

Going Beyond Telecenters to Foster the Digital Inclusion of Older People in Brazil: Lessons Learned from a Rapid Ethnographical Study.

Abstract: Telecenters take on a prominent role within the current information and communications technology (ICT) ecosystem in Brazil. They are seen by a great many as a key means to foster the digital inclusion of the older population in the country. This paper draws upon a rapid ethnographic study conducted with 78 older people in a center that teaches computer classes to seniors in Brazil. The results show that providing older people with technological infrastructures is not enough to strengthen their digital inclusion if their basic and non-instrumental needs are not taken into consideration in defining educational activities to be carried out in public centers. Participants' basic needs when it comes to interacting with ICT, such as coping with accessibility issues, were dynamic, whilst non-instrumental needs, fulfilled by using these technologies, such as interacting with relevant others, remained fairly constant throughout the study. Drawing on the results of the study, strategies for fostering the digital inclusion and well-being of older people in Brazil that go beyond telecenters are suggested.

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