*P. WRIGHT. **Digital tablet issues for older adults.** Gerontechnology 2014;13(2):306;* doi:10.4017/gt.2014.13.02.169.00   **Purpose**   Digital tablets offer a fast and convenient way for older adults to get online[1]. Prior computer experience is not needed and is not always helpful[2]. This paper explores two issues: What must older adults learn to be independent users? And, how can peer group meetings assist this learning[3,4]?   **Method**   52 members of a UK branch of the University of the Third Age (U3A) expressed interest in digital tablets. At monthly meetings, people brought their iPads or Android tablets and shared experiences. The problems people encountered, and the required changes in the format of meetings, provided answers to the research questions.   **Results & Discussion**   Across the three kinds of knowledge people had to learn (gestures, attention, tasks), the balance of cognitive and motor control challenges varied. (i) Gestures: People easily remembered many finger actions (swiping, tapping, holding, dragging, pinching, stretching), but successful execution could be a problem. Inadvertently touching the screen could result in typing errors or unexpected page changes[5]. For some people, a stylus helped, for others this was merely one more thing they had to learn to control. Helping older adults master gesture control was essential. (ii) Attention: New users of tablets often focused on a small area of the screen (e.g. on the keyboard when typing), and did not notice when helpful completions were offered elsewhere on the screen. They needed to be taught 'looking' skills. (iii) Tasks: Older adults needed to learn both why certain procedural steps were needed (e.g. the subject line in an email) and also how to achieve specific goals (e.g. how to delete items or create folders). Just explaining how-to was not enough to aid task memory. Group meeting: The framework of the monthly meetings had to be modified because the numbers of attendees grew, and also because the diversity of tablets within the group caused confusion and slowed progress. Having a separate Apple group and Android group addressed both issues, although considerable diversity remained within the Android group. Meetings had started with a general discussion of members' achievements and problems, but this often over-ran and was abandoned. Instead meetings began by ensuring newcomers sat beside a more experienced 'buddy' who could help them during the session. Then, everyone in the group worked through a printed handout giving the steps of a short procedure (e.g. bookmarking web pages). Meetings ended with general discussion. These changes increased participant satisfaction with the meetings, although some people left the group when able to do the few activities they wanted, because they felt they had learned enough. A brief summary of each meeting was emailed to group members. Unexpectedly this created 'email only' members, thereby widening group membership. In conclusion, older adults find tablets very useful for internet activities, such as staying in touch with family, but also find there is much to learn before using tablets effectively. This learning can be facilitated by meeting in small, friendly groups when a bite-sized, pedagogic approach is adopted to tablet mastery.

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