

Silver surfers



The world's population has never been this old. In fact, 20% of the U.S. population will be over 65 by 2030. The same is true for many developed countries, including Japan. And one of Japan's leading retailers, Mitsukoshi, saw this as unique opportunity, and wanted to be more user-friendly to this growing demographic.

IBM Easy Web Browsing was developed by IBM's Tokyo Research Laboratory. The technology helps make Web sites more accessible to the elderly, people with limited vision and the color-blind by reading text out loud and allowing users to customize the size and color of Web content. Mitsukoshi was the first retailer to use the technology, followed by hundreds more, including Macy's and Bloomingdale's. And together, they've helped seniors all over the world find services and take care of everyday tasks – with the click of a mouse.



 [Watch the video](#) (WMV, 2:00 min)

 [Read the transcript on page 2](#)

This story on the Web

- [Flash page](#)
- [Non-Flash page](#)

Retail solutions

- [Customer-centric offerings](#)

Accessibility tools

- [IBM Easy Web Browsing](#)
- [Create a competitive edge with accessibility](#)

Thought leadership

- [Turn shoppers into advocates](#)

Case study

- [IBM and Mitsukoshi create an accessible Web site](#)

Stay on top of innovation

- [More Ideas from IBM](#)
- [Watch IBM stories of innovation](#)

Syndication

[Subscribe via RSS](#)

- [Help with subscribing](#)



video • TRANSCRIPT

MITSUKOSHI

IBM Web Documentary

(Music)

(Voiceover)

Japan is bracing itself for the strain of carrying an aging society. Soon, there won't be enough young to look after the old.

Prof. Ooe – Keio University

(Subtitles) The aging population problem is increasing rapidly.

(Voiceover)

Global trends indicate alarming rates of aging population growth in developed countries. By 2050, an astonishing 40% of Japan's population is projected to be over the age of 65.

Masahiro Sakigawara – Future Robotics Technology Center

(Subtitles) When society is aging, it's inevitable that the number of people with physical disabilities will increase.

Kozo Kitamura – IBM

IBM has taken up the challenge of Japan's biggest problem – an aging society.

(Voiceover)

Together with Mitsukoshi department store, a new website innovation has been developed that assists the elderly with their lives.

Takashi Saito - IBM

(Subtitles) Recently we realized that technology developed for people with disabilities can also be applied to the elderly.

Elderly lady's voice

(Subtitles) Mitsukoshi's homepage has big letters and colors that make it easy to see. It even talks to me.

Mitsukoshi Web site

(Subtitles) “We deliver anywhere in the country free of charge.”

Yoshitaka Shibata – Mitsukoshi Direct Marketing Division

(Subtitles) The happiest moment was when I heard a customer say... “I can shop by myself!”

Hitoshi Ueno – Mitsukoshi Direct Marketing Division

(Subtitles) When general trends change, we need to respond to those changes. Our collaboration with IBM has enabled us to do that.

Kozo Kitamura – IBM

(Subtitles) If elderly people can't use the Internet, they'll miss out on services and suffer inconveniences in everyday life. We want to avoid that, which is why we're developing solutions.

(Music)

(End line) Innovation is helping the older generation join the digital generation.



SEND US YOUR FEEDBACK:

We're interested in hearing what you think about this article. Do you have a question, comment, suggestion or story idea to pass along? Please e-mail **Ideas from IBM**.

IBM Corporation

New Orchard Road, Armonk, New York 10504, USA