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ourcommunities

Topic Report

bitesize



Dorset County Council

Digital exclusion in Dorset

Big Numbers

12%

Dorset adults who
have never been
online

UK small businesses
lacking basic
digital skills

23%

Welcome to this **ourcommunities** bitesize bulletin on digital exclusion in Dorset – looking at a recently released Ipsos Mori study into the overall level of digital capability among those aged 15+ in the UK.



Box 1: Why is this important?

Technology continues to transform our lives and our work, but 23% of UK adults lack the basic digital skills needed to do simple things like pay bills with an app, apply for a job online, use Facebook or check their local council website for information. As more and more products and services move to online access, digital capability is essential and not knowing how to communicate online can lead to isolation, loneliness and ill health. Lives can be enriched through the use of digital devices. For the council, if more of our residents are digitally capable, this is a more cost effective way of providing services and resources.

Besides individuals, 23% of small businesses in the UK don't have the basic digital skills which means they are missing out on website sales; they can't be found online and so may lose business and be less competitive; and they could be missing the chance to give their customers a better, more efficient service. The challenge is even greater for charities with almost three in five charities nationally lacking basic digital skills. This means they can't raise money online or promote their cause to a wider audience, or use free marketing tools such as social media to spread their message.

in Dorset



Dorset adults lacking
basic digital skills

one in four

5 basic digital skills

- Managing information
- Communicating
- Transacting
- Problem-solving
- Creating

Box 2: Who is likely to lack digital skills?

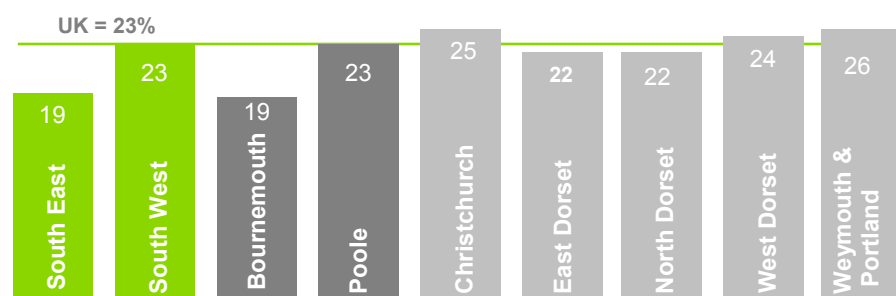
- Those aged 45+ and especially those over 65 – they have the lowest level of digital device ownership.
- Females are less likely than males to be competent in each digital skill.
- Those in low skilled, low pay jobs such as manual, low skill occupations – most likely to be under threat from automation and so digital skills would help them adapt.
- Retired, unemployed and homemakers.
- Residents in rural areas – largely because of poor internet access.



Box 3: What is the local picture?

Nationally, about 23% of adults lack the basic digital skills. In Dorset, this is likely to be slightly higher with estimates ranging from 22% in East and North Dorset lacking basic digital skills to 26% in Weymouth & Portland. However, the overall likelihood of exclusion was seen as highest in Christchurch – this is likely to be linked to the older age profile here.

Percentage lacking basic digital skills, 2015



Whilst about three-quarters of Dorset adults have all five digital skills, only two-fifths had used all of these in the last three months with the percentages varying from 36% in North and West Dorset to 43% in East Dorset. 12% of Dorset adults indicated they had never been online.

Box 4: What can be done?

Organisations can sign up to the [Digital Skills Charter](#) to pledge their support to improve the digital skills of their customers, colleagues, employees or communities. Individuals can help older friends and family members to make the best use of online services and keep in touch using online media. We can help by identifying areas with poor internet access and older age profiles and targeting them with support to use digital services.

Box 5: What are we already doing?

There is already support to help people in local communities go online, see <https://www.dorsetforyou.com/broadband/get-help-going-online>. Superfast Dorset and Skills and Learning also have a project to build a network of volunteer digital champions across Dorset to help people to get online. Current funding only allows for pilot activity, but highlighting digital exclusion as a barrier to economic development as well as shifting public services online and obtaining the necessary funding is necessary to make a real difference.



Like more info?

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Data source: Go ON UK commissioned Ipsos MORI to assess the overall level of digital capability among those aged 15+ in the UK in terms of the five basic digital skill areas.

[Basic Digital Skills UK report 2015](#)