



AI for Older Adults

AI promises to change the way we live and work, but what is it really, and what does it mean for older adults? This guide provides the facts about this new technology: the benefits, the risks, and how it can address the distinctive health-related, financial and lifestyle needs of people age 50+.

SENIOR PLANET
FROM **AARP**

What's hype and what's real?

AI has been advancing in leaps and bounds as companies invest billions of dollars. All that development is creating unanticipated opportunities, unforeseen benefits, and a lot of uncertainty. We're at the beginning of a long journey.

But what about the risks?

Great question! For all the upsides of AI, it has some drawbacks that we need to understand. It can be used for the kind of fraud and online scams that disproportionately victimize older adults. It can allow bad actors to create realistic fake news stories and images ("deepfakes"), or trick users into interacting with machines that seem very much like real people. It is disrupting the workforce and forcing workers and businesses to adapt. Some are also worried about the environmental impact of the data centers that power AI, consuming enormous amounts of energy.

Where can I find AI?

AI is showing up in everyday consumer and workplace applications, such as:

- Thousands of companies and products are starting to incorporate AI features to make things simpler for users by anticipating their needs and interests.
- Public websites like ChatGPT and Dall-E from OpenAI let anyone use powerful AI chatbots and image generation tools, with free and pay-tier options.
- Browsers like Microsoft Edge and Google Chrome have AI assistants to make it easier to search the web.
- Other popular software applications are starting to feature AI functions to simplify common tasks like note taking, transcription, translation, and auto-generation of text and images.

Technology innovations for aging and accessibility provide amazing opportunities for older adults to live better in and around their homes.

—National Council on Aging, 2024.

But what does this mean specifically to older adults?

Older adults have specific needs and circumstances. They steward money differently, have different demands on the healthcare system, and are more vulnerable to certain kinds of fraud, for example. We see the biggest areas of impact in three main areas:



HEALTH

Physical, mental, and emotional well-being, independence, longevity.



WEALTH

Personal finance management, shopping and saving, long-term planning.



SELF

Learning and self-development, creativity, community.



AI is a revolutionary technology, but it can create problems if used in harmful or deceitful ways. Here are precautions and steps you can take to protect yourself.

Supercharged Online Fraud and Scams

Bad actors are using AI to trick vulnerable individuals with realistic scams, including emails, photos, and even voice and video clips that impersonate loved ones asking for money. Be especially wary of unsolicited calls and communications unless you are sure of the source.

What you can do: Ask the person something only you and they would know to verify their identity. Don't click on links, even in authentic-looking messages. Report suspicious transactions immediately.

Misleading and Deceptive Content

Generative AI can produce very polished results, whether text, imagery, or video: so good that the fakes can look very, very real. If you see news stories, photographs, or even audio or video clips that don't seem right to you, dig deeper before clicking or sharing. The bad actors are counting on you passing misinformation along to give it more legitimacy.

What you can do: Some online tools like Hive offer a simple way to check text and media for the telltale signs of AI generation just by dragging and dropping a sample onto their website.

"Hallucinations" and Erroneous Responses

Generative AI tools like chatbots and image generators sometimes produce bad information or advice, due to a technical glitch that developers call "hallucination." These results can be unpredictable and range from the hilarious (calling toothpaste a good pizza topping!) and bizarre (photographs with odd elements like extra fingers) to highly convincing "facts" that happen not to be true.

What you can do: Use caution when using AI for research and open-ended advice rather than tackling straightforward, defined tasks.

Copyright Caveats

Because AI systems were built using data from the internet, there can be issues around the ownership of the underlying materials and the output of the systems. Courts recently ruled that content generated by AI systems is not subject to copyright protection. There are also cases in the courts claiming that AIs have plagiarized copyrighted materials or used data without permission.

What you can do: Always be transparent about how and when you use generative AI in work that you share to reduce problems that might arise.

Trust, But Verify!

At the end of the day, AI is meant to be a tool to amplify our humanity, not replace it. In doing so, it sometimes replicates and amplifies our human foibles along with our strengths. Just as we have done in earlier stages of the digital revolution, we need to use common sense in our approach to dealing with AI content, especially as it comes into greater mainstream use.

TIPS FOR SPOTTING AN AI COVER

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FINGERS

Look closely at hands, feet, ears, and noses for inconsistencies. AI is known for distorting fingers in disturbing ways, so look out for mis-matched fingernails, correct articulation of knuckles and wrist angles. If the hands are purposely hidden, be wary.



CLOTHING/ARMOR

AI struggles with symmetry, so check clothes and accessories. AI will often generate clothes that blend together/distort like collars, glasses, earrings, eyelets, bows, buttons, hair, belts and armor.



PERSPECTIVE

AI art has no concept of fore-middle-background, so everything looks flat. There's no dimensionality, no atmosphere, no foreshortening. Everything is rendered in soft detail, like you're not really focusing your eyes, just glancing at shapes in space.



FACE

Uneven facial features like eyes, lips and ears can also indicate if the image may not be real. AI is currently not very good at circles, so check the shapes of pupils and irises!



THE HUMAN ELEMENT

AI comprehend the 3D actuality of objects or real people. Purposelessness or lack of intent is a hallmark of this fallacy. Look for designs and structures that don't make sense but look cool. AI art is all style over functionality.

STILL NOT SURE?

If all else fails, upload the art through an AI detection website or app. There's many available to use online for free, including Hive, Illuminarty, AI. or Not, and Sensity.