Inscribing community by design: Reflecting on older people & participation

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C&T 2 July 2011

Overview & Main message

- How we conceptualise aging and the role that IT can play fundamentally matters
- Technology & older people
  - Case examples
- Reflective designers and builders of community IT
  - Societal importance

Physiological changes with aging

Aging as a physiological decline process

Definition of Success

At age 4 success is . . . not piddling in your pants.
At age 12 success is . . . having friends.
At age 17 success is . . . having a drivers licence.
At age 35 success is . . . having money.
At age 50 success is . . . having money.
At age 70 success is . . . having a drivers licence.
At age 75 success is . . . having friends.
At age 80 success is . . . not piddling in your pants.
Software specific to older people

Eg Eldy software – over 220,000 users

http://www.eldy.eu

Hardware specific to older people

Eg Amplicom M5000 Mobile Phone

Eg OXO Good Grips

OECD Report
May 2011

Aging population

Challenge & costs of LTC

Article June 7 2011

Obesity

Challenge for Selfcare, Health & well being

Telecare, remote monitoring, AAL...

Physiological monitoring
Telecare systems (eg Docobo)

Safety/security monitoring
Assistive Technologies (eg Tunstall)

‘Aging in Place’
Research projects

Limited evidence of outcomes

Health and other outcomes
- increase in life expectancy, better control over symptoms
- reduction in pain, anxiety and depression levels
- days off work can reduce by 50%

Healthcare system/cost outcomes
- visits to GPs can reduce by 40 to 69%
- hospital admissions can reduce by up to 50%
- number of days in hospital may decrease by up to 80%
- outpatient visits can reduce by 17 to 77%
- A&E visits can reduce significantly
- medication intake, e.g. steroids, reduced
- medicine utilisation is improved by 30%

What outcomes for whom?

Reduced social contact at home

Social isolation a significant problem & has health impacts

How does this inscribe…

Aging as positive developmental process

Aging… older people… home… care?

Fitzpatrick et al, Supporting self care – a practical approach, diagnosis, monitoring and assistive tools, April 2006.
Research in action in the section on self care a support, June 2010.

Diverse lived experiences of aging

Experiential/phenomenological theories of aging

Misc developmental research
- “reserve capacity”, plasticity, resiliency

Baltes & Baltes: successful aging
- Cognitive pragmatics compensate for cognitive mechanics
- Creative adaptation by selection, optimization, compensation

Carstensen: “Socioemotional Selectivity Theory”
- invest in emotionally meaningful goals & activities

Tornstam: “Gerotransendence”
*a shift in meta perspective, … normally accompanied by an increase in life satisfaction, … leading to “inner security, wisdom, and greater overall well-being”

What older people say they want
- From studies of people learning to use computers
  (Jose Rojas, Dave Harley, AC Silver Surfer Week reports, Goodman et al, etc)

- Keeping in touch – family, friends
- Work, business, study
- Hobbies, interests, ongoing learning
- Information seeking
- Connecting with family history, life stories
- Contributing, volunteer work
- Not AT/AAL etc …

Similar values, concerns
Motivating Mobility Stroke Rehab Project

Similar values, concerns
eHome Activity Monitoring Project

“And I’ll get old later but on my terms if I can keep learning and adapting and if we can keep compensating for the things that happen” [Jim]
Thank you…
All proceeds from sales go to help my “family” of orphan children in Ghana and Nepal.”

Example responses to Peter

- Overwhelmingly positive
  “Wow, this video probably breaks all YouTube records of the highest density of pleasant comments ever!... How respectful we all are! My faith in humanity is boosted” [Pp, 22, US - response to Video 1]

- Personal identification and empathy with Peter
  “omg...i cried...i feel like such a pansy...but i don’t care. you are a very wonderful person...i will look forward to more of your videos” [Md, 19, US – response to Video 5]
  “I wish you were my grandpa:)” [Jx, 21, US – response to Video 3]

- Appreciation of his age & experience
  “We need a voice on here that’s “been around the block” a little” [Lt, 27, US – response to Video 4]
  “you are so refreshing and real. thanks for contributing to the you tube community. i would love to hear bits of your wisdom on living life better or to its fullest” [Gg, 34, US - response to Video 1]
Intergenerational connections

Technical skills:
“Try putting music into the video through the program you are using, it would sound much better.” [ZS, 19, US - response to Video 1]

“you can also change the colors on Windows Movie Maker. When you are typing your text down by where it says animation or whatever to change the display of your text it should be right there. Just click that and you can change the font and then color is right under the font” [GL, 21, US – response to Video 2]

How to be a YouTuber:
“Put names of popular tubers in your tags, you'll get more views. It's kind of cheating I guess though...” [MC, 28, Canada – response to Video 2]

Local Community:
Wii league in Sheltered Housing

[with Dave Harley, Lesley Axelrod, Gareth White, Graham McAllister]

Strong Evidence Base for Societal Impact

- Aging Is Satisfying, New Research Shows
  - 17 June 2008: Univ of Qld research – Psychology & Aging Journal
  “Older adults appear to see the good things in life more easily and are less likely to be upset by the little things that go wrong.” (Von Hippel)

- Getting Older Leads to Emotional Stability and Happiness, Study Shows
  - 28 Oct 2010 – Stanford Center on Longevity
  “As people age, they're more emotionally balanced and better able to solve highly emotional problems, and can get along with a greater number of people. They care more and are more compassionate about problems, and that may lead to a more stable world.”
  “This all suggests that as our society is aging, we will have a greater resource. If people become more even-keeled as they age, older societies could be wiser and kinder societies. (Carstensen)"

Strong Evidence Base for Health Impact

- Active Social Life May Delay Memory Loss Among US Elderly Population
  - 30 May 2008: Harvard School of Public Health; Science Daily

- Less Frequent Social Activity Linked To More Rapid Loss Of Motor Function In Older Adults

- Social Life and Mobility Are Keys to Quality of Life in Old Age
  - 30 May 2011 Science Daily

- Higher Levels of Social Activity Decrease the Risk of Cognitive Decline

- Reciprocity: A predictor of mental health and continuity in elderly people's relationships? A Review.
In conclusion

- Reflects many themes from ‘aging as developmental process’ literature
- ‘Technology for older people’
  - Not just (even?) about accessibility
- (Older) people want to do ‘real things’ with technology
  - can engage with new technologies
  - even when accessibility is an issue
  - ‘if’ they perceive value

Living in place, in community not aging in place

Challenge to us as designers

Reflective practitioners
  Value centred designers

- How are we implicitly (or explicitly) inscribing notions of community, participation & age in our designs?
- What other groups might we be excluding?

- What new opportunities arise to take a more inclusive participatory approach to community & technology?

- Societal importance
  - Health benefits
  - Huge untapped community resource, huge amount to contribute

Summary Reflections
So what does it all mean

Opportunities

Enabling community engagement and intergenerational communication can be a good focus for design for older people

- Older people no longer in full time work have
  - Time to contribute
  - Experience to contribute - sharing of wisdom
  - Motivation?

- Local community
  - Garden, shopping, language learning …
  - Local history

- Beyond local geography
  - Communities of interest
  - Building relationships - ‘internet grandad’

Discussion