

LEARNING MADE EASY



3rd Edition

Facebook®, Twitter, & Instagram®

FOR SENIORS

for
dummies
A Wiley Brand

Keep in touch with
friends and family

Manage privacy and
protect your data

Share photos, albums,
and videos



Marsha Collier

Author of *eBay for Dummies*
and many more Dummies titles



Facebook[®], Twitter[®], and Instagram[®] For Seniors

3rd Edition

by Marsha Collier

for
dummies[®]
A Wiley Brand

Facebook®, Twitter®, and Instagram® For Seniors For Dummies® 3rd Edition

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Introduction

Welcome to the third edition of this book. I'm honored that I have been able to help thousands of people get online and use social media safely. Now you hold this power in your hands, too.

I've been working and playing online since the mid-'80s. I started out using CompuServe from my old Kaypro II with a 300-baud modem. I'd log on to my computer in the evenings when I had some quiet time after work, after my daughter was asleep.

The online world I found through CompuServe had no fancy pages, videos, or even photos. Just phosphor-green text on a tiny screen. The early onliners didn't have any better technology, so we communicated by sending words across the country and around the world. We chatted with each other and joined groups to discuss our hobbies and our families.

Drawing an analogy here, there have been related social communities online for as long as there have been connected computers. Even though kids today may think they invented the current online world, today's social media are just the 21st-century continuation of a community we've known for quite a while.

Many people who were online then (in the early '80s) are still online now. People of a certain age may also (after a long career) want to jump back into the family feeling of an online community. So, even though this book title says *For Seniors*, you should know I don't like that term. This book is for those with experience.

Although a persistent rumor claims that only the youngsters go online, actually online participation is growing faster in people over 50. There are more online users over 40 than under 25. Perhaps these people were so busy living their lives and bringing up their children that they didn't have extra time for themselves then — but they do now. And just as in the '60s or '70s, they don't want to be left out of anything. They want to be smack dab in the middle of the online revolution.

Unfortunately, a lot of what they encounter when they go online is unfamiliar stuff. So (naturally enough) some of the experienced, graying generation experience a feeling of trepidation when it comes to the Internet — most of all, they're a bit unsure about getting on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

I have to say: *Why?* Participating in social media is freeing — and can bring so much into your life! You can't *not* be there! This book will give you the tools to stay safe and find joy sharing on these sites.

I encourage you: Join your extended family, your children, and your friends online. By participating in social media, you'll find many of your old friends. In a world where people don't chat on the phone much anymore, the online arena is the perfect place to connect.

And you will also make *new* friends. I am blessed enough to have met many of my online friends in person. The online world has given me a whole new group of humans that I can call on for advice — or, better yet, go out to brunch with — in the real world.

Twitter is pretty straightforward — once you get the hang of it, you'll be Tweeting like a pro in no time. Instagram is sort of magical. I often browse the photos at any time of day, just to relax. But a website that's as complex as Facebook has many nooks and crannies that can confuse new users (and even experienced ones). Think of this book as a roadmap that can help you find your way around in the social media world, getting just as much or as little as you want from the trip. Unlike an actual paper road map, you won't have to fold it back to its original shape (whew). Just close the book and come back any time you need a question answered.

About This Book

Remember those open-book tests that teachers sprang on you in school? Well, sometimes you may feel like Facebook pop-quizzes you while you're online. Think of *Facebook, Twitter & Instagram For Seniors For Dummies* as your open-book-test cheat sheet with the answers.

You don't have to memorize anything; just keep this book handy and follow along whenever you need to.

With this in mind, I've divided this book into pertinent sections to help you find your answers fast. I'll show you how to

- » Set up your computer for the ultimate online experience.
- » There's a short tutorial on emoji, so you'll understand the meaning of 🤜, 🤚, 🐱 and 😊.
- » Set up a new account on Gmail to handle all your new communication.
- » Join social media by registering to meet old (and new) friends.
- » Post to your friend's Facebook walls and send private messages.
- » Find people you haven't heard from in years and catch up with their lives.
- » See what's going on with your children and grandchildren online — and join the party.
- » Share photos and videos online (or just view ones from your friends).
- » Become a part of a unique community of people!



TIP

Do not reach for your glasses. To protect the privacy of the online community, the screen images (commonly called *screen shots*) that I've used in this book blur private information on purpose. That's to protect the innocent (or not so . . . what the heck, cue the *Dragnet* theme).

Conventions Used in This Book

Anyone born before 1960 grew up in an analog age. Televisions were big, bulky affairs; the first remote controls ca-chunked each time they changed the channel (and they only had four buttons). Families woke up and went to sleep seeing a test pattern. Cameras (the good

ones) were solid, heavy devices, and movie cameras whirred along with a comfortable mechanical hum. Typewriters clacked in a danceable rhythm.

Then life turned digital without anyone's permission — even without folks noticing until it happened. The comfortable mechanical sounds of everyday appliances seemed to go away. Whirring, buzzing, and beeping replaced familiar sounds. Everything got more complex: the button count on my TV remote control went from four to a gazillion! It seems as if everything we use has gotten smaller. The digital camera on my phone looks so small and cheesy that I'm shocked it can take a good picture — but it does. (It takes great ones!) Even the type on a page, it seems, has gotten smaller — which is why my publisher has graciously set this book in a type that will permit you to read something, glance at your computer, and look back again without having to pick your glasses off the top of your head.

Here are a few conventions to look out for as you read this book:

» **Online addresses:** The online location (or address) of a website is called a Uniform Resource Locator (URL). These online addresses — as well as email addresses — appear in a monospace typeface, as follows:

`www.facebook.com`

» **What to type:** When instructions for a task require that you type something on your keyboard, that something appears in **bold** typeface.

» **On-screen buttons with long labels:** When an on-screen button is labeled with a phrase instead of a single word, I put it in title case, like this: Click the Do This Silly Digital Thing Now button. That ought to head off confusion at the pass.

Foolish Assumptions

I'm thinking that you've picked up this book because you heard that the immediate world has jumped online and maybe you feel a little left out. Perhaps you already like to send text messages and think this Twitter thing might be for you? If either of these assumptions is true, this is the right book for you.

Here are some other foolish assumptions I've made about you (I'm famous for my foolish assumptions . . . you too?):

- » You have access to the Internet so you can get online and start to socialize.
- » You have an interest in communicating with people, and you want to find out more about what you can do online — without asking your children.
- » You want tips to help you get online without looking like a newcomer, or *newbie* (the kids call them *noobs*). I can relate. We have a lot in common.
- » You're concerned about maintaining your privacy and staying away from shysters.

Icons Used in This Book

When something in this book is particularly valuable, I go out of my way to make sure that it stands out. In this book, I use the tip icon to mark text that (for one reason or another) *really* needs your attention. An example of this icon:



TIP

Tips save you a lot of time and keep you out of trouble.

Beyond the Book

In addition to the content in this book, you'll find some extra content available at the www.dummies.com website:

» **For the Cheat Sheet for this book, visit** www.dummies.com/ and search for *Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram For Seniors For Dummies 3rd edition cheat sheet*.

» **For updates to this book, click my blog on my website at** www.marshacollier.com.

Like everything else in the world, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram have an ever-changing nature. And for Facebook — because the website is more complex — this is even truer. (That's annoying, isn't it?) These social networking sites are always trying to improve the user experience, but sometimes such changes can be confusing. My job is to arm you with an understanding of basic functions, so you won't be thrown by any minor course corrections on the site's part. Don't look at this book as a deep dive; it's just enough to help you remove your training wheels when you're done. If you hit rough waters, just look up the troublesome item in the book's index.

Most of all, don't get frustrated! Keep reviewing topics before you feel fully comfortable to take the plunge on the sites. Perhaps even start off with baby steps — there's no need to start off with a bang. No one will notice that you're just a beginner.

A persistent piece of Internet lore quotes Albert Einstein as saying, "I never commit to memory anything that can easily be looked up in a book." But nobody seems to know exactly when he said that. No problem. You and I know that books are handy to have around when you're learning new things. I'm all about that. So is this book. Use your highlighter.

Feedback, Please

I'd love to hear from you: your successes and your comments. I'm on Twitter every day as @MarshaCollier (<http://twitter.com/marshacollier>). Feel free to join me on Facebook: I have my personal page, a book fan page, and a community page set up by Facebook with my biography. I love making new friends and will be glad to help you whenever I can.

Contact me at mtalk2marsha@coolebaytools.com or on my site, www.marshacollier.com. I can't always answer each and every question you send. But do know that I promise to read each email and answer when I can.

Visit my blog at <http://mcollier.blogspot.com>, and if you'd like to learn about eBay, check out my website at www.coolebaytools.com. I also wrote *eBay For Seniors For Dummies*, so if you're looking to make a little spare cash, that book will definitely simplify selling (and buying) on eBay for you.

Welcome to the future. It's actually a very fun place.

1 Getting Started with Social Networking

IN THIS PART . . .

Getting yourself ready for the Internet

Connecting to the Internet

All about email and online safety

Speaking the social media language

Sharing in the modern age: acronyms, posts,
photos, and videos

- » Select Hardware to Match Your Needs
- » Know What Options to Look For
- » Shop for Your Device of Choice
- » Browse for a Browser

Chapter **1**

Getting Equipped for the Internet

Don't worry, I'm not going to tell you that you need really fancy equipment to get started online, but you must *have* a computer, tablet, or at the least a smartphone. These days, there are more choices than you can imagine for joining the online social scene. If you're in the market for some technology to get you there, you've got a few choices, which I tell you about in this chapter.

Shopping for a computer or other Internet-capable device can be a dizzying experience. In fact, it's downright confusing. I suggest you go to a store and kick a few tires (or try out a few keyboards) before you make a decision. Also, recognize that your decisions about digital equipment depend on how and where you plan to connect online. Follow my advice in this chapter to evaluate your computer use and find the right source for your equipment.

Along with your hardware of choice and an Internet connection (see Chapter 2), you need just one more item — a software program or app — to interact with online social media sites. In this book, *social media* is considered Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. When you get a computer or tablet, you get an Internet browser for free. A *browser* is the software program that lets you talk to the Internet. An *app*, or application, is a standalone program on mobile devices which you download from Apple’s App Store or Google’s Play Store. They’re like having your own private cyberchauffeur. In this chapter, I also tell you a little about the common browsers and apps that are readily available.

Select Hardware to Match Your Needs

1. I confess, I have two desktop all-in-ones with 27-inch screens, three laptops, two tablets, *and* three smartphones — and I use each one at different locations and for different reasons. You certainly don’t need to have all varieties to participate in social media; simply decide on which types are right for you. Think through the scenarios in this section and see which one matches your plans. Then go find the hardware that fits.
2. If you are one who likes to sit at a desk or table, or wants a regular place to use your computer, you’ll be happy with a desktop variety. Also, if you like to have all the power of today’s computing at your disposal, you might want to get a desktop. *Desktop* computers are larger than their portable cousins.



TIP

You can buy a package that combines a monitor, keyboard, and computer module (which houses the processor that is “the brains”) or pick up an “all-in-one” that combines the requisite parts into one unit.

TECH-LITE ECONOMICAL SOLUTIONS

You may not have the budget, or even want to get involved in technology past your smartphone, but you may find your phone's screen too small. There are options for you, too:

- **Chromebook:** If you prefer laptops, consider a small Chromebook, which you can purchase for under \$200. All you need is a Google account and you can be running the Google Chrome OS immediately. Higher-priced models can include a hard drive for keeping copies of your work. Chromebooks need to be connected to Wi-Fi almost all the time, and the software comes from the cloud.
- **Amazon Fire Tablets:** Although Amazon's tablets run the Amazon OS, you can still install apps from Amazon's Android App Store. So if you have an Android phone, the tablets will be second nature to you. A 10-inch HD version with 32GB of storage is currently about \$140.

These economical devices can fulfill many needs. Search Amazon to find the latest iterations of these devices as well as the latest advances and processes.

3. If you're looking for a computer that will allow you to sit seductively at Starbucks — looking cool — you'll have to get a laptop — or perhaps a tablet. How about if you just want to use the device from *anywhere* in your home other than your desk (say, the kitchen counter)? The major difference between a desktop and a *laptop* (as shown in **Figure 1-1**) is that everything you need is combined in one compact, lightweight package. Also, you'll be able to use your laptop to go online anywhere a wireless (Wi-Fi) connection is available. Wi-Fi readiness is built into all laptops.

Also consider the following if you're leaning toward getting a laptop:

- You'll find that keyboards can get progressively smaller, depending on the size of laptop you buy. So if you have big fingers, be sure to test out the offerings in a store before buying one.
- You'll find smaller monitors on today's laptops, so they can be portable. It somewhat defeats the portability purpose when you have to lug around a 17-inch, 6-pound behemoth. Keep in mind that web browsers allow you to easily increase the size of the text you see (more about that in the task "Browse for a Browser" later in this chapter).

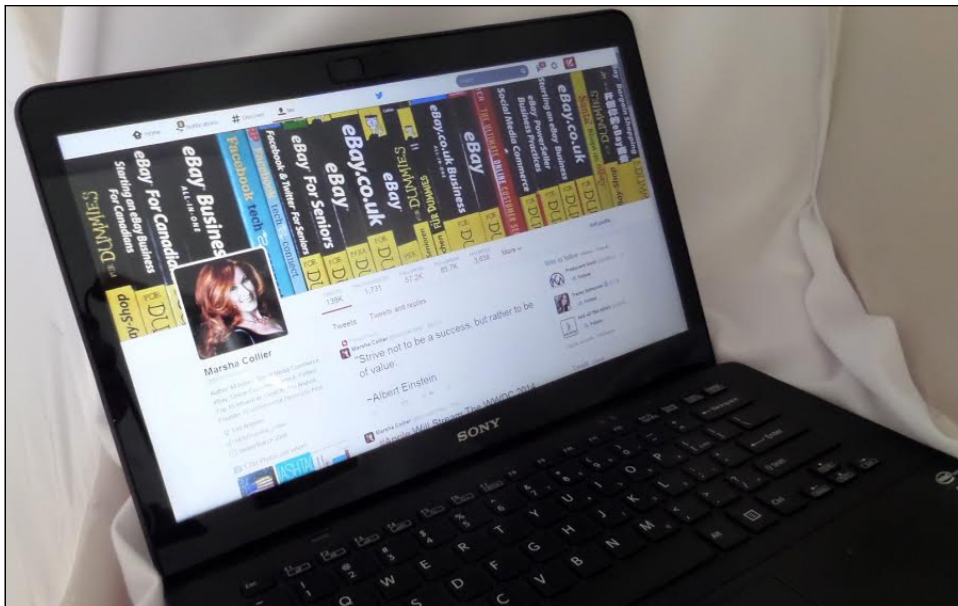


FIGURE 1-1



TIP

I've taken my laptop or sometimes my tablet out by the pool when I'm on vacation, and at home, I sometimes *Tweet* (send a message on Twitter) from my garden. Portability is a wonderful thing.

4. If you're looking for extra portability and convenience, think tablet. *Tablets* are handheld devices that are much smaller than laptops (they generally have 8- or 10-inch screens), you can slip one in a purse or shopping bag, and you can buy one for as little as \$100. They are a great deal: lots of capability in not much space. My 6.4-inch screen smartphone (a Samsung Galaxy Note 9) 8.4-inch screen Huawei MediaPad M3 is shown in **Figure 1-2** next to a 9.7-inch screen iPad Air 2. The Note 9 weighs about 7 ounces, the MediaPad about 11 ounces, and the iPad a pound.

Due to size limitations, there are a few tasks that a smartphone or tablet can't perform, as illustrated in **Table 1-1**.

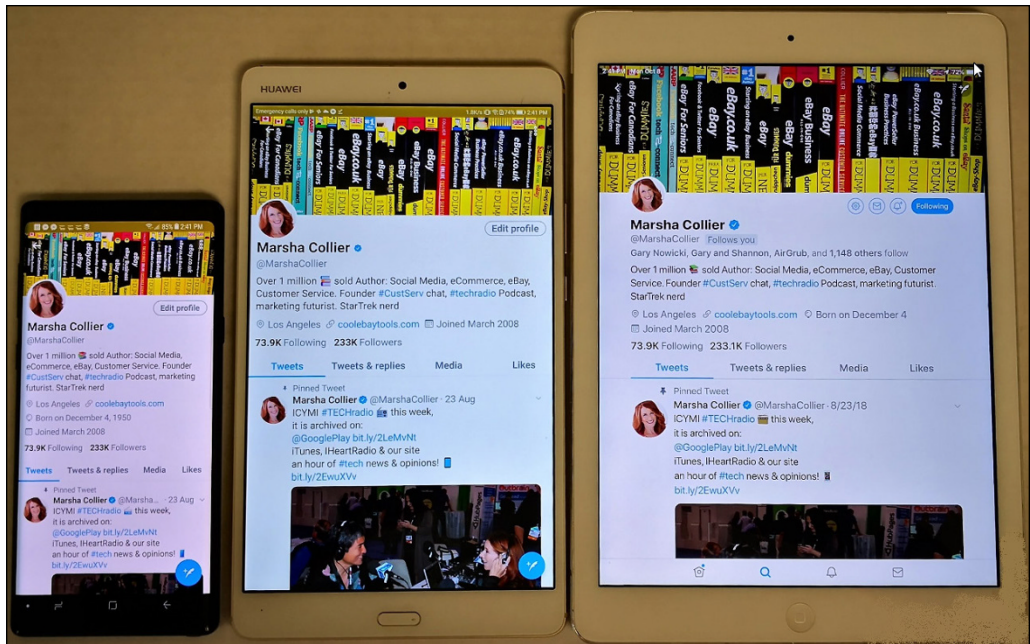


FIGURE 1-2

TABLE 1-1 **What a Laptop and a Tablet Can Do**

Task	Tablet	Laptop
Email, chat, instant messaging	X	X
Social networking, blogging	X	X
Surfing the web	X	X
Streaming audio or video	X	X
Using word processors, spreadsheets, and small business programs	X	X
Capturing live action with a built-in web cam	X	X
Playing games	Via apps	PC games
Editing videos and photos	Light editing only	X
Seamlessly watching HD movies	Depends on the quality of the Wi-Fi connection	X
Running complex software		X

5. If you want to access social media from your pocket, you can also do so from any of the current smartphones. A *smartphone* is a mobile personal computer that fits in your hand, and you can also use it to make phone calls and texts. Smartphones contain mini versions (*apps* just like those you'd use on a tablet) of almost every piece of software you have on your laptop. When your Wi-Fi connection is out, or if you have the need to connect from a restaurant, your mobile provider can connect you. **Figure 1-3** shows my Android phone ready for action.



FIGURE 1-3

Know What Options to Look For

1. Before you purchase one of the different types of equipment I outline in the previous section, think about some of the options you need to look for on any computing device that you plan to use for interacting with your pals on social media.

When it comes to a computer, look for one with a large hard drive. The more time you spend using — and collecting pictures, videos, and other important stuff on — your computer, the more Blob-like your hard drive's contents become. (Remember that 1950s horror movie, *The Blob*, where an alien life form just grows and grows?)

A hard drive with at least 160 gigabytes (GB) of storage space should keep your computer happy, but you can get hard drives as big as a terabyte (TB). You're probably going to be storing photos and videos (yes, you will — I promise), so I suggest that you buy one with the most storage available.

2. One USB port is *never* enough. These days, it seems that every peripheral device you need connects to your computer through a Universal Serial Bus (USB) connection. You may end up with an external hard drive for backup, a mouse, a printer, and a digital camera that you need to connect (so you can download pictures).

Figure 1-4 shows a common peripheral device: a USB flash drive. Make sure that the desktop or laptop computer you get has at *least* two USB ports. You can plug and unplug from these at will or attach a USB hub to one for temporary connections.



FIGURE 1-4

3. Make sure the central processing unit (CPU) is fast. A *CPU* (also known as a *chip*) is your computer's brain. It should be the fastest you can afford. The higher the processor speed is in any device, the faster it processes data. That means less waiting and more time to enjoy what your device can do for you.
4. You must have a keyboard for a computer. No keyboard, no typing. The basic keyboard is fine. You have a basic choice of "clicky" mechanical keyboards (they feel like an old IBM Selectric typewriter) or flatter models that you touch lightly with a tapping motion. Tablets and smartphones put virtual keyboards onscreen, or you can purchase a Bluetooth keyboard for your mobile device. Try them out at a store to see which suits your style.
5. Media-card reader. Your tablet, digital camera, or smartphone may have a memory card in it where it holds all the pictures you take. You may prefer to pop out the card and slip it into your computer than

mess around with connecting cables to archive your photos. If that's your thing, be sure any computer you buy accepts the same type of cards as your mobile devices (and that includes digital cameras).

6. You need a pointing device that moves the pointer around the computer screen; it's usually a *mouse*. Laptops come with touchpads or trackballs designed to do the pointing and give you a quick way to select options by clicking or tapping. I personally find that a mouse is a better choice.



TIP

To save possible pain in your hands, I recommend you use an ergonomic mouse like the Contour Mouse from Contour Design (www.contourdesign.com/product/contour-mouse). I've used one for over a decade (see **Figure 1-5**). The Contour Mouse fits your hand and is available in five different sizes for right and left hands. This mouse reduces or eliminates the grip force required to navigate and click traditional mice, and its sculpted design supports your hand comfortably without the need to clutch the mouse to control it.

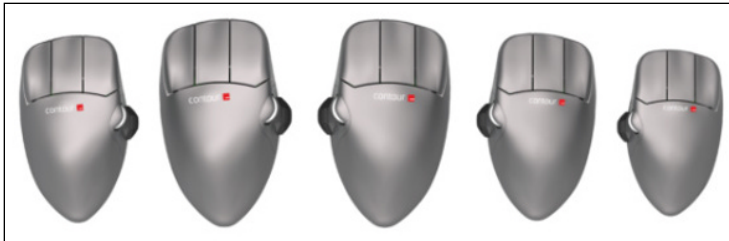


FIGURE 1-5

7. When buying a monitor to go with a desktop computer, size counts! A monitor that has at least a 17-inch screen can make a huge difference in your comfort level after several hours of rabid Tweeting, reading your friends' Facebook posts, or looking at pictures. Anything smaller, and you could have a hard time actually seeing the words and images. The good news: Monitors have become so inexpensive that you can find a 27-inch-or-larger variety for about \$200.