AARP Research Finds 90 Percent of Adults 50+ Use Personal Technology To Stay Connected
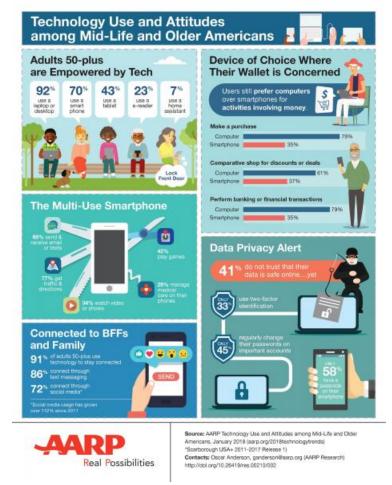
Desire to connect with family and friends is main driver of technology use for adults 50-plus

WASHINGTON, DC— Ninety-one percent of tech owners 50-plus say they use personal technology to keep in touch with family and friends, according to a new AARP survey aimed at measuring and identifying technology use and attitudes among adults 50-plus. The research found that mobile and computing devices are the primary technology for Americans 50-plus with subtle differences between age groups. Adults in their 50s and 60s are texting more than emailing on smartphones, while people 70-plus are more likely to use desktop computers and cellphones to keep in touch. Among people who own computers, tablets and smartphones, each device has different uses: computers are used for more practical tasks, tablets for entertainment and smartphones for social and on-the-go activities.

Key findings from the latest *AARP Survey on Technology Use and Attitudes Among Mid-Life and Older Americans* are:

- Seventy percent of adults 50-plus own a smartphone and an equal percentage are on social media.
- Among those ages 50-69, text messaging has overtaken email as the tech tool most used to stay connected.
- Adults in their sixties are more likely to use their devices to manage medical care than those in their 50s or 70s, particularly among tablet and smartphone owners.

AARP Survey on Technology Use and Attitudes Among Mid-Life and Older Americans

The survey additionally reported that over three-quarters (77 percent) reported using their smartphone for directions or traffic information. Other top activities include purchasing apps, surfing the internet, getting news and accessing social media. Another key finding was that privacy and security are a concern for most older adults but many are not taking proactive steps to protect themselves online.

This AARP Survey on Technology Use and Attitudes can be found here.

Information on AARP's Fraud Watch Network can be found here and AARP Learn@50+ programs offers in-person and online workshops for technology skills, caregiving and work and jobs.

Survey Methodology
The survey on Technology Use and Attitudes was fielded from November 16-27, 2017. Data were collected using GfK's KnowlegePanel, an online probability-based panel. The final, nationally representative sample included 1,520 adults age 50 and older. The margin of error for the general population is ± 2.7 percentage points.

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