

INTERNET AND SENIORS

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Abstract

The article deals about the possibilities of using the internet for seniors. Authors suggest using www pages as alternative of retrospective therapy. Authors describe barriers of internet access for seniors. The authors of the article consider about utilization of internet for the reminiscence therapy of seniors. The target group of this article are the workers of the information centres, gerontopedes and the other persons working as the pedagogues. The objective of this article is to summarize ways of using internet for helping seniors to better life. The authors describe terms e-senior. The authors suggest methodological approach to exercising user's skills.

Key Words

Internet, barriers of internet access, e-seniors

Introduction

The history of the mankind is interwoven by plenty of the fascinating technical inventions. When in the year 1876 sir Alexander Graham Bell set together the first telephone, he wouldn't anticipate not even in the dream, that it will come the period, when will the people walk through the streets with mobile phones. He wouldn't also think, that the telephone will serve one day as a technical tool for the transition of the multimedia information of the internet.

A lot of people associate the internet and information technology above all with the young generation. Maybe therefore, that the modern conceived education and breeding are interwoven by the informatics and cybernetics. The young generation grows up in the over-engineered environment. If we should use the words of Kevin Kelly, we could say, that the young generation grows up „in the world of atoms, which is influenced by the world of bits.“ The internet doesn't respect the state and continent borders, the time zones don't play their role, even the physical location of communicating subjects isn't the essential element of the communication. It governs as well, that the PC skills and the work with the internet browser or the e-mail client is becoming more easy. It's why we can suppose, that the utilization of the internet doesn't know the generation barriers.

In articles (Silva, 2009) and (Losh, 2003) authors say that young people largely drove the early stages of the internet growth but in recent years the sharpest rise in Web use in developed nations has been amongst people aged 70 and over, experts said Monday. "Older adults are the fastest growing demographic on the internet," said Professor Vicki Hanson of the School of Computing at Scotland's University of Dundee on the opening day of a global World Wide Web conference in Madrid. (Silva, 2009)

While just over one-fourth, or 26 percent, of 70-75 year olds went online in the United States in 2005, the proportion was 45 percent last year, according to data from the Pew Internet & American Life Project, she said.

The percentage of those aged 76 years and over who surf the Web rose during the same period from 17 percent to 27 percent. Britain has experienced similar sharp gains in the internet use by people in this age group, said Andrew Arch of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), the main international standards organisation for the Web.

"They are basically doing the same things as everyone else. Using the Web for communication, then quickly moving to other activities like information seeking, online banking, shopping," said Arch who works to boost Web accessibility for older and disabled users. (Silva, 2009) Sending and receiving e-mail is the most popular online activity for the internet users age 64 and older, according to the Pew study. But older internet users are less likely than younger Web surfers to do online banking and shopping -- and far less likely to use social networking sites, it found.

"They are not on Twitter," said Hanson, referring to the micro blogging Web site whose popularity got a huge boost last week as US talk show diva Oprah Winfrey became the latest big name celebrity to join the craze. With the percentage of the population aged 60 and over expected to reach 20 percent by 2050, experts said the numbers of older Web browsers is set to continue to rise. And with many countries increasing the retirement age, being able to use the Web will become a requirement for an increasing number of older workers.

But the physical problems that come with old age still act as a barrier to getting online. Poor vision can make reading text on the screen a challenge. Arthritis and motor control problems

can make manoeuvring a mouse difficult. Web sites can make it easier for older surfers by using larger fonts, higher contrast and extra spaces at the end of sentences, said Arch.

“The typical web developer does not really understand that the world is ageing the way it is,” he said, adding the changes he is suggesting would make it easier for people of all ages to use the Internet. (Silva, 2009)

“It is like footpaths. They were initially set up for the disabled but then everyone found them very useful,” he said. The number of people going online has surpassed one billion for the first time, according to online metrics company comScore.

It counts only unique users above the age of 15 and excludes access in internet cafes and through mobile phones. The authors of the article outline in the following text some possibilities of the utilization of the internet for seniors.

Material and Methods

The authors of the article consider about utilization of the internet for the reminiscent therapy of seniors. The target groups of this article are the workers of the information centres, teachers in organizations for seniors, and the other persons working as the pedagogues. Authors participate in questionnaire form research – collaboration in formulation of particular questions and evaluation about IT and the internet for seniors.

In the analyzing process of the papers that selection was subjected to citation survey in Scopus database and on the basis prepared search strategy has been applied deductive / inductive approach.

Data collection for confirmation of the initial hypothesis has been solved by questionnaire in the selected group i. e. in the framework of indicative research has been used structured

interview with predefined questions and with predefined questions order. This form of interview has been used for detection possibility of occurrence certain propensity to analyzing effects.

The partial findings of research have been presented in the defended dissertation thesis: Pikola P. Economic Context of Social Care Services in Retirement Homes (2009).

Results

It is possible generally to say, that the internet is for a lot of seniors technically and knowledge way inaccessible. In the time, when today's seniors were in the productive age, was the information education / computer literacy very underestimated. There was a great lack of the computers for practical education; beyond this computers were with their constitution and operating far-away from today's PC. For the information technologies use is necessary the PC and connection of this computer to the internet. While the providing of the hardware is the simple investment (it is possible to provide the average HW for c. 12 000 Kč), the user of the internet pays for the networking periodically (generally once a month). The payments for networking are either the fixed or they are calculated according to the time of the active networking / according to another connection features. Through steady (and unfortunately just slow) fall of the prices for networking, the operation costs pose one of the essentials barriers of the bigger spreading of the internet among the social groups with low pays. As well the ownership of the PC isn't quite common among the people with low pays. The government institutions are trying to eliminate these barriers with building of so called information kiosks, installation of the internet in the state libraries or endowment support of the

special educational plans. The raising of information literacy of seniors is possible to divide methodically into several stages:

1. Motivation and elimination of the barriers

It's probable, that lots of seniors will consider about the internet with certain disregard. It is possible to expect, that more conservative users won't want to use the internet, because they found out in the news about negatives, which brings internet. Probably a part of seniors will think, that „its not for me“, or „I wouldn't manage this novelty.“ That is reason why it's important to overcome the distaste and to motivate suitably. (Jung and Moran, 2010)

2. General identification with terminology, basic principles and links

For the third period of practical training is necessary to introduce to the students the basic terminology. It's suitable to speak shortly about the history of the internet, about the reasons of the information boom, about the sway of the network economy, about the positives and negatives of the information society and as well about the visions of the future development. This introduction is suitable to conceive with popular-scientifically form with the use of understandable language. Further is suitable to go through the essential ideas in brief: The Internet, WWW, URL, hypertext, hyperlink, etc. This stage will provide the support for the practical training. By results source (Schumacher and Morahan - Martin, 2001) the gender has a positive impact on average daily time spent on the use of the internet. Age has a positive impact on average daily use of the internet in general and a negative impact on the use of the internet for information access/downloading/entertainment. The authors of (Schumacher and Morahan - Martin, 2001) declare that income was not found to have an impact on empirical factors. Generally gender, age and income do not have any significant impact on average daily

use of internet for electronic services. In spite of this fact we suppose to make short lessons (between 20 and 45 min.).

3. Practical utilization of the particular services of the internet

As most suitable appears the practical training in the PC-room or internet-cafe. It is suitable to lead the training in the form of the controlled imitation (The lector demonstrates the work procedure on the screen; the participants repeat the work procedure). So it is possible to fix the general description of the work procedure as the practical skill. With a view to the age of the senior isn't the goal the quantity of the passed skills. On the contrary is suitable to select the services, which are usable for seniors and train them intensively.

4. Regular utilization of the acquired skills

The acquired skill is suitable to strengthen through the regular practicing. After certain cycles of repetitions the control over the mouse and keyboard automates. The user can since this instant pay the attention fully to the information content of the internet.

Discussion

We recommended organizing particular stages in such a periodicity and extent, that the quantity of the presented information didn't threaten the quality of memory trace.

It's suitable to instruct the user, not to confine the personal data (name, address, bank connection, number of credit cards etc.) in the unsecured communication. In order to seniors have fun with work with the internet, is suitable to support their creativity and motivate them to experiment.

Conclusion

The internet offers to seniors especially these services:

- E-mail
- Conferences
- Social nets / communities
- USENET (Netnews, Newsgroups)
- FTP (File Transfer Protocol)
- E-shops
- World Wide Web
- On-line services
- Skype

There are huge of possibilities for using the internet. It depends on each senior; it depends on equipment and users skills. The internet represents interesting and communication channel witch transforms "traditional senior" to position of "digital senior."

E-senior can be characterized using these points:

- E-senior is an internet user which is able to use the internet several ways.
- E-senior uses the internet actively and also passively; E-senior is good skilled user able to find and publish useful information. In these days use plenty of active senior's the internet as a daily shell. (Guus et al., 2001)
- E-senior uses the internet in combination with special software / operating system shells (e. g. speech SW).
- E-senior use the internet for overcoming their immobility and isolation.

- E-senior is an active user which can use the internet for studying. Universities of the third age use www pages as the basic shall.
- E-senior is able to offer all services using the internet.
- E-senior uses the internet for answering the questions or need additional, one-to-one support with senior issues. Several servers offer direct and telephone access to experts that specialize in senior financial, legal, short- and long-term care issues, and more.
- E-senior can use several senior tools. E. g. server <http://www.eseniormatters.com/> offer online Personal Health Record (PHR) that outlines a complete medical history. Get prepared in case of emergency. And use our online links and personal assessments to learn more about senior-themed concerns.
- E-senior can use the internet for seeking the discounts or special seniors offer.
- E-senior is very perspective user category for software houses.
- The special senior's category represents so-called "senior managers." To be a "senior manager" means to have practical experiences. In actual situation on the labour market enterprises prefer especially people with relevant and long practice, to be older isn't so big barrier as before the beginning of financial crises. "To an EIS was introduced as a support tool for senior executives at the beginning of the eighties. To make effective use of an EIS, managers must accept it, learn how to interact directly with aspects of the hardware and software, and adapt it to their requirements." (Pijpers et al., 2001)

Authors will plan continuing in research of the seniors and the internet relation. In the next research is suitable to find motivation aspects for using the internet in context of seniors. It is necessary to empower computer literacy of seniors in context of applying and development of e-government strategies.

Appendix

Research was realized in 465 rest homes. Returnability was 20,6%.

H 7 Questions for seniors in rest home

Have seniors interest in internet studying

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	50,0	52,1	54,9	54,9
	No	41,0	42,7	45,1	100,0
	Total	91,0	94,8	100,0	

Table 1: Seniors interest in internet studying

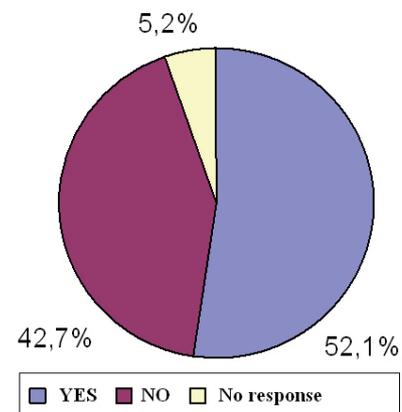


Figure 1: Seniors interest in internet studying

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