Community Based Digital Literacy: 
Meeting the Needs and Wants of Older Adults

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Older Adults Digital Literacy

- Direct Message (CCA Digital Strategies)
- Promoting Digital Literacy ... (SSHRC PDG)
- Digital Fuse (MIRA Fellowship)
- London Library Case Study (sub project PDLCPPLI)
Project Evolution: Digital Literacy Public Library Initiatives

• Interviews
• National Survey
• Older Adults Sub-projects

Older Adult Case Study
London Libraries Case Study

• HPL Olders
• London Libraries
Project Evolution: Direct Message

**Direct [Message]**
- Digital Literacy Videos
- Arabic (Dubbed) Digital Literacy Videos
- Adapted Mouse

**Digital [FUSE]**
- Co-Design Digital Literacy Needs
- Creation of Arabic Language Videos
COVID-19 Troubles

...we could not work through the number of significant challenges there were... We couldn't figure out how if somebody can't even explain to you what the issue is, how are you going to work with them to figure out how to solve the issue? (KL-LL)
COVID-19 Trouble!

COVID–19 restrictions - online participation only

Older Adults need for basic digital literacy skills for participation in distanced social connections

EDI Principles – easier to reach more privileged older adults

Marginalized and isolated adults = greater/better/right resources for engagement
COVID Possibilities...

...during COVID, we did art together back and forth on Zoom... We learned how to do it. We had so much bloody fun and the laughs... We laughed. We cried. We did everything... (JC – DM)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preliminary Findings: Access/Engagement</th>
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<tr>
<td>Cost and availability of technologies</td>
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<td>Cost, availability and quality of internet</td>
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<td>Suitability/match in training goals</td>
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<td>Suitability/match in training/resources</td>
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<td>Comfort/safety in training context</td>
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<td>Flexibility/adaptability of training approach</td>
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“WhatsApp” has voice [notes]... I send voice notes to my son in the UAE. Calls can only be made through Botim application in the UAE, you cannot [use voip] via WhatsApp or Messenger... [this is the law] but I use What’sApp to send a voice [note] and they receive it. (P3 – D[F])
Prototype Development

Analogue "mouse" as a response to physical needs of participants.
Preliminary Findings: Organizational Possibilities

- Networks - traditional and non-traditional
- Partnerships
- Openness/Responsiveness and willingness to pivot
- Creative use of resources
- Multiple levels of engagement/program design/delivery

Evaluation
Direct[Message]:
Use of Networks

Secondary Projects

Centre[3]

- Immigrants Working Center
- McMaster University
- Digital[Fuse] Video Co-Design
- Video Tutorials Dubbed in Arabic
- D[M] Video Tutorials
London Libraries: Use of Networks

Branch Programming
(staff + volunteer)

Dorchester Seniors Centre

Creative Aging Network

I-Pad Course

Creative Collage

Library Volunteers
Policy “Take A-ways”

Collaboration:
• more comprehensive understanding of needs
• potentially supports more diversity of participation
• mobilizes existing resources

Networks:
• mobilizes existing resources and understandings
• supports outreach and engagement
• builds on existing needs and wants
Policy “Take A-Ways” continued...

**Needs and Wants**
- older adults learn to facilitate goals (creating a photo album)
- motivation is outcome driven (talking to kids... via WhatsApp)

**Access/Engagement**
- barriers are systemic/experienced individually
- facilitating access supports engagement
- context matters (urban vs rural; Canada vs UAE)
Contact me: larost1@mcmaster.ca

Thank you!
Promoting Digital Literacy in the Community Through Public Library Initiatives

SSHRC - PDG

Principal Investigator
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Co-Investigators
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Heidi Julien; University at Buffalo
Alexander Serenko; Ontario Tech University

Sub-Projects
Because I am Old...
RA – Hannah Barrie

London Libraries Case Study
RA – Raghad Elgamal
(ongoing)
Direct Message: Older Adults’ Engagement in the Arts Through Digital Media

Canada Council for the Arts: Digital Strategy Fund

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**Digital Fuse**

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Publications from the Projects


