

In accordance with the gerontechnology philosophy the phone, although especially designed for older persons, is at the same time a modern globally-roaming cellular phone for everyone with internet connectivity, a USB port, and its comprehensive global navigation system.

The producing company understands that older persons, after they have started to appreciate the phone, will want more. A version with a built-in camera is planned, as well as expanded speech applications for the visually impaired. In addition user studies are under way in Germany, together with the Seniors League (DSL).

How long will it take until I can also use my cellular phone for remote control of the television and video set?

References

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3. Personal communication of Nico Stroomer, Secofone Nederland, e-mail: stroomer@tiscali.nl, as of March 2, 2000

J.E.M.H. van Bronswijk
e-mail: j.e.m.h.v.Bronswijk@tue.nl

Gerontechnologist retires

A hard to believe professional transition: Heidrun Mollenkopf retires

For many of us, it is hard to believe: On January 1, 2005, Dr. Heidrun Mollenkopf, an internationally acknowledged expert in gerontechnology, outdoor mobility, and social gerontology has stepped back from her professional duties due to German mandatory retirement law.



Dr. Heidrun Mollenkopf first began her training as a student of educational

science, sociology and psychology at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg and then as a sociologist at the University of Mannheim. She has also been what society has long regarded as a "good mother", taking the slower track that is perhaps typical for female academics. That is, Heidrun followed her spouse to various locations in Germany, in Switzerland - where her husband was engaged as an engineer - raised her two children and, of necessity, delayed the unfolding of her own scientific potential 'until later'. But although her master's thesis was 'only' completed in 1984 and her PhD 'only' in 1995 at the Free University of Berlin, she was engaged in a very fruitful pursuit of knowledge into human ageing from 1990 until the day of her retirement, an extraordinary career that went far beyond 'mere research'. It is and will remain hard to believe what Heidrun has achieved in her less than one and a half decade long involvement in scientific gerontology. Here is just a sample:

Although Heidrun was something of a late starter, she was always a front runner in terms of the themes she selected to form the core of her scientific interests. At the end of the 1980s, she began working on the empirical analysis of ageing and technology as a research associate in a large research project funded by the German government. This was pioneering work, not only in Germany but also internationally. In Germany, ageing and technology were nearly 'non-issues' at the time; becoming old and using technology for improving the quality of life was still regarded as an oxymoron. No wonder then that Heidrun became a key driver of the evolution of a new field in gerontology, i.e., gerontechnology. Her active involvement at international gerontechnology congresses - including her latest contributions to the Florida meeting in 2002 - are undoubtedly now a major part of the still

young history of gerontechnology. The field flourishes not the least because of scholars like Heidrun.

Related to the development of gerontechnology, Heidrun also was among the first to clearly recognize the role and impact of a European ageing research perspective. Heidrun was a member of the European Commission's early initiative COST A5 and thus contributed not only to the growth of gerontechnology but to cross-national European research on ageing issues in broader terms. It is hard to find a person these days in the European ageing research scene not familiar with the name Mollenkopf. Heidrun's engagements on the European level have meanwhile found many new expressions and led to many successes such as her contributions to the European Forum on Population Ageing Research together with Alan Walker. Most recently, Heidrun eloquently petitioned for the inclusion of social gerontology research issues in the 7th Framework Programme. I am sure that this will be another success for Heidrun, for ageing research, and if I may say so, also for many of us in the long run.

Heidrun was one of the first to embrace the issue of outdoor mobility when it appeared on the German and European ageing research horizons. Rather than viewing outdoor mobility simply as a geriatric issue (one extreme) or as car driving (another extreme), Heidrun was truly instrumental in conceptualizing outdoor mobility as a comprehensive process, as the product of ageing persons with their material, technological, and social environment. This further success brought with it many important findings on urban and rural as well as European differences in the out-of-home mobility of older people.

After her time as a research scientist at the Social Science Research Centre Berlin,

Heidrun served as a senior researcher in the Department of Social and Environmental Gerontology of the German Centre for Research on Ageing since June 1997. As the head of the department, I am very happy to have had Heidrun as a colleague and collaborator for such a substantial time period. Heidrun has contributed so much to the department and thus also to the scientific emanation of the German centre at large.

But I am also very happy of having the privilege with this contribution to International Gerontology to honour Heidrun's work on a more general level, speaking on behalf of her many admiring colleagues in the scientific community: Thanks so much for all you have done for the field of gerontechnology, for social gerontology, and for all of us.

Finally, we all are very sure that your scientific productivity will not be halted by German retirement law and we are waiting for more 'firsts' from Heidrun in the years to come. Dear Heidrun: Take care and the best of luck to you from all of us!

Hans-Werner Wahl
e-mail: wahl@dzfa.uni-heidelberg.de

Book Review

Arthur D. Fisk, Wendy A. Rogers, Neil Charness, Sara J. Czaja, Joseph Sharit, 2004. *Designing for older adults: principles and creative human factors approaches*. Boca Raton, USA: CRC Press, 158 pages. ISBN 0-415-28611-5. Price US\$32.37

Designing for older adults: principles and creative human factors approaches is characterised by a distinctive photographic cover in black and orange, that makes it likely that part of the book is about older adults and the office environment. Older workers and the retired form a large and