



Digital seniors – does landline telephony still make sense?

The question arises for nursing homes whether landline telephony should still be part of a project (or modernization) or not.

In 2020, ProSenectute participated in a comprehensive study on this topic. ([Study «Digital Seniors» \(prosenectute.ch\)](#))

As the study shows, 74% of seniors over 65 are already online. At the same time, the «digital gap», i.e. seniors who are offline, is shifting to the over-80-years-olds.

Two-thirds of seniors are great with smartphones/tablets

The majority of seniors are already in possession of a mobile device, either to ensure their personal safety and to be able to reach their loved ones at any time, to get information online or just for entertainment's sake.

The steadily increasing mobility is also evident among the largest Swiss providers. While Swisscom was able to count 3.7 million landline network connections in 2007, this number had decreased to only 1.52 million by the end of 2020 (Source: [Swisscom achieves goals - strong operating result | Swisscom](#) & [Swisscom: More profit despite decline in fixed network telephony - Blick](#)).

What does this mean when moving into a nursing home?

It's hard to imagine that these seniors will separate from their smartphone or tablet when they move into a nursing home. Nevertheless, when building or modernizing a nursing home, it is important to consider that around 81% of residents have an average

age of over 80. (Source: [Socio-medical institutions: Number of clients by age and gender - 2001-2020 | Table | Swiss Federal Statistical Office \(admin.ch\)](#))

We are thus currently in an intermediate phase in which some residents move in with their own mobile device, while others have not yet had much contact with the online world.



What does SmartLiberty recommend?

The best solution seems to be the implementation of cabling to the rooms via IP. This allows the nursing homes to decide on a situational basis whether to still install a landline.

If the connection is not needed, there are other applications on the market which can be connected to a cloud or server via IP (e.g. TV, Wi-Fi, call systems, access control systems, external sensors, KNX controls, etc.). The installation is therefore not lost but can be used for other things.

A nursing home should therefore try to avoid further expansion of analog cabling.

The baby boomer generation will no longer need landline telephony

This is a risky thesis for sure. Today, seniors still face some issues when it comes to navigating a touch screen. This is due to the composition and thickness of the skin on their hands. Many manufacturers have already recognized this problem, some already offer a couple of solutions, others are still continuing to work at full speed to completely eliminate this problem.

With this generation entering a retirement or nursing home, those will have to ask themselves how all mobile communication can be ensured. One possible solution is the in-house GSM systems that already exist on the market. Please also read our article: [Inhouse-GSM - trend or new must have ?](#)

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«I can't imagine telling my parents one day that they have to leave their smartphone at home when they move into a nursing home – just because the nursing home only offers landline telephony. I can already see the smirk on their face whilst they tell me: 'we are not that old and have been using smart devices for a long time.' It is therefore important to prepare accordingly for a future that is not so far ahead of us. «



Jan Binggeli, CSO SmartLiberty