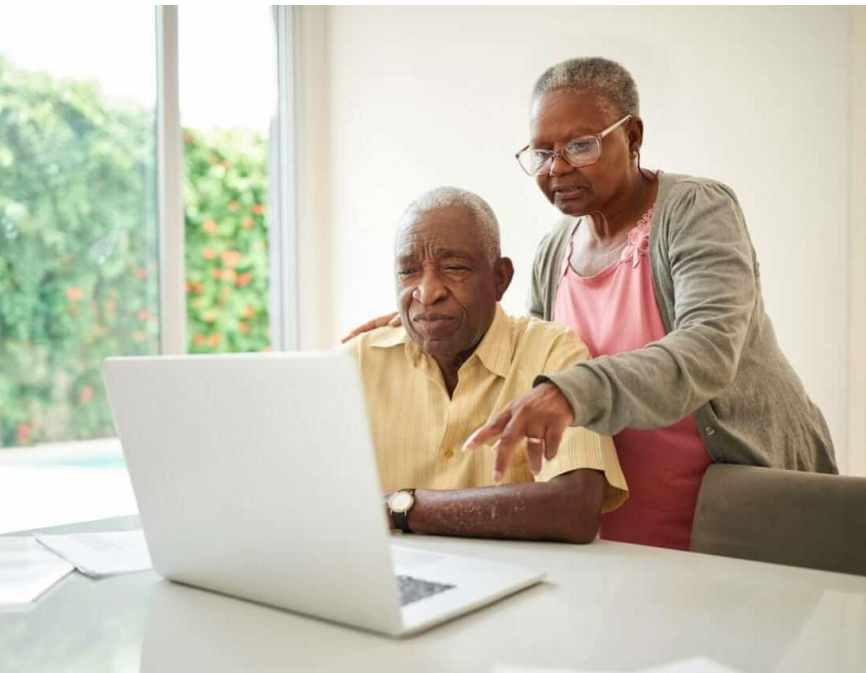


# Digital Literacy for Older Adults

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The Centre for Studies in Aging & Health





## What we will discuss:

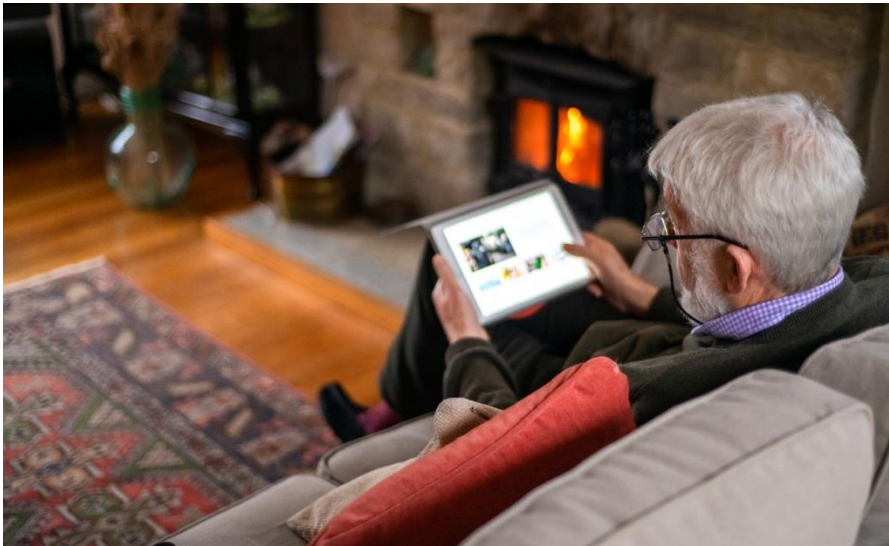
- What is Digital Literacy
- Why Digital Literacy Matters
- Scoping Review
- Delphi Study – Phase 1 and 2
- Knowledge Mobilization: Guidebook & Webinar

# What is Digital Literacy?



While there is no universally agreed-upon definition, digital literacy is generally understood as an **individual's ability to find, understand, communicate, and use information effectively** through *digital devices and technologies*.

# Why is Digital Literacy Important for Older Adults?



- Evolving digital landscape and aging population
- Individual Benefits (i.e., quality of life, independence, social connection)
- Promotes intergenerational equity
- Cost saving and contribution to the digital economy
- Supports aging in place
- Supports healthcare systems

# Multi-Phase Digital Literacy Project

Scoping Review  
(Summer 2024)



Delphi Study Phase 1  
(Summer 2025)

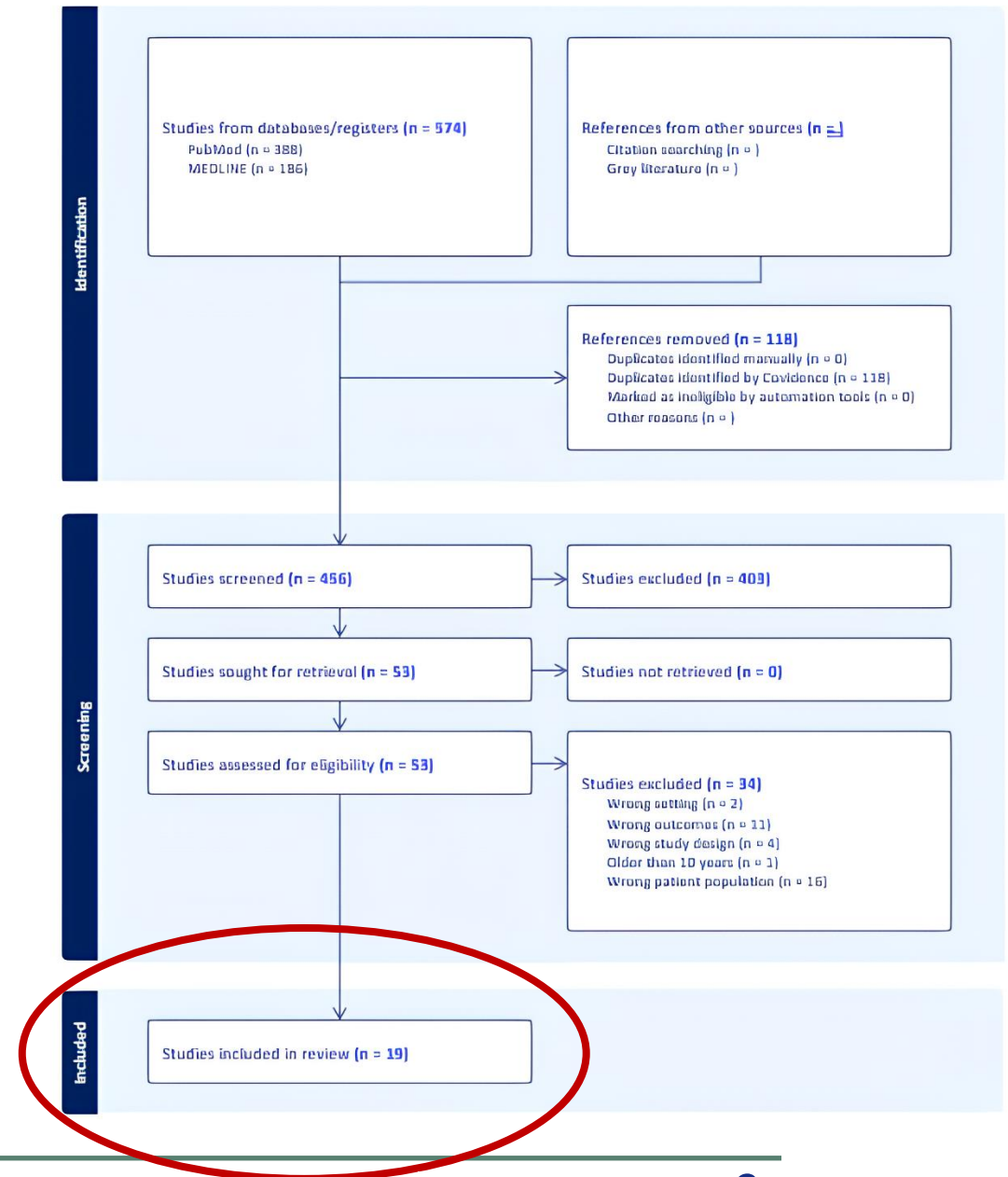
- Part 1: Older Adult Survey
- Part 2: Older Adult Focus Groups



Delphi Study Phase 2  
(Fall 2025)

# Scoping Review

This scoping review aimed to identify key barriers to digital literacy among older adults and synthesize evidence from existing literature to provide a comprehensive understanding of these challenges.



# Seven Barriers to Digital Literacy

1. Health Barriers
2. Barriers for Support Networks
3. Barriers to Convenience and Ease of Use
4. Knowledge and Information Barriers
5. Perception Barriers
6. Resource Barriers
7. Barriers for Special Populations

# Strategies to Mitigate Barriers to Digital Literacy

1. Collaborative Learning
2. Structured Content
3. Technology-Facilitated Self-Learning
4. Tailored Interventions
5. Adaptive Tools
6. Continuous Support

## Findings from Phase 1 Survey

- Responses from 756 older adults across all provinces and territories in Canada
- 60.2% (n = 455) participants heard of the term “digital literacy”
- Key Elements of Digital Literacy for Older Adults:
  - Safety, privacy & responsible behaviour
  - Ongoing instruction & adaptable learning
  - Communication & social connections
  - Affordable & inclusive technology
  - Functional skills for everyday tasks

## Findings from Phase 1 Survey

- The most preferred definition (37%) used in previous literature was *“The ability to find, evaluate, and communicate information using information and communication technologies.”*
  - Positives: clear, practical and easy to relate to everyday life
  - Limitations: too academic, did not explicitly mention support or learning process essential for older adults



# Findings from Phase 1 Focus Groups

- Four focus groups with 18 older adults in Canada
- Seven key themes identified:

Foundations of Digital Literacy: Basic Skills and Functional Use

Ongoing learning and individualized support

Safety, Privacy, and Trust in the Digital Environment

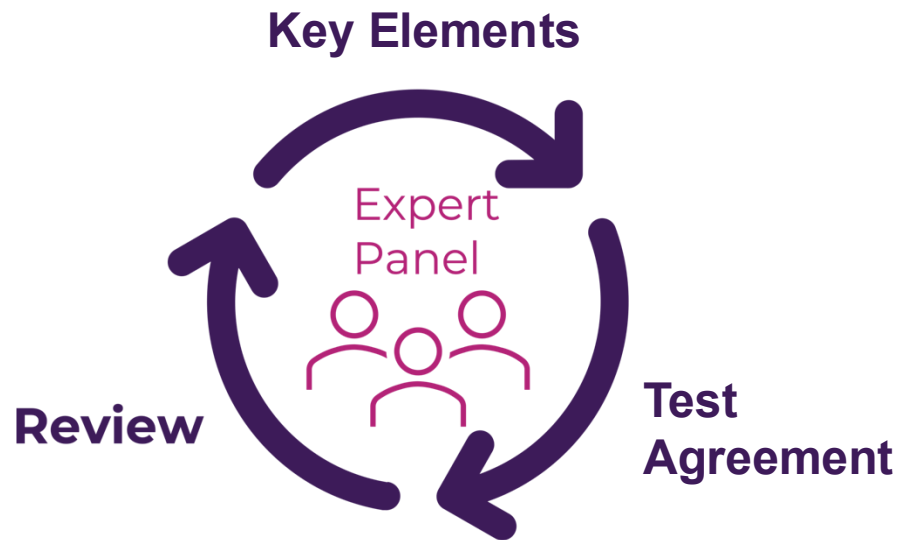
Digital Literacy as a Means for Social Connection and Inclusion

Barriers Related to Technology Affordability, Accessibility, and Complexity

Digital Literacy in the Context of Changing Life Circumstances for Older adults

The Role of Technology Evolution and Emerging Tools

# Delphi Hybrid Event



- Delphi supports the development of items through consensus building among a group of “*experts*” on a given topic.
- Delphi is not a single rigid technique but a flexible, evolving method.
- Its core function is to structure group communication to harness collective intelligence.

# Delphi Hybrid Event

- National Hybrid event
- 12 experts across Canada
- Integration of survey and focus group results
- Four rounds of small and large group discussion
- Three rounds of anonymous survey to reach 80% agreement

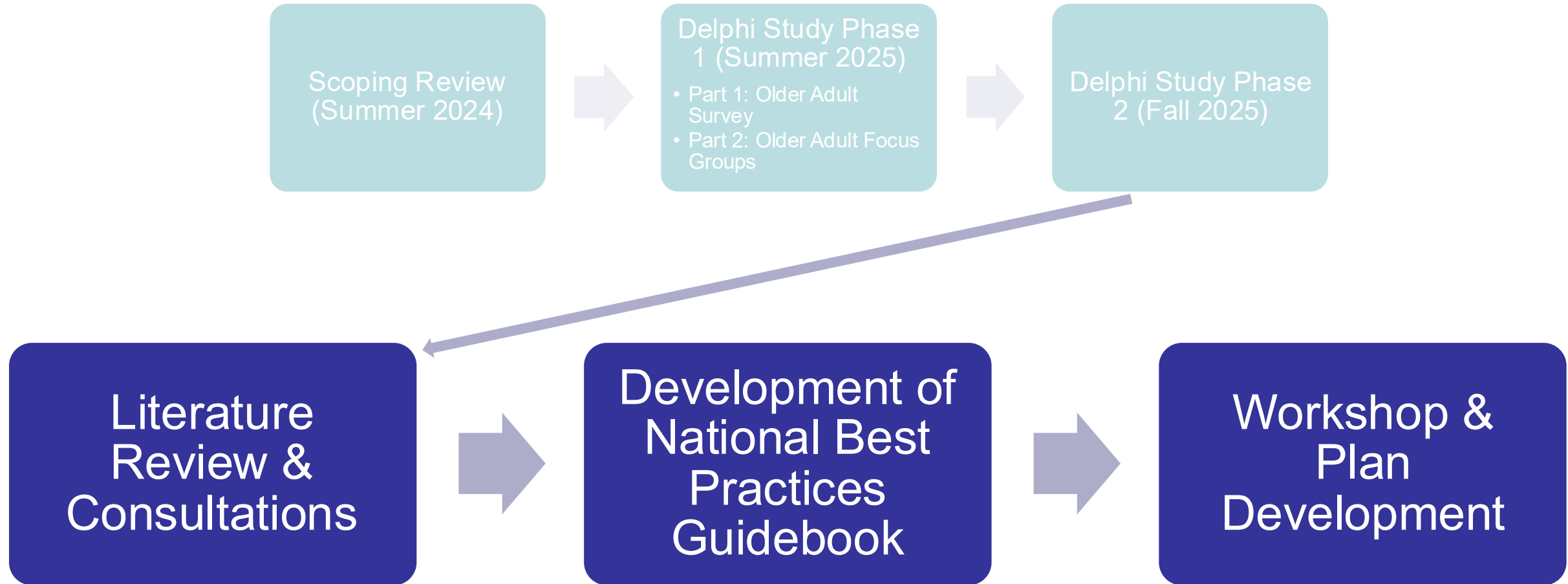
## Delphi Hybrid Event

“Digital literacy is the ability to use, function, understand, critically appraise, adapt, and create meaning to meet relevant and evolving needs and participate in digital environments.”

Key contextual elements that support and expand the definition:

- Context-specific aging needs
- Safety, privacy, and trust in the digital environment
- Ongoing and individualized support
- Adaptable learning

# Multi-Phase Digital Literacy Project



# Knowledge Mobilization & Next Steps

- National Best Practices Guidebook on Digital Literacy for Older Adults
  - Literature Review
  - Consultations of Guidebook
  - Design
- Knowledge Translation Plan
- Virtual Workshop
- Sustainability Plan

# Knowledge Mobilization & Next Steps

Online Poll for feedback on Guidebook and  
Webinar

[https://queensu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_4  
So8cyoUua4gwck](https://queensu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4So8cyoUua4gwck)



## Feedback, comments, or questions?

Join the CSAH Distribution list – [www.cсах.ca](http://www.cсах.ca)

## Contact us

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## References

Available upon request