



# Edmonton SeniorNet

## End of Program Report

March 2012

EDMONTON SENIORNET WAS FUNDED BY  
**GOVERNMENT OF CANADA'S** NEW HORIZONS  
FOR SENIORS PROGRAM

Canada 

AND ORGANIZED IN COLLABORATION WITH  
**EDMONTON SENIORS COORDINATING  
COUNCIL (ESCC)**



EDMONTON  
SENIORS  
COORDINATING  
COUNCIL

AND  
**SENIORS ASSOCIATION OF  
GREATER EDMONTON (Sage)**

  
Seniors Association of Greater Edmonton

## Background

The Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council (ESCC) was formed in 2004 as a mechanism of shared planning, coordination and collaboration among Edmonton service providers for seniors. One of the ESCC's objectives has been to develop and maintain a current strategic plan that addresses the needs of seniors and senior serving organizations in Edmonton. *The Strategic Plan for Services to Edmonton's Seniors: Towards 2015* is an initiative that aims to identify a shared strategic direction to meet the needs of seniors in Edmonton. One of the key areas that have been identified in this document is the need for meaningful and affordable social and recreational participation for seniors. A goal of this area, which **Sage** has taken the process lead on, is to develop and/or facilitate the use of current and emerging technologies to connect seniors. Our answer to this goal is the Emerging Social Media Project.

**Sage** received funding from the Government of Canada's New Horizons for Seniors Program for the project Emerging Social Media<sup>1</sup>.

## Objectives

Edmonton SeniorNet aimed to address key needs of older adults by:

- Increasing seniors' quality of life, through interaction and involvement with peers and the community.
- Increasing computer literacy, to promote ongoing intellectual stimulation and information acquisition among seniors.
- Increasing autonomy, by encouraging seniors to contribute skills, experience and wisdom in participatory and volunteer roles.

The project aimed to reduce the occurrence of social isolation among seniors, by helping them connect with family, friends and their community through social media<sup>2</sup> sites such as: Facebook, Twitter and Skype. Our goal was to have local volunteers train isolated seniors on how to effectively use these social media tools, as well as email and various other Internet resources. We hoped to equip seniors with progressive communication tools that would facilitate social participation and active living in the community, and thus help reduce social isolation. We wanted to encourage seniors to contribute their knowledge and skills in the planning and executing stages of the program. By promoting senior involvement in these new technologies, we also aimed to dispel some stereotypes and prejudices associated with aging.

## Project Planning

The intended project activities included creating a Seniors Social Media Advisory Committee for planning and implementing the program. A consultant was to conduct a brief literature review of best practices related to seniors and social media use. The Seniors Social Media Advisory Committee would then devise strategies for social media use, and pilot test them with vulnerable or isolated seniors. The results of the pilot program were to be evaluated, and the findings were to be shared with the community.

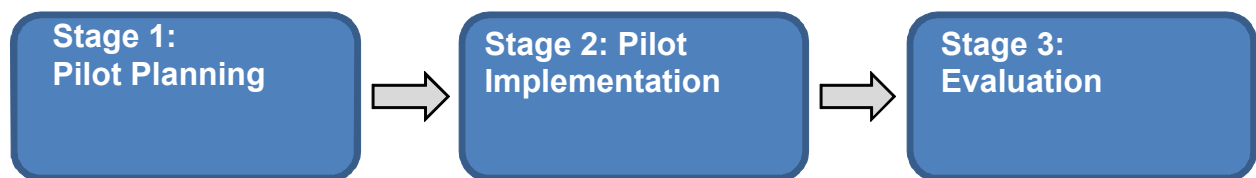
---

<sup>1</sup> The Seniors Social Media Advisory Committee agreed that "Emerging Social Media" may not be an easy title for the public to understand at first glance; after some brainstorming, the name Edmonton SeniorNet was proposed and adopted.

<sup>2</sup> In the context of this report, the term "social media" will relate to the online websites and communities that facilitate idea sharing and personal networking between users.

The project's expected results were to increase empowerment and social integration of seniors, while creating stronger networks with the community and organizations. We also hoped to gain more knowledge of social media's applications in relation to seniors. Most importantly, we wished to strengthen seniors' connections to their friends, family and community.

We anticipated that developing and implementing a successful model for seniors' use of social media would require several stages of work. These include planning a pilot project with limited geographic and service provision scope, implementing the pilot, as well as revising and expanding the service delivery model according to lessons learned in the pilot. These can be summarized as follows:



*Figure 1. Phases of Planning and Implementation: Edmonton SeniorNet*

Two committees were formed for the purpose of this project: The Seniors Social Media Advisory Committee and the Edmonton SeniorNet Training Team.

A detailed project work plan was drafted, including the functions of these two committees, **Sage** and the Emerging Social Media Project Assistant ([Appendix One](#)).

### Seniors Social Media Advisory Committee

Edmonton SeniorNet was a highly collaborative effort. The Seniors Social Media Advisory Committee met on a regular basis from May to November, and played an integral role in the development of the Edmonton SeniorNet pilot project. Meetings took place at **Sage**, for the duration of 1.5 hours, and materials and agendas were prepared and distributed by the Emerging Social Media Project Assistant. The purpose of the Edmonton SeniorNet Advisory Committee was to provide ideas and advice in the completion of Stage 1: Pilot Planning, including:

- Designing the details of Edmonton SeniorNet.
- Providing counsel, guidance and feedback on various components of Stage 1: Pilot Planning.
- Identifying candidates or recruiting resources for Edmonton SeniorNet Training Committee.
- Identifying seniors in the community who were at risk of and/or experiencing isolation.
- Reviewing results from literature review of best practices.
- Providing expert counsel and guidance on the results of this research in relation to the development of strategies for social media use in the pilot.
- Providing input to the pilot test throughout all stages.
- Reviewing the evaluation report of Emerging Social Media Project.
- Providing input into the plan for future use and public dissemination of information.

Chaired by **Sage's** Karen McDonald, Director of Community Relations, the Seniors Social Media Advisory Committee was composed of ten dedicated volunteers:

Arlene West, **Sage** Member  
Christine Causing, Next Gen Committee  
Dr. Donna Wilson, Faculty of Nursing, University of Alberta  
Frank Hanlan, South East Edmonton Seniors Association ( SEESA)  
Joan Carlson, **Sage** Member  
Dr. Lili Liu, Department of Occupational Therapy, University of Alberta  
Mack D. Male, Paramagnus Inc.  
Margaret Olson, **Sage** Member  
Michelle Maser, Operation Friendship  
Serina Weleschuk, Good Samaritan Society Tele Care®

The committee boasted a diverse set of experience and expertise in a wide range of relevant subjects; members were recruited from senior serving organizations, academic institutions and Edmonton's corporate community. Four committee members were senior citizens, who offered valuable insight into project logistics, as well as the accessibility of learning materials and teaching methods.

### Instructor Survey

The Seniors Social Media Advisory Committee agreed that conducting a survey of seniors' computer class instructors would ensure that Edmonton SeniorNet adopted an appropriate course structure. The survey requested information related to class logistics, curriculum and teaching methods. Four instructors from various programs and institutions replied positively to the request, and their detailed responses were helpful in planning Edmonton SeniorNet classes. Five of the most prominent suggestions gained from the instructor survey were:

1. Hands on, one-on-one training methods were considered the best methods of instruction by multiple instructors.
2. Handouts with visual instructions were considered an asset. Instructors wrote that seniors seemed to prefer hard copies to those available online. This came with a trade off, however: multiple operating systems made it difficult to have one universally helpful booklet.
3. Using a Smartboard to guide seniors through the lessons was considered very helpful.
4. Setting strict time lines for the program was not considered realistic. An instructor suggested that seniors with no computer experience would likely need more time to understand social media.
5. Engaging the training team was considered a challenge. One response suggested that the training team members should contribute to the curriculum planning. On-going meetings with the training team were also deemed essential as a means of addressing problems and sharing insight.

### Literature Review and Strategies

The first goal of the literature review was to define social isolation, and determine some of its effects. Wilson, Harris, Hollis and Mohankumar (2010) examined social isolation and methods of prevention. Social isolation was described as "the absence of social ties or relationships," and it was linked to detrimental health impacts such as depression, dietary concerns and illness among seniors. Factors that increased the risks of social isolation included loss of loved ones, independent living, illness, transportation or mobility problems,

low income, frailty and negative attitudes surrounding aging. Social isolation could be an outcome of a seniors' choice not to interact with others, or from specific barriers that prevented socialization from occurring (Hortulanus *et al.*, in Wilson *et al.* 3). Wilson *et al.*'s article also discussed using upstream solutions, which are primary preventative steps, to decrease the occurrence of social isolation among seniors (2). Some preventative steps identified by Wilson *et al.* that directed Edmonton SeniorNet included:

- Seniors with wider social networks were more likely to participate in healthy activities that prevented social isolation.
- Social interaction reduced stress and increased coping skills among seniors.
- Befriending was a great way to combat social isolation. Befriending is the process by which volunteers form personal connections with senior participants.
- If the seniors were involved with the planning and implementation of a program, they were more likely to improve their social and coping skills. Seniors benefited as their support networks increased and the program benefited as it became more sustainable.

Wilson *et al.* also determined that ageism needed to be addressed in order to prevent social isolation. Seniors were less likely to participate in social activities if they were subject to ageism. Ageism can affect the way that younger and older generations interact with each other; as a result, the final suggestion that was embraced in Edmonton SeniorNet was the use of cross-generational programs that helped dissolve harmful stereotypes and prejudice about older adults (5).

An older study in *Canadian Social Trends* was deemed useful in examining seniors' relationship to social media and their Internet usage trends. Taking her data from the 2001 General Social Survey, Michelle Rottermann found that 66% of seniors were concerned with privacy with relation to Internet usage, compared to 56% of younger generations. Such reservations played some role in preventing seniors from using the Internet (7). Statistics Canada (2001) also used the General Social Survey to determine that seniors with lower incomes or lower levels of education were less likely to use computers and the Internet. Only 8% of low-income seniors aged 55-64 accessed the Internet, whereas 77% of high-income seniors accessed the Internet.

Cynthia Silver (2001) determined that in 2001 only 13% of Canadian seniors were getting online. 80% of those seniors that did use Internet did so for personal interest and entertainment. Silver also mentioned that Internet use could help seniors "maintain ties with family and friends." 87% of Internet using seniors used e-mail, 69% of whom did so more often than once a week (10). With regards to how seniors learned to use the Internet, Silver determined that seniors were more likely to learn to use the Internet informally. Only 17% of seniors sought formal lessons, while relatives and peers assisted other seniors. Trial and error were perceived to be the most prominent way that seniors learned to use the Internet. Silver also determined that seniors' attitudes towards the Internet are a major barrier. Only 8% of non-Internet using 60+ aged seniors, were actually interested in using the Internet. Only a quarter of all older Canadians believed that everybody should be able to use the Internet (11). Some other barriers that Silver listed were lack of access, high costs, lower education and lower literacy, as well as lack of time, skills and training. Diminished physical abilities could also make using the computer keyboard, mouse and monitor difficult for some seniors (12). Silver concluded by summarizing some benefits that increased Internet skills could present for seniors: "The Internet may stimulate independent living, help combat isolation, create opportunities for volunteering and make it easier for retirees to earn

income without leaving home. The Internet can open the world to older people who may feel isolated and lonely” (12).

Tim Dixon published an article about an organization called Tall Trees. Tall Trees connected seniors to networking sites like YouTube and Facebook. Tall Trees based its work on research from the University of California, which showed how Internet usage could stimulate and increase brain functioning. A study by Phoenix Centre in Washington found that Internet usage correlated with a 20% decrease in depression rates among seniors ages 55 and over. Dixon pointed out that some senior citizen bloggers had experienced much popularity from their blogging activities. Before her death last year, 104-year-old Ivy Bean had 65,000 Twitter followers and 60,000 Facebook friends. Helping Hand conducted a trial with the University of Adelaide that aimed to determine whether or not social networking websites could have a positive effect on seniors’ feelings of loneliness. They worked with six clients over three months using About my Age, an online community for seniors. The results showed that social networking did reduce feelings of isolation. But, the trial also showed that individual social media training support was most helpful to the senior participants, as many issues came up related to just the human-computer interface. Helping Hands is now conducting a Skype trial.

### Edmonton SeniorNet Training Team

The purpose of the Edmonton SeniorNet Training Team was to complete Stage 2: Program Implementation of the pilot project. The team members functioned in either an instructing or a mentoring capacity, depending on their personal strengths and preferences. The Edmonton SeniorNet Training Team performed tasks including:

- Providing valuable feedback towards curriculum planning.
- Helping design and update class handouts and interactive learning activities.
- Facilitating senior computer training during Edmonton SeniorNet classes.
- Identifying and adapting to senior participants’ strengths or challenges.
- Posting relevant content to the Edmonton SeniorNet social media and blog profiles.
- Participating in class discussions and information seminars (e.g., Google Mail privacy and etiquette discussions, Easy Ways to Stay Safe Online presentation).

The literature review determined that intergenerational interaction could lead to decreased feelings of isolation among seniors, as well as decreased ageist preconceptions. The training team, as a result, was composed of young adults and senior citizens recruited through the **Sage** Link, Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council Link-Letter, Edmonton’s Next Gen Committee, University of Alberta faculty-wide emails, a *Edmonton Senior* Newspaper article, **Sage** posters and word of mouth.

Ten individuals participated in training senior participants throughout the project. The interdisciplinary approach was very successful; younger adults had the advantage in being able to intuitively respond to technological problems in class, as well as trouble shoot potential system or hardware errors that occasionally occurred. Senior citizen mentors bridged the gap between younger instructors and elder student participants, while providing valuable information and support during Edmonton SeniorNet classes. Senior mentors ensured that handouts and instructional pace were appropriate for the older audience. Most importantly, senior mentors served as positive examples of older social media users for participants to relate to; this aspect may have contributed to a less intimidating and more welcoming class environment for senior participants.

The combination of different generations created a dynamic, entertaining and informative class environment, wherein mutual learning and sharing were encouraged. Multi-faceted instruction styles were a natural result of the diverse group of instructors, utilizing discussion, story telling and visual tutorials to teach participants essential social media skills.

## Curriculum

The curriculum ([Appendix Two](#)) was a joint effort of the Seniors Social Media Advisory Committee and Edmonton SeniorNet Training Team. It became evident through the classes that instructors had to adapt to the pace and learning needs of the seniors. As a result, the curriculum was created to be adapted regularly by instructors based on the needs of the students. Many extra practice sessions were added, to help seniors absorb the information and practice their skills more fully. Breaking up learning into short lessons ensured that essential steps were not skipped, and that students learned the technology cumulatively.

An essential aspect of the curriculum was engaging senior citizen participants through interactive activities. Fun group and partner activities were designed to help seniors engage interactively with social media.

## Methods of Teaching

The multi-faceted instructional styles that the Edmonton SeniorNet Training Team utilized included instructor and student mentoring, hands-on tutorials and detailed hand-outs.

One instructor and two supporting mentors facilitated each class. The instructor took the lead in guiding the class through the day's lessons. The instructor had to possess an intuitive knowledge and handle of the social media utilities being taught in class that day, as well as strong leadership, presentation and interpersonal skills. Mentors supported the instructor by providing supplementary information and examples relevant to the class tasks. Mentors also ensured students were keeping up with instruction steps, and helped struggling students get back on track. As challenges arose during class, the instructor and mentors resolved them immediately; as a result, students were generally able to participate in lessons at the same pace. Mentors provided a form of one-on-one training that the Instructor Survey had indicated as successful.

Senior citizen students were also encouraged to mentor one another. The group dynamics of Edmonton SeniorNet classes allowed senior participants to become essential resources to each other. Participants were encouraged to discuss important issues, such as privacy and safety, and come up with positive responses and personal practices to these issues. Group or partner activities helped reinforce lessons learned during the tutorials.

Hands-on training was deemed the most effective instructional method according to the Instructor Survey. In order for students to be able to follow along with class activities, a projector and screen were set up at the front of the computer room. The projector was connected to the instructor's computer, visually displaying each step that the instructor performed and described. Students could easily glance at the screen to find the proper icon, text bar or application that the instructor was referring to. This method encouraged seniors to personally perform each action on their own computer, with some feeling of autonomy. The visual cues helped clarify instructions, and provided a valuable reference tool for

students' use. Students also could ensure that they were on the same task as the rest of the class, by comparing their own computer screen with the instructor's projected screen.

The tutorials closely followed the handouts that were distributed to each student at the beginning of each class. Students thus had another visual resource to refer to, complete with specific images and simplified text instructions. Students were able to take notes in the space provided, as well as write down extra information and tips for each social media activity. Students were encouraged to utilize these handouts while practicing lessons from home.

Students were also encouraged to practice lessons at **Sage**, during public access computer hours. Five handbooks were purchased in case students needed to look up specific tasks, or extend their knowledge outside the parameters of the class:

- *Facebook and Twitter for Seniors for Dummies* by Marsha Collier,
- *Using the Internet Safely for Seniors for Dummies* by Nancy C. Muir and Linda Criddle,
- *The Internet and Email for the Over 50s* by Bob Reeves,
- *Computers for Seniors for Dummies* by Nancy C. Muir, and
- *Fighting Spam for Dummies* by John R. Levine, Margaret Levine Young and Ray Everett-Church.

## Learning Materials

Using Adobe Creative Suite software, the Edmonton SeniorNet Training Team designed handouts ([Appendix Three](#)). The materials provided textual and visual instructions on how to perform specific tasks introduced in class. It was essential that the handouts encompassed senior-friendly design elements such as large fonts, contrasting colours and clear images. Some seniors had trouble distinguishing between Gmail, Facebook, Skype and Twitter handout booklets; as a result, the cover pages were colour-coded for easy distinction. Each lesson focused on one short, specific task such as "Signing Up With Facebook" in order to minimize confusion between tasks. Textual instructions were written in simple terms, avoiding technical jargon whenever possible. Note space was provided for students to personalize the information that they acquired during class, and to clarify certain concepts in their own words. Large screen-capture images allowed seniors to verify each step of the lesson as they performed it.

## Participants

Senior participants were recruited using posters, a **Sage** Link article and an Edmonton Journal article. The Instructor Survey indicated that first-time senior computer users would not have the keyboard and mouse skills necessary to take a social media course; with this in mind, the Seniors' Social Media Advisory Committee agreed to limit the pilot scope to seniors with some basic computer skills. Each student confirmed basic mouse, keyboard and Internet proficiency upon registering for the course.

Nineteen seniors initially registered for Edmonton SeniorNet classes. Based on preferences, the seniors were organized into two groups: Monday/Wednesday afternoon sessions and Tuesday/Thursday morning sessions. Each session lasted for one and one-half hours, with a ten-minute break mid-class.

## Evaluation

Stage Three: Program Evaluation was measured using pre-program and post-program evaluation surveys, which Dr. Lili Liu and Dr. Donna Wilson helped develop. The results of the evaluation, summarized in point form, included:

- **Logistics:** The logistics of the program such as location, time of year, instructors, materials (etc.) had highly rated responses.
- **Loneliness:** The evaluation showed that over the time of the project, six seniors indicated feeling less lonely due to the pilot project. Seven seniors indicated no change in feelings of loneliness; however, these seniors predominantly already had social networks in place to support them before beginning the program.
- **Confidence:** Four seniors indicated that their confidence in computer skills improved, while two seniors indicated that their confidence decreased. Six seniors indicated no change in confidence.
- **Social Media:** Students were asked if they would continue using social media. Nine seniors indicated that they would continue using Facebook. Five seniors indicated that they would continue using Skype. Seven seniors indicated that they would continue using Twitter. Nine seniors indicated that they would continue using Gmail. One senior indicated that he/she would continue using social media, but did not indicate specifically which application he/she would use. All students indicated that they enjoyed the course overall, and that they would be interested in taking similar courses in the future.
- **Positive feedback from students** (free form comment section):
  - Eleven seniors provided positive comments about the instructors and mentors.
  - Six seniors enjoyed meeting new people and socializing in classes.
  - Three seniors appreciated increasing their knowledge of computers.
  - One senior commended Sage for recognizing the use of skills in social media to reduce social isolation among seniors.
  - One senior mentioned that he/she appreciated the friendly class atmosphere.
  - One senior thought that Sage provided good teaching facilities.
  - One senior appreciated that the course was free of charge.
  - One senior liked learning about his/her profiles' privacy policies, and indicated that this knowledge gave him/her more confidence.
  - One senior mentioned that the class handouts were very helpful.
  - One senior thought her peers contributed to her learning.
- **Suggestions for improvement from students** (free form comment section):
  - Two seniors felt that the computer lab needed better computers.
  - Two seniors felt that the course duration should have been longer.
  - Two seniors felt that the course involved too much material, taught too quickly.
  - One senior felt that the course duration should have been shorter.
  - One senior would have liked more time with each social media application.
  - One senior indicated that downtown parking was too expensive.
  - Two seniors suggested breaking the course up into separate units so that future students could focus on the modules they were most interested in.
  - Two seniors suggested having classes based on skill level: beginner, moderate, advanced.
  - One senior suggested approaching companies like Shaw or Telus for sponsorship.
  - One senior suggested emphasizing beginner skills, before moving on to social media.

CTV News and CBC Radio conducted two interviews with Edmonton SeniorNet participants, providing valuable feedback and opinions regarding the course. They may be accessed through Edmonton SeniorNet's blog: <http://edmontonseniornet.tumblr.com>.

## Program Results

The Emerging Social Media Project was a pilot project, as a result the Edmonton SeniorNet Training Team approached all challenges as learning opportunities.

### Health

The Edmonton SeniorNet Training Team learned that the most important aspect of delivering the pilot was considering each senior's particular context.

Seniors might have a variety of health issues that make learning computer skills more difficult. One senior participant, for example, suffered from advanced macular degeneration. A visual aide computer was reserved for his/her use, and the Edmonton SeniorNet Training Team ensured that all of the handouts were designed for visual ease. One senior wore a hearing aide, which created a high-pitched interference while wearing headphones. The Edmonton SeniorNet Training Team's solution was to provide this senior with computer speakers during class time. A few seniors had difficulty remembering passwords and class lessons; as a result, handouts with note space were provided for seniors to take home with them. Extra, open-format practice lessons were scheduled where seniors could ask questions and focus on lessons they were having trouble with.

### Internet and Social Media Preferences

At the start of the pilot, many seniors had negative opinions of the Internet. These seniors were especially worried about their privacy and safety. As a result, the Edmonton SeniorNet Training Team incorporated information and discussions about safety, privacy settings and etiquette. A public presentation called Easy Ways to Stay Safe Online was organized to help address some of the fears seniors had towards the Internet.

Some participants were more interested in certain types of social media than others. For example, one individual did not initially want to learn about Skype, but was enthusiastic to learn about Facebook. The training team encouraged seniors to view the pilot as an overview, and to gain as much positive experience from the program as possible. Seniors were encouraged to participate in all social media units during the program – Gmail, Facebook, Skype, Twitter – but were given the option to delete their accounts at the close of the pilot. Many seniors found that they enjoyed a social media site that they initially were not interested in; for example, Twitter was met with much enthusiasm during the lessons, although few seniors were interested in its functions initially.

The Edmonton SeniorNet Training Team also observed that many skills that seniors learned in the first unit, Gmail, were essential to participate in the second unit, Facebook. Participating in the whole pilot, rather than in particular units, allowed for naturally cumulative learning. This also ensured that most senior participants were comfortable with progressively more complex tasks.

### Self-Assessment

Participation in the social media classes required some computer experience; seniors were therefore admitted into the program based on self-assessment of their skills. The Edmonton

SeniorNet Training Team observed that self-assessment was an unreliable way of gauging computer experience. Some seniors were much more proficient with computers, whereas other seniors owned a computer but did not know how to use it. To minimize this disparity during class, mentors spent more time with seniors who were struggling. More experienced participants were encouraged to help their neighbour students if they could not keep up. Students were encouraged to stay after class if they needed clarification with any material.

A beginner computer skills section, “Introduction to the Internet,” was later added to the Edmonton SeniorNet curriculum. This introductory class will review basic computer functions and web applications, preparing students for subsequent social media modules.

## Handouts

Utilizing large fonts and image sizes in class materials meant that more pages were consumed in each lesson book; this could be viewed by some as an expensive and wasteful use of paper resources. Many organizations wishing to replicate the Edmonton SeniorNet program may have trouble balancing in house printing costs with affordable course costs to participants.

The Edmonton SeniorNet Training Team also observed that keeping handouts current required much time and effort. Social media websites were constantly being updated, directly influencing the usefulness of class handouts. During the pilot project, Gmail, Twitter and Facebook layouts changed. This rendered the handouts out-of-date for future programming.

In order to remedy this, the handouts will have to be updated before the pilot program can be offered again. At least one future Edmonton SeniorNet instructor will have to be proficient with Adobe Creative Suite and all of the social media applications. This individual will have to update InDesign files, by taking current screen shot photos and writing effective textual instructions.

## Participant Engagement

Four seniors had to quit the program due to other commitments, such as travel plans or unexpected medical emergencies. The Edmonton SeniorNet Training Team was able to arrange private lessons for two of the seniors in their homes.

## Computer Access

Many senior participants did not have access to a computer from home. This made homework or practice activities difficult to arrange. Participants were encouraged to utilize public access computers at **Sage** or at Edmonton Public Library locations. In one circumstance, an Edmonton SeniorNet instructor volunteered to fix a participant’s home computer. This commitment, however, took much more time than anticipated, and added a considerable strain on the volunteer’s schedule.

## Conclusion

Through advice from the advisory committee, experience of the training team and feedback from senior participants, valuable insight was gained during the pilot project. Seniors responded positively to the curriculum and class format, as well as instructors, mentors and teaching methods. The pilot allowed **Sage** to gain knowledge related to seniors’ opinions and preferences regarding social media. Most importantly, many participants indicated that

This project is funded by Government of Canada’s New Horizons for Seniors Program 

they felt more socially engaged as a result of using social media applications during the pilot.

The Edmonton SeniorNet pilot project was not only positively received by senior participants, but also by the general public. Following Edmonton SeniorNet's CBC radio interview and CTV news feature, over forty seniors contacted **Sage** hoping to participate in future courses.

It is clear that senior citizens are becoming increasingly more interested in emerging social networking applications and the potentially beneficial impact of technology on their lives.

### Connect with Edmonton SeniorNet

Facebook: Edmonton SeniorNet

Twitter: yegseniornet

Skype: Edmonton.SeniorNet

Blog: <http://edmontonseniornet.tumblr.com>

## Appendix One: Project Work Plan

Advisory Committee		Emerging Social Media Assistant	Training Committee	Sage Administration
May 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kick off meeting to confirm scope, deliverables and approach</li> <li>• Review and confirm Terms of Reference</li> <li>• Review and confirm project title and Project Work Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruit individuals for Advisory Committee</li> <li>• Draft Terms of Reference for Advisory Committee</li> <li>• Recruit individuals for Training Committee</li> <li>• Draft Terms of Reference for Training Committee</li> <li>• Begin literature review of best practices related to social media usage amongst seniors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interested individuals meet and discuss project with Emerging Social Media Project Assistant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Propose and discuss Social Media Policy at <b>Sage</b></li> </ul>
	<i>Deliverables:</i> Approved Project Title Approved Terms of Reference Draft Project Work Plan	<i>Deliverables:</i> Advisory Committee Training Committee	<i>Deliverables:</i>	<i>Deliverables:</i> <b>Sage Social Media Committee</b>

Advisory Committee		Emerging Social Media Assistant	Training Committee	Sage Administration
June 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aid in identifying isolated seniors in the community for pilot program</li> <li>• Review and confirm evaluation forms and method</li> <li>• Review and evaluate research pertaining to best practice for social media use among seniors</li> <li>• Develop strategies based on research for pilot</li> <li>• Provide input on implementation of pilot</li> </ul> <p><i>Deliverables:</i> Project Work Plan Pilot Strategies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement action based on finalized Project Work Plan</li> <li>• Organize first meeting for Training Committee and begin identifying isolated seniors in the community for pilot program</li> <li>• Complete Literature Review</li> <li>• Develop curriculum, action plan and materials for Training Committee, based on strategies of Advisory Committee and feedback from Training Committee</li> <li>• Develop evaluation form for senior participants and volunteer trainers</li> </ul> <p><i>Deliverables:</i> Literature Review Draft Pilot Curriculum &amp; Action Plan Draft Evaluation Method/Materials</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kick off meeting to confirm team identity, goals and approach</li> <li>• Discuss approach to training isolated individuals</li> <li>• Undergo training on Social Media tools</li> </ul> <p><i>Deliverables:</i> Approved Terms of Reference</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft and review policy</li> <li>• Implement action items of Social Media Policy</li> <li>• Create social media profiles for <b>Sage</b>: Facebook, Twitter, etc.</li> <li>• Encourage other seniors organizations to follow suit so that participants of pilot can begin networking</li> </ul> <p><i>Deliverables:</i> Social Media Policy at Sage Online Profiles</p>
July 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide input and feedback on progress of pilot program</li> <li>• Provide feedback on Evaluation Method, Curriculum, and Action Plan</li> </ul> <p><i>Deliverables:</i> Approved Evaluation Method Approved Curriculum Approved Evaluation Method</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversee program implementation</li> </ul> <p><i>Deliverables:</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement pilot program in community</li> </ul> <p><i>Deliverables:</i></p>	<p><i>Deliverables:</i></p>

Advisory Committee		Emerging Social Media Assistant	Training Committee	Sage Administration
August 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide input and feedback on progress of pilot program</li> </ul> <p><i>Deliverables:</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversee program implementation</li> </ul> <p><i>Deliverables:</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement pilot program in community</li> </ul> <p><i>Deliverables:</i></p>	<p><i>Deliverables:</i></p>
September 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review evaluation reports of pilot</li> <li>• Provide input into the plan for future use and dissemination of information</li> </ul> <p><i>Deliverables:</i> <i>Plan for future use and dissemination of information</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate and compile evaluation of pilot program from volunteer trainers and senior participants</li> <li>• Draft Evaluation Report</li> </ul> <p><i>Deliverables:</i> <i>Evaluation report</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement pilot program in community until mid-month</li> <li>• Wrap up meeting and evaluation of pilot program</li> </ul> <p><i>Deliverables:</i> <i>Pilot Evaluations</i></p>	<p><i>Deliverables:</i></p>
October 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate and review Draft of Emerging Social Media Project Report</li> </ul> <p><i>Deliverables:</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compose draft of Emerging Social Media Project Report</li> <li>• Revise and compose Final Draft of Emerging Social Media Project Report</li> </ul> <p><i>Deliverables:</i> <i>Final Draft of Emerging Social Media Project Report</i></p>	<p><i>Deliverables:</i></p>	<p><i>Deliverables:</i></p>

## Appendix Two: Edmonton SeniorNet Curriculum

### Lesson Structure:

15 minutes prior to class—set up  
40 minutes—Lessons  
10 minutes—Break  
40 minutes—Lessons

*In each class, engage seniors through interactive activities. Have them partner up and Email/message/Skype each other. Have them comment on each other's photos, updates and posts. This reinforces lessons, encourages students' progress, and creates a friendly and positive class environment.*

### Introduction to Internet *(added after pilot)*

#### Day 1:

History of the Internet  
What's in it for you?  
Overview of Computer hardware  
Identifying different kinds of addresses (email, URL)

#### Day 2:

Review keyboard  
Review mouse terminology and use  
Review the desktop idioms  
Review icons, files, programs  
Practice with Solitaire & other tools

#### Day 3:

The web browser - your window to the Internet  
Different browsers, ie., Firefox, Chrome, Safari, Opera  
Features common to all browsers (address bar, bookmarks, forward, back, reload, home)  
Entering a URL  
Clicking a link

Using tabs

Going back

#### Day 4:

Search engines: Google  
How to read search results  
Refining search terms to find what you're looking for  
Google Images; Google Maps; News  
WikiPedia - what it is, who can edit (everyone!)

#### Day 5:

Homepage  
Using History  
Using Favorites/Bookmarks  
Maintenance: clearing the cache/history

#### Day 6:

Search Engine Scavenger Hunt

#### Day 7:

Safety and Privacy  
Cookies and tracking  
Identifying primary sites versus "regurgitator" sites  
Recognizing scams (pop ups, etc.)  
Protect your personal info  
Practice

#### Day 8:

Should I Register?  
When you might need to create an account  
How to choose a strong password  
Strategies for managing passwords  
How much personal information to share  
Practice

### Internet Activity/Homework ideas:

**Scavenger Hunt** – Senior participants scavenge the Internet in order to fill out a fun seniors-oriented worksheet. Search for important information like bus routes to SAGE, Government Sites, Seniors Serving Organization Websites, Edmonton Activities, News Sites, Radio Sites, Etc. Seniors receive a small prize (free lunch in Sunshine Café?) for completion of entire scavenger hunt!

**Online Games** – to improve mouse use, seniors can play Solitaire, Chess and other games.

## **Discovering GMAIL**

### **Day 1:**

Lesson One: Signing Up

Lesson Two: Signing Out

Lesson Three: Signing In

### **Day 2:**

Lesson Four: Composing a Basic Email

Lesson Five: Replying to Basic Email

Lesson Six: Add Contact

### **Day 3: Practice**

### **Day 4:**

Lesson Seven: Formatting Email

Lesson Eight: Downloading and  
Uploading Attachments

### **Day 5: Practice**

### **Day 6:**

Lesson Nine: Extra Gmail Tips

Lesson Ten: Email Etiquette

Lesson Eleven: Safety and Privacy

## **Discovering Skype**

### **Day 1:**

Lesson One: Signing Up for Skype

Lesson Two: Skype Test Call

Lesson Three: Find Contacts

### **Day 2:**

Lesson Four: Making a Skype to Skype  
Call

Lesson Six: Chat

### **Day 3: Practice**

## **Discovering Twitter**

### **Day 1:**

Lesson One: Account Sign Up

Lesson Two: Create Profile

Lesson Three: Post a Tweet

Lesson Four: Find and Follow Friends

### **Day 2:**

Lesson Five: Post a Tweet to your  
Friend

Lesson Five: Search and Follow Your  
City (#yeg)

### **Day 3:**

Lesson Six: Follow Celebrities,  
Politicians or Groups

### **Day 4: Practice**

## **Discovering Facebook**

### **Day 1:**

Lesson One: Signing Up for Facebook  
and Validation in Gmail

Lesson Two: Logging Off Facebook

Lesson Three: Logging Onto Facebook

### **Day 2:**

Lesson Four: Setting Privacy Settings

Lesson Five: Updating your Profile

### **Day 3:**

Lesson Six: Uploading a Profile Photo

Lesson Seven A: Finding and

Requesting Friends

Lesson Seven B: Approving a Friend  
Request

### **Day 4:**

Practice

### **Day 5:**

Lesson Eight: Send a Private Message

Lesson Nine: Reply to a Private  
Message

Lesson Ten: Post a Status Update

Lesson Eleven: Comment on a Friend's  
Wall

### **Day 6:**

Practice

### **Day 7:**

Lesson Twelve: Privacy Update (B)

Lesson Thirteen: Chat

Lesson Fourteen: Uploading a Photo  
Album to Facebook

### **Day 8:**

Lesson Fifteen: Exploring Facebook

## **Easy Ways to Stay Safe Online**

A presentation prepared by  
Occupational Therapy student, Carleen  
Ellis, and offered to Edmonton  
SeniorNet participants and the public  
free of charge. Topics include: online  
banking and shopping, passwords, E-  
mail, pop-up windows, scams, firewalls  
and virus scanners. A video of the  
presentation is available online:  
<http://edmontonseniornet.tumblr.com>

# LESSON ONE:

## SIGNING UP WITH FACEBOOK



- 1/ Type [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) in the browser's address bar. Press Enter (Return) to reach the web page. ☐

2/

The screenshot shows the Facebook homepage. At the top is the Facebook logo and navigation bar. Below the logo, there's a section titled "Heading out? Stay connected" with a mobile phone icon and a "Get Facebook Mobile" button. To the right is the "Sign Up" section, which is highlighted with a dashed box. Inside this box, there's a green "Sign Up" button. An arrow points from this button to the "Sign Up" form. The form includes fields for First Name, Last Name, Your Email, Re-enter Email, New Password, and a dropdown for "I am". Below these is a "Birthday" section with dropdowns for Month, Day, and Year. A "Sign Up" button is at the bottom of the form. A link "Create a Page for a celebrity, band or business." is at the very bottom of the dashed box.

- a. On the home page, find the **Sign Up** section to the right of the screen. This form will ask you for your **First Name**, **Last Name**, **Email**, New **Password**, **Gender**, and **Birthdate**. Type the information in each corresponding box. ☐

- b. Click on the green **Sign Up** icon. ☐

Notes:

1

3/

**Sign Up**

It's free and always will be.

**Security Check**

Enter both words below, separated by a space.

Can't read the words below? [Try different words](#) or [an audio captcha](#).Text in the box:  [What's this?](#)[◀ Back](#)**Sign Up**By clicking Sign Up, you are indicating that you have read and agree to the [Terms of Use](#) and [Privacy Policy](#).**Sign Up**

A new box will appear. It asks for a security check.

**a.** Type the letters that appear in the big white box into the corresponding box. If you are not sure about the letters, you can click the blue text that says **Try different words** or you can listen to the letters by clicking the blue text that says **an audio captcha** (you must be connected to headphones or speakers for this option).

**b.** Click the green **Sign Up** icon.

4/

**Step 1**  
Find Friends**Step 2**  
Profile Information**Step 3**  
Profile Picture**Are your friends already on Facebook?**

Many of your friends may already be here. Searching your email account is the fastest way to find your friends on Facebook.



Windows Live Hotmail

Your Email: **Find Friends**

Yahoo!

[Find Friends](#)

Other Email Service

[Find Friends](#)**Find Friends**[Skip this step](#)**Skip this step**

**a.** Try finding your friends using your Email address. Choose the correct option by clicking on the blue box or text that says **Find Friends** and follow the instructions.

**b.** You can also **Skip This Step** (bottom right corner text).

**Notes:**

5/

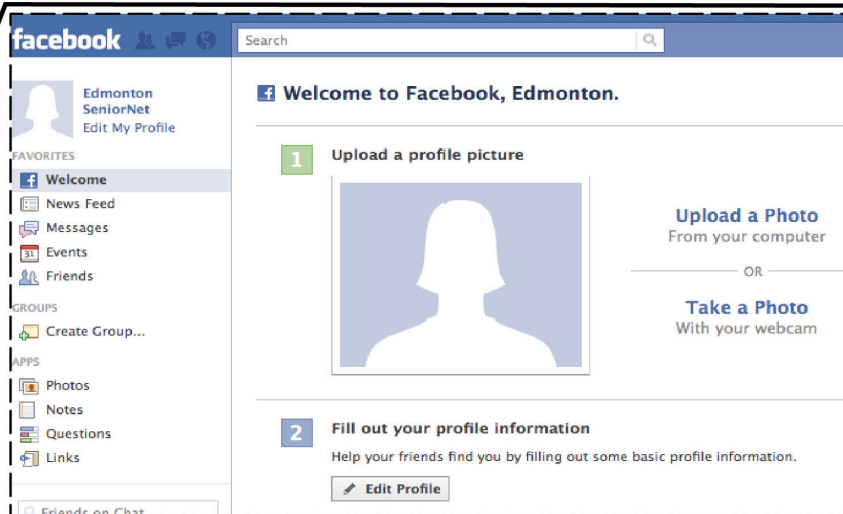
- a. Fill out some more information that will help Facebook find your friends. Type your past **Highschool**, **College/University** and **Employer** in the corresponding boxes. ☐
- b. Finish by clicking the blue box that says **Save & Continue**. ☐

6/

- a. Now add an image for your friends to see and identify you with. Click the blue text that says **Upload a Photo**. If you have a web cam, you can click **Take a Photo**. ☐
- b. From the new box that has opened select an image. This may be tricky as it is essentially showing you a "map" of your computer in which you must locate an image within its folders. Once you find your image, click the **Choose** or **Upload** button. ☐
- c. Click the blue box that says **Save & Continue**. ☐

Notes:

7

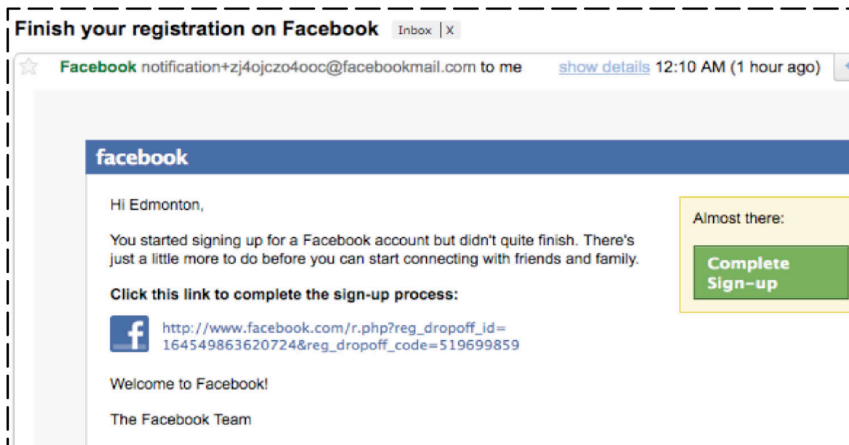


Facebook will bring you to your home page.

You have successfully signed up for Facebook!

8

But you still have to **Validate Your Account**. To do this you have to access the Email account that you used in Step 2 of Discovering Facebook.



a. Sign into your email provider. If you use Gmail, for example, go to [www.gmail.com](http://www.gmail.com). ☐

b. In your Inbox, find the email that Facebook has sent to you asking you to validate your Facebook account. ☐

c. Follow the directions. These usually just require that you click on a validation link. This link will direct you back to your Facebook home page. ☐

Notes:

## References

- Dixon, Tim. (2011, March-April). "Net Benefits." *Australian Ageing Agenda*, 53-57.
- City of Edmonton Community Services. (2007). *Aging in place: A neighbourhood strategy*. Edmonton, Alberta: Community Services Consulting Ltd.  
[http://www.edmonton.ca/for\\_residents/CommPeople/AgingInPlaceStudy20071231.pdf](http://www.edmonton.ca/for_residents/CommPeople/AgingInPlaceStudy20071231.pdf)
- City of Edmonton. (2010). *Edmonton seniors declaration*.  
[http://www.edmonton.ca/for\\_residents/Edm\\_Seniors\\_Declaration\\_FullReport.pdf](http://www.edmonton.ca/for_residents/Edm_Seniors_Declaration_FullReport.pdf)
- Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council. (2009). *Strategic plan for services to Edmonton's seniors: Towards 2015*. Edmonton, Alberta. Retrieved from  
<http://www.seniorscouncil.net/uploads/files/Oct.%2028-09%20Strategic%20Plan%20for%20Services%20to%20Edmonton%20Seniors.pdf>
- Rotermann, Michelle. (2001, Winter). "Wired Young Canadians." Statistics Canada. *Canadian Social Trends*, 63, 3-8.
- Statistics Canada. (2001, Winter). "Internet Use on the Cusp of the 21st Century." *Canadian Social Trends*, 63, 2-3.
- . (2003). "General Social Survey."
- Silver, Cynthia (2001, Winter). "Older Surfers." Statistics Canada. *Canadian Social Trends*, 63, 9-12.
- Wilson, D. M., Harris, A., Hollis, V., & Mohankumar, D. (2010). Upstream thinking and health promotion planning for older adults at risk of social isolation. *International Journal of Older People Nursing* doi: 10.1111/j.1748-3743.2010.00259.