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***CENTER FOR TECHNOLOGY AND AGING EXPERT PANEL  
IDENTIFIES HOW OLDER AMERICANS CAN USE TECHNOLOGY TO ENHANCE SOCIAL ACTION***

**OAKLAND**, CA, June 3, 2010 – As Americans face continuing economic, social and health-related challenges, some observers believe the voices of older Americans may be drowned out unless they strengthen their organizing efforts through adoption of social networking and communication technologies.

The relationship between social action, technology and older Americans was the subject of a recent expert panel convened by the [Center for Technology and Aging](#) on behalf of [The SCAN Foundation](#). The panel's insights have been published in a [new report](#), "Enhancing Social Action for Older Adults Through Technology," available on [The SCAN Foundation's Web site](#).

"Older adults have not used today's information, communication or social networking technologies to the extent of Gen Xers and Millennials," said David Lindeman, PhD, executive director of The Center for Technology and Aging. "We asked the panelists to identify what kinds of tools and techniques are now available, but not necessarily used for advocacy, and how can these be used to disrupt the status quo on behalf of the issues facing older adults."

According to the expert panel, older adults will adopt new technologies in more significant numbers if the technology is:

- Easy to use
- Provides an enjoyable and personalized experience

- Connected to the “cloud” (e.g. the Internet) and its wealth of resources
- Appropriate for individuals with physical or cognitive considerations
- Endorsed and encouraged by respected local community organizers

“Older adults have been politically active but have not realized the potential of using social networking tools and other technology to advocate for their issues,” said Bruce Chernof, MD, president and CEO of The SCAN Foundation. “Information and communication technologies have become essential tools for social action, so unless older adults have access to and embrace these tools, their voices will be muted.”

The report includes a discussion of specific technology trends, as well as user and public policy considerations that shape how technology might be adopted by older adults to enhance their capacity to more effectively give a voice and face to critical social issues affecting them.

Some technology factors affecting adoption for social action include:

- Current technology facilitates recruitment, mobilization and increased efforts in engagement
- Data analytics and assistance with filtering of content as a means of prioritization for seniors
- Platform advances (e.g., iPad, video, SMS, social networking, etc.) stimulate technology use
- Increased connectivity, data integration and user interface trends strongly influence adoption

Additional “user considerations” influencing older adults’ use of technology for political advocacy include adapting both physical devices and software applications (usually designed for younger users) to the needs of older adults, taking into account older adults’ needs and wants in using technology for social action, and assuring the privacy of information.

Policy considerations shaping the environment affecting technology adoption for social action noted in the report include expanding broadband and mobile access, encouraging innovation through standards and market regulations, assuring privacy protection and accountability for data safety, and facilitating coalition building among competing technology and software providers.

The report also profiles five technology and social action case studies: Campaign for Better Care ([www.campaignforbettercare.org](http://www.campaignforbettercare.org)); Elder Justice Now Campaign ([www.elderjusticenow.org](http://www.elderjusticenow.org)), Social Actions website ([www.socialactions.org](http://www.socialactions.org)), Florida Teachers Against Senate Bill 6, and Obama for America, the president’s new media campaign strategy ([www.myobama.com](http://www.myobama.com)).

The expert panelists were:

- Richard Adler, Research Affiliate, Institute for the Future
- Molly J. Coye, MD, MPH, (Moderator), Senior Advisor, Public Health Institute
- Tyrone Grandison, Program Manager for Core Healthcare Services, Healthcare Transformation Group, IBM Services Research
- Evonne Heyning, Interactive Producer, TechSoup Global
- Rey Muradaz, Founder, Interactive Aging Network
- Paola Tonelli, Executive in Residence, UC Berkeley's Center for Entrepreneurship and Technology
- Cecili Thompson Williams, Outreach Director, Campaign for Better Care at the National Partnership for Women & Families

The Center for Technology and Aging ([www.techandaging.org](http://www.techandaging.org)) supports more rapid adoption and diffusion of technologies that enhance independence and improve home and community-based care for older adults. Through grants, research, public policy involvement and development of practical tools and best practice guidelines, the Center serves as an independent, non-profit resource for improving the quality and cost-effectiveness of long-term care services. The Center was established with funding from The SCAN Foundation ([www.thescanfoundation.org](http://www.thescanfoundation.org)) and is affiliated with the Public Health Institute ([www.phi.org](http://www.phi.org)) in Oakland, CA.

The SCAN Foundation is an independent nonprofit foundation dedicated to advancing the development of a sustainable continuum of quality care for seniors that integrates medical treatment and human services in the settings most appropriate to their needs and with the greatest likelihood of a healthy, independent life. The SCAN Foundation supports programs that stimulate public engagement, develop realistic public policy and financing options, and disseminate promising care models and technologies. For more information about The SCAN Foundation, visit [www.thescanfoundation.org](http://www.thescanfoundation.org).