

## Elders and the ITC use to communicate with children and grandchildren

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## Why focusing on elders?

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- ❑ 1 in 4 people is estimated to be 65+ in the next 20 years ([UN, 2013](#))
- ❑ Growing old - decrease in social interactions and family network
- ❑ Lack of contact with family members - negative impact on health and well-being ([Santanta et al., 2005](#)).
- ❑ Older adults are willing to invest time and to link with persons important for them (children and grandchildren) ([Lindley, Harper, & Sellen, 2009](#))

## Older people -particularities in using ICT

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- ❑ Less use of the innovative services (photos, video sending, internet browsing ([Fernández-Ardèvol, 2011](#)))
- ❑ The content of communication is limited to basic information ([Santana et al. 2005](#))
- ❑ Communication agencies (phone calls, emails) used in special occasions as birthdays and emergency situations

# Hypothesis

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- When important family members move abroad, elders would become (more) motivated to learn using ICTs in order to share daily-by-day experiences
- Regardless their social-economic background, grandparents are willing to learn advanced internet

# Arguments

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- “Gratification niche of a medium”;  
“Gratification opportunity”  
(Dimmick, Kline, & Stafford, 2000)
- Evidence that elders’ ICT integration in everyday life routines is built up more from utilitarian approach rather than from the hedonistic one  
(Loos, Haddon, & Mante-Meijer, 2012).

Two research studies - empirical evidence on the elders use of ICTs in communicating with children and grandchildren

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**Study 1:** in collaboration with [Mireia Fernández-Ardèvol](#) (IN3, UOC, Catalonia), using semi-structured interviews with people aged 60 and above

**Study 2:** a netnographic research, using blended methodology (online ethnography and face to face interviews) with grandmothers having Facebook accounts, in collaboration with [Shannon Hebblethwaite](#), Department of Applied Human Sciences at Concordia University

## Study1: Method

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A set of case studies that follow the same methodological design and goals

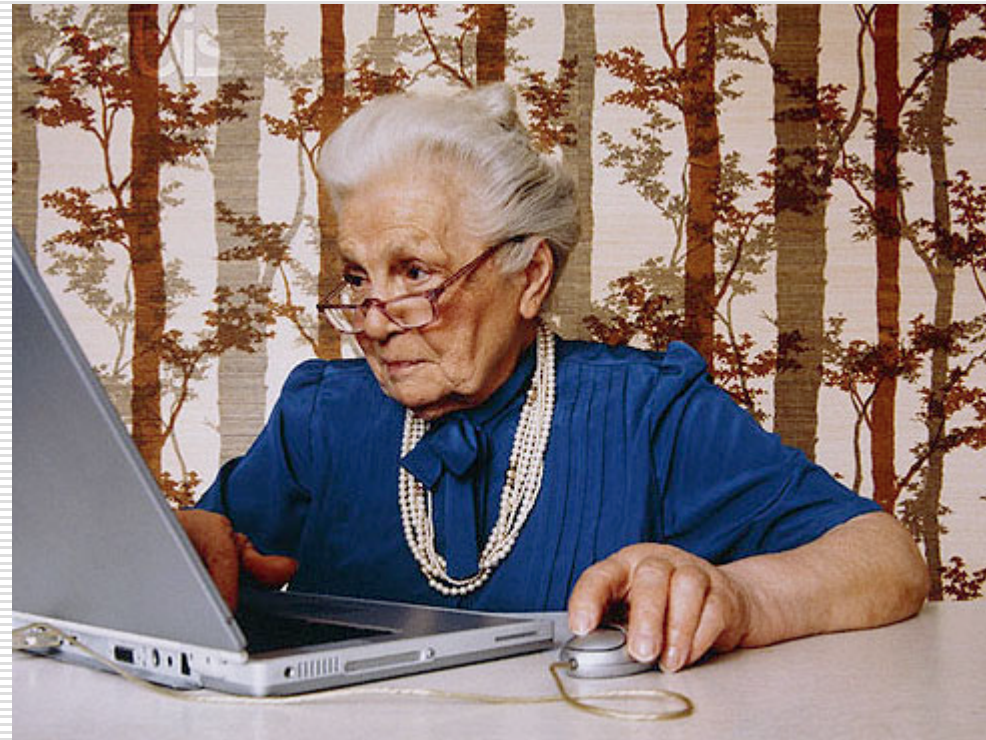
- Barcelona (Catalonia, Spain)
- Romania, including Bucharest and rural areas
- Los Angeles (California, USA)
- Toronto (Ontario, Canada);
- Montevideo (Uruguay)
- Lima (Peru).

semi-structured interviews with 163 individuals aged 60+

# Results

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- ❑ Using Skype or Messenger  
- need to communicate with children and grandchildren abroad
- ❑ The perceived skills and ability to handle the device
- ❑ The initial experience with the device





general potential “to manage these things”

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“I don’t press the red button, because I can see it is red. Sometimes, by mistake I press the red button...because it was in the left side in my old phone. I would loose the number or it is not possible to open it. Sometimes I mistake because I forget that red in in the left, and green in the right side” (woman, 70, rural, medium education)

## Urban versus rural areas

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- ❑ elders from the rural areas and also those from the 70+ feel unskilled with the use of ICT
- ❑ feeling helpless when children move abroad and communication is interrupted



## Older elders *versus* younger elders

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Interviewee: First of all, I cannot use the Internet. But my son is talking by Internet with my daughter from Germany.

Interviewer: And you, how do you talk with her?

Interviewee: Through them: my son says to me..."I've talked with Flory, she said this and this". She calls me only on my birthday to congratulate

(Man, 73, secondary education, Bucharest)

## More motivated to use ICTs to communicate

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- ❑ Professionally active elders but also those socially active
- ❑ Women who were in charge of taking care of their grandchildren
- ❑ Grandbabies -an important incentive to learn to use different services to record daily experiences with their grandchildren (internet browsing)
- ❑ Our data support “gratification niche” theory (Dimmick, Kline, & Stafford, 2000).

## Discussion (1)

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- Talking with children and grandchildren when family separated is an important motivator -“pushes” elders to learn more about the use of ICTs
- Once motivation is lost (i.e. family members are back home) the interest in using a particular technology to communicate is diminished
- Elders can be involved in a process of re-appropriation when the situation has changed

## Discussion(2)

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- A more dynamic model of technology appropriation:

Appropriation

Neglecting

-Re-appropriation

Contextual factors - different life stages:

- Prior (pleasant or unpleasant) interactions with ICT
- Perception of their own ability to handle de device
  
- Need to communicate with at long distance with family members
- Existence of alternative ways of communication that offered competitive gratifications
- Level of social and professional activism
- Possibility to have assistance in using the new technology

## Study 2: Netnography of grandmothers' use of Facebook for family communication with children and grandchildren living abroad ([Grannies on the Net](#))

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- ❑ A cross cultural pilot study (Romania and Canada) sponsored by [ACT project Canada](#)
  - ❑ In collaboration with [Shannon Hebblethwaite](#), Department of Applied Human Sciences at Concordia University
  - ❑ Mireia Fernández-Ardèvol (UOC, IN3) methodology adviser
- 1) Semi-structured interviews (N=20 in each country) with women having a Facebook account and relevant family members (children or grandchildren) living far away from home
  - 2) Content analysis of the Facebook profiles of the interviewed women (demographic info, # of 'friends', # of family members involved, frequency of use)
  - 3) Virtual ethnographic research (netnography) of a Facebook online group of older adults





## GRANNIE'S ON THE NET?

### The Use of Facebook for Family Communication

This comparative case study brings together research on social media use, specifically Facebook, in Romania and Canada. The purpose of the study is to investigate how grandmothers communicate with grandchildren who move far away from home. Considering Facebook as an emergent, global telecommunication practice, this study will widen the breadth of study on Facebook by including older adults as users of this technology.

Ageing is often accompanied by changes in social interactions, including family communication. In the context of today's intensive global migration for work and study, older adults are often left behind when children or grandchildren move abroad. The lack of contact with family members can have detrimental impacts on their health and well-being. Information and communications technologies (ICTs), such as Facebook, might offer appropriate mechanisms to facilitate family bonding when their families are geographically dispersed. Furthermore, ICTs provide important incentive for grandparents to engage with social media to share photos and news from children and grandchildren, especially grandbabies. Given that older adults are living longer and healthier lives than ever before, grandparents have increasing opportunities to develop intergenerational relationships when their grandchildren grow and move away from home. When families are living apart, either in different countries or at great distances within the same country, ICTs can help families to develop a shared history and sense of social support among generations. Given the increased role of ICTs in society today, including increasing usage among older adults, it is vital, the role that ICTs play in family communication

### Researchers:

Loredana Ivan, National School of Political Studies and Public Administration  
Shannon Hebblethwaite, Concordia University

### Collaborators:

Alina Duduciuc  
Corina Daba-Buzoianu

### Funding:

ACT-SSHRC

### ACT Partners:

National School of Political Studies and Public Administration  
Concordia University



# Premises

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- ❑ In the context of today's intensive global migration elders are often left behind
- ❑ Older adults value contact with family members and are willing to invest time in order to maintain contact
- ❑ ICTs might offer appropriate mechanisms to facilitate family bonding when their families are geographically dispersed
- ❑ Focusing on grandmothers, as previous studies (Quadrello et al., 2005; Burke et.al., 2013) have shown that they play a more central role in communication actions and family bonding
- ❑ ICTs can help families to develop a shared history and sense of social support among generation

## Preliminary findings from the semi-structured interviews and content analysis

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- Tendency to switch from different devices - Facebook interplaying with other ways of communicating with children and grandchildren
- Relative passive use of Facebook, focusing on photos and quotations as content which triggers emotions
- Their usage was influenced by social norms around decency and privacy
- Preference for telephone conversations rather than Facebook for personal communication among family members

# Switching devices

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- Facebook is seeing as a way of presenting daily life using photos

“I looked on Facebook and I saw pictures with my son’s house and how he decorated it, and I had just picked up the phone and said to him: I don’t like it that much. I asked him to add new photos on Facebook so I can see more clear”

(woman, 65, medium educated, Bucharest)

## Preference for using phone or skype rather than Facebook for personal communication among family members

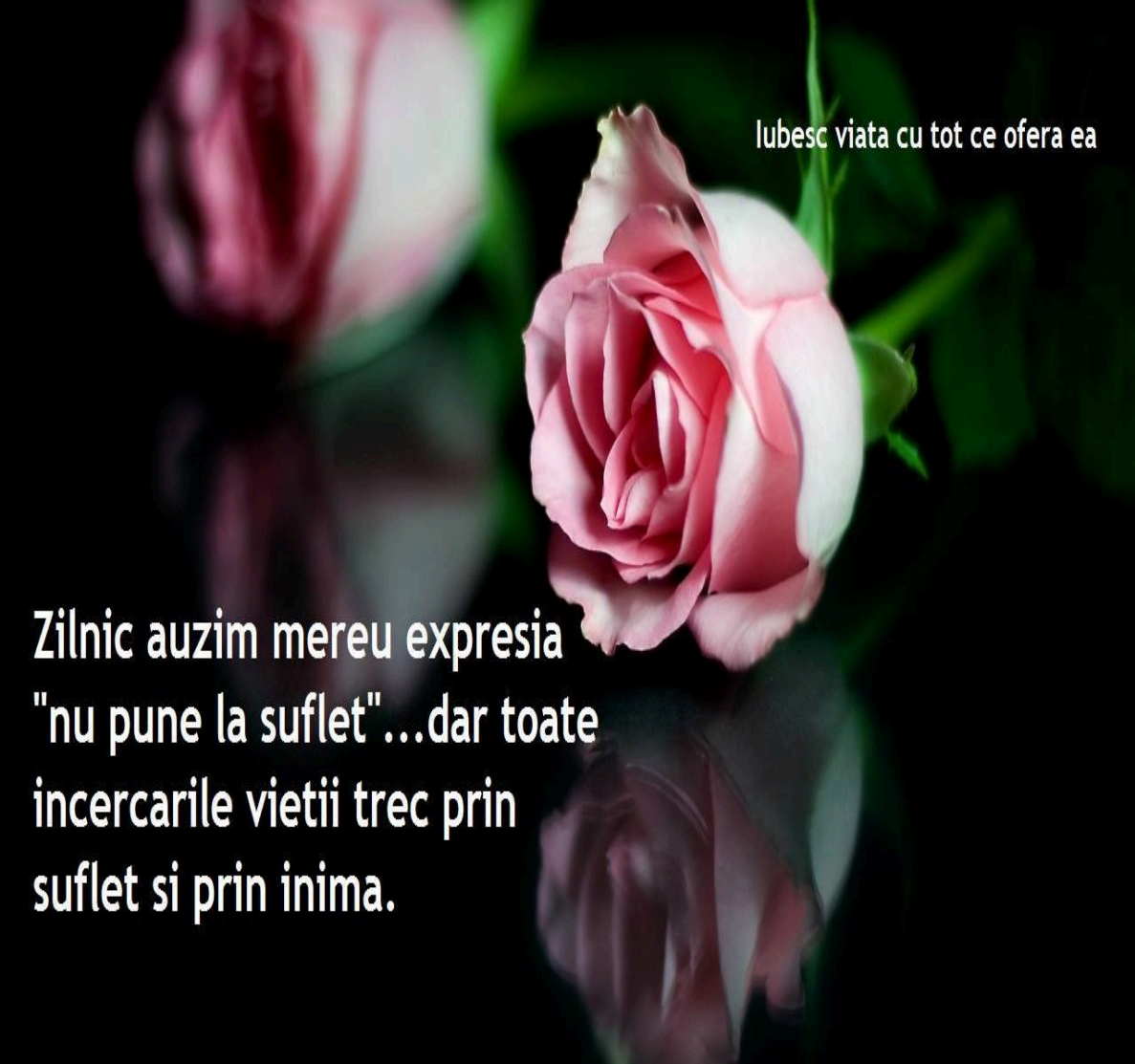
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“ I like watching their [grandchildren] photos on Facebook, but I prefer calling them when I have something to say. And now, with the Skype, anytime I miss them I can call them and talk with them. We talk like crazy and it is nice that we can see each other. Sometimes, when I really miss them, I just call”

(woman, 67, high educated, Bucharest)

## Passive use of Facebook, focusing on photos and quotations

"I like to see photos,  
I would like to learn  
how to add photos on  
Facebook with my  
grandsons. This will  
make me happy"  
(woman, 67, medium  
educated, Bucharest)



Zilnic auzim mereu expresia  
"nu pune la suflet"...dar toate  
incercarile vietii trec prin  
suflet si prin inima.

Iubesc viata cu tot ce ofera ea

## Concerns for social norms around decency and privacy

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“I simply don’t like people, women, who undress themselves on internet. I don’t want to share my problems with unknown ones. I have seen a lot of people on Facebook talking with others they don’t know or just showing everything. I do not see myself doing this”

(woman, 67, medium educated, Bucharest)

# Findings on ICTs use to communicate with grandchildren

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- ❑ Using tablets to play and skype with grandchildren
- ❑ Choosing online games to play with grandchildren
- ❑ The willingness to know more on adding content when using Facebook
- ❑ They stop using the devices when family is reunited (except for the games)

## Findings from the content analysis

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- ❑ Poor technical skills
- ❑ Basic skills, mostly sharing content following what others are posting
- ❑ Few persons in their network, mostly family members and second degree relatives (the presence of extended family)
- ❑ Few comments, few likes, the use of Caps Lock
- ❑ Preoccupation for impression management
- ❑ Limited self -impression management strategies (on their wall page)



# Preoccupation for impression management

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“First, I did not know how to create a page. My son, who helped me, took a photo of mine using the camera from the tablet. Then people called me and told me the photo is really ugly and I should change it. I also did not like it but I did not know how to change it. Now is better, I put a photo of my grandchildren” (women, 66, medium educated, Bucharest)



Emilia Ghinea

Friends  Suggest Friends  
 Following  Message  ...

- Timeline
- About
- Friends 1 Mutual
- Photos
- More

1 mutual friend: Dragos Dracea

Also lives in Bucharest, Romania

From Bucharest, Romania  
Born on July 21, 1950 (64 years old)

Your friend since July 2014

High School  
Ask to see info

Work  
Ask to see info

Post  Photo / Video

Write something...

Emilia Ghinea shared a link.  
December 3, 2014 ·

Sponsored

15 € Reducere - Bilete Avion  
www.vola.ro  
15€ reducere la biletul de avion! Doar cu newsletterul Vola.ro

Marti e Comedy Night  
www.berariah.ro  
Claudiu Bleont si Magda Catone te invita la "Un barbat si mai multe femei" (marti, 3 Mar.)

Recent

2014

Born

Chat (74)

# Grannies will be grannies...

Inbox (859) - loredana.iva x Elena Curteanu Dudau x how to make printscreen x Dragos

https://www.facebook.com/elenadudau

Elena Curteanu Dudau

Loredana Home

**Elena Curteanu Dudau**

Timeline About Friends Photos More

DO YOU KNOW ELENA?

To see what she shares with friends, send her a friend request.

Also lives in Bucharest, Romania

Retired

Went to C.A. Rosetti - Bucuresti - promotia 1964

From Bucharest, Romania

Sponsored

15 € Reducere - Bilete Avion  
www.vola.ro  
15€ reducere la biletul de avion! Doar cu newsletterul Vola.ro

Lenjerii de pat SUPERBE  
www.outlet-magazin.com  
Modele 3D! Preturi de la 79 Lei! Stoc limitat! Transport GRATUIT!

Recent

2015  
2014  
2013  
2012  
2011  
2010  
Born

Chat (87)



We have not always being old



Write a comment...



Tatiana Duna

April 4

AMINTIRILE BUNICII.....



Like · Comment · Share

3 people like this.

Seen by 25

View 1 more comment

SUGGESTED PAGES

See All



Mobile Media Lab - Concordia University

College & University · 201 likes

Like Page

English (US) · Privacy · Terms · Cookies · Advertising · Ad Choices · More

Facebook © 2015

Netnography is participant—observational research based in online fieldwork (Kozinets, 2010, p.60)

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- ❑ Participant observation—typical for the ethnographic approach
- ❑ Research on ‘Online Communities’ –
- ❑ Flexible , adaptive methodology
- ❑ Naturalistic research

The focus is on meaning  
Social life from the everyday  
perspective of group members

## Procedure

- planning
- entering the community
- gather the data
- interpretation

# Online community

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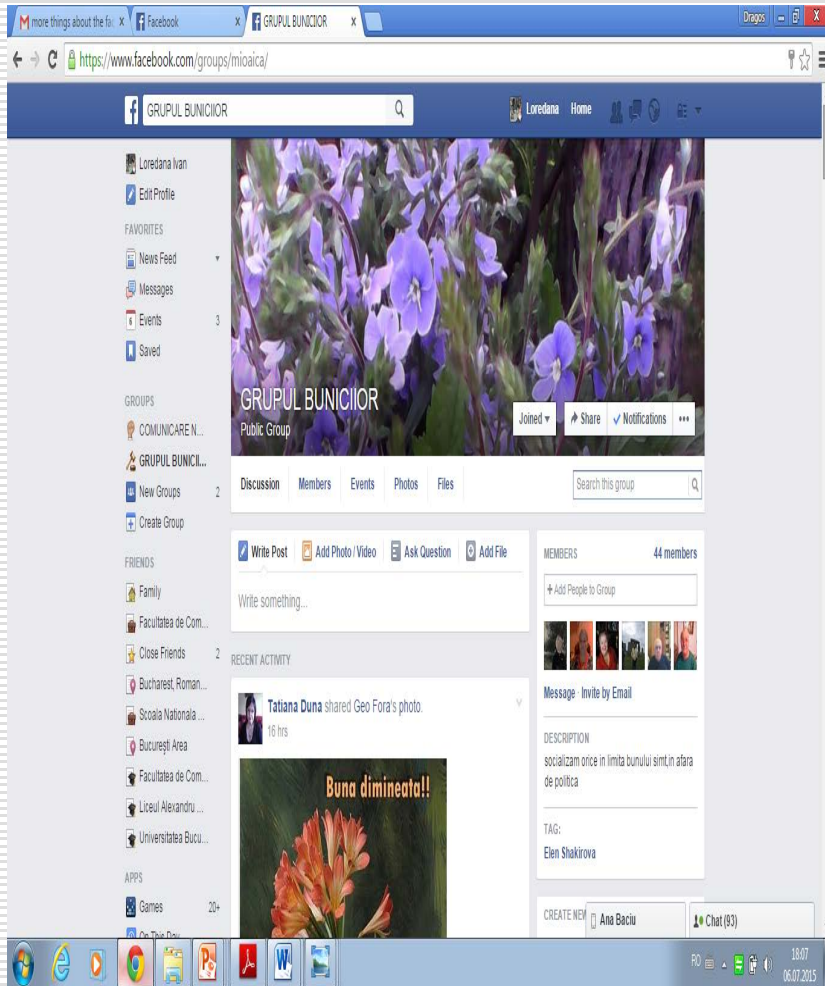
'social aggregations that emerge from the net when enough people carry on . . . public discussions long enough, with sufficient human feeling, to form webs of personal relationships in cyberspace'.

- ❑ Level of analysis – meso, group level
- ❑ Source of data –CMC
- ❑ Public access- accessibility
- ❑ Online communities as ongoing, continuous relationships
- ❑ authentic contact with others present in online communities: disclosure, honesty, reciprocal support



# Grupul bunicilor (*grandparents group*)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/mioaica/>



- ❑ Semi-public group (you have to ask for permission to join)
- ❑ Content is public
- ❑ As a non-member you can see all the posting
- ❑ As a member you can also post (add content)
- ❑ Number of members: 44
- ❑ 18 men, 26 women.
- ❑ Those active are mostly women
- ❑ 4-5 members are posting almost everyday



# Main topics found in the grandparents group

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- ❑ Music from the 60s-70s
- ❑ Famous actors the 60s-70s
- ❑ Cooking and recipes
- ❑ Daily life activities (as gardening)
- ❑ Interactions with grandchildren
- ❑ Travels and excursions
- ❑ Flowers, wise quotations
- ❑ Religious quotations and inspiring thoughts
- ❑ Humor – as a way to deal with negative stereotypes on older people

# Music and actors from the 60s

GRUPUL BUNICIOR x M quotations + photos + life o x

https://www.facebook.com/groups/mioaica/

P.S. I Love YOU!

The Beatles - P.S. I Love You

YOUTUBE.COM

Like · Comment · Share

Tatiana Duna likes this. Seen by 7

Write a comment...

Petre Stadler  
June 22 at 11:00pm

Jimi Hendrix - Hey Joe

YOUTUBE.COM

Chat (68)

start mesaj\_shan... about\_netr... GRUPUL BU... Screenshots photos EN 9:30 AM

(1) GRUPUL BUNICIOR x Sent Mail - loredana.ivant@... x

https://www.facebook.com/groups/mioaica/

June 9 at 6:33pm

Nu luăm cu noi nicio avuție.  
Ceea ce ne rămâne moștenire este numai ceea ce am dat

Florin Piersic

Tony Poptamas with Relu Capalo and 44 others

Frumos spus, Maestre...

Like · Comment · Share

3 people like this. Seen by 15

Chat (73)

start mesaj\_shan... about\_netr... (1) GRUPUL... Screenshots photos EN 9:46 AM

# Cooking and daily life activities

The image shows a screenshot of a Facebook group page titled "GRUPUL BUNICIOR". The browser's address bar displays "https://www.facebook.com/groups/mioaica/". The main post features a collage of four images: a large bowl of red jam, a green mug with a smiley face, a plate of jam, and several jars of jam with different colored lids (red, green, white). The post text reads: "Astazi anin galbenele. Daja incep pregatirile de iarna, am adunat sunatoare, coada calului, musetel, rostopasca, marar, tarhon, leustean, etc." Below the images, there are interaction options: "Like · Comment · Share", "4 people like this.", and "Seen by 18". The right sidebar shows group information, including "Grupul iubitori de Grecia, Jocati, muzica..." and "Fermierul roman". The bottom of the page shows a Windows taskbar with the Start button and several open applications, including "mesaj\_shan...", "about\_netn...", and "GRUPUL BUNICIOR...". The system clock shows "9:38 AM".

GRUPUL BUNICIOR

https://www.facebook.com/groups/mioaica/

Astazi anin galbenele. Daja incep pregatirile de iarna, am adunat sunatoare, coada calului, musetel, rostopasca, marar, tarhon, leustean, etc.

Like · Comment · Share

4 people like this. Seen by 18

mesaj\_shan... about\_netn... (1) GRUPUL... Screenshots photos EN 9:38 AM

Chat (63)

35

# Travels and excursions

# Grandparenting

The image displays two side-by-side screenshots of a Facebook group page titled "GRUPUL BUNICIOR".

**Left Screenshot:**  
- \*\*Post Date:\*\* May 18  
- \*\*Caption:\*\* Bunica la joaca...  
- \*\*Image:\*\* A woman in a black jacket is riding a large, white, rabbit-shaped carousel horse. The horse is decorated with colorful patterns and has a large, smiling mouth. The woman is holding the reins and looking towards the camera.  
- \*\*Interaction:\*\* Like · Comment · Share  
- \*\*Status:\*\* 4 people like this. Seen by 22  
- \*\*Chat:\*\* Chat (71)

**Right Screenshot:**  
- \*\*Post Date:\*\* April 13  
- \*\*Caption:\*\* ajutorul meu la cumparaturi  
- \*\*Image:\*\* A young girl with long brown hair, wearing a red shirt, is sitting in a shopping cart. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background shows a grocery store aisle with shelves of products and a sign that says "TARG".  
- \*\*Interaction:\*\* Like · Comment · Share  
- \*\*Chat:\*\* Chat (80)

The browser address bar for both screenshots shows the URL: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/mioaica/>. The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the "start" button and several open applications, including "mesaj\_shan...", "about\_net...", and "(1) GRUPUL...".



# Humor – as a way to deal with negative stereotypes on older people

<https://www.facebook.com/SERGIOCARVALLOFANS/videos/4991315029782/?fref=nf>

The image shows a screenshot of a Facebook page for the group 'GRUPUL BUNICIOR'. The main content is a video titled 'Actitud Positiva a los 90 años!' (Positive Attitude at 90 years!) by Sergio Carvallo. The video shows an elderly woman on a balcony. Below the video, there is a caption in Spanish: 'If you like it-share it with everyone! Watch the video: This is called having attitude... And at the age of 90! Access list exclusive videos: <http://bit.ly/listprivadasergio>'. The video is automatically translated.

Below the video is a cartoon by Sergio Carvallo. It depicts an elderly couple sitting on a park bench. A young boy is talking to them. The boy's speech bubble says: '...VEZI SA N-O NIMERESTI PE BABA DE NEVASTA-MEA!' (...Do you really not care about my mother-in-law!). The cartoon is signed '©ASAR'.

The Facebook interface includes a search bar, a navigation menu, and a right-hand sidebar with sections like 'TELL US WHAT YOU THINK', 'SUGGESTED PAGES', and 'English (US) - Privacy - Terms - Cookies - Advertising - Ad Choices - More - Facebook © 2015'. The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the Start button and several open applications.

## Further developments

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- ❑ Using blended netnography and collecting social demographic data from the Online community
- ❑ Also interviews with the most active women in the community (skype interviews or face to face interviews)
- ❑ Archive the online data during 3-6 months and systematically analyze it