Silver surfer (internet user)

Silver surfer refers to the population of individuals over the age of 50 who utilize the internet on a consistent basis. The number of older users has increased dramatically over the past several years due to their being more accustomed to the technology. It has been determined that this segment of the population now uses the internet on average four hours more per month than the age group 18-24. Research shows that the silver surfers are spending a majority of their time using search engines and online shopping sites. [1] Other sources indicate that this growing trend among the older population is due to the increase in use of social networking sites to stay in touch with family members or close friends that live far away. Studies point to Skype, Facebook, email, and instant messaging are all highlighted as commonly used, mainly because the means for communicating have become more available and even free [2]

While the rise in internet use among the younger population has led to fears of isolation, it is argued that the increase in use for the older population has done the exact opposite. A study was conducted that surveyed over 8,000 individuals over the age of 50 on the extent of their social-networking use. The results showed that individuals who used the internet more consistently were 1/3 less likely to be depressed. Depression for this age group is argued to arise from lack of mobility and feeling out of touch, but the ability to keep close contact has reversed this phenomenon - internet use is thought to increase avenues of communication and feelings of independence. A separate study analyzed the brain function of individuals after using the internet for a week, and found that it improved nerve function in the older group. [3]

References

Further reading