

# Professional News

## PROFESSIONAL NEWS

### ISG\*ISARC2012 and its General Assembly

Who is afraid of ageing? The ISG\*ISARC2012 World Congress on Gerontechnology in Eindhoven, Netherlands of June 2012 was tasked with debating this interesting question. The conference provided an opportunity to bring together both academics and non-academics to discuss the methods and means for how we address this question in the context of a globally ageing population. The conference attracted participants from countries across the world (Asia, the Americas, Europe, Oceania), belonging to various disciplines such as health and well-being, ageing, psychology, sociology, computing, robotics and engineering, and professions (including engineering and health care delivery). Participants shared research and exchanged ideas with non-academics including engineers, medical doctors, nurses, policy makers, financial experts, social workers, pharmacy industrialists, students and even ... artists and older citizens. This made for a heady mix of knowledge and expertise and contributed to a lively discussion advancing our thinking of how best to support older people within their settings and contexts.

Conventional oral presentations were delivered through short power point presentations which remained the most efficient way to present core ideas. Moderated poster sessions also represented a popular method of dissemination for tailoring research to the different groups in the audience. Alongside traditional methods of presenting, the conference embraced different approaches including innovative and highly engaging live demonstrations in robotics. New media was also embraced with the use of video based dissemination, a special Gerontechnoplatform which provided new ways to engage participants, as well as a specially designed app for the smart phone of the participants. The conference was supported by social events to facilitate additional opportunities for contacts, networking and knowledge exchange.

From construction technology to the occupational robot, from telemedicine to actimetry, from platform organisations to complex business models, from care to cure and cure to care, from leisure to occupation, from working assistance to social inclusion, all innovative issues were actively debated in Eindhoven. Here, technology was in the right place, as a powerful new tool for services and human development, activities and care, and as supports for assisting older disabled persons and towards promoting active and healthy ageing. At the end, we are not sure that all participants could go home with a specific answer to some of the interesting questions raised, especially those concerning the diverse financial models needed to support technology uptake. But all the key ingredients were there to

provide some potential solutions.

In addition, the International Society for Gerontechnology held its biennial General Assembly (Eindhoven, June 27, 2012). The assembly appointed professor-emeritus Herman Bouma PhD to be the 2<sup>nd</sup> ISG-Grandmaster in Gerontechnology. It was also decided to invite Professor-emerita Vappu Taipale MD from Finland to accept this title at the ISG2014 conference.

Professor Paolo Dario PhD from Italy, organizer of the 2008 conference, became an honorary member of the society.

A Student chapter was formed and accepted with Julie Brown (USA) as president.

In addition the board was expanded to include delegates from a larger number of countries (in alphabetical order): **Australia** (Greg Tegart PhD, Elizabeth Karol PhD), **Botswana** (P. Sadasivan Nair PhD), **Brazil** (Carla Santana PhD, Laura Machado PhD), **Finland** (Jaana Leikas PhD, Lea Stenberg PhD), **France** (Mr. Patrick Malléa, Vincent Rialle PhD, Philippe Robert MD) Jeanne Tyrrell PhD), **Germany** (Hans-Werner Wahl PhD), **Israel** (Lawrence Normie MSc), **Japan** (Hiroyuki Umemuro PhD), **The Netherlands** (Michiel Brink MSc, Helianthe S.M. Kort PhD), **Norway** (Mr. Espen Helge Aspnes), **UK** (Anthea Tinker PhD), **USA** (Sarah Czaja PhD).

Last, but not least, Taiwan was chosen as the venue of the next conference in 2014 to be organized by the ISG-Sinophone chapter.

The Executive Committee 2012-2014 consists of Alain A. Franco (President), Kuo-Ming Wang (Vice-president and organizer of the next conference), Johanna E.M.H. van Bronswijk (Vice-president, ISG-organizer of the previous conference, and editor-in-chief of the journal), Ryan Woolrych (General Secretary), Alexander Peine (Treasurer), Yeh-Liang Hsu (Secretary of the next conference), and Frans J.M. van Gassel (Secretary of the previous conference)

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### New ISG-Grandmaster Herman Bouma's acceptance speech (June 28, 2012)

I wish to thank you deeply for the honour bestowed upon me. Indeed, gerontechnology has been both my work and leisure for some 20 years. However, efforts were embedded in a multitude of efforts by my colleagues, so much so that we often published together because our papers were the result of intense discussions over prolonged periods of time. My nomination today therefore radiates to many of my colleagues. Let me mention in particular Jim Fozard, our early expert in longitudinal studies, Jan Graafmans the tireless



communicator of the first decade, Vappu Taipale, our connection with policy and application fields and first president of ISG, and Jan Rietsema our dedicated worker on student education programs. It also radiates to Annelies van Bronswijk, founder and mother of our journal 'Gerontechnology'

with unremitting efforts 24/7, who triggered me into activity ever so often. Let me also thank Alain Franco, our president, who have blown new life in ISG by putting it on track with IAGG and allowed me this presidential session. The presenters of this session Don Bouwhuis, Neil Charness and Jim Fozard/Hans-Werner Wahl have provided us with direct proof of how far our insight in important subject matter has proceeded.

When we started the Gerontechnology movement more than twenty years ago, we had no clear picture of its future, let alone of the reality of today. What we knew was the direction to go, i.e. building a solid scientific basis for providing the increasing number of ageing people with the best fitting technological environment. In this, we have partly succeeded, because we have a much better understanding now why ageing people lag behind younger people in using the available technology for serving their needs and ambitions. We also know better how to diminish the gap in practice and we understand why so many practical projects were too superficial. As to technical innovations, these continue to come at a pace that we can only just follow and therefore cannot utilize at its potential. What we have not yet succeeded in is convincing the political and the business world to put our insights into practice, to remove the many organizational obstacles, and to invest in effective and focused training programs. In our visionary world, a ministerial department of education would include programs for ageing people as would the industrial world for introducing new products and services; effective prevention programs would increase independence and lower the costs of the health system, and situated training would prepare for a higher retirement age.

So, let me thank all of you again for this great honour. This very conference is witness of the importance of our mission and of the widespread progress in understanding both in theory and in applications. Let me stress once again: we did this together. Let me also thank my son Tjibbe and our three daughters Elisabeth, Coos, and Enricke who have experienced the other and per-

haps somewhat darker side of my present medal. I am also glad that some of our grandchildren can attend today. Finally, all the years, Elly has chosen to be my daily and most effective support, and with her involvement and experience in geriatrics, she helped me to channel my efforts and take me to the present.

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## **Francesco Franchimon PhD, outgoing Secretary-General**

The ISG and its president would like to say a big 'thank you' to the outgoing secretary-general, Francesco Franchimon. Francesco, involved as a young engineer since its PhD preparation, made a significant contribution to the society, both in his years as treasurer (2008-2010) and as secretary-general (2010-



2012). He took the ISG out of the red, helped formalise many aspects of both the society and the journal, worked tirelessly to promote the interests of gerontechnology globally, ensured the success of previous conferences, and was always loyal and supportive to ISG's president. Although Francesco will continue to be involved in an advisory capacity, his knowledge and expertise will be greatly missed by all. We wish Francesco all the best for the future in his new industrial and development responsibilities.

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## **Ryan Woolrych PhD, incoming Secretary-General**

Dr Woolrych completed his PhD at Manchester Metropolitan University in the UK and is currently employed as a post-doctoral research fellow at the Gerontology Research Centre at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada. He has worked on a number of funded research projects



in the UK concerned with the application and development of smart technologies, AAL solutions and remote monitoring devices. He has evaluated the impact of these various interventions in supporting older people, family members and formal caregivers. Projects have included:

SOPRANO (Smart Service-oriented programable smart environments for Older Europeans), SAPHE (Smart and Aware Pervasive Healthcare Environments), and SDM (Smart Distress Monitor for independent living). In these projects, Dr Woolrych has worked with a number of European universities, engineers and telecommunication companies from prestigious organisations such as Philips and British Telecom. Dr Woolrych has adopted participatory approaches to involving older people in the research, including setting up older people's advisory groups, facilitating drama workshops and conducting world cafe discussion groups. His broader research interests include: healthy ageing, gerontechnology and environmental psychology. Dr Woolrych will be assuming all duties of the secretary-general including: ISG chapter formalisation and development, assisting in the preparation and coordination for ISG international conferences, coordinating the executive board and enacting decisions, maintaining the bylaws and continuing development of the society. His aim is to further grow ISG as a society and ensure it's prominent role in supporting the development of gerontechnology, continuing on from the excellent work of Francesco.

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## Tilde Bekker PhD, outgoing Treasurer

The ISG thanks Tilde Bekker, who served as ISG-treasurer in the period between the ISG-conferences of Vancouver (2010) and Eindhoven (2012). Tilde provided valuable support to Francesco Franchimon in what was a difficult period of ISG business reorganization, first acting as an aid to the treasurer.



When Francesco was elected Secretary-General she continued to serve the Society and was appointed the society treasurer. The ISG is grateful for her engagement and wish her all the best in her academic career! Due to other commitments Tilde resigned as treasurer at ISG\*ISARC2012, replaced by Dr Alexander Peine.

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## Alexander Peine PhD, incoming Treasurer

Dr Alexander Peine holds a tenured position as assistant professor of Science, Technology and Innovation Studies (STIS) at Utrecht University, Netherlands. Before joining Utrecht University, he was a Max Weber post-doctoral fellow at the European University Institute (Florence,

Italy) and a principal investigator at the Center for Technology and Society at Berlin University of Technology. Dr Peine has studied industrial engineering in Germany, USA and The Netherlands, and he holds a PhD in sociology and business economics from Berlin University of Technology. Alexander's main lines of research focus on two aspects of technological innovations. First, he explores shifting roles of consumers in innovation processes of complex technical systems such as smart homes, telecare environments, or ambient intelligence. Secondly, he is interested in new technologies that serve the evolving needs of ageing persons ('gerontechnology'). In this context, he is particularly interested in bridging the fields of innovation studies and social gerontology to explore and theorize the 'socio-material constitution of later life'.

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## Professor Shigekazu Ishihara PhD, new president of the Japanese chapter

Starting December 2012,

Professor Shigekazu Ishihara has succeeded Professor Hiroyuki Umemuro, as president of the Japanese chapter of the ISG. Professor Ishihara is a certified professional ergonomist educated at Nihon University (BSc in psychology 1986, MSc 1987) and Hiroshima University (PhD in System science and engineering 1992). He went through the academic ranks from research assistant to full professor at the universities of Yamaguchi, Onomichi Junior, and Hiroshima International. Professor Ishihara is currently employed by the Departments of Kansei Design and of Assistive Technology, Faculty of Psychological Science, Hiroshima International University, Japan. His general area of interest consists of product development and improvement with ergonomics, gerontechnology, and Kansei engineering. Current projects concern home electric appliances, bedsores preventive beds and mattresses, and developing brain and physical fitness games for older adults and persons with restrictions. The ISG Japanese Chapter is excited to develop and adapt technologies to such modern elders.

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