

Fit-for-life of future emerging technology

J. LEIKAS, P. SAARILUOMA. **Fit-for-life of future emerging technology**. *Gerontechnology* 2014; 13(2):242; doi:10.4017/gt.2014.13.02.136.00 **Purpose** Emerging ICT technology is often viewed as obscure and unpleasant by older people¹. In addition, it is associated with a variety of ethical considerations². In many cases, older people find it difficult to imagine a role for modern ICT technology in their everyday lives, since technology of this kind does not necessarily fit in with the forms of life of this target group. This is most often due to the failure of ICT design paradigms to address the issues involved in living a good life. Traditionally, the core user challenge in ICT design has been associated with the immediate usage situation. Human-centred approaches such as contextual design, scenario-based design, and design with personas strive to design technology based on an investigation of what people could do with a given technology and how they actually use it. However, to ensure that products and services fit in with people's goals, it is imperative that we ask why people would adopt and use a certain technology in their lives. An analysis of people's lives (and personal characteristics) and living conditions is necessary in order to answer this question. In addition, clear conceptualisations and methodological models are required in order to describe how such knowledge of technology design processes might be applied. A model for a multi-dimensional and holistic Life-Based Design (LBD) has been introduced on these grounds^{3,4}. This approach emphasises analysis of the role of technology in human life: facts and values related to forms of life, as a basis for the creation of design ideas and for concept design. **Method** Part of LBD consists of a fit-for-life analysis, which examines the benefits and meaningfulness people can derive from the solutions developed, as well as the impact that such solutions can have on everyday life. It illustrates the logic involved in enhancing quality of life (QoL), presupposing a thorough understanding of the concept and content of QoL, particularly the reassessment of QoL parameters in relation to everyday life supported by technology. When designing for quality of life, it is necessary to understand what is relevant to people's values. Fit-for-life analysis thus includes an analysis of the relevant biological, psychological, and socio-cultural attributes of forms of life, and examines the ethical problems that may be created by technology. **Results & Discussion** Fit-for-life analysis calls for a clarification of the issue of according to whose perspectives technology can contribute yielding higher value in improving quality of life. The outcome could lead to improvements in and modifications of product ideas. Technology is empowering when designed to be fit for the lives of older people. For example, it can enhance capabilities and self-efficacy and promote a feeling of security and ability to cope with life, while preventing loneliness and enabling participation in working life and social activities.

References

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