The Age of Florida Citrus Industry Members and Their Preferred Communication Methods
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Objectives
This study aimed to evaluate the relationship between age and the preferred communication form of Florida citrus industry personnel. Specifically, the research questions were: Who preferred email? Who preferred printed information? What forms of social media or various other communication technologies to keep informed were of interest?

The objectives of this study were to evaluate 1) the use of communication tools by age group and 2) which communication tools the various age groups prefer.

Methods
The survey was distributed at five citrus industry meetings and was available on-line via www.qualtric.com to reach more people, especially those not in attendance at the industry meetings.

The survey included questions on the various forms of communication technology used as well as respondent age. Other questions covered computer and cell phone types and usage.

All questions except one were given categorical values. The age of individuals was collected as a continuous variable and then grouped into categorical variables. By asking for specific ages, the researcher could group the ages as desired to evaluate the respondents various communication forms and usage habits.

The survey results were assigned numerical values for data entry. The frequencies by age were calculated by using the filter and sort functions in Microsoft Excel® then the COUNT function was used to total each answer category per question. The total number of each answer category by age group was divided by the total number of responses per age group to determine the percentage.

Results
A total of 237 surveys were collected. The average age of participants was 55 and over 50% of the respondents were growers or grove managers.

The two most common computer types used in the citrus industry were PC desktop and PC laptop (Fig. 1). The youngest age group (19-29) used laptops more frequently compared to the oldest age group who used desktops. The use of PC laptops and PC desktops were comparable for the age groups (30-79).

Over 50% of each age group used e-mail on a daily basis (Fig. 2). All age categories preferred to communicate via e-mail except for those between 80-89 years (Fig. 3).

Survey participants were asked about their usage of the three most common social media websites: Facebook®, Twitter®, and LinkedIn®. The youngest age group was more interested in Facebook than any other group. The older the participants, the less active they were on Facebook (Fig. 4).

Participants were asked if they had a text messaging capable phone if they would be interested in receiving text messages for meeting or event reminders (Fig. 8). The majority of each group would like to receive text messages, but two of the older groups were most interested.

Conclusions
• Age did not play a primary factor in communication method
• Majority of respondents did not use social media websites frequently, yet they would support the use of social media websites from extension personnel
• Clientele and extension personnel not using the same communication method would be ineffective communication (Robideau and Santl, 2011)
• Text messaging was greatly interesting to all age groups
• High usage of e-mail by all age groups was unexpected because of the relatively high average age of citrus industry personnel