

by Nick Radesca, Volunteer, Huntington SeniorNet Learning Center

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So you have a long day ahead of you. What to do? Maybe you'll be fortunate enough to spend some time with friends, talk on the telephone with family, read a few chapters in a book, and in between watch TV. For many seniors that's enough, but for those looking for a little more, I'd like to suggest the special worlds reached only by computer.

What worlds? How about emailing, playing games alone or with others, effortless shopping or bill paying, making travel plans, writing a letter, essay or book, creating art or greeting cards, organizing and editing pictures, buying and enjoying music or movies, "chatting" with others around the world about any topic, posting your ideas online for others to see and respond, researching, maintaining a personal calendar of events, etc. The possibilities are endless and limited only by one's interests and time.

At SeniorNet, where seniors are introduced to computers, there always seems to be a few reluctant open house attendees (probably forced there by their well-meaning children or friends) posing tactful questions regarding their fear of failure. The biggest learning obstacles to overcome, I think, are:

1. Typing: The keyboard layout is confusing and requires tenacity to master.
2. Structure: There is kind of an odd computer internal roadway or operating system that needs to be understood in order to do the things mentioned above.

These obstacles are obviously surmountable since millions of people of every age and country already use computers daily. If you want to join them, all you have to do is venture outside your comfort zone and let organizations like SeniorNet open new worlds for you. You may even find the learning to be fun.

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