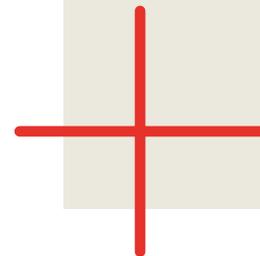
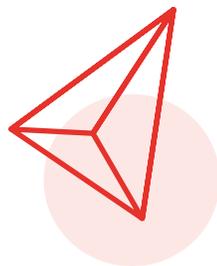


Senior Planet's Annual Technology Review

2021 Edition



SENIOR PLANET
FROM **AARP**

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Thank you!



Hello!

Whether it's learning how to keep in touch with family living in a faraway state, starting a second (or third or fourth) career online, or experimenting with new ways to make our voices heard, our community is discovering and mastering new technologies daily to achieve our goals.

In this Technology Review, we showcase some devices, apps, and websites that we don't always have time to cover in our classes, but we believe could be beneficial to know about.

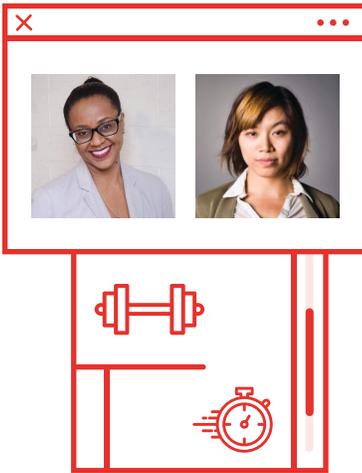
You'll read our staff picks from each of our five impact areas to see what we recommend, plus, "my tech diaries" from people in our community to see what tech older adults are using in their day-to-day lives!

Have a question about one of the recommendations? Call our technology hotline **(920-666-1959)** and one of our trainers can help you get started!

Best,

Pamela Hugi

Community & Advocacy
Manager



Fitness Picks

Fiona and Tina, Health and Wellness Team

Can't make Morning Stretch? Looking for more wellness assistance outside of Senior Planet courses? Here are our app suggestions to keep you moving, stress-free, and aging with attitude!



MyFitnessPal

MyFitnessPal is a smartphone app and website that tracks diet and exercise. The free version of the app is easy to use and jam-packed with useful features. There are even more features in the paid version!

Things we like

◆ There's so much! It allows you to customize your wellness goals; while it has a huge database of foods and recipes, you can easily add your own as well. It integrates your steps and workout, which allows you to see how many calories you consume along with how many you burn through movement; and there's a ton of educational content, including videos.

Things we don't like

◆ Like many free apps, you'll have to tolerate ads.



Down Dog

This app offers recorded yoga classes in varying styles and duration that you can tailor before starting the practice!

Things we like

◆ They offer multilingual instructions and variations to how much the instructor speaks in the recordings.

Things we don't like

◆ It is a paid subscription service, so you have to remember to cancel or else you will keep getting charged. But if you are not able to afford it, the app is offering subsidized-to-free memberships from financial hardships due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Insight Timer

Insight Timer is a smartphone app and online community for meditation. It has helped thousands of people cultivate peace of mind, improve sleep quality, and manage stress & anxiety through guided meditation.

👍 Things we like

◆ This free app allows you to track your daily meditation. You can create your own timer for 5, 10, or 15 minute meditation sessions and even more. When you meditate 10 consecutive days you receive a milestone honoring your commitment, which we find to be very motivating!

◆ The app offers Holistic courses for spiritual growth and guided meditations. You get a chance to meet people worldwide.

👎 Things we don't like

◆ Even with your device volume all of the way up, it can be difficult to hear the recordings. Consider connecting to a Bluetooth speaker!

◆ The background of the app is white, therefore it gives off a lot of light. So if you prefer meditating in a dimly lit room, it can be a distraction.

“

There are a lot of people who are stressed in the world and I'm one of them. I'm very stressed about everything going on in the country, but daily meditation with my meditation app helps me get away from those thoughts and dissipate that stress.

– Rudean ”





Working from Home Picks

Peter, Senior Planet's Technology & Data Manager

Starting a business, looking for work, or just trying to stay productive at home? Here are Peter's picks to help you stay connected and sound professional.



Discord
(discord.com)

Discord is a new, free, cutting edge chat application and social media platform. It's a great way to network online and share information!

👍 Things we like

- ◆ Voice, video, and text chat for free. All you need is an email to join!
- ◆ You can chat with friends you know from the real world, or join "Channels" built for the discussion of different topics you're passionate about. Debate, learn from, and connect with like-minded folks from across the world!

👎 Things we don't like

- ◆ Discord can be a bit complicated to learn how to use, but we think those brave enough to give it a try will find it to be an amazing tool for community creation.



Facebook Messenger
(messenger.com)

Want Facebook's "Messenger" feature without getting sucked into the big and distracting world of Facebook? Go to messenger.com, sign in, and chat with friends and family without getting caught up in everyone's new posts! You can detach from both the Facebook app and the Messenger app by using a web browser (messenger.com) to access the chat feature by itself!

👍 Things we like

- ◆ Chat with friends and family free from distractions of Facebook's main feed.

👎 Things we don't like

- ◆ A Facebook account is required; however, (fun fact) you don't need an active Facebook account to use this feature—disabled and suspended accounts can still access messenger.com and the "Messenger" app!



Podcasts

Want to get inspiration while you work? Or perhaps looking for a great procrastination method? We recommend a deep dive into the wonderful world of podcasts! If you're not comfortable with downloading an app to listen, try going to a podcast website to listen there for free! For example, all 700+ episodes of the podcast "This American Life" – one of the most celebrated and well known long-form radio shows in America – are available on their website: thisamericanlife.org!

👍 Things we like

- ◆ You can listen online or in an app (like the Apple and Google podcast apps, Player FM, or Spotify).
- ◆ Know how people say there's an app for everything? Well, there is also a podcast for everything. Here are some Senior Planet staff picks for Podcasts:



The New Yorker: Fiction

This podcast features readings of short stories published by *The New Yorker* followed by an insightful and illuminating discussion of the stories. The episodes go back over ten years, so listeners can enjoy stories that are a decade old or stories that are brand new.



TED Talks Daily

These are short presentations by experts on a myriad of topics – science, technology, innovation, health, education, etc. The episodes are highly informative. You learn something new from every episode.

“

It might seem a little intimidating to learn how to use a new device at first because it is a new adventure for you. But Senior Planet is an opportunity for you to get up to speed.

– Chinta ”





Activism Picks

Pam, Community & Advocacy Manager

Just because we are stuck at home does not mean that we cannot still fight the good fight! Here are a few resources to stay engaged and make your voice heard while staying safe.

MyReps

(MyReps.datamade.us/)

First step in making your voice heard? You have to make sure you're talking to the right people. MyReps is a website that helps you identify your elected officials on the local, county, state and federal levels.

👍 Things we like

◆ All you need to do is enter your address and you will be able to find every single one of your elected officials' phone numbers and emails addresses!

👎 Things we don't like

◆ Occasionally you'll find outdated or missing information, but when you spot it you can report it.

5 Calls

(5Calls.org)

This website, created by volunteers, helps you advocate for issues you care about by providing a seamless process for you to pick your issue, read a sample script, and then call the right decision makers.

👍 Things we like

◆ Experts say phone calls are the most effective way to get a politician's attention. This site makes calling your elected officials easier than ever!

◆ They provide the script and give guidance on the current "hot" issues.

◆ The site automatically keeps your call log up-to-date!



Twitter

Twitter is a social network available as an app or on browsers. While it is not without its controversies, when it comes to where you can find the most up-to-date breaking news and some of the most intriguing and honest discourse, Twitter is hard to beat.

👍 Things we like

- ◆ It's free!
- ◆ You can connect with other people with similar interests from all over the world and engage in debates that may challenge your worldview.
- ◆ You can follow your elected official and learn what they're saying about current events. Have an issue? Tweet at them with your concerns!
- ◆ You can share your ideas and opinions widely to the public. It can be a powerful microphone to hold!

👎 Things we don't like

- ◆ News is often spread on Twitter without fact-checking. Always make sure to check for sources and to note your own potential biases.
- ◆ While it can be a powerful force for change, it can also be a powerful force for wasting time. Make sure you don't fall into endless scrolling!

“

I want an age-friendly place to live and I want to be a part of helping to build that. I don't want them to make it for us. We need to be involved in how it is made.

– Lezrette ”





Creative Expression Picks

Roberto, NYC Based Trainer

What better way to stretch our minds than to create something unexpected? Use this time to experiment with new technologies that will not only assist but also push your creativity.



Fragment

Fragment is an app (iPhone/iPad, Android) where you can transform any image into totally unique, one-of-a-kind prismatic art you'll want to share with everyone!

👍 Things we like

- ◆ It's a great way to create kaleidoscope-like effects with photos, even photos that seem uninteresting. It's quick and fun to use.
- ◆ You can create multiple cool variations of the same photo.

👎 Things we don't like

- ◆ The app icons can be small in size.
- ◆ You need to provide your own photos to use.



Tayasui Sketches

This exhaustive app is an artist's toolbox that helps users create dazzling sketches, cheerful paintings, and smashing illustrations on the go.

👍 Things we like

- ◆ You can create original art on this platform, or enhance existing art (photos included) using a variety of tools.
- ◆ There is a free version!

👎 Things we don't like

- ◆ When first using this app, layering can get a little confusing; but we promise it will make more sense once you start practicing it!



Canva
(Canva.com)

Easily design beautiful, professional graphics. Canva gives you all the tools you need to design whatever your heart desires. Choose from hundreds of professionally designed layouts or create your own designs from scratch!

👍 Things we like

- ◆ This platform offers both free and premium options. It can be used on Apple's platforms (both mobile and desktop/laptop), PC, and Android.
- ◆ With a little practice, you can become a Canva pro!
- ◆ Canva has several templates and pre-formatted sizes ranging from templates for social media posts, printed greeting cards, and e-book templates. Your work can look like it's crafted by a pro.
- ◆ Serves as storage for your work as well, with options to download in different formats. And, you can also pay to have Canva print your creations!

👎 Things we don't like

- ◆ Limited photo editing options.

“

I've always wanted to try stand-up comedy by taking a class at the American Comedy Institute in NYC. I live in California, so attending classes in New York would normally not have been feasible, but since all classes now are virtual, I was able to attend online!

In August, I performed my debut stand-up set at American Comedy Institute's student showcase!

— Jane

”





Socializing Picks

Kim, Associate Director of Curriculum Development

Now, more than ever, it is vital that we stay connected. Use these recommendations to talk with friends you already know, and then join us for one of our social clubs to meet new friends!

The "live" feature of social media platforms

Social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram allow users to live-stream video to their followers.

👍 Things we like

- ◆ During the pandemic, this has provided us with amazing opportunities to maintain community!
- ◆ Viewers can comment while the event is happening live!
- ◆ One of our favorite live moments is watching [Fiona the baby hippo play at the Cincinnati Zoo](#).

👎 Things we don't like

- ◆ Fear of missing out (FOMO) has gone virtual! If you're not logged on for the live event, you can't go back to see it.



Zoom

Zoom has become the go-to video chat app during the pandemic. It's changed the way we think about virtual events.

👍 Things we like

- ◆ You don't need an account to join Zoom meetings – just click the link, and you're in!
- ◆ If you want to host meetings, you can sign up for a **free** basic account.
- ◆ The most important features like muting, video, and chat are straightforward and easy to use.

👎 Things we don't like

- ◆ Because Zoom took off so quickly and unexpectedly, it had to do some catching up with security features. It's important to update frequently to get the most recent security features and user experience.
- ◆ There's a 40 minute time limit for meetings on the free account.



WhatsApp

WhatsApp allows you to send messages and make voice and video calls using your WiFi connection.

👍 Things we like

- ◆ With more than 1.5 billion global users, it's a great way to stay in touch with friends and family all over the world.
- ◆ It doesn't matter if you and your contacts have an Android or iPhone, you just both need to have the WhatsApp app to chat.
- ◆ WhatsApp makes sending messages to groups easy. Create separate groups for family members, coworkers, or friends.
- ◆ WhatsApp's end-to-end encryption means that your messages can only be read by you and the recipients.

👎 Things we don't like

- ◆ All parties have to download WhatsApp to use it.
- ◆ Even though it uses WiFi to send messages and make calls, the app requires a phone number to sign up, so it won't work on a tablet or iPad without a cell contract.
- ◆ Depending on the group, chats can sometimes be nonstop or overwhelming. Turn off notifications if you don't want constant reminders of new messages coming in.
- ◆ You must change the default settings so that WhatsApp does not automatically save to your device the pictures or gifs that you open.

“

Learning how to use Zoom has been very much a lifesaver. I have been in a book club that meets monthly for over 25 years. We haven't been able to see each other in person since March, but now we are able to continue our meeting over Zoom! It has meant everything to be able to stay in touch.

– Mary ”





Up your Zoom Game!



Want to sound more professional and enjoy a smoother experience on Zoom? Here are our recommendations for accessories to help you look and sound your best:

◆ A good pair of headphones with a microphone

- Headphones make Zoom calls and other video and voice chats easier and more clear.
- We highly recommend the [Samsung corded earbuds by AKG](#). For a \$10.00 pair of headphones, these are excellent! Make sure your device has a headphone jack though before purchasing.
- If your device does not have a headphone jack or you prefer a wireless set-up, you'll need to use Bluetooth-capable headphones. Find one that works by searching "wireless headphones with mic" on your favorite online shopping website.

◆ Get a webcam with a microphone

- If your devices don't have a built-in camera or if you want to increase the quality of your video chatting: get a stand-alone webcam with a microphone!

[Logitech](#) is a long-trusted and reliable web cam brand with a variety of price points, starting at around \$40.00.

Please note: not every computer or tablet will work with every webcam or headphones, so make sure your technologies are compatible before purchasing!

- Need help setting it up? Call our technology hotline at **920-666-1959** for help!



My Tech Diaries

What pieces of technology are older adults relying on every day to help them run businesses online, transform their health, and expand their creativity?

Take a look at a "day in the life" of **Senior Planet participants and trainers** who are aging with attitude, and learn about the technology they are harnessing to do so!



Malvina

Public Defender, Travel Enthusiast, and Senior Planet Book Club Participant

Morning



First thing I do is turn on my cell phone. I shut it down at night to save battery and for peace and quiet! While still in bed, I check my email, the weather, do a few exercises on **Duolingo** and play a few **Lexulous** games.

Afternoon



When I'm around the house, I turn on **my smart TV to the Pandora app** and play my favorite music while I do household chores. Pandora is free and the music elevates my mood as I am doing my chores. Then on most days, I go swimming. My **smart watch (Samsung Galaxy)** is waterproof, plus it counts my steps and activity all day. Seeing the steps accumulate motivates me to keep going to my goal!

Evening



For the rest of the day I am using a combination of phone, laptop, TV, and watch. In this era of COVID-19, I feel it is more important than ever to stay connected. For someone who lives alone, this is extremely important for health, safety, and peace of mind.



Pat

Business Owner, Senior Planet Trainer, and Aspirational Aging Advocate

Morning



A typical day for me would include a morning routine of meditation using **an app called Balance**. After meditation, it's time for a one-hour walk using my **iPhone and the Audible app to listen to audio books**. This technology enables me to read one or more books every month!

Afternoon



As a trainer for Senior Planet, much of my day is spent facilitating **Zoom** conferences. Additionally, I highly recommend **YouTube** as a learning device to find the wisdom stored there.

Evening



I use my evenings to work on the book I'm writing! I use a writing app called **Ulysses** and of course **Google** is the best search engine to find the material to support my writing.



Justina

A retired public health worker focusing on her own health during lockdown

Morning



I like to start my day using my iPhone to check in on my family and read the news.

Afternoon



I use my afternoons to focus on my fitness. I take a walk or jog every day and use **Fitbit, Strava, and MyFitnessPal** to monitor my steps, distance, heart rate, and calories. Once I'm tired out, I turn to **Whatsapp, Facetime,** and **Houseparty** for video calls with children, grandchildren, and friends.

I like the convenience and safety of shopping online, so I love that I can use the **Nest app** to see who has come to the door and whether any packages have been delivered. For entertainment, I am loyal to my **Kindle** where I can read rented books from the library. Plus, I enjoy using **Facebook Live** to watch concerts and cultural events like museum tours, travel tours, and holiday celebrations.

Evening



Mazella

Retired Research Scientist, Ministry Volunteer, and Greeting Card Crafter

Morning



After waking up to the **alarm** on my smartphone, I use the **pray.com app** on the same device to enter my own prayers and respond to others.

Afternoon



I transition to using my desktop to look up whatever I want! Sometimes I'll watch **videos on card-making on youtube.com** or use **Google to research Keto recipes** for healthier eating. When I'm ready to do some work on my greeting cards, I use my **Cricut Diecutting Machine**. It's brought my creativity into the 21st century!

Evening



I use my evenings to look over my **online calendar** and review upcoming Zoom classes scheduled at Senior Planet, AARP, and **the Clayton Library Center for Genealogical Research**. Life-long learning has never been more accessible with online courses like these!



What's Next?



Every January, Senior Planet sends a staff member to CES, the gadget-laden annual trade show of the Consumer Technology Association. We were able to attend the conference remotely this year and found that even after months of lockdown, innovation refuses to slow down.

We attended CES 2021 searching for creativity; not specifically in the aging space, but in the technology stratosphere at large – to find technologies that incite wonder while adding tangible benefit to our lives as we age.

Unsurprisingly, this year, pandemic-friendly tech was the theme, as multiple vendors

introduced hot tech items to make post-COVID-19 life safer and more fun. N-95 facemasks that light up, touch-free doorbells, and a friendly, cleaning robot show how fast tech companies can adapt to serve the rapidly-changing world. But don't worry; there are also plenty of fun gadgets on the horizon that will be just as useful in the post-pandemic world!



Here are our top picks from CES 2021:

Pandemic life

◆ Razor Project Hazel N-95 Mask

Do you miss the days of seeing someone's full face instead of just their eyes and a facemask? While its user-changeable colored lights are cool, we think the selling point of this **reusable N-95 mask** is its clear-plastic face covering, allowing you to see people's genuine reactions while out in the world. Not only that, the mask includes audio processing to make you sound clearer!

◆ Alarm.com Touchless Video Doorbell

With our reliance on delivery services in lockdown, it's natural to be worried about just how many people end up touching your doorbell on a given day. **Alarm.com's new invention** can sense when a visitor arrives and send a notification to your phone. From there, you can talk to them through the app and safely maintain social distancing.

◆ Samsung's Bot Handy

Stuck at home and feeling lonely? Or just sick of doing chores more often to keep up with how much time you spend in your house? Samsung's **Bot Handy** is a sleek new robot helper that can clean up messes, fold laundry, and even re-arrange items in your home. The robot can do all this using a combination of built-in cameras and cutting-edge artificial intelligence.

Accessibility Tech

◆ Oticon More (hearing)

This **futuristic hearing device** uses a neural network to process hearing more like the human brain. One of its key features is the ability to

focus on speech in a noisy environment, putting it a far step above traditional hearing devices that can't tell speech from background noise.

◆ Mantis Q40 (vision)

The **Mantis Q40** is a braille keyboard like you've never seen before – this device combines a traditional QWERTY keyboard with a refreshable Braille display.

Health and Fitness

◆ Tatch Sleep Sensor

Having a bad night's sleep and don't know why? **Tatch sensors** can be worn overnight while you sleep, and will track your body positions and how they affect your quality of sleep.

◆ Wondercise

Want to work out more, but worried about hurting yourself with bad form? The **Wondercise** app can track your movement and tell you exactly how to correct your form for the safest results.

Cool Factor

◆ Panasonic Automotive AR HUD

This **augmented reality heads-up display** can help you drive safely with data! Using a system of cameras and advanced artificial intelligence, the display will alert you to hazards and calculate your distance from other vehicles and objects on the road.

◆ Petpuls A.I.-Powered Dog Collar

Have a furry companion in your home? This may be the closest we get to a dog translator! The **A.I.-powered collar** can use voice-recognition technology to decipher your dog's mood as well as monitor their sleep and activity.



Thank you!

It's because of Senior Planet superfans like you that we are able to offer free, life-changing technology courses to thousands of older adults across the nation.

We want to hear from you! Can you think of any technology recommendations that we should have included? Have an idea for another benefit?



SENIOR PLANET
FROM **AARP**