and to me that would be learning because I was finding things and putting them together. In the end I was looking at the little doll and I was thinking would I ever hurry up and finish it. So I gave the doll to her and she was delighted, I never told her that I was making it.

00:23:37 Interviewer

Goodness isn't that great.

00:23:40 Participant

I was learning something I hadn't done before.

00:23:42 Interviewer

Yeah absolutely.

So tell me a little bit then, so back to education. So just go through that now a bit slower because I'm interested in what you studied, how you studied, what that experience was like, if that’s okay <NORAH>?

00:23:59 Participant

I went back first of all for the two years with the mature students. I was the eldest (in the class).

00:24:11 Interviewer

At what age were you at that point, <NORAH>?

00:24:17 Participant

That was back in 1996.

00:24:20 Interviewer

OK. 25 years ago so you were about my age and you know my motto “you're never too old and it's never too late.”

00:24:28 Participant

Never too old.

00:24:31 Interviewer

OK, and tell me about that.

00:24:33 Participant

I had been in Toastmasters and I had got a lot of awards in Toastmasters as well.

00:24:38 Interviewer

That's great, actually. When I worked at Apple, anytime I went to Austin in Texas, they would do weekly lunchtime Toastmasters and I was always fascinated to go and sit in. They always wanted me to get involved but I was terrified, so I have great admiration for people who do, but it's supposed to be great for your confidence and skills and everything.

00:25:00 Participant

Yes it is.

And you have to keep to your time for different speeches, like start off with four minutes and there was one particular guy, he was going to college but he was doing his finals.

He would lose courage when it would come to speaking in public and so one night he had to give a speech and he couldn't do it and he got very upset over it. I intercepted him and said “what’s wrong?” and he said “I can't speak in public”, so I stayed on and said “you've work there”, I said “just talk to me, I won't say anything” so then bit by bit, another person who was a friend of his popped in and in the end he was able to do it and he got his exam.

00:25:51 Interviewer

Well, that's great.

00:25:53 Participant

But he said that he wouldn't have been able to do it only for the courage that I gave him. He would stand up and was barely able to talk, he said, but i made him think of something in his mind that was nice. Maybe the sea or something that he liked and especially to have a smile on his face because when he was giving a speech it was good to have a smile on your face.

00:26:14 Interviewer

Isn't that amazing? Such a great example of an intergenerational learning exchange. And just how it came about, you know, fantastic.

00:26:23 Interviewer

OK great. Alright so tell me about college then. We keep digressing <laughs>.

00:26:36 Participant

Well, I was doing the degree then. We were there and there was one teacher. He was teaching maths and he came into the class then one day and he lambasted me. Because I was working as well and I was popping in that maths today.

I tried to go some days to his class and some days I got permission to do it because I was working. My daughter had a ballet school and I was helping her to run the school.

So when it came to this day he stood up and started on about how about we were only a bunch of nobodies in the class and such and such and they were all terrified and instead of speaking and encouraging them, he made them all feel as if they were dirt. I was in the class with them and I was spending in different classes.

00:27:33 Interviewer

And where was this? Where did this happen?

00:27:36 Participant

CIT <now MTU>.

00:27:49 Participant

Yeah. And then UCC was the last place I went to.

00:27:55 Participant

When he was doing it anyway, I waited until he had got up and then I put my hand up and he said “yes, what’s wrong?” and I said “I'm listening to you for the last 20 minutes, ranting and raving, and before you say anything just let me speak” and I said “you’re ranting and raving and you're telling everybody”, I said.

“First of all, you told me the book to buy, a new book” I said, “I bought the book and you didn’t use the book, you used an old book and I paid 30-odd pounds for the book.”

“Secondly”, I said “you're talking about people not turning up for classes. I turned up for every class, but you didn't turn up and I ended up at the whole lot of them” and I said “So would you please stop talking to the class the way you're talking?”

00:28:40 Interviewer

Good for you.

00:28:42 Participant

I stopped then and I watched him. The kids started then, were all in their 20s.

And I wanted them to speak. It's called pregnant pause, not to break that pregnant pause that you've won, but they were getting agitated.

And eventually he said “Am I that bad?” and I said “you are, you’re absolutely terrible.”

He didn't expect that at all and I never raised my voice. Never did anything but I just said what I thought and just why should he stand there and tell people that they were a bunch of nobodies because he felt superior to them.

00:29:28 Participant

Another guy who was teaching, he was doing law, and he was going on and on and he was saying "I got this scholarship in Amsterdam” and I was listening to this and I thought Amsterdam. So I checked it out and found out who got the scholarship and I said “I think you're mistaken there, because everyone who did that scholarship that year failed.” And he was livid.

00:30:02 Interviewer

<Laughs> Oh my goodness, yeah. And was that because the rest of the class were younger students and obviously weren't used to having anyone stand up to them or check the facts?

00:30:21 Participant

There was four of us, I think we were called the Golden Oldies.

00:30:26 Participant

And you had some teachers that were so nice. Now don't get me wrong, there was some lovely teachers, some really lovely teachers, but this one was teaching as statistics and then he started on about old people like “if you're old and if you're going to college...”

00:30:42 Participant

Nobody has the right to try and humiliate you, and he was doing that. And he said about old people coming into the class and this, that, the other thing.

So I decided that, I was always on-time, that I’d come in late. I went to the shop out in CIT, I saw a broken trolley and I asked the lady could I have the broken trolley. She gave it to me, never asked me any questions, so I put my books in it and went down to the door (of the class). So I bashed in the door and then with the door open, and they looked at me, and I said "ooooh I'm so sorry, I'm old, and I forgot where I was” and you can imagine the whole lot of them just went into an uproar like that. They were laughing because they knew I wouldn’t take crap from any teacher.

00:31:35 Interviewer

You made your points, that's for sure.

00:31:37 Participant

I did make my point and I had to do it on a few occasions. But when they got to know me then they were very careful.

00:31:43 Interviewer

Well, they should have been careful anyway without you having to make any of those points, you know.

00:31:50 Participant

It wasn't that easy first for certain people that that that took it seriously. They could humiliate these young students as well. And the old, especially the older students.

00:32:05 Participant

Another issue, an incident such that we had. We were there and this particular teacher, she was quite well known. She used to write for the newspaper, but she was a terrible snob. She thought we were a bunch of side people doing third level education.

00:32:27 Participant

This particular day she was getting everybody to tell their story. And this particular lady who is after having a nervous breakdown and then she started to tell her story and I knew, because I had worked with bereaved people for quite a number of years, and I knew when you tell so much but when a person is pulling it out if you don't want to say it. And I knew this lady didn't want to talk about her life because she had told me her story. Anyway, this other person that I knew, I think she felt that she was left there on her own in front of me. But anyway, my friend Mary was in front of me, so I gave Mary a jab and I said “Mary, I remember where I’ve met you” and I interrupted the other lady (who didn’t want to tell her story). Mary said ‘where?” and I said “do you remember we served time in Limerick jail together?” <laughs>. “I was trying to keep that a secret, <NORAH>, and now you’ve made it public in the class” said Mary. Your woman knew that we were only making fun of her in the end.

00:33:49 Interviewer

But that's the thing, in these stories, learning has to be enjoyable as well.

It's not all just about the exam, the test, the assignment, you've got to enjoy it, and because if you didn't enjoy it you wouldn't do it, you know.

00:34:03 Participant

You wouldn't. But we made the enjoyment <laughs>.

00:34:07 Interviewer

Absolutely you sure did, oh my goodness.

Alright, and I'm just looking through my guide here and jumping around because you covered off so much of it. But it sounds like you have a very positive attitude to life and your quality of life.

For quality of life there are many variables or elements, but I'm using health, well-being and happiness. So, we might not be healthy, but we might be happy and have good well-being and so on. But it certainly sounds to me like you have a very positive outlook on life, <NORAH>. Is that fair to say?

00:34:48 Participant

Yes, I’ve always had a very positive outlook on life and a very courageous outlook on life. Which I needed.

00:34:56 Interviewer

Of course.

So, tell me a little bit about then about the technologies you use or you don't use and that kind of thing. I know you have an iPhone anyway because it came up as an iMessage so I could tell that, but apart from that what else do you or don't you do and why?

00:35:19 Participant

I have this one particular daughter and she’s so big into security that every time she comes up (well, she hasn’t with COVID) she changes the password and I try and go into it and the password is changed.

00:35:43 Participant

And I have an old...

00:35:45 Interviewer

IPad, haven't you.

<*The call dropped and I rang <NORAH> back*>

00:36:09 Participant

Sandra I thought that this was fixed. I put a new SIM card into the phone and it cuts out like that.

00:36:15 Interviewer

No problem. I've got you back anyway so that’s the main thing.

So alright, come back to me now because I heard you talk about the changing of the password and not being able to get back in. Sure, that happens the best of us, that's for sure.

00:36:46 Interviewer

I did a survey last autumn of students at UL where I teach part-time because it was a great opportunity to find out, did they help their older family members with their digital communications during lockdown, and I got about 440 responses and it was all really quite insightful.

So, what were your household arrangements like then during that lockdown last year <NORAH>? Did technology help you or hinder you and what was that like?

00:37:12 Participant

It didn't hinder me. I had the phone and I have the very first of the iPads, and I used that quite a lot. It’s very old at this stage but I can still check and get things on it.

00:37:31 Participant

I tried to do a lot of things. I used to make costumes and everything for my daughter for the show. I don't climb now like I used to, to make curtains and that kind of thing.

I wouldn't be the type of person that would have to run to the next-door neighbours that I would not be able to do that, because that word (not able) doesn't come into my category.

00:38:01 Interviewer

Absolutely. Totally confident and capable, that's for sure.

00:38:11 Interviewer

And people have said that to me as well “all I need is the phone, once I can text and call”.

And so many people you know, just absolutely managed with that. But then on the other hand, you've got that whole Zoom brigade and they all just went pretty crazy, and it was the Zoom family weekly calls, quizzes and that kind of thing.

Did any of that come your way, <NORAH>?

00:38:36 Participant

Oh it did, yes it did, but my phone was tapped, you know this was years ago and I don't go online or anything. I have, I don’t know what it’s called, I have the card to get on. You can get together with the family and my niece. Is that Zoom?

00:39:04 Interviewer

Yeah, it sounds like it.

00:39:07 Participant

Yeah, but I don't. I don't after being....

00:39:14 Interviewer

Well, that's what happens when you're a communist as a young person. <laughs>

00:39:19 Participant

It was very, very scary, to think someone knew everything about you.

I don't put anything up that people could you know, follow me, and there's nothing about me on the (Internet). Or on social media, no.

00:39:33 Interviewer

That all has to be from that time protesting in Italy, right?

00:39:43 Participant

No, it was from here in Ireland as well.

00:39:49 Interviewer

You know we complain about those odd calls that are now starting to look like your own number and that kind of thing. And that's all bad enough, but I don't know anyone who has had a genuine scare. That sounds really serious <NORAH>, doesn't it?

00:40:08 Participant

I think it will be brought into law shortly now, you know, abuse in families.

00:40:16 Interviewer

Yeah, I mean they've they have made changes to the law recently on coercive control, along those lines. I think actually it's an interesting point now and I haven't had this conversation like with anybody but like the whole business with technology. I just remember when that coercive control law came in and even down to you know, partner having access to your phone information and stuff like that. And that makes it scary because aren't you better off without a phone if you're going to be getting grief for who you're getting a phone call from and that kind of thing?

00:40:58 Interviewer

I know, yes.

00:41:00 Interviewer

Yeah, that is so serious. So, I suppose the way I would look at it is that I think technology has its place. And that's why it’s so important for me to speak to people who do use it, and people who don't use it, so I can get a balanced view, and honestly, you know what I would say to that point is yes, it can be positive, it has its place, but you know, people are silly with it as well and it can do damage untold damage, you know.

00:41:36 Participant

It can do an awful lot of damage. It can cause a lot of fear as well.

< *From 00:41:42 to 00:43:23 Sandra talked about the impact of COVID when the message from commercial organisations to everyone was to go online to conduct the necessary business, and there was no choice for those who did not wish to or could not go online*>

00:42:23 Interviewer

And I'm having my little rant here.

Do you know the government basically gets funding from the EU to provide 10 hours of digital skills training to every adult in the country if they want it. Now, some organisations do that well and Age Action I believe happens to do that well because they do the one-to-one tuition on your own device called Getting Started.

00:42:48 Interviewer

But then there's so many others that just haul you into a class to learn whatever they decide you should learn, but you're really not learning what you want to learn, like about staying safe online, and everything keeps changing. The fraudsters find different ways of getting at you so 10 hours of training just isn't going to cut it. Where’s the lifelong in that?

So for me, that's where for people interested, need to have that local support, so whether it's family, community, to just try and stay on top of these things because you just don't know what's happening, you know?

00:43:27 Participant

No, and they definitely need it. For me, I actually taught with Age Action as well, and I taught the computer and everything changed. It’s a few years since I did it and I haven't kept up to date with it. Now I know that if I went back I’d pick it up again.

But the thing is, there’s too much in it and it’s changing and especially when you're getting older as well, and you can't take it in as quickly as the kids.

00:44:02 Participant

But then again, the children, the youngsters nowadays, when they have to communicate, they can only communicate just by social media.

<*00:44:10 to 00:45:00 Sandra talked about the gentleman whose daughter shows him and his wife how to use Instagram and TikTok to benefit their business so they don’t have to learn it themselves*>.

00:45:02 Participant

Because you had to do it. I passed all the stuff I needed to know but it’s double-Dutch now what’s coming up in half this stuff. Instead of amending, with COVID everything just seems to have come to a full stop.

And when you're not in contact with people, like the last time I was up in Ardfallen, the classes in Douglas. And I was doing it but in truth I’m not interested to be on TikTok and all these different type of things. I don't actually like to see myself on them.

00:45:47 Interviewer

No, absolutely. And if they serve a purpose so, for me it's managing the local Tidy Towns communications and it kind of helps with that. But these new ones. It would take me so long to learn and what do I want to be using it for anyway?

00:46:07 Interviewer

I’ve gone off on a bit of a tangent but I think we've touched on most of the questions and themes that I was looking at, either directly or indirectly, so I'm happy enough with all that <NORAH>. But I wanted to ask you since we talked on Monday, was there anything you were thinking about that you definitely wanted to make sure that you were including in this conversation?

00:46:40 Participant

No, I think we've covered, so you asked the questions.

Because I had a busy day today. I knew that you were ringing but I didn’t think about questions. I have a book here now that just in case there was something that came into my head but I didn't Sandra. Do you have to find out other things?

00:47:08 Interviewer

No, I'm fine, honestly, because what I have here is just the pages of general themes that I want to go through.

So there was the lifelong learning, the intergenerational learning, the use of technology. They were the main things and you've told me so much more than that which is hugely valuable and you know I'll be making sense of it all together. So no, I'm pretty happy with everything and I'm conscious at the time because I said I wouldn't keep you more than 45 minutes but you've had so much to tell me it's been great.

00:47:41 Participant

When anybody came and I like to help people. I would never be afraid. I’ve always had courage but I would say I had a temper as well, don't get me wrong, that would only come out now and again.

But there are lots of things that I took on. I took on the Bank of Ireland. I took on the Irish Nationwide because of the mortgage on the house. And only for Marian Finucane that she, her researcher, was going to come to court and then the Irish Nationwide dropped the case because they hadn’t a leg to stand on. But I was capable of doing all of those things without batting an eyelid. And because I knew I was in the right.

And paying bills and everything, the banks got away with so much, especially against women, that it made me very very angry.

00:48:37 Interviewer

Yeah, and I think we're seeing that as well now, you know, they're forcing people. You have to be online. They're closing bank branches. You have to go to the machine and I think to be quite honest, what I am hearing is that if it wasn't for the post office and the relationship people have with their local post office I think things would be even worse so. But then you're just moving the problem along. So the banks have decided they don't want to or its not worthwhile having older adults as customers, because that seems to be what they're saying when they're just moving out and you know that's not right either. But I don't know. I think we'll have to see what happens there.

00:49:23 Participant

I’m fighting with them. I don't want statements online. I want paper statements. It's like trying to get blood out of a turnip, so I shave to pay them a visit now <laughs>.

00:49:35 Interviewer

Oh, I know and it’s the one record because if you do need proof on the bank statement and then they charge you so much per page, that's just crazy, I mean there are some things where paper is much better.

00:49:52 Interviewer

I am pretty happy with all that. You’ve given me loads. So what I will do, and I'm a bit backlogged now, about 3 behind I think at this stage, so it'll probably be over the weekend when I get to transcribe this. They're actually taking about four or five hours for each of them, so it's quite a chunk of work, but when I have it done and made sense of it all I'd like you to have a copy so you can see what we talked about and if there's anything you want to remove or maybe add then all of that's fine too. But is it best to put that in the post to you, <NORAH>?

00:50:28 Participant

I’d like it in the post yes.

*<<NORAH> gave Sandra her postal address>.*

00:51:04 Interviewer

Sometimes what I'm finding when I'm listening it back the software is putting, you know, the full stop in the wrong place so it's putting it out of context. So, I have to be quite careful.

And I think you and I both speak quite fast, so there's a lot of content here to go through.

But look, it's all great, it's just fantastic. And <NORAH>, I want to thank you for your time.

And if you know anybody else who'd like to either speak to me or do the survey or both, and you know, that would be great, but I'm really doing well now. I want to keep collecting data through interviews and surveys to the end of September and then I have the rest of the year because I'm not teaching this semester, so I'll be pretty much at this full-time to try and make some sense of it by the end of the year and we’ll see how it goes after that.

00:52:00 Participant

I'll ask my friends but some people don't like to talk or are afraid to talk. When I was with the bereavement group, I had to talk, I was never short of words anyway.

*<I had stopped the recording when <NORAH> shared her experience of her involvement in Mary Robinson’s campaign for President of Ireland, writing a report and two colleagues (with degrees) to Dublin, unsuccessfully tried to prise the report from her.*

*Also, her experience of being in the bank and successfully getting the cashier to lodge a cheque as <NORAH> would not use the machine, and also to cash not only her cheque but those of two other ladies in the bank at the time, threatening a picket – go <NORAH>!*

*Also, about the bank manager refusing to deal with her, telling her to go to her husband – that didn’t work out either and she got her own back by refusing to give her signature on a loan her husband was taking out!>*