

Abstract

In today's day and age, the number of people in the third stage of their life is increasing, and so are the expenses required to look after them and care for them. This increase has called for massive growth in the demand for technology to assist the elderly or help others to take care of them. But regardless of the money being invested and the efforts made, an essential factor that needs to be determined is how well the older generation would adapt to these technologies. Support groups have dominated all the research surrounding the interaction of older people and technology. But we live in an age of social media. COVID-19 forced more senior people to come out of their shells and get their hands dirty with technology since technology remained the sole communication medium during the social lockdown. And with the development of advanced text analytics techniques, it will be interesting to see whether the results found by the previous researchers in this field are still valid. And since society plays a significant factor in influencing the elderly to use technology, we will also look at the emotions of people talking about older people.

We created a pipeline that can be used by anyone trying to fetch data from specific social media platforms, which gave an accuracy of around 80% on three different platforms. We then used Part of Speech Tagging techniques to find out what parts of speech were used the most by either older people or people talking about older people. We saw increased use of Possessive Pronouns and compared the same with data extracted using keywords not related to older people to confirm the same. We then tried to mine the emotion behind the texts and found that for nearly half of the keywords used across the three social media websites (17 out of 34), the primary feeling shown was that of being scared. The second most widely exhibited feeling across the dataset was the feeling of joy when the keywords were related to welfare schemes of the government for older people. For a few keywords, the emotion was sadness and anger. Our research showed contradicting results to the outcomes delivered by previous researchers who used focus groups to get an idea of the emotions of older people towards technology.