# Senior Citizens and Young Technologies

European Comparative Research on Ageing – Challenges and Opportunities

Speaker: Sylvia E. Korupp, Erfurt University

# Theoretical Background

1. Gerontechnology

2. Structural and Individual Lag

3. Opportunity

4. Typology of Users

UNIVERSITÄT
ERFURT

# Question (1)

- **What Influences the Internet Access of Senior Citizens?**


- **Empirical Results:**
  - Age ("young" and "old" senior citizens)
  - Marital Status (level of social interaction)
  - Education (level of general interest)

UNIVERSITÄT
ERFURT

# Question (2)

- **What Sort of Differences Exist in Europe?**


- **Empirical Results**
  - ❑ Gender: Only significant for Nordic Regime
  - ❑ Age: None
  - ❑ Marital Status: None
  - ❑ Education: Strong Impact on Internet Use in Liberal and Mediterranean Regimes

UNIVERSITÄT
ERFURT

# Question (3)

- **Why not Use the Internet?**


- **Empirical Results:**
  - No computer at home
  - Too complicated
  - Knowledge missing
  - Not interested

UNIVERSITÄT
ERFURT

# Hypothesis (1)

1. Men are more likely than Women to Use the Internet (Technological Experience Hypothesis).

Can be rejected for all but the Nordic regimes. Likely to taper off there, too.

| | Nordic | Continental | Liberal | Mediterranean | GEE Pop Av Mod: EU Countries |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | | | | | |
| Men | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Women | 0,56 | ns | ns | ns | ns |
| … | … | … | … | … | … |
| N | 1087 | 2100 | 651 | 1344 | 5182 |
| Pseudo $R^2$ | 0,28 | 0,20 | 0,16 | 0,32 | |
| LR $\chi^2$ | 402 | 408 | 118 | 196 | 458 |

Source: Eurobarometer 59.2 (May – June 2003), unweighted data.

# Hypothesis (2)

2. "Old" Senior Citizens are less likely than "Young" Senior Citizens to Use the Net (Technological Generations Hypothesis).

Empirically supported.

| | Nordic | Continental | Liberal | Mediterranean | GEE Pop Av Mod: EU Countries |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| … | … | … | … | … | … |
| **Age** | | | | | |
| 55-64 Years (R) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 65 + Years | 0,50 | 0,45 | 0,57 | ns | 0,51 |
| … | … | … | … | … | … |
| N | 1087 | 2100 | 651 | 1344 | 5182 |
| Pseudo $R^2$ | 0,28 | 0,20 | 0,16 | 0,32 | |
| LR $\chi^2$ | 402 | 408 | 118 | 196 | 458 |

Source: Eurobarometer 59.2 (May – June 2003), unweighted data.

UNIVERSITÄT ERFURT

# Hypothesis (3)

3. People living with a Partner are more Likely to Use the Internet than People living Alone (Opportunity Hypothesis).

Empirically supported.

| | Nordic | Continental | Liberal | Mediterranean | GEE Pop Av Mod: EU Countries |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| … | … | … | … | … | … |
| **Marital Status** | | | | | |
| With Partner (R) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Never Partner | 0,39 | ns | 0,28 | ns | ns |
| No Partner | 0,42 | 0,54 | 0,50 | ns | 0,56 |
| … | … | … | … | … | … |
| N | 1087 | 2100 | 651 | 1344 | 5182 |
| Pseudo $R^2$ | 0,28 | 0,20 | 0,16 | 0,32 | |
| LR $\chi^2$ | 402 | 408 | 118 | 196 | 458 |

Source: Eurobarometer 59.2 (May – June 2003), unweighted data.

UNIVERSITÄT ERFURT

# Hypothesis (4)

4. A Positive Linear Relationship Exists between Educational Level and Internet Use (General Level of Interest Hypothesis).

Empirically supported.

| | Nordic | Continental | Liberal | Mediterranean | GEE Pop Av Mod: EU Countries |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| … | … | … | … | … | … |
| **Educational Level** | | | | | |
| Up to 15 Years (R) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 16-19 Years | 2,91 | 2,05 | 2,62 | 9,48 | 2,53 |
| + 20 Years | 5,19 | 7,61 | 10,65 | 12,37 | 5,71 |
| … | … | … | … | … | … |
| N | 1087 | 2100 | 651 | 1344 | 5182 |
| Pseudo $R^2$ | 0,28 | 0,20 | 0,16 | 0,32 | |
| LR $\chi^2$ | 402 | 408 | 118 | 196 | 458 |

Source: Eurobarometer 59.2 (May – June 2003), unweighted data.

UNIVERSITÄT ERFURT

# Hypothesis (5)

5. Occupational Status Positively Influences Internet Use (Diffusion Hypothesis).

Empirically supported.

| | Nordic | Continental | Liberal | Mediterranean | GEE Pop Av Mod: EU Countries |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| … | … | … | … | … | … |
| **Occupation** | | | | | |
| Self-employed | ns | 3,12 | 1,84 | 5,93 | 2,36 |
| Managers | 17,63 | 4,74 | 3,27 | 8,68 | 5,84 |
| White collar | 8,68 | 4,41 | 5,70 | 5,40 | 4,37 |
| Blue collar | 2,12 | 1,77 | ns | ns | 1,41 |
| Retired or Housewife (R) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Unemployed | 3,56 | ns | ns | ns | ns |
| N | 1087 | 2100 | 651 | 1344 | 5182 |
| Pseudo $R^2$ | 0,28 | 0,20 | 0,16 | 0,32 | |
| LR $\chi^2$ | 402 | 408 | 118 | 196 | 458 |

UNIVERSITÄT ERFURT

*Reasons for Not Using the Internet in Age Categories*

|  | No computer at home | Too complicated | Knowledge missing | Not interested | Total N |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Euro15** | **35,2%** | **11,7%** | **19,5%** | **35,1%** | 4468 |
| 55-64 Years | 37,9% | 13,5% | 21,1% | 30,5% | 2565 |
| 65+ Years | 33,7% | 10,7% | 18,6% | 37,7% | 2872 |

Source: Eurobarometer 59.2 (May – June 2003), weighted data.

UNIVERSITÄT
ERFURT

# Summary of Results

## User Analysis

- On average, gender has no influence on the use of the Internet within the senior population (exception: Nordic regimes).

- "Old" senior citizens are on average half as likely compared to "young" senior citizens to be silver surfers.

- Educational level is linearly positive related to the likelihood of Internet use.

- Retirement has a negative influence on Internet use.

## Non-User Analysis

- The most frequent reasons for the decision not to use the internet are:

  - No computer at home
  - Too complicated
  - Knowledge missing
  - Not interested

- The reason "not interested" is independent of socio-economic background (tested in a multivariate model).

UNIVERSITÄT ERFURT

# Discussion

- Effects of gender are tapering off. Possible reasons: Interactive technology? Gender "Equality" in Senior Population?

- Distinct net age effects for Internet use. Possible reason: Conservatism?

- Effects of education are large; Mediterranean and Liberal regime show strong relationships. Possible reasons: Differences caused by population distribution of education? …or lagged technology diffusion?

- Retirement has strong effects on Internet use. Possible reason: Structural discrimination?