Appendix C  
The Seniors Speak

I am a doctoral student in Adult Education at Virginia Polytechnic University and am interested in writing a dissertation about seniors (over 55) and the Internet. My main line of interest is how seniors learn how to use the Internet and possibly why they would like to try this media. I seriously would like feedback from the senior community about this research, and questions that could be asked about this topic.

I decided on this topic because, I was inspired by my mother who learned how to surf the Internet and get and receive e-mail in 1995. My mom is very mechanically inclined and needed to learn how the computer works (hardware and networking) before she could even understand the Windows® interface or e-mail. I am interested in finding what seniors think the important points would be for conducting research on this topic.

If you are at least fifty-five (55), and use the Internet for any purpose, please send any and all comments to ____________. I would gratefully appreciate any advice, comments or encouragement on perspective topics or questions, for my dissertation.

Note: The blank indicates that all identifying information is removed to preserve both confidentiality and anonymity.
Appendix D

From: ___________________________
To: ___________________________
Date: Monday, April 03, 2000 11:22 AM
Subject: Seniors and the Internet

In the March 2000 issue of P. C. Communicator of ________, FL, you requested comments on your proposed dissertation on how Seniors learn to use the Internet and why.

My analysis of the activity you want to study goes something like this: The activity can be defined by a simple statement consisting of a subject, predicate, and object such as

Subject = Seniors (over 55 age group of general population of USa)
Predicate = learn
Object = how to use the Internet

Leaving the predicate fixed, it might be interesting to consider what would happen if you changed the subject or the object.

For example, assuming there is available some body of knowledge on how another age group (such as elementary school pupils) handles this activity, you might want to examine how seniors do this learning versus how elementary school pupils do it. Or, changing the object, you might want to examine how seniors learn to use the Internet versus how they learn to play golf. In either case you would want to design the questions to best elucidate the points of interest.

The same approach works when you ask why seniors want to enter the Internet.

The above comments touch on only a small part of the whole problem but they may stimulate thought on different approaches.

Best of luck on your foray into research. Careful planning usually pays off.

__________________

Note: The blanks indicate that all identifying information is removed to preserve both confidentiality and anonymity.
Appendix E
Informed Consent

Doctoral Dissertation Research
Lori Ann Roth Gibbons
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Dissertation Title: Older Adults Learning Online Technologies: A Qualitative Case Study of the Experience and the Process

I. Purpose of Project:

The purpose of this dissertation is to assess how people over 65 years of age learn online technologies. For the purpose of this dissertation, online technologies are defined as the Internet and e-mail.

Data will be acquired by the researcher who will conduct three half hour to hour interviews with each participant. The interviews will center on the process of learning online technologies. The participant will also be videotaped two times, learning on a computer for half an hour, and then interviewed for half an hour about the process. In addition, the participant will be asked to keep a journal documenting his or her experiences with online technologies.

II. Confidentiality Statement

A. The subjects' interviews will be tape-recorded and videotaped and all of the information will remain confidential and anonymous. All identifying information, i.e., names of the interviewees, locations of work, etc., will be excised from the document.

B. The researcher is the only person who will listen to the tapes (unless the tape is transcribed by a professional) and she will either transcribe the tapes herself or have the tapes transcribed by a professional. Her analysis will be based on the information in the transcripts. Once transcribed, the original tapes will be kept locked in a secure location in the researcher's residence. The researcher is the only person who will have access to the tapes.

C. The tapes will be kept beyond the completion of the dissertation for the purposes of verification and in the event there is a need to continue or expand the research. Once that has been accomplished, the tapes will be erased.

D. The subjects will be given the final version of the analysis that pertains to their interviews to verify accuracy and to protect their rights to privacy. The subjects will have the opportunity to correct the record at any time including names or events. In addition, the subjects may withdraw at any time without any penalty.
III. Subject's Permission

I have read and understand the informed consent and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent for the participation in this project.

I understand that I may withdraw at any time without penalty.

_____________________________________ ______________________
Signature        Date

Should I have any questions about this research or its conduct I may contact:

____________________________________
Lori Ann Roth Gibbons, Investigator
Telephone - 
E-mail

____________________________________
Marvin G. Cline, Ph.D.
Departmental Institutional Review Board Officer
Telephone - 
E-Mail

____________________________________
Marcie Boucouvalas, Ph.D.
Chairperson/Advisor
Telephone - 
E-Mail

I agree to have my interviews tape-recorded and videotaped under the conditions described in Section II.

____________________________________
Signature        Date

Note: The blanks indicate that all identifying information is removed to preserve both confidentiality and anonymity.
Appendix F

Student Information

Instructions:
Fill out the information so that the instructor and your classmates may learn more about you.

Name and nickname:

E-mail address/Internet service provider (AOL, Earthlink, CAIS, Erols):

Snail mail address and phone number:

Why did you take this class (what do you want to learn):

Previous Knowledge/experience with on line technologies (e-mail and internet):

Expectations for Class:

Hobbies:
Appendix G

Volunteer for Doctoral Study

**Requirements:** No experience with the Internet/online technologies. Access to a computer with an e-mail/Internet account. Would agree to be interviewed and videotaped, and keep a journal of your learning processes and thoughts. Available from October 2 - December 1, 2000.

Name:_________________________________________

Phone number:__________________________________

Best times to call:_______________________________

Address:_________________________________________

________________________________________________
I need you... to contribute your experiences

**Wanted:** Adults 65 years and older to serve as participant volunteers to assist a Ph.D. candidate with research about learning the Internet.

**Requirements:**
- 65 years old or older
- Have never used e-mail and Internet
- Want to learn e-mail and Internet
- Willing to be interviewed and observed
- Willing to keep a journal of your thoughts
- Have access to online computer

*This research will be used to further theory and practice for helping older adults learn computer technology.*

Please call Lori Gibbons of Springfield, VA

Phone Number
Appendix I

The Process of How Seniors Learn the Internet

Interview #1

Purpose: To get an idea about the student's knowledge, attitude and skills about online technologies and computers. Also, to get them to think about starting the process of learning about online technologies.

1. Tell me about your experience with Computers?
   Probe: Do you have a computer? Do any of your friends or family? Do you use it for anything?

2. Tell me about your experience with online technologies (ie: e-mail and Internet)
   Probe: What have you heard about this stuff?
   Probe: Do any of your family members use this?

3. Is there a reason that you have not used a computer before now? Why now?

4. Would you like to use your computer? Why?
   Probe: What are you interested in that we can find out about with the help of the Internet?

5. How do you propose we start learning about the Internet and E-mail?
   Probe: What are the ways you learn best?
   Probe: Do you want to send e-mail to anyone special?
Appendix J
The Process of How Seniors Learn the Internet
Interviews #2 & 3

**Purpose:** To understand what they have learned and what they would like to learn. Also how they are learning. Are there any transitions or bottlenecks? Look for steps in a process.

1. How often have you gone online since we last met?
   
   **Probe:** You can look in your journal.

2. What have you been exploring using online technologies (ie: e-mail and Internet)?

3. What have you learned?
   
   **Probe:** How have you learned it?
   
   **Probe:** What do you want to learn still?

4. What do you see as a success and what has challenged you in your learning process?

5. How do you propose to learn what you want to learn?
Appendix K

Example of Specific Questions

*(pilot study questions)*

**Interview #4**

1. Could you get your journal?

2. You mentioned in one of the videos that you expected to see a blue screen instead of advertising? Why is that?

3. On the video I was watching, you clicked on games instead of health. How often does that happen and why do you think it happens?

4. What do you think the reason is that you can't remember exactly when you bought your computer?

5. Since you have used the computer for word processing and the Internet browsing, what do you think the difference is in learning a word processing program vs. the Internet?

6. What do you usually do when you know you have a lack of knowledge and you are presently surfing on the Internet or typing e-mail? Why do you do this?

7. You mentioned that your son helps you with the computer. When do you ask for help and why do you choose to have your son help you rather than other methods of help?

8. You say that e-mail is easy to use and fun, (sending the recipe to your friend not your sister) then you say later that it is frustrating. Can you elaborate about that, maybe give examples?

9. Have you downloaded any attachments lately and do you feel comfortable doing this? What would it take for you to feel comfortable?
10. You mentioned in an interview that you didn't have the nerve to put a message on a message board (genealogy). Why do you think that is and could you think of any reason why you might put a message on a board?

11. What would make you persevere more when you are looking for something on the Internet? What prompts you to stop?

12. You seem to try different things on the Internet like when a friend told you about the search engine "Ask Jeeves". What gives you the motivation to try stuff and what would keep you from trying stuff?

13. You seem really cautious about buying via the Internet. Have you bought anything yet? Why are you so cautious?

14. How often do you use the e-mail? Internet?

15. When you are looking for something and can't find it, you said that you get very impatient. What do you do in this situation?

16. You mentioned that one of your strategies is just to try to find things by trying different methods over and over again. Why would you think you use this strategy and how has this worked for you?

17. When you were looking for El Dorado with your grandson, you mentioned that you tried once and did not find anything then you stopped and tried again another day. You went to AOL research and learned and found what you were looking for. Why do think you use the strategy of coming back to this later? Does it seem to work for you? How did it feel when you found the information?

18. You mention that you write down web site names on pieces of paper. How does that strategy work for you? Why do you think you do that?

19. You mentioned that you don't go into chat rooms because your son and Jim said that it is not a good idea. Tell me how this strategy of listening to others tell of their experiences has helped or hindered you. Also, why you listen to their advice.

20. You mention that you use trial and error as a strategy. Why do you do this? Has it worked for you?

21. You mentioned that you have to be patient while you are on the Internet. How has this strategy worked for you? Why be patient? Explain.
Appendix L

See PowerPoint presentation called stages.ppt