

Elder-friendly tech to stay connected during COVID

In today's "Minding Our Elders" column, Carol Bradley Bursack recommends devices that can make things a little easier for seniors and their families during the coronavirus pandemic.

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Dear readers: As we know, COVID-19 infections are particularly threatening for older adults. This has led to distressing choices for families and professionals, the hardest being the need to limit or ban visits with older adults in facilities, and even in their homes.

However, isolating older adults, particularly those living with cognitive challenges such as Alzheimer's disease, can also lead to decline.

This challenge has brought about an intense scramble to develop and market technology that can help families stay connected to their older loved ones virtually. None of these products can replace in-person attention, but they do help.

Since we are now in a (welcome) new year, it seems like a good time to highlight some of the newer and/or most well-received communication products that I've heard about.

Amazon Echo Show: The Echo Show is a success for many caregivers whose older adults have trouble using most face-to-face technology. [With this device, once set up, you can “drop-in” on your older loved one at any time, eliminating their need to answer your call.](#) The best guide that I've read about getting started is on Daily Caring at [https://dailycaring.com/amazon-echo-for-dementia-technology-for-seniors.](https://dailycaring.com/amazon-echo-for-dementia-technology-for-seniors)

Alexa Care Hub: [Alexa Care Hub is a new, free feature in Amazon's Alexa app](#) that provides a way to remotely check on vulnerable people. It also notifies you if they ask for help.

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The RAZ Mobility smartphone: [This smartphone is specifically made for people with cognitive challenges](#), so the simple home screen only shows the preset images of people to call. The confusing technology is hidden. Since the device is always on, the elder simply touches the image of a face and

the call goes through. There's no need to remember how to answer a call. For more information, visit <https://www.razmobility.com/solutions/memory-cellphone>.

ViewClix: This is an enhanced version of an electronic picture frame. [In addition to photos, though, ViewClix accommodates drop-in visits, so it's a multipurpose product.](#) You might want to compare this with Amazon's Echo Show for the features offered. More information can be found at <https://www.viewclix.com/>.

Notes to Brighten: If you like the idea of your older loved one receiving a weekly greeting card from you, but shopping for cards or even remembering to mail them regularly is a problem, you may like this service. [You can personalize cards, but they will take care of choosing, mailing and remembering.](#) No need for you to go out and shop. <https://www.notestobrighten.com>.

Candoo Tech: [This company provides tech support and training geared toward older adults.](#) The live, online lessons cover topics like introductions to tablets, email and Zoom. A questionnaire is used to help decide what skills people need to develop or sharpen. There is also assistance for those with hearing or vision impairment. For more information, visit <https://www.candootech.com>.

That's it for now, but I'll continue to watch for new products. Feel free to drop me a note if you use a helpful product that I haven't mentioned.

Meanwhile, take care of yourselves while you take care of others.