

Baby boomers embrace online technology

In International Older Person's Week, kalahari.com researched the usage of baby boomers and online technology and discovered they are hip, savvy and know how to use the internet, social media and online shopping.



Image courtesy of Ambro at FreeDigitalPhotos.net

Take South African comic, Barry Hilton, whose age is somewhere north of 50. "I have definitely embraced the digital age. I'm on Twitter, Facebook, I have my own YouTube channel and I've even just written a motivational course on how to write snappy one-liners for social media, which will be released soon. My wife buys books for our young son on kalahari.com. I even sell my 'Nou Gaan Ons Braai' t-shirt range online." Hilton likes shopping for carpentry items because he does woodwork, and also buys plane and movie tickets online.

While Hilton and his generation grew up in a time before televisions, computers, mobile phones and digital cameras, Kalahari.com's research that they are embracing technology, judging by their shopping and surfing choices.

In a review of its over 55 customers' online behaviour, the site found that not only do these shoppers embrace online and mobile shopping but that it's a growing customer segment.

"We estimate that about 17% of our visitors are over the age of 55 and this segment is growing slightly faster rate than that of our younger shoppers," said Kirby Gordon, Head of Brand and Communication at kalahari.com.

"Our older shoppers get their business done in around 95% of the time it takes our average 25-34 year old to make a purchase. They are also the most decisive customers, with statistics indicating that they know what they want when they come to visit, and they tend to find it and check out pretty fast."

Purchases

Kalahari.com's analysis revealed that the older generation are in the market for:

- Mobile phones

- Home furnishings, appliances, DIY tools, decorating items and related books
- Fashion accessories
- Cameras and related equipment
- A wide range of books

This is compared to youngsters who are looking for:

- Mobile phones
- Computer accessories and components
- Fashion accessories
- Computers, laptops, notebooks, tablets and other portable devices
- Appliances/ul>**Celebs agree**

International celebrity chef Jenny Morris, who loves to shop online and is over 50, agrees with these trends. "I have such a busy lifestyle that I often have to rely on online shopping. If I trust a brand, I will buy it online. It saves you time, and with the wonderful new Consumer Protection Act you have recourse if anything goes wrong, provided that you use only reputable online shopping sites. I buy all sorts of things online: kitchen gadgets, car parts, makeup from my favourite brands, plants, jewellery for my shows and DVDs, books and music. I love jazz and blues, but I have very eclectic taste, for instance Lily Allen. The young people in my house often borrow my music."

Kalahari.com also found that grandparents are not scared of shopping on mobile either but they prefer doing so on an iPhone. "The propensity to shop using a mobile device is slightly lower than that of younger generations, but it's still very evident." Like the younger crew, IOS is a clear favourite over Android. In both age groups, Blackberry and Windows phones trail behind in popularity.

"I have an iPhone and an iPad, it's fabulous. I'm definitely not afraid of technology. I don't even feel old. I'll give the young generation a run for their money," says Shaleen Surtie-Richards, who considers music CDs, DVDs and drama series to be her ideal gifts.

Older dames are also more active on kalahari.com than gents with the gender split being 60/40 skewed towards females. The overall gender split for kalahari.com shoppers is 50/50.

Other online pastimes

When they're not shopping online, the older folks use the internet to:

- Check out the weather online
- Look at celeb gossip
- Check out recipes
- Look into craft 'how to' especially textile arts
- Watch some online videos

This compared to 25-34 year olds who tends to:

- Watch a lot of online video (YouTube)
- Look at job listings
- Check out Smart Phones
- Catch up on soccer news
- Read about the latest celeb gossip

The analytics reveal that when it comes to technology choices, the Baby Boomers have somewhat different preferences to their children and grandchildren. In this age bracket, 38.86% still prefer to use Internet Explorer, which

used to be the dominant browser out there, while most younger shoppers (45%) like Chrome best.

Favourite items

For those wanting to spoil their favourite granny or grandpa, the top picks are:

- The Gobi IVP full feature smartphone preloaded with the kalahari.com shopping app
- Biggie Best set of Tin Planters, perfect for growing herbs on a sunny kitchen windowsill
- Beautiful classic Jenna Clifford bracelet
- Affordable, stylish, easy to carry and easy to use digital camera by Canon
- Taste the World by the Giggling Gourmet, Jenny Morris
- Stand-up comedy DVD from Barry Hilton
- South African film classic: Fie! se Kind

"The assumption is often that it's only young people who are shopping online, but we know that this just isn't true. There's a very important market out there in our older generations and we are adamant that we will be there to meet their needs too," says Gordon.

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