Others

ISG Round table: Assistive technology and gerontechnology – An odd couple or a perfect match?
William D. Kearns (convener). *Gerontechnology* 25(s)
Participants: Chapal Khasnabis (India), Johan Borg, Associate Professor (Sweden), and Alex Mihailidis, V.P. U. of Toronto (Canada)

ISSUE Given that gerontechnology and assistive technology have evolved from different traditions (aging and social gerontology on the one hand, and rehabilitation and disability studies on the other), it is exciting to explore what might emerge if these fields were brought together. Significant differences in the two fields exist, to be sure: Gerontechnology encompasses purposes of technology use that extend beyond those of assistive technology, such as comfort, while assistive technology includes user groups that gerontechnology does not, such as support for younger people. Another difference concerns legal and policy status: assistive technology (or similar terminology) appears in legislation in many countries, while the term gerontechnology may not be used that often. The convenor, William Kearns, is a former ISG President, Chapal Khasnabis is former Unit Head of Access to Assistive Technology and Medical Devices of the World Health Organization, and developing global programs such as CBR Global Network, Global cooperation on Assistive Technology (GATE), Global Partnership for Assistive Technology: ATscale. At present is a Senior Advisor for the Asian Development Bank to develop the Assistive Care & Technology sector (ACT) for the older population. Johan Borg is an Associate Professor at Dalarna University with over 30 years of experience in assistive technology, having worked across industry, development cooperation, international organizations, and academia. Alex Mihailidis is a Professor at the University of Toronto and Associate Vice President for International Partnerships, with over two decades of experience in research, innovation, and leadership focused on the development and global translation of technologies to support healthy aging, rehabilitation, and independent living. **CONTENT** Each participant will present their views concerning intersection or union of the fields: When discussing a synthesis between gerontechnology and assistive technology, a key question is whether we should focus on their overlap (intersection) or their combination (union). The intersection would represent a narrower field, limited to what the domains share, whereas the union would yield a broader perspective where they complement rather than limit each other. **STRUCTURE** Each participant will present rationales and viewpoints as to how a broader framework could evolve that could improve technology acceptance while reducing stigma in the general population. The discussion that follows will elaborate on ways to serve the needs of a society throughout the life course. **CONCLUSION** This round table is expected to generate conceptual and strategic outcomes that advance the integration of gerontechnology and assistive technology. It will examine whether the relationship between the two fields is best understood as a limited intersection or a broader union and articulate a rationale for positioning gerontechnology within an "assistive technology for all" framework. The discussion will contribute to a life-course perspective that moves beyond age- and disability-specific silos, highlighting how technology can support people's needs across all stages of life. Participants will identify framing approaches that may improve technology acceptance and reduce stigma in the general population. The round table will also outline implications for policy and legislation, and highlight priorities for future research, education, and workforce development needed to support a more inclusive and cohesive field.