International Standard

ISO 25556

Ageing societies — General requirements and guidelines for ageing-inclusive digital economy

Vieillissement de la population — Exigences générales et lignes directrices pour une économie numérique inclusive en matière de vieillissement

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This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 314, *Ageing societies*.

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Introduction

0.1 General

The fourth industrial revolution, characterized by rapid digital innovation and exponential growth, has transformed all sectors of society, including how we live, work, and relate to one another. Digital technology can assist in learning new skills, facilitate social interactions, foster independent and autonomous ways of living, and improve the management and delivery of public health, social care and other services. However, this does not mean that everyone and everything is connected or digitised. Nor does it mean that the social and economic consequences of digital technology are necessarily inclusive or beneficial. Digital technology can both create opportunities and increase inequalities. In fact, not everyone can benefit equally from digital technology. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted unequal access to digital technology across and within ageing societies.

Products and services are increasingly provided online. In ageing societies, some people are more likely to be digitally excluded and to experience barriers to accessing products and services online. The reasons vary, for example, people lack access to technology, or they are unable to use and fully benefit from the opportunities provided by technology. Digital inclusion can create opportunities for active and healthy ageing, including social and economic participation. Improving digital access and digital literacy can empower people. It is essential to ensure aging-inclusive design and to ensure the relevance of digital services and products. It is important to create ethical, safe digital environments free from ageism that embrace the diversity of older individuals.

Digital economy refers to economic and social activity reliant on, or significantly enhanced by, the use of digital inputs[42].Establishing ageing-inclusive digital economies (and related standardization) is not only significant but urgent. This document seeks to respond to the context and demands of rapidly evolving digital economies, by providing general requirements and guidelines for ageing-inclusive digital economies from the perspective of the needs of ageing societies, and by addressing common problems of an ageing-inclusive digital economy.

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0.2 Opportunities of digitalisation in ageing societies

Digital technology can provide new opportunities and solutions for people living in ageing societies, such as:

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— maintaining social connectedness, including connectedness to family members living apart;

— accessing digital communities for the latest updates and information;

— working online by using the internet and mobile devices;

— seeking employment using digital tools;

— participating in online learning;

— accessing digital services, e.g. online shopping, and smart transportation systems;

— accessing medical and health care online, as well as electronic personal health records, e.g. online diagnosis and treatment;

— using digital safety tools and measures, e.g. using smart devices to make an emergency call.

0.3 How can digital technologies support ageing societies?

Digital technology can support ageing societies in multiple ways, for example with regard to the following aspects.

— Visual capabilities – It can be increasingly challenging for older persons and other people to read texts written in small fonts. Therefore, text that can easily be enlarged or compatible with the use of screen magnifiers and screen readers, or both, can be essential.

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— Hearing capabilities – Accessible content includes options for communicating with people with hearing difficulties, such as the availability of chats or messaging as an alternative to voice services. Accessible content is also compatible with hearing aid devices, for example, accessible smart TVs.

— Motor ability – To accommodate people with decreased motor skills, accessible information and communication technology (ICT) can be designed to interact seamlessly without requiring precise motor control. It can also support assistive technologies for optimal usability. For example, large clickable areas that include labels, especially for smaller controls, such as radio buttons and checkboxes are important accessibility features for people with limited dexterity.

— Cognitive capabilities – Some people can find it increasingly difficult to find specific information or recognize and access hyperlinks. It is important to consider these issues of usable and accessible designs. Making content easy to read and adding helpful features such as reminders can facilitate access.

— Communicating with the people responsible for websites or mobile apps is sometimes challenging. Accessible and easy customer support channels are important in order to help all customers.

— Social connection and isolation – Social connection can be increased through various ICT-related activities such as digital training and education, online peer-to-peer learning, and by providing support for sharing information.

— Vitality – People can experience a loss of vitality. E-health, telehealth and health apps can encourage healthy behaviour, monitor health and wellbeing.

Everybody ages differently, and people become more diverse as they age, for example in their independence, need for assistance, level of activity.

NOTE See Reference [46] for more information on ageing-inclusive digital economy.

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