

“IS THIS THING ON?”



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Intergenerational Ideas to Bridge the Digital Divide

The Inter-Generational ideas below are designed to utilize the technology available to bridge the Digital Divide between Digital Immigrants (those not born with a keyboard and mouse in hand) and Digital Natives. From documenting memories to scheduling quality time, the Internet offers an endless array of options for older adults who haven't ventured into the land of Skype or Facebook, but would love the benefits if they had a guide to help them across the Digital Divide.

Make a Date

- Schedule a regular date to connect in real-time online, whether it is a Skype video call or instant messaging (Ch. 20 – “Join the Conversation,” p. 331).
- Be prepared with open-ended questions that promote conversation, such as: “Why is she your favorite teacher?”; “If there is something you could change about yesterday, what would it be?”; or “What is a perfect day for you?”

Create a Ritual

- Touch base with computer questions on “Tech Tuesday.”
- “Website Wednesday” is when you e-mail the link of a website that you enjoy and think others would like, too (Ch. 17 – “Advanced E-mail,” p. 271). For suggestions to get you started, more than 200 websites are listed on pages 464-465.
- Schedule time to play a game online for “Fun Fridays,” alternating who chooses the game. Don't forget to play the old favorites—checkers, hangman, chess, and Go Fish. Play the same games, but actual 3-dimensional board games, when meeting face-to-face.

Chronicle Family History

- The Internet is a great tool for swapping memories and sharing family history between generations. Digital Natives can share a recent photo online—either as an e-mail attachment or on Facebook. Digital Immigrants, in turn, share an old photo well before the birthdate of the younger partner (Ch. 19 – “Picture This,” p. 312). You should each write a few sentences describing the photo. It can all be a great conversation starter for your next Skype session.
- Work together to design a family website for everyone to share photos and blog postings— include a family calendar with birthdays, recitals, school vacations, and more.
- Collaborate to create a questionnaire for each family member to answer and share. Include questions such as: “What's your favorite food?”; “What were you doing the day I was born?”; and “Did you have a pet when you were little?”

Send a Surprise

- Shop online and send all the supplies necessary for a party (hats, balloons, etc.) when there is no event on the calendar. Just for fun! (Ch. 23 – “Shop Till You Drop,” p. 401)
- Video yourself reading their favorite story.
- Send an e-card for no occasion at all.

Go Retro

Some traditions are irreplaceable! Send a postcard or a box of homemade cookies via snail mail.