



## It's never too late to learn to use the Internet



Do you know how to email? What about sending or receiving pictures on the computer?

In the early 1800's, it took mail at least 3-4 weeks to travel from the east to the west coast. Now you can send email anywhere in the world; and it can be received immediately.

Along with email that you send, you can add pictures or send picture mail. Family members really appreciate picture mail when a new baby is born into the family and you are not nearby or can't get to the hospital. Pictures of newborns are sent instantly by parents to family members and friends.

Today, soaring numbers of retired adults are using the internet! According to the Pew Internet and American Life Project, "the 70- to 74-year old internet usage category soared from 26 percent in 2005 to 45 percent in 2009. And, the 65- to 69-year old category is well over 50 percent, with 56 percent of that category utilizing the web." (<http://blog.glynndevins.com/2009/02/seniors-using-internet-more-than-ever/>)

### Keeping in Touch

The internet is a source of keeping in contact with family and friends, near and far, via email where you may send and receive electronic messages. You may surf the web to obtain a wealth of information on any subject imaginable from healthcare to items on sale at your favorite grocery store to printing coupons for grocery items, to what you missed on your favorite soap opera that day. You may join social networking websites such as Facebook or MyFamily, or even twittering.

Facebook.com: Social network websites are used by people to communicate and share information on the internet. I planned to give my neighbor's grandson a gift prior to leaving for college and assumed he was not leaving until the end of the month.

My daughter informed me that he was leaving in three days, which was the middle of the month. I informed my daughter of how I had to rush to purchase and give him his gift, and she said, "If you were on Facebook, you would have known!" Social networking websites provide the opportunity of being in the loop in real time (occurring immediately).

MyFamily.com: There are also family-related websites which allow you or a family member to create a website and any or all family members may post or upload information and pictures. This is a great method of communicating

with all generations. You can also track genealogy and create a family tree.

Twittering: I'm sure most of you have now heard the word "twittering" and are wondering what is twittering? Twittering is sharing and discovering what's happening right now, anywhere in the world, by sending very short text messages (160 characters including spaces) or following someone on twitter (which means reading their messages). (<http://twitter.com/>, [www.articlehubs.com/tutorials/Twitter\\_an\\_introduction\\_in\\_laymans\\_872135\\_0\\_article.html](http://www.articlehubs.com/tutorials/Twitter_an_introduction_in_laymans_872135_0_article.html)) (<http://twitter.com/>, [www.articlehubs.com/tutorials/Twitter\\_an\\_Introduction\\_in\\_Laymans\\_872135\\_0\\_article.html](http://www.articlehubs.com/tutorials/Twitter_an_Introduction_in_Laymans_872135_0_article.html)) I've touched upon just a few examples of the usages of the internet, but there are so many, many more. No wonder almost 100 million U.S. adults are going online every month. That's half of American adults and a 27 percent increase over 1999 in the number who surf the Web." ([www.internet101.org/internetbasics](http://www.internet101.org/internetbasics))

### It's Never Too Late to Learn

If you want to become more familiar with the internet, ask a family member or friend to assist you. You may also want to check your local community colleges or adult centers for free computer classes. If you don't have access to a computer, free access to the internet is provided at many public facilities, such as libraries and senior centers. Those of you familiar with the internet, share your knowledge with family and friends. Whether you are a new user or already familiar with the internet, visit the Center for Healthy Aging website, [www.healthyaging.pitt.edu](http://www.healthyaging.pitt.edu), on a regular basis to obtain information for healthier tomorrows.

*This column was written by Mary Parker, Administrative Coordinator for the Center for Healthy Aging. For more information on this article, please call 412-624-3217. The Center for Healthy Aging is a part of the Department of Epidemiology in the Graduate School of Public Health at the University of Pittsburgh. It is one of 33 Prevention Research Centers in the United States funded by the Centers for Disease Control. For questions or more information contact David J. Fetterman, Community Outreach Coordinator at the Center for Healthy Aging at 412-383-3121 or visit [www.healthyaging.pitt.edu](http://www.healthyaging.pitt.edu).*

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