

Geekatoo Pilot Final Report

Front Porch Center for Innovation and Wellbeing

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Executive Summary

During the month of October 2015, the Front Porch Center for Innovation and Wellbeing (FPCIW) evaluated Geekatoo (www.geekatoo.com) at Vista del Monte (VDM). Geekatoo is a nationwide network of local technicians, or “Geeks”, who assist users with various technology troubleshooting and education. Geekatoo also conducts compulsory background and criminal checks of its Geeks, and provides specialized training to help its team tailor their services to the unique needs of older adults and retirement communities.

In this pilot, FPCIW assessed the impact of the Geekatoo services on VDM’s community residents, and to evaluate the company to potentially service other Front Porch communities. The aims of the pilot were to:

- Determine if Geekatoo is a cost-effective and quality solution for residents’ technical support issues
- Assess the Geeks’ abilities to successfully address issues and interact with the residents
- Evaluate the sustainability of the service at the community and explore possible scaling to other FP communities.

Here is a summary of the pilot’s outcomes:

- There were a total 72 in-person sessions provided by the Geeks. These encounters included in-home visits, drop-in office hours, and group workshops.
- A total of 19 calls were handled by the remote support call line. Out of 19, the Geek agents completed 1 remote support session.
- 39 unique individuals received in-home visit services averaging one hour
- 17 attended drop-in hours, and 30 attended one of two 1-hour long workshops.
- The average satisfaction rate for Geekatoo service was 4.5 out of 5.0.
- 92% of the residents who used the service indicated they would recommend Geekatoo.
- 75% of the residents who used the service said they were likely to use Geekatoo again for technical support or tutorials.

Despite a few shortcomings with respect to Geek trainings and quality assurance protocols, VDM staff believe that Geekatoo provides a safe, affordable, and high-quality service that makes the company qualified to provide Front Porch residents with technical support and services.

Acknowledgements

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Project Summary

Geekatoo provides technical support services (i.e. in-home computer repair, troubleshooting, and training) to its customers through either an annual or month-to-month contract for individual users. Geekatoo also offers a special community package of services including training classes and one-on-one technology tutoring, through subcontracted technicians or "Geeks", designed to specifically meet the needs of retirement communities and their residents.

During the month of October 2015, FPCIW piloted Geekatoo (www.geekatoo.com) at VDM. The main goal of the pilot was to determine if Geekatoo can be a viable, cost-efficient and quality community-wide tech support and training solution for VDM residents. While some technical support has been available through VDM staff members and occasional volunteer help, the demand for these support services has been significantly increasing beyond the community's capacity to handle the requests, given the growing adoption and interest in technology and mobile devices among residents.

During the pilot, Geekatoo provided services in the following ways:

- One or two Geeks held 1-2 onsite drop-in/office hours per week to provide one-on-one tutorials and to troubleshoot mobile devices;
- One 1-hour in-home visit per resident for a single technical issue (e.g. setting up, configuring, tutoring, or troubleshooting a device);
- Two 1-hour community-wide workshops on selected topics; and
- Unlimited 24/7 remote support calls.

Methods

Two types of surveys were collected from residents:

- Baseline surveys were collected before the pilot, to assess and measure technological skill/knowledge of residents;
- Experience tracking surveys completed after each Geekatoo service (in-home, drop-in, workshops) was completed.

Demographics

During the month of the pilot, the Geekatoo service was only available to all VDM residents, which amounted to a population of 151 residents.

Geekatoo Technicians: “Geeks”

In anticipation of Geeks entering resident homes to provide technical support visits, the technicians were required to abide to Front Porch guidelines similar to those outlined for private caregivers. Geeks were thus mandated to complete and pass a TB test, a drug and alcohol test, and criminal background check before they could provide in-home services to residents. All Geeks completed and passed these background checks, but the turnaround time varied among the 4 Geeks who served in the pilot, taking between 3 to 7 days.

Geekatoo caters its services to an older adult population, and thus its staff are specially screened through interviews and further provided with trainings on how to interact with older adult customers. Geeks were required to pass a short test created by Geekatoo; however, this formal training had not been included in the original contract and therefore did not take place until about three weeks into the pilot only after FPCIW inquired and requested confirmation.

Project Findings

Baseline Survey Analysis

Baseline surveys were distributed one week prior to the start of the pilot to assess the VDM residents’ knowledge of and attitudes toward technology. A total of 56 VDM residents participated in the baseline survey. 75% of the participants were female, and 25% male. The average age of the participants was 85. Some highlights from the baseline survey results follow:

- 51% of the respondents owned desktop computers; 36% owned laptop computers; 31% owned tablets/iPads.
 - o Of the participants who indicated they own computer devices, 60% replied they used the device several times a day.
- The majority (72%) of the respondents preferred 1-on-1 learning.
- 67% of the respondents often needed some technical support with electronic devices.
- 38% of the respondents stated that they did not have access to computer technical support when they needed it.
- Popular workshop topics the residents were interested in learning included Facebook, iPad, photo album and folder management, Google Maps, email, and Amazon shopping.

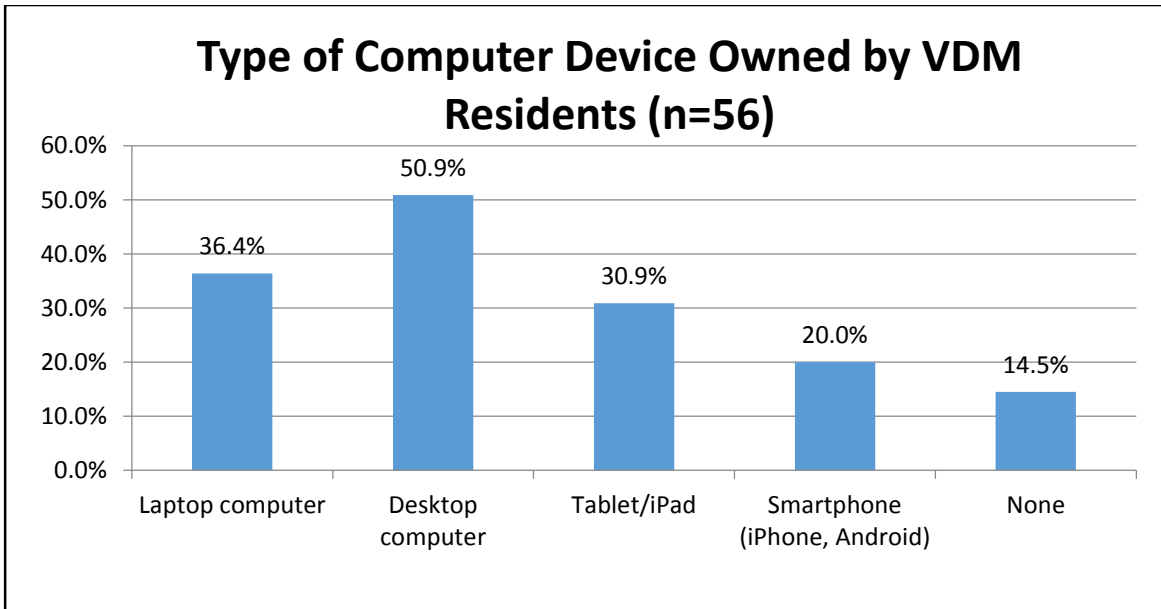


Figure 1. Type of computers the participants own.

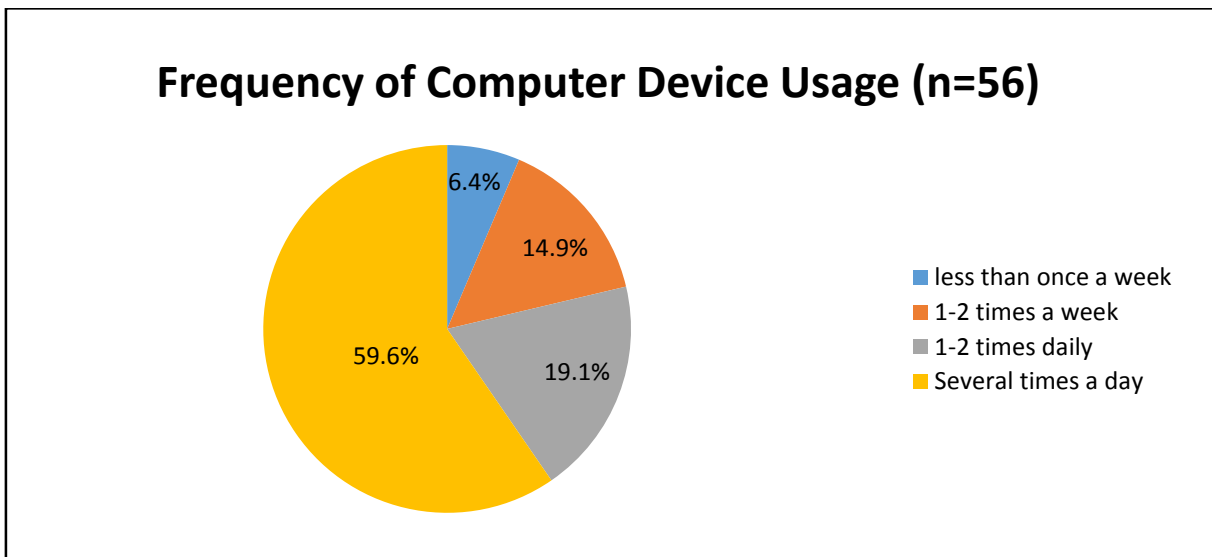


Figure 2. Frequency of using the computer devices if owned.

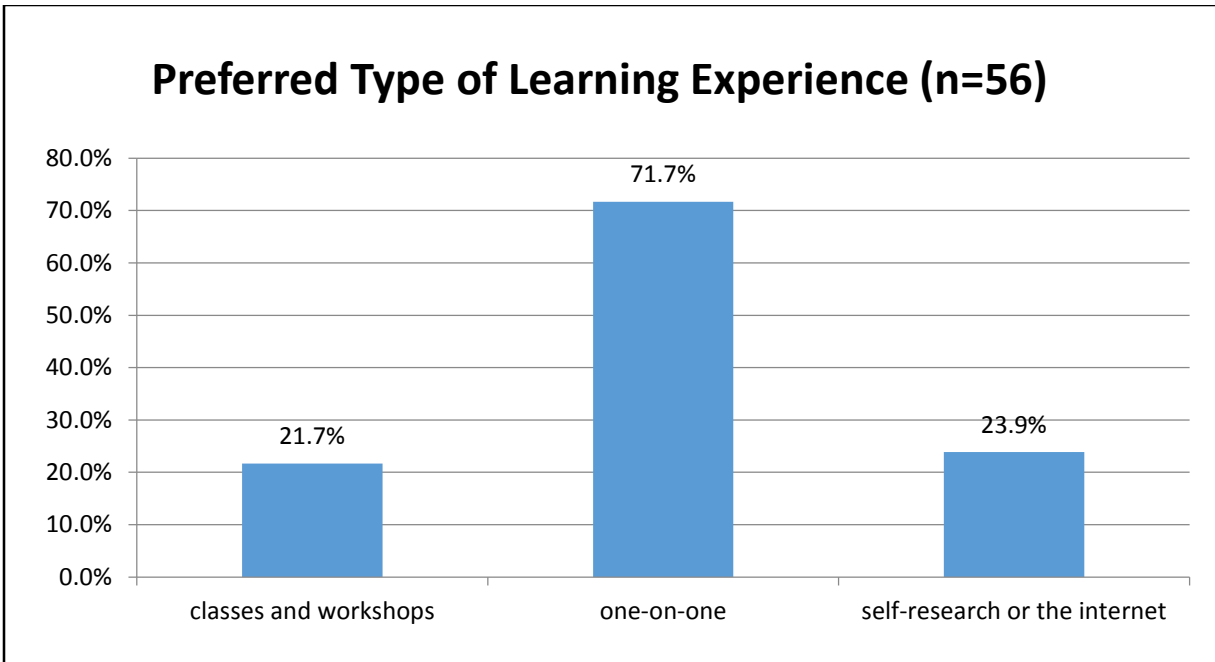


Figure 3. Preferred type of learning experience for computer devices.

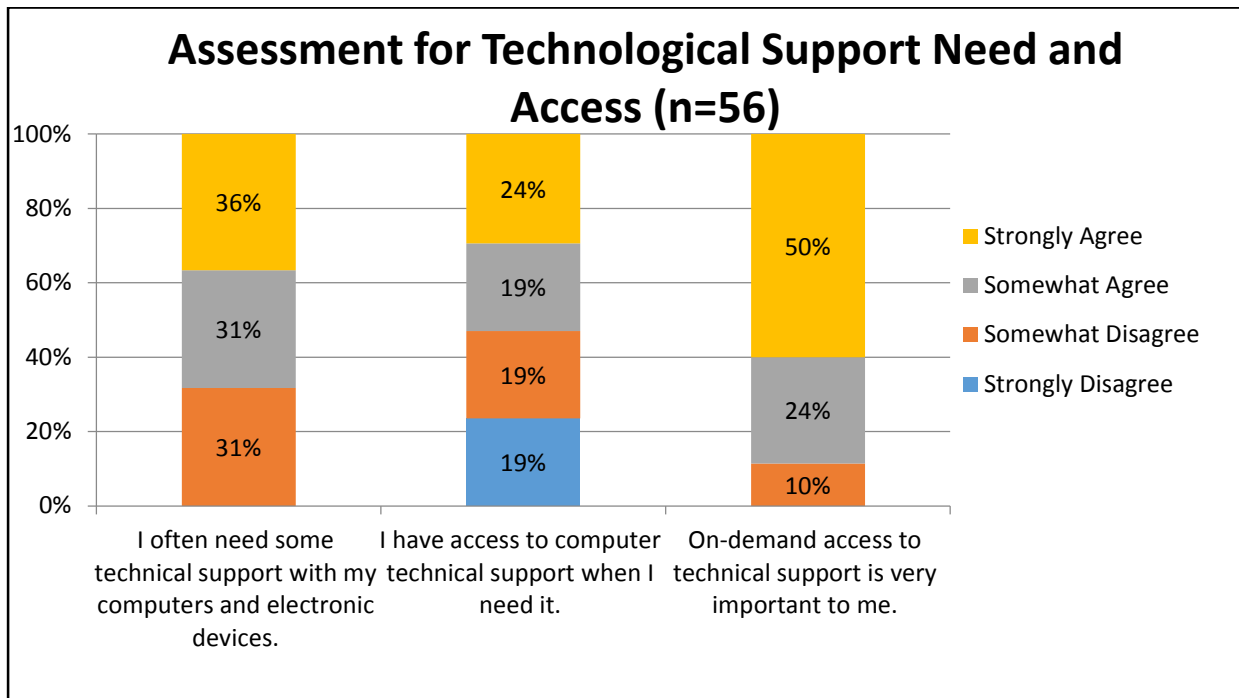


Figure 4. Assessment of technological support need and access.

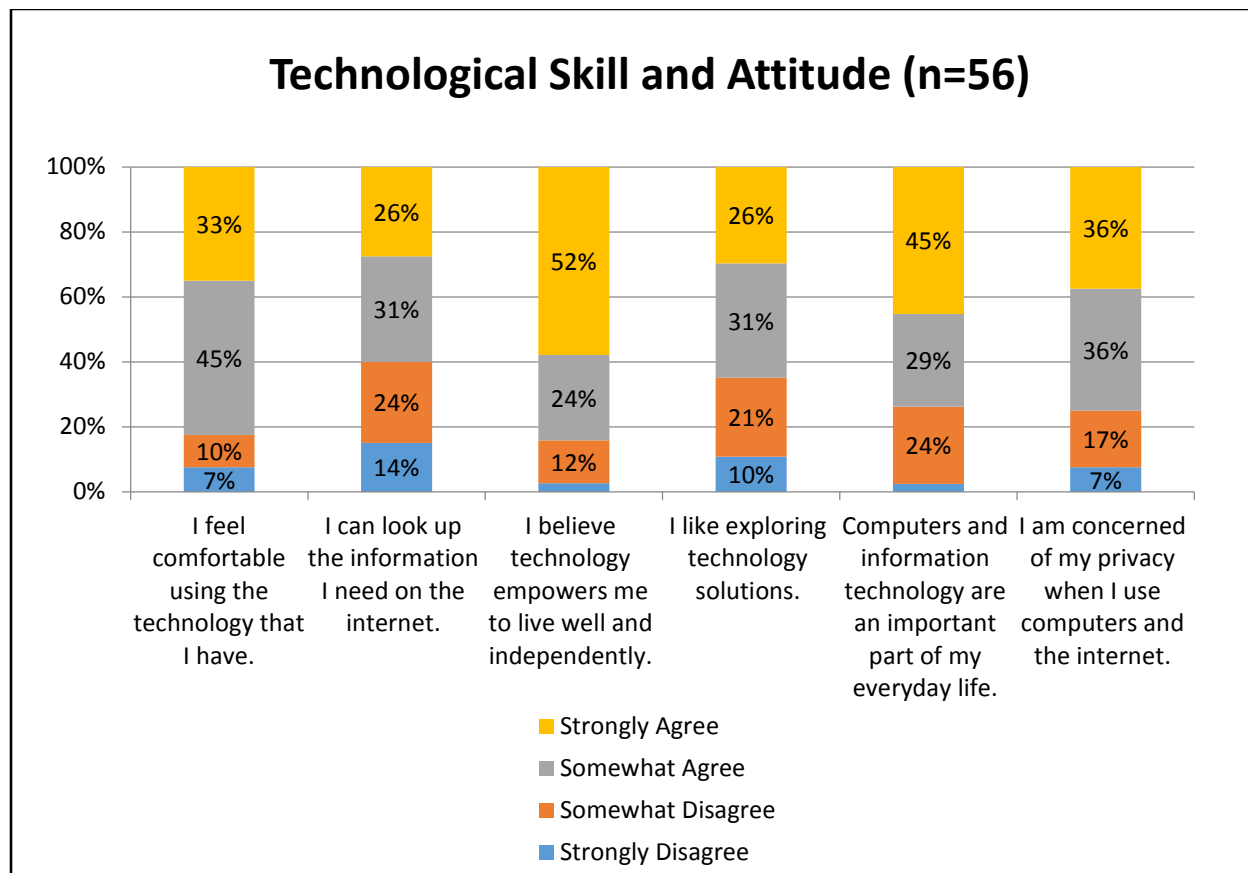


Figure 5. Assessment of the residents’ technological skills and attitudes toward technology.

Experience Tracking Survey Analysis

There were 5 questions in the follow-up Experience Tracking survey that examined the resident level of satisfaction with the in-home visits, drop-in hours, and workshops provided by Geekatoo. These surveys were developed by Geekatoo, and FPCIW and VDM staff were responsible for distributing and collecting these surveys. Following are some highlights from the results (Figure 6-11):

- Out of 72 residents who completed the surveys, 43% of the residents agreed that the service exceeded their expectation; 57% of the residents said the service met their expectation; 3% (2 residents) said it did not meet his/her expectation (Figure 7).
 - o Out of the 2 residents who indicated the service did not meet expectations, 1 resident commented that the issue was resolved during the follow-up call after the in-home visit. The other resident stated that the Geek she interacted with was not so knowledgeable with iPads.
- 95% of the survey participants (Figure 8) rated the service as either “excellent” or “good” (average 4.54 out of 5.00).
- 77% of the survey participants (Figure 9) expressed their interest in returning for more technical support (average 4.36 out of 5.00 for the likeliness to return).

- 74% of the survey participants (Figure 10) indicated they were likely to return for technical training or tutorials (average 4.34 out of 5.00 for the likeliness to return).
- 93% of the survey participants (Figure 11) were willing to recommend Geekatoo to others.

These aggregated data outcomes closely reflect a similar distribution of results for each of the three services in the experience tracking surveys (in-home visits, drop-in hours, and workshops).

1) In-Home service visits

All residents were eligible for one in-home visit service from Geekatoo. Geeks completed a total of 44 in-home visits, and 5 residents requested an additional visit. These in-home visits addressed technical issues (setting up, configuring, and/or troubleshooting a device), with each visit averaging an hour. Many residents required tutorials during their in-home visits. Some of the popular issues addressed included wi-fi troubleshooting, email configuration, and printer setup. For tutorials, popular topics included photo organization, iPad tutorials, and email tutorials.

In-home visits were the most utilized service among all types of sessions provided by Geekatoo (see Figure 6 for total sessions given). This result is consistent with the baseline survey analysis, which indicated residents preferring one-on-one tutorials to other forms of learning experiences.

Residents signed up for in-home visits through the front desk. They filled out request forms (created by VDM staff) with their general availabilities, which were manually inputted into a shared Google sheet by a VDM staff. The appointments were set up by Geekatoo, and Geeks gave out reminders 1-2 days before the appointments.

No resident who completed a survey stated that s/he would not recommend Geekatoo for technical services. One resident stated she did not want to return to Geekatoo; according to her survey response, however, the Geek who visited this resident was able to resolve all the technical issues the resident needed help with, and she therefore did not need a Geek to return for additional services. Additionally, one resident recommended that the Geeks create a step-by-step process or diagram for any tutorials—which was a recommendation that was also suggested by FPCIW, yet Geekatoo cited limited time availabilities for Geeks to record and provide such information to be left with residents.

About 10 residents commented in the feedback section of the survey to compliment the Geeks who visited their homes, and requested the same Geek to continue to provide future services. Two residents stated that they would like to know the fee to continue to receive the services.

2) Community workshops/classes

Community workshops were held in the library and were open to any resident who was interested. The two topics were chosen based on popular learning interest from the community: Facebook and iPad. The instructors from Geekatoo prepared their own lessons and came to the workshops with devices/equipment necessary for the workshops. The attendees were able to freely ask questions during the workshops, and instructors responded to them promptly.

Workshops were promoted by flyers and community board slides. The attendance was high and many unique individuals were served during the workshops (see Figure 6 for total sessions given). We found high levels of engagement and interest among residents, and believe that these two 1-hour workshops sufficiently provided basic and general discussions of technology.

In survey responses to the workshops, two residents stated they had a hard time hearing the presenter. This issue was addressed at the second workshop, where the presenter took advantage of the microphone and PA system.

3) Drop-in sessions

Office hours were held in the library to provide one-on-one tutorials, and to assist with troubleshooting and/or configuring mobile devices. About 10 residents returned for this service even after their initial visit and benefited from the service (refer to Figure 6 for total sessions given). Some residents were able to stay longer than the designated time (20-30 minutes) if no other residents were scheduled after him/her. Four residents who requested additional in-home visit services were directed to drop-in hours. For the first three weeks of the pilot these drop-in sessions lasted for 20 minutes per resident. The sessions were extended to 30 minutes for the last two weeks to better serve the residents, which seemed to be more effective and complete in addressing their questions.

Residents signed up for office hour slots at the front desk on a first-come, first-served basis. Reminder calls were made by a CIW staff on the day of the appointments.

Feedback on the drop-in hours was generally positive; the residents all agreed that the drop-in services were much needed in the community.

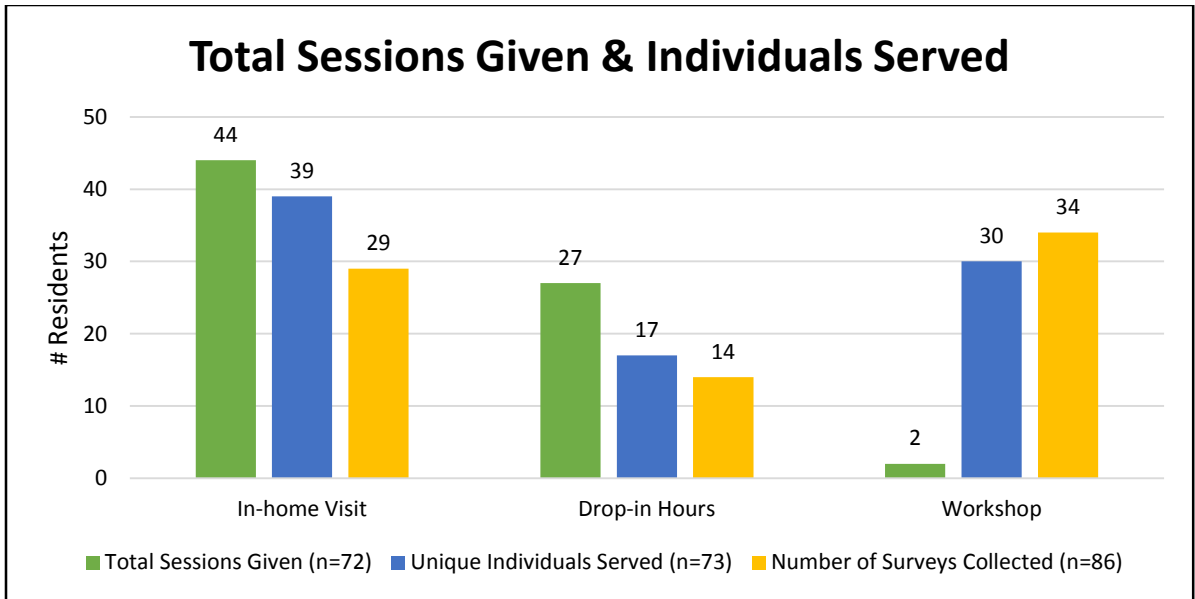


Figure 6. Total sessions given by Geekatoo, number of unique individuals served, and survey return rate per type of service (results exclude remote call data).

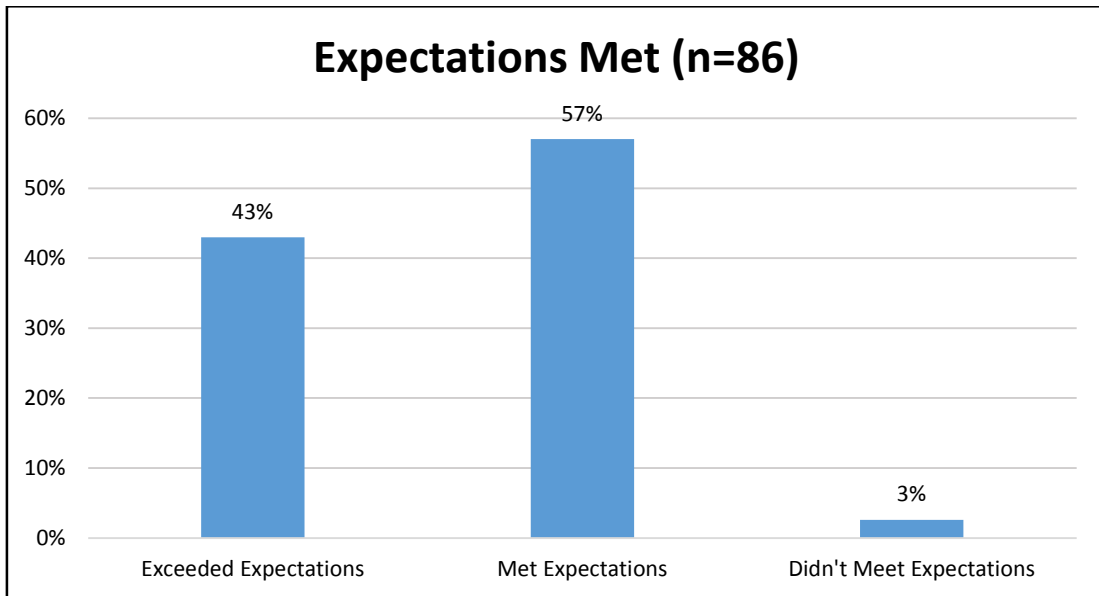


Figure 7. Expectation for the service met (in-home visit, drop-in hour, and workshop).

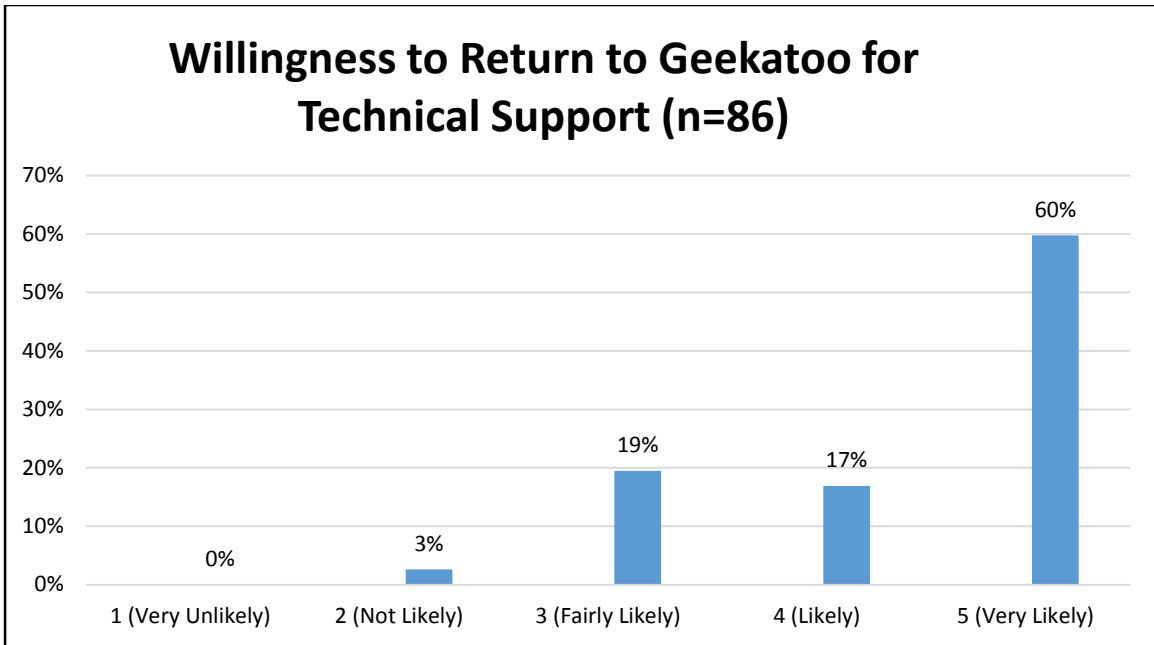


Figure 8. Willingness to reuse the service in the future for technical support issues (in-home visit, drop-in hour, and workshop).

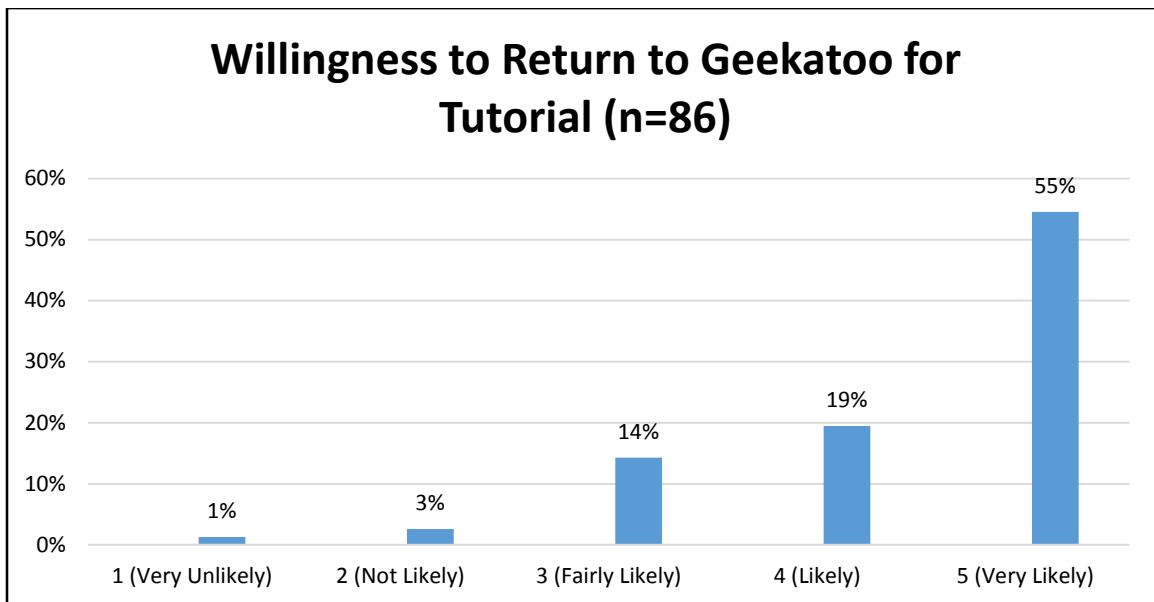


Figure 9. Willingness to reuse the service in the future for technical trainings or tutorials (in-home visit, drop-in hour, and workshop).

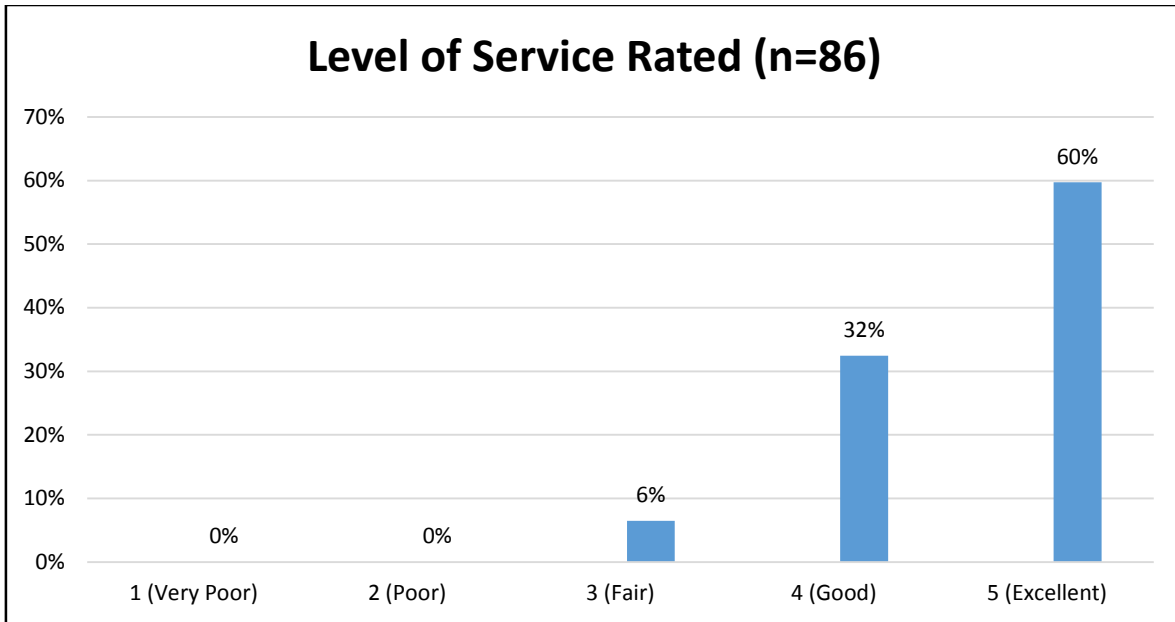


Figure 10. Satisfaction level of the service rated by the residents (in-home visit, drop-in hour, and workshop).

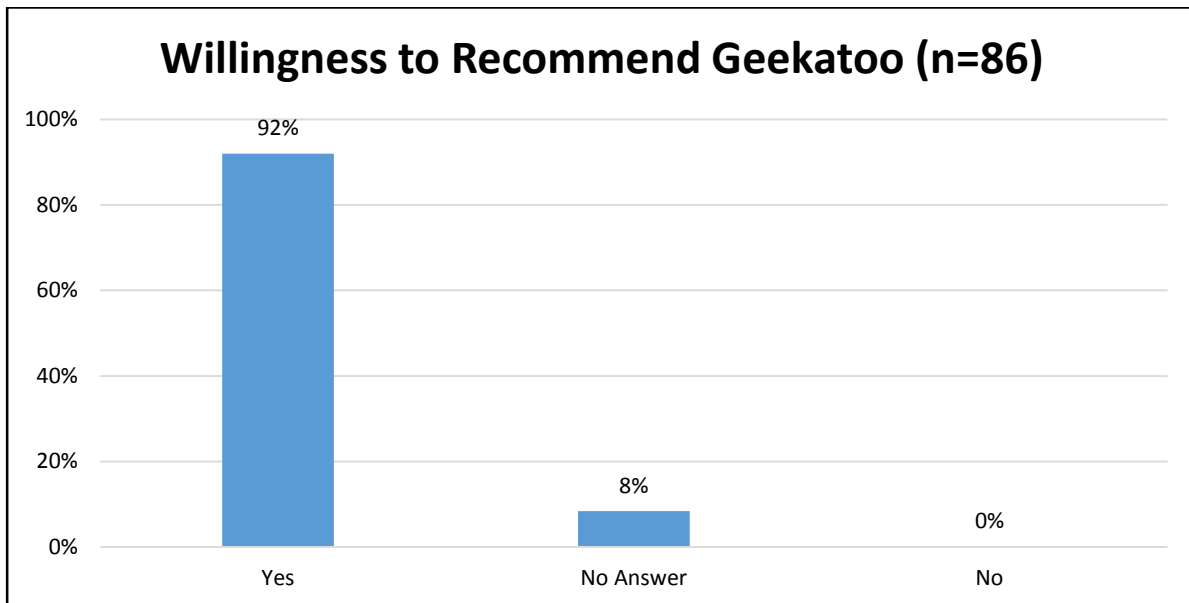


Figure 11. Willingness to recommend the service to other residents (in-home visit, drop-in hour, and workshop).

4) Remote service support

Geekatoo provided a dedicated remote call number for all community residents. A total of 19 calls were handled/answered, 3 in-home visits and 1 remote support in October (Table 1).

Calls Handled/Answered (duplicate allowed)	In-home Visit Scheduled	Remote Support	Average Duration for Calls Answered (S)
19	3	1	259.7575758

Table 1. Remote support call data breakdown

Here are the highlights:

- The average duration of the call answered was about 4.3 minutes.
- Among all the calls handled, there was only 1 remote support in the month of October. According to the participant, the issue was resolved successfully and she was satisfied with the remote support.

The number of calls occurred was lower than any other type of Geekatoo service, suggesting that residents may have preferred more in-person support instead of remote support. Half way through the pilot, the team raised a concern regarding some confusion around the types of issues that can be resolved with remote call support. A memo was distributed to all the residents to clarify this issue and remind them to utilize the support call line more, and the Geek agents were better trained on how to handle the various calls from VDM residents.

We believe that had VDM residents been told earlier how to use the remote services and that Geek agents were better trained on how to handle these calls, the usage and successful completion rate would have been higher.

Additionally, there were no quality measures for the remote support calls. Geekatoo provided a report on the basics (i.e. length of the call, recordings if available, date and time of the calls), but no data on residents' satisfaction levels were available.

One resident commented in a survey that her remote call experience was confusing. Although she was a VDM resident, she was calling about her issue from a location outside the community; the remote call representative had to verify her residency at VDM before providing her with support over the phone. After about an hour of waiting, the resident did receive remote call services, which turned out to be "satisfactory."

Conclusion

The quantitative and qualitative data collected during the pilot strongly suggest that regular technical support solution services are needed at Vista del Monte. Many returned to Geekatoo for drop-in hours and workshops, and about one quarter of the residents who completed in-home visits wanted additional visits from Geekatoo. Some residents even indicated that they were willing to pay to use Geekatoo after the pilot. In addition, more than half of the survey

participants said they were very likely to use Geekatoo's service again in the future for tutorials or technical support.

Overall feedback from the participants was very positive, and residents found the Geeks to be professional. It was evident that the Geeks were able to build trust with the residents. In their surveys, many in-home visit and drop-in hour participants requested additional visits from the same Geek to work on a personal photo album project or iPad tutorial. In cases where the Geeks could not resolve the addressed issues, they followed up with the residents to troubleshoot over the phone. One Geek did additional research to further investigate a technical issue, and directly contacted the resident to inform her of his findings.

The pilot also provided an opportunity to assess how Geekatoo services can be structured at senior communities. Although not part of the original contract, Geekatoo provided a formal Geek training guide on interacting with seniors upon request later in the pilot. Having the training in place from the beginning could have possibly addressed some of the issues/concerns raised by residents (i.e., speaking too fast or using too much "techno-babble"). The quality tracking measures were also not as thorough as originally expected; the surveys were created prior to the pilot to measure the satisfaction rate for in-home visits, workshops, and drop-in hours, but there were no clear means to track remote call service quality and results.

In conclusion, although Geekatoo could use some improvement in its quality tracking, training of Geeks, and service evaluations, FPCIW recommends the Geekatoo services for VDM because of the overall high satisfaction rates and fulfillment of demands for such services from residents. In the event that VDM and Front Porch decide to implement Geekatoo services, we would recommend exploring new and different strategies in the adoption of remote technical support, and a more effective use of weekly drop-in sessions to offset the demand for in-home tutorial services.