

Welcome to ISG*ISARC2012 World Conference

Johanna E.M.H. van Bronswijk PhD, chair for ISG

Ger J. Maas MSc, chair for IAARC

Frans J.M. van Gassel MSc, conference secretary

Eindhoven University of Technology, Department of the Built Environment, Group Performance Engineering for Built Environments, The Netherlands
E: j.e.m.h.v.bronswijk@gerontechnology.info

*J.E.M.H. van Bronswijk, G.J. Maas, F.J.M. van Gassel. Welcome to ISG*ISARC2012 World Conference. Gerontechnology 2012;11(2):63; doi:10.4017/gt.2012.11.2.659.00* Under the theme "Who is afraid of aging?" over 300 presentations from 35 different countries have been brought together that are related to phenomena and solutions pertaining to our aging society or that focus on robotics and automation in construction. Although many contributions report on results from either the field of Gerontechnology or the field of Automation & Robotics, a number of authors rose to the challenge of a new and fruitful cross-fertilization. This will give this issue of the Gerontechnology journal, as well as the World Conference ISG*ISARC2012, its special and distinctive flavor.

Keywords: gerontechnology, automation, robotics, construction, active aging

It is our pleasure to welcome you to ISG*ISARC2012, the joint conference of the 8th World Conference of the International Society for Gerontechnology, and the 29th International Symposium on Automation and Robotics in Construction. We are proud to present 13 keynotes, 26 symposia, 12 leading-edge technology events, as well as 32 chaired oral sessions. In addition the GeronTechnoPlatform will discuss video presentations and real-time virtual site visits. One of these visits will concern the AAL Summit 2012 in Bilbao (Spain). A designer contest and an exhibition of products and services complete the event.

The theme "Who is afraid of aging?" invites us to address issues such as quality of life with leisure and pleasure, home care, life-long working, retrofitting existing buildings and infrastructures, and associated new technologies, such as ICT, automation, robotics and governance in the construction industry. We start from the rights and needs of the aging person, living, working, and recreating in built environments. The majority of presentations concern communication, management and governance issues. The contributions originate from 18 different European countries as well as 17 other world regions.

This conference is taking place in the European Year for Active Aging. Just as the first ISG conference in 1991 and the 20th ISARC in 2003, it takes place at the Eindhoven University of Technology (The Netherlands), a center for innovation. Technology exists to serve society, even a society experiencing rapid demographic change. Only through a thorough, fruitful, and sustainable interaction between engineers and (social) scientists can obstacles be changed into challenges we can meet.

The two groups at this conference, from the fields of construction and care, have many items to discuss to increase mutual understanding and awareness. If we want new technologies to be adopted in our aging society, this kind of cross-fertilization is a necessity.

The organizers took extra care to support and stimulate this interaction, not only with a high-level scientific and social program, but also by taking advantage of new smart phone and (social) media options. That is how we present the state-of-the-art in our domains.