

Operationalizing and Enhancing Digital Literacy among Older Adults

Implied Informed Consent Form (ICF)/Letter of Information (LOI) for Prospective Research with Human Participants (Survey Research) – HSREB

Study title: Operationalizing and Enhancing Digital Literacy among Older Adults

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1. Purpose of Study

You are invited to participate in a research study because you are an older adult living in Canada, with relevant experience and perspectives related to the research topic. This consent form provides information to help you make an informed decision to participate. This study has received ethical approval from the Queen's University Health Sciences and Affiliated Teaching Hospitals Research Ethics Board (HSREB).

Participation is voluntary, and you can decline to participate in any aspect of the research at any time. In this study, you will complete a short, one-time survey. This survey will be completed online but is available as a PDF to print if you prefer. It will take 10 to 15 minutes to complete. This survey will ask questions about your understanding and definition of digital literacy for older adults. You do not need to answer any question you don't want to, and you can choose to withdraw from this study at any time without providing a reason.

2. Risks and benefits

There are no known risks to this study.

While there are no direct benefits to you for taking part in this study, your participation will give you the opportunity to contribute your expertise and experiences to share a more inclusive and effective understanding of digital literacy for older adults in Canada. Your insight could influence future programs and policies that better address the needs of older adults across Canada.

We hope that the results of this study may benefit older adults across Canada in the future. The overall anticipated public and scientific benefit of this study is to establish a clear and comprehensive definition of digital literacy for older adults, which will help validate the barriers older adults face in achieving digital literacy and develop a preliminary plan to support community programs and policymakers in developing a strategy for improving digital literacy for older adults.

3. Confidentiality

All the information collected during the research study will remain strictly confidential to the extent permitted by the applicable laws. If you decide to participate in this study, the research team will only collect the information needed. To protect your privacy, you will only be identified in the study documents by a participant ID. The master log linking your name to your participant ID will be stored separately from other study data and will be accessed only by authorized research team members. This master log will not leave the local site.

The study data will be stored in a controlled location (e.g., password protected files) on a secure network at Queen's University and/or Providence Care Hospital for five years after the completion of the study. After this storage period, the study data will be destroyed by the principal investigator, Dr. John Puxty.

During the study, for data collection, data analysis, monitoring, control, safety, and security, your study file may be accessed by the following organizations:

- Members of the study team, as delegated by the principal investigator, Dr. John Puxty
- Research Assistants, as delegated by the principal investigator, who have signed a confidentiality agreement
- Authorized Representatives of Queen's University, Providence Care, its affiliated hospitals and/or HSREB.

The results of this study may be published or shared during presentations at academic and community conferences, meetings or events. However, you will not be identified during the dissemination of study results or publication. All efforts will be made to protect your privacy, and the likelihood that someone may identify you is small, however it cannot be eliminated.

4. Incentives

After submitting your survey responses, you will be directed to a separate survey and can enter your contact information to be entered into a draw for a chance to win a \$25 gift card to Tim Hortons. Your odds of winning are based on the number of individuals who participate in the

survey.

Your name and email will be stored securely and separately from your survey responses and permanently erased once the draw is complete. The survey will close on **Friday, July 18th, 2025 at 5:00 pm EDT**.

Entry into the draw will close once all survey responses have been received.

The draw will take place within two weeks after the survey closes and be conducted by a random number generator.

Winners will be contacted using the contact information provided upon entry into the draw. If a winner has not responded within two weeks, the winner will forfeit the prize, and another draw will be held to determine a winner. The prize must be accepted as awarded or forfeited and cannot be redeemed for cash.

Participation is not required for entry into the draw; to enter without participating in the study, please email the research team at robertsm1@providencecare.ca with your name and contact information. Entries must be received by the closing date above to be eligible. We are not responsible for lost, late, incomplete, illegible, damaged, destroyed, postage due, or misdirected entries. No bulk mailings will be accepted. All entries will become the property of the study team and will not be returned. If you have any questions, please contact HSREB at Researchethics@queensu.ca.

5. Contact information

If you have questions about this study or if you suffer a research-related injury, you can contact:

1. Dr. Madison Robertson, Research Coordinator and Co-Investigator - Robertsm1@providencecare.ca or (613) 544-4900 x52018
2. Sarah Webster, Manager and Co-Investigator - Websters@providencecare.ca or (613) 544-4900 x52016

For ethics concerns, please contact HSREB at 1-844-535-2988 (Toll free in North America) or email Researchethics@queensu.ca. For research conducted outside of North America use: 1-613-533-2988. If non-English speaking participants wish to contact the Chair for ethics concerns, translation assistance may be necessary, as the REB Chairs communicate in English only.

6. Conflict of interest

There are no conflicts of interest to declare related to this study.

* 7. Consent

I agree that:

- I have read this Informed Consent Form (ICF)/Letter of Information (LOI).
- By consenting, I have not waived any legal right in the event of research-related harm.

I consent to Participating in the Main Study. **Selecting “Yes” and proceeding to completion of survey/questionnaire implies your consent to the study as outline above.**

☐ Yes ☐ No

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PART 1 – Demographics

Question 1: What Province or Territory do you live in?

- ☐ Alberta
- ☐ British Columbia
- ☐ Manitoba
- ☐ New Brunswick
- ☐ Newfoundland and Labrador
- ☐ Northwest Territories
- ☐ Nova Scotia
- ☐ Nunavut
- ☐ Ontario
- ☐ Prince Edward Island
- ☐ Québec
- ☐ Saskatchewan
- ☐ Yukon

Question 2: Do you identify as (check all that apply):

- ☐ 2SLGBTQIA+
- ☐ Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, Inuit)
- ☐ Visible Minority
- ☐ Living in Rural Area
- ☐ New Immigrant
- ☐ Person with a Disability
- ☐ Caregiver
- ☐ Living on low-income
- ☐ I prefer not to answer
- ☐ None of the above

Question 3: What is your gender?

- ☐ Man
- ☐ Non-Binary
- ☐ Two-Spirit
- ☐ Woman
- ☐ I don't identify with the above
- ☐ I prefer not to answer

Question 4: What is your age range?

- ☐ Between 55-64
- ☐ Between 65-74
- ☐ Between 75-84
- ☐ Aged 85 and older
- ☐ I prefer not to answer

Question 5: What is the highest level of education you completed?

- ☐ Elementary school
- ☐ High school
- ☐ College diploma/degree
- ☐ University Undergraduate degree
- ☐ Graduate degree
- ☐ I prefer not to answer

PART 2 - Key Elements of Digital Literacy

Question 6: Have you heard of the term “digital literacy”?

☐ Yes

If yes, please complete the rest of Part 2 and 3.

☐ No

If no, please skip questions 7, 8 and 9. Go to Part 3, Question 10.

Question 7: How would you define digital literacy?

Question 8: Please list and/or describe any key elements that you believe are essential to the conceptualization and definition of digital literacy.

Question 9: Please list and/or describe any key elements you believe are essential related to digital literacy specifically for older adults.

PART 3 - Defining Digital Literacy

Question 10: Below are definitions of digital literacy drawn from previous research.

For each definition, please rank on a scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” how well you feel it defines digital literacy. To do so, please check off the box you most agree with beside each definition, and then provide additional written detail for your rank in the space below each definition. If you are unfamiliar with the term ‘digital literacy’, please rate how much each definition makes sense or resonates with you.

Definitions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Digital literacy is “the ability to find, evaluate, and communicate information using information and communication technologies.” (Aslan et al., 2024)					
Please provide detail on your rating above for this definition:					
Digital literacy is “a set of competencies related to the skilled use of computers and information technology.” (Karna et al., 2022)					
Please provide detail on your rating above for this definition:					
Digital literacy is comprised of “five key indicators: information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, digital content creation, safety, and problem-solving.” (Kebede et al., 2022)					
Please provide detail on your rating above for this definition:					

Digital literacy “is the ability to use devices and online platforms.” (Chee et al., 2024)					
Please provide detail on your rating above for this definition:					
Digital literacy is “the ability to use and understand information obtained from various digital devices.” (Baek et al., 2024)					
Please provide detail on your rating above for this definition:					

Question 11: Please rank the five definitions of digital literacy presented below, from 1 to 5, based on how well each one matches your own understanding of digital literacy.

Rank 1 for the definition that aligns most closely with your understanding, and 5 for the definition that aligns the least with your understanding.

Rank (1-5)	Digital literacy is....
	“the ability to find, evaluate, and communicate information using information and communication technologies.”
	“a set of competencies related to the skilled use of computers and information technology.”
	“comprised of five key indicators: information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, digital content creation, safety, and problem-solving.”
	“the ability to use devices and online platforms.”
	“the ability to use and understand information obtained from various digital devices.”

Thank you for participating in the survey. We want to offer you the opportunity to be included in a draw for a gift card by adding your contact information below. Your survey data will not be linked to any of the contact information you provided for the draw. Your name and contact information will remain confidential and will not be linked to your survey answers.

The contact information collected for the draw will be securely stored, separately from your survey responses. It will be permanently erased once the draw is completed, and the prize(s) have been awarded.

Odds of winning are based on the number of people participating in the survey. Entry into the draw will close once all survey responses have been received.

If you do not wish to be included in this draw, please leave the contact details below blank.

If you wish to be included in this draw, **provide the following:**

Provide your full name:

Provide your email:

Thank you for entering your responses. Please scan this hard-copy and email it to Robertsm1@providencecare.ca.