Digital inclusion

An overview

What is digital inclusion?

Digital inclusion means that people have the resources, capabilities and opportunity to use the internet and technology to participate in today's society.

What is needed for digital inclusion?

To access and use the internet, people need:

1. Access to a device – e.g. a tablet, laptop, smart phone, or computer

2. An adequate internet connection, including sufficient local infrastructure, and enough data to meet their usage needs

3. Capabilities – including skills, knowledge, confidence and resilience – to use and navigate online technology

4. Digital platforms, content and devices that are accessible to all – easy to read, easy to use, easy to understand and compatible with assistive technology.

Why is it important?

Using the internet has become an integral part of daily life. Now, more than ever, many Australians use the internet for a large range of purposes, such as:

- finding information

- financial tasks, including banking and paying bills

- connecting with family and friends

- participating in education

- looking for and applying for work
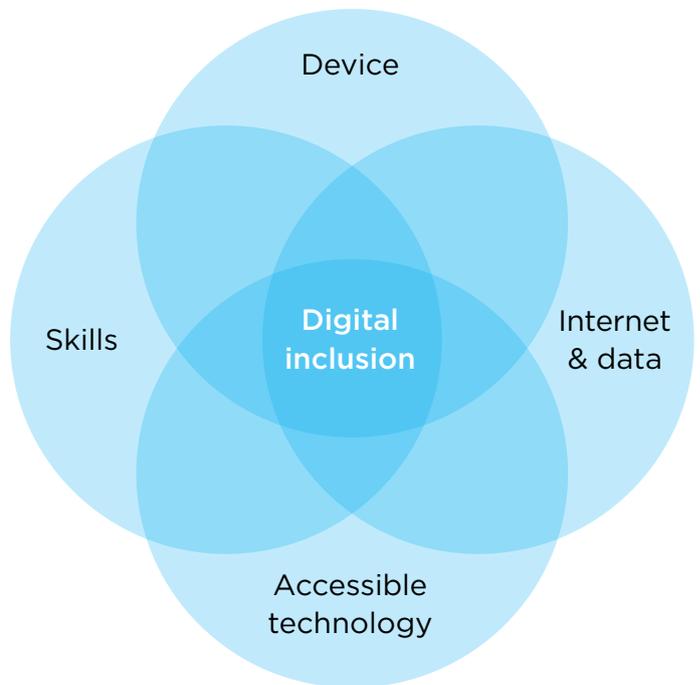
- accessing health services

- purchasing goods and services

- entertainment and leisure.

However, not everyone can access and use the internet.

Digital exclusion

- In 2016–2017, almost 300,000 Victorian households (13%) did not have access to the internet at home (on a mobile or a home internet connection). This represents one in five households in regional Victoria, and one in ten in metropolitan Melbourne[1].

- In 2019, fewer than 40% of Australians indicated that they felt they could keep up with changes in technology[2].

- In 2017, 34% of Australians aged over 50 were either 'digitally disengaged' (never performing online activities) or had 'low' levels of digital literacy or device usage (performing online activities less than once a month)[3]
- Internet affordability remains a key barrier to digital inclusion, particularly for low income households[2].

13%

Victorian households do not have an internet connection.

Less than

40%

of Australians feel they can keep up with changes in technology.

Each year The Australian Digital Inclusion Index[2] measures digital inclusion in Australia. The Index identifies groups who are more likely to experience digital exclusion as:

- People in households with a low income, particularly households with an annual income under $35,000.
- Those with mobile phone internet access only
- Older people, particularly those aged 65+ years
- People with a low level of education, particularly those with less than secondary education

- People living with disability
- People not in the labour force
- Indigenous Australians
- Culturally and linguistically diverse migrants who have recently arrived in Australia
- People living in regional and country Victoria (compared to those living in Melbourne)

For more detailed information, see Digital Nation Australia 2020 (pictured, below)[4].

References

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2. Thomas J, Barraket J, Wilson CK, Rennie E, Ewing S, MacDonald T. *Measuring Australia's Digital Divide: The Australian Digital Inclusion Index 2019*. RMIT University and Swinburne University of Technology for Telstra; 2019. https://doi.org/10.25916/5d6478f373869

3. Ispos Pty Ltd. *Understanding Digital Behaviours of Older Australians: Full Report: A Report for the eSafety Commissioner.*; 2018. https://www.esafety.gov.au/sites/ default/files/2019-08/Understanding-digital-behaviours- older-Australians-full-report-2018.pdf

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