

New research reveals why older Australians shy away from taking selfies

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Swinburne researchers have collected unique insights that help explain why 50% of older Australia want to do more on the internet, but are reluctant to take selfies and share posts on social media.

"Reluctant selfies: older people, [social media](#) sharing and digital inclusion' by Swinburne's lecturer in Media and Communications Dr. Diana Bossio and Associate Professor of Media and Communications Anthony McCosker has just been published in the Journal of Media and Cultural Studies.

They found older people's reluctance to engage on social [media](#) and take selfies isn't about lacking [technical skills](#). In fact, older people actively incorporate technology into their lives, for example with email, online shopping and reviewing.

Instead, it's social and cultural fears, as well as barriers to online participation that are behind older people holding back on social media.

The findings come out of the 60+ Online project, a workshop program to develop digital media skills and literacy among people aged 60 and over.

Dr. Bossio and Associate Professor McCosker say that research participants expressed fear around sharing personal content on social media because:

1. They felt like they didn't have the necessary online social skills to gauge the kinds of self-expression that are appropriate for online spaces. As one participant remarked: "no one wants to see grandma on social media."
2. They didn't feel like they understood what they saw as complex social boundaries and languages around how to interact with others online. Basically: "I'm going to make a fool of myself if I try to do what my grandkids do on social media."

All participants wanted to make better use of social media. This research forms part of a wider effort to increase participation in [digital media](#)

among people aged 60 and over.

More information: Diana Bossio et al, Reluctant selfies: older people, social media sharing and digital inclusion, *Continuum* (2021). DOI: [10.1080/10304312.2021.1937941](https://doi.org/10.1080/10304312.2021.1937941)

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