

## TECHNOLOGY "MUST HAVES" FOR THE 50+ [Alexis Abramson, PhD](#)

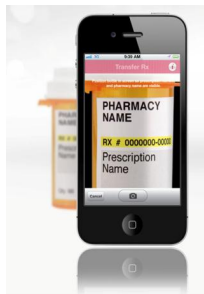
When it comes to technology, businesses are realizing that the 50+ demographic -- which has at times been overlooked in terms of the marketing of new technologies -- is actually extremely interested in innovative "50+ friendly" technology.

As a matter of fact, the marketplace for technology to assist aging adults is expected to grow sharply from \$2 billion today to more than \$20 billion by 2020, according a report from [Aging in Place Technology Watch](#) and boomers are going to be on the receiving end of the advancements and innovations.

I'm often asked about 50+ technology in my [Dr. Alexis Approved](#) blog, so I thought I would share a few of the most frequently asked questions. I hope they help you learn more about the advanced technology (and fun gadgets!) available for boomers, caregivers and seniors.

1. We've all seen the old reliable plastic "pill box" our parents used. What products are available for those boomers who forget to take their medications or those who take their meds, but forgot they did?

Baby boomers rely on their medications to keep them healthy, but complex medication schedules can lead to mistakes: missing doses, taking incorrect amounts or taking medicines at the wrong times. These mistakes could result in unnecessary doctor or hospital visits, illness and even death. It's currently estimated that about [one third to one half](#) of baby boomers do not take their medications as prescribed. With the complexity of medications many seniors take, it's no surprise that [1 in 10 hospital admissions](#) for seniors are a result of medication errors. A plethora of new products and services have recently been introduced to the market to not only prompt patients to take their medications *on time* but also in the *correct dosages*.



[Walgreens Rx App](#) - Walgreens added a new feature to its mobile health app called Pill Reminder. Pill Reminder aims to help pharmacy customers track their medication schedules and receive alerts. The alerts can be scheduled nine different ways, including daily, hourly, weekly (and more customizable options). Users can

also add multiple prescriptions, vitamins and other supplements to a single reminder notification.



[Vitality's AT&T connected GlowCaps](#) – These GlowCaps fit on standard prescription bottles and use light and sound reminders, which can be followed by a phone call or text message, so an individual doesn't miss a medication dose. Each time the pill bottle is opened adherence data is recorded and used to compile periodic progress reports that can be relayed to patients, caregivers, doctors and family members.



[The Philips Medication Dispenser](#) – This is an electronic voice output medication reminder and dispenser designed for use by individuals with vision, memory or cognitive disabilities. Medications are placed in a one-ounce plastic cup, loaded in the dispenser and administered as scheduled. Caregivers can view their loved one's activity through Philips Monitoring report which is available online, 24 hours a day.

2. If an active baby boomer was choosing between purchasing an iPad or a laptop, which one would you suggest and why?

Personally I think the iPad is a great choice, especially for those baby boomers who are "on the go" and just need user-friendly and lightweight computers to access their email, catch up on the news, search the web, buy products, etc. The iPad is easy to carry and store, and using it is as simple as swiping your finger across the screen (which is especially helpful for those 50+ buyers who have arthritis or gripping/dexterity problems in their hands and joints). There is also no need for a mouse or any additional devices to be attached, which makes the product fairly "hassle-free" in terms of trying to remember all the extra attachments that might normally be needed for other types of devices. Among the most convenient features is the ability to zoom in on text, making it larger and easy to read just in case the user

has low vision. Finally, one does not need to be technically strong to operate a tablet and the iPad is considered by most 50+ users to be more intuitive than many of its competitors. However, please note that tablets, in general, are mainly *content consumption* devices rather than *workstations*. This simply means that if you want to type in a lot of text or if you need to deliver large-scale projects, a tablet may not be the right device for you.

3. Is there any innovative technology available for those folks who are 50+ who want more independence or might need to reach help in the case of an emergency?

New and improved technologies emphasize wellness, mobility, autonomy and social connectivity. These innovative products and services are being properly positioned to promote health and independence for aging baby boomers and older adults. Here are a few of my favorite examples of advanced technology in the lifestyle, communications and emergency monitoring space:



[Vtech CareLine™](#) - Seniors are empowered to maintain active lifestyles and close relationships with VTech's three-piece CareLine home telephone and personal communication system. This great product includes a corded phone base, cordless handset and wearable pendant. The easy-to-use home phone system was designed with experts in aging and technology to answer seniors' daily communications needs and support hearing, dexterity or vision challenges. Features include large displays, photo speed dial, reminder capabilities, volume boost and a wearable pendant with one-button dialing that directly calls those pre-selected people who seniors communicate with most or for emergencies.



[eNeighbor™ Monitoring System](#) – This system is programmed to detect unusual activity in the home. A shower left running or a fridge that goes unopened for a day could trigger a phone call to the end user or a caregiver. The eNeighbor™ system can improve safety and security, health and wellness, and increase independence; all of which add up to a higher quality of life for boomers and older adults.



[BeClose](#) – The device tracks your loved one's daily routine by receiving information from discreet wireless sensors that are placed in various locations around the home (as well as a wearable alert button). Caregivers have the freedom of knowing their aging loved one is safe because they are able to check on them at any time using a secure, private web page. If there are any disruptions to daily life, the primary caregiver will be alerted immediately by phone, email or text message.

4. Are there any electronic devices for boomers who love to travel?

Baby boomers comprise an increasing share of the nation's travelers. In fact, according to the [Pew Internet and American Life Project](#), approximately 80% of leisure travel is comprised of baby boomers and beyond. New accommodating technology, such as automated check-ins and check-outs, make life easier on the road for both business and leisure boomer travelers. Here are a few gadgets that will make your next trip a little less stressful and a lot more enjoyable!



[Polaroid Zink](#) – This zero ink, 14 megapixel digital camera pops out a bordered and dated photo on the spot – to the delight of your travel companions wherever in the world you are! And unlike its '60s predecessor, the Z340 keeps a copy in memory so even if you lose the print you never lose the picture.



[The Magellan Maestro 5310](#) – This portable GPS-based navigation system is specifically geared toward boomers who are on the road! It features a larger screen and improved readability. Boomers can also use this GPS device to keep tabs on travelling aging parents, especially those with early signs of cognitive decline.



[Cloud Camera 5000](#) – This camera lets baby boomers and older adults keep an eye on their homes while they're away. The camera has a motorized pan and tilt base that you can access and control through the company's interface. You can set motion-sensor triggers to email you alerts when the liquor cabinet is getting raided by your kids or if the house is being ambushed by a pack of thieves.

5. With technology changing daily and new gadgets constantly hitting the market, what are some examples of a few additional products boomers (and beyond) should look to purchase that may make their lives easier - or just maybe a bit more fun?

Baby boomers have a massive amount of economic clout and certainly the sheer numbers to change the face of technology. By 2020, [116 million Americans](#) will be over 50 and their current [3.4 trillion annual buying power](#) will only continue to increase. Adults over the age of 50 expect technology to be safe, easy to use and flexible enough to adapt to their individual needs. Health, leisure activities and socialization are three areas that boomer technology companies are focusing on and will continue to do so as baby boomers continue to age! Below are a few great gadgets that will help make life easier (and more fun!) for baby boomers!



[Jawbone UP](#) – UP is the app-powered wristband that inspires you to feel better and live healthier than you ever imagined you would. UP tracks every move you make – it even reminds you to move more. The sky-blue wristband measures activity, sleep and nutrition and downloads all the data collected to an app on your smartphone. The battery lasts 10 days and even works in the shower!



[Q i-wear](#) – These shatterproof sunglasses bring on the music via Bluetooth stereo ear buds while toning down the ambient noise. They also allow you to simultaneously take phone calls! Q i-wear allows you to communicate with Bluetooth-enabled devices while engaged in active work and outdoor sports where protection and communication is essential.



[The IDEAL LIFE Body-Manager™](#) - This scale is designed for both weight-conscious individuals and patients with congestive heart failure (CHF). The IDEAL LIFE Body-Manager is a body weight scale that measures weight and automatically stores and sends the information to a user's healthcare team.



[Bionic™ Relief Grip Golf Gloves](#) – These are the only gloves designed by a leading orthopedic hand specialist for enhanced comfort, fit, and performance. The

anatomical pad system provides a more secure grip with less effort, to reduce pain and hand fatigue for those with arthritis. The top-grade cabretta leather gloves feature a form-fitting LightPrene™ wristband that comfortably supports the wrist and base of the thumb.

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