

# Reach The Unreached And Bridge The Digital Divide for Elderly People

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Thailand is encountering an aging society. In 2009, 7.2 million of the 63.4 million Thai population are elderly people (aged 60+) or 11.3%. From the population forecast for 2015 the proportion of elders will be 15.6%, 21.5% in 2025 and will reach 25% in 2033. There is not only an increasingly aged society but there is also a Digital Divide in elderly people. In 2008, the survey results of the National Statistical Office of Thailand showed that of 60.35 million Thai citizens who were at least 60 years old, 106,972 (1.5%) used only a computer and 60,283 (0.8%) used a computer with an internet connection. Most elderly people using computers and the internet were in Bangkok (capital city). The survey outcome, as mentioned above, showed that Thailand was faced with a serious Digital Divide in elderly people - the gap between people with effective access to digital and information technology and those with very limited or no access at all.

From the conclusion of the ICT for All - Academic Seminar on “Using Computers and the Internet to improve the Quality of Life of Elderly People” May 30, 2009, we found many elderly people in Thailand want to learn about computers and the Internet. Many elderly people strive to learn about how to use computers and the internet, such as how to access websites, find information, send/receive e-Mail, how to buy a new computer, select an internet package and entertainment (TV, radio, music online) but they do not have an instructor to teach or offer recommendations to them, or they cannot afford to attend the IT for Seniors class. For this reason we urge all family members of the elderly to teach basic computer and internet skills to their grandmothers or grandfathers, and we call for the government, private sectors, public sectors, academic institutes, universities and schools in local areas to offer free basic training in using computers and the internet to elderly people. This will assist in bridging the Digital Divide and educating elderly people which will lead to the older population improving their quality of life in the world of globalization. We will discuss this at the ICT for All - Symposium on “**Reach The Unreached And Bridge The Digital Divide for Elderly People**” on October 24, 2009, at Conference Room 1, Walailak University, Bangkok campus, SM Tower, Floor19, Phaholyothin rd. Phayathai district, Bangkok Metro, Kingdom of Thailand. Visit us at [www.ictforall.org](http://www.ictforall.org)