



# Microsoft Intergenerational Technology

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# Computer Technology Brings Grandparents and Grandchildren Closer Together

- No matter where you look, internet technology has become a part of everyday life. For seniors, this often means changing habits and learning how to use new gadgets.






- But there's one clear advantage of all these changes: It's now easier than ever for seniors to keep in touch with grandchildren — even if you live far apart.
- In fact, thanks to online communication, today's kids are connecting with their grandparents more than they have in the past.

- **How remote technology bridges the generational communication gap**

- As society relies more and more on technology, many people fear we're losing the in-person interactions that help us better understand each other. There's no question that spending quality face time is important, but when families can't be in the same place physically, online tools are a great option for grandparents to connect to grandchildren.



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- Teenagers prefer to use technology to communicate with their relatives, partly because of the instantaneous nature of the internet, according to a [study on intergenerational online communication](#).



- For example, one teenage girl in the study reflected on the difference between keeping in touch with her grandmother who uses email and her other grandmother who refrains from any sort of computer use. “I constantly am on my email getting stuff from my school,” she said. “So I am always able to see these ecards from my grandmother telling me happy birthday, happy thanksgiving, and stuff like that.”

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- The girl said it's harder to communicate with her other grandmother by sending letters via regular mail. "The events are delayed and I am trying to think back to what happened," the girl said. "I'll tell her that I am going to see this movie, and then she'll ask me months later 'so how was the movie?'"

- **Grandparents and grandchildren connecting, learning together online**

- Technology offers more than a basic communication tool — more importantly, it gives grandparents and grandchildren a way to bond and learn from each other. Studies show that family relationships strengthen when exploring the internet and learning about technology together.





- Seniors and teenagers benefit from this sharing of knowledge in several ways. Connecting through technology allows seniors to offer their grandchildren:

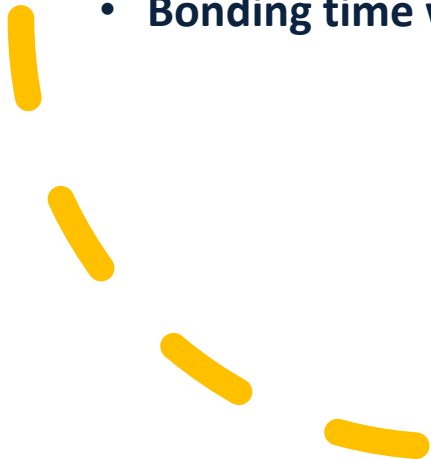
- **A listening ear**

Because they aren't parents to their grandkids, grandparents have a unique opportunity to help teens talk through issues and provide guidance.

- **A stronger sense of cultural heritage and family history**

Multigenerational households aren't as common as they once were, so connecting online allows grandchildren to learn about their background.

- **Bonding time with a role model**



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Teenagers have a lot to offer their grandparents too, including:

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Companionship and love

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A sense of purpose and value

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Motivation for staying active and engaged

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Knowledge of how to use the internet for more than communicating, such as for research, games, social media, and shopping

## **Best tablet apps for grandparents to video chat with grandkids**

If you've video chatted before, you know it's a unique experience. Texting is quick and simple, but there's little — if any — personality in a text message. Talking on the phone allows for a deeper connection, but a voice only goes so far in telling a story.

Video communication allows you to see your loved one's facial expressions as you speak: It's the next-best thing to meeting someone face-to-face.

## FaceTime

If you have an Apple product like an iPhone or iPad, [FaceTime](#) is the simplest way to video chat with family. The app comes built into your device, meaning you don't have to download it after buying a new phone or tablet. Keep in mind that FaceTime is only available on Apple products: If you or your grandchild has a different type of smartphone, like a Samsung product, you both must download a different app that's compatible with both of your phones.

## **Zoom**

[Zoom](#) is a great option for one-on-one video calls or group calls. In fact, if you pay for a premium version, you can have up to 1,000 participants in a single video meeting. It's also easy to record meetings and share your screen with the other people on the call, making this app popular in workplaces. So, if you and your grandchild ever work on a creative project together, Zoom could help.

## **Google Hangouts**

To use [Google Hangouts](#), you'll need a Gmail account with Google. Then you can download the Hangouts app on your smartphone and connect with family or friends who also have Gmail accounts. This app works for text messaging, image sharing, voice calls, or video calls with multiple people at once.

## **WhatsApp**

[WhatsApp](#) allows video calls with up to eight participants, plus basic texting and voice calls. While it's less common than other chat apps in North America, WhatsApp is very popular worldwide, so it's a great option if your family member is traveling or living abroad.

## **Facebook Messenger**

If you like keeping in touch with friends and family through Facebook, then their [Messenger](#) app may be your most convenient way to video chat. First download Messenger to your smartphone or tablet, then log in to your Facebook account, and your whole network of friends will be available. You'll see everyone's name and photo, and if they're online and active, a green dot will appear next to their photo. After tapping on their photo, you'll have the option to send a text message, make a voice call, or start a video chat.



## Other tools for grandparents and grandchildren to connect online

These websites and apps offer some other worthwhile activities for grandparents and grandkids:

**1. [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) and [MyHeritage.com](https://www.myheritage.com):** Ancestry websites are a great way for grandparents and older grandchildren to explore their family's history together.

**2. [Keepy](https://www.Keepy.com):** Share artwork, school projects, and photos grandparents love to put on their fridge but might not have room for.

**3. [Hoot](https://www.hoot.com):** Draw, play, or read together in real time.

**4. [Redeo](https://www.rededeo.com):** Read together while your young grandchild turns the pages.

**5. [ooVoo](https://www.ooVoo.com) and [Voxer](https://www.voxer.com):** These apps allow you to send photos and videos or to talk and text — all in real time.

**6. [Wheel of Fortune](https://www.wheeloffortune.com):** This app version of the popular TV show allows grandparents and grandchildren to spin the wheel together, no matter the distance.