

TECH

Eager to Learn

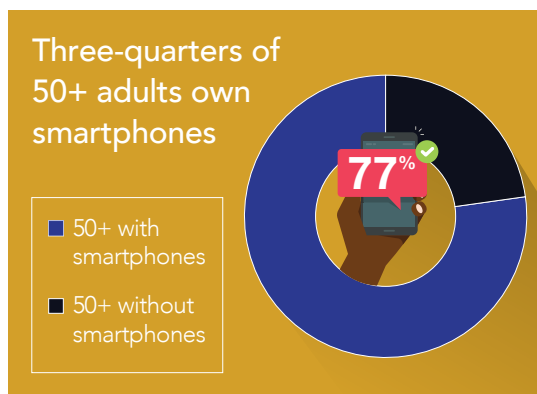


Those 50+ have adopted technology with roughly the same rate as younger people, though this wanes with age

A majority of those 50+ have adopted many types of technology to stay connected with loved ones and there is room to expand this to include technologies which keep them safe and healthy. With a personal introduction from a trusted friend or family member, it is likely people 50+ will be more comfortable and confident incorporating more technology into their daily lives.

Those 50+ have adopted technology with roughly the same rate as younger people, though this wanes with age.

Three-quarters (77%) of those 50+ own smartphones; ownership is highest among those 50-59 (86%) and declines as age advances.



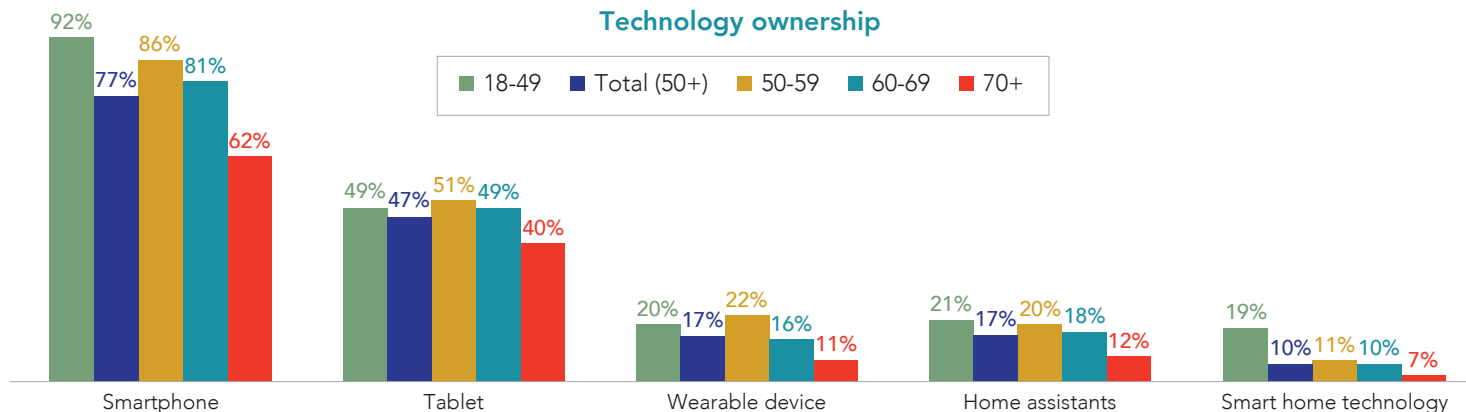
The same pattern is observed for tablets (47% total), wearable devices (17%) like Fitbits and Apple Watches, home assistants (17%) like Alexa and Google Home, and smart home technology (10%) like Nest thermostats and Ring doorbell cameras.

Interestingly, apart from smartphones, those 50+ own popular technology with about the same frequency as their younger cohorts (18-49).

Among home assistant device owners – like Alexa and Google Home –

11% only one in ten are confident their information is kept private

Technology ownership



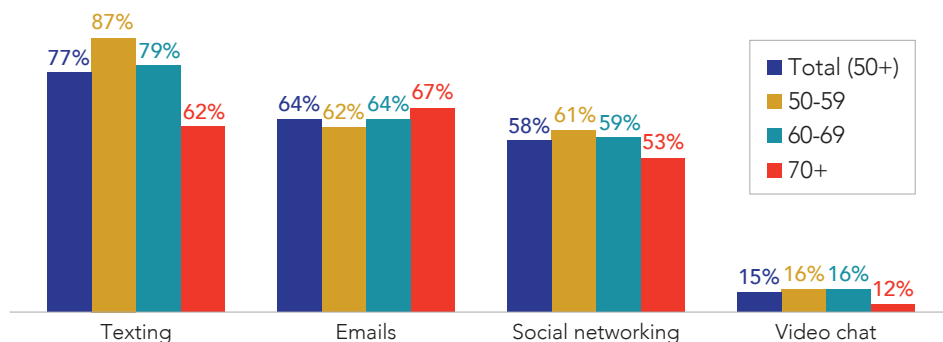
Texting and email lead the way for those 50+ to keep in touch with friends and family.

Those 50+ most often text (78%) to keep in touch with friends and family a couple times a week or even daily. Texting is most popular among those 50-59 (87%) and usage declines as age advances. The same pattern of high use among those 50-59 and declines as age advances is seen with the use of social networking (59%), which about two in five (44%) use to connect with loved ones.

The second most popular means of staying connected with loved ones is through email (66%), which those 70+ prefer above all other means (66%), perhaps, in part, to high ownership of personal computers.

Surprisingly, video chat options – like Skype, Zoom, What’s App, or Facetime – are greatly underutilized, as only about one in six (15%) use it with any regularity with no significant difference between age groups. However, a majority of those 50-59 (58%) and 60-69 (52%) and two in five of those 70+ (42%) have used this technology at some point to stay connected with family and friends.

Methods of staying in touch with loved ones - among those who use a couple times a week or daily

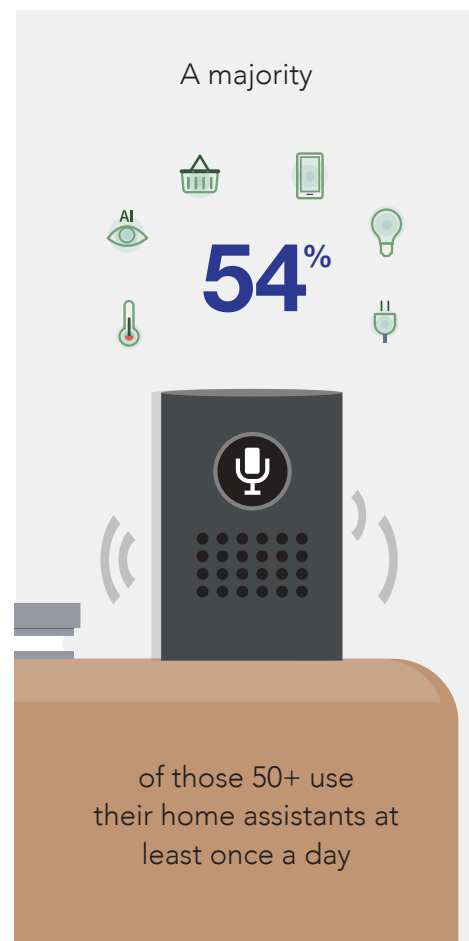


The 50+ are interested in various types of technology to support their home safety.

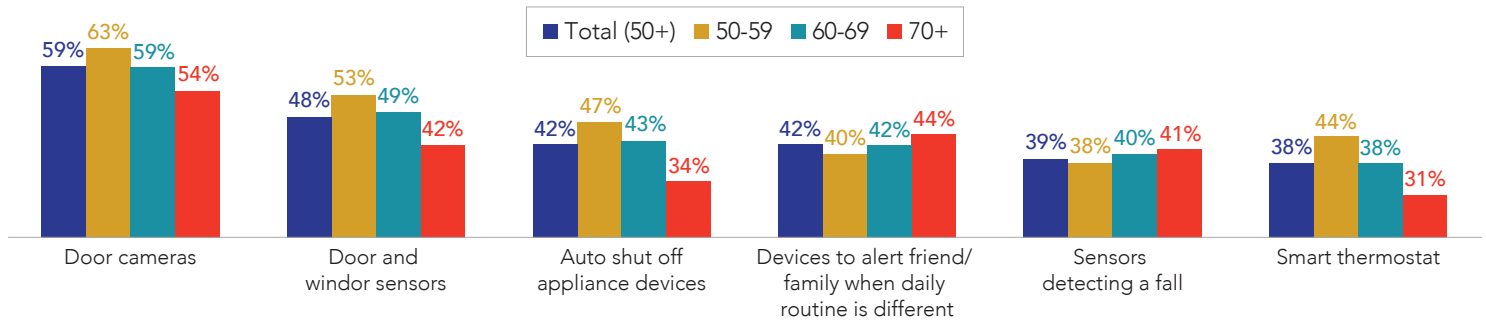
Individuals 50+ are most interested in front door cameras (59%) and nearly one in ten (9%) already own them. More than one in ten (12%) already own sensors which alert residents when a door or window is opened or closed unexpectedly and nearly one-half (48%) are interested in such technology.

In nearly every case, those 50-59 are more interested in adopting home technology than their older cohorts, which could be a sign of simple unfamiliarity among older potential users.

Interestingly, despite one in ten (10%) already owning one, less than two in five (38%) are interested in a smart thermostat, like a Nest, which can be controlled with an app.

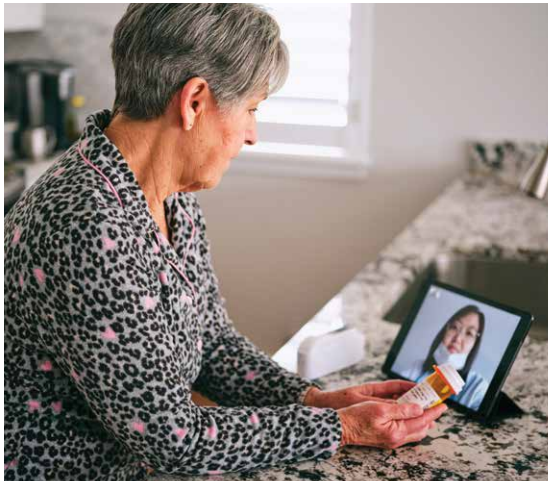


Interest in various home technology - among those who are very or somewhat interested



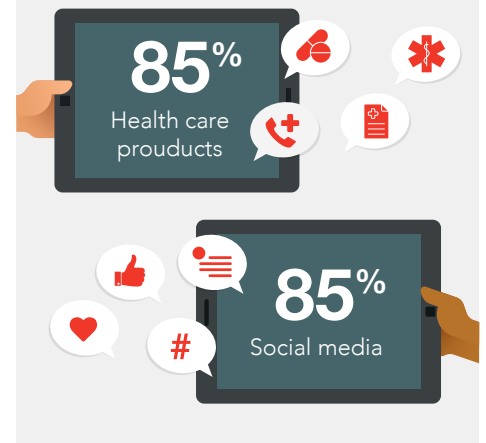
Telemedicine is an important, underutilized tool for those 50+.

Roughly two in five adults 50+ recognize the value of telemedicine, which conveniently can help manage health conditions by minimizing disruptions of daily life when quick consults or routine check-ups are needed (45%: 50-59, 43%: 60-69, and 37%: 70+).



Additionally, three in five adults (59%) would be willing to share health information collected through tracking devices, like Fitbits, smart scales, and other health monitors, with their doctors. Sharing this information with doctors would allow for more constant monitoring in order to identify changes in health quality more quickly than relying upon annual or even less frequent office visits.

More than **four in five** of those 50+ would not share health information with businesses exploring health care products or on social media.



Implications

Home safety technology should find a natural market among those 50+ for the many benefits it can offer them, but lack of awareness could explain the lukewarm interest, especially among those 70+. Family and friends who are tech savvy could help demystify the use of home safety devices and not only show how these are used, but also explain the many benefits which they can bring to their daily lives as this type of technology could help this population maintain their independence longer as they grow older.

Younger family members like grandchildren or adult children could help introduce older adults to new technologies like video chat, which, once adopted, can serve as a means to connect with family and friends in a more personal, and, potentially more fulfilling way, than simply through text or email.

The untapped power of telemedicine is particularly important for those 50+ to embrace. While nothing can replace being personally seen by a physician when needed, there is immense value in avoiding sick people in doctor's waiting rooms and in the convenience offered by simply pushing a button to receive medical attention for minor concerns and prescription needs.



For more information, contact Brittne Nelson-Kakulla, bkakulla@aarp.org
For media inquiries, contactmedia@aarp.org.