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## Article

# Older audiences and digital media : focus on Romania

Management dynamics in the knowledge economy

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## **Older Audiences and Digital Media: Focus on Romania**

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**Abstract.** *This report discusses descriptive results of the Computer Assisted Telephone based Survey (CATI) conducted in Romania in December 2016. The present survey is part of the international project Cross-National Longitudinal Study: Older Audiences in the Digital Media Environment (see [www.actproject.ca/](http://www.actproject.ca/)), and it is planned to be conducted every two years, in three waves, on the same sample of older adults. The sample is representative for the online population of people 60 years old and above living in Romania. The results show that TV is the most important media channel for this age group, followed by radio. Also, we can talk about a specialization of media consume at older people, with Television and television set playing a central role, followed by radio (and radio set), whereas newspapers and magazines are accessed both online and offline. One important incentive for older people to go online and try different mediated communication options is to share their life routine with family and friends. While the Internet becomes a communication medium used all over the paces, older people preferred using it in their own private homes. The report also indicates the important role of mediated communication in interpersonal communication mechanisms in the case of older people.*

**Keywords:** *60+ Internet users; Romania; CATI survey; Internet; mobile communication; media consumption; digital media versus traditional media.*

### **Introduction**

The current document is a country report presenting data from the first cross-cultural longitudinal study on older people usage and activities in the digital media environment. The project *Cross-national longitudinal study: Older audiences in the digital media environment* started in 2016 with the goal of conducting a panel study of three waves on older people media use and practices, in seven countries around the world: Austria, Canada, Denmark, Israel, Romania, Spain, and The Netherlands. This is a four years project, 2016-2020, designed to include three waves in 2016, 2018 and 2020, with an aim of investigated at least 500 people in each (representative at country level) for the last wave. The project is supported by the ACT project (2018) and the panel study expands both Nimrod's (2017) work and that

conducted within the *EU COST Action IS0906 Transforming Audiences, Transforming Societies* (European Audience Research, 2014).

The aims of this panel study are: (1) to investigate the potential for displacement of traditional dominant media by innovative communication practices within the older audiences and to analyze the media repertoires and habits of older audience of the new media; (2) to analyze the dynamics of media practices at older people and the level of globalization of potential displacement of traditional dominant media by innovative communication practices. Data were collected in each country by a commercial firm and the sampling procedure, questionnaire translation and adaptation was supervised by a senior researcher in each country.

In the following, we will analyze the main findings from the Romanian sample, on the first wave of the project. This constitutes a country report and similar reports are created for each of the participant countries. Note that both authors of the current report are members of the ACT project and of the initial research team.

## **Methodology**

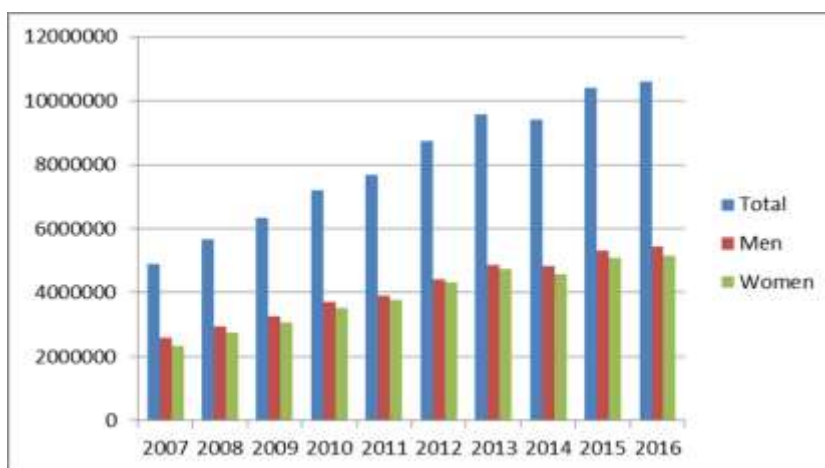
In Romania, data collection was completed by a private company, *Cult Market Research* using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews (CATI). The questionnaire was applied using CATI method and all conversations were recorded. Data collection was completed between 16 November - 16 December 2016, on a national representative sample of older Internet users (people 60 years of age and above) living in Romania. Note that the company selected in Romania to collect data has extensive experience in using CATI and it will be involved data collection also for the subsequent waves. A number of 9000 people were contacted and the final sample (of people answering the survey) was  $N=800$ , with a response rate of 8%. The relatively low response rate was expected, as the percentage of older adults Internet users in the population is rather low (an estimation of 20% on people 60 years and above – see Eurostat, 2016). Thus, some people were not selected, as they were not Internet users and others refused to answer the survey. CATI is an appropriate tool for this specific group of Internet users, taking into account the low frequency of Internet users in the older population in Romania. Note that in the other countries from the project, an online survey was conducted, except Romania. The decision to pursue a telephone interview was based on the fact that Romania had the lowest rate on Internet users at older adults among the participant countries. The private company in Romania followed the academic protocols and the ethical guidelines required for academic research. Representativeness was ensured using quota sampling following the age distribution (60 to 64; 65-70 and 70+ years of age) and gender distribution (women/men) in the total population; National Institute of Statistics demographic distribution in the population (INS, 2016a) were used for the sampling procedure. In addition, the sample was represented for each of the 42 counties in Romania (with Bucharest being treated as a separate county). This is a standard procedure used in similar CATI studies and details of the planned versus the real sample are provided in the Appendix.

## The context of the current research

The evolution of the older population in Romania, over the past 15 years shows an accelerating trend of increasing the percentage of people 65-69 years of age and those having 80 years and above. New demographic projections show an eastward shift of the aging process; estimates for Romania suggest reaching, after 2040, the highest median age among European countries (United Nations, 2017).

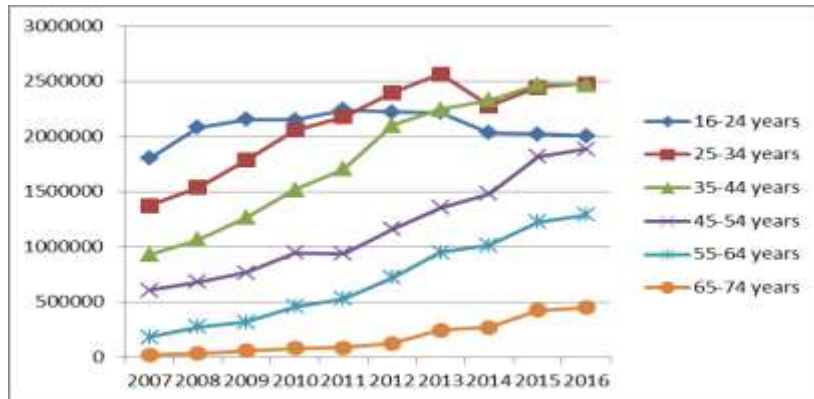
Data provided by the National Institute of Statistics in 2016 (INS, 2016b) shows that 65% of the households in Romania had access to the internet at home, the majority of this household (65.5%) being located in urban areas. The percentage is significantly lower when compared with the average European level of internet penetration in households in the EU28 which is estimated at 85% for the same year (Eurostat, 2016).

Figure 1 shows that the number of people from Romania (16 to 74 years of age) who have ever used the internet has continuously increased over the past 10 years, reaching about 10.6 million people out of the total Romanian population in 2016, almost an exponential curve. (For example, the increase from 2015 to 2016 was 1.2% of the total population aged between 16 and 74).



**Figure 1. People from Romania (16-74 years of age) who have ever used the internet, over the past 10 years (divided by gender)**

Older people are using the internet to a lesser extent compared to the younger ones. Still, as Figure 2 shows, during the past three years (beginning with 2014) we face a larger increase in the internet use at older adults, (55+ and also 65+) in comparison with the younger adults. This happens also due to a level of saturation of internet access in the younger segments of the population – where we see stagnation in the percentage of internet users.



**Figure 2. The percentage of households with internet access, divided by the age group of the housing provider**

## Results of the current study

### *Socio-demographic characteristics*

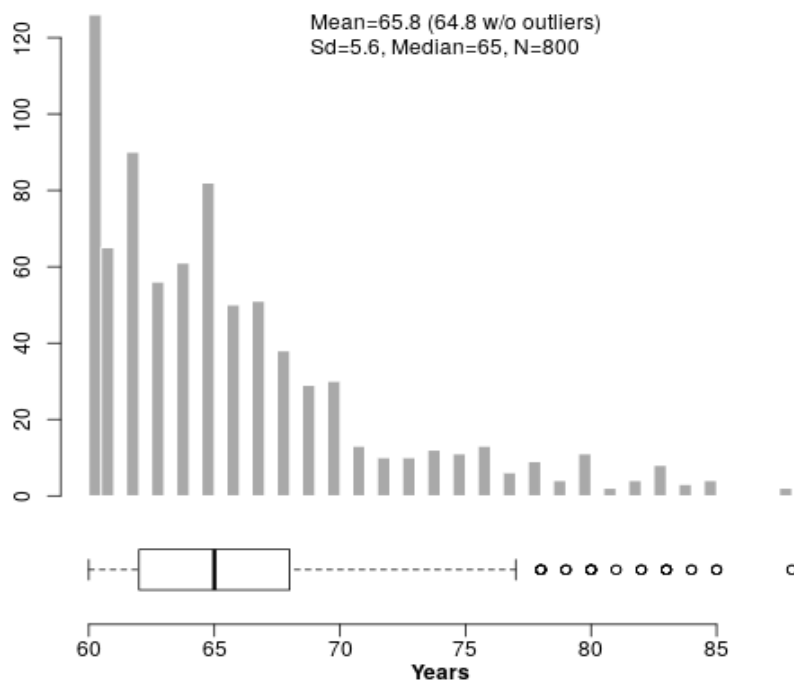
As the sample was selected based on gender distribution in the total population, the sample has unbalance distribution on people 60 + and particularly on people 70+ (INS, 2016a), which are segments with higher percentages of women than men, due to gender differences in life expectancy (women life expectancy in Romania (76 years) is almost 7 years higher than men life expectancy- 69.5). Still, the larger percentage of men in our sample compared to the total population of 60 + years of age is also due to gender differences in the Internet use for older people (see Figure 1 above): in this segment of the population, we have more men than women using the Internet. Also, the age distribution is asymmetric (see Table 1 and Figure 3), with more people in the younger-older group than in the older-old group.

Although this distribution is not consistent with the general population, it reflects the distribution of internet users in the older population in Romania, the group of 65 years and above (and even more on the group 70+) having a lower percentage of Internet users compared to 60-64 age group. The mean age in our sample was  $M = 65.78$ ,  $SD = 5.65$  (Table 2).

**Table 1. Gender and age distribution of the Internet users aged 60 and over – sample**

%	Men	Women	Total
60-64	24.5%	25.3%	49.8%
65-69	14.6%	16.6%	31.3%
70-74+	5.0%	4.4%	9.5%
75-88	5.1%	4.5%	9.6%
Total	49.3%	50.7%	100%
N=800			

**Q22: Age**



**Figure 3. Age distribution of Internet users aged 60 and over – histogram and box plot of the sample**

**Table 2. Age distribution of Internet users aged 60 and over - centrality and dispersion measures of the sample**

Mean	Standard deviation	Min.	Q1	Median	Q3	Max.	Skewness	Kurtosis
65.78	5.65	60	62	65	68	88	1.4	4.75
N = 800								

**Table 3. Marital Status and Parenthood**

	%	Parenthood			Total
		No children	With children	DK/NA3	
	<b>Married</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>---</b>	<b>74.5</b>
	<b>Not married</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>---</b>	<b>24.4</b>
	Single	1.2	1.4	---	2.6
	Divorced	0.9	4	---	4.9
	Widowed	2.2	14.6	---	16.8
	<b>DK/NA<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>---</b>	<b>---</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>1.1</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100</b>

N=800. Original question in Romanian: "Cum puteți descrie situația dvs. familială în prezent? (o singură variantă de răspuns)"

Most of the respondents in our sample declared they are married (75%), whereas 24.5% are not (16.8% widowed). The number of people who claim to be single is rather low (2.5%), while almost 5% are divorced (Table 3). The majority of the respondents in our sample (almost 90%) are parents (with children). We did not record whether people are also grandparents. But data seem to indicate that a large percentage of people might find themselves in grandparent role as well, especially if we consider the fact that the rate of marriages in Romania is among the highest in Europe (8.78 per 1000 inhabitants), the average age at first marriage is one of the lowest in Europe (25.2 for women and 28.5 for men) and the average age of mothers for the first child is rather low (Popescu, 2010).

In terms of formal education, in all countries participating in the project were asked about the number of completed years of school and then levels of education were described (primary, secondary, tertiary) as presented in Table 4. Our sample is imbalanced for secondary and tertiary education, not consistent with the general population people 60+ in Romania (INS, 2016a). Still, the percentage of older people using the internet is higher at medium and high educated people, compare to low educated ones and this pattern is to be found in other European countries as well

<sup>1</sup> DK/NA: Doesn't know / doesn't answer.

(Eurostat, 2016). This is probably linked to the type of jobs people use to have and the opportunity of using different ICTs early in life, as well as to the problem of costs and access to Internet-related services. In this respect, the current distribution of the sample on the education levels is representative of the structure of Internet users at the older population (60+) in Romania. Table 4 shows that fact that more than half of the older people using the Internet are highly educated people, whereas the number of low educated people using the Internet is extremely low (1.2%).

**Table 4. Education level in our sample**

	%
<b>Primary or less</b> (up to 8-9 years of education)	<b>1.2</b>
<b>Secondary</b> (between 10 and 14 years of education)	<b>34.9</b>
<b>Tertiary</b> (15 years of education or more)	<b>52.8</b>
<b>DK/NA</b>	<b>11.1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>
N = 800	

To record participants' socioeconomic status, respondents had to position themselves in relation to the average income (Table 5). We noticed the fact that only 15% of our participants positioned themselves above the average income, whereas 67% positioned themselves below the average income. Only 10% of our sample though they are at the average, on income, while 8% preferred not to answer this question. The large percentage of people below the average income, while more than 85% of the participants have medium or higher education, gives some indications about the economic situation of older people in Romania – with most of the people having low economic status. These results are consistent with data from the National Institute of Statistics (INS, 2016b) and reflect not only a perceived lower economic status from the side of the older segment of population, but also a real low economic status, as resulted from the data on the population revenues collected at the national level, on this age group.

**Table 5. Income**

	%
<b>Above the average</b> (A lot above + Slightly above the average)	<b>14.9</b>
<b>Similar to the average</b>	<b>9.9</b>
<b>Below the average</b> (A lot below + Slightly below the average)	<b>67.3</b>
<b>Not declared</b> (Don't know + Prefer not to respond)	<b>7.9</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>
N = 800. Original question in Romanian: "Venitul mediu BRUT pe lună al unei persoane în România este de 2681 Lei. Acesta include taxele (decă este valoarea aflată pe hârtie, din care se scad taxele). Venitul dvs. (personal) brut, pe lună, este [...]?"	



The majority of respondents are retired (79%, Table 6), as expected for this age group. Among those who were active on the labor market, 14.7% were fully employed, while 2.7% worked part-time. This data is consistent with the level of activism in the labor market of people 60 years and above in Romania, particularly with the segment of the population living in the urban areas (INS, 2016a). As Table 7 show, only 13.9% of our sample is formed by people from the rural areas, though the number of older people from the rural areas represents more than a half of the total population of 60+. Still, in our sample, the largest percentage comes from the big urban areas, as our sample is a representative one for the older population using the Internet (who tends to be concentrated in urban settings).

**Table 5. Occupation**

	%
<b>Active</b>	<b>17.9</b>
Employed	17.4
Full-time	14.7
Part-time	2.7
Unemployed	0.5
<b>Inactive</b>	<b>79.7</b>
Retired	78.6
Unpaid position (housework, volunteer or community service)	1.1
<b>Other</b>	<b>0.0</b>
<b>DK/NA</b>	<b>2.4</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>
N = 800. Original question in Romanian: "Care este situația dvs. ocupațională (o singură variantă de răspuns)?"	

**Table 7. Geographic location**

<b>Big urban conglomerates</b>	<b>43.6</b>
A big city	39.4
The suburbs of a big city	4.2
<b>A town or small city</b>	<b>39.1</b>
<b>Countryside</b>	<b>13.9</b>
A country village	12.8
A farm or home in the countryside	1.1
<b>DK/NA</b>	<b>3.4</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

N = 800. Original question in Romanian: "Alegeți dintre următoarele variante pe cea care descrie cel mai bine localitatea unde locuiți dvs. în prezent"

## Mass media consumption

Watching television on a TV set is the most commonly used mass media consumption (Table 8) by the majority of the respondents (almost 99%). Interesting to notice is that almost 9% of the respondents declared they use a computer to watch TV, whereas 4% are using mobile phones to watch television. We reveal that TV is the most important media channel for this age group, followed by radio (most of the respondents using radio sets and TV sets) (Table 8). We can say that in this segment of the population the new media is rather at the beginning, in terms of usage and non-Internet based media is predominant. Also, this segment of the population uses print newspapers and magazines (34.5%) and, to a comparable extent (30%), newspapers or magazines on the Internet. It looks like Romanian older people are alternatively using traditional and new media for different purposes. Especially in the case of information from the newspapers and magazines, the Internet is becoming an important medium. Moreover, when it comes to reading books, the traditional printed version overcomes the electronic reading (almost 4% of the respondents admitted they have read books in the electronic version). We can talk about a specialization of media consume for this age group, with Television and television set still playing a central role, followed by radio (and radio set), whereas newspapers and magazines are accessed both online and offline.

**Table 8. Media consumption and time spent the previous day**

Media used the previous day	Users (%)	Time spent (hour: min) <sup>1</sup>
Watched television on a TV set	98.5	3:04
Listened to the radio on a radio set	39.2	2:48
Read newspapers or magazines on the Internet	30.9	0:36
Read newspapers or magazines in the printed version	34.5	0:41
Read books in the printed version	28	1:23
Read books in the electronic version	3.8	0:45
Watched television on a computer	8.6	1:22
Listened to radio on the computer	3.4	2:20
Listened to radio on a mobile phone	2.9	0:43
Listened to audio books	1.4	0:58
Watched television on a mobile phone	4	0:40

N = 800. Categories showed in descending order as for % of users

<sup>1</sup>. Average time without outliers, calculated for those who used the medium the previous day. The original question in Romanian: "am vrea să ştim cât timp petreceţi făcând următoarele lucruri. Pentru a răspunde gândiţi-vă la ceea ce aţi făcut ieri. Cât timp [...]"

In terms of time spent on different media formats (Table 8), the results show a similar pattern, with most of the time dedicated to watching television on a TV set and listening to the radio. Still, computer plays an important role in older people's lives, as people are spending about 2 hours and 20 minutes on watching television on the computer (only the respondents who are using this medium for watching television). Though people who are using computer to watch television spend less time on television than those who are watching the TV set, data presented in Table 8 show the importance of television in people's lives. The same is valid for listening to the radio – those using computer to listen to radio spend less time than those who are using a radio set, but the time spent on listening to the radio (regarding the format) is rather high, more than the time allocated for reading newspapers/magazines or for reading books. Television and radio seem to dominate older people's media consume.

A particular look into printed periodicals (Table 9) shows local daily newspapers play a more important role (43.2% declared they read local daily newspapers) than the national daily newspapers (28.7% declared they read national daily). Still, we have almost 32% of the respondents who never read printed newspapers. Among these, a part is reading newspapers online, as it was shown by the data from the Table 8. We are facing a change in this age group from the traditional to the new media, at least in terms of newspapers reading. Also, these data show the importance of the local newspapers, as compare to national and international ones, and the need to be informed on local problems, that might be prevalent in this age group compare to other groups. This happens also because older people are not in the center of the current migration and globalized trends. The idea of "aging in place", largely discussed in the literature (Andrews & Phillips, 2004; Atkins, 2017) comes along with the need for local media consumption (as for example local newspapers).

**Table 9. Reading newspapers in print format**

	(%)
National daily newspapers	28.7
Local daily newspapers	43.2
Magazines and periodicals	16.6
Free newspapers	4.5
Weekly newspapers	10.1
International daily newspapers	2.7
I never read printed newspapers	31.9
N = 800. Original question in Romanian: "Pe care dintre următoarele tipuri de ziare sau reviste le citiți în format tipărit? [se pot alege mai multe variante de răspuns]"	

We asked respondents about audio and video devices they use (Table 10). Video devices usage is more frequent than audio devices usage and almost 31% of the

respondents (from the video users) hold a new version of the TV set that allows Internet use. Also, some of the old devices as DVD players or Video recorders are still in use for this category of the population (almost one-third of the video users have used a DVD player). As for the audio devices, CD player is commonly used, while the MP3 player is also used by an important segment of the old population (17%). Still almost half of the Romanian older population (60+) does not use any of those devices, so the importance of classical TV set (with no Internet incorporated), computer and mobile phones (or tablets) are not to be neglected when talking about video and audio devices.

**Table 10. Audiovisual device usage**

	Device Usage (%) <sup>1</sup>	Used yesterday (%) <sup>2</sup>	Time spent yesterday (hours: min) <sup>3</sup>
<b>Video</b>			
<i>DVD player</i>	29.6	<b>64.5 of Video devices users</b>	<b>2:41</b>
<i>Hard disc recorder</i>	6.2		
<i>Video recorder</i>	14.2	<b>31.6 of Total population</b>	
<i>TV box with Internet access</i>	30.9		
<b>Audio</b>			
<i>CD player</i>	26.5	<b>53.7 of Audio devices users</b>	<b>1:14</b>
<i>MP3 player</i>	17.1		
<i>Wi-Fi radio</i>	12.5	<b>19.9 of Total population</b>	

<sup>1</sup> N = 800. The original question in Romanian: "Pe care dintre următoarele dispozitive tehnologice le utilizați? [se pot alege mai multe variante de răspuns, conform situației fiecărui respondent]"

<sup>2</sup> Only asked to those who declared using at least one of the video or audio devices respectively.

<sup>3</sup> Average times without the outliers. Time reported only for those who declared using video (audio) devices the previous day. The original question in Romanian "Aproximativ cât timp ați petrecut [...]"

To achieve more detailed information, we asked about the time spent using different audio and video devices the day before the survey (Table10). These questions were asked only to those who already declared they are using video or audio devices (at least one of the audio or/and video devices). The results show that video devices users had used them in the previous day in the 64.5% of the cases, which represents the 31.6% of the total population. The users spent, on average, 2h 41m on these devices. Also more than a half of those who reported using audio devices (53.7%), 20% of the total population also did it the previous day, spending on average 1h 14m listening to these devices.

### ***Internet activity***

Respondents were asked about Internet usage and time spent on different online activities (Table 11). Note that the differences in time spending on these activities reflect particularly the intrinsic nature of each of the activities and not necessarily the respondent interest or preference. The most commonly used Internet activity was “social network sites” (almost 34%) followed by “writing and reading emails”. Also, getting news using the Internet was one of the preferred activities (almost 31%) and searching websites concerning interests or hobbies (23%). While writing emails could be considered a traditional way to interact online, compared to the use of social network sites (that face an explosion for the past years in all generations), we can understand people’s involvement with emails also in connection to their engagement on the labor market. From our previous studies (Ivan & Hebblethwaite, 2016), we noticed that using email is typical for the older people from Romania who are still active on the labor market and less common for those retired in pension and almost absent for those who started using the Internet after they retiring from work. We cannot stop noticing the small percentage of older people using online banking or shopping online (2.5%) and we expect this percentage to increase in the nearest future. As some studies on older adults and the use of Internet shows (e.g. Nimrod & Berdychesky, 2018), “having fun on the Internet” is one of the main motivation of older people to go online. Similarly, in our study, there are significant numbers of people who are using the Internet for searching websites concerning their interests or hobbies, for downloading music, films or for playing computer games online. In total, almost half of those who use the Internet are involved in Internet activity that has an entertainment connotation. The findings that Internet banking and online shopping is the online activity performed to the least number of older Internet users (2.4%) is important and probably connected to the trust this age group would have in the online activities that involved personal money. It can also be attributed to a bad communication strategy from the online banking services and online shops to this segment of the population, sometimes even ignored from the strategic communication plans (Moschis, 2003).

***Table 11. Internet usages and time spent the previous day***

<b>Internet used the previous day for ...</b>	<b>Users (%)</b>	<b>Time spent (hours: min)<sup>1</sup></b>
Writing and reading e-mails	31.3	0:24
Getting news	30.7	0:39
Using chat programs	16.3	0:29
Using social network sites	33.7	1:09
Using websites concerning my interests or hobbies	23.1	0:41
Online shopping, banking, travel reservation etc.	2.4	0:19
Playing computer games online	14.1	1:10

Reading entries at debate sites, blogs	13	0:34
Downloading music, film or podcasts	5.3	0:46
Writing entries at debate sites, blogs	5.2	0:18
Other	0	0:00

N = 800. Categories showed in descending order as for % of users. Average time without outliers, calculated for those who used the medium the previous day. The original question in Romanian: "Vă rugăm să vă gândiți la ce anume ați făcut ieri – cât timp ați petrecut efectuând următoarele activități legate de Internet?"

### Spaces of media consumption

The home is the privileged space of media consumption (Table12) for reading printing newspapers, watching TV or listen to the radio. Note that watching television happens in the bedroom or in the living room to same extent, while listening to radio is associated with "other spaces" from the home. We believe that for most of the respondents it is the kitchen or in spaces, people are doing different households while listening to the radio. Reading printing newspapers happens for a part of the respondents in the living room, whereas others use other spaces from their home for reading newspapers: ex. bedroom (28.4%). Reading newspapers is a media practice more diverse distributed along different spaces of people's homes and probably it is more dependent on the home structure. Interestingly enough Internet use becomes a media practice similar to television in terms of spaces of consume: both in the bedroom and in the living room, whereas few people declared they have used the Internet in public places (approximately 3%). Thus, while Internet becomes a medium largely used all over the places, both in public and in private settings, older people preferred using it in their own private homes. So, we believe that Internet practices have a more personal relevance for older people, as their Internet consume tend to be a rather private issue. This could be a particularity for older people, as compared to other age groups that tend to use the Internet almost everywhere. Approximately 9% of the respondents use the Internet at work and this is considerable lower compared to the percentage of active respondents on the labor market (resulting from or sample distribution). We have almost 18% of the respondents, active in the labor market (see Table 6) and only 8% of them using the Internet at work. The rest probably have jobs that do not require Internet usage.

**Table 12. Spaces for media use**

%	Read printed newspapers	Listen to radio	Watch TV	Use Internet
At home				
...in the living room	43.7	18.4	63	53.6
...in the bedroom	28.4	17	62	47.6
... in other spaces	24.1	36.2	20	33.2
In public places	4.75	1	1.9	3
During transport	4.75	1.8	0.1	2.5
At work	3	5.7	0.6	8.7
At friends or family	3.4	0.7	4	4
At place of study	0.38	0	0	0.9
In other places	0	0	0	0
I never use that medium	30.7	1.4	0.9	-

N=800. Non-exclusive categories. Original question in Romania: “Am vrea de asemenea să știm unde folosiți diferitele tipuri de mijloace de comunicare/media de comunicare? Unde.... [se pot alege mai multe variante de răspuns]”

### **Mobile phone use**

Landline is still used by a large segment of older people in Romania (79%), while mobile phone has come close to 100% reach. We can notice (see Table 13) that people who use a landline, in use the mobile phone too. Only 2% of the respondents have an only a landline. One-third of the respondents mentioned Internet-based phones. It might be that people using Internet-based phones are those who have relatives abroad (and preferred to reduce the costs), if we take into account the large migration phenomena in Romania, for the past 10 to 20 years, and also the fact that older people are the ones left behind (INS, 2014).

**Table 13. Phone type at home**

<i>Type of phone</i>	<b>Phone ownership (%)</b>
Landline phone	79.1
Mobile phone	97.4
Both landline and mobile phone	77
Either landline or mobile phone	22.5
Internet phone	34.4
None of the above	0.4

N = 800. The original question in Romanian: "Ce tip de telefon aveți în gospodărie? [se pot alege mai multe variante de răspuns, conform situației gospodăriei dvs.]"

Also, when we asked participants to declare the purposed of their mobile phone use yesterday, 90.5 % mentioned conventional voice calls (with a mean of 5 calls per day – send and received), whereas 27% mentioned the fact that they have send messages using the mobile phone (the mean number of messages was 2.7, less than the average number of calls per day). In conclusion, when using their mobile phones, people preferred to call instead of sending messages (Table 14).

**Table 6. Mobile phone calls and messages in the previous day**

<b>Mobile phone used yesterday for ...</b>	<b>Users (%)</b>	<b>Average (N)<sup>1</sup></b>
Conventional voice calls (sent and received)	90.5	5
Messages (sent)	27.3	2.7

N=779. Categories showed in descending order as for % of users. An average number of calls or messages without outliers, calculated for those who did the activity the previous day. The original questions in Romanian: "Cu aproximație câte conversații de pe telefonul mobil ați avut ieri?"; "Cu aproximație câte mesaje de tip text, imagine, sunet, filmuleț ați trimis dvs. de pe telefonul mobil ieri?"

Table 15 shows the types of mobile phone usage people declared when the main mobile phone features were listed. Consistent with others studies conducted on older adults (e.g. Vroman, Arthanat, & Lysack, 2015), features which allow visual content are attractive for older people (20.5% declared taking photos and 30.4 recording videos). Also, instant messaging and viewing websites via a browser are used by one-third of the older Internet users. Other features, like an alarm clock, reminders and calendar are used by approximately 40 % of the respondents. As we expected, social network sites are popular and one-third of the respondents access these sites on their mobile phones. Except for games, other features like listening to the radio, listening to music or watching TV on the mobile phone are used by less than 10% of the participants. The fact that a relatively important percentage of older adults (approximately 13%) play games on their mobile phones support the idea expressed



above that older people are using new media for entertainment. Also, 9.2 % of the respondents declared they download different apps, showing interest in the opportunities offered by the Internet on the mobile phones. We notice that relatively few participants (14.8%) declared using SMS, which was practically a traditional feature of the mobile phone. Instead, new features, like Instant messages, social networks use or gaming are becoming more popular.

**Table 15. Usage of mobile phone features**

	<b>Users (%)</b>		<b>Users (%)</b>
Taking photographs	20.5	Social network sites	29.4
Instant messaging (WhatsApp, etc.)	29.1	Downloading apps	9.2
Ordinary voice calls	71.6	Listening to radio	5.6
E-mail	25.9	Viewing websites via apps	18
Alarm clock and reminders	44.2	Watching TV or video on mobile	8.1
SMS	14.8	MMS (Multimedia Message Services)	3.5
Calendar	40	Using a phone as a music player	6.4
Viewing websites via browser	33.9	Games	12.7
GPS and maps	17.5	Listening to podcast	0.5
Recording video	30.4	Other (mobile usage)	4.7

N=779. Question shown if ownership of mobile phone is selected. Original question in Romanian: "Care dintre următoarele aplicații de pe telefonul mobil le folosiți? [se pot alege mai multe variante de răspuns]"

As for the goals of using mobile phones (Table 16), communicating with family and friends largely expressed by participants, with 23% of them using mobile phones also for work-related goals. Indeed, the percentage of people who declared they are active on the labor market is lower than 20%, but there might be people still doing work-related tasks, also after retiring or keeping in contact with the co-workers by the use of mobile phones. A relatively small percentage of older adults (8%) are using a mobile phone for education. It looks like for the majority of older people a mobile phone is an indispensable device for interpersonal communication.

**Table 76. Goals of mobile phone usage**

	Usage (%)		Usage (%)
Contact with family	97.6	Work	23.1
Contact with friends	86.8	School or education	8
		Other	0.1

N=779. Question showed if ownership of a mobile phone is selected. The original question in Romanian: "Pentru ce anume utilizați telefonul mobil? [se pot alege mai multe variante de răspuns]"

### **Mediated communication and everyday life**

To reveal the importance of mediated communication in people's lives, we asked them about instances in which different media could be used. In the followings, we will present the data by grouping them around three instances of media use: (1) mediated communication in free time activities; (2) mediated communication to manage everyday social interactions; (3) information gathering through mediated communication. Participants were asked to choose three most commonly use activities, for each of the three possible instances of mediated communication.

#### ***Mediated communication in free time activities***

Respondents had to answer what they would do if they would have some free time, and they had to choose three out of the listed activities (see Table 17). A large percentage of the participants (27.5%) did not know what to answer, as probably they think in other terms than using mediated communication when they reflect on their free time. One-third of the respondents will call family and friends on the phone and 13% will send messages to family and friends using mobile phones. We conclude that mobile phone plays a very important role in their free time activities. One fourth admitted they would watch TV if they would have some free time while reading printed books, newspapers or magazines is one activity mentioned by 17% of the participants. Also, 8% will chat online with family and friends in their spare time, while 15.5% will visit family and friends. We can notice that spending time on real or mediated interaction with family and friends is the activity that people imagine themselves commonly doing in their spare time. Other activities, as spending time on social sites or watching videos and DVDs are on the second priority on people's willingness to spend their free time. As our previous studies show (Ivan & Fernández-Ardèvol, 2017), one important incentive for older people to go online and try different mediated communication options, is to share their life routine with family and friends.

**Table 17. Free time activities**

	%		%
Watch TV	25	Write emails to friends or family	2.5
Read printed books, newspapers or magazines	17.1	Send messages (text, video, etc.) via mobile phone to friends or family	13.2
Call friends or family on the phone	29.1	Chat online with friends or family	8.4
Visit friends or family	15.5	Listen to music on CD, MP3, or similar	4.4
Visit websites	7.1	Watch video or DVD	7.7
Listen to radio	3.4	Other media use	0
Use social network sites	6.9	DK/NA	27.5

N = 800. The original question in Romanian: "Imaginați-vă că aveți câteva ore de timp libere la dispoziție. Dintre următoarele opțiuni alegeți trei pe care, cel mai probabil, le-ați face într-o asemenea situație."

### ***Mediated communication to manage everyday social interactions***

Respondents were asked about their media choices in two situations related to different dimensions of social life (Table 18). This analysis can integrate Granovetter's (1973) conceptualization of "weak" and "strong" ties. The first situation refers to "weak tie" – contacting an old acquaintance, whereas the second one refers to a probably stronger bond, or "strong tie" when one has to change a dinner invitation. Also, the first hypothetical situation is not marked by emergency, whereas, the second one is closer to the idea of temporal urgency. Data show the fact that phone call is mainly used by the respondents in both situations, but to a higher extent when temporal urgency and private involvement are situational constraints (as the strong bond with the person or sharing personal space for the dinner). Also, 21.7% of the participants will change the plans for dinner via phone messaging and 17.1% will do the same when contacting an old acquaintance. This suggests the fact that phone features (mainly call but also messaging functions) would play an important role in managing social relations, both for the "weak ties" and the "strong ties". Also in the case of "weak ties" – contact an old acquaintance, using social network sites is envisaged by almost 17% of the participants. Indeed, on the important role of the social network sites, admitted but adults in general, is its ability to allow people to contact old friends, colleagues, co-workers and so one, and this is a media specificity of the social network sites

**Table 18. Ways of contacting old acquaintances and closer people**

%	Contact old acquaintance	Dinner invitation change
Phone call	77.5	81.7
Email	10.4	4.1
Phone messaging functions	17.1	21.7
Social network site	16.6	5.4
Posting a letter	2.4	0.4
Other	0	0
DK/NA	6.9	7.2

N=800. The original question in Romanian: "Imaginați-vă că trebuie să luați legătură cu o veche cunoștință pe care nu ați mai văzut-o demult. Alegeți dintre următoarele opțiuni three modalități pe care ar fi cel mai probabil să le folosiți pentru a contacta această cunoștință"

### ***Information gathering through mediated communication***

When being in a hurry, people will check the information on websites or turn on TV /radio (Table 19). Appealing to the same extends to traditional and new media when rapid information is needed seems to characterize this age group. The two forms of mediated communication: traditional – mainly TV, printed newspapers, radios; and non-traditional, Internet-based, are part of the everyday routine of the older adults who are using the Internet, in Romania. In addition, one third will call somebody for information, in a situation of temporal urgency. Also, 7% will use social network sites to find information in an urgent situation. Probably they use alternatively the different options presented here (websites, TV/radio, calling others, social network sites) in connection to the type of information need it and the success (rapidity and accuracy) in getting that information from that channel in previous situations.

**Table 19. Means of getting information in a hurry**

	%
Check websites	41.1
Turn on TV or radio	38.5
Call someone who is likely to have this information'	27.5
Use a social network site	7.2
Send a message (via mobile phone) to someone who is likely to have this information	4.5
Send an email to someone who is likely to have this information	3.7
Use a chat program	1.7
Other	0
DK/NA	7.62
N = 800. Original question in Romanian: "Imaginați-vă că trebuie să obțineți foarte repede o informație importantă (spre exemplu rezultatul alegerilor sau rezultatul unui meci). Alegeți dintre următoarele trei modalități de a obține aceste informații, pe care ar fi cel mai probabil să le folosiți."	

The same is valid for situations in which factual information is needed (Table 20). People would search on Google or other search engines or they would call somebody. Some would look on a specific website - probably in situations in which finding the respective website will be intuitive or people are using it regularly. Interestingly enough almost 10% of the respondents are using a printed encyclopaedia for factual information (probably a pattern they have always used). The percentage of people using social network sites to search for factual information is lower compared to situations in which they are in a hurry and they need to get information. This probably means that when people have the time to search, they would appeal more to web sources of printed sources for information and less to social media. Regardless of the time they have or the urgency of the situation, people would appeal to others for information, usually by calling or by sending a message (this to a lesser extent). They will rely on others for information they need and we can infer from here the key role of mediated communication in interpersonal communication mechanisms in the case of older people.

**Table 20. Means of getting factual information**

	%
Look it up via Google or other search engines	45.6
Look it up in at a specific website	15.5
Call someone who is likely to have this information'	44.2
Look it up in a printed encyclopedia	9.1
Send a message (via mobile phone) to someone who is likely to have this information	7
Use a social network site	4.75
Send an email to someone who is likely to have this information	2
Use a chat program	1.6
Other	0
DK/NA	9.75

N = 800. Original question in Romanian: "Imaginați-vă că discutați o problemă cu un prieten și aveți nevoie de o informație despre problema respectivă (spre exemplu o anumită data istorică sau o informație care ține de economie). Alegeți dintre următoarele trei modalități de a obține informația respectivă, pe care ar fi cel mai probabil să le folosiți."

### Life and health satisfaction

Finally, the survey asked respondents to position themselves in terms of their satisfaction regarding two personal dimensions: satisfaction with life, understood as a general assessment of personal circumstances, and satisfaction with physical health. All 800 participants answered the question referring to their overall life satisfaction, on a scale from 1 (completely dissatisfied with my life) to 10 (completely satisfied with my life). The mean score for life satisfaction was 7.7 (7.9 without outliers). The most selected answers were 8 (30%), 7 (18%), 9 (16.8%) and 10 (15.6% - completely satisfied); these four answers make up 80.4% of the responses. As for those respondents that were less satisfied with their life, 1.6% of the study participants chose 1 (completely dissatisfied with their life), 0.8% chose 2, 0.9% chose 3, 1% chose 4, 8.3% selected 5 (the middle option), and 5.1% of participants rated their overall life satisfaction as a 6. Figure 3 illustrates these findings.

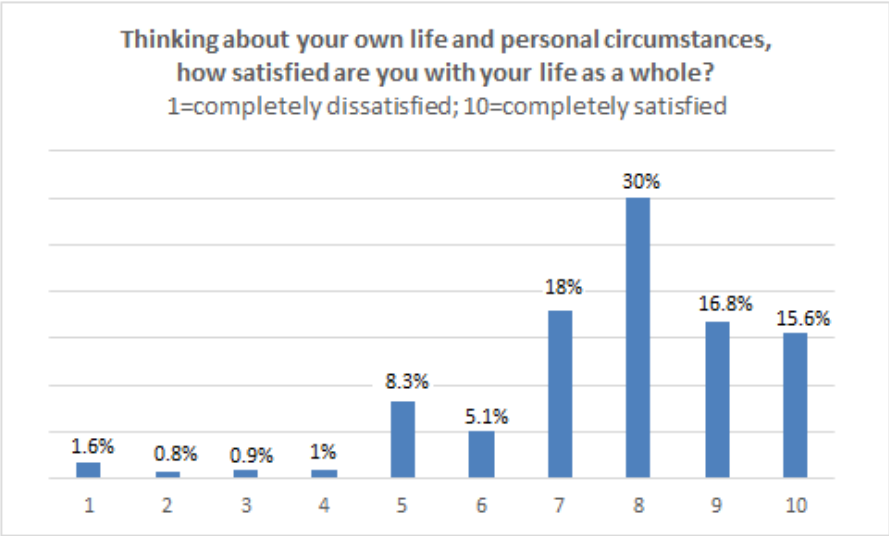


Figure 3. Life satisfaction

The participants (N=800) also rated their satisfaction with their overall health, on a scale from 1 (completely dissatisfied) to 10 (completely satisfied). The mean life satisfaction score was 7.1 (7.4 without outliers). Most participants declared being above average satisfied with their overall health; 26.5% ranked their satisfaction choosing 8; 19.3% selected 7; 14.3% answered 9, 10.3% indicated a level of satisfaction of 5 points, 9% of respondents chose 10 (completely satisfied) and 8.6% selected 6. Together, these 6 answers account for 87.9% of responses (Figure 4).

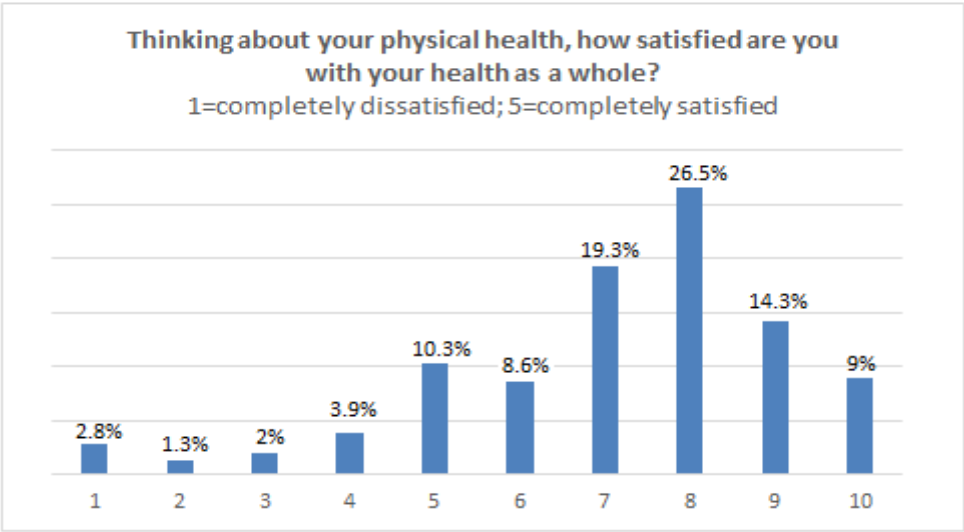


Figure 4. Satisfaction with health as a whole

## Conclusions

This report discusses descriptive results of the computer-assisted telephone based (CATI) based survey conducted in Romania in December 2016. The present survey is part of the international project Cross-National Longitudinal Study: Older Audiences in the Digital Media Environment (ACT, 2018) and it is planned to be conducted every two years, in three waves, on the same sample of older adults (longitudinal approach). The sample is representative for the online population of people 60 years old and above living in Romania. The structure of our sample over-represents medium and high educated people from large urban areas and underrepresents older old people from the rural areas. This is an effect of the digital divide phenomenon: Internet access is higher at older adults who are educated and live in urban settings, whereas lower educated older individuals from the rural areas are often lacking the skills or the access to Internet-based applications.

The results show that TV is the most important media channel for this age group, followed by radio (most of the respondents using a radio set). In this segment of the population, the new media is rather at the beginning in terms of usage and non-Internet based media is predominant.

Also, this segment of the population uses print newspapers and magazines (34.5%) and, to a comparable extent (30%), newspapers or magazines on the Internet. It looks like Romanian older people are using alternative traditional and new media for different purposes, and the Internet is becoming an increasingly important medium. Also, we can talk about a specialization of media consume for this age group, with Television and television set playing a central role, followed by radio (and radio set), whereas newspapers and magazines are accessed both online and offline.

Moreover, local daily printed newspapers play a more important role (43.2% declared they read local daily newspapers) than the national daily newspapers (28.7% declared they read national daily). Also, almost 32% of the respondents never read printed newspapers.

The home is the privileged space of media consumption for reading printing newspapers or watching TV or listen to the radio. While the Internet becomes a communication medium largely used all over the places, older people preferred using it in their own private homes. Landline is still used by a large segment of older people in Romania (79%), while mobile phone has come close to 100% reach. When using their mobile phones, people preferred to call instead of sending messages.

One important incentive for older people to go online and try different mediated communication options is to share their life routine with family and friends. Thus, the social network sites start to play an important role in older peoples' lives. Social network sites are valued for their potential in allowing people to contact old friends, colleagues, co-workers and so on. Regardless of the time they have or the urgency of the situation, people would appeal to others for information, usually by calling or by sending a message. They will rely on others for information they need and this



indicates the key role of mediated communication in interpersonal communication mechanisms in the case of older people.

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## Appendix 1- Survey Technical Details

The survey was conducted using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews, with a planned strata sample (age, gender and county). The sample is representative for all 41 counties in Romania, with Bucharest (the capital city) being treated as the 42th county. The differences between planned sample (the size of each stratus was calculated after consulting the National Institute of Statistics on the distribution of population in 2016 on age and gender) are presented the Table 21. A number of 9000 people were contacted via telephone, using a data base of telephone numbers organized by the 42 counties. In the end we got 800 filled the questionnaire, with a response rate on 8%. People who do not answer the survey were mainly those who were not online users (they declare from the beginning they do not use Internet), while others refused to answer the survey, with no particular reason.

**Table 21. Planned sample/sample in practice**

		Age			Total
		60-64	65-69	70+	
Male	Planned	40%	40%	40%	40%
	In practice	49%	47%	53%	49%
Female	Planned	60%	60%	60%	60%
	In practice	51%	53%	47%	51%

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