



Technology and entertainment trends in independent living communities

DIRECTV
FOR BUSINESS

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A 2026 survey reveals how seniors are embracing streaming, AI and digital connectivity—helping reshape expectations for the modern resident experience.

Today's independent living residents are more digitally connected, entertainment-focused and technologically engaged than ever before. New independent research^o commissioned by DIRECTV FOR BUSINESS[®] reveals a shift in how independent senior living residents age 64+ use internet services, consume entertainment and adopt emerging technologies like artificial intelligence (AI).

The findings challenge outdated assumptions about senior technology adoption and highlight a growing expectation for robust connectivity, entertainment and digital tools that support both convenience and wellbeing.



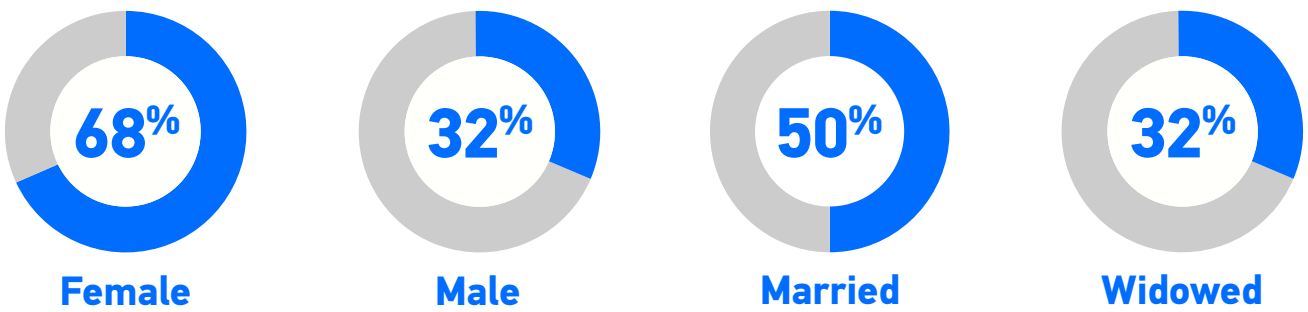
Advanced Entertainment Platform featured. Netflix subscription/login required.



The results paint a clear picture: connectivity is no longer optional—it is *foundational* to resident quality of life.

Today's independent living resident is digitally active

The survey population represented a highly engaged demographic:



All respondents were age **64+**, with half of those surveyed between **80–89**.

Despite assumptions that older generations are less connected and technically challenged, residents reported near-universal internet usage for everyday tasks and communication.

Top online activities among seniors

- 98%** use email
- 90%** conduct web searches
- 79%** shop online
- 73%** manage finances digitally
- 63%** stream content
up 5% since 2024



These findings reinforce that internet access has become an essential tool within independent living communities. Residents are relying on connectivity not only for entertainment, but also for communication, commerce and financial management.

Faster internet is becoming a competitive amenity

While 45% of residents still use the basic internet service provided by their communities, demand for higher speeds is increasing:

18% currently pay to upgrade to faster internet service

38% decline in communities offering internet as a fully included amenity since 2022

This trend creates an important opportunity for community owners and operators. As residents become increasingly reliant on streaming, online shopping, video communication and AI-powered tools, bandwidth expectations are rising accordingly.

Communities that invest in reliable, high-speed internet infrastructure can help align with evolving resident expectations while helping to differentiate themselves in an increasingly competitive market.



Streaming continues to surge among seniors

Streaming adoption among independent senior living residents continues to grow.
According to the survey:

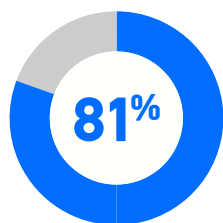
70%

of residents now use
streaming services

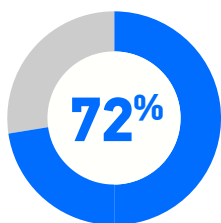
5%

increase in streaming
usage since 2024

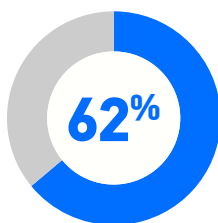
Younger segments of the independent living population
are driving particularly strong adoption:



Ages 70-74



Ages 75-79



Ages 80-84

When asked which streaming platforms they “couldn’t live without,” residents identified these in order of importance:

1. Netflix 2. YouTube 3. Amazon Prime

These preferences reflect a broader shift toward on-demand entertainment experiences that mirror what residents already enjoy at home before transitioning into independent living communities.



DIRECTV's Advanced Entertainment Platform has access to live tv, on demand content and popular streaming apps such as Netflix, Prime Video, Tubi and more.

Netflix and Prime Video subscription/login required.

Residents are willing to pay for better entertainment

Entertainment remains a high-value priority for seniors, and many are willing to pay more for expanded access and premium content. The study found:

37%

receive only basic TV service through their community

44%

pay extra for additional channels or programming

\$42

Average monthly entertainment spend—a **20% increase since 2024**

The most valued programming categories in order of importance include:



1. News



2. Movies



3. Sports

This growing investment demonstrates that residents are actively seeking personalized, robust entertainment options rather than settling for limited, one-size-fits-all packages.



Consider DIRECTV's Bulk Stream product for independent living communities—a property owner-paid service offered at a discounted rate when the community invests in DIRECTV® service for every living unit.



Entertainment plays a meaningful role in wellbeing

Residents engage with content for more than entertainment value alone. For many seniors, programming contributes directly to emotional wellbeing, engagement and lifelong learning.

According to the survey:

57% believe the content they consume is important to their personal wellbeing.

The following entertainment genres were ranked by survey respondents as contributing most significantly to the overall wellbeing:

- News
- Documentaries
- Movies
- Historical programming
- Nature and wildlife content

These findings help reinforce the importance of providing diverse, high-quality programming experiences that can help support both enrichment and engagement within senior living environments.



AI adoption among seniors

One of the most surprising findings from the 2026 study was the level of AI adoption among independent living residents.

57%

report actively using AI tools

27%

use AI multiple times per day

37%

use AI a few times per week

14%

use AI a few times per month



Residents reported using AI primarily for:

- Voice assistants
- Chatbots
- Writing assistance for emails and documents

The strongest area of future interest centers around technical support:

65% want AI tools to help answer technology questions or problems

However, residents also expressed thoughtful concerns surrounding AI adoption:

73%

cited privacy and data security concerns

60%

questioned accuracy and reliability of information

30%

worried about losing human connection

These insights suggest seniors are approaching AI with both curiosity and caution—embracing practical value while remaining mindful of trust and transparency.

What this means for independent living communities

The modern independent living resident is digitally engaged, entertainment-driven and increasingly comfortable with emerging technology. Communities that continue to view connectivity and entertainment as secondary amenities risk falling behind evolving resident expectations.

Key takeaways for community owners and operators include:

- High-speed internet is a core resident expectation
- Streaming access and content matter more than ever
- Entertainment contributes to resident wellbeing
- Seniors are demonstrating meaningful adoption of AI tools
- Technology offerings can play a major role in resident satisfaction and differentiation, and potentially attract new residents

As digital behaviors continue to evolve, independent living communities have an opportunity to create more connected, engaging and future-ready resident experiences through thoughtful investment in entertainment and connectivity infrastructure.

Consider DIRECTV FOR BUSINESS entertainment for independent senior living communities

Independent living senior communities have access to DIRECTV's Bulk Stream product and the DIRECTV FOR BUSINESS Advanced Entertainment Platform, which integrates live TV, on demand content and access to popular streaming apps.

Call us at 1.833.817.8056 for a quote or visit us online for more information.

*Source: Link-age Connect Survey conducted April 2026 with 504 U.S. Independent Living respondents. Availability of DIRECTV service may vary by location. In certain markets, programming/pricing may vary. Hardware and programming available separately. Receipt of DIRECTV programming subject to terms of the DIRECTV Terms of Service. Taxes not included. DIRECTV programming, hardware, pricing, terms and conditions subject to change at any time. ©2026 DIRECTV. DIRECTV and all other DIRECTV marks are trademarks of DIRECTV, LLC. All other marks are the property of their respective owners.