

SeniorNet's Tech Connect

WELCOME!

Welcome to our first newsletter. In these very unusual times, we at SeniorNet look forward to continuing to connect with you by providing information to keep you connected and involved. As you read through this newsletter, take the time to explore some new techniques, try the new apps or explore the new websites. Take your free time to stay connected with friends and loved ones.

Remember the volunteers at SeniorNet are here for you. Although our office is currently closed, if you have any questions, you can still reach us by emailing us at information@seniornetli.org.

STAYING CONNECTED

Today, when seniors especially feel so isolated, we have more options than ever before to stay in touch with our loved ones. Telephones come to the forefront. We can call anyone in the world just to say hello. Smartphones have added to the fun by allowing us to take and send photos and videos, talk and see each other, or text each other. We can also just choose to use email to get it all done.

This issue will introduce you to some social media websites such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. We will explore videoconferencing, give you some tips for streaming videos, and share some interesting websites and apps.

Above all, stay connected!

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SOCIAL MEDIA



Social media is one of the best ways to keep in touch with others, and can be much fun. Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram can keep you quite entertained on your computer and/or mobile device. All have websites as well as apps for mobile devices (although you can't post photos on the Instagram website). If you'd like to see a demo of a website or mobile app, check out YouTube (youtube.com or app), and search for a tutorial. Note that website and mobile app navigation will be a bit different, but you can access your data using either.

In most cases you will need to create an account, which is a simple process and requires very little information. If you are concerned about privacy, create your account with a fictitious or abbreviated name and other information. Let your friends know your new identity so they can contact and share with you!

Here's a brief look at these popular social media platforms and some fun ways to use them.

Facebook – launched in 2004, it is now the world's most popular social media site, used for sharing posts, pictures, videos, and interests. On your PC, go to facebook.com. On your mobile device, download the app from the App Store or Google Play.



A great feature of Facebook is Facebook Groups. You can start your own, or join an existing group. You never know who or what you may encounter in a Facebook Group. Expect the unexpected but expect nostalgia on a grand scale if you join an alma mater or neighborhood group. My childhood neighborhood group has pictures of the neighborhood that span decades and occasionally I'll see a familiar name in a post or comment.

So how do you find such groups? You can use Facebook's search and see what suggestions appear, for example the city you grew up in (or current town) followed by "group" (e.g., Fresh Meadows group) to keep up to date on local news, commentary, and nostalgia. You will have to click on Join, and at some point an admin for the group will make you a member. If the group is public you will be able to see posts without joining.

You can also use Facebook to message or video chat with one or more people. On mobile devices you need to download the Messenger app. On the web, messaging is built into the program.

Twitter – launched in 2006, Twitter is the world’s second most popular social media site. Tweets (posts) are limited to 280 characters. Twitter now also supports photos and short videos. You don’t need an account to view content using a web browser. Go to twitter.com/twitter and then use search to view celebrity, company, or anyone’s tweets. To create an account, on your PC, go to twitter.com. On your mobile device, download the app from the App Store or Google Play.



Although perhaps best for news, a fun feature of Twitter is the use of hashtags (#). Most live TV shows will have a hashtag along the bottom of the screen (e.g., #dateline). Search this hashtag on Twitter, and see what people are saying about the program you are watching while you are watching!

Instagram – launched in 2010, Instagram is used to share photos and short videos taken with your mobile phone. Users follow one another. You can use a filter to change the image. Images are square, similar to the old Kodak Instamatic pics us baby boomers used to have. On your PC, go to instagram.com (however you can’t upload a photo from your computer). On your mobile device, download the app from the App Store or Google Play.

It is fun to follow others, especially those with young children as they often post daily. Post your own photos and followers can like and comment on your photos. Many people post daily, somewhat like a photo journal.



To learn more about social media and how to use it, there’s a great book for seniors, “Social Media for Seniors”, by Michael Miller, 3rd edition, available on Amazon and the AARP website. See you online!

WEBSITES OF INTEREST

For grandpas, grandmas and kids ...

<https://vangoghmuseum.nl/en/whats-on/children-and-families/crafting-and-colouring>

For world travelers...

<https://www.timeout.com/travel/14-world-famous-city-views-you-can-see-from-your-sofa>

For Museum visitors...

<https://www.timeout.com/newyork/news/museums-are-now-offering-moments-of-zen-to-calm-peoples-nerves-031820>

For National Parks Enthusiasts

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/travel/travel-trivia/need-to-get-outside-these-5-national-parks-offer-virtual->



WELCOME TO Zoom

Have you heard about Zoom? It is a free video conferencing platform. It is a great way to meet in groups with friends and family without leaving home.

You can have up to 100 people on a call for 40 minutes at a time. You can see and hear all the participants, and send them documents and photos. Zoom can be used on Windows, mac, iPhone, iPad and Android phones and tablets. Zoom is easy to use and they have tutorials to get you started.

You can be a guest on a zoom call (no time limit) without having an account. If you want to host/initiate a call, you create a free account and your name and email address are required. If you want your calls to last more than 40 minutes, upgrade to the Pro version for \$15 per month.

Zoom video conferencing is being widely used by schools, churches, synagogues, libraries and clubs to allow their group meetings. Weight Watchers just started using Zoom to host their weekly member meetings.

Recent information has highlighted some security issues with Zoom. As with any internet-based program, you must use common sense when clicking on links asking you to join a meeting. Don't share links on social media and with others.

Enjoy and have fun!

www.zoom.us

TIPS FOR STREAMING VIDEO

Streaming, is watching **video** over some sort of network. Netflix and YouTube are probably the most common examples of places where people “stream video”, however when you are watching cable TV, you are streaming video.

If there's one particular movie or show you want to watch, your best bet is to look it up with JustWatch (<https://www.justwatch.com>), a website that trawls more than 20 streaming, à la carte and on-demand services to show you where your content is available.

Whenever people ask me how to watch specific TV channels without cable, my first step is to check The Streamable's matchmaker tool (<https://thestreamable.com/matchmaker>). This allows you to enter all the cable channels, shows, and sports teams you want to watch, and it then spits out a list of compatible live TV streaming services. You can also enter a zip code to see local channels and regional sports coverage, and you can click on each service for menu screenshots, DVR details, device compatibility, and other information.

Your Public Library is a Great FREE Cord Cutting Resource

Do you like free movies, TV shows, music, audiobooks, ebooks, and more? Your public library is probably the best kept cord cutting secret to help you watch your shows, movies, and more without paying a dime. You likely know that your library lends out DVDs, but did you know most public libraries also stream movies, TV shows, eBooks, audiobooks, and more? Yes, most libraries now offer at least one streaming service.

Of all the streaming services out there, “hoopla digital” and “Kanopy” are probably the most well-known. “hoopla digital” and “Kanopy” team up with local libraries to offer free streaming for members of more than 1,600 public library systems across North America. Public libraries are a great resource for cord cutters. The best part is they now have apps for Roku, Apple TV, and Android TV.

“hoopla” also has a large number of Disney movies, shows, and music to pick from. Many of these Disney shows and movies can be difficult to find on other services. “Kanopy” has a large collection of content from a long list of studios.

You need to ask your local library what limits they may have.

So how do you get access to “hoopla” and “Kanopy”? You need a library membership. If you want to stream this great library of content, contact your local library, or check their website, and find out if they offer “hoopla”. Chances are they have a free streaming service for members. If you are a cord cutter make sure to take advantage of your local library. You are paying for it with your taxes, so why not take advantage of the services?

SENIORNET LI.ORG

SeniorNet is a global, not-for-profit, volunteer teaching organization focused on computer and technology classes for adults aged 50+.

We provide affordable training over a wide range of topics for our students seeking to learn to use modern computing devices and to access the internet.

We are also volunteers, mostly retired from working, who do this for the pleasure of helping others and of giving back to the community.

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TIPS FOR STREAMING VIDEOS

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How to Watch Your Personal Media Collection through a Streaming Media Player

While streaming movies and TV shows directly from the Internet is pretty common these days, a lot of people have both commercial and personal videos stored on their computers, mobile devices, and external drives that they'd like to watch on TV... here are 3 ways.

Connect a USB drive to a streaming media player:

- The Roku Ultra and Amazon Fire TV box players have a USB port that you can plug a drive into with your media files. The Roku has its own media player channel that you can use to play the files.

Play files through a personal media server

- This is software you install on your computer that organizes all the media files on your system. **Plex** is a very popular media server. I use it all the time... It's compatible with all of the Big Four players and many other devices. The brains behind the whole operation is the **Plex Media Server**, it's free software. Once you have downloaded it onto your computer it gets to work scanning and indexing all of your media, making it intuitively organized in your Plex library, and getting it ready for streaming.
- Then just add **Plex** as a channel or station to your smart TV or streaming device.

You can stream any media from your **iTunes library to an Apple TV** by turning on the Home Sharing feature in iTunes as long as your computer and the player are logged into the same Wi-Fi account.