

Seniors tuning in to social media



Surveys are showing, more and more, that the older generations are connecting with family and friends, joining communities and expressing themselves on social media such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter.



No doubt, seniors not too long ago were resistant to the whole idea of “computers.” Today, more seniors have realized that:

- ▶ Jockeying a computer (or smartphone or tablet) does not take special genius, just learning and a little practice
- ▶ Using a modern device is very easy (e.g., touchscreen-driven navigation)
- ▶ Social sites are where friends and family are today

Some of the attractions for seniors

Distance disappears. Seniors have found that on social media sites, particularly Facebook, families who are physically separated can gather around the table virtually to share news, photos and thoughts. Social media have boosted the use of even cell phones for photos and messages instead of spoken conversations and created a time-and-distance-defying way to stay close to children and grandchildren.

It's visual. Grandparents in particular can simply go to Facebook, YouTube or other outlets to see photos and videos of and by family members.

Safety reasons. For elders living on their own, having a regular check in via social media from family members adds a very convenient security measure to long-distance relationships.

Deals. It's not all about family and friends. Seniors, many of whom are on fixed incomes, are increasingly taking advantage of deals offered by companies on social media sites and on websites such as Groupon.



Communities for belonging and sharing interests

Particularly for those living alone at home, more elders are finding that they can easily belong to any number of online communities to share experiences, opinions and interests – and stay engaged. Such communities, whether found on Facebook, blogs or other types of websites, provide opportunities for friendship, congregation and contribution – without leaving the house.

