Project Summary

CYBERSAFETY

EMPOWERING A CYBER-SAFE SOCIETY

MTU
Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta na Mumhan
Munster Technological University

CYBERSKILLS
Building Ireland's Cyber Security Skills

UNIVERSITY *of* DENVER
1864

Science Foundation Ireland **sfi** For what's next

NCSC
National Cyber Security Centre

The National Challenge Fund

The National Challenge Fund is a series of challenge-based funding opportunities, where teams of researchers must work towards solutions in the areas of digitalisation and the green transition. The Challenges are funded under the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, helping Ireland to restore its society and economy following the adversity of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement is a significant part of the research process. We talked to 172 distinct stakeholders, including older adults, government officials, service providers and the voluntary sector. This helped us understand the ecosystem of support available. The key findings from this process are as follows:

- Using technology is a positive experience for most older adults.
- Older adults are afraid online.
- Knowledge and awareness of cyber safety and appropriate cyber hygiene is low.
- Older adults want support in a way that works for them.

There is an opportunity for Ireland to enhance engagement and knowledge sharing between researchers and practitioners. The Age Friendly Ireland programme is introducing actions to address participation and inequality and it is intended that people of all ages will be supported to enjoy healthier, more active and connected lives. Initial discussions between our project team and Age Friendly Ireland have provided an opportunity to integrate our solution into this programme that operates in all 31 local authorities in the country.

Stakeholder Engagement

State of the Art

In Estonia, digital access is viewed as a Human Right, and all members of society are supported through a comprehensive system of information and engagement. The Estonian Ambassador shared information outlining their approach to digitisation, and the result is high levels of internet confidence and activity across all age groups. We would view their approach as a 'best in class' and aim to provide similar contextualised support to Irish society.

The best regarded security advice was developed by the US NIST organisation and is referenced by many countries internationally. It is a 220-page technical report. The EU agency for cybersecurity, ENISA, has also published documents on security practices but again these are aimed at a technical reader or a business. Developing accessible tailored advice for different communities of users and providing the tools to implement this advice will put Ireland on the international stage for user-centric security practices and identify us as a leader in secure citizen innovations. It will also ensure that Ireland has a population equipped to deal with cyber threats.

The US has recently introduced equity guidelines via a presidential executive order. NIST is currently developing a revised set of digital guidelines for organisations and they will, for the first time, be taking into account equity in the cyber-solutions they support.

Many charities and organisations offer in-person tech-support classes for older adults. However, Age Action Ireland revealed that even when technical support is provided, often cyber-safety advice is not discussed or included in the training.
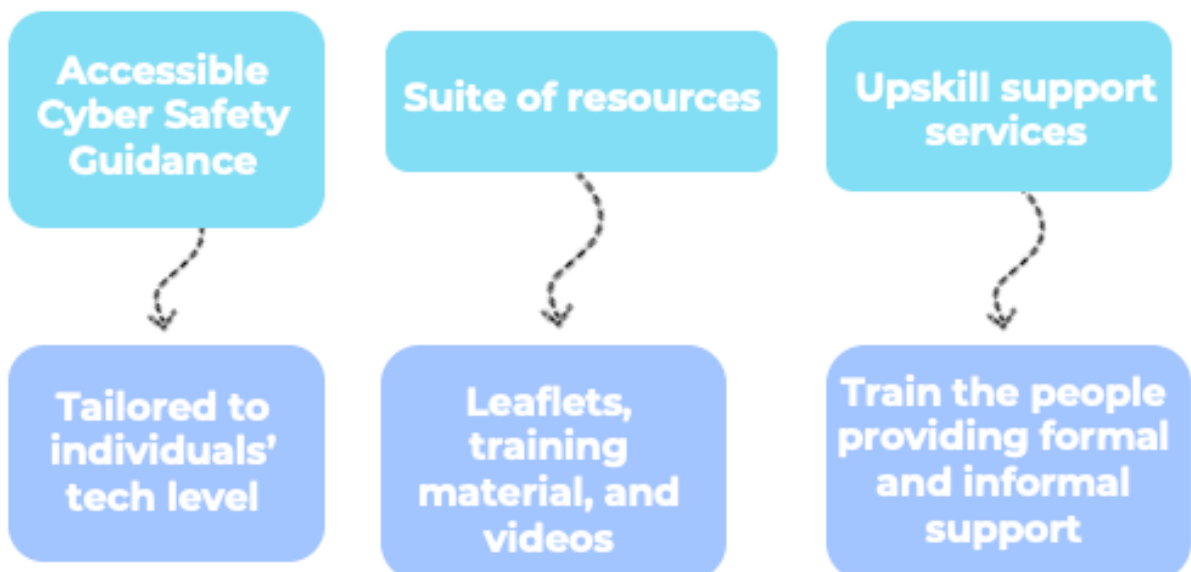
The solution

We suggest the following solution:

1. Develop cyber safety guidance tailored to the needs of older adults. This guidance will be developed collaboratively with older adults and will be improved and tailored based on feedback. Based on our concept phase interviews we already know that the guidance we provide will differ for non-tech older adults, medium tech and tech savvy older adults.
2. Disseminate this guidance to older adults through the existing ecosystem and other methods suggested by older adults. This includes physical leaflets in libraries, garda stations, citizens information, as well as online videos hosted by a trusted source that will show step-by-step how to do certain tasks online safely. Information provided to alone so that older people can ring for assistance.
3. Train the trainers – train the ecosystem of helpers that currently offer assistance to older adults so that they can also provide guidance on cyber safe practices and cyber-crime protection and response. In the first instance this will be piloted as in person training but will also be developed into an e-learning module that can be accessed at any time.
4. Consolidate existing distributed supports and provide an index of what is available and where it is provided.

Our approach is to give people personalized cybersecurity advice and make it easy to follow as it is tailored to their context, constraints, and needs. This advice will be disseminated by enhancing existing support by providing upskilling and training in cyber-safety.

Accessible Cyber Safety Guidance

Suite of resources

Upskill support services

Tailored to individuals' tech level

Leaflets, training material, and videos

Train the people providing formal and informal support

Next Steps

We are now moving on to the Seed Phase of the Our Tech National Challenge Fund. In this phase we will develop cybersecurity guidance for carrying out specific activities and test it to see how it is used and understood by both older adults using technology in their daily lives and support services. We will continue to engage with our stakeholders and share our lessons learned so far with policymakers. We are part of a competitive process and we will present our findings to an expert review panel towards the end of 2024. This will determine if we continue to the 'Grow' phase of the Challenge.

MTU Project team from left to right; Moya Cronin, Michelle O'Keefe, Hazel Murray and Aoife Long