

Activists show seniors how to log on, stay connected

Barney Henderson
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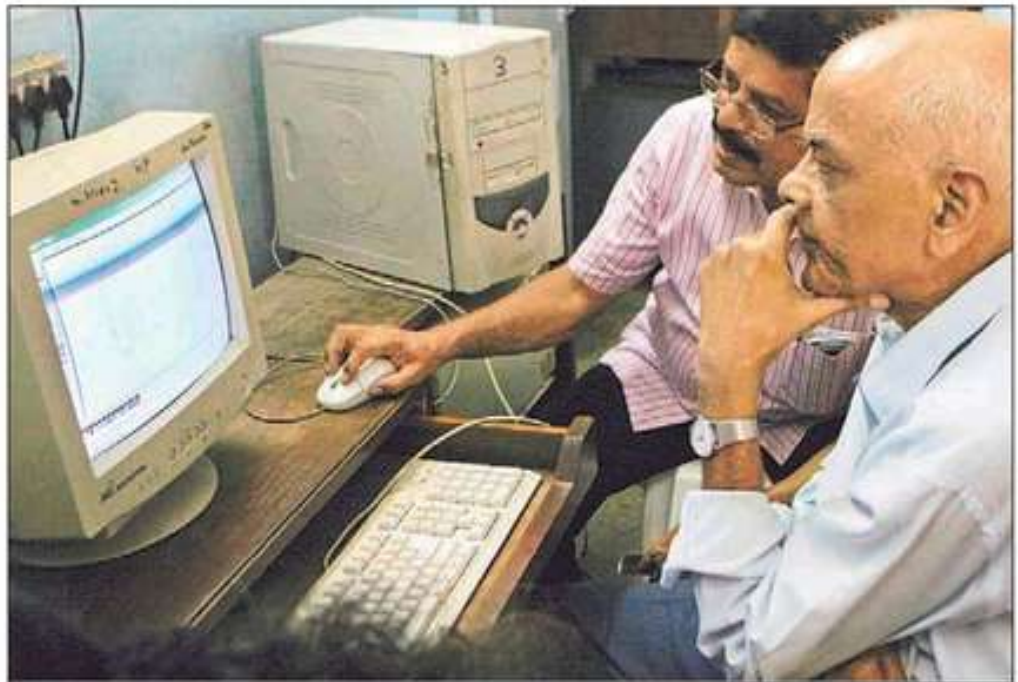
THE ODD phone calls to his grandson in the US were not enough to satisfy 69-year-old B. Satyanarayana. In this age of instant communication, the senior citizen — who had never touched a computer until two months ago — longed for more.

And a pilot training programme in computer and the Internet for seniors not only fulfilled his dream but also opened the window for a whole new world.

From complete novices at the start of the course — when they thought a mouse was a furry rodent rather than the key to the digital highway — 60 seniors can now create word documents, perform Google searches and send e-mails.

“I was frightened to even touch a computer and did not want to join a computer class with young people. This course has been wonderful and given me huge confidence and freedom. I am now sending e-mails and communicating all the time with my five-year-old grandson,” said Satyanarayana, who has travelled four hours, three times a week for two months from Navi Mumbai to Lower Parel for the course.

The pilot training project was organised by senior citizens’ NGO, Silver Innings, and computer edu-



PUNEET CHANDHOK/HT

A senior citizen attends a class at Sterlite Foundation in Lower Parel.

cation NGO, Sterlite Foundation. Following the success of the project, the senior citizens’ course will be offered at 12 Sterlite training centres across Mumbai and Navi Mumbai from November 4.

The aim of the project is to connect seniors to family members overseas, bring them together with an online community and give them access to the Internet so they can find medical information, order a book or reserve train tickets.

A social networking site is being created for graduates from the

course so that they can stay in touch with the others, and a blog site is also being built for them to share experiences.

“Loneliness is one of the biggest issues for seniors, so by teaching them how to use the computer and the Internet, we hope to give them a new way of communicating with their families abroad and with each other,” said Sailesh Mishra, founder president of Silver Innings.

(For details, call Silver Innings on 9987104233)