

Slow to adopt, quick to use



A new study examines how men and women 50+ use technology

Men and women 50+ use technology in different ways. While men use technology more as a tool, women use it more for entertainment, yet both underutilize the technology with which they are already comfortable to better support their health and wellness. Some of this hesitation may be lack of awareness, but it also may be rooted in concern for data privacy. However, while ownership is low, these concerns do not stop the majority of men or women from using home assistants and smart home devices.

Men use technology more as a source of information, while women more often use it as a source of entertainment.

Men are more likely than women to use their smartphones and tablets to get directions (56%, compared to 46%) or read about news (36%, compared to 29%) or sports (22%, compared to 6%). Meanwhile, women are more likely than men to use them to take and organize photos (68%, compared to 58%), engage on social media (65%, compared to 51%), and play games (55%, compared to 38%).

Interestingly, men and women are more similar in their technology use when it comes to supporting health and wellness. For example, roughly two in five women (43%) and men (38%) use it to get health and fitness information, and fewer use it to talk to a doctor or order prescriptions online (43% women, 38% men).

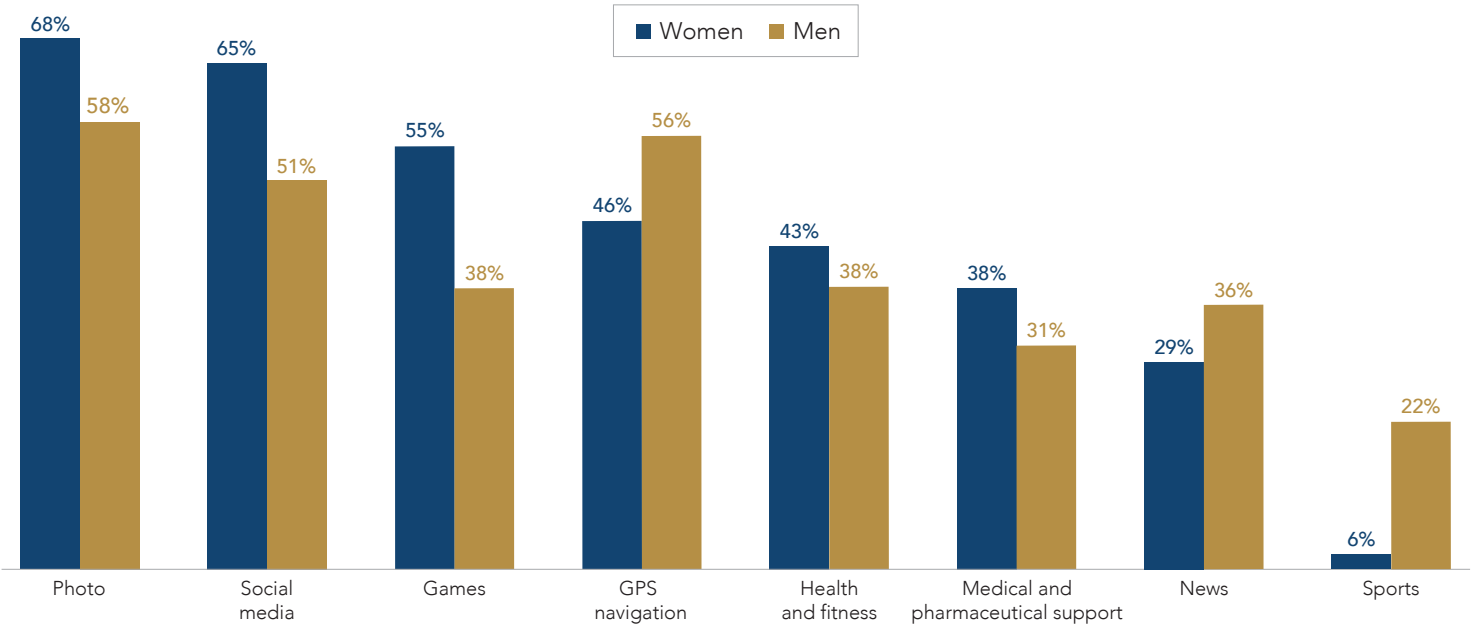
Overall, one-half (50%) of women 50+ and two in five men 50+ (43%) are not confident that their information is/stays private when using wireless devices such as a computer, tablet or smartphone, but this does not curtail use.

Men & Women 50+

utilize technology in both similar and different ways

About one in six men (16%) and women (17%) own wearable devices, like Fitbits or Apple Watches. Most use their wearables for personal knowledge, since a majority (58% men, 60% women) would not share the collected information with anyone. However, some are open to sharing this information with their doctor (39% men, 37% women) or their insurance company (23% men, 18% women).

Use of Technology



Women use technology of all types to connect with loved ones more often than men.

Roughly nine in ten women 50+ (93%) and men 50+ (88%) use technology to stay connected with friends and family, most often through daily text messages (62% women, 49% men).

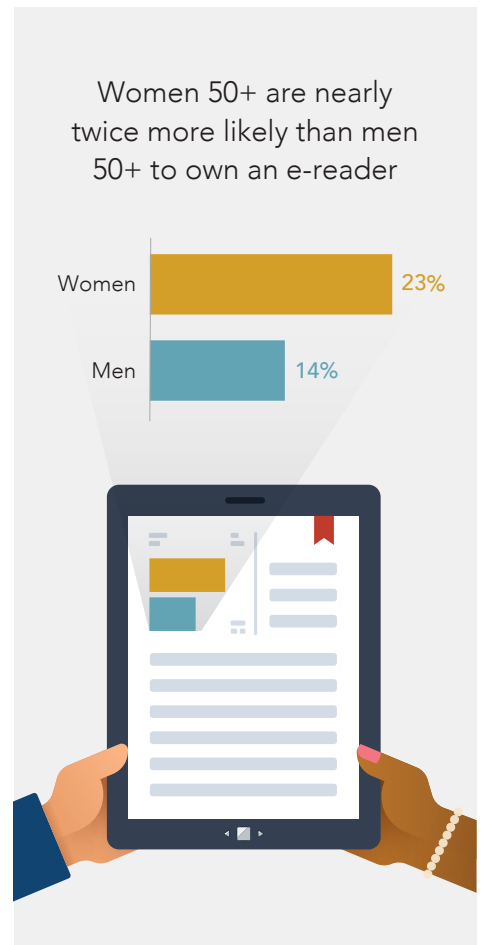
Social media is also a popular means of connecting those 50+ with their loved ones, with one-half of women (48%) and one-third of men (34%) using platforms like Facebook and Instagram daily, and three-quarters of women (75%) and two-thirds of men (67%) doing so monthly.

Video chat is a greatly underutilized avenue for staying in touch with friends and family, as only one in ten women 50+ (10%) and one in twenty men 50+ (5%) use it daily.

Men and women 50+ stream entertainment content at about the same rate.

Roughly one-half of men (52%) and women (47%) 50+ own a smart TV, and two in five (42% men, 40% women) use it to stream entertainment services like Netflix and Hulu.

Given their high levels of connectivity with family and friends, it is not surprising that more women (60%) than men (51%) find out about programming through word of mouth. Overall, far fewer find out about new content through online searches, with women particularly less likely to search online for new content (30% men, 20% women).



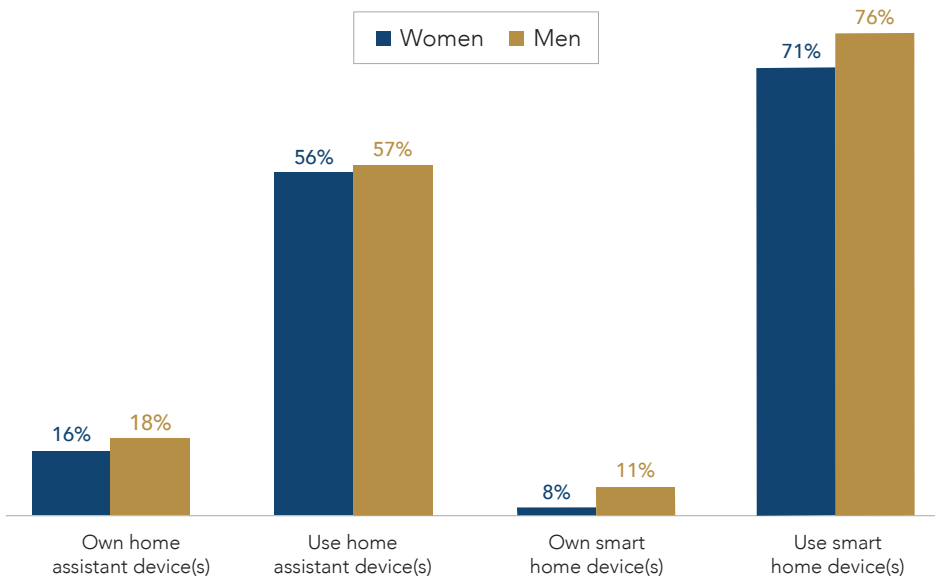
While ownership of home assistants and smart home devices is nascent, both men and women 50+ who do have such technology use it frequently, despite skepticism that the information shared remains private.

While fewer than one in five own a smart home assistant like Google Home or Alexa (18% men, 16% women), use is quite high for both men and women (57% men, 56% women).

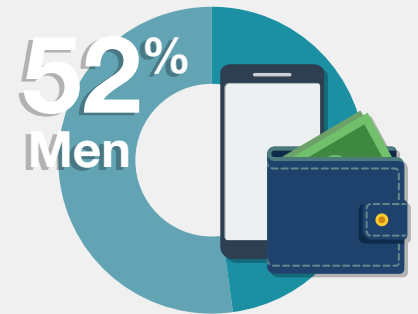
Emerging smart home devices, like Nest thermostats or Ring doorbell cameras, are growing in popularity. Although smart home devices are less common than smart home assistants and owned by roughly one in ten (11% men, 8% women), use is much higher (71% men, 76% women).

Even among those who own home assistants or smart home devices, one-half of men (50%) and even more women (56%) are not confident the information given to or received from their home assistant or smart home devices is kept private.

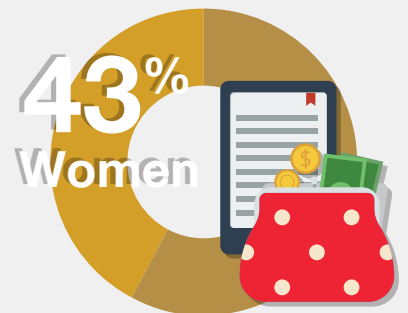
Ownership and Use of Home Assistants and Smart Home Devices



Roughly one-half of men 50+



and two in five women 50+



wait to adopt new technology devices until others have started buying them

Implications

While privacy is a big concern of those 50+, knowing that their information – be it collected or shared through smart phones, fitness devices, home assistants, or other technologies – is not confidential does not curtail use. However, if individuals better understood how companies store data and felt assured the information was not shared, usage might increase and, importantly, devices may be better used to their full potential.

Clearly, men and women are comfortable using smartphones, computers, and tablets, whether as sources of information or entertainment. However, from video conferencing with doctors to ordering more affordable prescriptions online to tracking health and fitness progress, this population can better leverage currently-owned technologies to support their health and well-being if they are made aware of such opportunities and assured of data security measures.

Men and women use technology of all types to stay connected with loved ones. However, free video chat platforms – like FaceTime, WhatsApp, and Skype – are greatly underutilized. This could simply be a lack of awareness or understanding of how these applications work, and a simple online tutorial or video could increase usership tremendously.



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