

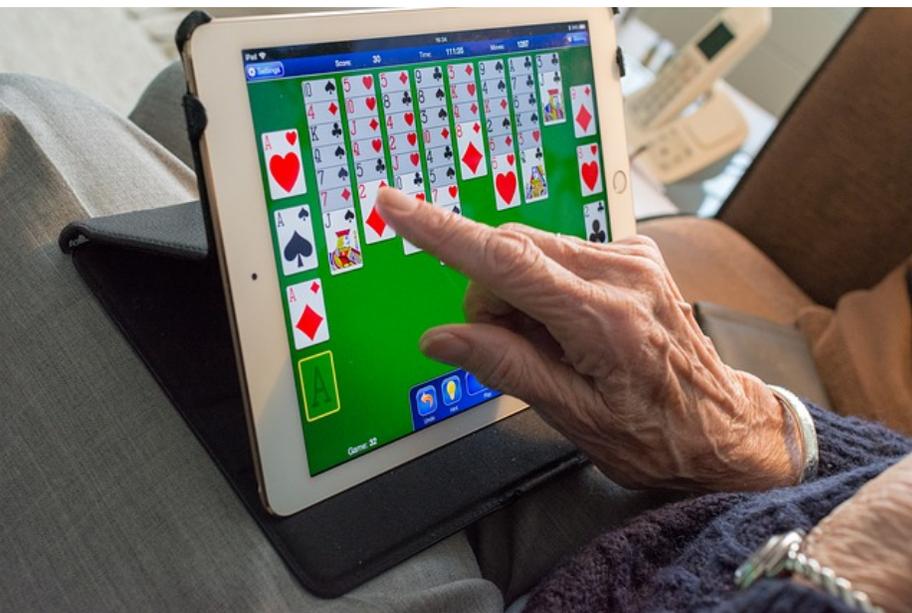
Mobile Technology & Older Participants



The Datacubed Health platform for mobile data collection and participant engagement, Linkt, has been designed with older users in mind.

Linkt includes intuitive interfaces and clear instructions, as well as highly visible text and response buttons. Datacubed has conducted extensive usability testing with participants aged 65 and older to ensure that Linkt provides a quality user experience for older users, and study participants as old as 88 have used the Datacubed platform successfully for extended periods of time.

It is commonly assumed that older adults lack access to mobile devices and are disinterested in or even averse to the use of gamified mobile technologies, suggesting that adoption of digital health tools may be limited among older individuals. However, current data on device ownership and usage suggest these assumptions are incorrect.



A recent study by AARP found high rates of smartphone ownership among older adults: 78% of Americans aged 50-59, 73% of those 60-69, and 55% of those 70 or older owned a smartphone in 2017, according to the study. Tablet ownership in those age groups was also high: 46% of people aged 50-59 and 40% of people 60 and older reported owning a tablet. Additionally, 10% of Americans aged 50 or older who did not own a mobile device in 2017 said that they planned to purchase one in 2018. Data from the annual Deloitte Global Mobile Consumer Survey suggest that such a 10% year-over-year increase in device ownership would be on par with increases in preceding years. The Deloitte survey found that rates of smartphone ownership among Americans over 50 increased by approximately 40% between 2015 and 2018. Similar international data from the Pew Research Center suggest that trends in other developed countries closely mirror these changes within the US.

Recent data also suggest that older adults enjoy using mobile devices to play games. The AARP's study surveyed respondents about their app usage and found that gaming was among the top 10 activities for which people 50 or older said they used their mobile devices. Among surveyed users, 43% indicated that they use mobile gaming apps at least weekly. Indeed, the use of mobile gaming apps by Americans aged 50 or older exceeds that demographic's usage of apps for other common activities such as banking (32%), reading the news (31%), shopping (29%), or listening to music (18%).

While it remains true that mobile apps with poorly designed user interfaces (for example, UIs that are unintuitive or use very small fonts) can be off-putting for older users, it is clear that well-designed gamified mobile apps such as Linkt are well tolerated by older adults and usage trends suggest they will continue to become even more so over time.

Sources

- Anderson, G. Oscar. "Getting Connected: Older Americans Embrace Technology to Enhance Their Lives." AARP Research, December 2017.
- Deloitte Global Mobile Consumer Survey, US edition, August 2015, August 2018.
- "Smartphone Ownership Is Growing Rapidly Around the World, but Not Always Equally." Pew Research Center, February 2019.