

Someone still cares: loneliness of seniors and their daily use of smartphones

Magdalena Hodalska

Institute of Journalism, Media and Social Communication, Jagiellonian University, Cracow, Poland

Abstract

Loneliness among seniors is a growing global concern as populations age. In Poland, 88% of seniors report feeling lonely, and 13% of those aged 80+ never leave their homes. Loneliness is associated with poorer health, cognitive decline, and lower quality of life, making it a pressing social issue. For many older adults, smartphones have become lifelines—tools for communication, security, and daily functioning that help mitigate isolation. This paper presents findings from the international #HumanePhone project, which studies smartphone habits across six continents. Focusing on Polish seniors, we used a mixed-methods approach, combining survey data (N=55) from 2024 with follow-up in-depth interviews (N=20) in 2025. The study explores how seniors incorporate smartphones into everyday routines and how this affects their well-being. From a social science perspective, these findings highlight the role of smartphones as tools of social participation and psychological resilience among aging populations. This research reframes smartphone use among seniors as an opportunity for social inclusion and improved well-being, offering actionable insights for educators, policymakers, and designers aiming to address loneliness and foster connected aging in a technology-driven world.

Keywords: Aging, Well-Being, Smartphone, Mobile Phone, Habits, Seniors, Loneliness