The United States of Aging Survey
Seniors and Technology Findings

In its second year, The United States of Aging Survey, conducted by the National Council on Aging (NCOA), UnitedHealthcare and USA TODAY, explores what underlies American seniors' perspectives on aging, and how the country can better prepare for a booming senior population.

The 2013 survey comprised 4,000 telephone interviews, including nationally representative samples of Americans ages 60 and older and adults ages 18-59. To explore different perspectives on aging preparedness, the 2013 survey oversampled key audiences, including:
- Low-income seniors (ages 60 and older with a household income of less than $15,000);
- Older seniors (ages 80 and older);
- Seniors with three or more chronic health conditions (ages 60 and older);
- Seniors from five designated markets including Birmingham, Ala., Indianapolis, Los Angeles, Orlando, Fla. and San Antonio.

Wired Seniors

According to the survey, seniors today are comfortable using technology and cite its importance in helping them stay connected to family, friends and the wider world.

- The majority of seniors say that technology is somewhat or very important in helping them stay in touch with family/friends (87 percent), keeping up with the world (84 percent), learning new things (80 percent), and staying mentally sharp (79 percent).
  - More than 4 in 5 (81 percent) low-income seniors say technology is somewhat or very important in helping them stay in touch with family/friends.
- When asked which technologies they use frequently, 75 percent of seniors say cell phones, 68 percent say computers, 65 percent say the Internet, and 62 percent say email.
  - Low-income seniors are less likely to use these technologies frequently: 54 percent use cell phones, 25 percent use computers, 21 percent use the Internet, and 20 percent use email.
  - Nearly 1 in 3 (30 percent) seniors frequently use social networking technology, compared with 9 percent of low-income seniors.
  - Thirty-eight percent of seniors rely on GPS devices, while more than half (57 percent) of adults ages 18-59 use this technology for directions while on the road.
  - Adults ages 18-59 are more likely to use cutting-edge technology than seniors, citing greater use of tablets like an iPad (43 percent compared with 20 percent), media players like an iPod or MP3 player (54 percent compared with 19 percent) and videogames like a Wii or other console (46 percent compared with 14 percent).
- Nearly the same amount of seniors and adults ages 18-59 say it is very or somewhat important for seniors to use technology (83 percent and 88 percent, respectively), with 72 percent of low-income seniors saying the same.

Barriers such as a lack of understanding and cost prevent more wide-spread adoption of technology among seniors.
Seniors cite barriers to using more technology, including “I don’t understand how to use it” (34 percent) and “I don’t think I need it” (34 percent). Concerns of data privacy and security follow close behind, with 28 percent of seniors citing these issues as preventing them from using more technology.

Low-income seniors are most likely to cite “it costs too much” (47 percent) and “I don’t understand how to use it” (48 percent) as barriers.

Low-income seniors are more likely than seniors overall to cite “it’s physically too hard for me to use” as a barrier – 24 percent compared with 11 percent.

To access survey findings, visit www.ncoa.org/UnitedStatesofAging. Join the conversation on Twitter at #USofAging.

**About The United States of Aging Survey**
The United States of Aging Survey is an annual survey conducted by the National Council on Aging, UnitedHealthcare and USA TODAY. For the 2013 survey, Penn Schoen Berland completed 4,000 telephone interviews from April 3, 2013, to May 4, 2013, including nationally representative samples of Americans ages 60 and older and adults ages 18-59. The margin of error for the national samples is +/-3.1 percent and between 3.7 percent and 5 percent for oversampled subpopulations. Data from general population samples, the regional oversampled audiences and the oversampled audience of seniors ages 80 and older are weighted to U.S. Census Bureau demographic statistics in terms of age, gender, income, marital status and race.

**About The United States of Aging Resource Kit**
The United States of Aging Survey explores American seniors’ perspectives on aging and community preparedness to support a growing senior population. The United States of Aging Resource Kit is designed to serve as a catalyst for ongoing discussions about aging preparedness within local communities. This virtual resource was created by the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging, the National Council on Aging and UnitedHealthcare. For access to survey data, discussion guides, template newsletter articles, social media content, and more, visit www.ncoa.org/UnitedStatesofAging.