

When I was a Kid, We Didn't Have...

As you begin your investigation into Senior Technology, one fact quickly smacks you in the face—all of the recent world-changing technologies were conceived of and developed during your lifetime! You witnessed the birth of high-tech.

I know this sounds like the premise to a classic joke, but your list of “I didn’t have that when I was a kid,” is truly amazing. Let’s take a look at some of the biggies that appeared in just the last few decades.

Home Computers

Home computers were developed in the late 1970’s, gained widespread popularity in the 1980’s, and have since found their way into over 75% of American homes. We use these for everything: word processing, playing games, communication (email and the Internet), shopping, business management, and education—to name a few.



More seniors are using computers.

Digital Cameras

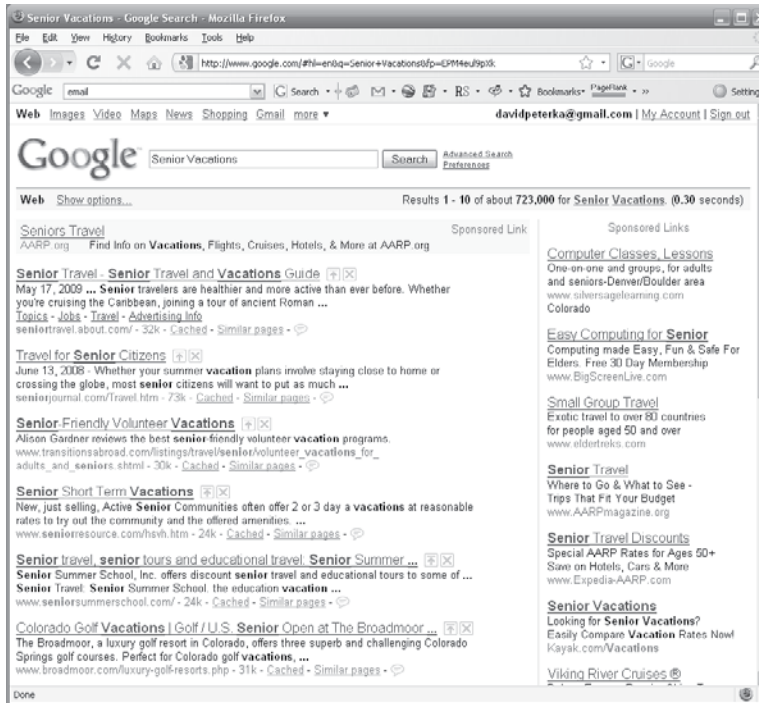
Photography is now accessible to the casual user. We can snap a picture, immediately see it on a digital display, and then upload it to our computer. From there we can touch it up and print it—all without access to a darkroom full of chemicals. Of course, you still need to have an eye for photography to get a good picture.



Tiny cameras can display pictures immediately.

Internet

This global network of computers has revolutionized how we exchange information. We can now send emails, photographs, and other large collections of digital information from the comfort of our home computer. The amount of information at our fingertips is mind-blowing.



Volumes of information and entertainment at your fingertips.

Portable Music Players

Now you can listen to your favorite music while strolling down the street. Simply clip the player to your shirt, place the nearly invisible speakers in your ears, and enjoy!

Tiny devices like the one shown here can hold ALL of your music library.



iPod shuffle music player.

Cell Phones

We thought in-home cordless phones were neat. Well, they were—but cell phones are even neater. Now you can stay in touch with friends and family from just about anywhere in the world (at least anywhere relatively close to a cell tower). The latest generation of cell phones has gotten even neater. Phones, like the Apple iPhone, include Internet access, music players, cameras, and mapping technologies.



Cell phones keep us in touch no matter where we go.

Robot Vacuum Cleaners

Although I include this item in jest, they really do exist, and it does illuminate a world of possibilities. Don't like vacuuming—who does?—get a robot to do it. It won't be long before we have robots to wash our dishes, shovel our driveways, and paint our houses. Is this going to make us lazy? Maybe, but it will be fascinating to find out!



The Roomba robot will clean your floor and then recharge itself.

This is just a small sample of the new consumer technology available to all of us. We will go into more detail on these and other technological advancements in later chapters.