Older Adults and the Internet...
How the future may look

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Agenda

1. What research has said about Older Adults and internet use and/or internet gambling
2. Benefits of Older Adults accessing the internet
3. Observations from clinical practice
4. Potential risks for older adults
5. Reaching out to the Isolated Older Adult with Prevention and Awareness messaging
Quick Literature Review

- Very little research has focused on Older Adults and Internet Gambling/Gaming

- Much of the research has focused on barriers to older adults embracing technology
General Attitudes of an Aging Population

- Popular view that internet users, and online gamblers, are youth and middle-aged adults

- Misconceptions that adults over 55 are set in their ways and reluctant to experiment with new products and internet
Changing Times....

- Adults over the age of 55 make up the biggest group of “new” internet users

- Many Older Adults learned to use, and still use, computers in the workplace
The largest increase in internet use since 2005 was seen in the 70-75 year old age group (26% of age group in 2005 → 45% in 2009)

Older Adults also are significantly more likely than they had been two years ago to download videos (13% compared to 1% of adults over 73) and access online entertainment

# Generations Explained

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation Name*</th>
<th>Birth Years, Ages in 2009</th>
<th>% of total adult population</th>
<th>% of internet-using population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gen Y (Millennials)</td>
<td>Born 1977-1990, Ages 18-32</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen X</td>
<td>Born 1965-1976, Ages 33-44</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Younger Boomers</td>
<td>Born 1955-1964, Ages 45-54</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older Boomers</td>
<td>Born 1946-1954, Ages 55-63</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silent Generation</td>
<td>Born 1937-1945, Ages 64-72</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.I. Generation</td>
<td>Born 1936, Age 73+</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project December 2008 survey. N=2,253 total adults, and margin of error is ±2%. N=1,650 total internet users, and margin of error is ±3%.

*All generation labels used in this report, with the exception of Younger - and Older - Boomers, are the names conventionalized by Howe and Strauss's book, Generations: Strauss, William & Howe, Neil. Generations: The History of America's Future, 1584 to 2069 (Perennial, 1992). As for Younger Boomers and Older Boomers, enough research has been done to suggest that the two decades of Baby Boomers are different enough to merit being divided into distinct generational groups.
Percentage of Americans online by age ( Teens, 12-17, Nov. 2007-Feb. 2008, margin of error = ±3 percent. Adults, December 2008, margins of error differ by subgroup. See methodology).
# Generational Differences in Online Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Online Teens (12-17)</th>
<th>Gen Y (18-32)</th>
<th>Gen X (33-44)</th>
<th>Younger Boomers (45-54)</th>
<th>Older Boomers (55-63)</th>
<th>Silent Generation (64-72)</th>
<th>G.I. Generation (73+)</th>
<th>All Online Adults^^</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Go online</strong></td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play games online</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Watch videos online</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get info about a job</td>
<td>30~</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>47</td>
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<tr>
<td>Send instant messages</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use social networking sites</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Download music</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create an SNS profile</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read blogs</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32</td>
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<tr>
<td>Create a blog</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit a virtual world</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activities where Gen X users or older generations dominate:</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Get health info</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buy something online</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>71</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bank online</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit govt sites</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get religious info</td>
<td>26~</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>And for some activities, the youngest and oldest cohorts may differ, but there is less variation overall:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use email</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use search engines</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research products</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get news</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make travel reservations</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research for job</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate a person or product</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Download videos</td>
<td>31~</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in an online auction</td>
<td>28~</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Download podcasts</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Vuori, S. & Holmlund-Rytkonen, M. 55+ people as internet users. *Emerald Research Register*

- 60% of respondents felt forced to use the internet – especially for banking services
- Used it stay in touch with friends - 93%
- Research various topics - 77%
- Stay current with news and events - 68%
- Discussion groups chat rooms - 53%
- Make stocks and investment transactions - 47%
- Make purchases - 45%
- Play games - 34%

[www.emeraldinsight.com/0263-4503.htm](http://www.emeraldinsight.com/0263-4503.htm)
In Canada

- “Canadians are the most active users of the internet in the world... particularly older individuals”
  (ComScore Report as cited on cbc.ca, March 9, 2011)

- Reported a 12% increase in new users over the age of 55 between 2009 and 2010

- Both the 55 – 64 and the 65 and older age groups saw a 35% increase in social networking sites in 2010
Similar trends in other countries

- Australia
  adults over 55 had a 129% increase in 1999 compared to 42% of general population (Gietzelt, D. 2001)

- USA
  in 2000, 15% of new users were over 50 compared to 5% the previous year (McLuhan, 2000)

- Finland
  found that education level, more than age, was highly correlated with internet familiarity
The “Internet” is responding...

- Research and marketing strategies are being used to appeal to an aging demographic

- As the population continues to age there will be a growing market for “Silver Surfers”
Old Flirt
Flirting and Dating for the Young at Heart

Senior Dating. Find Friends and Romance online.
Free to Join. Quick and easy to use. Silver Surfer Dating.
Thousands of UK members are looking for mature dating.
Join OldFlirt now, it’s FREE.

Start by adding a few details

I am a **WOMAN looking for a man**

My first name

I was born

Email address

These details are private and not given to any third party

Choose Password

Confirm Password

How did you hear about OldFlirt? **Please select**

By clicking ‘Join NOW’ you agree to our Terms of use.

Join NOW

SAFE. SECURE. CONFIDENTIAL. DISCREET.
UK based telephone and email support.
It's never too late for love! Join us and meet your match.

- "50 ways to meet your lover..."
  - SuperMatch - Find your soulmate
  - SoulMatch - Character matching
  - SelectMatch - Interest matching
  - SensualMatch - Sexual compatibility
  - StarSignMatch - Zodiac matching
  - Free E-mail - Contact others for free

- Phone support - Personal and direct
  - Browse free - Member galleries
  - Video communication - Webcam chat
  - Voice direct - with new technology
  - Phone 2 phone - Anonymous!

What's New?

How to Write a Good Profile

Are you having problems writing a catchy profile while staying true to yourself? Would you like more replies to your ad? Here are some tips about how to create a good profile that'll get those emails rolling in...
Benefits of Increased Internet Use Among Older Adults

- Many studies are looking at the benefits of older adults maintaining social connection via the internet.

- Belief that the internet and email can help facilitate social interaction and improve social support and well-being.

- Can lead to improved self-esteem, positive feelings generated by a sense of computer mastery, sense of productivity and accomplishment and relationship.

- Study recruited from older adult internet courses to look at motivation to learn about computers

- Majority of older adults had computers at home

  → 52% acquired computer for purposeful or activities-oriented reasons

  → 37% for external reason (given by family),

  → 30% for affective reasons (interest in computers. Desire to keep an active mind)
Study Findings

Older adults embrace internet use to avoid isolation, for purposes of communication and interaction, for education, and keeping the brain cells working.

Become a silver surfer: Computing for senior citizens

Last week and this week I spent most of the time researching and writing about accessibility in computing. (You can read the first post and go from there if you’re interested.) During my research I came across many references to computing for seniors (seniors being a group that also often prefers and even requires accessibility features in order to be able to use a computer). The overlap was obvious.

So I decided that after I was finished with my accessibility series, I’d look a little deeper into the subject of how to offer our senior citizens access to the world of computing and show how it can open up universes to them that they never knew existed. But perhaps the most important thing that I discovered is that being able to use the computer as a senior citizen is a great way to lessen feelings of isolation and uselessness, especially if you’re housebound or have limited mobility.

If you listen to NPR (doesn’t everyone listen to NPR? I suppose not; I just like to continue to clutch to that last shred of Pollyanna-ness I still have in my sweaty fist), you often hear this: "This program was brought to you in part by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, that believes everyone deserves to lead a healthy, productive life." (Or something like that.)

Although this video below was not created by the Foundation, its own tenet is “Enabling people and businesses throughout the world to realize their full potential.” And when you watch this video, you’ll see that PEOPLE are what it’s all about; seniors in particular. Exploration and discovery don’t have to end when you pass a certain milestone age; you, as a senior, can still learn how to use a computer so that you, too, help yourself lead a productive life and reach a potential you never knew you had.
Beliefs

- Internet makes life easier and more comfortable as it brings information and entertainment within reach

- “the internet keeps me active and alert because it makes me use my brain” (Vuori et al, 55+ people as internet users)
Observation from Clinical Practice

- Clients using internet more

- Family encouraging internet-use as a “safe alternative” to casino gambling

- Wanting to “stay connected” to friends, or make new connections so as not to feel as lonely

- Don’t see internet as gambling
- 95 year old man, caregiver of wife w/ dementia, online gambling – referred from bank b/c of $6000 credit card debt to overseas sites

- 65 year old male horse-race gambler, stopped gambling and plays ‘free’ gaming site online with chat rooms for 10-14 hours at a time

- 67 year old female, slot-player, stopped, used free slots online all night, daughter bought an i-phone and now uses slot-app on phone

- 84 year old female, bought computer to reduce boredom (with savings from not gambling), tendinitis in arm from playing games for 12 hours
Question of overall well-being

- Is this a “safe alternative” for clients with age-related risk factors of developing behaviour addictions
Age-Related Risk Factors – What We Know From Land-Based Gambling

- Loss
- Decreased social networks (retirement, friends passing away)
- Increased isolation due to mobility
- Loneliness and boredom
- Change in routine and structure
- Increased amounts of ‘free time’

- Wanted to explore the barriers to accessing internet in later life and the impact on social support & well-being

- Pilot study took a small sample of older adults and provided age-specific lessons on how to use internet, with regular follow-up
Findings

- older adults use computers primarily for personal and recreation reasons:
  - 38% emailing
  - 23% general internet use
  - 14% games

- Evaluated loneliness before and after study and found:
  - 60% experienced decrease in loneliness
  - 13% had no change
  - 27% had an increase in loneliness
Limitations to the study

- Many participants already had social support (participants from a retirement community) and drop out from the study was because participants were not able to fit computer classes into busy schedules.

- Found that participants spent more time with each other and with ‘helpers’ in follow-up teaching - making it difficult to determine if the effects were connected to computer use or the social interaction.

- Not able to reach isolated older adults.
Loneliness and social uses of the internet (Morahan-Martin & Schumacher, 2003)

- Study wanted to explore whether loneliness was associated with internet use or if lonely individuals are being drawn to internet use because of social networking potential

- Findings:
  Lonely individuals were more likely to use internet to modulate moods and to report that internet use was causing disturbances in daily functioning

  Loneliness was associated with both increased internet use and compulsive internet use

  Greater internet use was associated with increased levels of loneliness
Vicious circle where lonely individuals go online to fill social voids and emptiness in their life, but their online time creates voids their non-internet social life and creates other real life problems.
Relationship between internet activities and depressive symptoms in a sample of college freshmen (Morgan & Cotton, 2003)

- Assumption that the benefits of online communities will provide are especially valuable for people who lack mobility or are socially or geographically isolated

- The study found that pre-existing social support is significant

- Those with higher pre-existing levels of social support had lower levels of depression

- Low levels of social support had an increase in depression
Positive vs. Negative

- Increased use of internet for email, chat rooms and instant messaging is associated with a decrease in depressive symptoms.

- Increased internet use for games, shopping or research is associated with an increase in depressive symptoms.
Age-Related Risk Factors associated with Online Gambling Problems

- Is the internet a safe alternative for an older adult who has had changes in their social support network?

- With increasing numbers of older adults accessing the internet, how will age-related risk factors affect rates of internet gambling addiction?
What we know about gambling and internet gambling

- Free sites have incentives to move to pay sites

- Online Gambling is more likely by those who have tried traditional forms of gambling

- Older adults are at risk of developing problems with gambling at a quicker and more devastating rates (free time)

- Problems with internet gambling are nearly 15 times higher than that of community sample

- Data suggests that either internet gambling leads to problem gambling behaviours or individuals who gamble problematically are prone to gamble on the internet (Wood, Williams & Lawton, 2007)
Why do internet gamblers prefer online versus land-based venues? (Wood, Williams & Lawton, 2007)

- Relative convenience, comfort and ease of internet
- Aversion to the atmosphere and clientele of land-based venues
- Disabled less likely to prefer internet
- People playing VLT more likely to prefer internet
Internet Gambling Behaviour in a Sample of Online Gamblers (McBride & Derevensky, 2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Land-Based (n=556)</th>
<th>Internet (without money) (n=434)</th>
<th>Internet (with money) (n=238)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>93.8</td>
<td>70.3</td>
<td>90.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-54</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>99.7</td>
<td>76.9</td>
<td>45.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>55 +</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>99.0</td>
<td>79.9</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Percentage of Sample</td>
<td>Percentage Preferring Internet Gambling over Land-based Gambling</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>18-19</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>73.2</td>
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<td>20-24</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>76.8</td>
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<td>25-29</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>70.5</td>
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<td>30-34</td>
<td>14.5</td>
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<td>35-39</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>70.4</td>
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<td>40-44</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>74.6</td>
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<td>45-49</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>76.3</td>
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<td>50-54</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>80.6</td>
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<td>55-59</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>82.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>60+</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>75.0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Game Played Most Often**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Game</th>
<th>Percentage of Sample</th>
<th>Percentage Preferring Internet Gambling over Land-based Gambling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keno/Bingo</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>62.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cards</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>74.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dice</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>64.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport Betting</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>64.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slots/VLT</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>76.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Questions to think about?

- Are Older Adults an underestimated risk group to use online gambling and/or online gaming?

- Internet paradox: a social technology that reduces social involvement and psychological well-being (Kraut et al, 1998)
Summary

- “(the internet)...can be a place where people blossom or a place where they get stuck, caught in a self-contained worlds where things are simpler than in real life” (Turkle, 1995)
Prevention and Awareness with Isolated Older Adults

- Reaching Out To Isolated Seniors (ROTIS) - network or service providers, businesses, community groups, faith groups and individuals

- Advocacy and Community Development

- Coordination and collaboration of resources

- Communication and information sharing

- Education and awareness
How to reach isolated older adults caught up in isolating-related behaviours?

- Education and coordination of community groups, volunteers, businesses and professionals and encourage them to reach out to isolated seniors

- Strategies for identify isolated seniors and encourage them to enhance their skills to form social relationships and links with the community

- for example: letter carriers, neighbours, banks, pharmacies, police
- Educate youth regarding seniors, integrate aging into the school curriculum, dispel myths and encourage youth to be involved with seniors

- Create linkages and share information with local, provincial and federal governments, coalitions and groups who work with seniors in the community (e.g. Hoarding, Elder Abuse Network)
Ontario Resource Group on Problem Gambling and Older Adults 55+

- Representatives from treatment agencies in Ontario mandated by the Ministry of Health & Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) to provide gambling services to Older Adults

- Purpose: to act as a resource to 55+ Service Providers and Ontario’s Problem Gambling Treatment System to increase the likelihood of a positive outcome for Older Adults with gambling related problems
Older Adult Specific Programs

- Addiction Services of Thames Valley (London)
- Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (Toronto)
- Community Outreach Program in Addictions (Toronto)
- Lifestyle Enrichment for Senior Adults (Ottawa) (Kingston)
- Peel Addiction Assessment and Referral Centre (Mississauga)
- St. Joseph’s Care Group Sister Margaret Smith Centre (Thunder Bay)
- Sault Area Hospital Addictions Treatment Clinic (Sault Ste. Marie)
- Windsor Regional Problem Gambling Services (Windsor)
Questions?
Our question for you..

- Are Older Adults an underestimated risk group in their use of online gambling and/or online gaming?


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