

Distrust of Internet in Older Adults

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Abstract

In an increasingly interconnected world, people above the age of 55, who we address as “Older Adults”, are also steadily falling victims to several malicious activities on the Internet. Our project aims at understanding conditions that can help us mitigate this phenomenon. We investigate what influences an older adult’s general distrusting feelings about websites in order to help them adopt a precautionary approach to the Internet.

Theoretical Foundation

- *Activity Theory* of Aging (Cummings and Henry, 1961) can explain why older adults are increasingly using the Internet.
- *Exchange Theory* of Aging (Dowd 1975) can explain how online social networking helps in the aging process.
- Attitude towards Aging and Concerns towards Privacy have influence on trust issues towards people (Cody 1999).
- Trust and Distrust towards the same entity can exist in parallel (McKnight 2006).
- Models explaining trust issues in younger adults don’t apply to older adults.

Approach

Research Methodology

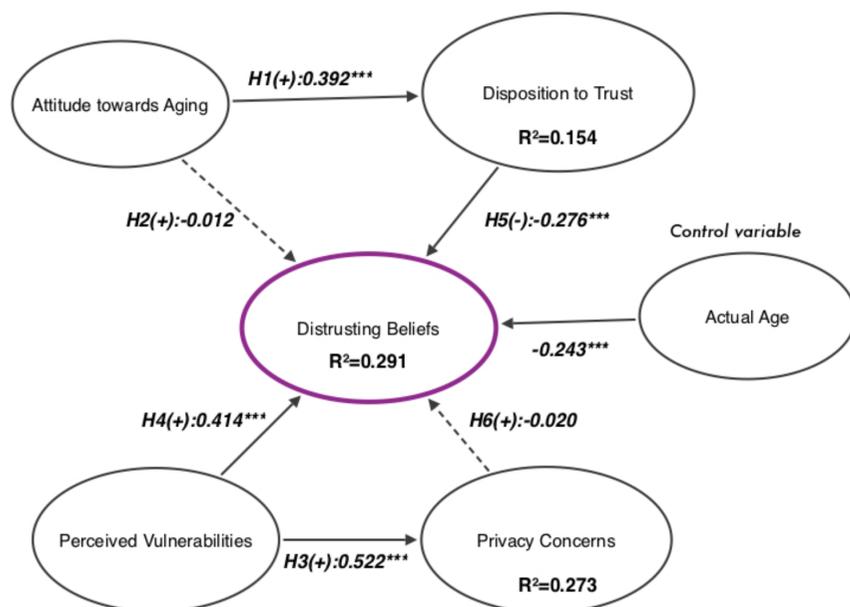
- Distrusting beliefs hypothesized to have 2 contributing angles:
 1. Personality: Related to aging and general nature of the individual.
 2. Technology: How much a person knows about privacy issues or experienced it.
- Using previous literature, a variance/causal model was formed.

Data Collection

- Conducted paper-based survey for the variance model.
- Analyzed survey data using Partial Least Square regression.
- Collected anecdotes by conducting outreach program of Cyber Security workshops in Western New York senior centers.

Preliminary Results

*** $p < 0.001$



Future Work

- Use this as a pilot study to conduct a nation-wide survey.
- Test “trusting beliefs” as an additional dependent variable for older adults.
- Conduct the same survey for younger adults to measure the importance of aging.
- Introduce Cognitive Age as an independent variable.
- Conduct further outreach programs in WNY aimed at adjusting Trust and Distrust of the Web among older adults.

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Interested in meeting the PIs? Attach post-it note below!



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NSF Secure and Trustworthy Cyberspace Inaugural Principal Investigator Meeting
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