Interactive Media Systems for Seniors

UbiComp 2006, Orange County, CA

Aim

Supporting independent living and social engagement to improve quality of life

Requirements

1. Understanding user needs / feelings / emotions / coping strategies / mental models
2. Get elders to participate in needs / requirements identification, for example through participatory design / focus groups /questionnaires

Goals

1. Improving physical/emotional health
2. Making existing technology accessible
3. Extending social networks
4. Allowing empowerment in society
5. Engage research community in this topic

Issues

1. Facilitate the diffusion of innovation through user / developer dialog (e.g. physical / social context awareness) to enable elders' use of technology and innovations
2. Technology must be transparent to users
3. Get underlying true needs and opinions – difficult with elders
4. Gender, behavior, and preferences differences
5. Social environment as driver / inhibitor of system user – e.g. frustration / errors / concerns about device theft
6. Over reliance on social helpers such as younger family members to serve as technology brokers

Solutions

1. Using metaphors that are familiar to elders (but new to interactive media space) to aid understanding
   - elder-friendly "newspaper" format
   - repurposed television/phone
   - family photo albums
   - address book for non-business user
2. User centered design / user-friendly systems for elders
3. Simple/adaptable interfaces/ more functionally focused - reduce functionality to core needs

Anxo Roibas (chair), Lynne Harris, Jan Koch, Sri Kurniawan, Myungeun Lim, Jonathan Livingstone, Michael Massimi, Liam McDaid, Marcela Rodriguez, Risto Sarvas