

# The Plug-in.

## Engaging older consumers in new technology

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# The Plug-in.

COTA SA's social enterprise The Plug-in is a specialist consumer engagement and insights consultancy which connects a community of older people with government, business, industry and researchers who want to understand them better.

[theplugin.com.au](http://theplugin.com.au)



# The Plug-in.

We give people aged 50+ an influential voice...

and enable clients to innovate and improve their products, services and policies for older Australians.

[theplugin.com.au](http://theplugin.com.au)



# The Plug-in.

- + Consumer engagement, insights and market research
- + Co-design, focus groups, in-depth interviews, surveys
- + Product testing, innovation, development
- + Participant recruitment

Aged Care, Health, Technology, Finance, Retail,  
Transport, Nutrition, Lifestyle, Legal, Government



# The Plug-in.

Engaging older consumers in new technology :

- + understanding the digital divide
- + barriers to engagement
- + technology and independence
- + what it all means for engaging older consumers





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Understanding the digital divide.

*“Not everyone’s online you know!”*

*“I couldn’t live without it!”*



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*“It needs to be understood that there are still many, many people who do not have access to the internet. Too many organisations do not have alternatives to on-line services. Using the internet is not cheap, either, taking into account the cost of devices, NBN etc.”*





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*“I would be lost without my smart phone although I’m not almost permanently attached to it like many young people. Often I forget about it for hours or leave it at home. But next to my wallet it’s something that would devastate me if I lost it. And my iPad/Netflix subscription accompanies me to bed at night!”*



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## Barriers to engagement.

*“When she started talking about the app  
I just switched off.”*



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*“Privacy and security of personal and financial information is my main concern. I find it hard to trust any organisation, government department or company that says it will protect my privacy, given the regular media reports of information leaks and sites hacked.”*



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*“Coping with the technological demands of the future is my greatest FEAR for the future, particularly as memory deteriorates not improves.”*



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Technology and independence.

*“I would welcome exploration of technology which would allow me to continue to live at home – but not at the expense of human contact”*



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*“I constantly messenger my family, just chatting, as if they were around the corner, when they are 100s of miles away. We discuss many topics I need advice on.”*



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*“I enjoy browsing and purchasing items and paying bills without having to leave the house, especially in the hot weather. It has made my life easier and more enjoyable.”*



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*“I don't have to rely on others for information.”*





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Tips for engaging older consumers in technology.

*“I am open to using technology when I can identify benefits for me”*



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## #1: Increase familiarity

- + The more familiar, the more likely older people will be to use it (late adopters)
- + Information rich marketing, word of mouth
- + High involvement, personal selling
- + Repeated exposures are important
- + Use analogue as well as digital comms



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## #2: Sell the benefits not the technology

- + Focus on overall benefits – why would they want this?
- + Increasing independence is a driver
- + Don't focus on tech features or functionality
- + Tech talk can be intimidating, esp. to women



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## #3: Make it easy for the customer

- + Don't shift the burden of set up, this could create a barrier
- + Low tech users have low threshold for complexity, require more support
- + Provide support and training in a variety of formats : face to face, printed manuals, and YouTube instructional videos
- + Plug in and play is a winner



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## #4: Face-to-face wins every time

- + Older people prefer dealing with a human
- + New tech more likely to be accepted if taught by a person
- + Provide phone or in person support, not just online
- + Face-to-face in-home set up, trial, training, support is highly appealing



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## #5: Engage older consumers early

- + build co-design into your product development plan
- + understand drivers and barriers before you're too far gone
- + conduct rolling testing and feedback
- + co-design a sales and marketing strategy with potential customers
- + ask The Plug-in how: [connect@theplugin.com.au](mailto:connect@theplugin.com.au)



# Connect with The Plug-in

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theplugin.com.au

