

**Q. Is it true that most people using the internet are barely out of college?**

**A.** Yes. 40% of internet users are under the age of 17! 57% of web users are under the age of 34. But 14% of internet users are over the age of 50. In 1993, there were only 90,000 people using the internet. But by 1999, there were 81 million people on the internet, a 90,000% increase. In 1995, only one in four people over 50 owned a computer. Three years later, two out of five (40%) owned a personal computer. Internet usage rose even more dramatically. In 1995, around 18% of 50+ Americans were on the internet, but by 1998, 68% were on the web.

The federal government has developed an extensive list of websites to allow older people to learn more about such key government programs (more) as Medicare and Social Security. One popular location is [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov), which contains background information on Medicare, who can enroll, and who is eligible. You can compare 7,000 nursing homes at the website. The Social Security Administration has created [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov) to help people understand how the income benefit program works.

**Q. Can I use the internet to help me find elderly services in Massachusetts?**

**A.** Absolutely. A new website has been created by the Massachusetts Office of Elder Affairs and Mass Home Care. The site is [www.800AGEInfo.com](http://www.800AGEInfo.com) and it is a toll-free number as well. If you go to this website, you can search for any elderly service in the state. For example, if you enter the keywords "nursing homes," you get a list of 811 alphabetically arranged records across the state. You can also narrow the search using 17 categories, and by the location of programs. You can also download documents like the 59 page "Consumers Guide to Nursing Homes." You can read the "Massachusetts Guide to Health Insurance Choices," which covers Medicare, Medicaid, Medicare supplements, and long-term care insurance. You can also find applications for prescription (more) assistance. The website [www.AGEInfo.com](http://www.AGEInfo.com) also has a page of links to other state and national websites. You can even check up on the latest legislation on Beacon Hill or Capitol Hill, or email your congressman.

This website also doubles as a phone number: 1-800-AGE-INFO. If you call this number, you can be transferred to the local Age Info agency serving your area (known as "Aging Services Access Points"). You can also get health insurance information, prescription drug information, and direction about how to report an elder abuse problem. Whether you use the internet or the phone, 800AGEInfo can help you find exactly the elderly service or info you need.