


 The logo for 'Aging Engaged' features the words 'Aging' and 'Engaged' in a stylized, serif font. The 'A' in 'Aging' is large and decorative, and the 'E' in 'Engaged' is also large and decorative. The background of the logo is a horizontal band of a sunset or sunrise sky with warm orange and yellow tones.


Brother Francis Deibel, SM

Praise God! Five to six hours each day at the computer may sound like a nightmare for some people, but for Marianist Brother Francis Deibel, "it's just great, praise God!" And if that surprises you, consider this: Brother Frank, as he prefers to be called, is 101 years of age.

Research is showing that computer use among elders is growing by leaps and bounds. Just recently, the Pew Internet and American Life Project found that internet use among 70-75 year olds increased from 26% to 45% in the past four years. Clearly, the notion that elders are fearful of technology is an age-related stereotype.

For 48 years, Brother Frank ministered as a librarian at the University of Dayton. Now a resident at Mercy Siena in Dayton, he continues to be a source of information for people, corresponding regularly with over 100 contacts using email. "I'm not very original," he said, "so I usually just send along things that I find of interest: news articles, pictures, whatever I think they might like to know about." It's clear that he knows his way around the technical terminology of "contact lists,"

"attachments," and "forwarding protocols." "Of my 100 contacts, I'd say that I get replies pretty regularly from about 25 people every day." That's a social network worth celebrating.

Daily contact with friends and colleagues on the internet keeps Brother Frank busy, but it was obvious during the interview that he's not just hiding behind a screen all day. "Do you know Brother Norbert?" he asked me. "He died this morning. He was a good friend." In the moments of silence that followed, I was moved by the deep sense of community that he values in his life.

"You know", he mused, "I never asked for this, to be 101, but, praise God, I feel fine, and I thank God for my life. I enjoy being in touch with people; I go outside for walks every day; I go to Chapel for Mass; I have a computer in my room. Everything's all set."

When asked what he'd like to say to our readers, he paused, then offered, "Don't be afraid of the computer. It's the same as using a typewriter. Older people know how to do that. So they can use a computer too. It has changed my life."

What better rejoinder than "Praise God!"