Georgia Tech "Elizabeth and Stan" Team Solution - viewSimple

Image: Illustration of a smartphone on a white surface, with "foot" at top edge to raise it off the surface.

ViewSimple is a touchscreen smartphone shaped to make it to be easy to hold, pick up from a table, or pull from a pocket. Large controls high-contrast markings make operations simple. A built-in MediHelp application helps manage daily medication schedules and refills, as well as contacts and appointments with physicians.

Persona Elizabeth & Stan:

Elizabeth is 84 years old, and her husband Stan is 87. Both struggle with deteriorating vision, hearing, and mobility as they age. Two years ago, their children convinced them to move to an apartment close by, to make it easier for the family to get together and to help manage daily living, complex medications, and increasing visits to doctors and therapists. The family also convinced Elizabeth and Stan to carry "Jitterbug" cell phones, so everyone could stay in touch anytime, wherever they are. Now the family is urging Elizabeth and Stan to upgrade to smartphones, citing advantages of Facebook access and text messaging to keep up with the grandchildren.

Even more important to the family, though, is using smartphones as reminders for medications, appointments, paying bills, and keeping their complex medical histories up to date and handy. Elizabeth and Stan admit that all of these tasks are becoming difficult for them, but they're just now getting used to their Jitterbug phones. They feel that their everyday lives are complicated enough without introducing even more complicated technology.

The challenges that Elizabeth and Stan face in using wireless technology are shared by many elders, including some still in the workforce as part-time workers or volunteers. These customers favor technologies that emphasize their abilities, not their limitations. Some opt for high-end smartphones for just this reason. But without the life experience with wireless technologies that younger users enjoy, these customers struggle to understand and take advantage of the capabilities of these devices. Searching for help, they find product manuals and technical support staff of carriers and manufacturers are instead additional sources of frustration.

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