B. Altemeyer, J. McCann, C. Nugent, K. Stevens, D. Taylor. Effective communication between researchers and older users in developing design-led, fit for purpose, products. Gerontechnology 2010;9(2):187; doi:10.4017/gt.2010.09.02.264.00 **Purpose** To enhance the lives of older users in terms of autonomy and independence, through the application of technology in functional garments that are attractive and fit for purpose. Maintaining activity into later life is essential for health and wellness and the lack of suitable clothing has been highlighted as a potential barrier to activity into, and throughout, old age. The ISPO Best Ager Sports Market Study[1] found that the over 50's have difficulty finding suitable clothing that is for purpose and that they are willing to wear, from technical, aesthetic and cultural perspectives. Design for Ageing Well approaches design and research and development, from a cross-disciplinary, user-centered perspective; a concept not commonly seen in traditional fashion design. It aims to work with user-groups to develop and test concepts for a functional clothing layering system, with embedded technologies, that older people will willingly wear, with a focus on walking. As a first step, communication between the providers of technology and the users in this age group has to be enhanced, by developing a shared language, one founded upon alignment of capacity with function. This will lead to increased usability, less design redundancy and aligned technology matching the needs of an ageing population to the functional range of supporting technology. **Method** To develop a shared language, to inform clothing design development in collaboration with researchers and older users, that breaks down the boundaries between the disparate disciplines of design and technology, driven by eliciting and addressing the social culture demands of older users. The goal is to establish complementary work packages with close working relationships between PhD students, researchers and an advisory group of industry specialists and consultants, to examine the current methodologies and terminologies within each separate discipline to amalgamate knowledge gained in order to achieve the development of a new breed of cross-disciplinary researcher. **Results & Discussion** This paper will discuss initial stages in uncovering of the differences in methodologies, language and terminology between the research practices identified within the disparate disciplines. It will look at the development of strategies for the essential interaction between researchers and older users in developing a design led approach to addressing their everyday clothing and technology needs. It will consider methods for the effective communication of potential design attributes and technological applications, which they may willingly wear and consider usable, with the potential to enhance their autonomy, independence and well-being. It will highlight the need for the development of a common language of communication between older people and a new breed of cross-disciplinary researcher.

References

1. ISPO Best Ager Market Study; www.ispo-bestager.com; retrieved January 13, 2010

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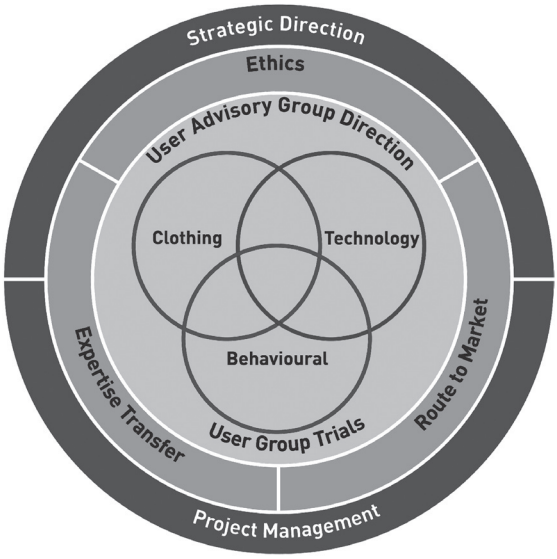

Figure 1. The interdisciplinary character of functional clothing design for older users