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## Use of information technology by older people

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### Abstract

Among older Australian's there is an increasing utilisation of technology as people recognise its capacity to improve their social well being as well as to facilitate communication. Research by the Council on Ageing suggests that older adults are particularly attracted to technology products that enhance their capacity for independent living. There is also government recognition of the importance that older Australians have the skills and support required to make effective use of online technologies as well as adequate access to these new technologies.

After experiencing continuous growth in previous years, the proportion using a computer appears to have stabilised in 2002. However, while small declines were experienced for the age groups 18-24 years to 45-54 years, the proportion for those aged 55-64 years and 65 years and over continued to grow.

In 2002, around one in five older persons (ie. persons aged 65 years and over) used a computer. This proportion decreased across the age groups from a high of 89% for those aged 18-24 years to 55% for those aged 55-64 years, then dropping substantially to 21% for older persons. As for computer use, the proportion of people accessing the Internet decreases with increasing age.

This paper will provide an analysis of ABS data sources to discuss use of information technology by older people including computer usage and internet access, as well as highlighting barriers to the use of these technologies. It also compares usage across age groups and across time.

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