

AGING IN PLACE

LIBERTY THROUGH TECHNOLOGY



Internet of Things · Smart Homes & Security
Device & Software Support

2019 Edition

Aging in Place: Liberty through Technology
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Introduction

We are in a time that allows us to benefit greatly from technology. These benefits can be for all ages and types of people. This technology can also be a double-edged sword as there are ways to expose your private and financial information to those that wish to exploit, steal, or scam.

The best way to benefit from technology is to understand the basics. Senior citizens can specifically take advantage of modern technology by using it to enrich their lives and, in keeping with a growing trend, utilizing it to help them with Aging in Place.

Imagine ordering your groceries with your smart fridge and having the fresh groceries delivered that same day.

But what is this Internet of Things (IoT) that enables all these so-called smart devices? What is a smart home or even a smart device? How do you protect your personal information and smart

devices connected to your home internet? How do you behave while on the internet? How do you keep learning how to use technology while aging in place? How do you deal with all these questions and keep your head on straight?

All these questions and more are answered below in our Aging in Place: Liberty through Technology eBook.



Aging in Place



Aging in Place is becoming an ever increasingly popular topic among those preparing for or just entering retirement. Why not live in a comfortable home and be independent at this age? The U.S. [Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#) defines aging in place as "the ability to live in one's own home and community safely, independently, and comfortably,

regardless of age, income, or ability level". Aging in place includes being able to plan for your home, health care, finances, travel, and entertainment. While making a plan for aging in place one has to consider how technology can assist with this process.

How can a smart home be beneficial for those that want to age in place? What is the role of smart home security and all devices connected to your internet? How is a personal tech support team and its services part of this process?

To understand this better one has to learn how all these devices that amplify living at home are connected. This is what is referred to as the Internet of Things (IoT).

internet or other devices. This can range from a cell phone to watches, coffeemakers, thermostats, and even lamps!

Basic Explanation of the IoT

In the simplest sense, the IoT is a concept of connectivity. It is the idea of connecting any device with an on/off switch to the internet, and multiple of these devices to one another.

The devices associated with the IoT are pretty extensive. For example, cell phones, watches, lamps, coffeemakers, refrigerators, thermostats and cars are just a few devices that have been created with IoT capabilities. Basically, the IoT is a large network of these connected “things” and the intelligent use of data collected and stored by and through their relationship with the internet.

One example of current IoT technology is the [Nest Smart Thermostat](#). The Nest Smart Thermostat is a thermostat that’s connected to the internet. With smart technology, it collects data and learns your family’s routines, adjusting the temperature

accordingly. Based on whether the inhabitants of a house are away or home, awake or asleep, the Nest Smart Thermostat adjusts the temperature up or down. In addition, the thermostat can be managed via a smart phone, and it has the ability to alert users when problems arise with their heating and/or cooling systems.

You can take this concept and apply it to other devices. Almost anything with an on/off switch and internet capabilities can utilize the IoT. By not relying on human interaction, the IoT can promote increased efficiency and save energy. On a large scale, this could have dramatic implications for things like healthcare and transportation networks.

History of the IoT

The vision of intelligent, communicating devices was around even before the launch of the internet. Some of the major milestones of development are simply the growth of the internet and the way it has evolved over the past several decades.

A list of these milestones can be found [here](#), but an overly basic summary follows the evolution of the internet. First, the internet connected people to content. Then, it connected people to services. Later on, it connected people to people. Now, it is connecting things to things (IoT).

The term IoT was thought to be coined in 1999, by Kevin Ashton, during a presentation for Procter & Gamble. Ashton, the executive Director of Auto-ID Labs at MIT, spoke about the idea of computers capturing and sharing data without any help from humans. He explained how direct communication between

devices would allow for increased efficiency and get rid of human limitation.

Machine to Machine solutions (M2M) is a subset of the IoT. It is basically a broad label used to describe technology that allows networked devices to communicate and perform actions without manual assistance from humans. Machines talking to machines (things talking to things) is essentially the foundation of the IoT.

Impacts on Consumers and Society

Consumers

As a consumer, you may already have personal IoT devices. New cars come preloaded with IoT applications, and fitness trackers use the IoT to tell your friends how much you've been exercising.

If you are less familiar with IoT devices or simply wish to imagine a world where all of your devices are connected and communicating, take this for an example:

It's Monday morning. A calendar on your phone prompts a bedside alarm to go off at a certain hour. This alarm is familiar with how much time it takes you to get ready for work, and by knowing your routine, it chooses an hour that will allow you adequate time to prepare.

As your alarm goes off, the coffee maker in your kitchen goes on. You get out of bed, get dressed, and you eat breakfast. When you step outside the door, freshly brewed coffee in hand, your car is already warm and started. Upon entering the car, you are given a traffic report and told the fastest route to work. This is an example of IoT technology working to promote ease of life on a personal level.

Society

On a larger scale, the opportunities of IoT technology are virtually endless. The IoT can be applied to things like transportation networks, defense systems, infrastructure, smart buildings and eventually [smart cities](#).

In healthcare, the IoT has the ability to keep patients safer and healthier while improving care delivery. One example of IoT in healthcare is the development of a continuous glucose monitoring

system for people with diabetes. This device uses a sensor that communicates with a smart transmitter and sends blood glucose levels to a mobile app on a patient's phone. IoT technology like this is expected to dramatically change the healthcare field.

The IoT could also dramatically improve energy efficiency, productivity and other aspects of daily life. Increased connectivity between people, processes and things opens the door for educational and economic growth. Safer and more efficient transportation, waste reduction, social and environmental benefits are just the beginning.

Challenges with the IoT

Security is perhaps the biggest issue when it comes to the IoT. A world where cars, city infrastructure, healthcare, companies and homes are all connected creates a perfect storm for cyber vulnerability. As billions of devices become connected, the devastation hackers and cyber-attacks can create increases.

In the home, Americans are worried about the possibility of someone stealing their personal information. Researchers have been able to hack IoT devices, which means hackers can likely do the same. Security within large companies and city infrastructure creates an even bigger platform for concern, especially since it will be difficult to be aware of all of the necessary safeguards during early adoption.

Another issue is that of privacy and data sharing. The IoT has the potential to create a staggering amount of data, but what the

world will do with this data is a whole other issue. Vast amounts of data introduce more entry points for hackers, and it needs to be sorted, stored and analyzed.

Maintaining privacy with this data is a main concern and likely will become increasingly important as more IoT technology is adopted. Luckily, companies, like [HelpCloud](#), can help. Along with computer support, the [protection plans](#) offered by HelpCloud can minimize a hacker's chances at accessing your personal information. In the future, companies will become increasingly involved in offering personal protection while they answer consumers' security questions and privacy concerns.



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Future of the IoT

As the world becomes increasingly connected, it is hard to predict all that the IoT might encompass. Some expect the IoT to become “the backbone of future customer value,” as it already has and will continue to play a major role in the global market. If interested in learning more, consider checking out [The Internet of Things 2017 Report](#) by Business Insider Intelligence.

With the IoT, endless opportunities await. Obviously, many of the benefits are yet to be realized, and so are many of the challenges. As the world heads towards increased connectivity with IoT technology, there will be a lot of learning, changing and growing. In the end, hopefully the benefits outweigh the challenges and it leads to a safer, happier, healthier and more productive world.

Smart Homes



The Internet of Things (IoT) is changing a lot about the world you live in. Everything from the way people drive to the way people live at home. A home enabled by the IoT and connected devices is called a “smart home”. A smart home is a [home automation system](#) that includes controlling your lighting, climate, entertainment, and other devices which are all connected to the internet and centralized control devices, such as an app on a smartphone or tablet. These devices in your home connected to the internet are all part of the Internet of Things.

Imagine being able to turn up the heat from your smartphone while your spouse is driving you home. You can also turn your lights on and off at your content while on vacation. Or also, while

on vacation, you can check your security cameras from your smartphone or tablet. What about being able to have an e-visit from a healthcare provider? Or having your device give you medication requirements and reminders every morning? All these are great but they also mean that all your devices are collecting data in order to optimize your experience. This data can be compromised. So how do you understand and protect it?

Read more: [How to Protect Your Smart Home Devices](#)

If you're wondering how you will adapt to this new life, you're not alone. Although a lot will change over time, information protection will have to advance rapidly to help keep your information safe.

Reading on, you'll find practical tips and information on protecting yourself in this new age.

What You Can Do Now

Change Your Router's Password

If you have a home router, you may still be using its standard password. Unfortunately, [it's fairly easy for a hacker to gain access to your home internet](#) by guessing your password. There are similarities between default passwords on routers, which makes gaining access to them quick and simple.

To protect yourself from an attack, change your password every three months. When you come up with a new password, try to make sure it is at least eight characters long. Ideally, it'll have a lower-case letter, upper-case letter, number and some sort of punctuation mark. Another sound practice is to use characters that look alike to confuse potential hackers. For example, you could use both the letter S and the dollar sign in your password because they look very similar.

Keep Programs Current

Nearly every year, manufacturers and software providers offer product updates. Many times, people neglect to update their software because they assume that the new version will only offer new features. Some updates include improvement or advancements, but their main purpose is generally security related.

When your devices are updated, you can rest assured that you're benefiting from the latest protection. Every month, look at your various IoT devices and see whether or not there is a new version to upload.

Hint: right now, you can benefit from checking your router's model number and looking to see whether or not there's an update available. A recent study identified [a huge vulnerability in the majority of modern routers](#), and the only way to protect yourself is

with an update. If you need more support or information regarding how you can update your router, reach out to [HelpCloud](#).

Invest in Computer Protection Software

Computer security software is another important layer in protecting your personal information. With the right program, your computer will benefit from strong firewall and malware protection.

A firewall helps block out hackers and viruses that try to reach your computer over the internet. Malware is a software that can damage and disable your computer as well as steal your personal information.

Understand the Information Your Devices Collect

Many smartphone users are unaware that their devices collect, store and share information about them. When you use Google, for example, you trust them with your data. They collect data on the things you search, websites you visit, videos you watch, your location and more. They also store emails you send and receive on Gmail, photos and videos you upload and your calendar events. In addition, they collect more personal information about you, such as your name, birthday and phone number.

As a responsible technology user, it is up to you to be clear about the information your devices collect and why. If a company wants to understand what you do, what you create and who you are, you should understand exactly why they want this information and what they do with it once it's collected.

Monitor Connected Devices

To protect your home information, look at how your devices connect and their various privileges. For example, if you run a home thermostat from your phone, you probably only want to make sure it's only able to control the temperature of your home. You don't want your thermostat to communicate with your front door lock or vice versa.

Make sure your devices and applications are not communicating without barriers. Although you want some connected devices to communicate, they don't all need to have the same privileges.

Disable Plug and Play

The IoT wants gadgets to discover other gadgets. Unfortunately, this is exactly what hackers want. When a lot of devices are connected, it's easier for a hacker to exploit them. To protect

yourself from this, you can disable plug and play features so your network devices won't discover and connect themselves without your permission.

Unplug Your Devices

This piece of advice may seem too simple to work, but it is one of the best ways to decrease your vulnerability. Whenever you're not using your IoT devices, disconnect them from the internet. If they're not connected, it'll be much harder for an attacker to gain access and take advantage of you.

Protection Matters

In addition to understanding how you can protect yourself, it's important to know why you should protect yourself. People often

forget that their IoT devices are constantly connected to the internet. This fact makes them extremely susceptible to hacks.

Additionally, the IoT is so new it's hard for manufacturers to know what security systems they should embed into their products.

Industries understand how to protect more familiar technology, like computers, but they're struggling to decide how manufactures and consumers will safeguard themselves in this new age.

Measures Are Underway

IoT security is becoming a level of greater concern, [even to the federal government](#). Security firms and manufactures are working tirelessly to insure that the IoT world is a safe and beneficial place. Microsoft recently announced that it will add encryption protection to Windows 10. This will help secure on-device data and decrease the frequency of hack successes.

A group of tech firms have also created a non-profit named the Internet of Things Security Foundation that will vet internet-connected devices for vulnerabilities and offer security assistance to manufacturers and consumers.

As more of your devices have IoT capabilities, hackers will have more opportunities to target you. As such, now is the time to address security concerns and prepare for the future so it can be filled with more upsides than downsides.

It's Not All Bad

It's all too easy to feel as if smart homes pose more risks than benefits. Luckily, there are many upsides to adding advanced devices to your home, especially if you're 65-years-old or older. Home automation may seem like it belongs in the hands of millennials, but it's intrinsically useful for older adults. Adding more devices to your house can make it safer and more enjoyable to live in.

There's a growing movement in America called, "aging in place." This idea focuses on keeping seniors in their homes as they age. In the past, specific occurrences would make it harder for an individual to remain in their home.

One such event would be losing the ability to drive. When a senior couldn't drive to the store, family members would need to provide transportation or carry out shopping. Now, thanks to technology, a

senior who's no longer driving can use a smart home tool, like Google Home, to [order pantry staples](#) for delivery.

Another large advantage smart devices can offer is health monitoring. Various devices can provide medication reminders when you need them most. There's also a large surge going on in the popularity and availability of e-visits. Seniors can now use a tablet or other device to have a virtual visit with a healthcare provider, so they don't need to travel for a traditional office visit.

Smart lighting is also available for seniors and other populations that commonly suffer from vision loss. It's not uncommon for eyes to weaken over time. With a decrease in vision, remaining in your home can be difficult.

Fortunately, smart lighting can help individuals stay safe and comfortable in their houses for longer. Smart apps provide the illumination necessary to see more, so individuals can continue preparing meals, navigating their homes and carrying out other

necessary daily tasks without falling or experiencing other vision-related problems.

Staying Safe

Companies, like Google and Apple, are starting to develop more and more smart home devices. As they do, an increasing amount of consumers will begin to purchase and benefit from smart home technology.

working on a

will help you control

on your mobile device.



Samsung is also currently

smartphone technology that

everyday objects in your home

Smart homes and smart devices won't be mainstream for some time, although they are trending that way. As such, now is the time to familiarize yourself with these devices, their upsides and their security vulnerabilities before they're more widely available and less questioned.

When these products hit the market, people who have done their research and understand how to use the technology safely will likely experience superior benefits from these products.

Smart Home Security



There is always debate about which devices are necessary or convenient improvements for our lives, especially at home.

Traditionalists may be hard pressed to desire and see the need for a smart lamp, others will love it. But when it comes to peace of mind it may be hard to find many individuals that are against

improving the security and protection of their family and home.

Home security systems have been enhanced by the development of smart devices that connect on the same network. Imagine being on vacation and when that pang of inevitable anxiety comes where you worry about your home, you can simply jump on your phone and check its current status by reviewing the thermostat readings, looking at camera footage, and checking the lock status of your windows and doors.

A great advantage to Smart Security is being able to verify that the system and all necessary devices are functioning as intended. Another advantage is being able to manually control lights instead of using the predictable traditional method of timed lights. Imagine being able to manually turn off the security system yourself so that a neighbor can enter your home and feed pets, water the plants, bring in the mail, etc. With Smart Security systems you can receive text messages or emails with custom notifications, even know who and how long someone was in your home. The

advantages far outweigh the traditional security systems.

Especially for the DIY kind of person.

Read our articles that explain in detail what smart home security is and how to avoid or fix the major drawbacks:

[Smart Home Security](#)

[Smart Home Security Components and Control Features](#)

[Explained](#)

[How to Fix or Avoid the Drawbacks of Smart Home Security](#)

Improve Your Home Security System



As the IoT expands, home security systems will do a lot more than protect a home from intruders. More

advanced systems can control the lights when you're away and even call emergency responders on your behalf.

When you update to an advanced home security system, you'll be able to monitor your home's energy use and run its electricity from afar. If you're on vacation and forget to turn an appliance off, you can use your phone to turn the appliance off. While you're away, you can ensure that different lights are left on at different times, giving the appearance that you're home

Another option is to invest in indoor and outdoor security cameras that can protect your home while you're away. The IoT will allow you to monitor your residence, regardless of where you are.

Finger Scanning Devices

Just one decade ago, finger scanning devices seemed like a distant idea. Today, they're routinely used in smartphone and laptop technology. In another ten years, chances are that fingerprint scanning devices will become quite common in homes.

This technology should make it more difficult to pick locks. In some ways, every device with fingerprint verification will have an extra level of security.

Lights

When "[The Clapper](#)" sound-activated electrical switch came out, people were overjoyed. The ability to turn on and off household items with the clap of your hands was revolutionary. Consumers felt all-powerful having new control over their homes.

Now, technology is even more advanced, as numerous companies offer smart lighting options. These devices can be controlled from an application, which can be downloaded on phones and tablets.

Through the application, you can do a variety of things with your lights. For example, you can dim the brightness of bulbs. Some LED lights even have the option for you to change their colors.

As you might have guessed, this unmatched control has many possibilities. Imagine being able to turn off your bedroom lights by simply tapping your smartphone from your bed. For security purposes, picture being able to leave on a different light in your home every night you're away on vacation. This way, you'll really appear to be home, and you can turn the lights off during the day to save energy.

Video Doorbells

In the past, people would generally look out of a window to see who was at their front door. This process is always a bit frightening, as the person on your porch might see you. Today, you can see who is at your door without needing to sneak a look. Even if you're not home, you can use a smart video doorbell to understand who is visiting your residence.

Another unexpected benefit is the option to keep an eye on your packages. When a delivery person comes to your door and rings the bell, you can speak with them through the video interface.

This is useful if you'd like to tell them to hide the package because you can explain where it should go. You could also use this feature to tell them that you'd rather pick it up at their local store or another pick-up location.

Motion Detectors

Movement sensors are vital to home security. If someone is sneaking around your home, the detector is the first thing that will notice the unwanted activity. With a smart sensor, a message can be sent directly to your phone if a sensor is tripped. With some systems, you can even monitor the movement and detect where the threat is located in your home.

The world of smart motion detectors is pretty vast, and there's an option for nearly everyone out there. One of the most popular options on the market know is [a pet-immune sensor](#). These technologies have sophisticated algorithms that allow them to differentiate animal motions from human motions.

Security Cameras

One of the best investments you can make is a home security camera. Once you have one in place, you'll be able to know what's going on in and around your home, even if you're away. With live and recorded video, you can keep an eye on your home in its current state and review what's happened in the past when needed.

Although there are numerous options on the market, many of the best ones are the simplest. Cameras should look simple, discrete and be easy to use. If a camera stands out too much or is hard to navigate, chances are you won't use it to its full potential.

Smoke and CO Monitors

You probably already have smoke detectors in your home now, although you likely rarely think about them. Generally, the only

time they seem important is when they're chirping their low-battery signal sounds.

Luckily, with a smart smoke and CO monitors, you can do away with annoying beeps forever. These devices simply notify you on your smartphone or tablet when they are running out of batteries. Additionally, they won't call the fire department when you accidentally make something in your kitchen that smokes more than expected. Instead, you can program them to send you an alert first, enabling you to avoid a costly fire truck visit if there's no emergency.

Door and Window Sensors

Doors and windows are two of [the main routes criminals use](#) to enter a home. When a burglar tries to pick your lock or climb through your window, a smart sensor can notify you instantly on your phone.

As soon as you get the message, you can contact your local police force to let them know your security system has been tripped. Then, they can go out to evaluate the situation, keeping you out of harm's way.

Locking and Unlocking Capabilities

House keys are all too easy to misplace. More than that, though, forgetting to lock a door is something everyone does from time to time.

Incorporating smart locks into your home automation system can help you overcome the two pitfalls mentioned above. With the ability to unlock your door from your smartphone, you can prevent lockouts due to lost keys.

When you're out, and you can't remember whether or not you've unlocked the door, you can load the application to ensure your home really is secure. Another amazing advantage of the smart

door comes when it's coupled with a smart doorbell. You can open the door for package delivery, allowing the delivery person to set your goods inside. As soon as they do, you can then lock the door again, so your new package and your home are protected.

Voice Control Platforms

Smart assistants really came into the spotlight when Apple released Siri. Since this time, there have been rapid developments and numerous other smart assistants have become available.

These personal helpers are smart, always-listening works of artificial intelligence that can respond to nearly any wish or command. You can use an assistant to make a call, turn off your house's lights or play your favorite song.

They can also be used to monitor your other smart home security devices. When you're not next to your smartphone or tablet, you can use a smart assistant to access, control and evaluate the smart security features of your house.

Do Your Homework and Understand the Device

More and more smart home security devices are being created and sold every year. The best way to use these devices to manage your home security is to understand the device by first, doing your homework and then after purchase, get to understand your device.

When you add new smart home security gear to your residence, the last thing you'll want to do is read its owner manual.

[Familiarizing yourself with a new device](#) isn't fun, but it's necessary if you want to keep yourself safe.

First things first, decide if it needs to be connected to the internet all the time. Some smart home devices need all-hours access, but others can be disconnected when not in use. Also, look to see what information the device collects. If there's data it gathers that you feel uncomfortable handing over to a company or a criminal, you may want to return the device for another offering.

Another important thing to learn is what other devices your new smart home gear wants to communicate with. If it's a smart light that also connects to your garage door opener, you should probably opt for another option on the market.

Another way you can avoid smart home security issues is to research a product's safety before you add it to your network. Older devices should have some sort of track record regarding safety. You can evaluate this information to decide if the product seems like a safe bet.

Of course, you won't always be able to see a company's track record, especially because a lot of IoT devices are new.

Whenever a company doesn't have past information, reach out to them directly and ask about their safety features.

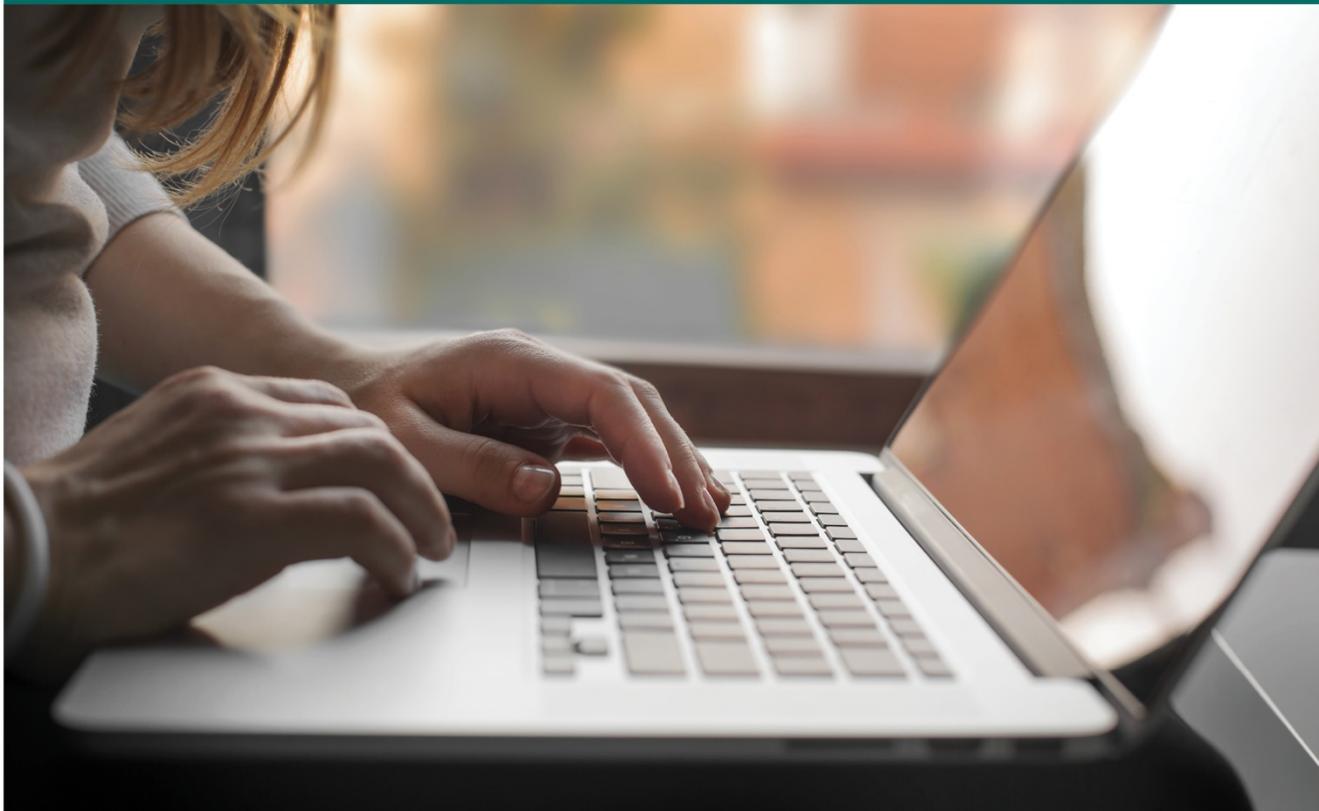
Tell them you're concerned about someone accessing the information the device collects. Ask them exactly what the device will know, what devices it'll communicate with and any other security information you find pertinent.

Smart technology, especially a smart security system, is a powerful force that can make the lives of everyone better. Still, the upsides don't negate the fact that this new technology can put personal data at risk.

As smart devices enter your home, it's important to use them wisely. Transitioning to a smart home has a lot of benefits, like [improved quality of life](#) while aging in place, as long as you consume the technology safely along the way.

Devices, Software, and Websites to Amplify Aging in Place

With a basic understanding of how the Internet of Things, smart homes, smart devices, and its security works, it's time now to better understand some specifics of technology. This understanding could enrich your life and assist with aging in place. Humans never stop learning, why should we? At HelpCloud we believe that all people can and should understand technology, the pros and beauty of using it while considering, being aware of, and protecting themselves from the negative implications of using modern technology, specifically devices that are connected to the internet.



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Below we have a list of specific articles that will be of use to better understanding technology. Follow our weekly blog posts to get up-to-date information such as the articles below:

Is Your Internet Running Slowly? Here's How to Quickly Fix Your Wi-Fi Connection

Back in the day, the only way to connect one technological device to another was to run a cable between them. Today, things are very different, especially when it comes to the internet.

If you have a Wi-Fi connection, you use an alternative to network cables. Wi-Fi functions in the same way as a traditional cable, as it carries internet to devices. So, more or less, Wi-Fi works in the same way as traditional broadband, without requiring a single cable.

Due to its cordless nature, this type of connection is much more convenient than other internet options. That being said, it can require some extra troubleshooting. It's not uncommon to find that

your Wi-Fi is running slowly and wonder where you should start to figure out what's going wrong.

Read more [here](#).

How to Enjoy Facebook While Also Protecting Your Personal Information

Earlier this year, news broke that Cambridge Analytica, a political data firm, accessed 87 million Facebook users' private information. The firm was able to use this information to identify the personalities of American voters. It is believed they used this knowledge to influence the behaviors of those affected.

Unbeknownst to you, your friend network, "likes" and user profile could have been used to influence your actions. If you participated in a personality survey, that was reportedly for academic use, on Facebook in 2014, there's a chance personal information was scraped from your profile.

The good news about this occurrence is that it's now banned.

Cambridge Analytica's data-collecting activities took place under false pretenses, and they've since been stopped.

Still, it is possible that other occurrences like this are still taking place. To stay safe, you need to change some settings on your Facebook and employ a healthy amount of skepticism when using the application.

Read more [here](#).

5 Tips to Ensure You Have a Positive Experience with Your New Facebook Account

Over two decades ago, the first recognizable social media website was born. The site's name was Six Degrees, and it allowed users to create profiles, add photos and become friends with other users. Two years after this site was created, blogging sites rose to popularity, and social media as we know it today was born.

In 2006, big-name companies Facebook and Twitter became available to users from around the world. Although other popular sites, like Myspace, have failed over time, Facebook has stuck around.

If you're new to the world of Facebook, it's important to know that it's simply a social networking site that connects you to friends

and family online. It was originally created for college students, but the platform now has [more than 2 billion users](#) in total from all walks of life.

On Facebook, you can send people messages, post status updates to your profile, see photos and videos and more. Unlike calling individuals individually or emailing them, Facebook allows you to be more public with your communications and talk to multiple people at once or convey information to groups of people.

Read more [here](#).

Six Helpful Websites to Help Seniors Navigate Computers

New, important technologies are released at an extremely alarming rate. If you're like most, you can benefit from a lot of these



advances without becoming individually involved with them. There are a few technologies that require personal learning and mastery, though ...

To take advantage of all that computers and the internet have to offer, you have to understand how to use your laptop, desktop, tablet or another device. Unfortunately, many seniors fail to learn

these technologies because they feel “too old” to learn or they’re intimidated by the process.

Fortunately, regardless of age, almost everyone can learn how to use the computer and access the internet. Mastering this technology can even be fun and exciting with the right help.

Read more [here](#).

15 Best Smartphone Apps for Seniors



If you have a smartphone, you probably use a few mobile applications. These easy-to-download offerings can be used for a variety of purposes, whether you want to play a game, access weather information or receive turn-by-turn directions while driving. In fact, applications are so helpful and popular that consumers spend [85 percent](#) of their time on smartphones using applications.

Mobile apps are beneficial for every smartphone user, but they offer special advantages to individuals 65-years-old and older. From tracking your health information to connecting with family and friends, the benefits [smartphone apps](#) offer are virtually endless.

Read more [here](#).

Video Chat Troubleshooting Expert



Video chat platforms allow you to connect with one or more people who are located in different places. Everyone who joins the call can be seen and heard in real-time.

In the past, video calls were mostly available in a one-on-one format. Furthermore, they were likely to glitch and suffer other technical difficulties. Things today are much different. The equipment needed for video calling is effective, affordable and available on more devices than ever before. As long as you have an internet connection and a device that supports video chat, you can participate in an online conversation.

Although video calling has come a long way over the last few decades, it's still a somewhat flawed system. There are a lot of

issues that commonly plague users, but, fortunately, many of them can be fixed with a little know-how.

Overview

A lot of people think that video calling is just for fancy businesses, but this is far from the case. Of course, video calling is an invaluable business tool, but it's useful for a much wider demographic than C-level executives.

Mainly, video calling has grown in popularity among individuals who have family or friends that live in another state. Video chat gives these people the opportunity to see their loved ones more often by having a face-to-face conversation over the internet.

Overall, there are several great video platforms that you can use, and each comes with its unique upsides and downsides.

Unfortunately, from time to time, these platforms don't work perfectly. When this happens, you're often left to troubleshoot the

issue by yourself. This process can seem confusing, but it's not too bad with the right information.

Read more [here](#).

How to Digitize Your Photos



It's pretty crazy that some of your most important memories might live in a box. Even if you're organized enough to store old photos in an album, it's all too easy for them to be lost, damaged and gone forever.

Luckily, there's a fast way to fix this issue. Various technologies can help you digitize your images.

The Benefits

If you have photos, slides and even negatives, you can benefit from making them digital. All traditional photographs fade and become discolored over time. The only way to save them forever is to put them in the digital world.

Digital images can't get scratched or torn, and they won't age like traditional prints. It's also easy to reproduce a digital image on a variety of mediums without compromising the integrity of the original copy.

Another upside is increased organization. With a digital library, you'll never need to sort through piles of photos again. Online, it's easy to find the exact photo you're looking for right when you need it.

When your images are digital, it's easier to share them, too. You can share them as you like over the internet with the people who matter the most to you. Furthermore, before you share your photos, you can update or improve them in a variety of ways.

If you see something in the image that needs changing, you can edit it on your computer. If you're someone who enjoys albums, you can arrange your pictures into an online book that you can view on the internet or print a copy for in-person viewing.

What Is 'Digitizing,' Exactly?

Digitizing, or [digitization](#), is the process of changing something into a digital format. Once information is digital, it's stored in units of data called bits.

Digitized information is easier to preserve, access and share. For example, if you have a paper photo, you have to keep it in good condition and know where it is at all times.

You may also only show it to people who are in the same physical location as the photograph. If you digitize the photo, you can preserve it forever, find it easily and be able to show it to virtually anyone around the world.

Read more [here](#).

How to Connect Your Computer's Mouse, Keyboard, and Printer



So, you have some new technology, and you're ready to set it up.

At first, properly connecting your computer's mouse, keyboard and printer may seem like an overwhelming and complicated task, but it's actually a lot easier than you might think. Regardless of what types of devices you have, most computer accessories are set up in similar ways.

If your mouse, keyboard and printer are still in their boxes, each one probably includes a how-to guide that outlined step-by-step instructions. That being said, some items don't include guides, or they've been misplaced ... luckily, you can still set up your computer's accessories in a few easy steps, even if you don't have the instructions. Read more [here](#).

Smart TV – 6 Tips for Better Understanding and Using Your Flatscreen



The world of smart gadgets can be a confusing place. With so many up-and-coming technologies, it's easy to feel behind the ball. Luckily, when it comes to “smart” gadgets, they all have one easy-to-remember quality ...

When the word “smart” is seen in front of any form of technology, it generally implies that it's connected to the internet. For example, you can use your smartphone to connect to WIFI and search the web, access GPS and use other functionalities that live on the internet.

So, a smart TV is simply a television that's connected to internet, whether it's wireless or wired. It's a rather straightforward idea, with greater benefits than you might assume.

For individuals who are new to the technology, the idea of hooking a television up to the internet seems confusing and unneeded. Many people are [cutting the cord](#), though, and for good reasons. When you have a TV with internet, you can experience a lot of extra features and pay less than you would for an inferior cable plan.

Read more [here](#).

How to Buy the Perfect Desktop Computer



If you're interested in buying a new desktop, chances are you want a computer that will work for years to come. One of the greatest features of a desktop is that it's easier to upgrade than a laptop, so you can make sure it stands the test of time. Desktops often also boast larger screens than laptops and tablets, making them the preferred choice for many users.

Another advantage of desktops is that they've become smaller and lighter over the years. Long gone are the days of bulky, heavy towers. In fact, desktops have become so light that there are now portable options on the market.

Buying a desktop is a wonderful investment that has a lot of advantages—but there are a few things you should know before

you purchase one. Below, you'll find key information that'll help you pick out the perfect desktop for your needs and lifestyle.

Read more [here](#).

Three Essential Questions Every Tablet Shopper Should Ask



If you picture a tablet, do you think about Apple's iPad? If you're like a lot of Americans, the answer to this question will be "Yes."

This is because the revolutionary technology behind tablets is often attributed to Steve Jobs, but interestingly enough, another company started making tablets one decade before Apple... In 2000, [Bill Gates released the first tablet](#). Two years later, he created the world's first color tablet.

This brief history might seem to be superfluous, but it is very important ... It shows there are many things about tablets that the average consumer doesn't know. Furthermore, without an understanding of current and past technology, it's hard to

evaluate options fairly. Luckily, with the help of this article, you'll understand more about tablets and learn how you can select the ideal one for you.

Read more [here](#).

Tech Support for Aging in Place



Technical support specialists and IT support plans can get your computer and devices back in working order faster and cheaper than taking your computer to the local repair shop every time you have a problem. It is also faster and more reliable than depending on friends and family. 24x7 tech support from home is important for those that are new to technology, can't keep up with the changing pace, or want peace of mind when it comes to securing their computers and other devices. Consider having a personal tech support team and how it can help you age in place with professional technical care and protection while at home.

[Our members are more than pleased](#) with the protection and services we provide.

Technical Support for Your Computer and Devices Saves You Time and Money

Today we use complicated computers and advanced software programs and apps as part of everyday life. We use PCs and other desktop systems in the home and office, and laptops and mobile phones when we are on the move. These technical devices assist us in many ways, ranging from communications and staying in touch, planning our travel, helping us in our jobs, banking and shopping, providing instant access to information and knowledge, and entertainment during leisure hours. When our computers are working we take them for granted. But when they break down we quickly realize how reliant on technology we have become.

It is said that the most effective computer fix is to switch off and switch on the device, the classic reboot. This is true in a surprising number of cases. But when genuine problems emerge it's not always easy to figure out the problem and, if you don't know what's wrong, it can be difficult to know where to look to find a solution, despite the millions of help pages on the Internet. Of course, when you can't get onto the Internet at all because your computer or device won't connect, you are left completely in the dark.

Traditionally the solution was to take your computer to a repair shop for diagnosis and a fix. Sometimes, when you have a hardware problem like a disk drive breaking down or a screen cracking, this remains the only solution because physical parts need to be replaced and this cannot be done over a telephone. So the repair shop continues to serve a useful purpose and will do so into the foreseeable future.

However, a large number of problems can be related to the operating system, or the software running on the computer, or a setting you may have changed, a file you inadvertently deleted or malware and other unwanted programs that have found a way into the system. For these types of problems it's so much faster and far more convenient to pick up a phone and speak to an experienced and well trained technical specialist who has probably seen your problem many times before and can quickly identify the correct solution.

Diagnosing a Computer Problem

Minor computer problems can be identified and fixed by yourself. Often a computer program will display an error message when something goes wrong. This message may instruct you how to correct the problem, for example you may need to update your software or install another program. You can also download tools

from the Internet to diagnose computer problems and automate the fixes. Of course, be very careful when downloading tools and ensure you use reliable sources and pick tools that have strongly positive user reviews. Be aware, some of these programs are powerful and, in inexperienced hands, can do more harm than good.

But what if you can't fix the problem yourself? What if you have no idea what the problem is? If your computer won't boot up at all and shows no errors, or if software suddenly crashes or freezes, or keeps getting slower and slower? What if you see strange or vague error messages that you don't understand, or nasty advertising pop-ups that you can't close down?

In such cases you can spend hours or days searching through page after page on the Internet, trying to find a fix. That's if you know enough about the problem to guess what search terms to use. You can try partial fixes and workarounds supplied by unknown third parties. You can take the well-intentioned but

random advice of inexperienced friends – have you tried this, maybe that? You can uninstall and reinstall software. Run endless virus scans, but nothing seems to correct the problem. This is when you need a trained expert to take a look. Computer support specialists deal with many and varied technical problems every day, helping countless numbers of people just like you to solve technology problems. They can be the difference between a long and fruitless search or a rapid and reliable solution that addresses the problem properly and permanently.

This is one of the key advantages of expert computer support. It is generally a phone call away, 24 hours a day, every day of the week, and it will help to get your computer and devices back in good working order in the shortest possible time and with the least inconvenience.

Keeping Up With Technical Developments

With busy lives we just don't have the time to keep abreast of all the latest advances and developments and news related to our computers and devices. Not unless that happens to be a hobby, which is rare for most computer users.

How much time would you need to invest ensuring you were up to date with all the latest information that could help you should computer problems arise? What about a simple operating system update? You press a button, the update is downloaded and now your computer won't boot up or is extremely slow. This happened not so long ago to millions of users of a very popular mobile device, with older versions of that device suffering multiple issues after updating to the latest operating system.

Similarly, are you up to date on all the latest security threats, virus alerts and emerging threats such as ransomware? Have you

taken the necessary steps to protect your computers and devices?

Good technical support is not just a helpline for when things go wrong. It should also be an early warning system designed to prevent the problems arising in the first place. Professional support companies are constantly on the lookout for relevant news and events connected to the computers, devices, operating systems and software they support. They do the searching for you so you don't have to. They know where to look when you may not. They'll learn of potential threats and issues more quickly and be able to take preventative steps in a much timelier manner.

So another big advantage of technical support services is monitoring and prevention. If the problem can be avoided then that's the best outcome of all, the biggest time saver and by far the cheapest outcome.

Computer Support Packages

We've seen how a good technical support plan will offer telephone help and preventative monitoring. But the better plans offer plenty more on top, to provide a complete maintenance, protection and problem solving package.

With better plans you'll get [computer and device optimization](#).

This configures your computer to operate at its best possible performance, clears out all the unwanted or unnecessary programs and files that accumulate over time, removes malware as well as other tweaks and enhancements to ensure your system is stable, up to date and operating at peak efficiency.

Once the computer is in good shape, monitoring and protection tools are added, including anti-virus packages, automated updates, [data backup](#) and restoration solutions and other tools to greatly reduce the chance of problems occurring at all, and to detect and fix them in the shortest time possible.

With a good support plan you can focus on using your computer to reliably complete your many day to day tasks, while leaving it to systems running unobtrusively in the background to ward off any issues. Why wait until your computer breaks down? Why wait until it slows down? It's far more efficient and a far better use of your time and money to take a few simple steps and precautions to keep your technology reliable and in good condition.

The Cost of Professional Technical Support

Technical support plans are a lot cheaper than you might think.

Like insurance, you don't have problems all the time so you are paying a small amount per month to deal with the potentially high cost of fixing problems should they occur.

It all depends on how much you value your time and how heavily you rely on your technology. If you have the time and the knowledge to fix problems yourself, configure your tech to limit the

occurrence of these problems and stay up to date on technology developments in a timely manner then that's the cheapest option.

But for a few dollars a month you can have a professional company take care of all that for you. And you buy yourself the reassurance that should anything go wrong there's always an expert available, any time of the day and night, to help you. So if your time is valuable to you it becomes a very cheap option to hire a third party to take care of your technology.

Helpcloud.com Technical Support Packages

Here at HelpCloud.com our Premium and Unlimited membership plans include 24/7 unlimited technical support by telephone or through our chat feature. You get the benefit of an expert using all the best tools to keep your technology in top condition. To get a similar result yourself you'd likely end up spending more on the premium tools required to do the job than paying for somebody to

do it for you. You also get daily data backups, antivirus and firewall protection, and even [identity theft monitoring and protection with restoration services](#), because not all computer problems are connected to the technology itself.

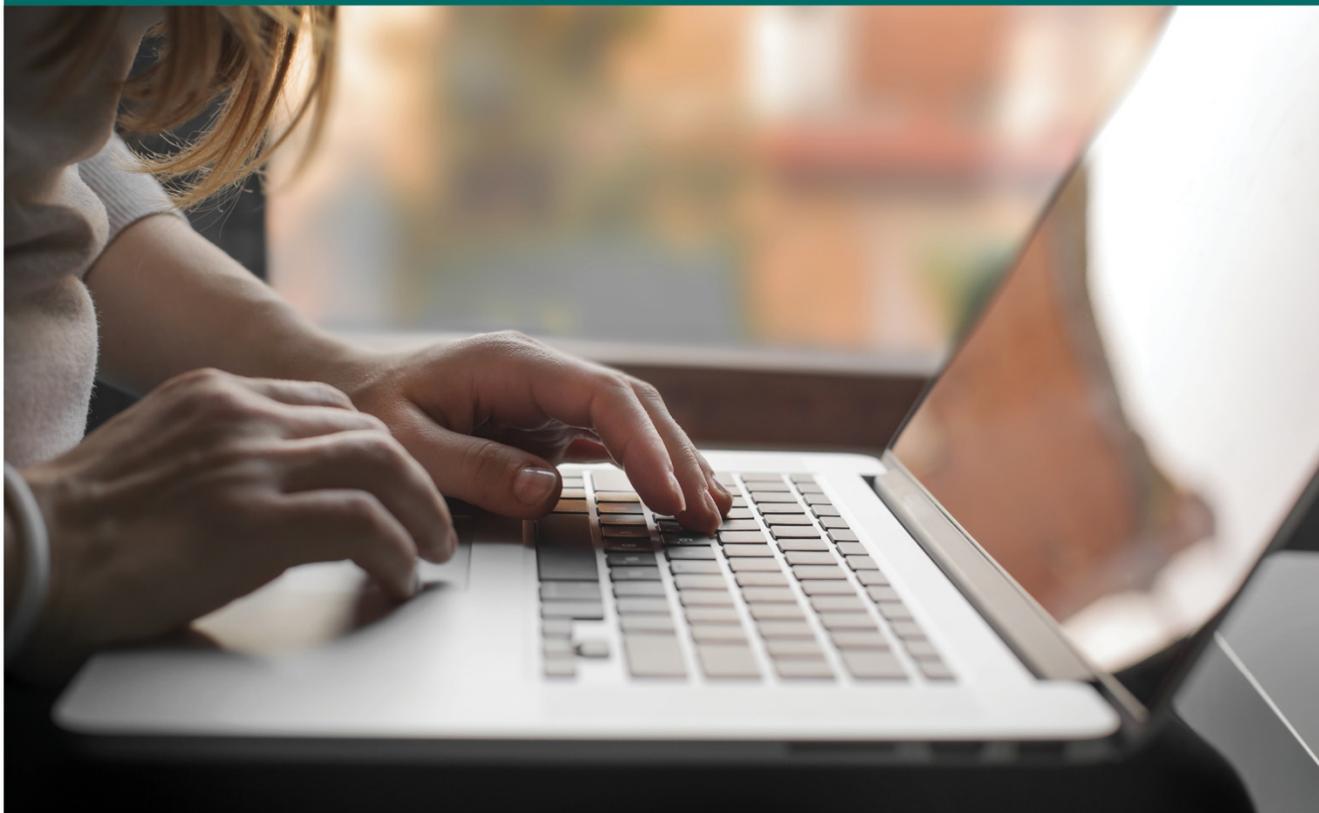
HelpCloud also offers one-time computer cleans to restore your computer back to optimal operating conditions.

HelpCloud.com includes a technology support membership and the company based in Utah. All our support technicians are fully trained, English speaking, friendly and ready to assist you. Our computer diagnosis service is free. When it is completed you are under no obligation to purchase any of our services. All our membership plans include computer cleaning and optimization.

It is easy and understandable to be overwhelmed by new technologies. But it is also easy to be excited by the ease this technology can bring to your home life. By learning the basics, being an aware user of technology, and professional tech support and protection it is easy to see how aging in place is feasible and

that modern smart homes and its devices will be a great help in this modern era.





A Comprehensive Tech Support Membership

Webroot SecureAnywhere® Antivirus

EZShield® Dark Web Monitoring

EZShield Online Identity Vault™

EZShield® Credit Monitoring

EZShield® ID Restoration Pro

Unlimited Data Backup

Quarterly Computer Cleans

Learning Center

24/7 Tech Support

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