Name(s)	Project Number
Rebecca C. Stark	**S0430**

Project Title

Internet Adoption Among People Over 65

Abstract

Objectives/Goals

The goal of my project was to research factors behind Internet adoption among people over 65 and discover why some seniors have adopted the Internet while others haven#t. As the senior population in our country continues to grow each year, this issue is becoming increasingly pressing. Internet can help seniors improve their quality of life, and I believe that identifying the driving motives behind adoption of the Internet can increase Internet usage.

Methods/Materials

After speaking with various seniors as well as with a professor from the Stanford Center for Longevity, I created a survey that asked seniors about family, use of technology (specifically the Internet), and previous job experience. I created a final draft of the survey and delivered 200 copies to various senior homes in my community. I then collected completed surveys, tabulated the responses into Survey Monkey and analyzed the results.

Results

I learned that the majority of seniors who are active Internet users learned to use the Internet out of necessity. By this, I mean that they either had to use the Internet in a job they help prior to retiring (in order to be successful) or they use the Internet to stay in touch with far-away family members. Non-Internet users typically did not have work experience involving the use of the Internet and their family members tended to live close by. However, this only partially explained the use of the Internet. Many active Internet users are internally motivated to use the Internet. They taught themselves, and they felt more confident about their skills than non-users.

Conclusions/Discussion

In order to increase Internet usage among seniors, we need to boost motivation and confidence. Motivation stems from showing seniors the value of the Internet. We need to help seniors understand how and why the Internet can improve their lives. Confidence stems from a belief that they can successfully learn a new technology. Educators can help by simplifying methods for teaching seniors. In doing both these things, we will be able to harness the power of internal forces in helping seniors use the Internet. We also need to help family members by providing them with effective tools for working with their seniors. That way, we can also use a grass-roots approach.

In my science project next year, I hope to build on this project by evaluating teaching methods to help senior citizens use the Internet.

Summary Statement

I worked on understanding why some seniors adopt the Internet while others do not.

Help Received

My mother helped by delivering and picking up surveys to/from senior centers.