

C.L. CRAIG. *Creativity and communication: making use of everyday technology in care homes. Gerontechnology 2010;9(2):277; doi:10.4017/gt.2010.09.02.176.00* **Purpose** There is a strong correlation between good interpersonal relationships and quality of life for older people. This is particularly true for those living in residential care, where relationships have been found to be one of the key determinants of experience within care homes<sup>1</sup>. These findings relate to residents and their families as well as staff<sup>2,3</sup>. Technology offers many opportunities for promoting and building relationships by providing opportunities for communication and interaction. There is increasing research that demonstrates the potential of web2 technologies such as Facebook, and other social networking sites, to provide meeting places for individuals to share experiences and build relationships. However, to date there is little research that has explored the potential of these everyday technologies within care home environments where many people currently reside. This purpose of this poster is to outline an initial feasibility study that sought to explore the potential of Skype and digital scrapbooking as media to promote communication in a care home setting in the UK. This is the first part of a much bigger study that seeks to explore possible application of these technologies. **Method** This poster presents the findings of a small study, undertaken in a care home, which examined the potential of everyday technologies (Skype, digital scrapbooking) to promote communication between older people and carers. Individuals were invited to talk about their experiences and the perceived benefits and challenges in relation to using these technologies. **Results & Discussion** The initial results from this pilot study are extremely positive. Skype offered older people the opportunity to communicate with family members who were too frail to physically visit the person living in care, thereby reducing feelings of isolation. Carers felt that digital scrapbooking was an extremely powerful tool to build relationships and gain insight into who individuals living on the unit were, and was more 'dynamic' than traditional biographical and reminiscence based activities previously utilised. Respondents raised issues in relation to the practicalities of using the technology, including, the weight of laptops and keyboard size and there was an expressed interest in having classes in the care-home for residents, staff and carers in learning how to use the computer.

## References

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