

DIGITAL INCLUSION AND DIGITAL PARTICIPATION OF LOW-LITERATE DUTCH ADULTS

RELEVANCE



- 2.5 million Dutch citizens (16+) have problems with reading, writing and/or calculating, and are classified as low-literate (CBS, 2019)
- 4 million Dutch citizens lack the basic digital literacy skills to safely 'participate' in the digital society (Knops, 2020)

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How do low-literate Dutch adults appropriate the affordances of digital media (hardware/software) to leverage their potential of, and possibilities for participation?
- What tactics do low-literate Dutch adults use to be able to participate in (digital) society, despite their low-literacy/linguistic limitations?

THEORY

- The digital divide (Helsper, 2012; van Dijk, 2020)
- Literacy support (Buddeberg, 2016)
- Digital care work (Kaun and Forsman, 2022)
- Affective dimension of media use (Kennedy and Hill, 2018; Tsatsou, 2021)



METHOD

- Focused observations (Spradley, 1980)
- Semi-structured interviews (Spradley, 1986)
- Focus groups (participatory context)
- Walkthrough method (Light et al., 2018)
- Recursive and iterative design -----> Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2008)



ARGUMENTS

- The socio-material and affective dimensions of low-literate adults' enactment of digital media are very influential in what digital media are used, and how digital tasks are performed
- Sequential understanding of the digital divide implies a hierarchical order of exclusion, not in line with the situated contexts of low-literate citizens

POSITIONING



How can we 'open up' the concepts of participation and/or digital citizenship, in order to construct a less normative, and more inclusive understanding of what it means to participate, and to become a digital citizen?

Not highlight the limitations, rather, foreground and leverage capabilities that digital media afford for disadvantaged public

Alexander Smit // PhD Candidate
University of Groningen
Center for Media and Journalism Studies
a.p.smit@rug.nl

Promotors:
prof. dr. M.J. Broersma
dr. J.A.C. Swart

