

Dainis Olders

Digital Expertise

Riga, Latvia

Tell us more about yourself and how you got to where you are?

I started working as a lecturer at the Faculty of Automation and Computing at Riga Technical University, where I worked for 17 years. I earned a master's degree. Then I moved on to work in other private and public organizations.

I have been leading the non-formal education association ALTUM for 15 years now, and I also work there as a teacher in adult digital skills training. We have participated as a partner in ERASMUS+ adult education projects.

Are you familiar with the IKIGAI principles?

If we understand the Japanese expression IKIGAI as a principle, as the reason for a person's joy and satisfaction with their life, then yes.

How can the concept of IKIGAI be integrated into digital transition for older adults?

The word IKIGAI is also used to describe the mental and spiritual conditions in which a person feels valuable in their life. It is based on various values, including the joy of meeting other people, in our version, of digital communication, and the sense of life in the process of self-realization.

How does digital literacy contribute to a person's sense of purpose and fulfilment?

Digital literacy broadens a person's horizons, creating opportunities to communicate digitally with both loved ones and friends, as well as with previously strangers in digital peer groups. This reduces the isolation and anxiety of an older person.

What are your thoughts on the European Union's current policies for inclusion and accessibility?

EU policy strengthens the cohesion of citizens and their access to new knowledge.

Are there any specific policies or initiatives from Latvia that could serve as models for other European countries?

Yes, for example, the movement of digital agents, i.e. volunteers who are specially trained to help residents with e-service consultation in libraries, municipal community centres, and public organizations.

**What are the most difficult things to learn when starting to use a computer?
What about a smartphone?**

- a) The most difficult physical adaptation for seniors is working with a mouse or a touchpad. Often an older adult say - I understand where to click the cursor, but my hand doesn't listen to me.
- b) Difficulties with phones – small screen and small keys. Clumsy, unaccustomed and untrained fingers have difficulty hitting the required letter or symbol.
- c) New technologies must also be learned, just as, for example, street traffic rules must be learned.

What are the most important things to keep in mind when learning new technologies? Where should one start?

- a) To explain the understanding of the structure of the digital world and the flow of information in order to reduce the fear of everything new and the fear of mistakes. When starting to teach digital skills to older adults, it is important to explain the need for digital skills in today's rapidly changing world. The regularities and interrelationships of information must be explained. The frequently asked question - "What is it for?" must be answered, I just want to, for example, transfer meter readings.
- b) Older adults should be helped to develop visual perception, to get used to graphic symbols and signs, which are in contrast to the previously used textual information.
- c) Physical exercises for the hands and fingers are useful for training fine motor skills.

Some older adults struggle with the differences between Mobile Applications and Websites. How would you simplify it?

It should be explained that websites are usually called with textual names, digital addresses, while applications are called using graphical notations, digital icons.

If you were to create a guide for new computer and smartphone users, where would you start?

By creating awareness that technological developments are changing the physical world - in the past, letters and messages were physically carried by horse-drawn carriages, then by cars, then by airplanes. However, this is now being replaced by operational electronic communications.

The possibilities of the physical world push people to constantly learn something new, change their perception of the world, and acquire new skills.

To motivate people to overcome difficulties and learn, it would be useful to list many of the endless opportunities that digital skills and knowledge open up for a person.

What do you consider to be the essentials of using a laptop? What about a smartphone?

Computers are increasingly used by professionals in various fields.

Residents use computers to create various documents and presentations needed in everyday life, and to read books, because smartphones have a relatively small screen.

In everyday life, it is more convenient for people to use phones with an Internet connection - both for communicating with friends and acquaintances (calling, writing, exchanging information, social networks), and for the operational use of various e-services.

Do you recommend any exercise to learn new technologies?

To facilitate the learning of a new technique, short breaks in the learning process are useful, during which the instructor, together with a group of students, performs exercises to relax muscles and relieve stress.

How can we design technology that is more accessible and intuitive for older adults?

We simply need to help older adults change their perception and, consequently, their thinking. This goal can be achieved by encouraging them to play simple digital games on their phones or computers that train visual perception, reaction, etc.

Use gamification methodologies with an emphasis on the use of picture icons when grandparents play board games with grandchildren.

How can cybersecurity be simplified for older adults?

To convince with examples that, just like in everyday life, one must monitor one's belongings and order, and not get carried away with the dissemination of sensitive information.

How can users be more secure on the internet?

Users will be safer by not disseminating sensitive information about themselves and their relatives on the Internet.

Do you have anything you'd like to add to what has been mentioned?

Each succeeding generation of citizens will perceive new technologies better and adapt to them more easily.