# Digital technology may significantly reduce dementia risk in older adults



A recent study has highlighted the potential cognitive benefits associated with the use of digital technology among older adults, suggesting that engaging with devices such as smartphones and computers may significantly reduce the risk of dementia. Conducted by researchers from Baylor University in Texas and the University of Texas at Austin, the study examined data from approximately 400,000 individuals, predominantly aged 68, to assess the impact of technology on cognitive health.

The findings reveal a striking correlation, indicating that regular use of digital technology is linked to a 58 per cent lower risk of cognitive impairment, which includes difficulties with memory, attention, language, and problem-solving abilities. Professor Michael Scullin, a researcher involved in the study, noted that many older adults initially find the process of learning to use computers and smartphones challenging. He remarked, “One of the first things that older adults were saying is ‘I’m so frustrated by this computer. This is hard to learn’.” He further explained that this frustration often reflects the cognitive challenge involved in adapting to new tools, which can, in turn, be beneficial for brain health.

Professor Scullin elaborated on the nature of this challenge, stating, “That’s actually a reflection of the cognitive challenge, which may be beneficial for the brain even if it doesn’t feel great in the moment.” He highlighted that technology demands continuous learning and adaptation, as users must frequently familiarise themselves with new software or applications. He added, “If you’re doing that for years... even though you might experience frustration, that may be a sign of you exercising your brain.”

In addition to individual cognitive benefits, the study indicates that technologies such as video calls, emails, and messaging applications play a vital role in maintaining social connections, which may further guard against cognitive decline. The research encourages families to introduce older relatives to technology, with Professor Scullin advising, “Start simple, and be very patient while they learn.”

The study findings were published in the journal Nature Human Behaviour, contributing to the ongoing dialogue surrounding technology use in the senior demographic, particularly in light of growing concerns about the potential negative impacts of excessive screen time. Oxford University Press recently designated "brain rot" as its phrase of the year for 2024, reflecting societal anxieties over mental health in the digital age. However, this research suggests that, when used mindfully, technology can be a valuable tool in fostering cognitive resilience among the elderly.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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3. <https://neurosciencenews.com/digital-tech-dementia-28638/> - Neuroscience News reports on research that shows digital technology use correlates with a 58% lower risk of cognitive impairment in older adults. It highlights mental stimulation and social support as key factors in this cognitive protection.
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6. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41562-025-10243-6> - This link is not directly available, but it would be to an article in Nature Human Behaviour that publishes the study from Baylor University and the University of Texas at Austin, detailing the correlation between technology use and reduced cognitive impairment risks.
7. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-14616307/dementia-risk-digital-technology-cognitive-decline.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data