



**C2**

ISSUE 26 • SUMMER 2010

**THE MAGAZINE**  
Engaging Consumers >40

# HIGH TECH FOR THE BOOMER FUTURE

**It's Closer  
Than You Think**

## **TRENDS**

The Techno-Challenged  
Boomer

## **MEDIA**

Devising Your Social  
Media Strategy

## **PROFILE**

Insight for Online Boomer  
Communities

## **INTERVIEW**

Exclusive Interview with  
Posit Science



## FROM THE EDITOR

**After 12 years of working in the aging consumer space, I believe that in 2010 we have reached a tipping point.**

From the health care debate to the adoption of the iPad, people are focusing on the aging of our country's citizens, and the rest of the developed world. In fact, Continuum Crew was recently recognized by *Entrepreneur* magazine in its Annual 100 Brilliant Ideas as a company to watch in the aging space, along with Florence Henderson's technology support service, FloH Club.

At conferences nationwide experts are talking about the implications of an aging population; the concept of aging in place; and caregiving. At Continuum Crew, we follow these conversations and help our clients translate the trends and data into actionable product and marketing strategies.

The contributors in this issue are some of the smartest analysts, entrepreneurs and businesspeople focusing on aging consumers and their needs. They understand the intersection of technology and innovation in serving older adults and their caregivers. And they are on the cutting edge of understanding the power of social media.

While we are honored to be considered "brilliant" for creating a business to help companies connect with older consumers, at the end of the day we focus there because the numbers are so compelling. Beyond the size of the Boomer population and the increased longevity of our senior population, consider that more than 65 million people – 29 percent of the U.S. population – provide care for a family member. Almost 40 percent have either children or grandchildren under 18 living with them. For the first time since we began charting this statistic, more adult children are returning home than

are leaving home.

**This aging majority is shaping the zeitgeist of the country and creating a seismic shift in our worldview and approach to all types of goods and services. We have arrived at the tipping point.**

This aging majority is shaping the zeitgeist of the country and creating a seismic shift in our worldview and approach to all types of goods and services. We have arrived at the tipping point.

Read on and let us hear from you.

You may join us on Facebook, LinkedIn, or our blog, [BoomersInTheWild.com](http://BoomersInTheWild.com). Or follow us on Twitter: @loribitter, @40plusconsumers, @continuumcrew.

[Lori.Bitter@ContinuumCrew.com](mailto:Lori.Bitter@ContinuumCrew.com)



Lori K. Bitter  
**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**

Stacey Harris  
**EDITOR**

Rosa Mangiardi  
**PUBLIC RELATIONS**

Beth Fredericks  
Jill Gilbert  
Cyrus Hedayati  
Laurie M. Orlov  
Esther Surden

**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS**

Jim Wood  
**CREATIVE DIRECTOR**

Kurt Baker  
Rebecca Nicholson  
**PRODUCTION**

Stephen Olle  
**COPY EDITOR**

C2 is published by Continuum Crew, the leading full-service agency specializing in the mature and Baby Boomer market.

If you would like to continue to receive C2 send an email to [Info@ContinuumCrew.com](mailto:Info@ContinuumCrew.com) with your name, title, company, mailing address, phone number and email address.

Contact C2 at:  
[info@continuumcrew.com](mailto:info@continuumcrew.com) or  
111 Maiden Lane, Suite 540  
San Francisco, CA 94108

© 2010 Continuum Crew  
May not be reproduced in whole or in part without consent of the publisher.

### FOLLOW CONTINUUM CREW

[BoomersInTheWild.com](http://BoomersInTheWild.com)

@loribitter

@40plusconsumers

@continuumcrew

Continuum Crew - Engaging Consumers > 40

Continuum Crew - Engaging Consumers > 40

# Top Tech Trends for the Boomer Generation

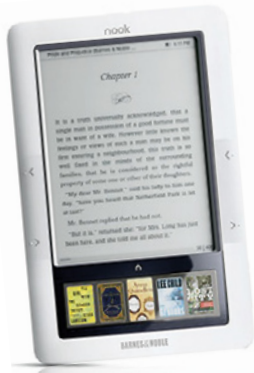
**Baby Boomers are a diverse bunch, but for the most part they are drawn to challenges, and technology is one of those challenges.**

Early on, some Boomers were more reluctant than others to embrace the newest wave of technology – the personal computer – but they are making up for it now. They are gravitating to social networking sites like Facebook (even though, for some, it is due to the draw of children and grandchildren already there) and tech gadgets like the Apple iPhone in record numbers. While some may be leading the technology pack, even their less technologically sophisticated friends are beginning to dip more than their toes into this brave new world. In no particular order, here is my take on the top tech trends for the Boomer generation:



**BY ESTHER SURDEN**

Esther Surden is the author of the blog *Tech and the Baby Boomer* at [techandboomers.blogspot.com](http://techandboomers.blogspot.com).



## **BARNES & NOBLE NOOK E-BOOK READERS**

Wireless networks deliver eNewspapers, eMagazines and store as many as 1,500 eBooks in easy-to-use devices.



## **APPLE IPAD TABLET COMPUTERS**

Thin, lightweight tablets offer a multi-touch screen to operate apps, view photos and surf via Web browsers.

## **FACEBOOK AND SOCIAL NETWORKING**

After mastering the Web, Boomers are flocking to the social networking website Facebook. One survey found that the majority of Boomers and older respondents had joined the popular social networking site within the last six months.<sup>(1)</sup> According to the *New York Times*, the fastest-growing user group is women aged 55 and older, an increase of more than 175%; its usage among men aged 55 and older grew 138%. Facebook is a great way for them to keep up with relatives, friends from high school, former neighbors and children. Boomers are posting status reports to brag about grandchildren, uploading pictures for their college buddies and loving games like Zynga's Farmville.

Boomers looking for inspiration from their peers can go to EONs, a website aimed at them. This is a smaller, more intimate site. It isn't cross-generational, but rather a place for Boomers to find other Boomers.

Those in the job marketplace are drawn to LinkedIn, a professional social network that is a great way to connect with former colleagues and form new professional connections. There are also



social networking sites with a narrow focus that attract the Boomer crowd, such as Vibrantnation.com for women aged 50+, and About55.com, which provides a range of information from finding a job to selecting the best running shoes.

**There is a seismic shift among older adults experimenting in the social media arena.** (Editor's note: this makes an inviting challenge to product marketers – beyond the platform networks themselves – as to how they will work to engage those users who are merely “lurking” and not fully participating.)

## E-BOOK READERS

While e-readers have only captured 1 to 2 percent of the book publishing marketplace, Boomers are drawn to them because they are easy on the eyes, use fonts that can be increased in size and allow them to carry as many books as they like on vacation in one small, light package. By the time they reach age 50, some Boomers will have dealt with carpal tunnel syndrome, shoulder problems or vision problems, so the e-reader is an ideal option. The Amazon Kindle, the Sony E-reader, the Barnes & Noble Nook and the Apple iPad are all easy-to-use devices that weigh between 10 and 12 ounces. While some of them have their quirks, like pages that do not turn quickly enough or books that are slow to download, they all provide a satisfying user experience in the \$200 to \$500 range.

## SMARTPHONES

These phones let Boomers do much more than talk to their friends. With the iPhone, for example, Boomers can download applications (apps) that can let them play Sudoku, watch Netflix movies, search the Internet by speaking into the phone and even read books. Apps translate languages for users, act as travel guides and provide sports score updates. There are apps for every hobby and every lifestyle, and Boomers have found them and are using them. One key aspect Boomers like about the iPhone is that it is easy to use.

## TABLET COMPUTERS

Tablet computers like the Apple iPad are the “next big thing” that Baby Boomers will adopt. When it launched it was described as being tailor-made for Boomers,<sup>(2)</sup> not completely without truth as to its appeal. The iPad is just the first of a number of all-in-one devices that will allow Boomers to watch TV, movies and videos on the go; organize their burgeoning photo collections; read books and magazines (without the paper to recycle); check their email; and play games. Although it has not seemed to affect its popularity, right now this genre of gadget is a bit on the expensive side, starting at \$499, but as the price drops, Boomers will continue to adopt this consumer device in droves.

Boomers' use of technology is poised to grow (particularly any devices that will help them maintain their independence as they age). With friends, children and grandchildren on hand to offer technical support, tips and encouragement, there will be no limits to what these techno-explorers will conquer. **C2**

## OLDER ADULTS' USE OF SOCIAL MARKETING WEBSITES

41% of Boomers have visited social networks such as Facebook, MySpace or LinkedIn.<sup>(1)</sup>

During a four-month period in 2008-2009, the fastest growing user group for Facebook was women 55 and older. This demographic increased by more than 175%.<sup>(2)</sup>

Among Facebook users aged 45 to 54, women outnumbered men by 5.3 million to 3.3 million.<sup>(3)</sup> But men aged 55 and older are catching up. By December 2009, new users in this age group exceeded that of women 55 and older.<sup>(4)</sup>

By August 2009, U.S. women of all ages outnumbered men on Facebook by a ratio of 1.35 to 1.<sup>(5)</sup>

Older users are more comfortable visiting websites to seek information rather than creating new content or interacting through comments and online conversations.<sup>(6)</sup>

The number of U.S. Boomers who use the Internet at least once per month will grow by more than 4 million, rising from 59.4 million in 2007 to 63.7 million in 2011.<sup>(7)</sup>

Sources:

1, 6 NPD Group, Entertainment Trends in America consumer surveys, 2008

2, 3, 4, 5 Inside Facebook, December 2009

7 EMarketer.com

## 2009 CONTINUUM CREW SURVEY OF BOOMERS' USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Among all the media services listed, Boomers are least willing to give up their access to the Internet compared with their top response in 2008: their cell phone.

Boomers now spend more time than ever online, a rapid increase in one year from 38% to 62%.

Boomers are catching up with Generation X on social networking: The majority of Boomers have joined Facebook within the last 6 months.

This survey studied 700 adults aged 35 and older. For full survey data, download from [www.BoomersInTheWild.com](http://www.BoomersInTheWild.com)

(1) Continuum Crew, Follow Up to Economic Impact Survey, 2009

(2) Ultimi Barbarorum, “The Real Reason Why the iPad Will be a Success” blog post, January 28, 2010 (syndicated by Gizmodo.com, “The Apple iPad is for Old People”)

# Health-Based Technology in the Home: Why It Matters, Why Now

In the past five years, technologies have been developed that can support families and seniors to age in place more independently. Why are in-home technologies so important?

## Boomers and seniors will stay longer – and frailer – in family homes.

Nursing home occupancy has been declining for the past 10 years, and assisted living growth has stalled following the collapse of real estate markets, shrinking retirement portfolios and worsening job prospects for older Americans. Today, there are only 3 million units of independent, assisted and skilled nursing care nationwide, despite 39 million seniors 65 years of age and older.

The result of this trend toward “aging in place” is that many more frail seniors with chronic conditions will stay in their current homes longer.

## Home health technologies have evolved and cost reductions have been proven.

In 2008, the Veterans Health Administration studied care coordination/home telehealth of more than 17,000 people, and the results were quite positive. With coordinated care by case managers and a variety of technology enablers, participants’ bed days of care dropped 25% and hospital admissions decreased by 19%. The per year, per patient cost of \$1,600 was substantially lower than primary care costs (\$13,121) or market nursing home care (\$77,745).

## HOME HEALTH TECH THAT MATTERS

According to the Centers for Disease Control, falls occur in more than one-third of adults 65 years of age and older each year in the U.S. and are the leading cause of injury deaths. A fall in the elderly often leads to the loss of independence as well as increased medical costs. As the Baby Boomers age, the financial ramifications will be staggering. In addition, in our more mobile society, adult children often live far from their aging parents. Technology is allowing greater safety and independence among seniors and greater peace of mind for their families.



BY LAURIE M. ORLOV

Laurie M. Orlov is founder of Aging in Place Technology Watch ([ageinplacetech.com](http://ageinplacetech.com)), a market research firm that provides thought leadership and analysis about

technologies and services serving the senior market. She has spent more than 30 years in the technology industry, including nine years as an industry analyst at Forrester Research. Certified in geriatric care management, Laurie advises large and small firms about trends in this market. She has been quoted in BusinessWeek, The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal.

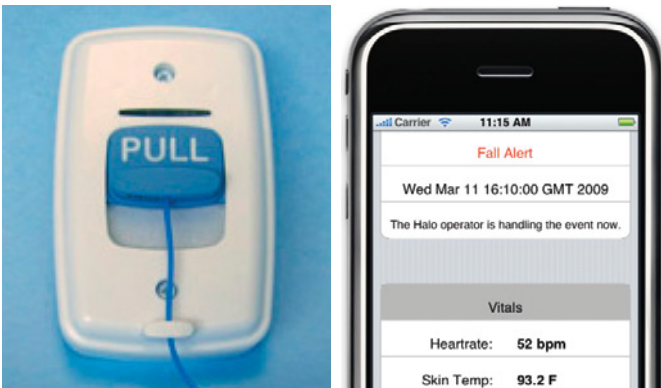




### PHILIPS LIFELINE

#### PERSONAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE SYSTEMS

Personal pendants transmit to base units and send alerts to 24-hour centers that call for medical assistance and notify family members and neighbors.



Health technology is not just for the eldest of the older population. Health-savvy Baby Boomers are already tapping into mobile health technologies to track their health and communicate with physicians. But the market for aging in place and home-based health care for those with chronic health conditions is a big one.

Several home monitoring tools are helping seniors to be safe in their homes. These include:

#### PERSONAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE SYSTEMS (PERS)

The PERS pendant (or watch) is traditionally a first-step monitoring system. The pendant transmits to the base unit in the home from a distance of approximately 300 feet and requires the user to press the button in the event of an emergency. These alerts track into a 24-hour call center where trained staff call for medical assistance and notify family members and neighbors. Philips Lifeline and Health Hero Network (among many others) market medical alert systems.

#### PASSIVE FALL DETECTION DEVICES

A new wearable category of product has emerged that can detect that a fall has occurred without the requirement of pressing a button. Halo Monitoring is an early pioneer in this market and offers a wearable chest strap and belt clip that can alert to vital sign changes as well as falls. A major advantage of a wearable technology is the ability to detect "precursor" falls that may signal a future life-threatening fall. Recently Philips enhanced its Lifeline Medical Alert with AutoAlert, which combines a medical alert service with fall detection capabilities that can automatically call for help if a senior is unable to.

#### PASSIVE SENSOR-BASED ACTIVITY MONITORS

As they must be worn and activated, PERS devices are not the most reliable way to detect a problem being experienced by a frail, homebound individual. Nor are they useful for preventing falls or other problems. Sensor-based home monitors (GE QuietCare, GrandCare Systems, WellAWARE and Healthsense) can collect information that can determine whether to signal for help. Sensors embedded in carpets, placed in and outside doorways, in beds as well as near refrigerators can detect the absence of movement and help track risk factors that could lead to tailored fall prevention measures.

#### WEB CAMERAS, TELECARE AND OTHER SECURITY DEVICES

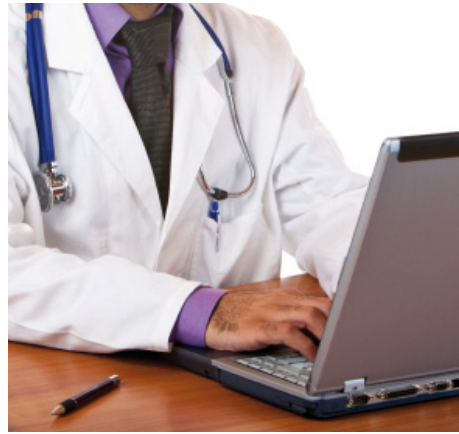
The ability to remain in one's home depends on whether the home is free from obstacles and dangers, and on whether risks are addressed. Security systems from Alarm.com and ADT, both with Web camera options, could help ensure notification and reduce risk from a stove being left on, water left running, windows left open or air conditioning failures. Web cameras are of special interest to family members who live some distance away and want to see, perhaps, that a frail relative has been in the kitchen today.



### MEDICATION DISPENSING UNITS

#### MEDMINDER

Multidose, multiday wireless containers support four dosage periods with 28 compartments and transmit data that can be viewed by a technician or nurse.



### VIRTUAL DOCTORS

#### AMERICANWELL & TELADOC

Healthcare providers can electronically respond and assist patients through e-mail and telephone.

### THE VIRTUAL DOCTOR VISIT

Depending on the circumstances, it may benefit patients and healthcare providers to use around-the-clock services that can electronically respond to and assist patients through e-mail and telephone. AmericanWell (which uses HealthVault), ConsultADoctor, and TelaDoc are some offerings. For a small monthly or per-visit cost, a caregiver can also gain reassurance about whether a family member's condition needs emergency treatment or a prescription.

### INTERNET SITES WITH INFORMATION OR COMMUNITY

Individuals with computers but little mobility can benefit from sharing experiences through condition-specific sites such as Diabetesmine.com or experience sharing on a site such as Patientslikeme.com. These Internet-aware individuals can also access for-profit sites such as WebMD, and nonprofit or chronic disease management sites such as Alz.org, for those with Alzheimer's disease.

## MEDICATION MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT

It is well known that the number of medications prescribed proliferates in relation to age and chronic disease. Studies indicate \$290 billion per year is spent on healthcare due to medication nonadherence. Furthermore, it is estimated that one in 10 visits to the hospital result from medication mismanagement. Technologies to combat this include:

### AUTOMATED REMINDER SYSTEMS

Telephone-based reminder systems, such as OntimeRx and HealthAnywhere, help ensure that medication regimens are met. By adding mobile telehealth capability to cell phones and smartphones, these products enable the user to attach a blood pressure cuff and transmit readings, while Med-eMonitor offers a pill reminder and a portable pillbox.

### MEDICATION DISPENSING UNITS

Beyond simple reminders, some vendors offer wireless compliance transmission and various forms of dosage management. Websites such as ePill.com list current offerings, some of which can

be purchased and others leased. These include removable canisters (MedSignals), dispensing devices (Philips) and even remote pharmacy reconfiguration of dosages (InRange Systems' EMMA). Like Philips, MedMinder offers a multidose, multiday wireless container that supports four dosage periods and 28 compartments. Transmitted information (including noncompliance warnings) can then be viewed on the Web by a technician or nurse.

## INTERNET-BASED AND OTHER SERVICES

A 2008 Deloitte study of consumers and healthcare found that 80% of consumers want more Internet-based information about their medical records, test results and information about treatments, but most do not have this access. This has created an opportunity for Google Health, Microsoft HealthVault personal health record (PHR) software and partnerships with health technology products. Jitterbug phone users can add a service (LiveNurse) in which family members can obtain answers to nonemergency questions 24 hours a day. Other services include:

Health technology is not just for the eldest of the older population. Health-savvy Baby Boomers are already tapping into mobile health technologies to track their health and communicate with physicians. But the market for aging in place and home-based health care for those with chronic health conditions is a big one. GE and Intel are committing \$250 million over the next five years in research and development of home-based health technologies, and studying whether home monitoring of patients with chronic diseases by using remote patient monitoring technologies will reduce hospitalizations and emergency room visits. This will provide valuable insight for the development of future technologies that will improve quality of life for seniors, Baby Boomers and others with chronic diseases. **C?**

# Devising Your Social Media Strategy

There is no shortage of social media platforms today, and if the present landscape is any indication, one thing seems certain: the onslaught of new technology making its way to the marketplace will only increase. So how do you choose the most effective mediums? How can you leverage the power of social media to boost your business?

It is not as hard as you might think. Just remember this: social media provides value by connecting people, information and ideas. The potential for collaboration and ideation is massive. The end results of building your business through this medium is entirely dependent on the social media tools you use, and how you use them. To be successful, you must make a plan – but recognize that social media strategy is adaptable, and you should be too.

## GETTING STARTED

Social media is collaborative by design. Creating your social media strategy is a lot like sitting down to a family-style meal. Consider the menu, choose the option with the strongest personal appeal – not necessarily what everyone else tells you to order – and enjoy the experience. It is a social experience, after all, which connects you with like-minded people and ideas you are interested in, and vice versa.

Companies do not have networks. People do. With very few exceptions, the best social media strategies recognize the importance of personalizing their brand, which means building, expanding and leveraging your personal social network to move your business forward. Sure, sometimes there will be overlap, but the personal touch is essential. Companies do not gain a foothold by blogging or tweeting using their brand as a pseudonym, but they do when company insiders share knowledge, insight and information with consumers who are hungry for it.

Start planning your social media strategy by assessing what you are doing now. How could you do it better? What else can you do to strengthen your arsenal?



BY JILL GILBERT

Jill Gilbert is a product strategist and self-professed aging tech geek. She's currently coproducing the Digital Health Summit for the Consumers Electronic Show (CES) and getting ready to launch a new venture.

Jill was a cofounder and CEO of Gilbert Guide (recently acquired by Caring.com), a company that paired practical, expert advice and information with the first comprehensive national directory covering the entire continuum of senior care.

The screenshot shows the Facebook profile for 'Continuum Crew - Engaging Consumers > 40'. The profile picture is a logo with 'C2' and two dots. The bio states: 'Continuum Crew is the nation's thought leader in understanding and creating engaging communications for consumers over 40. From research & consulting, to advertising, marketing, and online strategies CC creates results and profitable relationships.' The location is listed as 111 Maiden Lane, Suite 540, San Francisco, CA, 94108. A recent post from Thursday at 4:10pm celebrates a 'Gold in National Mature Media Awards, in Marketing/Advertising (Marketing Communications) category for our Clark - Samara Woods, Integrated Launch Campaign Congratulations to all the winners!' and includes a link to the award website.

Creating your social media strategy is a lot like sitting down to a family-style meal. Consider the menu, choose the option with the strongest personal appeal – not necessarily what everyone else tells you to order – and enjoy the experience.

## THE ONE-TWO APPROACH

There is no need to make your social media strategy complicated. Simple is best when you are just getting started, and who can argue with two simple steps?

### 1. CONNECT TO THE COMMUNITY BY DEMONSTRATING THOUGHT LEADERSHIP.

Rather than hard-selling yourself, your services, products or company, focus on contributing your insider knowledge or informed opinions that show you know your stuff. That will win you friends, followers and, most importantly: trust. Trust sells. Just ask Oprah.

### 2. MAKE YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY INTELLIGENT AND EFFICIENT.

Save time by using plug-ins to import feeds from your various social media accounts to cross-populate your content and updates across your entire social media network. Automatically plug your YouTube videos and blog posts into your Facebook page and pull your blog RSS feed into your Twitter account so your followers are alerted each time you post a new article.

## FIVE GOLDEN RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Lots of people will rattle off a long list of what you need to do when it comes to using social media to boost your business. But in reality, it is pretty simple. Keep these five basic rules in mind, and you will be set.

### 1. COMMIT YOURSELF TO IT.

Social media shows the greatest benefit over time, so be patient and be consistent. Make a plan and stick to it.

### 2. PAY IT FORWARD.

When you find content you like, share it with your audience – retweet it, re-blog it, link to it or repost it (with permission from the author, of course).

### 3. ADD VALUE.

Contribute to the conversation by voicing your opinion. Giving advice helps others and helps establish you as a thought leader.

### 4. BE AUTHENTIC.

Do not promote anything you do not personally believe in. Be honest.

### 5. FOCUS ON LOYALTY, NOT NUMBERS.

Do not become obsessed with boosting traffic to your site at all costs. Aim for quality over quantity, both in content and in establishing a following. Loyalty is more meaningful, and better for your business, than random spikes in traffic that will not translate into conversions.

## THE ESSENTIALS: TWITTER, FACEBOOK, LINKEDIN AND YOUR BLOG

There are dozens of social media applications that can complement your traditional business marketing strategy. But casting a wide net in shallow waters will not catch a lot of fish. Instead, make a concentrated effort to reach your audience through tried-and-true methods like Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and your company (or personal) blog. Whether you start with one or a combination of these approaches, remember to make a plan and stick to it.

### Twitter



**WHAT IT IS:** A micro-blogging and social networking platform that enables users to read and write messages up to 140 characters.

**HOW IT HELPS:** Limited space per post lends itself to regular posting and frequent updates. It is a convenient, quick and effective way to keep your followers up-to-date and alert them to your new articles.

### DO'S & DON'TS:

- **DO USE A PERSONAL PHOTO.** Most corporate newbies are tempted to use their company logo. Don't be one of them. This personal touch is powerful.
- **DO SEARCH FOR OTHER INDUSTRY LEADERS AND BECOME A FOLLOWER.** Engage these leaders with relevant information so they follow you back.
- **DON'T TWEET EXCLUSIVELY ABOUT YOURSELF OR YOUR COMPANY.** Updates are fine, but if you want to be seen as an industry leader, act like one. Tweet about things that matter to your industry.
- **DO TRY TO TWEET AT LEAST ONCE OR TWICE A DAY.**
- **DO READ TWITTER 101** (on the Twitter site: [twitter.com/Twitter101](http://twitter.com/Twitter101)) before tweeting your first tweet.



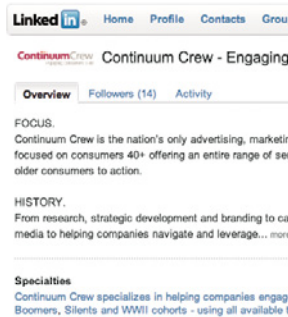
## Facebook

**WHAT IT IS:** A social networking site that offers customizable profile pages along with group and individual networking opportunities.

**HOW IT HELPS:** Facebook is a great place to initiate your social media engagement because it is community-oriented and easy to get started. Facebook is particularly good for nonprofits because it is easy to promote their cause and keep interested parties updated.

- **DO'S & DON'TS:**
- **DO POST ABOUT THE CONFERENCES YOU PLAN TO ATTEND,** and post updates when you are there.
- **DO POST PICTURES AND VIDEOS** from relevant events or interviews you have done.
- **DO IMPORT YOUR TWITTER FEED.**
- **DO MAINTAIN YOUR FACEBOOK PAGE REGULARLY.**
- **DO USE FACEBOOK TO INVITE YOUR FACEBOOK FRIENDS** to events you host.

## LinkedIn

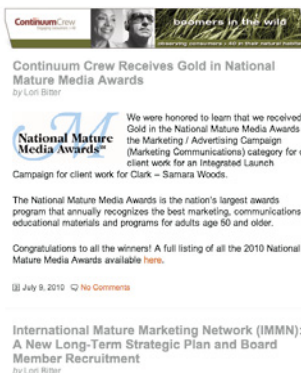


**WHAT IT IS:** A social networking site for professionals and businesses.

**HOW IT HELPS:** LinkedIn offers a prime opportunity to create, maintain and nurture important business relationships. For professional networking, LinkedIn is tops because it spans all industries and educational institutions. You can locate present and former colleagues and classmates, search for new business opportunities and give or seek advice.

- **DO'S & DON'TS:**
- **DO LAUNCH A BUSINESS PROFILE FOR YOUR COMPANY.**
- **DO CREATE AND MAINTAIN A PROFESSIONAL PROFILE ON YOURSELF.**
- **DO ENGAGE WITH PEOPLE WHO HAVE SIMILAR INTERESTS.** Join groups, or start a group and invite others to join.
- **DO USE LINKEDIN TO STAY ON TOP OF INDUSTRY NEWS.**
- **DO PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY.** Post relevant articles and discussion topics, and contribute to conversations.

## Blog



**WHAT IT IS:** A site that features regular content posts, whether from original articles, commentary, news feeds, video, graphics or a combination of these forms.

**HOW IT HELPS:** You have heard it before – content is king. Your blog or site needs original content that will connect with your audience. Great articles can help position you as a thought leader, and they are an essential part of your business. Best of all, you control the message your content sends.

- **DO'S & DON'TS:**
- **DO WRITE ATTENTION-GRABBING HEADLINES.** Include relevant keywords if you can.
- **DO WRITE ABOUT TOPICS THAT APPEAL TO A WIDE AUDIENCE,** but make sure the information is interesting and valuable. Don't risk losing a reader because your content is boring or simply not useful.
- **DO MAKE YOUR CONTENT EASY TO READ OR SKIM.** Break text into short paragraphs and make use of headings, graphs, charts, illustrations and bulleted or numbered lists.
- **DO ENCOURAGE LIVELY DISCUSSION.** Respond to comments and questions as regularly as possible.
- **DO INTEGRATE YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS:** plug your Twitter feed into your blog and feed your blog to your other social media accounts, like Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn to help people find your articles and drive traffic to your site.

## PARTING WORDS

In 2009, one well-known cosmetics giant had 41,000 Twitter followers, which translated into revenue of \$67,000, all thanks to this single social media tool. But that is not all. The same company also had 366,000 Facebook fans, which resulted in conversions that led to \$500,000 of revenue the same year. Not too shabby for a streamlined one-two approach. Here's to your social media marketing success.



# Online Communities for Boomers: Got Insight?

From party host to neighborhood Welcome Wagon rep to PTO president, I have been a community builder in the real world for most of my life.

So it was easy and natural for me to make the transition to online communities in 2006 when Eons, the social networking website for boomers – founded by Jeff Taylor of Monster fame – made me its official community builder.

The site had lots of content about health, finances, relationships, money and fun, but what really took off were the “groups” – message boards on subjects of interest to Boomers, some started by Eons staff and many more by Eons members themselves.

It was my job to create new groups on topics where no group existed, and occasionally to step in and moderate member-created groups. The goal was to help new members get acquainted with the site, find areas of interest, create personal profiles and connect with other members – all with the hope and expectation that they would come back day after day.

Members themselves created many of the most popular groups: 50+ Singles, Hippies for Life and Becoming a Spiritual Adult. The same creative group names have formed on Grandparents.com, such as MIL Anonymous (for mothers-in-law), General Gabbery and Grandparents Raising Grandchildren.

Meanwhile, our business and marketing department was working with corporate sponsors and advertisers to find ways to introduce their products and services to Eons members.

We drove a growth spurt by creating branded groups, hosting contests and offering special deals on products and services.

At the time, all this was new to me and I had no idea that I was part of a new phenomenon called social media.

Since then I have learned that social media takes many forms – from online publication to video and photo sharing to interactive gaming and more. But at the heart of my work, at Eons and now at Grandparents, is the creation of social networks – communities where members can meet, share and interact.

## SOCIAL NETWORKS FOR BUSINESS

When creating an online community, there is no guarantee that your groups will grow. It's not a case of “if you build it, they will come”. It is more that, “if you offer what they need or want they will come”. But will they buy? That is another question, for another article.



**BY BETH  
FREDERICKS**

*Beth Fredericks is the online community manager for Grandparents.com—the website for everything related to grandparenting. Beth joined Grandparents.com*

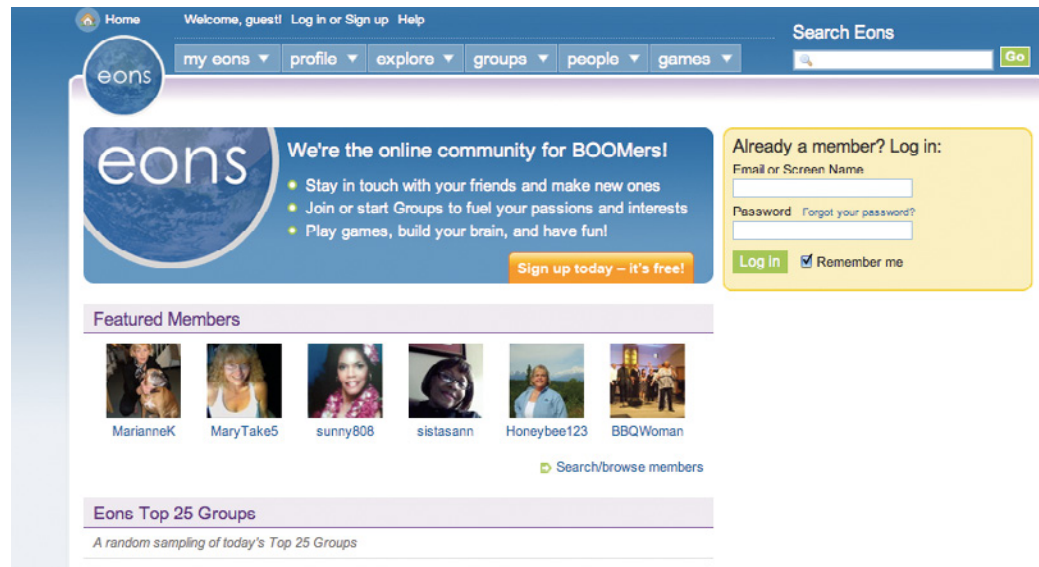
*in 2009 after helping launch Eons.com, the website for Boomers. As the “party hostess,” Beth’s skills in welcoming new members and getting them to come back every day has contributed to the growth of two of the largest communities of Boomers on the Internet. You can find her on Grandparents.com as CommunityGal.*

**The question we are considering here is: Does an online community make sense for your business? If the answer is yes, then what kind of community should it be?**

**First, let us consider three reasons to build an online community as part of your business strategy:**

- 1. TO PROVIDE A PLATFORM FOR PEOPLE** to start something from seed and see what grows, and then looking for ways to create products and market them to the group.
- 2. TO CONNECT LIKE-MINDED PEOPLE** who will talk to each other, share tips and useful information about your subject area while you listen in.
- 3. TO INTENTIONALLY CONVENE A GROUP OF PEOPLE** who are motivated (often by money or other incentives) to answer your questions, weigh in on your ideas or provide you with insight about your product.

Eons and Grandparents are examples of the first two types of communities. Communispace is an example of the third type, as it is in the business of building small, branded communities for the specific purpose of asking people particular questions, initiating discussions and then listening to what the members have to tell them. (See its report, “Size Matters: When Insight Is the Goal, Small Communities Deliver” (1) on its website: Communispace.com.)



## Building an Online Community

Before you commit a budget – and a full-time job – to building an online community, it is important to recognize how Boomers think and what it takes to build and nurture a Boomer community. Here are five steps you will need to follow to build and grow an online community.

### 1. DEFINE YOUR PURPOSE.

The question is why would Boomers want to chat about content on your website? Answer: Your content (and product or service) is directly related to their need or passion, and the quality of your site creates an atmosphere where they are willing to join in and chat. Their experience on your site needs to be meaningful and purpose-driven, with a strong, personal payoff. Check out the communities at WeightWatchers, Grandparents, Facebook and Encore Careers. Members of these communities come back almost every day to be inspired to lose pounds, to see how to handle a prickly daughter-in-law after she has delivered your first grandchild, to find an old boyfriend after a divorce, or to build a network while looking for a new job. The size of the community – how many group members there are – does not matter nearly as much as how relevant the topic is. It only takes a couple of members to get a meaningful conversation going.

### 2. HIRE THE RIGHT COMMUNITY MANAGER.

Too often the critical job of community builder is given to a junior employee who is a technological whiz on Twitter and Foursquare, but does not have the social skills or knowledge to guide Boomers into groups for 50+ travel, prescription medications or financial products for retirement. Find the right, welcoming voice – someone who will connect easily with everyone who comes to your site.

My online persona is called “CommunityGal.” I brought her to life on Eons as I welcomed and guided new members through tasks such as posting comments, uploading photos, inviting friends and cheering on members who create and moderate their own groups (so you do not have to). You need patience for this job – I’m not kidding! A community manager for a Boomer site has to have great social skills and a strong EQ (emotional quotient), and really love the job!

### 3. GREET PEOPLE GENUINELY.

Boomers like to be noticed, welcomed and introduced to others. To them, a first visit to an online community is very much like arriving at a party and hoping someone will greet you, introduce you to other guests, and show you the way to the buffet! Before you launch a site, think about ways you will welcome new members one at a time. Leave a welcome post in different places. Offer suggestions about what to do first – take a virtual walk around the neighborhood, read a certain article or fill out their profile. Reply daily when you see new members posting. Drop members into a Newcomers Club or, as at BabyCenter.com, into a group for those who delivered a baby in the month of May, for example. Boomers appreciate knowing that there is a real person keeping the community safe and secure. All of these actions will increase the likelihood that new members will “stick.”

#### 4. GIVE PEOPLE SOMETHING TO DO.

Whether you are building a community alongside editorial content and tools, or building what some call a market research online community (MROC), you must give your members something to engage them every day. I get messages regularly from members who ask, "What do you do here?" Make it clear what you want them to do in your community. Members who are passionate about taking photos of their grandchildren can enter a photo contest (vote and submit!) on Grandparents.com. Eons members who are from Motown, like me, can listen to, and post, great music in the group Old School Soul Music. If you have just learned you need a total hip replacement, you can talk to people who have already had the procedure in the group HIPster. The goal is to connect members with one another so they will find common ground and build real relationships online.

#### 5. DELIVER INSIGHTS REGULARLY.

Don't you love those "ah ha" moments? When you read something amazing that you did not know? When a truly creative solution appears that you have never tried? Online communities have the capacity to deliver insight daily. CafeMom or MomCentral do this brilliantly for young moms, and Boomers want daily insights related to their own areas of interest. Coming up with these daily insights is not as difficult as you might expect. Here are a few of the ways I do it:

##### 1. READ THROUGH A BUNCH OF POSTS AND REPLIES, AND CHOOSE THE TOP 10 IDEAS FOR WHAT IS RELEVANT.

Put these together in a simple tip sheet that can be downloaded or e-mailed and publish it.

##### 2. ASK A QUESTION OF THE WEEK.

Boomers love to answer questions and give their opinions. Give them opportunities to tell you what they think, and share their thoughts.

##### 3. GET PEOPLE TO BRAG.

There are so many great stories to tell after you have lived 40, 50 years or more! Share some of them on your site.

##### 4. INVITE MEMBERS TO LEAD THE PARADE.

Lots of older people who are relatively new to online communities are quick to climb the learning curve. Give them a chance to moderate a group, host a party or direct the traffic – and then send swag!

Marketing guru Jerry Shereshewsky, formerly of Grandparents and now CEO of GrownUpMarketing, says the fastest growing segments in this social media universe are, surprisingly, the 50+ group.

"The bottom line seems to be that if you are online you are a social media user, and therefore marketers absolutely, positively have to take notice and act accordingly," he said.

So the Boomer audience is not only out there, it is growing. You can reach them if you engage them with a clear purpose, a delightful community manager and insights served up daily. Just wait, some amazing things will happen. **C2**

(1) "Size Matters: When Insight Is the Goal, Small Communities Deliver," Communispace, <http://www.communispace.com/research/abstract>

## Aging Technology Alliance – A New Consortium of Technology Companies

During the Silvers Summit held at the 2010 International Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas in January, leaders from companies and organizations in the home health and aging technology industry formed the Aging Technology Alliance. The Alliance was formally announced at the What's Next Boomer Business Summit held in Chicago in March, and its aim is to become the world's leading aging-focused technology consortium.

Sensing an absence of an organization that would help members gain awareness and promote their products and services to an aging society, Peter Radsliff, Alliance chairman and CEO of Presto Services, proposed creating a technology community that would facilitate innovation through professional development, education and standardization of products and services.

"Other organizations focus their missions on acting as brokers between companies, organizations and academia to guide development of solutions to aid aging-in-place," said Jill Gilbert, event co-producer of Digital Health Summit @ CES, and an Alliance board member and its treasurer. "Our mission is to promote the awareness, benefits and value of member products and services for an aging society and assist in the advancement of member companies and individual members." An additional goal of the Alliance is to improve the buy cycle for such products, by elevating awareness among consumers and increasing channel distribution.

Members of the board of directors include representatives from ClearSounds Communications, Digital Health @ CES, firstSTREET, GrandCare Systems, Jitterbug and Presto Services.

The Alliance is currently soliciting regular and associate members from across the market spectrum, such as manufacturers, developers, resellers, educators and organizations. Individuals interested in joining the Aging Technology Alliance can find more information at [www.agetek.org](http://www.agetek.org).

# Exercising the Aging Brain

Science has been good to the human body. In the 20th century alone, medical research has cured countless diseases and doubled the average lifespan – now roughly 78 years old for Americans. If only our brains could keep up.

More than half the people who live past retirement decline mentally, many to the point of being unable to live independently, and many develop crippling diseases like Alzheimer's. For all the progress in nourishing our physical vitality, medical science has done relatively little to strengthen the most important body part we have for an enjoyable, fulfilling life: our brain.

"It's a tremendous challenge for us, as a country, as a people, as scientists, to see how we can improve brain health to a level at which we can change that picture," says Dr. Michael Merzenich, neuroscientist and founder of the brain training software company Posit Science. "What we're trying to do is to get the majority of people's brain span to last as long as their bodies do."

Merzenich has dedicated his life to the theory of brain plasticity – that our brains are constantly rewiring themselves according to how we use them. While the previous dogma of neuroscience was that the brain was "hardwired" and unalterable after young adulthood, Merzenich has proven through extensive research that our brains continue to change throughout life and well into old age.

The issue of avoiding cognitive decline among the elderly looms large as millions of Baby Boomers become senior citizens. According to census projections, the number of Americans 65 years of age and older will jump from 39 million to 69 million in the next 20 years.

With that in mind, Merzenich founded Posit Science in 2003, channeling his research into software programs that help the elderly and aging populations exercise their brains through concentrated mental workouts. Done routinely, these game-like exercises can speed up mental processing and undo the effects of aging on the brain.

"You can actually rejuvenate your abilities to remember things through the appropriate forms of exercise," says Merzenich.

Posit Science software has proven itself in science labs and academia. In a study funded by the National Institutes of Health and published in leading medical journals, people who used the InSight brain fitness program showed statistically significant improvement in their driving safety, mood and processing speed; they even reported improvement in their quality of life.

Of course, physical exercise is vital to your brain too – as is a balanced diet. But unlike those tenets of healthy living, mental exercise is still grossly undervalued: most adults rely on the occasional brainteaser puzzle to keep their minds nimble, if they do anything at all.



**BY CYRUS  
HEDAYATI**

Cyrus Hedayati is a marketing specialist at Posit Science, a developer of software-based brain training programs designed to improve cognitive performance in adults. On the Posit Science

blog ([positscience.com/blog](http://positscience.com/blog)), he writes a weekly column on issues related to brain training, neuroscience and healthy living.

**It's a tremendous challenge for us, as a country, as a people, as scientists, to see how we can improve brain health to a level at which we can change that picture. What we're trying to do is to get the majority of people's brain span to last as long as their bodies do.**



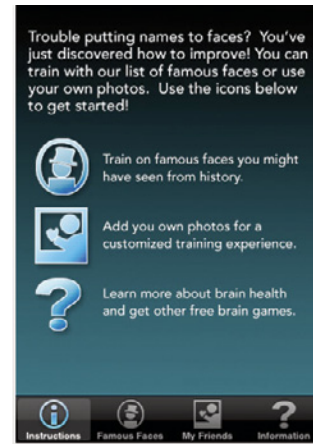
**BRAIN PLASTICITY  
KEEP THE GEARS GRINDING**

Dr. Michael Merzenich’s extensive research has proven that our brains continue to change throughout life and well into old age.



**INSIGHT™  
BRAIN FITNESS PROGRAMS**

InSight by Posit Science® targets visual processing to improve focus and help users react quicker.



**iKNOWYOU IPHONE APP  
MOBILE EXERCISE**

Posit Science® provides a mobile application to improve the ability to associate names with faces.



“They think that just being active somehow will work, or they think that it’s enough to do the odd crossword or Sudoku puzzle or play bridge every week,” says Merzenich. “Most people just do the things that they’ve learned to do long before in life and do on a regular schedule, just to hang in there. But it’s not enough.”

Adults begin to decline mentally when they stop doing new activities, learning new skills or even going to new places. Like the body, the human brain works according to the principle of “use it or lose it”.

“In the first part of life you’re in a period of aggressive continuous learning – acquisition of skills and abilities,” says Merzenich. “At some point you make a transition to just being a user of those over-learned skills and abilities.”

This process makes sense when you consider the lifestyle of most adults, who settle into routines to meet the demands of working or raising a family. But as a result of that change, most people begin losing their cognitive abilities starting in their 30s.

**Getting older does not have to mean withdrawing from social situations or strenuous activity; that when it comes to our brains, we do not have to accept the hand we have been dealt.**

“You’re no longer refining, improving or elaborating the operations of your brain,” says Merzenich. “Basically, the processes of the brain lead you into decline.”

It can be difficult to reverse the cycle: the more your brain relies on that old knowledge, the harder it becomes to feed it new information. And in the fast pace of modern life, many adults just do not have the time to challenge their brains with a new skill – like learning French or taking up the guitar.

“The task is to retrain the brain to represent information that it’s trying to deliver to memory, and to do that more precisely, more powerfully and more completely,” says Merzenich.

Worse yet, many adults view cognitive decline as a natural and unavoidable part of growing older. But those who have used Posit Science programs find that their brains quickly rise to the challenge, taking in information at the

pace of a young person.

“We see its impacts expressed in multiple ways, both in their behaviors and in their neurology,” says Merzenich. “People’s memories get better, people feel better. They feel more alive and more active.”

This can have enormous benefits for individuals, whether it’s preventing memory loss, following along with conversations more easily or staying alert behind the wheel. But the benefits for our society could be even greater: adults and seniors may realize that getting older does not have to mean withdrawing from social situations or strenuous activity; that when it comes to our brains, we do not have to accept the hand we have been dealt.

“This is a revolution,” says Merzenich. “It’s the beginning of a great societal change in how we think about aging and how we think about making the most of our lives.” **C?**



**55%** *of U.S. Boomers*  
**PURCHASED**  
**A PRODUCT OR SERVICE**  
*promoted in an e-mail.*

**DO YOU HAVE A STRATEGY THAT  
CONNECTS YOUR BRAND MESSAGE  
ON- AND OFFLINE?** Learn more about  
Boomers and social media. To find  
out more, contact Continuum Crew  
at 415-295-4575 or visit us online.

**ContinuumCrew**  
Engaging Consumers > 40

continuumcrew.com • 415.295.4575  
info@ContinuumCrew.com