

Where technology and aging intersect, gerontologists chart path forward

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The latest issue of the journal *The Gerontologist* from The Gerontological Society of America contains [21 articles highlighting the state-of-the-art research regarding aging and technology](#), and offering guidance for the future.

Among the findings are that [older adults](#) in certain [demographic groups](#) are less likely to use technology for health-related purposes; using the Internet to connect with family and friends can indirectly affect well-being by decreasing loneliness and increasing [social engagement](#); and there exists a potential for social robots to promote the health of older people. The development of this special issue was led by past Editor-in-Chief Rachel Pruchno, Ph.D., FGSA.

"Technology has the potential to improve the lives of older people," Pruchno wrote in an opening editorial. "However, for technology to be useful, gerontologists must be engaged in every step of its development."

The articles fall under several categories: technology and the [digital divide](#), strategies for bridging the digital divide, Internet use and well-being, robotics, technology in the community, and technology in nursing homes.

"Gerontologists understand the aging process and can facilitate the experiences of older users. Engineers and marketing managers usually do not have this expertise," Pruchno said, adding that when technology and marketing proceed without gerontologists, a great deal of money is

invested in useless technology.

"On the other hand, gerontologists do not have the skills to develop or design new technologies. Success will depend on evolving partnerships that include gerontologists, engineers, marketing experts, and older people working together and listening to one another," she said.

GSA has been active in promoting research on technology and aging, most notable through the work of a member interest group and a dedicated track of sessions at the Society's Annual Scientific Meeting in November 2018.

Provided by The Gerontological Society of America

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