Homesharing for Seniors: A Practical Guide

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The issues are known
Most want to age in place

Challenges

Health

Safety

Social Isolation

Solutions

In Home Support
- Medical
- Daily Task
- Architectural Accommodation

Supportive Technologies
- Monitoring & Safety
- Medication Management
- Communication

Intentional Community
- Senior Cohousing
- Village Movement
- Homesharing
The Homesharing Solution

The sharing economy can bring technology to bear on this problem

- Address financial, safety, health and isolation issues
- Existing options had limitations
  - Craigslist and online roommate services were daunting, and had younger users
  - Existing services (online and in-person) were local and small scale
  - Fees were a barrier for many potential users
- Building an online homeshare service for seniors creates scale and reach
  - National scope
  - Not for profit, virtual organization eliminates cost barrier
    - Supported by donations, grants, and partners
Technology and this user population

Design for older users
- Universal Design that works for everyone
- Mobile-friendly, as many members can’t afford PCs
- Fonts, contrast, white space
- No walking menus (fine motor skills test)
- Instructions, not assumptions

Bridging techniques
- Helpers
- Intermediaries
- Peer support
How it works: Step 1, create a profile

Select path for “Homeowner” or “Homeseeker”

- About you – the basics
  - Gender
  - Age
  - Smoking
  - Pets
- About your home (or the home you seek)
  - Location (by radius)
  - Amenities
  - Budget
- Introducing yourself
  - Text section to talk about who you are, hobbies, etc.
  - Ability to create your own questions
Step 2: Review your matches

Members are matched by algorithm

- Review current match list
  - Percentage match
  - Basic characteristics
  - Drill down for detail
- If you want more matches
  - Review and adjust preferences (at top)
  - Location
  - Budget
Step 3: Review our Safety Tips

Basic online safety
  ◦ Don’t share personally identifiable information
  ◦ Create/use a username, not email
  ◦ Don’t include name, email or phone in profile
  ◦ If someone seems promising
    ◦ Meet at a neutral location
    ◦ Take a friend, relative or neighbor
    ◦ Ask for (and check references)
    ◦ Credit and criminal checks, but they are not guarantees
    ◦ Money is exchanged only as part of the agreement
  ◦ If you decide to be housemates
    ◦ Discuss and sign a homeshare agreement
  ◦ Read *Sharing Housing: A Guidebook for Finding and Keeping Good Housemates*, by Annamarie Pluhar
Step 4: Message and Meet!

Good “netiquette”

◦ Important to verify email (via welcome message)
  ◦ We will notify you of new messages
  ◦ Also notice of new matches when they join
◦ Check in (or check email) frequently
◦ Members appreciate prompt responses
◦ Respond kindly even if you are not interested
Q&A

Please feel free to contact me:

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