

The tools of technology can help make life more accommodating during the retirement years. This book discusses those tools of technology and recommends ways to be more adept with those tools, and how to incorporate technology into your retirement lifestyle.

Technology & Your Retirement Lifestyle: Tools For The New You

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***Technology & Your Retirement Lifestyle:***

***Tools For The New You***

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Jeffrey Webber

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## **CHAPTER 1: WHY TECHNOLOGY IN RETIREMENT?**

I'm reasonably certain that you have some understanding of the benefits of technology. During the retirement years, a most important question for all of us is, "What is out there that can make our lives easier?" Other than medication and easy to chew food, technology can make a big difference in the quality of our lives. For example, folks that in or nearing retirement are into technology more than ever before. They are going online to bank, invest, find volunteer opportunities, participate in interest groups, and perhaps even start up something new for fun or profit.

In my many years of experience as a technology facilitator for a public school district, I learned that there are few things in life that tools of technology cannot help you with. The lives of the inner city children I taught became enriched academically as well as socially. Because many of these students had limited access to environments other than that of a local nature, their knowledge base became more global. In essence, they became educated world travelers with knowledge of other cultures, the arts, and new hobbies. Socialization greatly improved as

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worldwide friendships developed. All of this happened because of the Internet.

These positive changes led me to believe that technology can readily benefit us retired folks in a similar fashion. We are able to learn at any age and may, depending on age and physical abilities and financial means, have similar travel limitations. And even if we are able to get up and go, why not do it with the right tools.

So, specifically why is technology important in retirement?

First of all, there is a world of information at your fingertips. Assuming you have developed that all-important plan for retirement I've been nudging you about, you can look up anything and everything related to it.

One of the goals my wife and I have set is to travel for the purpose of pursuing our interests. This past year we took an extended trip in our new motorhome to Florida and on to Arizona. We have a variety of cultural interests and hobbies that we wanted to pursue. Throughout the trip we were fortunate to have available to us wireless Internet (wi-fi). If you are not familiar with the term, it basically means that I could hook up my laptop wirelessly because each campground had a wi-fi antenna on premises. This is a fabulous convenience for weary

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travelers. We were able to plan our daily routes through directional websites, make reservations, find refueling locations, check TV listings, find theatre locations and reviews, and a whole lot more. A typical example follows:

We arrived for a three-day stay in Santa Fe, New Mexico. We were desirous of visiting the Georgia O'Keefe Museum ([okeeffemuseum.org](http://okeeffemuseum.org)). From the comfort of our RV, we were able to obtain maps and directions, and retrieve important information about the museum from the website, including a virtual tour of permanent exhibits. It is important to note that most major museums do indeed offer virtual tours of exhibits. In case you are not familiar with the term "virtual tour," it is basically a tour of something without you actually being there.

Research on the Internet most definitely provides a plethora of information relating to our needs. Further chapters in this book will discuss in detail seeking out information on your favorite hobbies and passions in this, the final stage of life. We will also discuss researching medical conditions, comparison shopping, blogs, and other ways this information will make you an integral part of your world.



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Another hugely beneficial element of the technology is communication. When we travel, we are in daily contact with friends and family utilizing both my cell phone and my laptop. We've made many friends through the years that we are most anxious to keep in touch with.

If your cell phone provider is a company like Verizon Wireless, you can call whomever you'd like for free, if the person on the receiving end has Verizon as a provider. You also have the ability to send e-mail or text messages (typing out a message using the keypad) through your cell phone.

On your computer communication is simple via e-mail (electronic mail) or by using any of the free Internet telephony programs such as Skype (*skype.com*) or iChat (*apple.com/macosx/features/ichat/*). Further, if you have access to a video camera, or, have a built-in camera in your computer, you can easily create a video conference with the aforementioned programs, allowing all users to see and talk to each other. This technology is fabulous when keeping in touch with children and grandchildren and at the same time lessens the potential of incurring a large phone bill. Audio and videoconferences dramatically reduce distances if you travel a

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great deal. I do this on a regular basis with my daughter who lives three thousand miles away in Seattle.

One of the most annoying tasks that we face is the paying of bills. With the availability of online bill pay mechanisms, the task becomes substantially less daunting. No matter where you are, it is quite simple, expedient and cost effective. Most banks offer this service free of charge to its customers. Additionally, there are many software programs that will assist you in the process. Another major advantage is that you can precisely determine when the biller receives funds. A most important implication here is that this is another step you can take to make life easier during the retirement years.

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