



Age:	60
Marital status:	Divorced
Children:	Ben (35), John (33) and Claire (30)
Education:	Bachelor's degree in Biotechnology
Job:	Laboratory technologist
Impairment:	Hypoacusis

meet Edward Hodgins...

Edward is a 60-year old man who divorced his wife some ten years ago. He hasn't had any longstanding, stable relationships since. His three children are adults who have their own families, which he visits on a regular basis. He holds a Bachelor's degree in biotechnology, and has worked all his life in the pharmaceutical sector, as a laboratory technologist.

For quite a number of years now, Edward suffers from moderate hearing loss (hypoacusis). Without his hearing aid, he can't understand other people talking in noisy environments, and he has to turn up his TV set very loud in order to make sense of what is being said. Fortunately, his hearing aid alleviates some of the problems he encounters: Edward leads a fairly regular life despite his hearing loss.

technology use

Edward's job doesn't require him to do a lot of work on computers. He works on a desktop PC (Windows XP) both at work and at home, adding up to about 20 h per week. At work, he sends e-mails to his superiors, and does some basic work in Excel and Word.

Edward uses Internet Explorer, because it came with the computer, and Google every few days to search for general information and visit his favorite sites on artistic photography.

He likes his old camera and develops his pictures in his self-made dark room. Although he is no expert at photo editing, he does use basic photo viewing software for storing the digital pictures sent by his children and grandchildren. Very sporadically, he also 'talks' to his grandchildren using instant messaging – if he remembers to start up the instant messaging application on his computer, that is.



Edward uses a standard mobile phone. It is a rather cheap model, with keys that are somewhat larger than standard. Although he always keeps his phone with him, it is not his main means of communication. He mainly uses it in specific situations, for instance to call people when he will be a bit late for appointments, due to traffic. Edward tries to avoid noisy environments (such as public spaces), since he has trouble understanding voices through the phone.

Edward uses no assistive technology on his phone: his main motivations for buying the model he owns were the price tag, and the fact that the phone is quite easy to use, without a lot of bells and whistles. He doesn't like the elaborate, intricate menus in more expensive phones : basic calling will do the trick for him. He doesn't send text messages very often, because he thinks texting is a bit tedious on a phone keyboard, and because he thinks texting is for kids.





problems

Edward doesn't like texting: the predictive text (T9) feature is confusing him and he doesn't know how to turn it off. In any case, texting just takes too long for him. Phones with complete keyboards instead of the numeric keyboard are too expensive, too big, and are too difficult to learn. Elaborate phone functionality is not for an old man like him, he says jocularly.

As for his computer, he doesn't like the sound quality of his computer speakers: they are too small to allow him to use them in a decent way. Other than that, he thinks himself a fairly regular computer user, although he sometimes has trouble finding his way through the various applications – as he has never had any computer training.



needs & wants

- Edward would like to learn how to store other information in the phone, such as dates and appointments, but the navigation is just too complex. Easier to use menus in his phone might inspire Edward to try out more features. He doesn't really know how to do 'all the other stuff', but in the end, he is not really interested.
- If anything, Edward would very much welcome a phone with better sound quality. This would help him a great deal in understanding people in noisy environments. Besides the sound quality, he often can't hear his (quite loud) ringtone. The phone's vibrating is often too subtle to notice, he regularly has to return unanswered calls. So an easy to switch on strong vibration option would serve him well.
- Maybe he could get used to texting, if there were fewer letters per key on his phone (not 'abc' as well as all punctuation under one key)
- Subtitles, especially on news sites on the internet.

last month...

Although there certainly are some shortcomings to his mobile phone, Edward is generally still satisfied with the model he currently owns. Since he would like his phone to have a better quality of sound output, but is reluctant to pay a lot of money for a new phone that is sure to offer only a minor improvement, Edward has tried to couple his phone with his hearing aid. Unfortunately that didn't really work out. The connection only worked occasionally, and there was a very annoying beeping when he tries to couple the devices. Since Edward isn't the most patient technology user, he gave up trying to make the connection after a few tries.