Title:
Computer Courses: Do We Really Need Them?

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Summary:
For Seniors This Does Compute

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courses offered, as they provide skills needed for personal as well as business
acumen.

Community colleges, senior centers, community centers, non-profit organizations,
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Community colleges, senior centers, community centers, non-profit organizations,
high schools, colleges, universities and private for-profit firms all offer
computer courses. Many retails and office supply stores, as well as e-merchants,
offer computer courses by e-book, POD (print on demand), Web-based training and
CD or DVD.

For seniors especially the choice in computer courses is diverse, plentiful and
generally low cost. One of the perks of growing old is the right to become part
of what is fast becoming a commonplace college affiliated organization –
Creative Retirement centers. These are typically cropping up on the campuses of
community colleges and state universities and offer computer courses, discounts
on standard college courses, senior computer centers, events, trips and get

togethers such as meetings, dances and dinners.

The impetus behind these creative retirement facilities and organizations and their computer centers and computer courses was the University of North Carolina and its Asheville campus. The home of the Center for Creative Retirement, UNC Ashville each Memorial Weekend hosts a weekend get-together for seniors or about-to-be-retirees, with a look at the various facilities and housing available locally, the various courses including computer courses offered at the UNC campus club, and a tour of the local area.

The College for Seniors is a program of the North Carolina Center for Creative Retirement, established in 1988. With full access to the resources of the University of North Carolina at Asheville, College for Seniors members keep mentally and physically fit through participation in classes and possibly even teaching a class or two.

College for Seniors draws from members' experiences and professional expertise as well as from the UNCA faculty to offer four terms each year. Courses range from Chaucer to computers, foreign affairs to opera, yoga to history. Held on the UNCA campus and at community locations, courses are non-credit, with no tests or grades, open to all interested adults. Members collaborate with staff to teach, learn, design curricula and arrange special events. Educational travel opportunities are available. Term-renewable registration entitles members to as many courses as schedules permit.

All College for Seniors students are required to be members of the North Carolina Center for Creative Retirement. This membership allows participation in all Center for Creative Retirement programs and provides a UNCA parking permit, a UNCA identification card, and UNCA library privileges. There are no age limits for College for Seniors courses or Center for Creative Retirement membership.

Examples of computer courses offered as part of College for Seniors include a basic Getting Started with Computers course, Advanced Home Computer, Basic e-mail and Internet access, MS Word training, Excel Spreadsheet basics, and Power Point basics. The only prerequisites for the more advanced of these computer courses are knowledge of the keyboard and mouse, and comfort with the use of both. A basic knowledge of either Windows or Macintosh jargon and menu bar items such as filing, editing, viewing and inserting functions. You should also know commands such as copying, cutting and pasting, and standard and formatting toolbars.

For the beginning computer courses, you don't even need these rudimentary understandings, though. The computer starter course assumed you've never used a

computer before, and teaches the senior student how to navigate around the Internet, and how to conduct searches. Windows applications are taught as well in these basic courses. Here the retirees learn how to use word processing to save files, and to create folders. They also learn the basics of sending and receiving e-mail.