

# *Technology: A Brave New World for Seniors*



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While many seniors today are often chided (gently, we hope) by their families for their aversion to new things, it's instructive to remember that seniors have in their lifetimes adapted to a wealth of potentially unsettling changes and inventions: seeing people walk on the moon, cable television, food processors, cell phones, and beyond.

And while most would perhaps contend that the technological phenomenon known as the internet is primarily the playground of the young, there are now close to 16 million people over the age of 55 in America utilizing Facebook and other social media and 15 percent of Americans over 55 have – and use – some sort of Smartphone or hand-held technology.

Yes, seniors are embracing new media. Sites like Facebook have helped many reconnect with friends and family members, and even former classmates they might not have thought to contact or call otherwise. And if you ever pose a health-related question in the presence of a tech-savvy senior, don't be surprised if they whip out an iPhone, connect to a medical website, and do some quick fact-checking on possible diagnoses, remedies, or other obscure statistics about the topic at-hand.

There is perhaps no better source for instant (and usually credible) information than the internet, and senior citizens can avail themselves of sites that can answer their questions or point them in the direction of someone who can.

Some of the more popular sites for seniors come from the American Association for Retired Persons ([www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org)), Access America for Seniors ([www.usa.gov/Topics/Seniors.shtml](http://www.usa.gov/Topics/Seniors.shtml)), Alliance for Aging Research ([www.agingresearch.org](http://www.agingresearch.org)), ElderCare Online ([www.ec-online.net](http://www.ec-online.net)), the Medicare Information Center ([www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov)), and the National Council on Aging ([www.ncoa.org](http://www.ncoa.org)).

Clearly, not every senior in America is wired and surfing the net, but it's possible to get in the game in a hurry. Public libraries are often filled with open computer stations for the elderly and everyone else to utilize, and most offer computer training. Local councils on aging and recreation departments are also helpful in getting older citizens set up to learn the ins and outs of their computers, phones, and tablets.

We may occasionally make fun of our older friends and family members when they shift into "Back in my day" mode, but we shouldn't be surprised when we find they've found their way to the web and have discovered their niche among the billions of young and old accessing this technology on a daily basis.

Keeping the promise,



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