



Seriously... It Couldn't Be Any Easier!

By Pam McDonald

Not only have cell phones changed the way we hear each other now, they also have irreversibly changed how we take and share photographs. According to Samsung, 2.5 billion people around the world take pictures every day. And, every minute, there are more than 200,000 photos uploaded to Facebook.

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

Photographs capture moments, freeze them, and allow us to take time with them. They can instantly bring back the feelings of that moment and can convey ideas, tell stories, and express how we see something. It's true; they can be worth a thousand words.

I don't know a grandmother alive who doesn't love to receive and share pictures of her children, grandchildren, great grandchildren and other family members. And, why not? Family photos can make her feel more connected to her loved ones and more a part of their daily lives.

According to the annual [United States of Aging Survey](#) conducted in 2013, seniors are driven by a desire for connectedness. More than half of the 4,000 seniors age 60 and older surveyed (specifically, 53 percent) indicated that being close to friends and family matters.

CONNECTIVITY FOR SENIORS

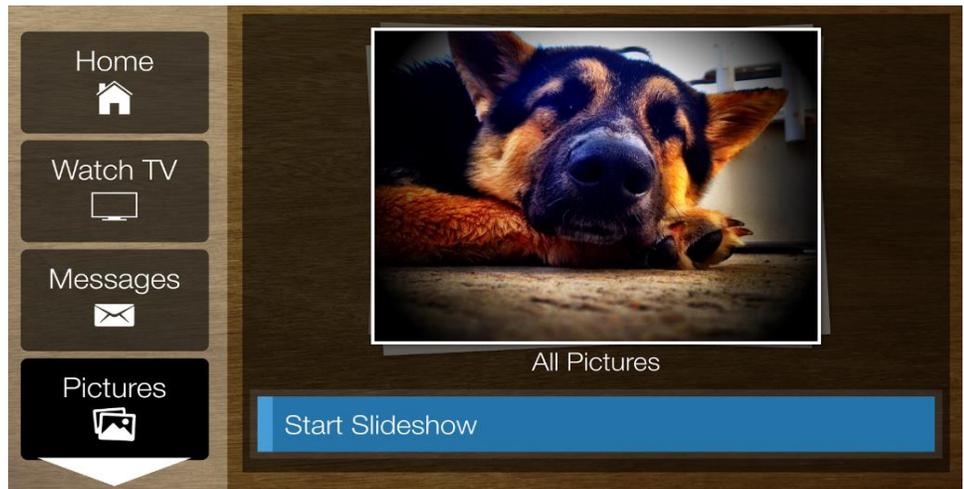
Eighty-four percent cited technology as central to their ability to connect with the world around them. According to Co-Founder and CEO Steve Rusche of [LifeShare Technologies](#), a Senior Housing Forum partner, it was a primary reason his firm developed their communications system – to bring the benefits of internet connectivity and digital infrastructure to seniors and senior living.

Knowing that many seniors are techno-adverse, they wanted to ensure their platform was universally known. So they built out their system from a common variety television, which most seniors already know how to use and have in their own home.

LifeShare's simple-to-use, yet powerful interface, enhances what seniors – whether living in their own homes or a senior community – can access on their TV. Once the LifeShare system is set up, users can, with a click of the remote, watch TV; receive or send messages; obtain, view and share pictures; listen to music; play games; access news; or enjoy faith-based programming.

THE "PICTURES" CHANNEL

Given the importance of photographs to seniors, LifeShare worked to create a robust "Pictures" channel to ensure photos can be received, stored, and presented with ease. A number of impediments to photo viewing have been eliminated. Users do not need to log in, download or upload to view photos. Nor do they need to change from one format to another (such as jpg, png, or pdf), or resize pictures they receive.



And, whether the photo is sent via email or text or uploaded from LifeShare's portal, a copy is stored in its "Pictures" channel where it can be easily browsed manually or, again with a click of a button, viewed as a "slideshow" and displayed automatically.

Because some families prefer to stay in touch and share photos on Facebook, LifeShare makes it possible for users to receive a message anytime a Facebook friend they follow updates his or her wall. In that way, LifeShare users are alerted about new photos from family and friends.

The use of LifeShare Technologies by senior living communities themselves was part of the system's design from its inception in 2011. Staff can control and distribute content with a web login. On TVs in public areas of the community, they can share photos of residents' day-to-day lives and, of course, special occasions as well as display activities schedules, menus, and announcements, which also can be sent directly to residents' rooms.

PERSONAL MEANING

Sometimes the photos displayed take on personal meaning for individual residents and their family members. For example, Wanda, a fairly new resident of a senior community in Evansville, Indiana, and her son Larry had been going together to the local farmer's market for years. This tradition had become less frequent with Wanda's transition into her new living environment and Larry's work responsibilities.

But on a visit to the community, Larry spotted a photo of Wanda and other residents on an outing to the farmer's market. Larry was excited to find out how Wanda liked the trip. But when he got to her room and asked, Wanda looked confused and said she hadn't been to the market this year.

Larry, unaware of such gaps in Wanda's memory, was momentarily taken aback. But he escorted her down the hall to the TV monitor and pulled up the outing photo. It triggered Wanda's memory and eased her mind. Larry and Wanda were then able to reminisce about their own cherished visits over the years to the farmer's market.



This article has been brought to you by [LifeShare Technologies](#) in partnership with [Senior Housing Forum](#).

