



# Assisting people living with complexity to use smart phones to connect with their community

rebuilding lives

**hutt**ST  
CENTRE



accan

# Assisting people living with complexity to use smart phones to connect with their community

Hutt Street Centre

April 2019

rebuilding lives

**hutt**ST  
CENTRE



accan

## Assisting people living with complexity to use smart phones to connect with their community

Authored by **Liz Johnston**

Published in **2019**

The operation of the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network is made possible by funding provided by the Commonwealth of Australia under section 593 of the *Telecommunications Act 1997*. This funding is recovered from charges on telecommunications carriers.

### Hutt St Centre

Website: <https://www.huttstcentre.org.au/>

Email: [dchutt@huttstcentre.org.au](mailto:dchutt@huttstcentre.org.au)

Telephone: **(08) 8418 2500**

Australian Communications Consumer Action Network

Website: [www.accan.org.au](http://www.accan.org.au)

Email: [grants@accan.org.au](mailto:grants@accan.org.au)

Telephone: 02 9288 4000

If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, contact us through the National Relay

Service: [www.relayservice.gov.au](http://www.relayservice.gov.au).

Cover design: **Richard Van Der Male** with images from Shutterstock



This work is copyright, licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Licence. You are free to cite, copy, communicate and adapt this work, so long as you attribute the authors and “**Hutt St Centre** is supported by a grant from the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network”. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

This work can be cited as: Johnston, L. 2019, *Assisting people living with complexity to use smart phones to connect with their community*, Australian Communications Consumer Action Network, Sydney.

# Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	i
Brief Overview and Aims.....	1
Method and Materials .....	1
Baseline data.....	2
Endline Data.....	4
Topics covered in Workshops .....	6
Outcomes and Highlights.....	6
Learning and Feedback .....	7
Conclusion.....	7

# Brief Overview and Aims

The project aim was to improve and develop skills for people over the age of 50 who are living with complexities including homelessness, financial hardship, disability, and Aboriginal ethnicity to have basic education about the use of smartphones. This education is then intended to support them to have the confidence to use, to be better connected in their communities, and to be able to make use of services available via phones and the internet.

## Method and Materials

This education project was delivered via a training programme which consisted of eight hour-long workshops run in the space of four weeks (two workshops per week) for 18 participants. An experienced facilitator in technology education, Leanne Isaacson, was engaged to conduct the workshops. Together, Leanne Isaacson and the Project Leader, Liz Johnstone, developed the project plan for the workshops including key objectives, goals, logistics and resources.

The materials required for the training were primarily the smartphones themselves, as the participants did not have their own devices to learn with. ACCAN supported this project in sourcing suitable smartphones, with 20 Apple iPhone 5s (ex. demo) models donated by Optus, and three Oppo R11 (new) models donated by Vodafone. Sim Cards were acquired by Leanne Isaacson. The workshops were held at the Eastwood Community Centre, and the facilitator was supported by three staff members from Hutt St (the Project Leader; Occupational Therapist, Nadia Di Griolamo; Lifestyle and Health Assistant, Margaret Kleeman) who were familiar with the clients and their needs.

Participants were engaged to join the workshops through advertisements placed in the Aged City Monthly Newsletter, a flyer in the Day Centre, and through the word of mouth of Case Managers and Occupational Therapists who passed the information on to their clients. 18 clients expressed interest in participating in the workshops and were split into two groups. Two cars were booked weekly to provide transport to and from Hutt St Centre to the venue, while some participants chose to make their own way there.

# Baseline data

At the beginning of the first session, clients were asked to complete a short survey to understand their existing confidence levels with using smartphones; this data would be used to shape and cater the workshops to the needs of the groups. Three questions were asked of all the participants, and they were required to indicate on a scale of 1 (not at all confident) to 10 (confident) what their confidence levels were. 11 participants responded to the first two questions, and 13 participants responding to the third question only.

## Question 1 – Phone Calls and Texts

The first question of the survey was **“How confident do you feel using a smart phone for basic functions, e.g. phone calls, texts, etc.”** Four respondents gave a response of 8 or above, indicating a higher level of confidence, while two respondents scored this as 3 or below, indicating a low level of confidence. Four respondents gave scores of 4 to 7 suggesting a mild to moderate level of confidence. The median response was 5 while the mean response was 6, both indicating an overall mid-level of confidence among the group.

1) How confident do you feel using a smart phone for basic functions e.g. phone calls, texts etc.?										
Scale:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Responses:	0	1	1	1	3	1	0	1	2	1

Figure 1: First baseline survey question

## Question 2 – Using the internet

The second question was **“How confident do you feel using your smart phone for activities like internet banking, shopping, and searching the internet?”** Six respondents replied with scores of 3 or less, with four participants giving a score of 1 – indicating low levels of confidence. Three participants gave scores of 4 to 7, and two respondents gave scores of 9 which was the highest result given. The median response was 1 while the mean response was 4, indicating a lower level of confidence in performing these tasks than in the similar tasks such as phone calls and texts.

2) How confident do you feel using your smart phone for activities like internet banking, shopping and searching the internet?										
<b>Scale:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Responses:</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>

Figure 2: Second baseline survey question

### Question 3 - Apps

The third question was “**How confident do you feel using the extra functions of your phone like the calendar, calculator, and camera?**” Four respondents gave answers of 3 or below; six respondents gave answers between 4 and 7; and three respondents gave answers of 8 – which was the highest score given. The median score and mean scores were both 5, indicating a roughly similar level of confidence with these functions as with phone calls and texts – however it is important to note that there were a greater number of respondents to this question, and that while there were some quite confident users scoring 9s and 10s for phone calls and texts, the highest level of confidence here was an 8.

3) How confident do you feel using the extra functions of your phone like the calendar, calculator, and camera?										
<b>Scale:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Responses:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Figure 3: Third baseline survey question

Overall it is worth noting that average confidence levels were at a ‘medium’ level, with the lowest levels of confidence in online functions including internet banking, online shopping, and searching the internet.

# Endline Data

During the final workshop, the participants were again surveyed to measure their confidence levels after taking part in the training. Unfortunately, of the 18 participants only 8 completed the final survey, meaning the data is not directly comparable with the baseline survey; however it can be used for indicative purposes.

## Question 1 – Phone Calls and Texts

Five participants gave scores of 9 or more in the endline survey, with three scoring between 4 and 7. The median score was 9 (increased from baseline of 5) and the mean score was 8 (increased from baseline of 6). This is a marked increase on the baseline level of confidence among participants, and it is particularly encouraging to see that two participants scored themselves at 10 – indicating a good level of confidence.

1) How confident do you feel using a smart phone for basic functions e.g. phone calls, texts etc.?										
Scale:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Responses:	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	3	2

Figure 4: First endline survey question

## Question 2 – Using the internet

Confidence levels also improved in this area as a result of the workshops. Six participants scored themselves as 8 or higher, with only one participant scoring at 6 – which was the lowest score given. This is a large jump in scores, and indicates that the training was well catered to addressing the needs that the participants expressed at the beginning. The median score was 9 (increased from baseline of 1) and the mean was 8 (increased from baseline of 4).

2) How confident do you feel using your smart phone for activities like internet banking, shopping and searching the internet?										
Scale:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Responses:	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	3	1

Figure 5: Second endline survey question

### Question 3 - Apps

This area also saw a rise in confidence among participants. Again, all participants scored themselves as 6 or higher, with three giving scores of 10 and two giving scores of 9. Overall, the median score was 10 and the mean was 9. This was the highest scoring area in the endline results, showing a high level of participant confidence in using in-built apps.

3) How confident do you feel using the extra functions of your phone like the calendar, calculator, and camera?										
Scale:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Responses:	1	1	2	0	5	1	0	3	0	0

Figure 6: Third endline survey question

# Topics covered in Workshops

The workshops covered a variety of topics from phone safety and security (including how and why to lock a smartphone; internet banking safety); Wi-Fi access and the meaning of 'free Wi-Fi' advertised in public spaces; to purchasing, managing and deleting Apps. The participants gained confidence in using the 'touch screen' interface of smartphones by playing popular interactive games which taught them how phones respond to touch and movement. The workshops also covered how to use the basic features and settings of phones (including what sim cards are, how to insert them), as well as some of the in-built apps such as torch and camera.

Group sessions were complemented by one of one sessions with staff, peer support, and informal refreshment breaks were participants used the opportunity to ask questions and discuss the learnings together.

## Outcomes and Highlights

The workshops had a regular attendance rate, with the majority of participants attending each week. Participants reported the following positive changes to their lives as a result of the training:

- Participants share knowledge of hotspots in the city and were able to use the internet while out
- A participant was able to use the MetroMate app (Adelaide's metropolitan bus service app) to find out bus times
- A participant has discovered the camera app and enjoys using this
- A participant is now able to use Google maps to navigate the city
- A participant found the first session challenging and decided not to continue with the workshops. With one on one support, she gained confidence to continue and has since described the training as "life-changing." The participant was able to call the police when someone was following her in the city, and she now feels safer when on her own in the city and has been going out more. She also uses the camera and alarm daily.
- Two participants reported that they now have email addresses, which allows them to be better connected.
- A participant reported a complete turnaround in perception and confidence about using her phone; she now uses it to contact Hutt St Centre regularly and the Hutt St staff can now contact her to check in with her.
- Participants noted that having a group with mixed levels of confidence and knowledge of smartphones was a positive, as it allowed for peer-to-peer learning and support.

# Learning and Feedback

- Logistics posed some difficulties with this project. As the workshops were held offsite, transport needed to be arranged for participants, although some chose to make their own way there. Future similar trainings would ideally be held onsite to minimise costs and additional logistics needs.
- Donations of phones were not forthcoming following an appeal to the public; Optus and Vodafone donated phones following a request from ACCAN. For a future similar project it would be best to approach Telcos directly rather risk delays waiting for public donations.
- Time wasn't adequately built into the project to allow for the delays in setting up the phones (including travelling to the Apple store to set up Apple IDs; registering participants with email accounts etc.) This should be taken into consideration in future.
- One participant who was a rough sleeper expressed concern that having a phone made him feel vulnerable to theft. Despite this, he was given a phone so that his Case Manager was able to make appointments with him and stay in contact. Unfortunately, his phone was indeed stolen. The lesson learned is that the participants ultimately should determine their own comfort levels for carrying a phone.
- Participants continued to require some one on one support from their Case Managers following the workshops, and therefore individualised support provisions should be built into future project designs.

## Conclusion

In summary the project was successful. Participants continue to use the phones given to them, Case Managers are able to contact their clients regarding appointments and to check in with them, and Hutt St Centre staff members are able to communicate with clients about upcoming activities they may benefit from.

The results of the surveys demonstrate that participants' confidence levels markedly increased as a result of the training. This project provides an attractive model for future similar workshops for people living with complexity in other areas of Australia.



**Assisting people living with complexity to use smart phones to connect with their community**