

Overview: This research aims to understand the community services available for older individuals in the Upper Peninsula (UP) of Michigan and explore opportunities to enhance Taproot Law's engagement with this demographic. The focus is on the aging population, their interaction with technology, and potential improvements to legal services.

Community Services for Older Individuals:

- Senior Centers in Marquette: There are four senior centers in Marquette providing various services, including financial management. However, the county's Aging Services department has mixed reviews.
- Marquette Senior Center: This center serves as a community focal point, offering a range of services and activities to enhance the well-being and independence of older individuals.
- UP Area Agency on Aging (UPAAA): UPAAA provides technical assistance and services to support human and economic development, collaborating with senior centers in the region.

Technology Interaction of Older Individuals:

- Older individuals in the UP are willing to use technology but face challenges with instructions and lack of confidence. Clear instructions and patience are essential for successful adoption.
- Satellite internet is prevalent in rural areas, and the study on tablet usage indicates a positive outlook if technology is introduced effectively.

Taproot Law's Potential Improvements:

- Tech-Based Services: If Taproot Law wants to become tech-based and elderly-friendly, clear instructions and a patient approach are crucial. Considering the independent nature of older individuals, self-help resources may be beneficial.
- Website Accessibility: The website's performance on satellite internet should be evaluated to ensure accessibility for rural users.

Legal Services Accessibility:

- Senior centers and Aging Services offer financial assistance but the extent is unclear. Taproot Law could collaborate with these services and provide brochures for remote legal advice.
- Free legal assistance is available for low-income residents in Michigan, but Taproot Law could explore offering discounted or free services for seniors.

Targeting the Elderly Community:

- Advertising Strategies: Leverage high-traffic areas and nostalgia in advertising to appeal to older individuals.
- Community Involvement: Showcase Taproot Law's involvement in local events and causes to establish trust. Testimonials and case studies can further demonstrate reliability.

Interview Focus

- Interviews with key individuals such as Emily and local residents in Iron Mountain can provide insights into information-seeking behavior, the use of services, and the potential for Taproot Law's enhancements.

Tablet Usage Among Older Adults:

- A study involving novice tablet users (aged 65-76) highlighted their perceptions, barriers, and willingness to adopt technology.
- Barriers included a lack of instructions, knowledge, and confidence, as well as health-related issues and cost concerns. ([PubMed Link](#)).

Hearing Loss Among Older Adults:

- Older adults commonly experience hearing loss, with approximately 50% of men and 30% of women aged 65 facing hearing loss severe enough to inhibit social interaction.
- Hearing-related challenges should be considered in the design of technology and communication strategies for this demographic ([Marquette University Link](#)).

Internet Access in Michigan:

- According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2020), approximately 79% of households in Michigan had a broadband internet subscription.
- Understanding the availability of internet access is crucial when considering technology-based services, ensuring inclusivity, and addressing potential disparities in internet access ([Michigan Department of Education Link](#)).

Implications for Taproot Law

- The design of any technology-based services or communication strategies we should consider the potential barriers highlighted in the tablet usage study.
- For effective outreach, the firm should be mindful of potential hearing-related challenges among the older demographic.
- Understanding the internet access landscape in Michigan helps in strategizing how digital services can be effectively delivered to the target audience.

SOURCES

- <https://www.marquettemi.gov/departments/community-services/senior-center/>
- <http://upcap.org/program/u-p-area-agency-on-aging-upaaa/>
- [4% of Michigan homes lack Internet, Census says - mlive.com](#)
- <https://www.uppermichiganssource.com/>
- https://www.co.marquette.mi.us/departments/aging_services/index.php
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