

M.C. WINTERMANS, C.A.L. VALK, R.G.A. BRANKAERT, Y. LU. *Not all classrooms have four walls: Analysing experiences of senior citizens using novel smartphone technology. Gerontechnology 2018;17(Suppl):89s-90s; <https://doi.org/10.4017/gt.2018.17.s.088.00>*

**Purpose** As identified by Sayago et al.<sup>1</sup>, senior citizens adopt three strategies in learning ICT successfully: (i) linking learning to real-life needs, (ii) learning collaboratively and informally, and (iii) adopting appropriate memory aids. Although getting familiar with new technology can still be challenging both in usability and in adoption<sup>2</sup>, technology can play an essential role in living independently longer<sup>3</sup>. We evaluated the GoLivePhone (*Figure 1*), an Android phone with a simplified user interface, including care functionalities such as fall prevention and remote data monitoring for informal caregivers. This evaluation identifies specific drivers for senior citizens to use novel technology and how learning can be supported. **Method** To evaluate the technology, in-context focus groups<sup>4</sup> (*Figure 2*) were held every two weeks with eleven participants, independently living in a small village in The Netherlands, to track their process over twelve weeks. During these sessions, their current opinion and usage was evaluated through an open discussion. Their input was subject to a thematic analysis (coding) to derive the results. **Results & Discussion** We build upon the knowledge of Sayago et al.<sup>1</sup> in three ways: (1) Seniors acknowledge real-life needs, e.g. “[I want] To start using it [GoLivePhone] now, before I cannot learn it anymore (Participant G)”. However, from the literature, we learn that technology should also address a current emotional interest<sup>5</sup>, as exemplified by messaging application *WhatsApp*, which enables the senior citizens to be part of e.g., a family group conversation; (2) Within learning collaboratively and informally, we see that the introduction of peers who educate in class<sup>6</sup>, gave participants the motivation and confidence to learn about the technology: “I think it is very motivating to participate with multiple people. You do not feel so alone because you can exchange experiences (Participant D)”. Also, we observed it helped the participants to have a dedicated timeslot to learn so that they could make sufficient progress, next to their often-busy agendas filled with several sports clubs and voluntary commitments; and (3) The memory aid which our participants used, a printed manual, consisted of an extensive guide detailing all the courses. They addressed it as comforting to be able to repeat and practice at home as well. Participants reported they missed a short manual to look up daily tasks, as a quick reminder versus the complete step-by-step guide. For future work, we plan to conduct a study with a new group of seniors to evaluate: (i) which drivers influence sustainable use, (ii) which positive and negative experiences connect to specific features of the technology and (iii) which elements within online and offline channels make learning more accessible. We see design opportunities for creating an adaptive and continuous learning process, preferably elaborating upon triggering and empowering individual learning ambitions over time. Our next step is to co-design and evaluate a new smartphone application based on senior citizen’s interests, enriching their daily life. Overall, we aim to develop an understanding about how seniors learn using and continue using novel technology, and design guidelines to improve technology acceptance.

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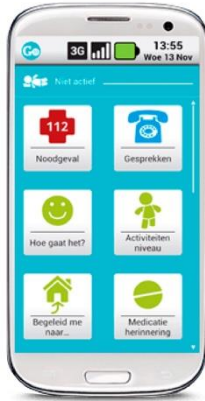
# PAPER

## Internet and Social Media

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*Figure 1. The interface of the technology we evaluated, named the GoLivePhone.*



*Figure 2. Participants gathering together to learn in a social context*