Zlatka Bracanović, Janja Robida: INFORMATIONAL INTEGRATION PROCESS OF ELDERLY PEOPLE IN DAILY MODERN COM-
MUNICATION
Informatol. 47, 2014., 2-3, 150-156

150

INFORMATIONAL INTEGRATION PROCESS OF ELDERLY PEOPLE IN DAILY MODERN COMMUNICATION

INFORMACIJSKI PROCES INTEGRACIJE STARIJIH U SUVREMENU SVAKODNEVNU KOMUNIKACIJU

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Abstract

This article presents the integration of elderly people in modern communication. At birth, we can talk about aging, as yet an invisible field, which is later on, is shown in many mental, physical and social changes. Today, the number of elderly people increases with extensive speed, so elderly people need to be taken positively with more attention deserved - by that both sides are being prepared for their age. To continue to enjoy the success and quality of life, we must bring to their lives as bigger variety of information as possible - communication technology, which is an influential factor of our lifestyle. The purpose of this article was to determine if the integration of elderly people in modern communication is satisfactory, and how elderly are adapting modern communication. This article is based on a review of relevant literature and sources in English and Slovenian. After analyzing the relevant literature, an analysis of collected data about integration of elderly into modern communication has been made. Today a big factor for non-usage of modern communication among elderly is based on their not-knowledge and ignorance of using the modern communication technologies, that is why it is important that with the help of various institutions, courses and lectures of the usage of information-communication technologies, are being organized. A product that is meant to be used by elderly, needs to be adjusted in that way, that the usage of it is easy and customizable for elderly.

Sažetak

Ovaj članak predstavlja integraciju starijih ljudi u modernu komunikaciju. Pri rođenju, možemo govoriti o starenju, kao još nevidljivom području, koje je kasnije, prikazan u mnogim mentalnim, fizičkim i društvenim promjenama. Danas, broj starijih osoba povećava se velikim brzinama, tako da se starijim osobama treba posvetiti s više zaslužene pažnje - tako da se obje strane pripremaju za svoju dob. Da bi i dalje uživali u uspjehu i kvaliteti života, moramo unijeti u njihove živote više raznih informacija što je više moguće - komunikacijske tehnologije, što je utjecajni faktor našeg načina života. Svrha ovog članka je utvrditi je li integracija starijih ljudi u modernu komunikaciju zadovoljavajuća, te kako se starije osobe prilagođavaju modernoj komunikaciji. Ovaj članak se temelji na pregledu literature i izvora na hrvatskom i slovenskom jeziku. Nakon analize literature, napravljena je analiza prikupljenih podataka o integraciji starijih osoba u moderne komunikacije. Danas je važan faktor za nekorištenje moderne komunikacije među starijim osobama temeljen na njihovom neznanju i ignoriranju korištenja suvremenih komunikacijskih tehnologija, to je razlog zašto je važno da se organiziraju uz pomoć raznih institucija, tečajeva i predavanja o korištenju informacijsko-komunikacijskih tehnologija. Proizvod koji je namijenjen za korištenje od strane starije osobe, treba se prilagoditi na taj način, da je korištenje lako prilagodljivo i za starije osobe.

INTRODUCTION

With the extension of life expectancy and the growing number of elderly people, which nowadays became part of our every day's life, many health, social, economic and political problems are encountered. At birth, we talk about aging as something far, far away but with years this »distance« is getting smaller and smaller, and becomes visible in many mental, physical and social changes. Aging is a biological process, which is reflected as a progressive deterioration of physiological functions of the organism, which reduces its ability to maintain balance in the body, thereby increasing sensitivity to change. It is a complex and not yet fully understood phenomena that affect the organism in adult life, and is finally terminated by death /**1**/.

Age is defined in three ways: chronologically (the age of the human body according to the calendar), biological (the age of the human body in relation to the proper functioning of basic bodily functions and cellular processes) and psychological - adventure (how old one feels) /**2**/. Since we cannot deal with the whole age group in the same way, we divided age chronologically into three periods: early age period (66 Below 75 years) , middle age period (76 to 85 years) and late age period (after 86) /**3**/. Chronological age definition is associated with the policies and norms as well as retirement and legislation providing for the elderly, as a person older than 65 years /**4**/.

Education for elderly people

Today, the number of elderly people increases with the extensive speed, so we must accept them as part of our lives and pay them more attention, since this is a part of our indirect preparation for aging. The most efficient help of improving the quality of aging, it the usage of a variety of modern information and communication technologies (ICT), such as computer and mobile phone, which allow us the usage of Internet and mobile telephony /**5**/. Elderly may learn and train of how to use the modern information and communication technologies as well as the Internet in education courses, which are organized and tailored specifically for them, or at home, where they are being assist by their families, grandchildren &

children. The use of modern ICT can help elderly people with information about the latest developments at home and abroad, acquiring knowledge on a variety of topics and communicate with friends and acquaintances. Elderly can be active and spend quality leisure time included in the Slovenian University of the Third Age, which has several branches in Slovenia or become members of the Association of Pensioners of Slovenia. The University organizes a variety of activities and courses, including courses about the use of modern information and communication technologies.

Information and communication technology

Information technology includes all the technology that is being used for collecting, processing, storing and protecting data. It refers to computer hardware, computer software and computer network /**6**/.

Information and communication technology includes the transmission and use of all types of information. It represents the backbone of the economy, and is the initiator of social change of the 21st century. It affects all aspects of life which we know today, and without it, life would have been almost unthinkable. With the use of ICT, factors such as distance are no longer considered as barriers for accessing information. ICT consists of information technology, telephony, electronic media, all kinds of processing and transmission of audio and video signals as well as all the functions of control and monitoring technology based network /**7**/.

Information and communication literacy in Slovenia

The report of the evaluation and measures for improving ICT literacy "Competitiveness of Slovenia 2006-2013" represents a link between general literacy and ICT literacy. Participants in the study on the relationship of general literacy and ICT literacy in Slovenia, which assessed their general literacy as low, mostly common assessed also their ICT literacy as low. Those who have assessed their general literacy as high (group of older people), mostly common assessed the ICT

Zlatka Bracanović, Janja Robida: INFORMATIONAL INTEGRATION PROCESS OF ELDERLY PEOPLE IN DAILY MODERN COMMUNICATION
Informatol. 47, 2014., 2-3, 150-156

152
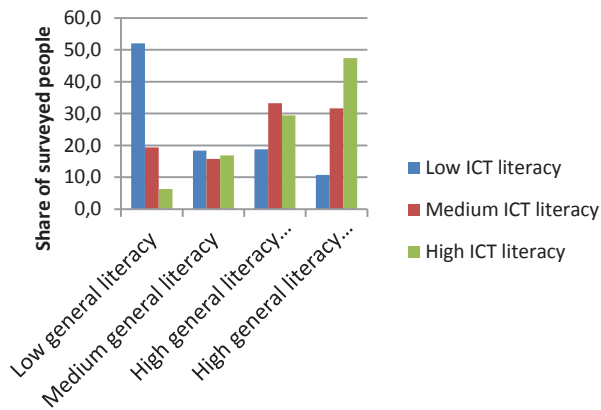
literacy on the medium level /**8**/.

Figure 1: The relationship between general and ICT literacy resource /**9**/

Elderly and information communication technology

Elderly people are a group of people that at studies that were obtained so far, achieved the minimum results in both areas of literacy (general and ICT literacy) .The majority of »not internet & computer user« come from the group of elderly people. One of the biggest barriers to ICT use among the elderly is the lack of opportunities of including them in further education or training of the use of these technologies. One of the main solutions to the increasing of use of information and communication technologies is to promote the education of the use of ICT by the state and voluntary institutions, in order to achieve greater social involvement of elderly people, increase their skills for self-sufficiency, independence and a better life in the rapidly evolving information society /**10**/.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

The purpose of the research is to determine whether the elderly using ICT in order to achieve satisfactory integration of elderly people in modern communication; how the elderly have adopted modern forms of communication; how and by whom the elderly learn how to use modern forms of communication; why they chose to use modern forms of communication and the willingness to attend computer courses, prepared and adapted specifically for them.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this analysis the descriptive method of work has been used. An analysis of the relevant literature in English and Slovenian has been made. After analyzing the relevant literature, we conducted a survey of elderly people, and performed an analysis of the results of the survey. The analysis of relevant literature and the results of the questionnaire were carried out with the help of foreign (PubMed, Google Scholar, Web of Science, ProQuest, ScienceDirect) and Slovenian (Cobiss, DKUM) electronic databases and the software Microsoft Office Excel 2007 and Microsoft Office Word 2007.

SURVEY RESULTS

The study included 50 elderly people in the area Podravska and Savinjska statistical region. The survey sample consisted of 25 men and 25 women; average age of the people surveyed was 69.7 years. The most respondents were those that were retired for more than 10 years (36%) and more than 20 years (32%). Into the survey sample at least were included elderly people who have been retired for over 30 years; more than 5 years and less than 10 years.

38% of elderly respondents are satisfied with today's communication between people, and 30% of surveyed elderly people are dissatisfied with the present communication.
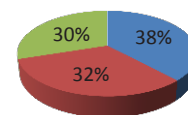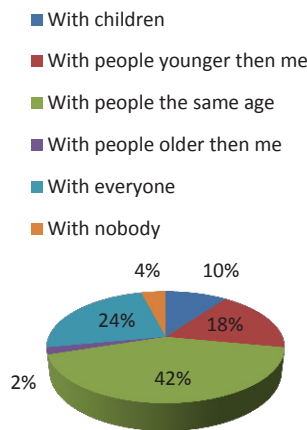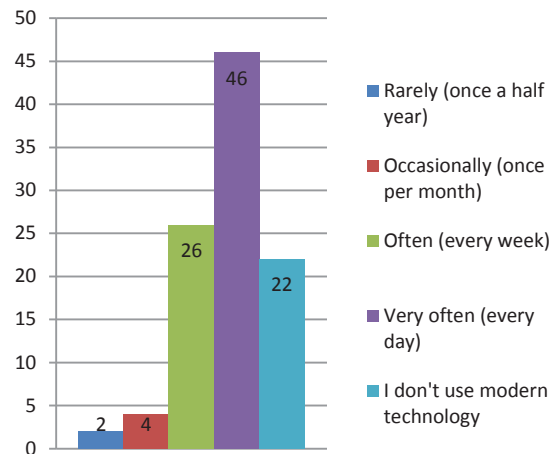

The surveyed elderly people prefer to interact with people their age (42%), 24% of surveyed elderly people like to communicate with everyone.

Popular communication group

- ■ With children
- ■ With people younger then me
- ■ With people the same age
- ■ With people older then me
- ■ With everyone
- ■ With nobody

Frequency of use of modern technology

- ■ Rarely (once a half year)
- ■ Occasionally (once per month)
- ■ Often (every week)
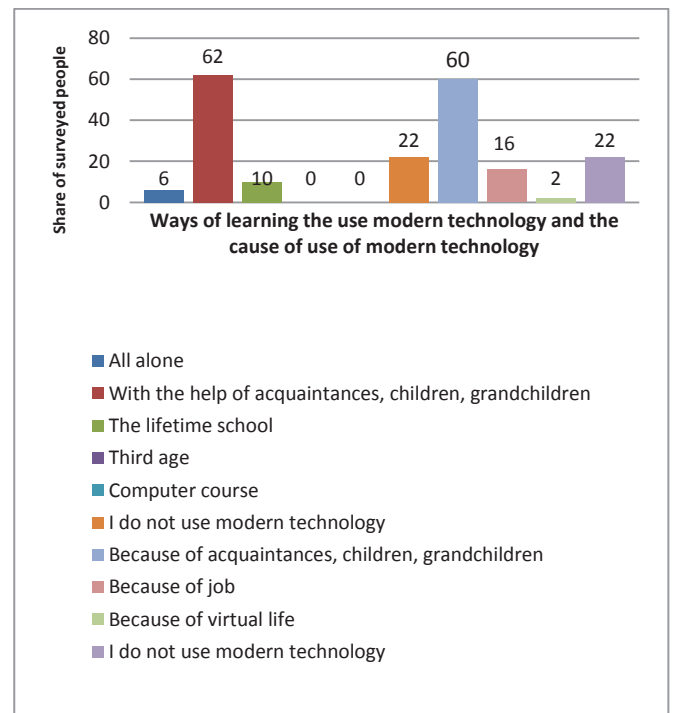- ■ Very often (every day)
- ■ I don't use modern technology

78% of elderly people surveyed using modern technology, 22% of the respondents, do not use it. The respondents commonly used mobile phone (78%) and stationary computer (32%), at least they use a Tablet PC (10%).
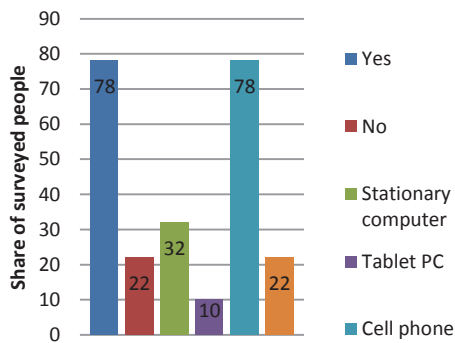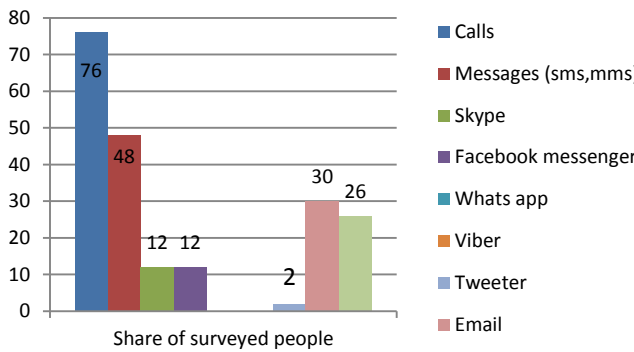

Usage a technology and types of modern technology, used by elderly people

- ■ Yes
- ■ No
- ■ Stationary computer
- ■ Tablet PC
- ■ Cell phone

46% of surveyed elderly people use modern technology on regular basis; only 2% of surveyed elderly uses it rarely (1x half of the year).

The majority of the surveyed people (62%) have learned to use modern technology with the help of acquaintances, children and grandchildren. None of the surveyed people have learned how to use modern technology via the help of third age education or computer courses. More than half of elderly people surveyed (60%) began to use modern technology because of communication needs with friends, children and grandchildren, at least of elderly people surveyed began to use it because of purposes of virtual socializing (2%).

Ways of learning the use modern technology and the cause of use of modern technology

- ■ All alone
- ■ With the help of acquaintances, children, grandchildren
- ■ The lifetime school
- ■ Third age
- ■ Computer course
- ■ I do not use modern technology
- ■ Because of acquaintances, children, grandchildren
- ■ Because of job
- ■ Because of virtual life
- ■ I do not use modern technology

Zlatka Bracanović, Janja Robida: INFORMATIONAL INTEGRATION PROCESS OF ELDERLY PEOPLE IN DAILY MODERN COM-
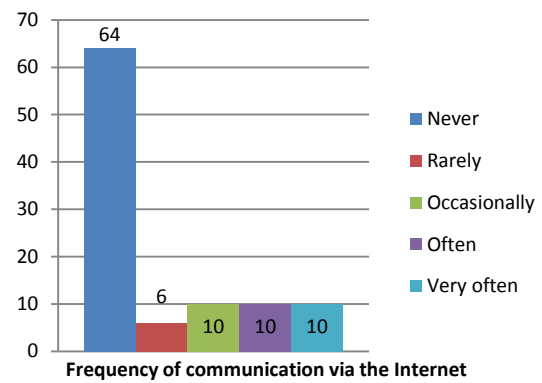MUNICATION
Informatol. 47, 2014., 2-3, 150-156

154

Respondent elderly people most commonly use applications of modern technology to make calls, to write text messages (SMS and MMS), to write e-mails (e-mail) and to browse on the internet. The application of modern technology does not apply to the use Whats app and Viber.


The most commonly used applications of modern technology are used in communications with friends, acquaintances and relatives (62%) and the least to receive notifications of events and performances.
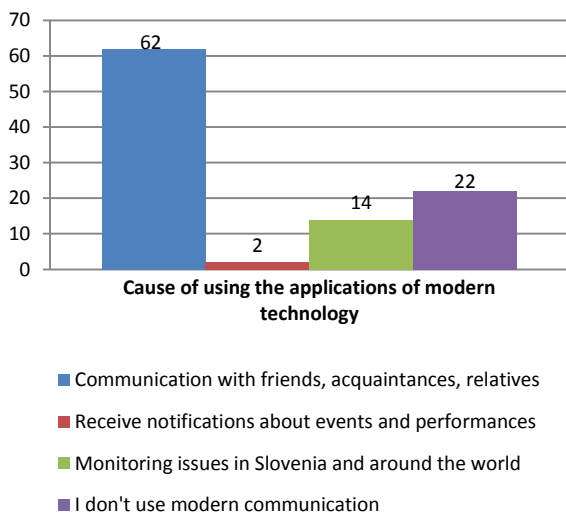

Most elderly people surveyed never communicate via the Internet (64%); very often, often or occasionally communicate via the Internet 10% of all respondent elderly people.


70% of surveyed elderly people like modern communication, while 30% of surveyed elderly people modern communication did not like. Most of surveyed elderly people like modern technology in order to facilitate communication with family and distant friends, acquaintances. At least elderly people liked modern technology due to the shortening of free time (4%).
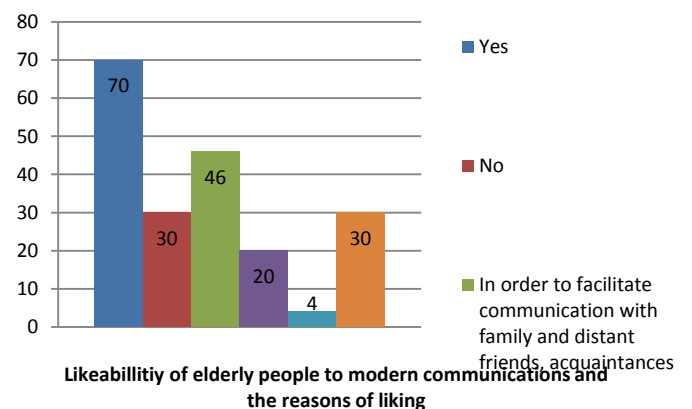
68% of elderly people surveyed were of the opinion that modern communication brings some benefits, but it also has negative sides. 4% of respondent elderly people were of the opinion that modern communication brings many benefits and that without it hard to live today. 28% of respondent elderly people decline the use of modern communication.

Opinion of modern communication

- I refuse it
- Brings some benefits, but it also has downsides
- It brings many benefits, without it hard to live today

Share of surveyed people
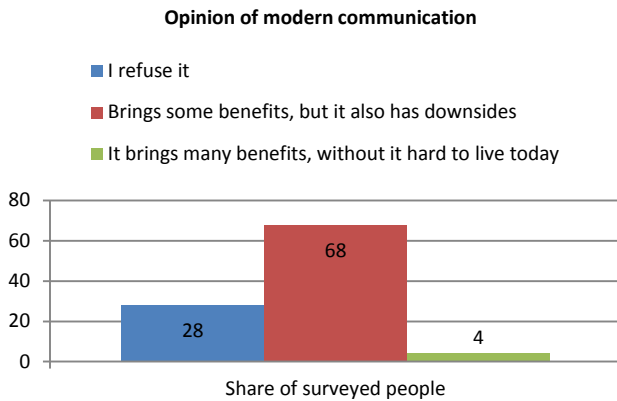
More than half of all elderly people surveyed (58%) would not attend in an organized computer course in the vicinity of their home, only 42% of elderly people were of the opinion that they would attend it.

Participation in a computer course
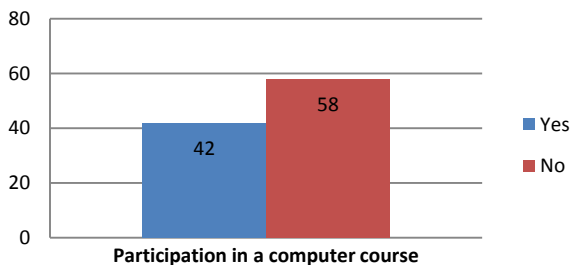
DISCUSSION

The survey showed that 38 % of elderly people surveyed are satisfied with today's communication between people. 30% of elderly people surveyed are dissatisfied with the present communication, 32 % percent of respondents is partially satisfied. The main reason for dissatisfaction with the present form of communication can be attributed to lack of time to communicate, due to rapid and stressful lifestyle, which in the opinion of elderly people surveyed, is the reason that people in the modern world do not know how to communicate personally any more. By their opinion communication without the use of modern communication technology cannot be imagined any more.

Elderly people most likely and consequently most frequently interact with their peers, primarily due to common interests. Surveyed elderly people began with the use of modern technology mainly due to the effects of the environment in which they live. More than half of elderly people surveyed (78%) most frequently used mobile phone. Increased use of mobile devices between the el-

derly people can be attributed to a simpler, easier and faster communication with relatives, grandchildren, friends and acquaintances. Many elderly people get mobile phones for a gift (birthday gifts, holidays) from relatives, acquaintances and friends in order to facilitate communication with the elderly, whereby they are in some way "forced" to the use of mobile phone. More than half of respondents learned the use of modern communication technology with the help of acquaintances, grandchildren and relatives.

Respondents most commonly used applications such as calls, messages (SMS, MMS), web mail and Internet browser. Applications were most commonly used for communication with friends, relatives and acquaintances.

Less than 15 % of surveyed elderly people rarely; sometimes; often and very often communicate via the Internet. Via the Internet is not communicating more than half (64%) of the respondent elderly people. The reason is mainly due to lack of knowledge of ICT and the correct and safe use of applications.

More than half of elderly people surveyed (58%) would not attend a computer course, even if only that would be carried out in the vicinity of their home. The most common reason for lack of interest of elderly people surveyed, is their rejection of modern communication technologies by favoring personal form of communication (visiting relatives, acquaintances, grandchildren and friends).

CONCLUSION

Man is a social being, which requires for its existence the company of humans and other creatures. The quality and effectiveness of socializing with people is dependent on the communication flow. Through the thousands of years of development the human communication was conducted through letters and personal gatherings. Today, in the 21st century we most common communicate with peers via modern information and communication technologies. The use of information and communication technologies requires knowledge that is most often obtained with the help of relatives, acquaintances and friends throughout their time at school, work, or through the media.

Because of knowledge, that is needed to use ICT, the rapid development of the latter and the lack of presenting the advantages of using such technol-

Zlatka Bracanović, Janja Robida: INFORMATIONAL INTEGRATION PROCESS OF ELDERLY PEOPLE IN DAILY MODERN COMMUNICATION
Informatol. 47, 2014., 2-3, 150-156

156

ogies, the elderly often have problems with using the technology, which most often leads to apathy of elderly people using that type of communication.

Elderly people most often have lack of confidence in their ability to use modern ICT, which most often refuse to use it. Lack of confidence in their ability to use modern technology in the elderly population is the most common reason for inhibition of motivation to use it. Elderly feel the fear in the use of modern forms of communication and mistrust in their abilities (causing failure of technology), due to which they most often do not choose to use this form of communication or reject it even categorically.

Faster pace of life, work and communication requires more rapid development of information and communication technologies and consequently, faster adaptation to the users of technology. Faster development of technology leads to the digital division between younger and older people. Younger people are in work, study and are daily "forced" to continuous education in the use of modern information and communication technologies and adapt only this, where by older people most often lose their desire for further education in the use of modern technology with retirement and theit "settling down".

Elderly are being introduced to the use of modern technology most frequently by relatives, acquaintances and grandchildren, in the form of donation of appliances for modern communication (eg. Mobile telephone) and give them an incentive to use and learn.

One of the reasons why elderly people do not use modern ICT is the unadjustedness of these towards elderly users. Elderly in the use of modern information technology need simple forms, simple icons, and large buttons on appliances, large numbers and simpler instructions for the use of modern information technology. By adjusting the ICT devices and the preparation of simple and understandable instructions for use, elderly people would be more motivated to make more use of modern ICT. With more frequent use, an inter-generational communication link between elderly and younger would be easily formed. Elderly people do not attend computer and other courses on the use of modern ICT mainly due to the lack of interest of the individual and the society in which they live. The participation in educational courses and the education of elderly itself could be increased through various projects, based on inter-generational transfer of knowledge on the use of modern information communication (eg. grandchild - grandparent) and would be implemented for a nominal fee.

Notes

/1/ Ramovš, J. (2003). *Kakovostna starost. Socialna gerontologija in gerontagogika.* Ljubljana: Inštitut Antona Trstenjaka in Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti.

/2/ Hojnik-Zupanc, I. (1997). *Nekaj spoznanj in nasvetov, kako se smiselno in zdravo pripravljati na starost in jo tako tudi živeti.* Ljubljana: Gerontološko društvo Slovenije.

/3/ Ramovš, J. (2003). *Kakovostna starost. Socialna gerontologija in gerontagogika.* Ljubljana: Inštitut Antona Trstenjaka in Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti.

/4/ Hlebec, V., Nina, L., Nagode, M., Bitenc, K., & Kramberger, A. (2003). *Uporaba alarmnega sistema kot sredstva večje samostojno starostnikov. Vrednotenje 10 letnega delovanja kot sredstva za zagotavljanje kakovosti bivanja v tretjem življenjskem obdobju.* Ljubljana: Fakulteta za družbene vede. Center za metodologijo in informatiko.

/5/ Lenarčič, B., & Ramovš, J. (2006). Uporaba informacijsko-komunikacijske tehnologije med tretjo generacijo v občini Komenda. *Kakovostna starost* , 15-20.

/6/ Čelebić, G., Rendulić, D I. (2012). *ITdesk.info – načrtovanje računalniškega e-izobraževanja s prostim dostopom-Priročnik za digitalne pismenosti.* Otvoreno društvo za razmjenu ideja (ODRAZI), 1

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/8/ Vehovar, V., N. Brečko, B in Prevodnik, K. (2008). *Evalvacija stanja ter ukrepi za izboljšanje IKT pismenosti »Konkurenčnost Slovenija 2006-2013« Poročilo.* Raba interneta v Sloveniji, 158, 216-217

/9/ Ibidem

/10/ Ibidem