

## How to Become a Boomer Tech Genius

Humorous and helpful ideas to get savvy about electronics and apps

By Barbara Crowley for Next Avenue

I believe my generation, the boomers, will change the way the world views aging. I think we'll do this by railing against getting old, whereas the generations before us just sat back and accepted it. Suppliers of cosmetics, plastic surgery, pharmaceuticals and vitamin supplements have voluntarily joined our cause. Actually, these businesses don't see it so much as a cause, but as a potentially lucrative demographic— now tagged the “grey market.” For most of these businesses, the focus is “anti-aging.” I take issue with that term. The dictionary definition of “anti” is “opposed to.” Can you really be *opposed to aging*? Like you have an option and can cast your vote?



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### Is There An Aging App?

The technology industry, on the other hand, doesn't really care if the boomers age. They just want us all to do it with a mobile app. Tech innovators in the aging and caregiving arena believe that smartphones, smart homes, smart cars and big data will improve the lives of aging adults and their caregivers enormously. I believe they are right. I just don't know how to use that stuff very well. I'm not tech-frightened. I consider myself a tech-curious-eager adopter. I'm excited for the future. I look forward to Rosie the Robot finally coming to live at my house! I will wear newfangled digital devices that track my heart rhythms and space-age socks that can decipher whether I am about to fall down and break a hip, or rat me out if I don't take my medication. These devices will keep me safe and help me live longer. Still, technology can be complicated and not always intuitive, especially for those of us who used typewriters and pay phones during our formative years.

### My Solution: Adopt-a-Genius

So how can we attain tech savvy and then keep up with upgrades?

One idea: When I go to the Apple Store, a “Genius” helps me with a question about my iAnything and all the words coming out of his/her mouth make perfect sense. Then I go home and forget

what I learned. So maybe the solution for both United States economic growth and older adults who struggle to make their technology work is to literally *adopt* an Apple “Genius.” It’s perfect! The “Genius” gets free room and board and uses the money saved to pay off student loans. We adoptive boomers benefit by having a live-in IT person who doesn’t roll their eyes when you ask how to post a photo to Instagram like your *real* kid does.

### **Finding Tech Instruction**

I am pretty sure Apple won’t implement my “Adopt a Genius” program anytime soon (unless they can get us to agree to their Terms and Conditions).

So here are a few practical options to help us navigate the world of technology:

- [Oasis Connections](#): They partner with local libraries, job help centers, senior centers and faith-based organizations to help bridge the “digital divide.”
- [Osher Lifelong Learning Institute](#): Some of the most popular classes at this wonderful organization provide instruction on computers, smartphones and other mobile devices.
- In New York City, try [Older Adults Technology Services](#), which provides hands-on training to improve computer skills and learn how to search for reliable health information, city services. It also encourages social engagement, which is a good thing, too.