

Unit 1 Silver surfers

Teacher's notes

Preparation

Before you use this lesson plan:

- Make one copy of each worksheet per student.
- Visit the proposed website to check it is operational.

Warmers

Short (5 minutes)

Write the term “silver surfer” up on the board and ask the students if they know what it means. Encourage them to guess. Tell them that it is a phrase used to describe senior citizens who use the Internet. Ask the students if they think computers and the internet are popular with the elderly.

Long (10 – 15 minutes)

Ask students to list any usability issues or problems that older people might face when using computers. These could include small fonts, small keyboards, non-ergonomic mouse(s), lack of software and web content targeting the older generation.

Set the scene

(5 minutes)

Tell the students that they have been asked to advise a community centre on how people over the age of sixty use computers. The community centre is considering an investment in a computer room for local pensioners and needs to know if the elderly community would find it useful, what sort of things they might use the computers for, and in what ways older users differ from younger users in using computers.

Present the tasks

(5 minutes)

Explain the procedure:

- 1 Divide into small groups. Ask each group to discuss Task 1.
- 2 Use the websites to research and collect information; each group member should choose one website to visit.
- 3 Report and share information, before reporting back informally to the class.

Do the tasks

Discussion (10 minutes)

The students discuss the activities in Table 1 in groups and decide how they think the over-sixty generation use computers.

Research (15 minutes)

- If computers are available, allocate one to each small group or pair and let the students do their research.
- If computers are not available, set the research as homework to be performed at home or during free time at work. Emphasise to the students that they do not need to spend more than about 15 – 20 minutes collecting information.

Reporting and calculations (20 minutes)

After the research, the research group members exchange their research information and can review Table 1 to see how accurate their earlier discussion was. Each group then gives an informal five minute presentation on what they have learned.

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Aims

- talking about how the older generations use computers
- sharing information and research

Situation

You have been asked to advise a community centre on how people over the age of sixty use computers. The community centre is considering an investment in a computer room for local pensioners and needs to know if the elderly community would find it useful, what sort of things they might use the computers for, and in what ways the older generation differs from younger generations in using computers.

Tasks

- 1 Look at the list of computer-based activities in Table 1 – discuss with your group whether you think the older generation use computers to carry out these activities.
- 2 You are going to research the ways in which older people use computers and the Internet. Divide the websites up amongst your group, visit the websites and take any notes that you think are useful.
- 3 Report back to your group on the information you have found. Look at Table 1 again – was your earlier discussion from Task 1 accurate? Prepare a five minute presentation for the community centre on how the older generation use computers.

Task 1 – discussion task

Talk with your group and complete Table 1.

Table 1

	Yes	Maybe	No
Video editing			
Online shopping			
Emailing friends and family			
Playing advanced computer games			
Playing simple computer games			
Social networking			
Research			
Viewing and storing digital photos			
Creating documents (Word, etc.)			

Task 2 – discussion task

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/755656.stm>

Read this article on silver surfers on the BBC website to see how older people are using computers and the Internet in Britain.

http://www.ageconcern.org.uk/AgeConcern/bettys_story.asp

Listen to Betty talk about her experience of using a computer.

<http://www.usabilitynews.com/news/article2911.asp>

Read the review of the research report and take notes on some of the issues that you discover.

Task 3 – the report

Share the information from your research with the members of your group. Ask them about their research findings and use this information to prepare a five minute informal presentation. The language box below will help you with your reporting.

Older people take advantage of computers in many different ways ...
 One of the problems older people face when using computers is
 One area of difficulty is ...
 One important difference between younger and older generations is ...