

Over one in four over 50s faced issues accessing online services during lockdown

As face-to-face services shut down during the pandemic, we began to access services such as healthcare and retail online. More and more over 50s are having to make the switch, but a large number of these 'silver surfers' are struggling to adjust.

Temps de lecture : minute

22 July 2021

New data from global leader in accessibility technology, *Texthelp* in collaboration with YouGov has revealed that one in four adults over the age of 50 encountered issues when accessing websites throughout the pandemic.

The research suggests that this age group, which accounts for over 25M people in the UK, are struggling to navigate vital services online.

The report, *Improving online accessibility for the 'silver surfer'*, found that of all who experienced accessibility issues, almost one third had trouble knowing what to do or click on, while nearly half of all respondents found that the links in the sites were not working, and a further 63% found the visual layout and design of sites overly complicated.

Unclear website text also added to the accessibility issue, with 20% of respondents indicating they would prefer larger text, while 22% would prefer the content to be easier to understand.

Sector specific issues

The difficulty in accessing and understanding online resources has been particularly worrying in the past 18 months for those relying on instructions taken from websites. During the first national lockdown, over three quarters of respondents used online platforms to access healthcare, with over a third of these relying on websites to access and order medicines and prescriptions.

Financial services also accounted for a large portion of the resources users turned to websites to access. 85% of respondents used online banking for managing their personal finances during the worrying period.

Browsing and connecting online also proved to be a popular way to keep in touch with a sense of normality. 67% of respondents went online to access public services while a staggering 95% of over 50s and over 65s used online retail sites during lockdown while shops remained closed.

With an ageing population and a growing number of 'silver surfers' online, accessibility issues will continue to grow unless addressed by organisations. 56% of respondents indicated they planned to continue using online services as frequently as when they did during lockdown, meaning that websites will now need to ensure their platforms are easy, accessible and ensure a positive experience online.

Martin McKay, CEO & Founder at Texthelp said, "The pandemic has fast-tracked the transition to digital. Many products and services previously available on the high-street, at a GP surgery or in a shop are now only available online."

"Older generations have been forced to migrate online, where they might have been resistant before. However, our research shows that many private and public organisations are failing to accommodate the needs of

older generations. This data should serve as a wake-up call to both public and private sector organisations alike.”

Article by Abby Wallace