

# IDEALiC.BE

## DIGITAL AUTONOMY BEYOND THE LIFE COURSE

Axelle Asmar, Ilse Mariën, Leo Van Audenhove  
With the participation of Dana Schurmans and  
Laura Faure

About Us

The research

1. Conceptual framework of digital and social exclusion
  - 13 indicators of digital inequalities
2. Findings
  - A. The importance of social support
  - B. Rethinking access: From Platforms to Services
  - C. Digital Fluidity: The new meta skill?
3. Final Thoughts: Reconsidering Digital Autonomy

**OUTLINE**

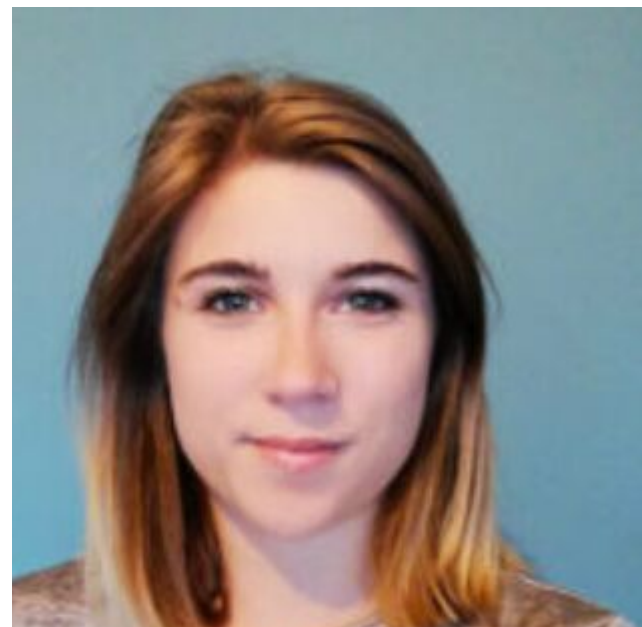
# ABOUT US



Dr. Ilse Mariën



Pr. Leo Van Audenhove



Chantal Wauters



Axelle Asmar



Willemien Laenens

# THE RESEARCH

**How e-inclusion policies and initiatives can provide solutions regarding mechanisms of digital exclusion that coincide with the digital turn?**

# THE RESEARCH: BEYOND THE LIFE COURSE

## 3 LIFE STAGES

- 18-30 years old: Participants building autonomy in all life domains.
- 31-50 years old: Maintaining full autonomy and participation in society being challenged by life hazards.
- 51-70 years old: Remaining independent while ageing.

## 3 LEVELS OF EDUCATION

- High Education Level: Min. Bachelor Diploma
- Medium Education Level: Max. High School Diploma
- Low Education Level: Max. Middle School Diploma

## BEYOND THE LIFE STAGE

Do experiences with digital technologies differ according to the different 'digital generations' or is another approach needed? Are there user's profiles present amongst all generations?

**CONCEPTUAL  
FRAMEWORK OF  
DIGITAL AND  
SOCIAL EXCLUSION**

# 13 INDICATORS OF DIGITAL INEQUALITIES

## SOCIAL INDICATORS

- Income
- Education
- Agency
- Participation
- Well-Being

## DIGITAL INDICATORS

- Access
- Attitudes
- Digital Skills
- Autonomy
- Types of use
- Uses of the environment
- Social Support
- Social and soft skills

# THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL SUPPORT

## SUPPORT DEPRIVED

- Low educated, late 2nd life category and 3rd life category
- Low digital skills and often in situation of precocity and/ or social exclusion
- Acknowledge that they need help but in the incapacity to reach out to their networks because of situation of exclusion

## USERS BY PROXY

- Refuse or are unable to engage with digital technologies
- Ask someone in their networks to accomplish specific tasks for them
- Very often spotted in elderly couples

## TECHNICALLY SUPPORTED

- Almost all sources of help coming from computer classes
- Computer classes as:
  - Potential way out of exclusion
  - Way to become more independent

## DOMESTIC LEARNERS

- Draw mainly support from close family networks
- Very socially included

## VICARIOUS LEARNERS

- Do not ask explicitly for help but rely on 'warm experts'
- Watch their friends engage with a technology before deciding whether or not to adopt it
- Usually 1st life category respondents

## SELF-SUPPORTED

- Do not seek for support but are themselves great sources of support for others
- High levels of digital skills and willingness to step out of their comfort zone
- Mostly male and highly educated respondents from 2nd to 3rd life category

AUTONOMY -

AUTONOMY +



# RETHINKING ACCESS: FROM PLATFORMS TO SERVICES

## Rethinking access

- To answer their communication needs, individuals combine and express themselves through a varied range of media
- The media richness of the present environment results in an idiosyncratic use of technological possibilities to meet social and emotional communication needs
- Emphasis on the active role of individuals in fitting in and adopting digital technologies in their daily lives

## From Infrastructures to services

- Access to services is primordial whereas access to infrastructures has become secondary
- Depending of the needs, individuals will use and combine a variety of media regardless of the infrastructures

## **MOTIVATION IS ABOUT NEEDS**

Disengagement and non-uses  
determined by the needs, not only  
the attitudes

---

## **TRAINING BEYOND EQUIPMENT**

Necessity to develop trainings  
beyond the mere tools or platforms

# DIGITAL FLUIDITY: THE NEW METASKILL?

- As access moves from platforms to services, need for individuals to develop new sets of skills to help them adapt to an ever changing technological environment
- Digital fluidity as the ability to move easily between platforms and services
  - Skills related to structure
  - Skills related to functioning
  - Skills related to etiquette
  - Skills related to knowledge integration

# RECONSIDERING DIGITAL AUTONOMY

## **Digital Autonomy as a Social Process**

*We come into being in a social context that is literally constitutive of us. Some of our most essential characteristics are not made by us but given to us (or developed in us) through our interactions with others.*

## **Digital Autonomy as Subjective Experience**

*We cannot understand or protect, much less reconceive autonomy unless we attend to what gives citizens a sense of autonomy, to what makes them feel competent, effective, able to exercise some control over their lives, as opposed to feeling passive, helpless, and dependent.*

## **Digital Autonomy as a Capability**

*Having and respecting autonomy requires anticipation by others of what is needed to make the choice in question and facilitating that choice accordingly*

# CONTACT US

[www.ideallic.be](http://www.ideallic.be)

**Axelle.Asmar@vub.be**

**Ilse.Mariën@vub.be**