

ETHICS IN DOMOTICS (REPLY)

Previously van Berlo¹ stated that "It is ethically not acceptable to use cameras for achieving cost efficiency in the care of people with mental disabilities". I fully agree with this statement, as far as these cameras are only used for passive monitoring during care at night and in the evening. Personal privacy is a great good that should not be removed from a person unless it is absolutely unavoidable. Beside this, family members are not always comfortable with the thought that mother or father are being watched.

However, much of the passive camera monitoring could be transformed in 2-way communication on demand between carer and client in a videophone environment. This more active use of camera-technology has proven to be successful². Videophone systems create a feeling of social security. It does not bear the privacy restrictions of passive camera monitoring, at the same time improving a demand driven care. Persons may connect to the system whenever they feel like it.

The small communities of independently living persons with no severe mental disabilities as mentioned by Van Berlo¹ could benefit greatly from such a videophone set-up. It would not only diminish the need for direct personal care at night but also during the day. Older adults with severe mental disabilities could be monitored by use of other technologies than that of cameras. The Dutch association for homecare (LVT) is in the process of evaluating all national projects now using a videophone technique, to be completed by autumn this year.

References

1. Berlo A van. Ethics in domotics. *Gerontechnology* 3(3):170;2005
2. www.camcare.nl; accessed July 2, 2005

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BOOK REVIEW

Charness, N. & Warner Schaie, K. (Eds.) (2003) *Impact of Technology on Successful Aging*. New York: Springer, 352 pages. ISBN 0-8261-2403-8. Price: US\$47.95

This volume is the fifteenth in the series 'Societal Impact on Aging' that started in 1989 and which presents the contributions of conferences in a special way. There are six reviews on a restricted number of topics which are followed by

two discussion papers, one by a scientist of the same discipline, and one from a neighbouring discipline. Whereas discussion and multidisciplinary might be thought to promote dissent and controversy, this is not the case in this volume that sports constructive comments and agreement. Rogers and Fisk introduce the general topic with a comprehensive review of where technology fails to be usable and what can be done to counter this. They show that designers consistently underestimate the inherent variability in the population, of young and older people alike; a point forcefully emphasized by Charness. Schieber provides an admirably broad review of the effect of aging on vision, hearing, attention and memory. Interesting new phenomena he presents are that reduction in colour sensitivity can be compensated quite well by increasing luminance. Another is that the decline in speech intelligibility, documented already by Jerger to start in the mid thirties, can be reduced by providing semantic context of neighbouring words. Commenting on the design guidelines proposed by Schieber, Fozard notes that consumer education is also lacking, e.g., in relation to hearing aids. From the review by Czaja and Lee the reader can deduce that actual empirical research on Internet use by older people is rather scarce; much more is known on the capability of older people to learn to use software applications. Helpfully, Morrell, Dailey and Rousseau present their study on the usability of the website NIHSeniorHealth.gov from which it appears that existing guidelines can still be too vague, but as they claim, the design of the site can serve as an interesting model. A most welcome chapter is that by Mann on the benefits of assistive technology, both in terms of financial cost and in terms of physical and psychological well-being. While assistive technology in most cases cannot prevent further decline, it could be shown that the lack of assistive technology leads to much greater decline, and in the end far higher costs. Yet, technology may not be seen as assistive at all. According to the study by Wahl and Mollenkopf consumer products, mostly for entertainment and communication, have a higher diffusion rate and popularity than domestic appliances. Remarkably, while people have about the same number of bad experiences for household technology as for communication and entertainment products, they have more fear for the latter, which seems strange considering the potential physical risks. Wahl and Mollenkopf argue that experimental interest has largely gone to the micro level, and not to the broader societal factors that influence technology use. In the final chapter Liu and Park give some interesting examples of how technology can be used effectively in supporting correct

medication or how mobile phones with a minimal interface can be immensely useful in situations of frailty. There is some duplication in this chapter with that of Schieber about memory that could have been better co-ordinated. An intriguing finding is mentioned by the authors in that older people having read false information tend to think it is true on repeated reading, unlike younger folks, who get more convinced it is false. It provides an interesting glimpse of the factors one could look at in introducing technology into society. Morrow shows that even basic technology, like note taking, can improve elderly cognitive functioning impressively. Another practical observation is that by Gueldner and Loeb, who studied the benefit of a telephone for people with physical limitations. It is a beautiful example of how careful observation of simple activities can produce valuable insights of great practical relevance.

Despite its title this book is sufficiently varied to evoke broad interest; eminently suitable for the researcher in this area, useful for graduate students, but maybe somewhat less appealing for the theorist.

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PEOPLE

Richard Pieper honorary member for life!

Richard Pieper was appointed honorary member of the International Society for Gerontechnology in a Board Meeting in Nagoya, May 27, 2005. Earlier appointed honorary members are Herman Bouma, Vappu Taipale and Jan Graafmans.

Prof. Richard Pieper has qualifications in sociology of urban and social planning, technology and environment, and gerontology. He received his Ph.D. in sociology at the University of Hamburg and his 'Habilitation' at the Technical University of Munich. Since 1994 he is professor for urban studies and social planning at the University of Bamberg. His main fields of research are in ageing and technology, and planning and management of social and health care systems. Besides studies on consultation of home adaptations for the elderly and geriatric ambulant rehabilitation he participated since 1996 in two EU-projects in the field of elderly care: PLANEC (1996-98) - a R&D project in the Telematics Application programme developing a PC-application for planning, monitoring and evaluation of elderly care system in Europe



(subcontractor), TED (1997-99) - Technology, Ethics and Dementia, a concerted action under BIOMED2 studying the options for the support of independent living of persons with dementia and their carers by innovative technologies and developing a PC-application for the stimulation and activation of dementia patients (co-ordinator). From 1992 - 1996 he was representative for Germany in the EU-program COST A5 'Ageing and Technology'. Since 2001 he is partner for Germany in the EU-Thematic Network 'CARMEN - The Care and Management of Services for Older People in Europe Network'.

Richard is one of the co-founders of the International Society for Gerontechnology, and served more than 3 terms on the Board, usually holding the office of vice-president. In addition he organized the successful 3rd International Conference on Gerontechnology in Munich in 1999.

Jan Ekberg, ISG Secretary-General.
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ISG BUSINESS

Impressions from the Nagoya Conference

Some statistics: the conference counted 200 participants from 16 different countries. In total 74% of the participants originated from 6 different Asian nations. Europe was present with 8 countries and 37 participants (18.5%), while 2 countries of North America accounted of 15 persons or 7.5% of the attendance.

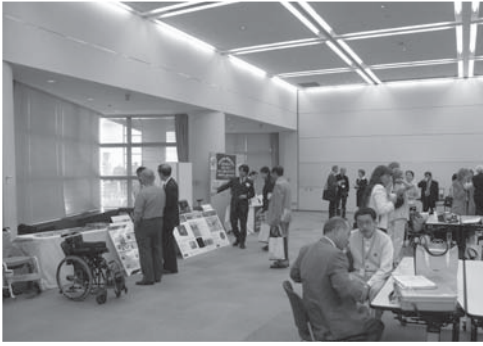


Plenary meeting

Discussions were lively and resulted in a good exchange of information as to the situation and technological options in the different geographical regions. Kansei engineering (user-oriented design) appeared to be the mainstream in Japan, making it an example to the rest of the world.

A more detailed report will be included in the next issue.

M. Nagamachi (text)
Neil Charness (pictures)



Flocking in the exhibition hall



Lively discussion (James Fozard)



Chairs meeting: Mitsuo Nagamachi, chair of the conference (left) and Herman Bouma, president of the ISG



Amazing drumming at the banquet

Draft-minutes of the General Assembly of May 26, 2005, Nagoya, Japan

Present: 19 members from 5 countries

Apologies: Treasurer Wiet Koren

1. Welcome

President of ISG, Herman Bouma opened the meeting at 6 pm and welcomed the participants. Jan Ekberg was elected as secretary for the meeting.

2. Draft minutes from the Assembly meeting 2002

The draft minutes of the General Assembly of November 10, 2002, Miami, USA were approved with the correction that Kazuo Yamaba (local organising committee) was elected to the board.

3. Announcements

Paolo Dario presented the draft content for an ISG conference 20-23 May 2008 in Pisa. The Italian population is aging very fast. The research on technology for supporting older people is very diversified including, for instance, communications, information technology, robotics. The conference could be organised partly in co-operation with other organisations in order to get attendants from other disciplines to get interested in gerontechnology.

The Assembly approved the proposal to have the next conference in Pisa.

Vice president Neil Charness gave a short overview of the Miami ISG congress 2002. The number of participants, 161, was a little too small which resulted in a small loss. But the conference as such was good and appreciated.

Vice president Mitsuo Nagamachi, general chair for the organising committee, gave an overview of the Nagoya conference. Organising committee president was Noritaka Shimizu, senior advisor to the board, Toyota Motor Corporation. Professor Kazuo Yamaba chaired the local organising committee, and Ken Sagawa the program committee. Final number of accepted papers was 142 and accepted posters 26. The number of participants was 181 (turned out later to be as high as 200).

4. Reports

Executive board report: The international society for Gerontechnology has been presented at many congresses during the last period in EU, US and Japan.

Publication committee: The journal is now the predominant medium for ISG. The Society could publish issues 2-4 of volume 2, and 1-4 of volume 3. Annelies van Bronswijk gave a short overview of the peer reviewing process and told the members that there are about 20 manuscripts in the various review phases at this moment, but still more manuscripts are needed.

Finance: Annelies van Bronswijk gave a short overview. The society has successfully got more and more members every year, the total number

now surpassing 100. In addition 15 libraries have subscribed to the journal. But still new members are needed, and all should be active in the recruiting of them. Regional Chapters (>25 members) are being founded in Japan (East Asia region), and later in Italy and the Nordic region. The Board succeeded in obtaining a loan from the Herman Bouma Foundation for Gerontechnology to finance part of the journal issues. Income from membership fees and subscriptions does not yet counter the costs of producing issues. To achieve a balance, income must increase. This may be done by increasing the membership and the number of subscribing libraries, or by selling advertisements. A third option is to combine the selling of advertisements with the associate membership. Associate (corporate) membership (1500 €/year) will then include receiving the journal and the right to advertise (half a page in each issue). Membership fee is unchanged, 100 €/year and 500 €/year for non-profit Associate Members.

ISG Articles of Association

The text published in Gerontechnology May 2005, Vol 3, No 4, (p260-262) was updated and subsequently approved. The approved version will be published on the ISG website.

(The Board has been enlarged, and meets in connection with the conference every 3rd year. Part of it, the new Council, meets every year. The associate secretary for the next conference participates in the Council.)

ISG Byelaw s

The text published in Gerontechnology Dec 2004, Vol 3, No 2, (p119-122) was updated and subsequently approved. The approved version will be published on the ISG website. The new Council replaces the old Board.

5. Elections

President, Herman Bouma, Netherlands, 2nd term
Editor-in-chief of the Journal, Annelies (J.E.M.H.) van Bronswijk, Netherlands, 2nd term

General secretary, Jan Ekberg, Finland, 2nd term
Treasurer, Wiet (L.G.H.) Koren, Netherlands, 2nd term

Vice-president as organizer of the Nagoya Conference: Mitsuo Nagamachi, Japan, 2nd term

Vice-President as organizer of the next conference: Paolo Dario, Italy

Associate secretary, Giuseppe Anerdi, Italy

Other Board Members:

Dario Bracco, Italy

Neil Charness, USA, Chairperson of the Editorial Board, 3rd term

Roger Coleman, United Kingdom

Francesco Franchimon, Netherlands, officer for advertisements and other paid news items in the Journal

Ramon M. Gutmann, Argentine

Kazuo Yamaba, Japan, 2nd term

Hans-Werner Wahl, Germany

Regional representatives: Old members continue. The list of names and addresses will be published on the ISG web sites. Possible changes can be communicated to the secretary general Jan Ekberg. E: jan.ekberg@stakes.fi

6. Future Activities 2002-2005

Sixth World Congress of Gerontechnology will be held on 20-23 May 2008 in Pisa, Italy.

The goal is to get more members, regional chapters, industrial associate members as well as more non-profit associate members.

7. Other Business

None

8. Next meeting

Next meeting will be in conjunction of the next congress in Pisa, in 2008.

Herman Bouma, Chairman of the meeting

Jan Ekberg, Secretary of the meeting

Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna wil organize the 2008 conference!

The Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna (SSSA, <http://www.sssup.it>) in Pisa is a public, residential university offering opportunities in research and advanced studies in social sciences (economics and management, law, political science) and experimental sciences (engineering, medicine and agricultural science). The School's mission is to educate students in a stimulating and active academic environment offering personalised undergraduate tutoring, graduate programs (master's and doctoral programs), and continuing education professional courses. The School participates in multiple and growing international networks of academic and other research institutions, exchanging programs with international professional and business associations, industry and public agencies in various research areas such as ap-



Entrance of Polo Sant'Anna Valdera restored in 2002

plied medical research, business organisation and training; basic and applied scientific research and cutting-edge technological development.

The research structure of the Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna is composed of several laboratories active in different research fields. Among them we cite:

The **ARTS Lab** (Advanced Robotics Technology and System Laboratory) founded in 1989, has been purposely established with the aim of carrying out theoretical and experimental research in biomedical robotics and bioengineering. More than 45 full-time multidisciplinary researchers investigate scientific and technological problems associated with the development of components and integrated systems for sensing devices, neuroscience, automatic control, information technology, telematics, bio-engineering, bio-mechatronics, humanoid robotics, bio-medical signal and movement analysis, training methodologies, innovative materials, innovation and technology transfer. The ARTS Lab has activated a Joint Laboratory for Research on Humanoid Robotics at the Waseda University of Tokyo, Japan.

The **CRIM Lab** (Centre for Research in Micro-engineering) was established at the SSSA with the specific mission to perform applied research on micro-mechatronics mainly in the biomedical field, and to implement service activities aimed at promoting the industrial take-up and exploitation. The CRIM Lab has more than 40 full time researchers possessing interdisciplinary expertise; a variable number of graduate students are also involved.



The newly built CRIM Lab of the Scuola, in use since 2003

The **E-Z Lab**, Research Centre on Technology and Support Services to Longevity, established in 2001, integrates expertises in bioengineering, social and economic sciences, human factors, market analysis, medicine and law and promotes project and cultural initiatives aimed at supporting the needs of senior citizens with the industrial innovation opportunities related to longevity.

Various research projects have been carried out in this frame. They include personal care facilities conforming to the variable profile of older or impaired users and integrated in a domotic network, the study of active prosthetic ambients to improve the safety and the quality of life of moderate cognitively impaired facilitating their living at home, while lightening the burden of caregivers. Particular attention is devoted to the development of mechatronic and robotic systems for the comprehension of the modification of the motor control strategies induced by the aging process and to assess in unstructured environment the performance of senior citizens. An important project (Peccioli for the Elderly) has been carried out in the last ten years together with the Municipality of Peccioli (a small village near Pisa), leading to a highly innovative network of social and healthcare services for the elderly, including a high-tech nursing home.

It will be clear from the above that the Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna is well equipped to organize the next international ISG Conference as has been stipulated by the General Assembly of the ISG in Nagoya in May this year.

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WORLD NEWS

Argentinean Initiative to Foster New Technology for Older Persons

In 2003, the Government of Argentina identified as a national priority the infrastructure creation for industrial development of technological aids for older citizens. The National Institute for Industrial Technology - INTI (www.inti.gov.ar), the country's official standards body and nationwide network of R&D centres, was mandated with the establishment of a research and development and industry liaison unit to achieve this strategic goal.

The Technology for Serving the Elderly R&D programme, which is scheduled to begin operations early in 2005, is to be an interface between industry (particularly SMEs) and INTI's network of specialty laboratories (including mechanical engineering, electronics, materials science, design, and human factors). SMEs aiming to develop new assistive products for the 3rd age market, but lacking the facilities or know-how for in-house development, can apply to INTI for research and product development to be performed on their behalf at INTI laboratories, resulting in advanced prototypes for market testing. In November 2004, INTI held in Buenos Aires the 'First Symposium on Technology in the Service of Older People'. Over 300 delegates,

from Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay, attended the event; they represented the entire professional spectrum of ageing issues, included experts in gerontology, geriatrics, cardiology, neurology, rehabilitation engineering, and institutional care. A considerable number of SME representative and private inventors (including an official of the National Association of Inventors) also participated; many of whom are eager to develop and market new technological products for the 3rd-age market. International key note speakers, invited from the USA and Israel, described their respective organisations' experiences in technology research and development for the benefit of older people. During the intensive two-day meeting, thirty papers were presented, covering a wide range of issues, including medical, economic, psychosocial, product engineering and design, and policy. In parallel with the symposium and programme launch, INTI has published on its web site three catalogues in Spanish: a catalogue of assistive and rehabilitative products developed and manufactured by Argentinean companies (www.inti.gov.ar/terceraedad/pdf/Catalogo_productos1.pdf); a general compendium of commercially available assistive devices (www.inti.gov.ar/terceraedad/pdf/Catalogo_ayudas2.pdf); and a showcase catalogue of work by a talented team of young industrial designers who were invited by INTI to create prototype assistive products for display during the symposium (www.inti.gov.ar/terceraedad/pdf/Catalogos_desarrollo3.pdf). Prizes were awarded for the best designs. Although several of these product ideas already have commercially available counterparts, the creative output of the group demonstrates Argentina's design talent at the disposal of companies wishing to enter this nascent market sector.

A book of the symposium presentations is expected to be published during 2005. For more information on this and INTI's programme on technology for older people, contact Ing. Rafael Kohanoff, email: rkohanoff@inti.gov.ar.

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FICDAT: A Festival of International Conferences on Disability, Aging, and Technology

This smorgasbord of professional meetings on ageing issues is to take place concurrently in Toronto during the period June 16-19, 2007. The four conference themes are (i) Growing older with a disability; (ii) Technology and Aging, (iii) Advances in neuro-rehabilitation, and (iv) Caregivers and essential partners in care. Under the aegis of FICDAT, the 2nd International Conference on Technology and Aging will ex-

plore how technological advances can contribute to a positive quality of life as we age. The conference will provide an opportunity for researchers, designers, policy makers and consumers to present and learn about new and innovative technologies being developed to help older adults participate fully in their daily lives. Topics of interest will include the design and use of assistive technology, smart homes and intelligent systems, technology for care giving, impact and outcomes of technology on quality of life, and policy and legislative issues, as well as topics related to safety and performance standards for new technologies. According to conference co-chair Dr. Geoff Fernie, the Festival is a concept that will allow four really significant conferences to be held in an environment in which there will be opportunities for greater interaction between the conference delegates, with economy of scale for conference administration. "It looks as though this is becoming quite a big event", Fernie told *Gerontechnology Journal*, "and several organizations are now partnering with individual conferences or are arranging events as pre- or post-festival activities."

Info: www.ficdat.ca

SIVA Portal of the Italian Government

A wealth of information on independent living in spite of physical restrictions is available on the SIVA portal of the Italian government on assistive technology and independent living. The site provides guidance on assistive technologies for independence, quality of life and participation in society of persons with disabilities. The portal contains both databases and other services for end users, professional and researcher. It includes a news section and a forum. The databases may be searched by both English and Italian key words.

Info: <http://siva.welfare.gov.it/ENG/>

e-Inclusion: Call for proposals

Twenty-nine million euros are to be allocated to shared cost collaborative projects within the e-Inclusion initiative - part of the European Commission's 6th Framework Programme (thematic area: Information Society Technologies). Proposals will be accepted until September 21, 2005. The two priorities of the current call are: (i) To mainstream accessibility in consumer goods and services, including public services through applied research and development of advanced technologies; This will help ensure equal access, independent living and participation for all in the Information Society; (ii) To develop next generation assistive systems that empower persons with (in particular cognitive) disabilities and

Calendar of Events

aging citizens to play a full role in society, to increase their autonomy and to realize their potential. Any type of legal entity (industrial, academic, non-profit, etc.) can apply for funding under this call.

Info:

www.cordis.lu/ist/directorate_f/einclusion

Ageing and future Research and Cohesion Policies in the EU

In 2005, people aged 65+ in the EU25 represent 16% of the total population of Europe or 24,5% of what is considered to be the working age population. By 2050, as a result of demographic changes, older people (65+) will constitute 29,9% of the population. In the context of Cohesion Policy, ensuring that EU Member States and regional and local institutions respond to the impact of these changes for their territories is going to be crucial. Public authorities will need to ensure that housing and services are designed for an increasing number of older citizens. These issues present both opportunities and challenges for those working on the 2007/13 European structural funds programmes. The European Parliament's 'Inter-group on Ageing', which includes European Members of Parliament from a range of member states, academics and representatives of European regions, recognises that consideration of ageing has tended to focus on the cost of more older people on public finances. However, they acknowledge that more needs to be done to promote awareness of the vital role of older people in leading their communities, and also in providing support and care to younger people and older, dependant people, and also work towards investing in projects to support older people to be active and productive.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

August 23 - 25, 2005

Accessible Design in the Digital World

Dundee, Scotland, UK

Organizer: Digital Media Access Group, Department of Applied Computing, University of Dundee

Info: www.accessinthedigitalworld.org/2005/

September 6-9, 2005

Assistive technology from virtuality to reality: 8th European Conference for the Advancement of Assistive Technology in Europe

Lille, France

Organizer: Package Lille

Info: www.aaate2005.com

September 23, 2005

From Care Reliance to Independence, International Biophilia Rehabilitation Conference

Berlin (DRFZ), Germany

Organizer: Deutsches Rheuma-Forschungszentrum

Info: www.biophilia.info/berlin

September 29 -October 1, 2005

VIVA 50plus; World Ageing & Generations Congress 2005

University of St. Gallen, St. Gallen, Switzerland

Organizer: Swiss Association for Demographic and Inter-Generational Issues

Info: www.viva50plus.org

October 9-12, 2005

ASSETS 2005: The 7th International ACM SIGACCESS Conference on Computers and Accessibility

Baltimore, Maryland, USA

Organizer: New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, New Mexico, USA

Info: asears@umbc.edu

October 23-26, 2005

White House Conference on Ageing 2005

Washington DC, USA

Organizer: US Department of Health and Human Services

Info: www.whcoa.gov

November, 2005

'Technology and Aging' event

Convention of the Gerontological Society of America,

New Orleans, LA, USA

Organizer: Formal Interest Group 'Technology & Aging'

Info: www.gsa-tag.org/2005/index.html

November 3-6, 2005

Caring Machines: AI in Eldercare

Washington DC, USA

Organizer: American Association for Artificial Intelligence

Info: www.misu.bmc.org/~bickmore/eldertech

Announcements of meetings and other events for the Gerontechnology Calendar should be submitted by e-mail to: j.e.m.h.v.bronswijk@gerontechnology.info. The editors decide to include or not include the announcement of a certain event.