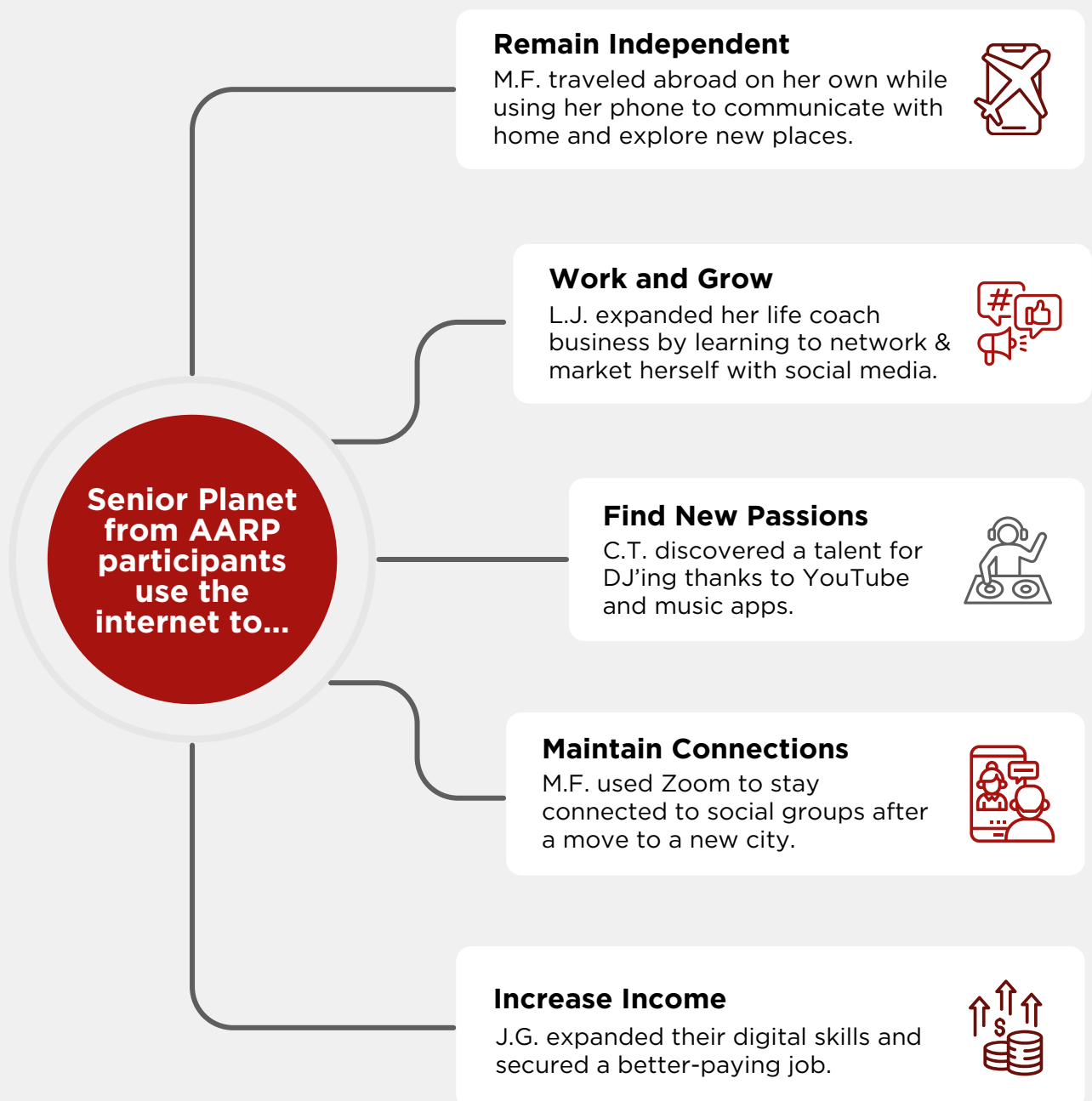# OATS | OLDER ADULTS TECHNOLOGY SERVICES™
FROM AARP®

Unlocking Online Opportunities: Internet Basics for Older Adults

Connecting to the internet can offer many great benefits, like learning new things, connecting with loved ones, and exploring your passions. It's an exciting endeavor, but can it can also be a little intimidating for those who are new to technology. It's important to remember that while it may take a little time to build your comfort and confidence, the internet will unlock a whole new world of experiences.

## The Power to Improve Everyday Life

Senior Planet from AARP participants use the internet to...

Remain Independent
M.F. traveled abroad on her own while using her phone to communicate with home and explore new places.

Work and Grow
L.J. expanded her life coach business by learning to network & market herself with social media.

Find New Passions
C.T. discovered a talent for DJ'ing thanks to YouTube and music apps.

Maintain Connections
M.F. used Zoom to stay connected to social groups after a move to a new city.

Increase Income
J.G. expanded their digital skills and secured a better-paying job.

Addressing Some Common Concerns

Security

Safeguard yourself against scams by practicing safe online habits and looking out for the signs of a scam.

- **Remain calm.** Any message that promotes a sense of emergency or causes an emotional reaction should give you pause.

- **Always use a reliable web browser** like Chrome, Safari, or Edge and make sure it's up to date. Check out your browser's settings and consider enabling additional security features.

- **Download apps** exclusively from your device's app store. Make sure to check the number of downloads and reviews before downloading.

- **Use a password-protected internet connection!** Don't use open networks to check sensitive information like bank statements or online health records. It's a best practice to only enter payment information over secure network connections.

- **Make sure that your mobile device is password-protected** so others can't access it. Instead of a password, you can use Face ID.

- **Create unique, strong passwords for your accounts.** The more sensitive the information, the stronger (longer) the password should be. Password managers are a safe and secure way to create separate passwords for all your accounts. It's easy to set up iCloud keychain for iOS users or Google Password Manager.

- **Use 2FA or MFA whenever possible.** 2-factor authentication (2FA) or multi-factor authentication (MFA) requires more than 1 piece of information to access an account.
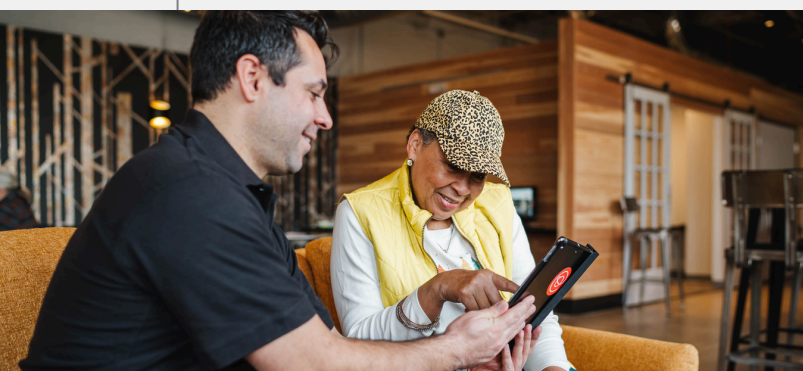
Privacy

Understanding the necessary steps to safeguarding the privacy of your online activities can help you feel more confident using the internet in everyday life.

Here are steps you can take to limit the tracking of your online activities by websites and advertisers:

- Only accept necessary or essential cookies.

- Explore your browser's privacy settings.
    - Safari offers Private Browsing Mode.
    - Chrome offers Incognito Mode.

- Regularly delete your browser history and clear cookies.

- Review the settings of your favorite apps and make sure that you limit tracking whenever possible.

Digital Fluency

We all have different levels of digital fluency, based on our exposure to and use of technology. Digital fluency includes familiarity with technology terms that have become a part of everyday language. To get the most out of tech and build confidence when using it, it's helpful to familiarize yourself with tech terms as they come up. Senior Planet provides a frequently-updated glossary of common tech terms at seniorplanet.org/glossary.

You're likely already using and benefiting from some technology. The more you explore new tech, the more you'll learn about additional benefits for your everyday life. These include doing things like:

- Using a banking app to check account balances or deposit a check
- Using an app for driving directions or public transportation
- Video chatting with friends from anywhere

Accessibility

Many devices' built-in accessibility features can make using digital tools easier for older adults. Becoming familiar with the relevant accessibility features of your devices is a good first step. Smartphones and tablets can be customized to meet the needs and preferences of the individual user. Common helpful features include the following:

- Screen color inversion
- Adjustable text size
- Voice-to-text
- Voice control
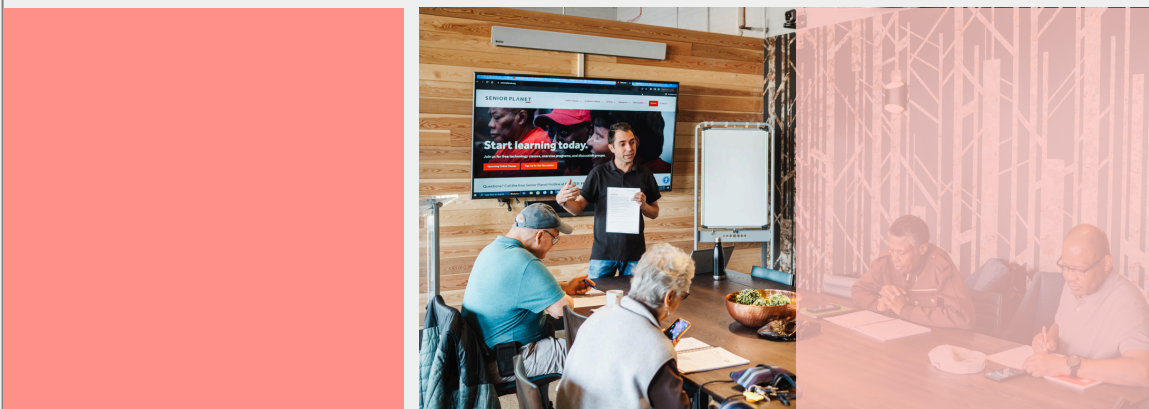
Build Foundational Web Search and Evaluation Skills

Internet searching and website evaluation skills are essential for making the most out of the internet. Building these skills can be a fun and exciting journey!

For Factual Info, Start with a Search Engine

- Google, Bing, etc
- Type in the web address bar
- Ask a voice assistant

Practice Search Terms

- Be specific
- Use a zip code for local results
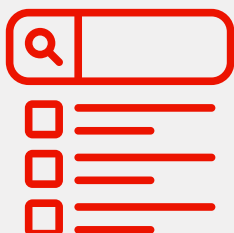- Include month/year for recent results
- And you can always tweak terms and search again!

Get to Know the Search Results Page

- Use links in the AI Overview to double-check provided info

✦ AI Overview

- Recognize ads
- Filters can help you comb through results

Ask Yourself Questions to Evaluate Websites

- Who runs the website? Are they a reputable source on the topic?
- Does the website have an "About us" section? What can I learn from it?
- Is the website trying to sell something? Does it have an agenda?
- Is the information on the website up-to-date?
- Can I find the same information on multiple websites?
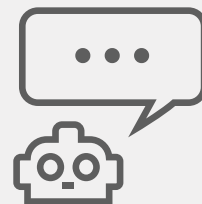
Once You're Comfortable Searching, Try AI Chatbots

- Search engines are best for facts that don't require follow-up questions.
- AI chatbots are conversational and require context.
- Ask for and verify sources when using AI chatbots.
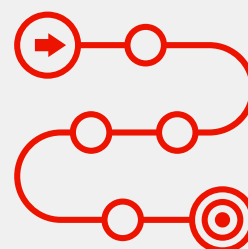
SeniorPlanet.org Resources

Start here:

- **Welcome Page**
  seniorplanet.org/welcome

- **Tech Terms Glossary**
  seniorplanet.org/glossary

- **How To Use Zoom**
  seniorplanet.org/zoom

- **Hotline (888-713-3495)**
  seniorplanet.org/hotline

Next steps:

- **Tech Tip Videos**
  seniorplanet.org/videos

- **On-Demand Learning**
  seniorplanet.org/on-demand

- **Quizzes & Games**
  seniorplanet.org/quizzes

- **1:1 Tech Help**
  seniorplanet.org/tech-help

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Older Adults Technology Services (OATS) from AARP helps older adults learn to use and leverage technology to transform their lives and communities. Through its flagship program, Senior Planet, OATS works closely with older adults to create extraordinary experiences in-person and online. The mission of OATS is "to harness the power of technology to change the way we age." OATS is a charitable affiliate of AARP. To learn more, visit www.oats.org or follow @OlderAdultsTech on social media.

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