



**International  
Standard**

**ISO 25556**

**Ageing societies — General  
requirements and guidelines for  
ageing-inclusive digital economy**

*Vieillesse de la population — Exigences générales et lignes  
directrices pour une économie numérique inclusive en matière de  
vieillesse*

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## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see [www.iso.org/directives](http://www.iso.org/directives)).

ISO draws attention to the possibility that the implementation of this document may involve the use of (a) patent(s). ISO takes no position concerning the evidence, validity or applicability of any claimed patent rights in respect thereof. As of the date of publication of this document, ISO had not received notice of (a) patent(s) which may be required to implement this document. However, implementers are cautioned that this may not represent the latest information, which may be obtained from the patent database available at [www.iso.org/patents](http://www.iso.org/patents). ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

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For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), see [www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html](http://www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html).

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 314, *Ageing societies*.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at [www.iso.org/members.html](http://www.iso.org/members.html).

## Introduction

### 0.1 General

The fourth industrial revolution, characterized by rapid digital innovation and exponential growth, has transformed all sectors of society, including how we live, work, and relate to one another. Digital technology can assist in learning new skills, facilitate social interactions, foster independent and autonomous ways of living, and improve the management and delivery of public health, social care and other services. However, this does not mean that everyone and everything is connected or digitised. Nor does it mean that the social and economic consequences of digital technology are necessarily inclusive or beneficial. Digital technology can both create opportunities and increase inequalities. In fact, not everyone can benefit equally from digital technology. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted unequal access to digital technology across and within ageing societies.

Products and services are increasingly provided online. In ageing societies, some people are more likely to be digitally excluded and to experience barriers to accessing products and services online. The reasons vary, for example, people lack access to technology, or they are unable to use and fully benefit from the opportunities provided by technology. Digital inclusion can create opportunities for active and healthy ageing, including social and economic participation. Improving digital access and digital literacy can empower people. It is essential to ensure ageing-inclusive design and to ensure the relevance of digital services and products. It is important to create ethical, safe digital environments free from ageism that embrace the diversity of older individuals.

Digital economy refers to economic and social activity reliant on, or significantly enhanced by, the use of digital inputs<sup>[42]</sup>. Establishing ageing-inclusive digital economies (and related standardization) is not only significant but urgent. This document seeks to respond to the context and demands of rapidly evolving digital economies, by providing general requirements and guidelines for ageing-inclusive digital economies from the perspective of the needs of ageing societies, and by addressing common problems of an ageing-inclusive digital economy.

### 0.2 Opportunities of digitalisation in ageing societies

Digital technology can provide new opportunities and solutions for people living in ageing societies, such as:

- maintaining social connectedness, including connectedness to family members living apart;
- accessing digital communities for the latest updates and information;
- working online by using the internet and mobile devices;
- seeking employment using digital tools;
- participating in online learning;
- accessing digital services, e.g. online shopping, and smart transportation systems;
- accessing medical and health care online, as well as electronic personal health records, e.g. online diagnosis and treatment;
- using digital safety tools and measures, e.g. using smart devices to make an emergency call.

### 0.3 How can digital technologies support ageing societies?

Digital technology can support ageing societies in multiple ways, for example with regard to the following aspects.

- Visual capabilities – It can be increasingly challenging for older persons and other people to read texts written in small fonts. Therefore, text that can easily be enlarged or compatible with the use of screen magnifiers and screen readers, or both, can be essential.

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- Hearing capabilities – Accessible content includes options for communicating with people with hearing difficulties, such as the availability of chats or messaging as an alternative to voice services. Accessible content is also compatible with hearing aid devices, for example, accessible smart TVs.
- Motor ability – To accommodate people with decreased motor skills, accessible information and communication technology (ICT) can be designed to interact seamlessly without requiring precise motor control. It can also support assistive technologies for optimal usability. For example, large clickable areas that include labels, especially for smaller controls, such as radio buttons and checkboxes are important accessibility features for people with limited dexterity.
- Cognitive capabilities – Some people can find it increasingly difficult to find specific information or recognize and access hyperlinks. It is important to consider these issues of usable and accessible designs. Making content easy to read and adding helpful features such as reminders can facilitate access.
- Communicating with the people responsible for websites or mobile apps is sometimes challenging. Accessible and easy customer support channels are important in order to help all customers.
- Social connection and isolation – Social connection can be increased through various ICT-related activities such as digital training and education, online peer-to-peer learning, and by providing support for sharing information.
- Vitality – People can experience a loss of vitality. E-health, telehealth and health apps can encourage healthy behaviour, monitor health and wellbeing.

Everybody ages differently, and people become more diverse as they age, for example in their independence, need for assistance, level of activity.

NOTE See Reference [\[46\]](#) for more information on ageing-inclusive digital economy.



# Ageing societies — General requirements and guidelines for ageing-inclusive digital economy

## 1 Scope

This document provides general requirements and guidelines for an ageing-inclusive digital economy, aiming to enhance its applicability and credibility. It specifies the principles, aspects, scenarios, and actions for establishing or transforming to an ageing-inclusive digital economy.

This document is applicable to consumers, policymakers, administrations, organizations, and other stakeholders in the digital economy.

The requirements and guidelines in this document focus specifically on older persons.

This document does not cover information technology, ergonomics, and related requirements and guidelines which are defined or covered by other standards.

## 2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

## 3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminology databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <https://www.electropedia.org/>

### 3.1

#### **ageing**

natural progression of an individual's characteristics over time

Note 1 to entry: The impact of ageing will vary at different ages.

Note 2 to entry: The concept of ageing is very broad and comprehensive, and may include chronological ageing, biological ageing, psychological (psychosocial) ageing, cognitive ageing, functional ageing, social ageing, organizational age, and career age. See ISO 25550 for more information.

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC TR 22116:2021, 3.2, modified — Note 2 to entry was added.]

### 3.2

#### **ageing society**

demographics of an older population that shifts overtime

[SOURCE: ISO 25550:2022, 3.1]

### 3.3

#### **diversity**

characteristics of differences and similarities between people

Note 1 to entry: Diversity includes factors that influence the identities and perspectives that people bring when interacting in digital economy.