

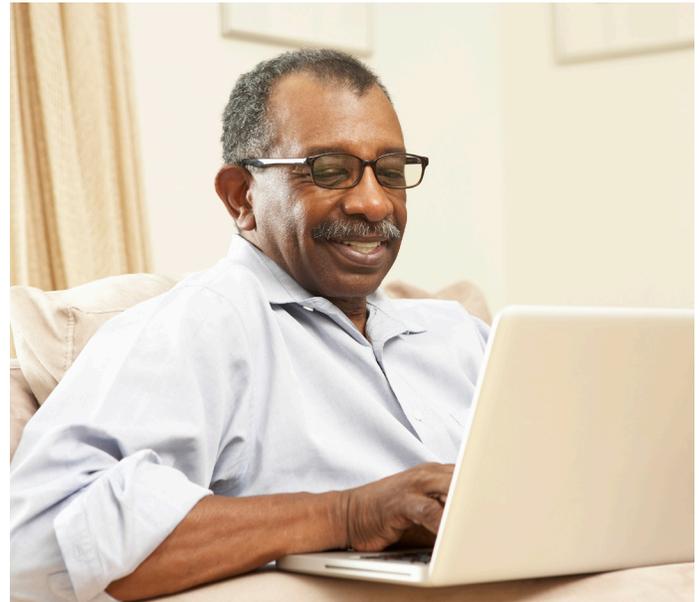
## Silver Surfers—The world is at your fingertips!

By *Kaarina Dillabough*

A growing body of research is showing that the Internet brings happiness and health into the lives of older adults.

Here are some highlights from the research on computers and thinking skills:

- The Mayo Clinic Study of Aging involved 926 participants aged 70 to 90. Researchers found that those who engaged in any amount of computer use were 44% less likely to have mild cognitive impairment than people who did not use the computer.
- Researchers can't confirm that there is a causal link between computer use and sharper wits, but the evidence is growing. Researchers from the Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior at the University of California-Los Angeles studied middle-aged and older adults surfing the Web. They found that doing this for only a week stimulated areas of the brain that control decision-making and complex reasoning.
- A 2009 UCLA study showed that when seniors were performing simple web searches, blood flow increased in areas of the brain vital for memory and thinking.
- *Other studies have shown* that seniors who are moderately physically active AND computer active are more likely to stave off memory loss. This leads researchers to speculate that "people who engage in both physical activity and computer use may be healthier, more disciplined individuals. In other words, these activities could simply be a marker for a healthy lifestyle."



### *The emotional benefits*

An active social life is one of the keys to healthy aging. Corresponding and connecting -- at your convenience, any time of the day or night -- is an amazing benefit of the online world. A study by the Washington DC-based Phoenix Center found that spending time online reduces depression by 20% in senior citizens.

There are games to play with distant friends for fun and mental exercise, such as online Scrabble. The Internet makes it easy to share photos and stories with family and friends. There are also free services like Skype, where you can video call people all over the world.

### *The advantages to you as a consumer*

The Internet also provides one-stop shopping from the comfort of your own home. E-commerce and online banking have become easy and convenient for everyone, and especially for those with mobility or transportation challenges.

The Internet is a world of information at your fingertips. You can use it to research activities in your community, and learn about events all around the world.

## ***Need help getting started?***

If you're looking for ways to deepen your connection to family and friends, forge friendships, find information, learn new things, and have a great time doing it, then flex those fingers: the Internet beckons!

For introductory computer classes, check with your local:

- library
- parks and recreation department
- community centre
- board of education
- community college.

## **About the Author**

**Kaarina Dillabough** is a business/life coach living in Amaranth, Ontario, Canada. For over 25 years she has inspired those she has worked with to reach beyond their grasp, to attain great things in business and in life. A former Olympic sports colour commentator and coach, Kaarina parlayed her coaching skills from the gym floor to the boardroom, working with business owners to improve their profitability and prosperity. She loves nothing more than helping people achieve their goals in business and in life. Check out her [Blog](#) or follow her on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#). Email contact: [kaarina@kaarinadillabough.com](mailto:kaarina@kaarinadillabough.com)