Assessment of online recruitment, screening and selection methodologies, practices and tools

(Task 1.1 – IO1)

National Report – Bulgaria

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Introduction

Bulgarian National Research was conducted in the period between January – March 2019. It was prepared in accordance with the required methodology and guidelines, provided by the IO leader. The research conduction phase, as well as the document itself could be divided in two separate parts:

1. Desk research – this phase of the research was conducted online, as various statistical data providers (EUROSTAT, NSI, Employment agency), as well as all Bulgarian Legislative and non-legislative acts in the field of employment and employability support were studied.

2. Survey – during the survey phase, 18 people were interviewed – 6 HR specialists, 6 head of department, 3 Labour market mediators and 3 case managers. The survey was conducted in a format of structured interview, based on preliminary prepared questionnaire. Each interview session longed between 30-40 minutes. For the analysis of the collected data a specially designed grid tool was provided by the activity leader RED2RED.

State-of-the-art of adults 45+'s digital competences

The data for this section was mainly retrieved from Eurostat and National Statistical Institute.

Overall data:

According to the latest statistical data[1], provided by the Bulgarian statistical institute 48.7 % of the Bulgarian population is aged over 45 years. Majority of them are women – 54, 6%. People over 45 years of age who are still at working age are 56,9%. Majority of them are employed – 82, 5 % of the people between 45-54 years of age and 61,3% of people aged between 55-64.

Digital skills data:

Individuals' level of digital skills

A research on the topic of individuals' digital skills with data provided by Eurostat (last updated 31.01.2019) provides insightful analysis of the overall digital skills of the Bulgarian population for the years 2015, 2016 and 2017

Data we seek to extract was concentrated in 3 levels of overall digital skills namely no overall digital skills, basic or above basic digital skills and low digital skills with focus on people aged 45+.

The report below will summarize the trends in overall digital skills in 3 groups of people namely: All individuals, Males and Females. Those 3 groups all contain data for a specific

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age group as well as data for digital skills based on 3 levels of formal education: low, medium and high. Our main focus will be the age group 45+ and thus the percentage of overall digital skills will be presented in separate pie charts and graphs, while the data for the other age groups will be summarized in one major graph. All data will be presented by years.

2015:

In 2015, Individuals, Males and Females aged 25-64 with low, medium and high formal education showed the following overall digital skills based on percentages:
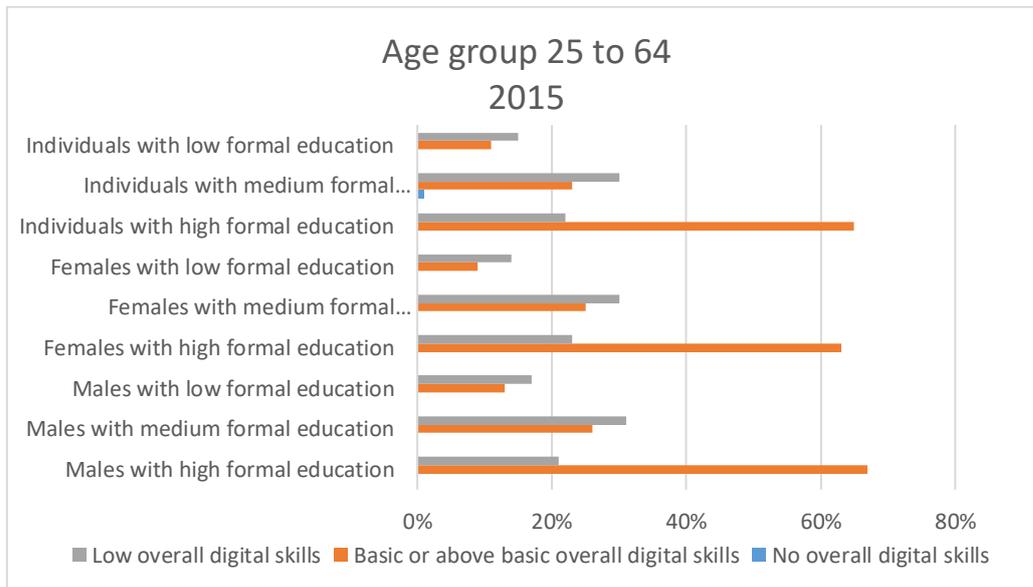

The graphic clearly shows that fortunately 0% of the people aged 25 to 64 (except individuals with medium formal education (1%)) have no overall digital skills. Data on basic or above basic overall digital skills shows highest percentages (above 60%) within all groups with high formal education and respectively lowest in overall digital skills in all groups with low formal education which could be taken as an indicator that the level of digital skills one has is connected to the level of education one receives. Low overall digital skills carry the highest rates (30-31%) with medium formal education in all 3 groups – individuals, males and females, while the lowest are in low formal education for all 3 groups (14-17%).

TARGET GROUPS 45+

- Low overall digital skills
- Basic or above basic overall digital skills

1%

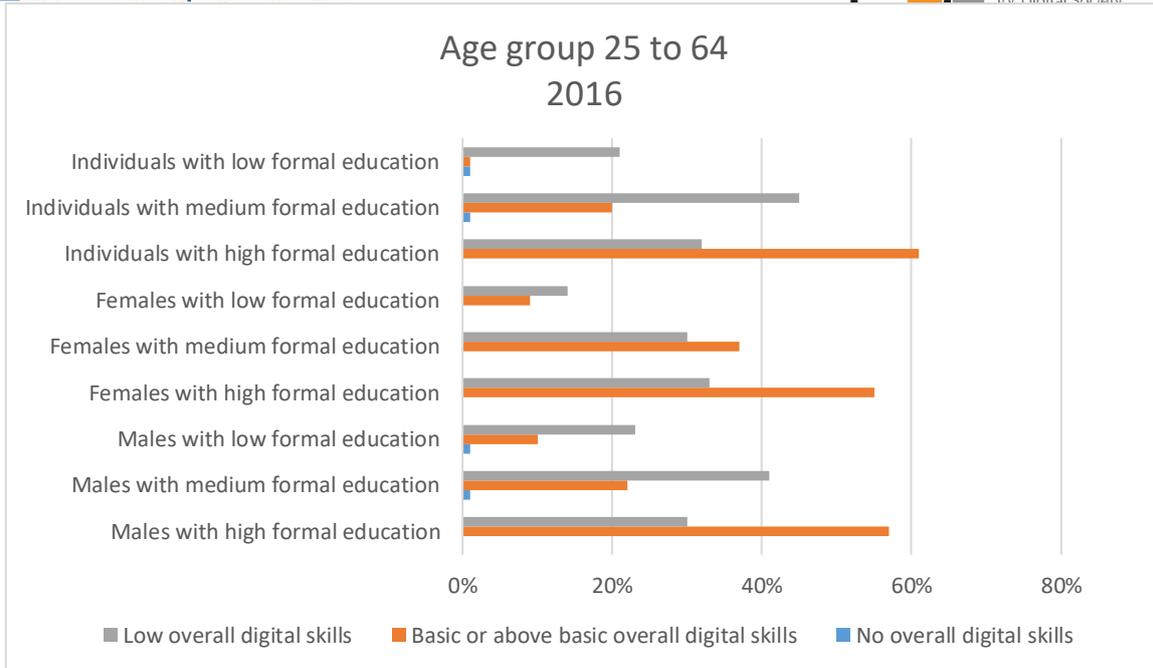26%

30%

Year 2015 All individuals aged 45 to 54
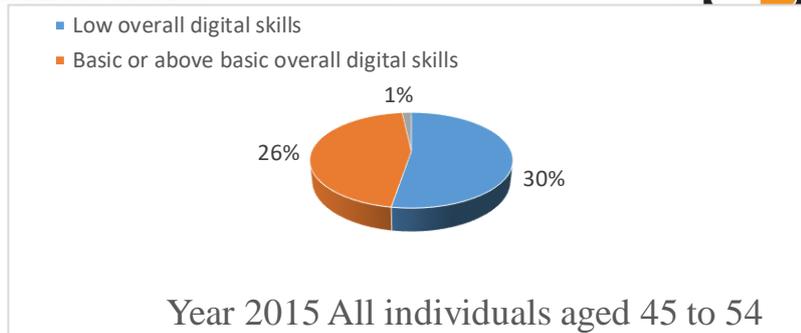
With our target group individuals aged 45+, we observe that 30% of them possess low overall digital skills and 26% of them basic or above basic digital skills. Only 1% of all individuals aged 45 to 54 have no overall digital skills.
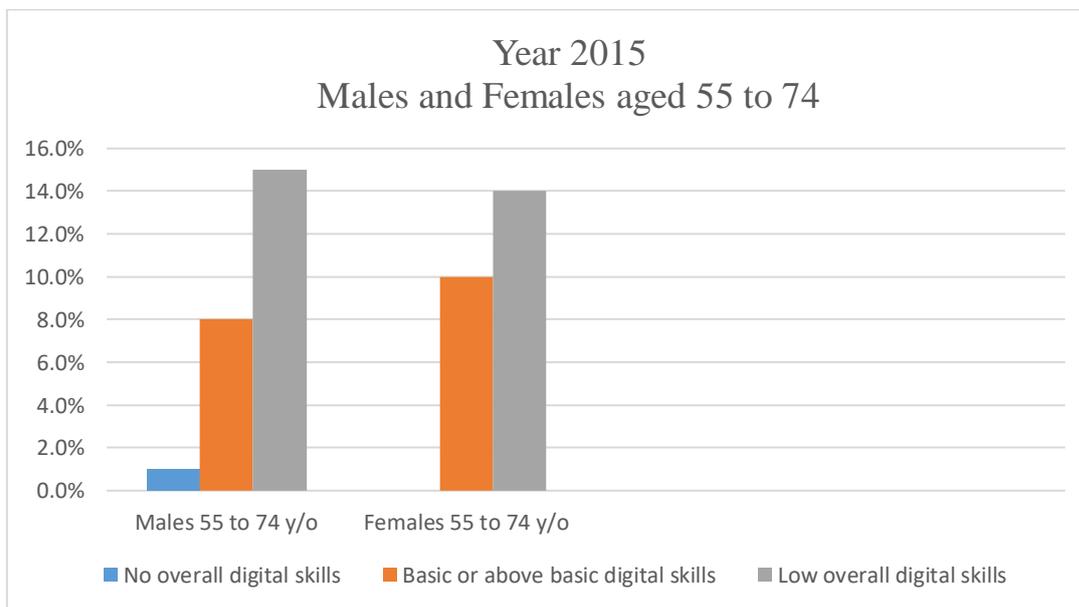

Male and Females between the ages of 55 and 74 show low overall digital skills at 15% for males and 14% for females respectively. Basic or above basic digital skills rates are again similar for both genders, with 10% of the females and 8% of the males. Females exhibit 0% of no overall digital skills, while males 1%.

2016

Age group 25 to 64
2016

Individuals with low formal education
Individuals with medium formal education
Individuals with high formal education
Females with low formal education
Females with medium formal education
Females with high formal education
Males with low formal education
Males with medium formal education
Males with high formal education

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%

■ Low overall digital skills   ■ Basic or above basic overall digital skills   ■ No overall digital skills

Similar as the 2015 trend is the 0 to 1% of no overall digital skills for the age group. For 2016 the graph indicates basic or above basic digital skills at 61% for individuals with high formal education, 55% for females, and 57% for males with high formal education. Data is similar to the 2015 graph, however a slight drop in numbers is present at basic or above basic skills in women with high formal education dropping from 63% in 2015 to 55% in 2016. Lowest basic and above basic digital skills are at individuals with low formal education (1%) and females with low formal education (9%). Highest rates of low overall digital skills is at 45% for individuals and 41% for males with medium formal education. The numbers have increased compared to the 2015 graph which shows 30% for individuals and 31% for males with medium formal education respectively. This is a 10% rise in low overall digital skills in individuals and males between 25 and 64.

TARGET GROUPS 45+

Year 2016 All individuals aged 45 to 54

1%
21 %
31%

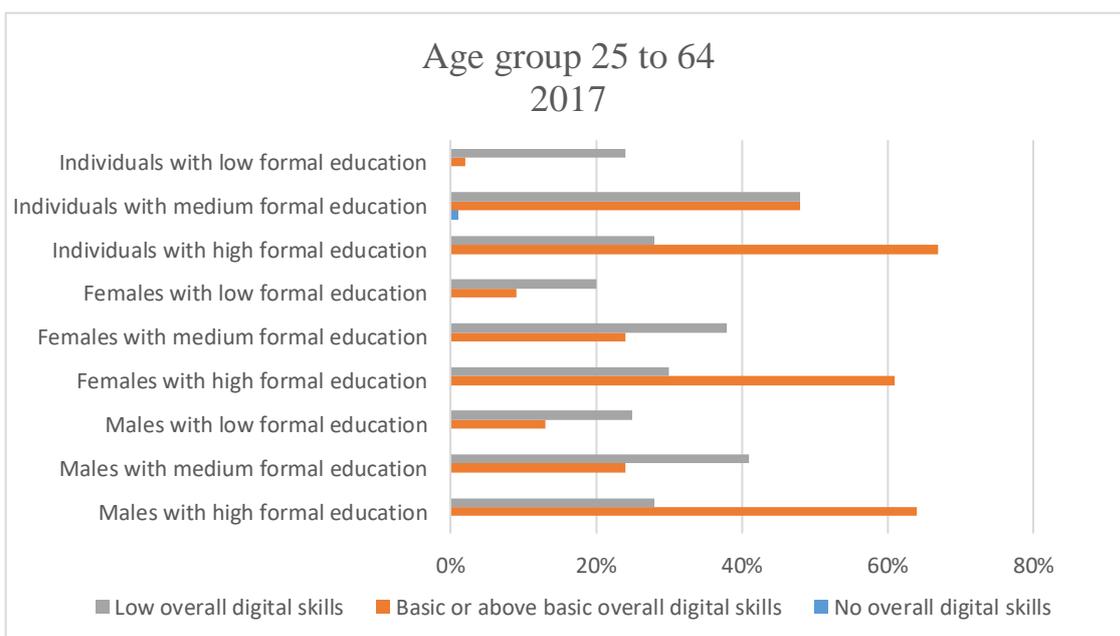■ Low overall digital skills   ■ Basic or above basic overall digital skills   ■ No overall digital skills
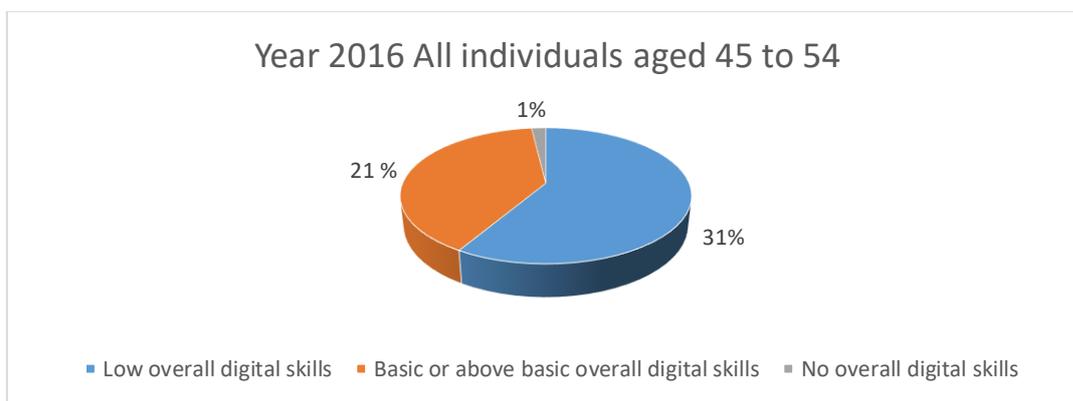
For our target group (45+), in comparison to the 2015 pie chart, here we see a drop in basic and above basic overall digital skills with 5% - from 26% in 2015 to 21% in 2016. A rise of 1 % compared to 2015 is visible at the low overall digital skills. Data for no overall digital skills remains the same at 1%.

Year 2016
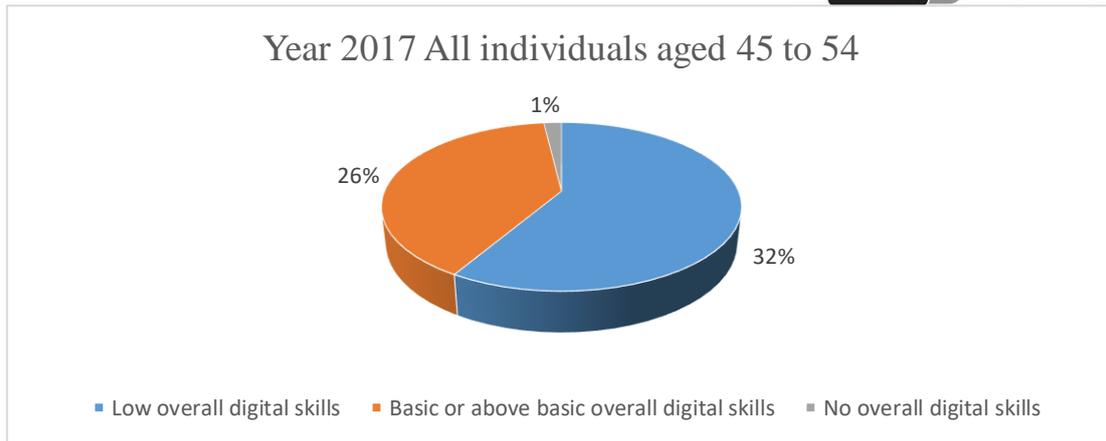## Males and Females aged 55 to 74
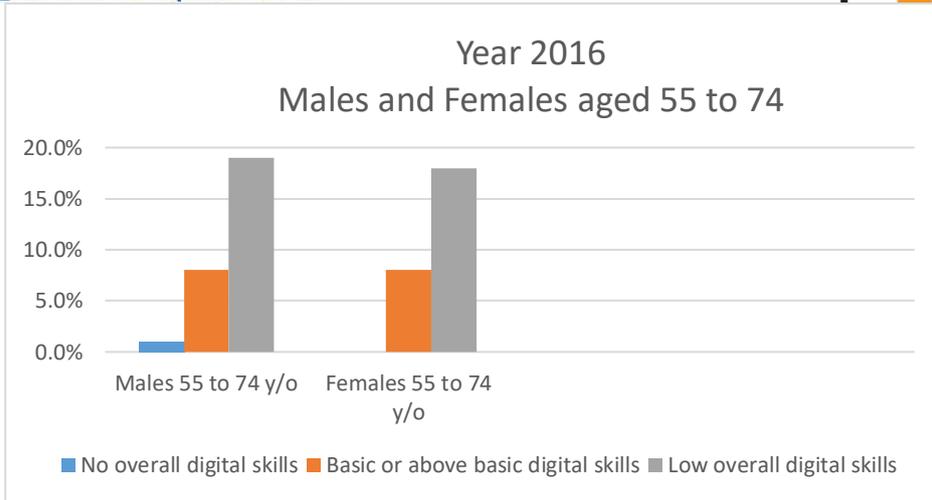
In 2016 we observe a rise in the low overall digital skills in males and females aged 55 to 74, with 4% for males (from 15% in 2015 to 19% in 2016) and 4% for females (from 14% in 2015 to 18% in 2018). Basic and above basic digital skills remains the same (8%) for males, however drop to 8% from 10% in 2015 for females aged 55 to 74. No overall digital skills remain at the same rates for both men and women 1% and 0% respectively.

2017

In 2017 once again the highest rates of basic or above basic digital skills is with people with high formal education (67% individuals, 61% females, 64% males), while the lowest basic or above basic digital skills are visible with people with low formal education (2% individuals, 9% females, 13% males). Highest rates of low overall digital skills, same as in 2015, 2016, are the people with medium formal education (48%individuals, 38% females, 41% males). No overall digital skills are 0% with all above-mentioned groups, except for individuals with medium formal education (1%).

Age group 25 to 64
2017

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and Low Skilled Adult Workers
for Digital Society

Year 2017 All individuals aged 45 to 54

- Low overall digital skills
- Basic or above basic overall digital skills
- No overall digital skills

TARGET GROUPS 45+

The rates for basic and above basic overall digital skills for individuals aged 45+ in 2017 is 5% higher (26%) compared to the rates in 2016 (21%) and identical to the trend in 2015. Low overall digital skills have risen slightly compared to 2015 and 2016 from 30% and 31% respectively to 32% in 2017. No overall digital skills have kept at 1 % throughout all 3 years for people aged 45+.

A rise in both basic and above basic digital skills is visible - from 8% in 2016 to 10% in 2017 for both genders. Low overall digital skills also rise from 19% for males in 2016 to 22%, and from 18% for females to 21%. No overall digital skills stays at 0% for females and 1% males in the year 2017 – same as the 2 previous years.

Individuals' level of internet skills

Year 2017
Males and Females aged 55 to 74

- No overall digital skills
- Basic or above basic digital skills
- Low overall digital skills
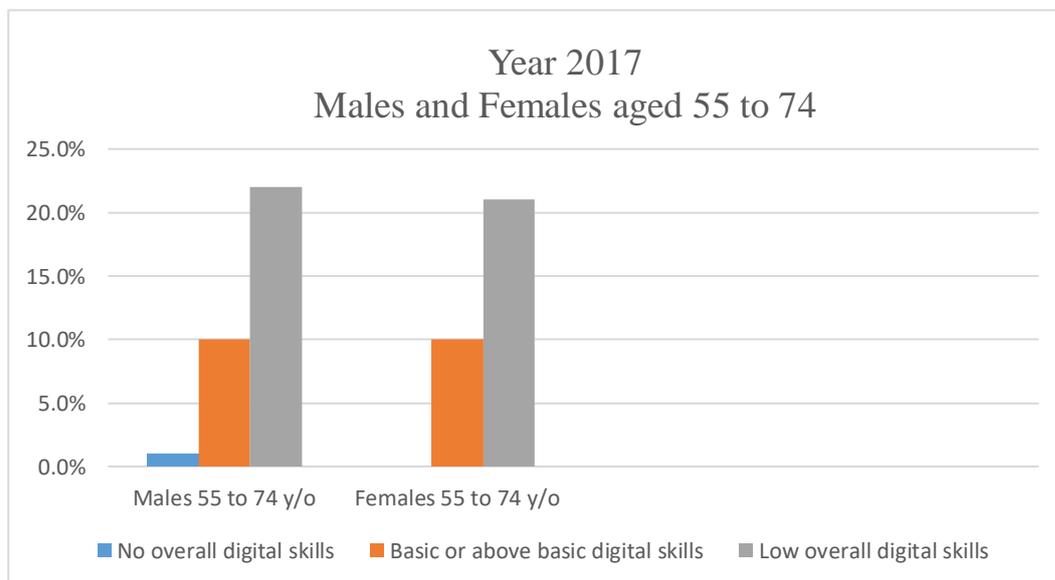
Latest data for Individual's level of internet skills for Bulgaria in Eurostat are dated 2011 and 2013. No later information is available. However, a more recent data on persons **regularly using the internet** (every day, weekly or never) is available for 2018. We could

consider the daily/weekly internet usage of internet correlated to individual internet skills as one cannot use the internet without a certain set of internet skills[2].
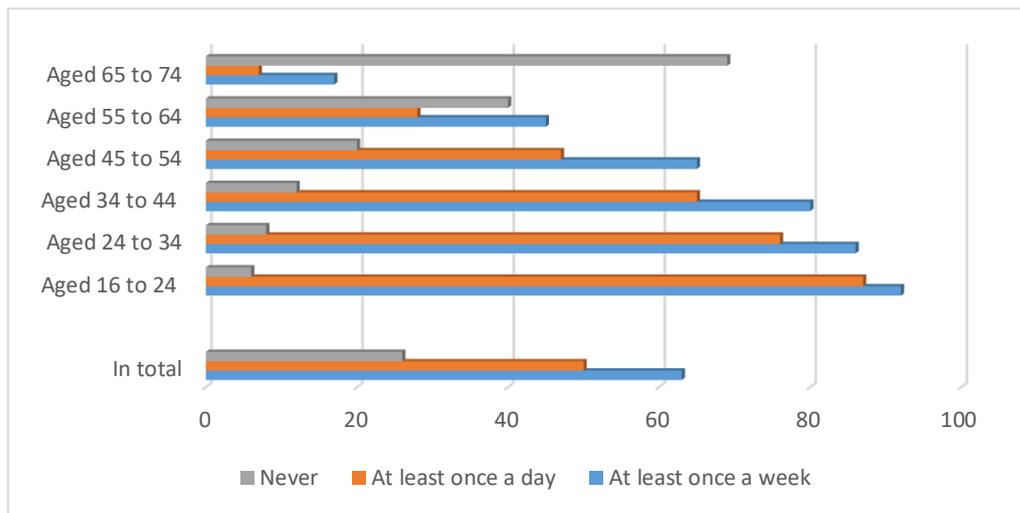
Data for individuals aged 45+ who use the internet daily or at least once a week:

1. Individuals aged 45 to 54 - **65.7%**
2. Individuals aged 55 to 64 - **45.2%**
3. Individuals aged 65-74 – **17.8%**

Here we observe a clear decline of daily/weekly internet usage as the age group progresses, and a rise of never using internet as the age progresses. Between 10 and 20 years of age difference results in a decline of internet usage by nearly 50%. Thus, we can conclude that the older the people the less internet they use and therefore might demonstrate lower internet skills.

Eurostat's data for individual's internet skills have distinguished several skills by which their statistics have been gathered:

Individuals who have used a search engine to find information Individuals who have sent an email with attached files Individuals who have posted messages to chat rooms, newsgroups, or online discussion forums

Below we will explore the statistics for the above-mentioned internet skills for our target groups 45+ for the year 2011 and 2013.
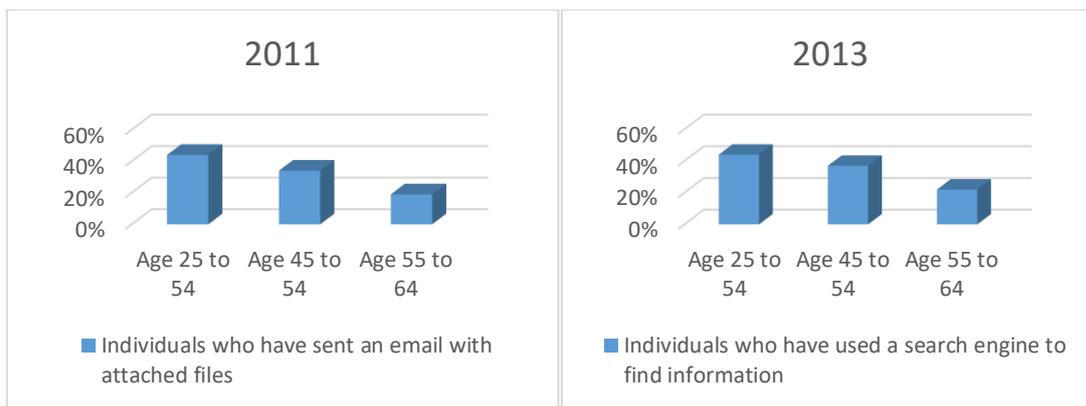
Individuals who have used a search engine to find information
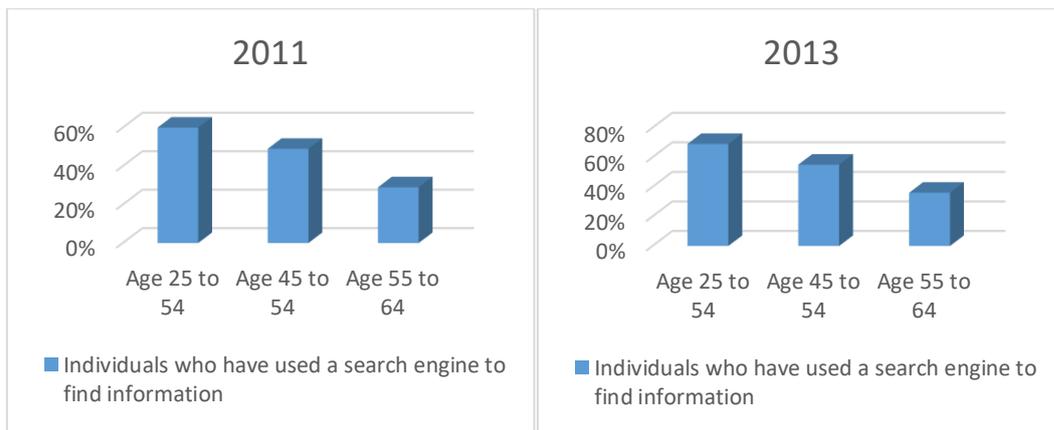
In general, a clear decline of search engine usage is visible the older the age group, however a rise in usage of search engine to find information (between 6 and 9%) is also noticeable with all age groups.
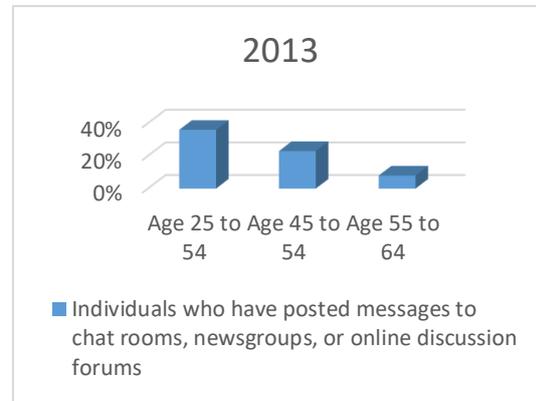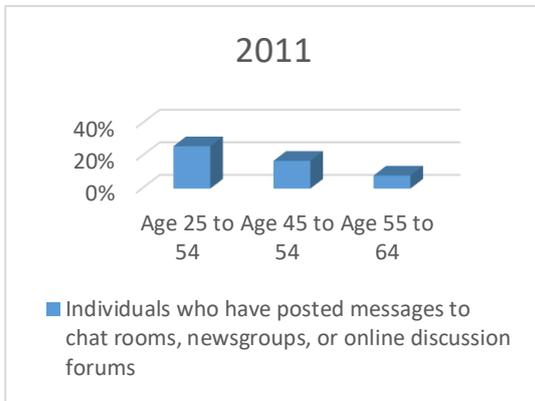
Individuals who have sent an email with attached files

1st age group shows equal results for both years for sent email with attached files, however with the other 2 age groups we observe a rise in this skill from 34 to 37% for age 45 to 54, and 19 to 22% for age 55 to 64.

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Individuals who have posted messages to chat rooms, newsgroups, or online discussion forums

2011

2013

Here we see a significant decline in the internet skills in the age groups of 45+ compared to the previously mentioned internet skills. Perhaps that is because posting messages in chat rooms and forums requires a higher level of internet skills which people 45+ possess little. Where 49% of individuals aged 45 to 54 use search engines, only 17% of them post messages in chat rooms or forums in the year 2011. Same applies to individuals aged 55 to 64, only 8 % of them post messages online, whereas 29% of them use search engines. In 2013, we see a significant rise in posting messages to chat rooms and forums in all age groups, 25 to 54 from 26 to 36%, 45 to 54 from 17 to 23%. People aged 55 to 64 show the same results for both years (8%) which shows no gain or loss of skills.

Way of obtaining e-skills

Here, we will look over the ways of obtaining internet skills and how many of the individuals aged 45+ have carried out such training. The data we have summarized here is from 2018.
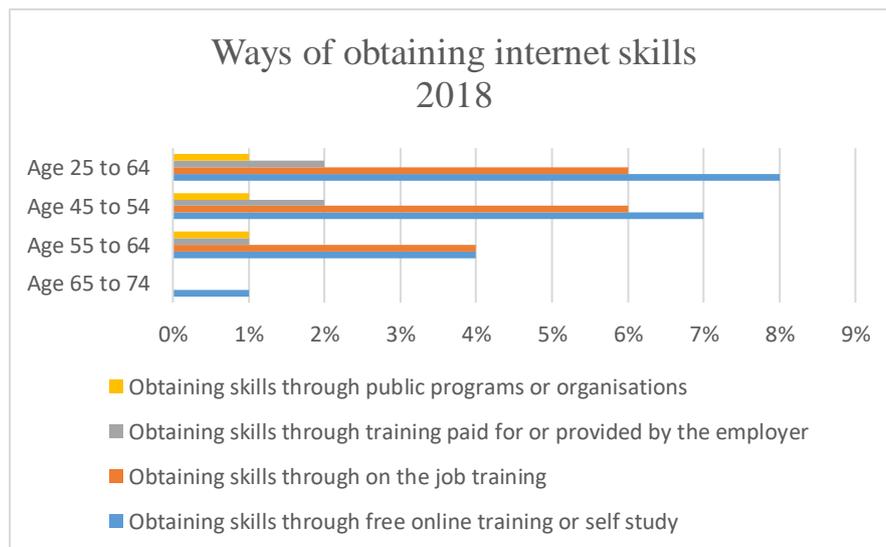
Unfortunately, we see extremely low results in all ways of obtaining e-skills. At first sight, we can see that individuals aged 65 to 74 have carried out close to 0% trainings for gaining internet skills. 1% of that particular age group have gained training through self-study or online free trainings. Consistently low for all age groups are the trainings carried out through public programs/organisations 1% for all age groups, except 65 to 74 where the rates are at 0%. Between 1 and 2% are the trainings provided by or paid for by the employer for all age groups from 25 to 64 years old. We observe highest rate of skills training through free online training/self-study (8% for people aged 25 to 64, 7% for 45 to 54 and 4% 55 to 64 y/o). On the job trainings amount to 6% of e-skill trainings for people aged 25 to 54 and 4% for people aged 55 to 64. From this chart we can clearly state that even if there are any sorts of paid or free internet skill trainings in Bulgaria, under whatever form, very little of those ever reach people aged 45+ and even younger.

NATIONAL STATISTICS:

Below, we you may find the extracted detailed information regarding the Employment and Unemployment rates of the Bulgarian population aged 45+ of the years 2017 and 2018.

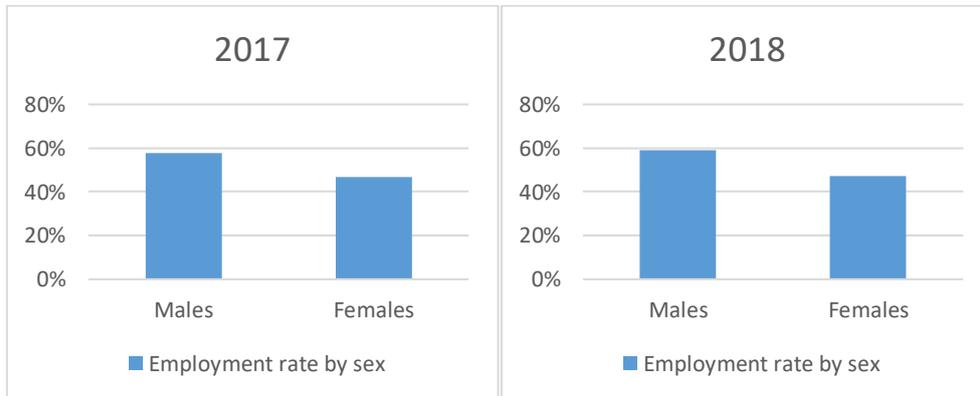**Employment rate by age groups**
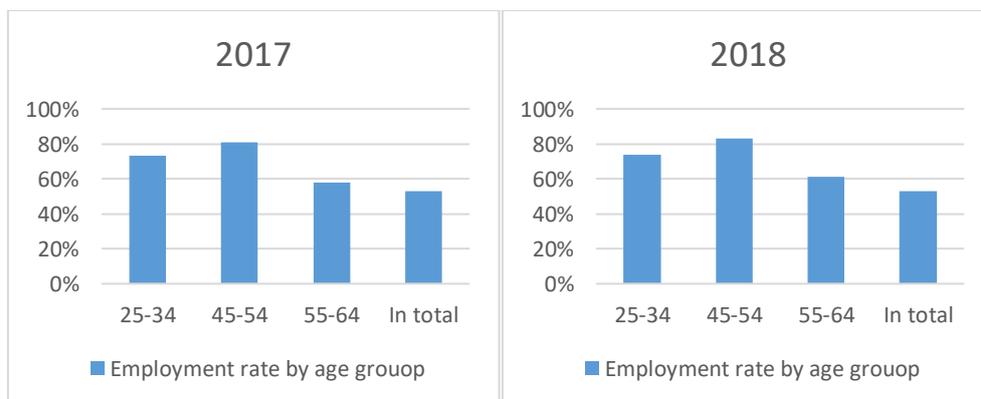
In both years we see age group 45 to 54 with the highest employment rate - 81% in 2017 and 83% in 2018, while the lowest of all age groups for both years are people aged 55 to 64 with 58 and 61% respectively. In all age groups we see a rise in the employment rate with up to 3% each. The employment rate in total shows 2% higher (53%) in 2018 than 2017.
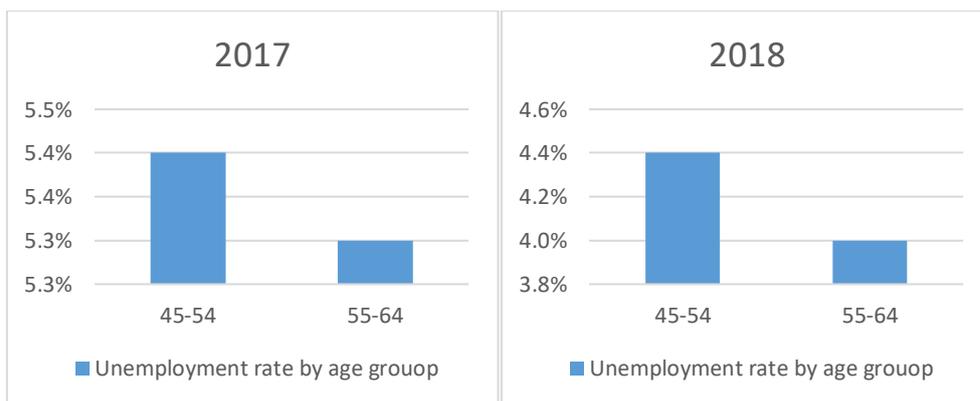
Employment rate by sex

Employment by gender is at the same rate for females for both years (47%), while employed males show a slight rise of 1% from 58% in 2017 to 59% in 2018.

Unemployment rate by age groups:

Data reports that the highest unemployment rates from the above-mentioned age groups are 25 to 34 year old with 7 and 5.7% for 2017 and 2018 respectively. Lowest unemployment rates are for the age groups of 45-54 and 55-64 with 5.4 and 5.3% respectively for 2017, and these drop to 4.4 and 4% respectively in 2018. In total, we see a drop in the unemployment rate from 6.2 in 2017 to 5% in 2018.

Unemployment rate by sex
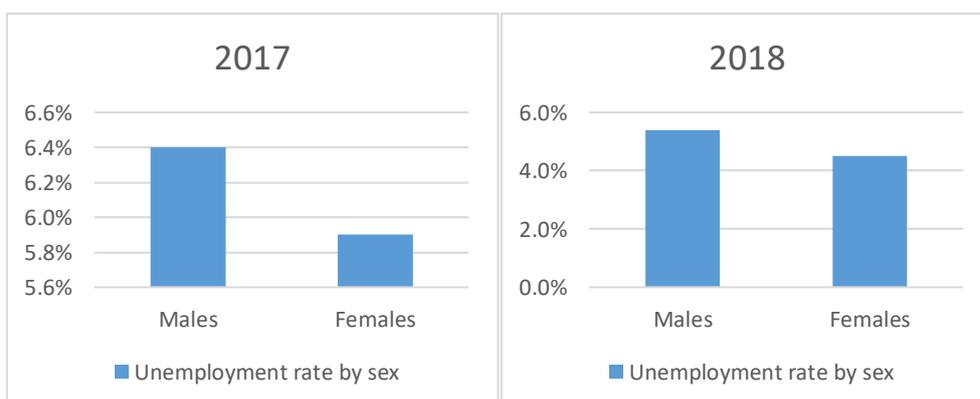
For both genders we observe a drop in the unemployment rates. Males drop from 6.4 in 2017 to 5.4% in 2018, while females drop from 5.9 in 2017 to 4.5% in 2018. Interestingly, in the afore-mentioned statistics, females show lower unemployment rates than males with up to 0.9%.

Long-term unemployment rate

The long-term unemployment rate is the number of persons unemployed for 12 months or longer as a percentage of the labour force (i.e. economically active population). Unfortunately, we found scarce data on the subject and we will hereby present only long-term unemployment rates by sex as part of the general unemployment rate. Unemployed persons comprise persons aged 15 to 74. Data collected corresponds to years 2017 and 2018.
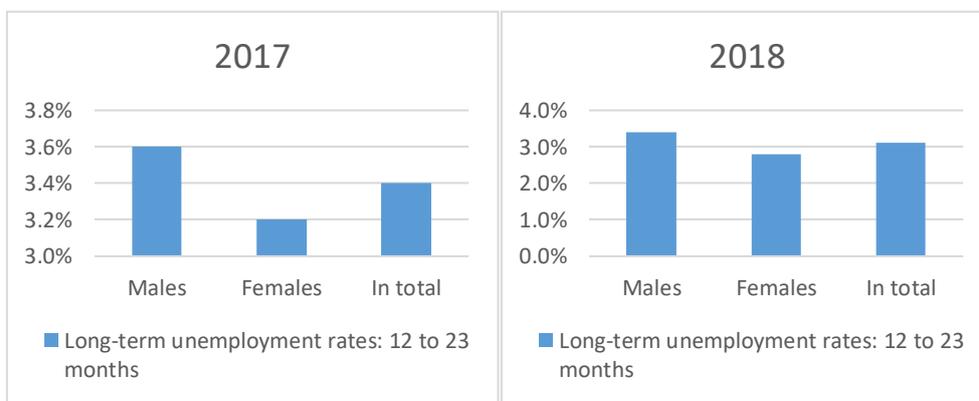
Here we observe a drop in the long-term unemployment rate with 0.2% for males (3.4%) in 2018 compared to 2017 (3.6%) and 0.5% drop for females in 2018 (2.8%) compared to 2017 (3.2%). In total, a drop of 0.3% is visible in 2018 where rates drop to 3.1% compared to 3.4% in 2017.

National programmes and major stakeholder initiatives

1. E-skills for E-inclusion is 3-years Erasmus + project whose main objective is to develop a training program on computer literacy for vulnerable groups in order to facilitate their access to the labour market. As we already mention, the adults over 55 years of age are considered as one of the vulnerable groups on the labour market and such initiatives are targeted to increase their competitiveness. **E-skills for E-inclusion** outcomes are:

- Innovative adult learning methods to enhance the basic digital skills of vulnerable groups, including new curricula, courses and accompanying learning materials and tools;
- Expanding and certifying the competences of trainers to more effectively conduct computer literacy courses for vulnerable groups;
- Developing and implementing innovative tools for assessing the acquired digital skills of trained representatives of vulnerable groups;
- Developing a multilingual web portal for lecturers on computer literacy;

Four regional libraries, placed in medium size Bulgarian cities with predominating elderly population are involved in this project implementation.[3]

2. ICT training for 60+ years old individuals

An ICT course for people over age of age of 60 is conducting at the Regional Library "Nikolay Vranchev" since 2011. It is three days course, dedicated to training on 3 basic digital knowledge themes:

- How the computer works and what we should know about it?

What is a computer system - computer, monitor, and periphery; how the computer works and what "operating system" is; Microsoft office– is or how to write documents.

Tasks to perform: how to run and switch of the computer; how to create a document folder; Word - basic concepts.

- Internet – how to search for information?

What is the Internet and how works: terminology- browser, chat, emoticons; what is Google or where we should start from; finding, storing and printing information from internet; Starting the Web - browser and Google opening; finding information in the web for railway transport schedule (Bulgarian state railway transport company), EVN (electricity distribution company), VIK (water distribution company), libraries, etc.

- Email and online communicating

What is e-mail and how it works – wat is email registration and how to register; Skype- what is skype, skype profile, and video conversations; how to exchange photos, files and documents via Internet.

Tasks to perform: email creating at ABV.bg or and other email providers; working with Skype; photo exchange; downloading of photos and documents from the web.

It is organized as a group training – the number of participants should not exceed 8 persons and two trainers. Individual consultations on additional themes as mobile phone usage, laptop usage, Power point, etc. are also foreseen.[4]

3. Training for acquiring professional qualification "Computer operator" for unemployed people

Each year on the territory of the country specialized trainings which to enable unemployed persons to acquire professional qualifications and / or key competencies under the profession "Computer operator" are being organized. The trainings are targeted to vulnerable groups on the labor market, namely: unemployed persons under 29 or over 50, long-term unemployed, people with low or unskilled labor skills and lack of key competences, low education, as well as to persons outside the labor force, discouraged persons and others.

The trainings are in format of group training and are 300 study hours long. Participants receive scholarships of 8 leva (BG currency) per school day and transport cost reimbursement up to 10 leva if they live in rural area.

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[3] Project Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/E-Skills-for-e-Inclusion-144176962731656
[4] For more information: http://lll.mon.bg/uploaded_files/obuchenie_po_ikt_smolyan.pdf

Job offers addressed to unemployed adults 45+

Since 2004 a Protection Against Discrimination Act is in force in Bulgaria. According to Art.12, Section I "Protection in Exercising the Right to Work" of the Law's Second Chapter the employer *shall not have the right to set requirements* relating to the grounds

referred to gender, race, nationality, ethnicity, human genome, citizenship, origin, religion or belief, education, convictions, political affiliation, personal or social status, disability, *age*, sexual orientation, marital status, property status, etc.

This means that according to the Bulgarian law, if a job announcement indicates requirements for minimum age, which are not imposed by the nature of the profession or the conditions under which it is carried out, in order respective position to be occupied, this should be considered as an act of direct discrimination on grounds of age which is illegal. Therefore, job vacancies which addressing adults 45+ could not be published neither on the State Employment Agency website, nor onto the private job offering platforms.

The only exceptions to indicating age requirements in job vacancies announcements are allowed by the law when these job vacancies are created and filled in executing state measure for employment promotion, targeted to unemployed persons over 55 years of age. This age group (55+) is considered as of one of the "vulnerable groups on the labour market" and public subsidies are invested in order to fill the gap in their employment opportunities. In this case, state institutions and private companies which benefit from state funding for job creation for people over 55 years old are allowed to clearly state that the job vacancies they announce are targeted only to people aged 55+. An example is newly created online platform named "Evergreentalents" which is targeted to people over age of 55 and clearly states that all job offers concerns only people over this age. The platforms is functioning at national level since October 2018. It is entirely private initiative of leading HR companies, but is supported by the Bulgarian Ministry of labour and social policy and Bulgarian Employment Agency.

In this connection, the data provided below regarding the job announcements targeted to people over 45 years of age is based on the official one, retrieved from the National Employment Agency and Evergreentalents and present information for all job vacancies announced for people over age of 55. Since the beginning of 2019, 22 job vacancies for people over 55 of age have been announced. 27, 2 % of the job positions are available on the territory of bigger Bulgarian cities, while the majority of the job offers (72, 8%) are for vacancies in small cities on the territory of the country. Majority of the job announcements (68%) require low or none qualification- -they offer job positions for drivers, labourers, car washers, shop assistants, etc. The rest requires higher education or professional qualification and offer job positions for chefs, accountant, administrative assistants, etc. Only 1 of the announced job positions is for part-time job (4-hours working day). 86% of the vacancies are for temporary job positions (up to 12 months), because their "creation" is subsidized by the state budget in executing the state policy for people 55+ employment promotion (Art. 55 (a) Employment Promotion Act).

Frequency of use of social media for searching a job

Overall data:

According to the latest statistical information 65.7% of population aged between 45-54 years old, 45, 2% of those in age group 55-64 years and 17.8 % are using internet on regular basis (once a day or once a week), while the share of the Bulgarians who are using

Internet for job searching and sending job applications in 2017 is only 7% - 4% of individuals aged between 45-54 years are using internet with this purpose, as the same refer to only 1% of the individuals between 55-64 years old.
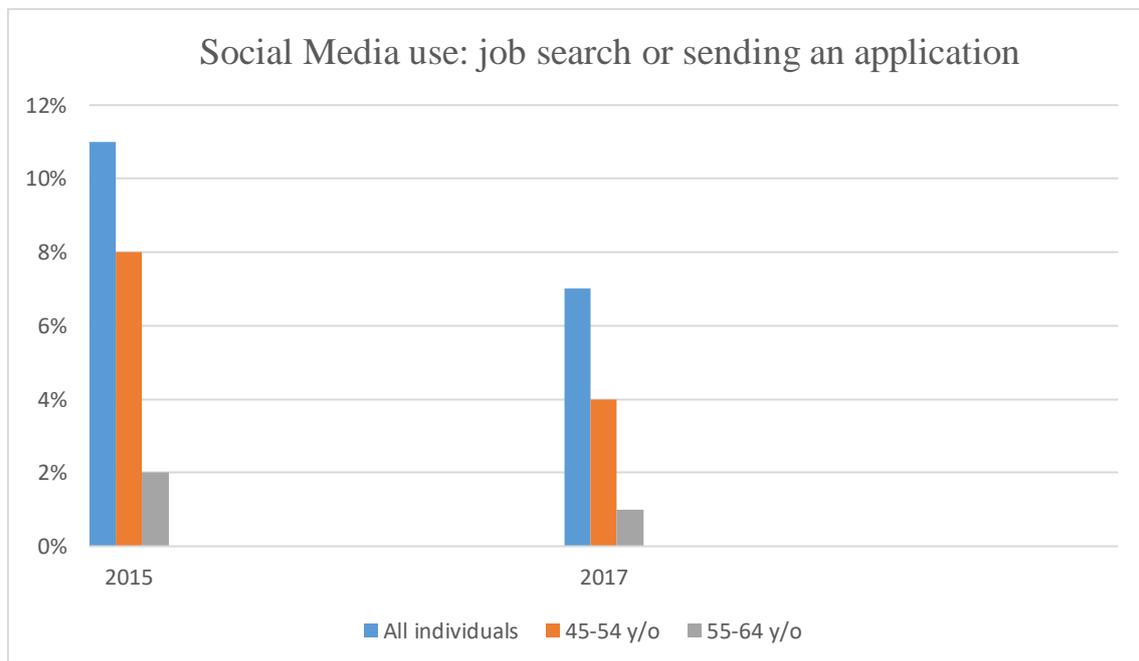
Main devices used for having access to social media (personal pc, smart phone, tablet, pc at work)

Bulgarian internet users are among the most intensive users of on-line video calls (1st place) and social networks (6th place). Over 85 percent of people use the Internet for phone and video calls through various applications. Facebook is the most popular social network in Bulgaria. However, Bulgarian internet users appear to refrain most from using the Internet when they need to do online banking or shop on-line and only 20 percent of Bulgarians use Internet to interact with state administration bodies. 49% of the Bulgarians aged between 45-54 years old are using internet for social network participation. Some 85.3 percent of Bulgarians browse the internet via their smartphone; 36.1 percent browse through a laptop or tablet; and, 63 percent of Bulgarian households have a desktop computer, a laptop or a tablet. In 2017, 58.8 percent of the population between the ages of 16 and 74 used a computer every day or at least once a week at work, at home or elsewhere. In 2017 there are 3.69 million users of mobile data in Bulgaria. [5]

[5] https://www.export.gov/article?id=Bulgaria-Information-and-Communications-Technologies

The most common methods and ways to search for and find a job

According to the official statistics for 2018, retrieved from the National Statistical Institute[6], 68.5 % of the unemployed Bulgarians favour the utilisation of personal contacts (relatives and friend) as a method to search for a job. It is not surprising, because the surest way to get the job you want is to be recommended to the employer.

Among the others more preferred ways are:

- Direct contact with the employer - 49,6 %
- Following up job announcements, published in newspapers, magazines, platforms, others – 41,9 %
- Registration at the State Labour Offices – 40,8 %

With regards to online job searching, the two most popular methods and ways to search for and find a job in BG are:

1. Sites with job ads.

This the most preferred way job searching, because it allows the candidates and employers to establish good contact in an easy and time-saving manner. Most sites allow that client to create a personal profile where he can create and store CVs and cover letters, track his application history, and get notifications of new job ads, based on that criteria he has previously set. The most popular job search site in Bulgaria is Jobs.bg. The second popular is Zaplata.bg which is functioning in similar like jobs.bg way. Although Jobtiger.bg is the first job-searching website in Bulgaria, it is not the most preferred one now. However, jobtiger.bg is offering additional services to its clients and users – career guidance, practical advices for creating and using application documents for presentation to the potential employer, etc. Jooble is also among the used platforms for job searching. It is an aggregator of job ads. which saves time for searching to its users by offering them ads from several sites in one place.

2. Social media

• LinkedIn is the largest network for creating professional contacts. Since 2003 to date, its users account for more than 150 million people around the world. The site allows users to create and manage their own professional profile. The platform allows chronologically to describe the occupations, the projects they have worked and the skills gained. One of the biggest benefits is that the user can post recommendations and assessments receive by his colleagues, partners and former employers. LinkedIn is becoming popular in Bulgaria recent years, including among those who are 45+ years old and search for a job. Of course it suits best to people with higher qualification and skills.

• Probook.bg is a Bulgarian professional network. At present, its users are over 380,000 Bulgarians and almost 16,000 companies. The site also allows its clients to create their

professional

profiles and business card in Bulgarian and is very user-friendly, which makes it appropriate for adults with lower digital skills

	NAME OF THE JOB SEARCH PLATFORM	
Characteristics	**Field**	*European*
	Creation date	2006
	Objectives	Jobs.bg is a career media. Over 95 000 companies in Bulgaria from all business sectors use Jobs.bg to publish more than 30 000 job positions monthly. The number of applications sent in a month exceeds 2 000 000. Jobs.bg is part of The Network.
	Leader entity	JOBS.BG Ltd. – Sofia, Bulgaria
Job offer platform services	**Web page/e-mail**	www.jobs.bg
	Financing **Private**	Jobs.bg is a private company- the services provided both to the jobseekers and the companies are free of charge, while the platform activities are being financed via advertisements, consulting, etc.
	Public	N/A
	Access **Users**	The usage of Jobs.bg requires registration and account creation. To create a personal account the user needs to complete the online registration request form. Upon completion of the registration request, the user receives email message(s) to confirm it.
	Companies	Jobs.bg applies the leading standards to ensure the reliability of the service. All companies pass a strict validation procedure at the time of registration before being able to publish job ads.
	Services offered **General**	Jobs.bg is part of The Network - the largest international alliance of the leading job boards in over 130 countries. In partnership with The Network expert positions in European institutions, as well as in leading international companies open for candidates from Bulgaria are published in Jobs.bg.
	Users	After account creation thee users of Jobs.bg are able to: - store a CV and other files and use them when applying to positions; - create online a CV in European format guided step by step; - access the full history of application dates, job ads and CVs with which you have applied - to contact over 95 000 companies in Bulgaria from all business sectors and to get access to more than 30 000 job positions monthly.
	Companies	Each company has the opportunity to publish up to 25 free job ads monthly (within 30 calendar days). In addition, should they need greater number of job ads or job ads with greater visibility, companies have the opportunity to use paid job types. Jobs.bg provides the opportunity to edit job ads after they have been

	published subject to specific terms that aim to ensure the reliability of the service to the website users.
Digital competences required to use the platform	Overall, the platform requires simple digital skills in order a registration to be created. After that the platform itself is quiet friendly and one only must fallow the steps to fill the information concerning their work experience. Required skills: - Uploading/ downloading files - Work with searching engine - Completion of online forms
Main tasks and responsibilities offered to people + 45 years	N/A
Additional comments	The platform is really helpful, both for the jobseekers and the companies which are searching for employees. This is the largest job searching platform and all publicly announced job vacancies are being published there, incl. such in state administration (institutions). So it becomes highly recommendable each person who is searching for a job to become familiar with its functionalities and to use the platform on a daily basis.

Fieldwork – Interviews to HR professionals

Conclusions