

# Rewiring Aging

Social networking can improve the quality of life for America's oldest senior citizens, but many people over 80 need assistance in becoming part of the digital world.

We asked over 400 adults aged 80+ about how they use and perceive technology.



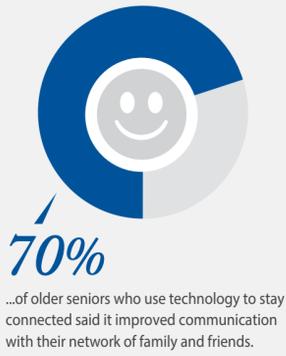
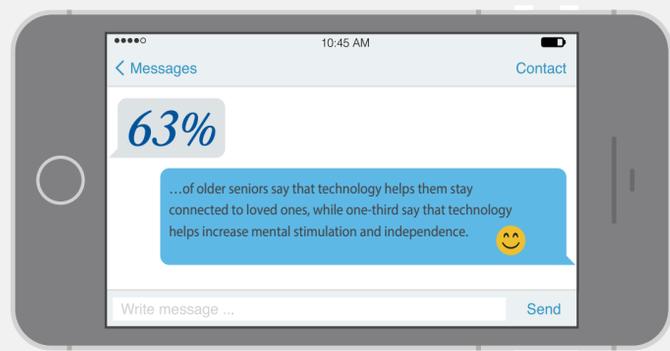
## What matters most to seniors: having relationships with family and friends.

While most Americans over 80 say that technology helps them stay connected socially, more than 1/3 of them do not use any form of social technology. This is despite additional findings that positively link health, happiness and wellbeing to tech-based social engagement — and its effectiveness at combating isolation and loneliness.



## Staying socially connected through technology helps older seniors.

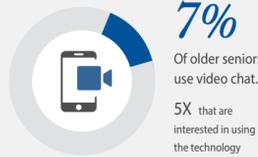
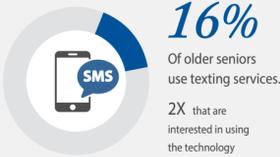
Older seniors who reap the connecting benefits of technology have more positive impressions of new tech overall. Seniors who stayed socially connected are happier and healthier than those who are isolated and alone, had a higher life satisfaction and were more likely to be attaining life goals.



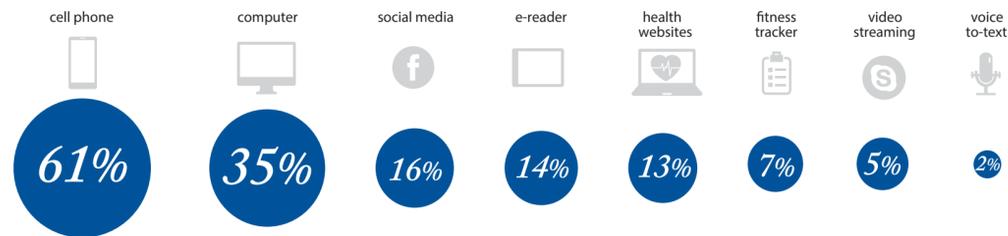
## Seniors are open to future technology and online applications.

However, much of current technology is neither easy to adopt, understand, use nor meaningful to them.

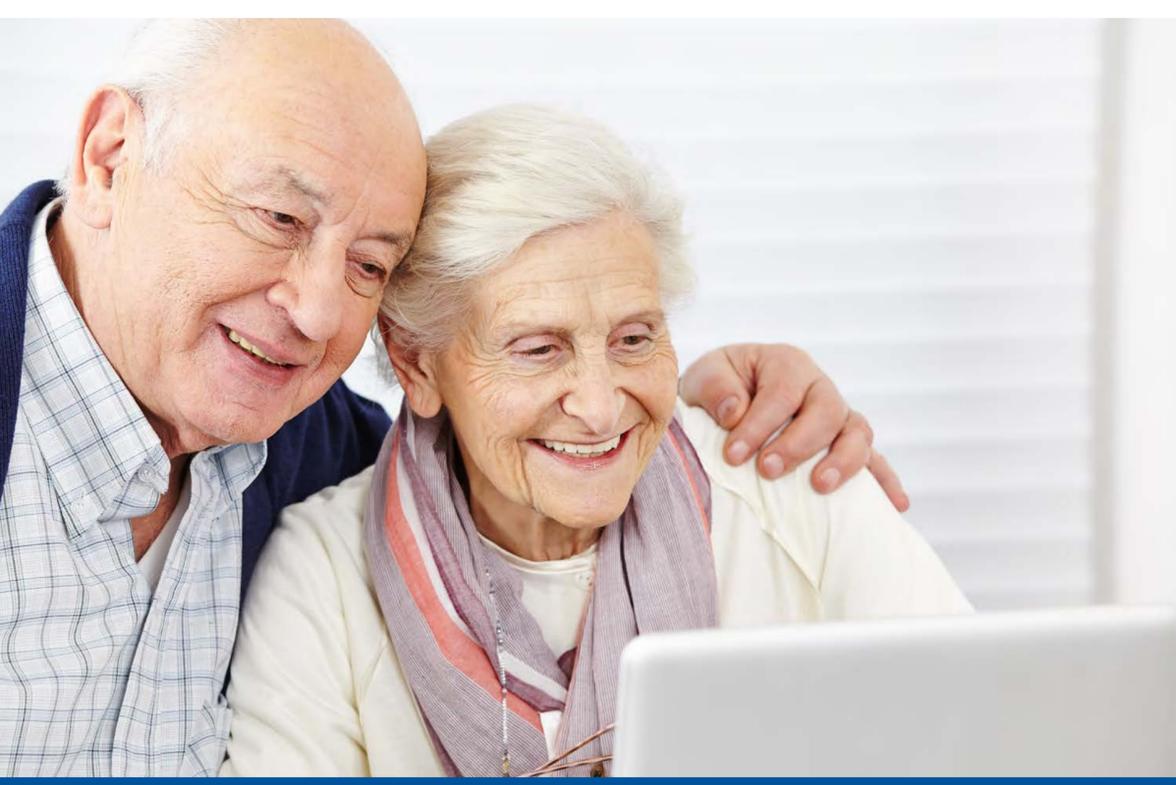
Seniors say they want technology they can use to stay socially connected, including efficient ways to stay in touch like speech-to-text, text-messaging and video-chat-enabled applications (e.g. Skype and FaceTime) — however few use the applications.



## Technology currently used by seniors:



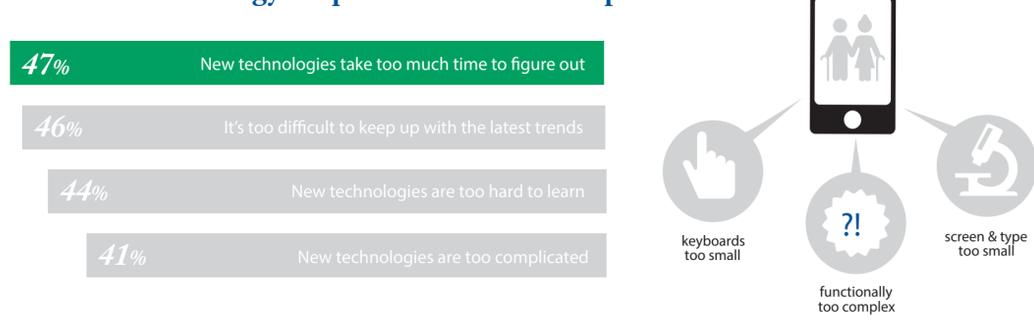
## Seniors who do not use any technological devices, apps or programs:



## Being overwhelmed by complicated technology is #1 barrier.

Seniors 80+ want technology that's easy to use, but they find the usability of current technology, designed for the younger generations, frustrating. The low technology adoption rate by senior citizens demonstrates a perception that much of current technology, like smart phones and Apple's iWatch, are too complex to help them.

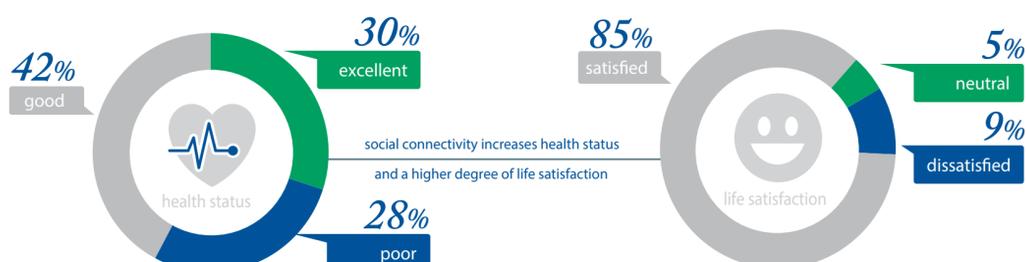
### Barriers to technology adoption & common complaints:



## Social technology use is associated with improved health, happiness and wellbeing.

“Human connection is crucial for people at all ages, but especially so for seniors. Loneliness in this age group is associated with shorter life spans, chronic conditions such as high blood pressure, depression and even dementia. If we can also help those in their 80s and above connect through technology, it's an opportunity to enhance their wellbeing even further and so we are taking numerous steps in that direction.” — Brookdale chief medical officer Kevin O'Neil, M.D.

## Older seniors who use social technology feel better connected, enabling them to be healthy and happy.



Although staying in contact with family and friends via technology is positively associated with improved physical health, over all life satisfaction and reduced loneliness — simply having technology available doesn't lead to use or greater life satisfaction for seniors. What counts is using it to engage in meaningful social ways, and understanding how to make it work for them. Supporting older adults use of technology and creating technologies they can embrace can help the aging stay socially connected.