SENIOR IN THE DIGITAL WORLD

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SMARTPHONE – DO YOU NEED IT?

Digital exclusion results in a limited use oft the newest technologies – it can be caused both by limited access to equipment and the inability to use technological advances. This form of exclusion mainly applies to older people, whose professional activity coincided with the times when computers and technologies were not yet such a common tool in work and communication.

Technological development has resulted in transfer of many aspects and forms of social life to the digital space. On the one hand, the latest technologies make it possible to maintain contacts between people, which makes them closer to each other, and on the other hand, it increases the digital generation gap. Currently, access to the Internet is not only a facilitation, but also a condition for full participation in social, cultural and professional life.

The key issue in using the newest technologies in everyday life is having the right display device – for the vast majority of people – a smartphone is the best available choice. The dynamically developing modern technologies cannot be put into a rigid framework such as guides or compendiums – this content quickly changes and becomes obsolete due to numerous changes and improvements introduced almost every day. This situation makes it impossible, for example, to create a textbook, which we will be able to use for novice smartphone users – but there are some general rules which will make it easier to "tame" this device, especially for beginners.

SMARTPHONE – MORE THAN A PHONE

Many older people are probably wondering why they need "smart phones", since they have the phone which they can make all the necessary calls from, and even send text messages. They are already used to properly functioning, portable telephones, so they see no reason to change it.

A smartphone is much more than a mobile phone – it is rather a mini computer that, apart from the obvious functions that ordinary phones have (calls, photos, text messages), offers much more, especially when it's connected to the network. Using a smartphone, we can for example read the latest news, watch movies, learn languages and read books or even make a payment in the store. In addition, it is a portable device, where the only condition for using it is … a charged battery. Of course, you will also need Internet access in most cases.

Currently, there are two main types of smartphones on the market – most of them run Google's Android operating system, a smaller part of them use Apple's IOS software. All smartphones have a large touchscreen that covers almost the entire front surface of the device, an "on and off" button (depending on the model – usually located on the side of the device), as well as, buttons for adjusting the volume.

Here are some helpful tips for novice smartphone users:

1. If you have a smartphone, it is a good idea to buy a protective film or tempered glass that will protect both the screen and the camera from scratches, and also to buy a case that, in the event of a fall, will prevent the device from breaking. Repairing this type of damage can be expensive and often price is even half the value of the device. It is the same in case of water–damaging the device, the reparation can be very expensive – even though companies now offer waterproof phones. When buying a smartphone, you can often buy additional insurance that covers broken display, water–damage or theft.

2. Many older people have problems while using smartphones due to small, poorly visible fonts, if this also applies to you – enter device settings and change font size. The visibility of the font will also increase when you change the brightness of the display – be careful though, because then the battery will discharge faster. In the settings menu, you can also adjust other device parameters to your needs, such as sound, screen background, etc.

3. The smartphone will gain access to the mobile network when we insert a SIM card. You will get a SIM card after signing a contract with the operator, you can also buy a prepaid card, in such a case, do not forget to register it (it is best to do it at the seller immediately after the purchase). Note that there are several sizes of SIM cards, if your device supports a non–standard card size you may need to use an adapter or "break" the card to get the correct size.

4. Each smartphone is equipped with a battery, which is located on the back of the device – in older models it was possible to remove the battery yourself, while in new models only servicemen can remove the battery.

DON'T BE FOOLED – BASIC SAFETY RULES

There is information in the media on how dangerous the Internet is – about virtual crime, hackers, viruses, identity thefts, etc. Some of these chilling stories are true and can effectively prevent many people from using the Internet. You are not completely safe online, just like on the street – but nevertheless you do leave the house. All you need is a little knowledge about the dangers and following a few safety rules to prevent dangerous situations. Below you will find the most important of them.

1. The basis of protection on both smartphones and other devices is the appropriate antivirus program and regular system updates – never ignore antivirus warnings or notifications about system updates.

2. Create a secure password – such password is at least 8 characters long, includes numbers and upper and lower case letters. Do not use your family names, pets' names, or addresses in your password. Do not give your password to anyone, never send it by e-mail, use different passwords for different sites.

3. Do not open attachments and links in e-mail messages from unknown addresses, especially if they contain a pressure to act quickly, unexpected promotions or extremely attractive occasions (e.g. free cinema tickets).

4. Don't give out personal details, passwords, addresses and account numbers online.

5. Avoid connecting to Wi-Fi outside your home, in public places – such networks may not be protected against hacker attacks, if you have already connected to such a network, do not visit "important" websites, e.g. the bank's website.

6. Protect your privacy – pay attention to what you post on the web, change your profile settings so that strangers cannot see your posts.

7. Protect your device – set a PIN, password or pattern to unlock. Do not install poorly rated applications, if you do not use one anymore – remove it immediately.