2023 Capstone Final Report

Tyler Berry

INFM 480

Dr. Liu

December 14 2023

# **Executive Summary**

The purpose of this study is to find common usability challenges that elderly (65 and over) internet users face and how improve on these challenges. As someone who has observed how elderly users interact with various forms of technology, it can be seen that there are a number of challenges that these users face when using various forms of everyday technology. Thus, with this study I chose to focus on one of most important forms of everyday technology, the internet, to focus on, as it is a piece of technology that is deeply ingrained in our everyday lives.

With the internet being a main form on technology that is used in our everyday lives, finding ways to increase the accessibility of it to elderly user can be made. With this project, a senior friendly mode is being proposed. This senior friendly mode, would be presented as a main feature on webpages for the users to enable. By enabling this mode, two main features would be enhanced in order to improve the user experience for elderly user. The first would the enlargement of the text and the second would be to present the user with a minimalistic interface of the main website. With these two main feature, it would be hoped that elderly internet user would have a more satisfactory user experience when using the internet.

# **Acknowledgment**

I would like to thanks Dr. Liu for being both a great guidance during the course of my studies, and for having a great wealth of knowledge that helped to shaped my overall goals and outcome during my studies.

### Introduction

Internet usage plays an important role in how we interact with each other in our everyday lives. With this rise in the interment importance, comes the rise in its overall complexity in its design. For those who may have grown up in an age where using the internet was apart of everyday life, making use of the internet may be done with little not ease. Unfortunately the same cannot be said for those who may not have grown up with the Internet readily available.

According to the *Pew Research Center* (Faverio, M.), 75% of U.S adults who say they use the Internet, are 65 and over. Further, the Pew Research Center states that, "adoption of key technologies by those in the oldest age group has grown markedly since about a decade ago, and the gap between the oldest and youngest adults has narrowed." Based on this, the data shows that more and more who fall into the 65 and over demographic are increasing adapting the usage of technology.

This demographic, which is currently evermore connected to the internet than ever before, is, unfortunately, one that is not actively served when it comes to Internet designs. According to a study done by the *Nielsen Norman Group (Kane, L.)*, two of the most common challenges that Internet users in the age group face are small font sizes, and unforgiving interfaces. With these two challenges that internet users in this age range face, having an design feature would be of great help for those users. With this, the challenge of vision and cognitive abilities becomes the core focus of the study. According the *World Wide Web Consortium* (W3C), vision and cognitive ability are two age-related impairments that can affect how elderly users use the internet.

Therefore, for this research project, I am proposing a senior friendly mode. This, mode will be an integrated feature that is promptly displayed at the top of webpages. If needed, the user can enable this mode. By enabling this mode, larger texts will be enabled, and a minimalistic design of the main webpage being browsed will be displayed. This feature would help those who may find using various webpages easier and more efficient to use. As such, the mode would help to improve upon two of the main age-related impairments that was listed by the W3C: Vision and Cognitive Ability. Further, this project will go on to show a further social impact, in which the usability of elderly internet users can be enhanced by focusing on the user experience of these users, and finding out what specific challenges these face when using the internet and how to improve upon these difficulties so that the elderly user experience is enhanced. With this, technology developers will be encouraged to not only implement this senior friendly felature on their webpages, but to start thinking of ways to make technology, in general, more user friendly for elderly technology users as well.

# Research Question

How do elderly (65 and older) internet users interact with the internet? What challenges do these inerrant user have and how can their user experience be improved upon, so that users in this demographic will have a better user experience while using the internet.

# **Project Scope**

The senior friendly mode will provide a user interface that will allow more efficient use for elderly internet users. The two main features of this mode that would allow for this efficiency of use would larger texts, and a minimalistic interface, which would provide only what would be needed for the user to complete the tasks needed for the website. With this feature, the user experience for elderly internet users will be improved.

# <u>Timeline</u>

Weeks	Tasks	Status
October 2 - 9	Design interview plans and questions	Completed
	Find Prospective Participants	
October 2 - 9	Project Proposal	Completed
October 2 - 9	Staekholder's Map	Completed
October 2 - 9	Project Scope	Completed
October 2 - 9	Der 2 - 9 Success Measurments Completed	
October 16-23 Conduct Interview and observations Completed		Completed
October 16-23	r 16-23 Personas Completed	
October 16-23	Storyboard	Completed
October 16-23	User Tasklist	Completed
October 16-23	Site Structure	Completed
October 16-23	Database Design and Entities Completed Relationships	
October 23 - 30 Write Report based on interview and observation Completed		Completed
October 30 - Dec 6	ber 30 - Dec 6 Design prototype for website Completed	
Nov 27 - Dec 4	Nov 27 - Dec 4 Conduct Final Observations Completed	
Dec 4 - Dec 11	Usability Analysis	Completed
Dec 4 - Dec 11	Final Powerpoint	Completed
Dec 4 - Dec 11	Final Report	Completed

# Research Methodology

This project consisted of two research methodologies, interviews and observations.

Interviews was conducted on two elderly internet users in order to find out what exactly they felt were challenging when using the internet and also to find how these challenges could improved upon in order to provide a better user experience internet users in this age range. Along with these interviews, observations was conducted for both participants. The participants were given a task list, with which, various tasks was asked of the participants to complete on Kroger.com.

Based on how well the participants completed the tasks, more insight was gained into seeing how exactly a internet user in this age range would use the internet, and what challenges that would face when using the internet.

# **Project Deliverables**

A working prototype of the senior friendly feature will be the final deliverable of the project. As the currently project was based on Kroger.com, the senior friendly mode will have a user design that will have features of the default Kroger website display on the senior friendly mode. The user will be to complete all of the tasks that are presented on the project task list when using the senior friendly mode.

# **Success Measurements**

The measurement for success for this project would for the ability to complete each given task on the task list on the final prototype version of the senior friendly mode feature. Based on the initial interview and observation process, a number of challenges was found when observing the participant performing tasks from the task list. If successful, the prototype would make performing each task on the task list easier and more efficient the the user.

# Stakeholders Map

High	Keep Satisfied  Business Owners	Actively Engaged  Elderly internet Users  Project Developers  Tech Companies
	Monitor  People who use little to no internet	Keep Informed General Internet Users
Low	w Interest /	Availability High

# **Interview Script**

## **Introduction**

Hello, my name is Tyler Berry and I am conducting this interview for my 2023 Capstone project. This project deals with internet usability and how the usability of the internet can be improved upon for elderly internet users. For this interview, I will asks serval questions that will deal with different aspects of your Internet usage. With these questions, I am hoping to gain more insight into how you use the internet and in which ways internet usability can be improved upon. For any of these questions, feel free to further elaborate on the questions if needed.

## **Interview Questions**

- 1) How often do you use the internet?
- 2) What do you most often use the internet for? For example, for work, or entertainment purposes?
- 3) Do you find that using the internet has improved your life, when it comes to performing certain tasks, such as paying bills online?
- 4) When using the internet what websites do you most often use?
- 5) What challenges do you find when using these websites?
- 6) Do you find websites to be to cluttered visually?
- 7) Do you find the texts of websites to be too small?
- 8) Do you make use of audio functions when using the internet, such as watching videos? If so, how well do these audio functions work for you?

- 9) Do you think enough is being done to help with older Internet users to navigate the internet
- 10) What do you wish websites would do to make it easier for you?

# **Observations**

Observations for the research project was done using the Kroger website (<a href="https://www.kroger.com/">https://www.kroger.com/</a>) The following task list was given to the research project participants and a 1-5 grade was given for each task given to the participants.

# **Task List for Observations**

- 1) Enable senior mode (For prototype observation)
- 2) Find link to customer support
- 3) Find create an account
- 4) Find Weekly ads
- 5) Using the filter function, find dairy and egg products that are on sale
- 6) Find link to digital coupons
- 7) Find about us link
- 8) Find Kroger promotion sales
- 9) Find pickup FAQS
- 10) Find information about health and wellness services

# Observations were graded on a scale of 1 - 5

- 1- Unable to complete the give task
- 2- Task posed a great challenge in completing task
- 3- User was able to complete task, after a considerable amount of time
- 4- User found very little challenge in completing given task
- 5- User was easily able to complete the given task

# Interview Questions for Participant #1 (Age 73)

- 1)How often do you use the internet? I use the internet everyday
- 2) What do you most often use the internet for? For example, for work, or entertainment purposes? I use the internet to check my email, news, community events, for shopping and for banking.
- 3) Do you find that using the internet has improved your life, when it comes to performing certain tasks, such as paying bills online? **Yes, it has**
- 4) When using the internet what websites do you most often use? Recipe websites, Wells Fargo, AT&T, and Kroger website
- 5) What challenges do you find when using these websites? The websites are pretty prompt
- 6) Do you find websites to be to cluttered visually? Sometime I find a lot of stuff is not needed
- 7) Do you find the texts of websites to be too small? **Texts could be larger**
- 8) Do you make use of audio functions when using the internet, such as watching videos? If so, how well do these audio functions work for you? Yes, when I use Zoom. Sometimes the audio functions can be challenging
- 9) Do you think enough is being done to help with older Internet users to navigate the internet I think more could be done
- 10) What do you wish websites would do to make it easier for you? **Have more training on how** to get onto websites and how to use them.

# Task List and Observational Grade for Participant #1

1) Find link to customer support - 0

- 2) Find create an account 0
- 3) Find Weekly ads 1
- 4) Find website help link 2
- 5) Using the filter function, find dairy and egg products that are on sale 0
- 6) Find link to digital coupons 5
- 7) Find about us link 5
- 8) Find Kroger promotion sales 5
- 9) Find pickup FAQS 3
- 10) Find information about health and wellness services 5

Summary: During the interviewing process for this participant, it could be seen that certain things like texts size, and having too much information on screen would have been a challenge from the user. This, through certain tasks that were given to the user could have made it challenge for the participant to complete certain tasks. For example, with the tasks of find the website help link, it could be seen that although the user was able to complete the task, it could have been more efficiently done if less visual information was presented on screen to the user. Along with this, the participant's thinking that websites could provide more training on how to use websites is very telling. As the help link was not as easy to find for the user, having this more promptly displayed on the webpage would be a tremendous help to such a user. Along with being useful for more simply tasks, it could also be very use in completing more complex tasks. For this participant I asked the user to use the filter function in order to find dairy and egg products,

of which the user did nor complete. This function, which could be very helpful, is something that websites could offer some training on to help such a user.

# Interview Questions for Participant #2 (Age 68)

- 1)How often do you use the internet? **2-3 hours everyday, in increments**
- 2) What do you most often use the internet for? For example, for work, or entertainment purposes? I use the internet for entertainment, paying bills, news, Facebook, and playing games
- 3) Do you find that using the internet has improved your life, when it comes to performing certain tasks, such as paying bills online? Yes, for when it comes to certain tasks like paying bills
- 4) When using the internet what websites do you most often use? Facebook, amazon, Walmart, and wayfair
- 5) What challenges do you find when using these websites? No, because I go on frequently
- 6) Do you find websites to be to cluttered visually? Yes, sometimes there are things that I do not need.
- 7) Do you find the texts of websites to be too small? Yes, I do find texts to sometimes be too small
- 8) Do you make use of audio functions when using the internet, such as watching videos? If so, how well do these audio functions work for you? Yes. I find no challenges when using these functions
- 9) Do you think enough is being done to help with older Internet users to navigate the internet.

## Yes more could be done, such as training and making websites more simplified

10) What do you wish websites would do to make it easier for you? **Bigger texts could be used,** and more training on how to use Zoom would help.

# Task List and Observational Grade for Participant #2

- 1) Find link to customer support 0
- 2) Find create an account 3
- 3) Find Weekly ads 5
- 4) Find website help link 0
- 5) Using the filter function, find dairy and egg products that are on sale 5
- 6) Find link to digital coupons 5
- 7) Find about us link 0
- 8) Find Kroger promotion sales 2
- 9) Find pickup FAQS 4
- 10) Find information about health and wellness services 3

**Summary**: This user found less difficulty with completing a number of these tasks, but a particularly improvement could help make website such as the Kroger website more efficient use. This user was not able to find the help link and about us link, both of which could be found at the bottom of the webpage. This, I think is something that could cause problems for many users in my chosen age range, since many users would probably want everything presented to them, with little to no searching. This, is one of the key features of my research proposal. By

only having what is needed for the user presented on a single page layout, users using my proposed function would not need to scroll to the bottom of webpage in order to find valuable webpage information.

# **Story Board**

### STORYBOARD: AN ELDERLY INTERNET USER EXPERIENCE







SCENE 1

A elderly internet user is going to look up electronic products on Kroger.com

### SCENE 2

The user finds that the website uses texts that is very small and hard to read and becomes disgruntled.

#### SCENE 3

The user changes the website mode to "user friendly" mode







### SCENE 4

Now the website text is enlarged

### SCENE 5

The user can now easily find the electronics section of website

### SCENE 6

The user is now happy!

## STORYBOARD: USER TRYING TO FIND DIGITAL COUPONS





### SCENE 1

The user is trying to find the digital coupons on Kroger.com

### **SCENE 2**

Too much information is presented to the user on the homepage, making it hard for the user to find the digital coupons

#### CENE 3

The user enables the "user friendly" mode





SAVE

SCENE 5

Set your aift coupon - (1) per person

The user finds the digital coupons on Kroger.com

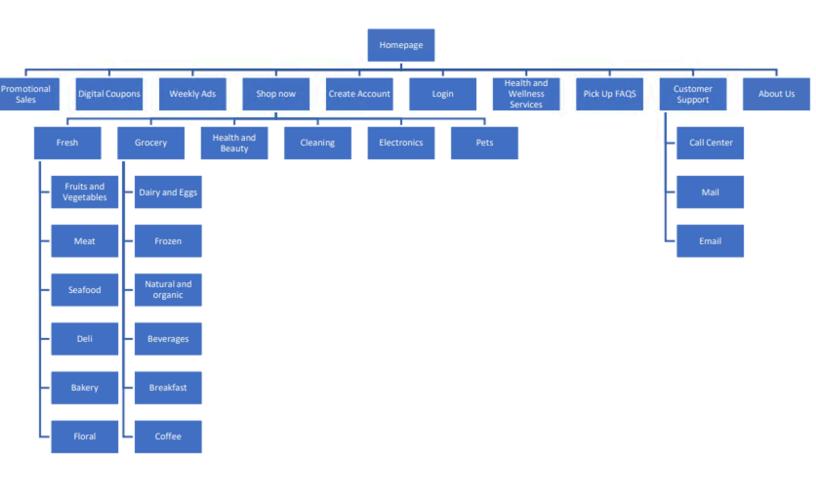
### SCENE 6

User can now save more when shopping on Kroger.com

### **SCENE 4**

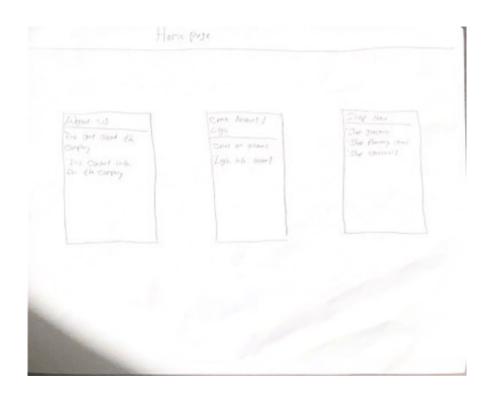
The information is now presented in a minimalistic design, making it easier to find what the user needs.

# Site Structure



# Prototype Development

# Prototype One



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# Prototype Two



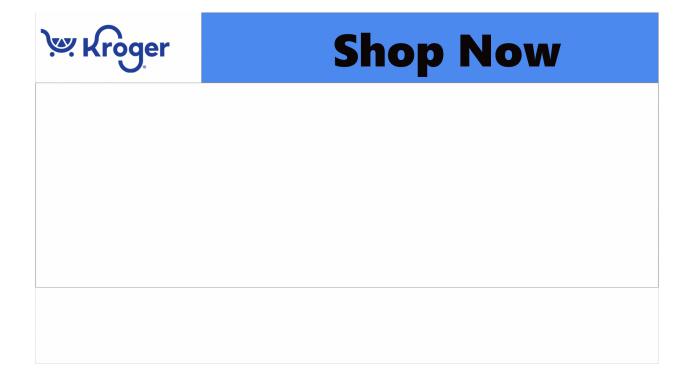
# **Homepage**

**Create Account** 

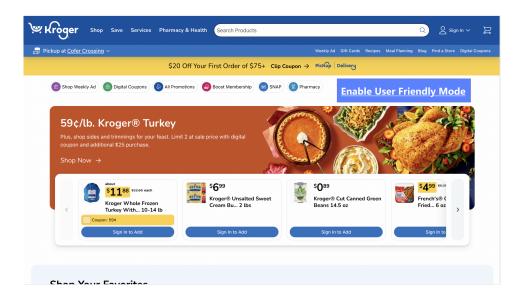
Login

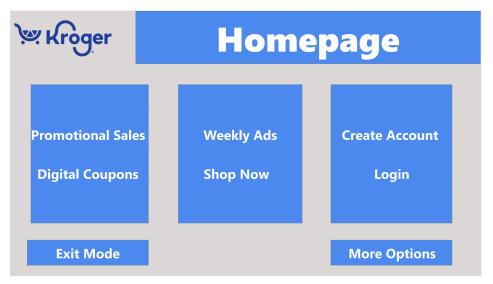
**Shop Now** 

**Contact Us** 



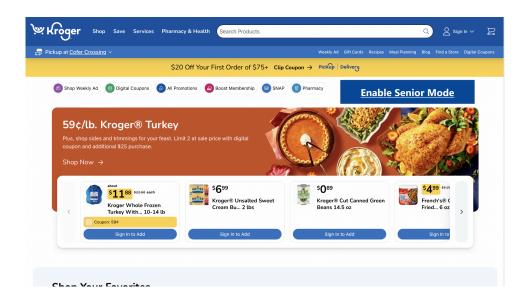
# **Prototype Three**

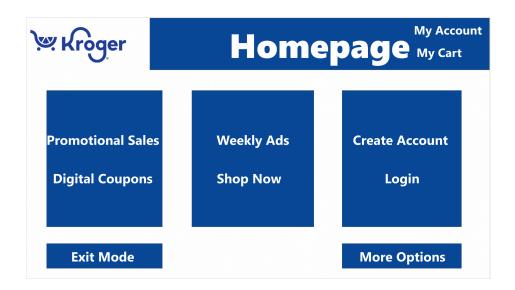






# **Prototype Four**







# **Prototype Five (Final)**









For this project five prototype was developed. For the senior mode feature, the main Kroger website was used as a template for which features were to be included on the prototype.

The initial prototype was a handwritten version. This version included the basic layout idea that wanted the full version to feature. As can be seen, I wanted to initially use a tile layout, in which the various pages that wanted to include would be featured. From here the user would be able to click between the various pages.

The second prototype features the initial step of developing the idea. This prototype features only a handful of pages, but the tile feature can be seen. These tiles were clickable, and would link to a blank page that would feature which page was initially clicked on from the home page. Along with this, the pages featured the Kroger logo and a blue banner at the top of the page, with the main pages themselves being white.

The third prototype, features the senior mode on the main Kroger webpage. This was used in order to show how the senior feature would be displayed for use on the website. When clicking the senior mode, this would lead to the homepage of the senior mode. From here, a grey layout was tested and blue colored tiles was added.

The fourth prototype features a tile coloring that matches the actual colors used by Kroger. Along with this many different pages were added to enhance the functionality of the prototype. For example, pages for the create account and about us functions was added.

The fifth prototype added larger text for the pick up FAQS and the About Us pages for better readability. Also Prices and add to cart functions was added for the products listed under the Dairy & Eggs section of the prototype. Along with this, the exist mode was changed to exist senior mode for better specifications.

# <u>Usability Analysis</u>

# Task List and Observational Grade for Participant #1 (Final Prototype)

1)	) Enable Senior mode - 5		
2)	Find link to customer support - 5		
3)	Create an account - 5		
4)	Find Weekly ads - 3		
5)	Find website help link - 3		
6)	Using the filter function, find dairy and egg products that are on sale - 0		
7)	) Find link to digital coupons - 4		
8)	Find about us link - 5		
9)	Find Kroger promotion sales - 5		
10)	10) Find pickup FAQS - 2		
11)	11) Find information about health and wellness services - 5		
	Task List and Observational Grade for Participant #2 (Final Prototype)		
1)	Enable Senior mode - 5		
2)	Find link to customer support - 5		
3)	Create an account - 5		
4)	Find Weekly ads - 4		
5)	Find website help link - 4		
6)	Using the filter function, find dairy and egg products that are on sale - 0		
7)	Find link to digital coupons - 5		

- 9) Find Kroger promotion sales 5
- 10) Find pickup FAQS 4
- 11) Find information about health and wellness services 5

For my usability analysis, I conduct a final observation on the prototype. With this prototype, I made use of the same task list that was used during the observation of the Kroger website. When analyzing the observations of the two participants of the study, a number of improvements can be seen from their usage of the Kroger website and the senior prototype of the website. For example, when looking at the task list score, the score went up between the the Kroger website and the senior mode prototype. As such, two main points can be observed due to this study. The first is that, these observations confirm that there are usability challenges that elderly internet users face and two that these challenges can be improved upon in order to improve the overall user experience of elderly intent users. In the end, the prototype was able to demonstrate the initial idea of using a senior friendly mode, in order to improve the overall user experience for elderly internet users.

# Social Impact

Based on the study and observations that were done for the project, the great social impact of implementing such a feature can be seen as one of great importance. At the start of this study, it was mentioned that elderly internet users, do find that there are a number of challenges that they face when using the internet. Of this two main challenges can be seen: text size and unforgiving interfaces. With this prototype, these two challenges would be fixed, enabling elderly internet users to better navigate the internet when using different websites.

With this prototype, the implementation of using a senior mode feature for every website becomes a great possibility. By implementing a senior mode, companies will be able to provide a better user experience for elderly internet users who may make use of their websites. This can be seen as being something of great importance as, based on the *Pew Research Center* 75% of U.S adult who say they use the Internet, are 65 and over, along with this, this demographic will continue to grow. As this elderly demographic grows, features will be needed that will help to aid users in this demographic. By starting to implement a senior mode, this will not only help the current alertly internet users, but will help the future elderly internet users, who would probably benefit greatly with the implementation of a senior mode feature on webpages.

### Conclusion

At the beginning of this research project, I wanted to seek out the different challenges that elderly internet users face and how these challenges could be improved upon to help improve the user experience for users in this demographic. In doing so, two of the main challenges that was found for these users dealt with text size and the cognitive abilities of these users. With these two challenges, I wanted to demonstrate how, a "senior mode" could be developed, in which both of these challenges could be fixed in order to make the user experience better for these users. In order to demonstrate this, I made prototype for the Kroger website, in which the senior mode was implemented in order to demonstrate how these challenges could be improved upon.

With the senior mode, two of the main improvements can readily be seen. The first is that the text of the website has been enlarged. In comparison to the main Kroger website, text is now bigger and bolder, which would allow for elderly users to more easily see the text that is on the screen. The next feature that can readily be seen as to deal with the challenge of the cognitive ability of elderly intent users. By only presenting the key functions of the main Kroger website, this would led to a more minimalist design for the senior mode. With this, it would allow for less on screen distractions for these users, and would allow the user to more easily navigate throughout the website.

With this function, it would be hoped that this is a function that could be directly implemented on all websites. With this, and company that has a website, will be able to be easily used by elderly internet users. For example, a website like Amazon, could have an impact on the cognitive ability of an elderly internet user, due to the amount options that are available to the

user. This, however, could be fixed by implemented the senior mode feature, which would allow for a more minimalistic design of the website, that could help improve the usability of the website for elderly users who may find the website to be too complicated to use. In the end, this is a feature that would greatly aid in the accessibility to the internet for elderly internet users, and would greatly benefit companies that make use of websites that has a level of complexity that would make it difficult for elderly internet users to efficiently navigate.

# **References**

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# **Appendix**

# Participant's Informed Consent Documents



[Information Technology and Informatics]

# 2023 Internet Usability Study Research Project

# **Informed Consent**

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Before you give your consent to volunteer, it is important that you read the following information and ask as many questions as necessary to be sure you understand what you will be asked to do.

### Investigators

Tyler Berry, Mercer University, Information Technology and Informatics 3001 Mercer University Dr, Atlanta GA 30341, 404-563-5442

### Purpose of the Research

The project is designed to research challenges faced by elderly internet users, and to find solutions to common problems among this demographic

The data will be used to proposal improvements for the Kroger online website, that would aid in the usability for elderly users of the website...

This project will demonstrate my knowledge and research skills, and how these skills can be applied in a real world scenario

### **Procedures**

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to be a participant in an interview and to be observed using the Kroger online website..

Your participation will take approximately 1-2 hours.

## Potential Risks or Discomforts

There are no foreseeable risks.

### Potential Benefits of the Research

There may not be any direct benefit to the participants of the research project

Potential benefits may be gained for the research of technology and how elderly users interact with technology. Based on the research gained, insights can be made for the potential improvement of the interacts of elderly internet users.

### Confidentiality and Data Storage

Any information that would directly identify participants will be omitted from the research project. Only information that is needed for the research will be included in the project.

The information gained from this project will only be used in relation to the completion of this project. The data will only be accessible by the primary project researcher and advisor.

Video recording may be used to observe participants completing specified tasks on the Kroger. Online website. These recording will only be accessed by the primary project research and advisor. Recordings will be stored at Mercer University for at least 3 years after study completion.

Participation and Withdrawal

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. As a participant, you may refuse to participate at any time. To withdraw from the study please contact Tyler Berry: tyler.berry@live.mercer.edu.

If you wish to withdraw from the research project, please contact Tyler Berry: tyler.berry@live.mercer.edu.

Questions about the Research

If you have any questions about the research, please speak with Tyler Berry: tyler.berry@live.mercer.edu

In Case of Injury

It is unlikely that participation in this project will result in harm to subjects. If an injury to a subject does occur, he or she may be seen at a local or regional medical facility. All expenses associated with care will be the responsibility of the participant and his/her insurance. If the research is not conducted at Mercer University, omit the option of using local or regional medical facility and enter information regarding participant care in the event of injury.

Incentives to Participate

There are no participation incentives.

Audio or Video Taping

For the purposes of this research project, audio recording may be used during the interviewing portion of the research project. Similarly, video recording, if needed may be used during the course of the research project

Reasons for Exclusion from this Study

This research project deals with the topic of elderly internet users and how they interact with the internet. Therefore, for this research project, If you are not 60 years or older and are not a internet user, you will be excluded for the study.

This project has been reviewed and approved by Mercer University's IRB. If you believe there is any infringement upon your rights as a research subject, you may contact the IRB Chair, at (478) 301-4101.

You have been given the opportunity to ask questions and these have been answered to your satisfaction. Your signature below indicates your voluntary agreement to participate in this research study.

Research Participant Signature

Date

Tyle Berry Name of Person Obtaining Consent (Print)

Person Obtaining Consent Signature



[Information Technology and Informatics]

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If you wish to withdraw from the research project, please contact Tyler Berry: tyler.berry@live.mercer.edu.

### **Questions about the Research**

If you have any questions about the research, please speak with Tyler Berry: tyler.berry@live.mercer.edu

### In Case of Injury

It is unlikely that participation in this project will result in harm to subjects. If an injury to a subject does occur, he or she may be seen at a local or regional medical facility. All expenses associated with care will be the responsibility of the participant and his/her insurance. If the research is not conducted at Mercer University, omit the option of using local or regional medical facility and enter information regarding participant care in the event of injury.

### Incentives to Participate

There are no participation incentives.

### Audio or Video Taping

For the purposes of this research project, audio recording may be used during the interviewing portion of the research project. Similarly, video recording, if needed may be used during the course of the research project

### Reasons for Exclusion from this Study

This research project deals with the topic of elderly internet users and how they interact with the internet. Therefore, for this research project, If you are not 60 years or older and are not a internet user, you will be excluded for the study.

This project has been reviewed and approved by Mercer University's IRB. If you believe there is any infringement upon your rights as a research subject, you may contact the IRB Chair, at (478) 301-4101.

You have been given the opportunity to ask questions and these have been answered to your satisfaction. Your signature below indicates your voluntary agreement to participate in this research study.

D'unne Porter	Tyler Berry
Research Participant Name (Print)	Name of Person Obtaining Consent (Print)
Research Participant Signature	Ymn
Research Participant Signature	Person Obtaining Consent Signature
10-22-23	October 22, 2023
Date	Date