

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 7<sup>th</sup> 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!

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## 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

increasing part of the population in the Western world. "Of all people who have ever lived to be 65 years of age or older, more than half are alive today." The aim of the book is to provide an introduction to issues that must be considered when designing systems, products, or environments to better accommodate the older adults' needs, seen primarily from an engineering psychology perspective. The guide is divided into four parts: Fundamentals (Chapters 1-3), Design guidelines (Chapters 4-7), Exemplar applications (Chapters 8-9) and Conclusion (Chapter 10).

*Part I Fundamentals* includes the introductory chapters of the book, and 'Toward better design for older adults' provides the background and purpose of the book. The need to design for older adults is explained by the authors in terms of a globally ageing society, especially in Europe and North-America. The assumption that older adults wish to avoid new technology is rejected, although it is stated that elderly are less likely to use technology than younger adults. Many people are experiencing usage difficulties while using everyday products, and age may even worsen these problems. By improved 'user-friendly' design 25% of these problems could be solved, and design guidelines can provide a starting point but seem to be incomplete and not applicable to everyone. In 'Characteristics of older adult users' an overview is given of current understanding of perceptual, cognitive, and movement control factors in relation to design for older adults. As can be learnt from the chapter not all capabilities decline with age, nor do some older adults show age-related declines. Designers should compensate for declines and capitalise on abilities of older users, also from a market strategy point of view. Guiding the design process forms an introduction to human factors tools and techniques and discusses a number of methods and issues involving user-centred design. It is clearly stated that

representative users performing representative tasks within representative contexts must be the arbiters of usability. The chapter can also provide the insight necessary how to identify problems older users may face in interacting with devices and for determining the potential solutions to problems.

Each chapter of *Part II Design guidelines* gives an overview of key findings related to ageing in a specific domain as well as design guidelines. Improving perception of information provides design recommendations based on scientific data concerning perception. Guidelines are given for optimising visual and auditory perception. It is stated that male voices are preferred to female voices for making announcements. Unfortunately no attention is paid to other environmental parameters as ambient temperature or thermal comfort. Developing training and instructional programs is concerned with the development and implementation of training and instruction, providing material relevant to creation of workplace training as well as instruction for use of technology. Older adults should be allowed extra time for training and given regular breaks when sessions are relatively long. Design of input and output devices offers design recommendations and guidelines, based on scientific data, for in- and output device design and selection. Older adults are more likely to have problems in controlling fine motor movements, which according to the authors should have clear implication for the design of in- and output devices. A photo example is given depicting 2 remote controls. Interface design addresses the design of system, human-computer interaction, and facilitating interactions with systems. Older adults benefit from guidelines for facilitating proper interface design such as minimising clutter and scrolling and a good organisation of information.

*Part III Exemplar applications* consists of two chapters providing examples of how the design guidelines are applicable to work and health care. Making the work environment age-friendly states that the current generation of older adults is healthier, more diverse, and better educated than previous generations, and also more interested in remaining engaged in some form of productive work, even after retirement. A number of issues must be considered in designing work (environments) to accommodate an ageing workforce, likely to encounter personal computers on the work floor, such as workplace and equipment redesign, or the development of new and innovative training strategies. Domotic appliances and ambient intelligence are not among the solutions provided, even though these state-of-the-art technologies can bring great relief on the work floor. In 'Maximizing the usefulness and usability of health care technologies' the authors focus on health care technology. Health care is a critical concern especially to older adults, who often have at least one chronic condition, and in many cases are caregivers themselves. Assistive health care technology should be effective and safe, and attention to human factors is crucial, since health care technologies are used under stress and in highly emotional situations in a domain which is often not well-known. Technology should be accurate, credible, and easy to operate, since usage error can lead to prolonged illness or worse. When using the World Wide Web: "older adults, unfamiliar with a domain or desperate for a service, may be susceptible to what is termed a gullibility error" (believing something that is untrue).

The book is concluded by '*Synthesis and comments*', which contains a discussion on the development of future technology stating that new technology is not necessarily better, and that knowledge of the

end-users is indispensable in good design. Although the book provides guidelines based on scientific data, much of the information is self-evident. The book does, however, provide a legible overview of topics discussed. Throughout the book there is great feedback to previous chapters to express relations between physiology and design. It would be a valuable asset to the guide if more graphical material was added in order to show good and bad design examples, which would also make the book more appealing to a larger audience such as students and designers.

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## ISG Business

### News from the Nagoya Conference

The Nagoya conference is ready to receive its participants, with the all-time record for an ISG conference of 150+ papers turned in, with keynotes and symposia inspired by the issues we face today.

Venue: Nagoya Congress Center, 1-1 Atsuta-nishimachi, Atsuta-ku, Nagoya, Aichi 456-0036, Japan; phone: +81-52-683-7711; fax: +81-52-683-7777; URL: [www.ncvb.or.jp/ncc/](http://www.ncvb.or.jp/ncc/)

### Draft Agenda of the General Assembly of the ISG, Nagoya, May 26, 2005

1. Welcome
2. Draft-minutes of the General Assembly of November 10, 2002, Miami, USA (Gerontechnology 2002; 2(2):223-224)
3. Announcements
4. ISG Proceedings November 2002 - May 2005
  - Final Report on the Miami Conference by Vice-President Neil Charness (to be presented at the meeting)
  - Report on the Nagoya Conference by