



***Empowering older people:
an overview of AGE
research and policy
activities***



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Research projects for older people's independent living

Focus on ICT, health and mobility

- OASIS: 7FP, 01.01.2008 – 31.12.2011
- VERITAS: 7FP, 01.01.2010 – 31.12.2013
- DREAMING: CIP PSP, 01.05.2008 – 01.05.2011
- HOME SWEET HOME : CIP PSP, 01.01.2010 – 31.12.2012



Focus on ICT and older workers

- GOLDENWORKERS : 7FP, 01.10.2011 – 31.12.2012



The future of ageing research

- FUTURAGE : 01.09.2009 – 31.12.2011
- BRAID: 7FP, role as Advisory Board 03.2010 – 03.2012
- AALIANCE 2: 7FP, 01.10.2011 – 30.09.2013



OASIS: holistic services for older people

www.oasis-project.eu



OASIS targets to develop ICT and other key technologies in order to provide holistic services to older people to support their physical and psychological independence stimulate their social or psychological engagement and foster their emotional well being.

In doing so, OASIS addresses key areas of their activities encompassing: independent living and socializing, autonomous mobility and flexible work-ability.

The project listens to the users' voices through dedicated **User Fora** organized by AGE (*last project User Forum: November 2011 in Milan*) which allow older people to interact directly with the applications' developers and to influence the devices' development according to a more user-friendly approach.

AGE has moreover established an accessible e-learning platform on the key OASIS subjects: nutrition advisory, mobility information support, health monitoring and brain skill training services, which are all connected through an Oasis social platform.

VERITAS: virtual reality Designing For All

www.veritas-project.eu



VERITAS develops an open framework to provide accessibility support at all stages of realization of mainstream ICT and non-ICT technologies.

The project aims at delivering to product/software developers instructions embedded in a virtual reality platform: users' features (age and sex, physical and cognitive impairments, ...) are embedded in virtual users (*avatars*), allowing developers to design products and services that inherit universal accessibility features and to test them in virtual setting, in a more efficient way.

AGE brings the users' viewpoints for shaping the project activities according to the principle of "Universal Design" and works for strengthening the dialog between the different stakeholders through User Fora gathering older people and people with disabilities to express their needs and concerns to the application developers since the very early stage of designing products and services.

DREAMING for independent living

www.dreaming-project.org



DREAMING (*Elderly friendly alarm handling and monitoring*) brings together a set of services which, packaged together, allow extending the independent life of elderly people while providing them with an equivalent level of safety as that they would enjoy in a protected environment such as an elderly home, and offering them a way of staying in touch with their loved ones even when the latter are away.



In addition, the DREAMING services (through biosensors, environmental sensors and medical support via videoconference) facilitate the management of chronic conditions in a home setting reducing the need to use the expenses resources of acute hospitals to a bare minimum.

Real life trial in several countries: Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Italy, Sweden and Germany

AGE assures the involvement users through the project **Advisory Board, made up by experts on health and ICT** that provide a critical vision and advise the development of policy recommendations.

HOME SWEET HOME

thanks to home assistance

www.homesweethome-project.be



HOME SWEET HOME trials a new, economically sustainable comprehensive set of home assistance services which supports older people in their daily activities and allows carers to remotely assess their ability to stay independent.

While systems of this kind inevitably represent an intrusion in the older people's private life, HSH privileges features which can be used by the older people themselves and limits to a bare minimum the need for other people to interfere with their private life unless a clear need is detected by the system

As in the Dreaming project, AGE organizes **Advisory Board** meetings in order to bring a critical vision inside the project activities, to bridge the project's outcomes and their policy's implications, taking into particular account the ethical, privacy and security issues for both older people, families and carers.



FUTURAGE
A ROAD MAP for AGEING RESEARCH



For working the future European research on the needs and concerns of our ageing society, the involvement of older people is key!

Pooling with partners and stakeholders, AGE has contributed to the definition of principles of user involvement throughout the project by:

- *Identifying the barriers and solutions to the participation of older people and other user groups in research*
- *Establishing a lasting model of user involvement for European (ageing) research*
- *Integrating user perspectives, especially those of older people, into the process of generating the definitive Road Map*

Raising awareness on the challenges brought by user involvement is nowadays a priority: AGE works for boosting the discussion at policy level focusing on:

- *how researchers and public authorities can support the users' engagement;*
- *how industries can ensure that older people's expectations and needs are taken on board;*
- *how older people express their expectations and needs to researchers and service/product developers.*

User Involvement: Overarching issues 1/4

1. Who are the users?



- **Who are the users?** Defining end users depends on the research objectives and the selected methodology
- **How representative is the user sample?** Attention to include non-mainstream/ marginalized user groups and not to treat different situation in the same way (i.e. old and young old, gender issues, seniors living in rural and urban areas etc). Need to redefine age groups; 65+ age group is insufficient. Promote equal participation
- **How to engage carers, professionals and other actors in ageing research?** Engage retired professors and experts, liaise with older people's organizations, disseminate research outcomes and role of media

User Involvement: Overarching issues 2/4

2. User-centred approach



- To ensure user acceptance products and services should meet the actual needs and expectations of the users and their environment;
- Users are already a market: industry and research should not be driven by the technology push only.
- Need to raise awareness on the users' needs, need to find the right balance between mainstream products and targeted solutions.

**Explore ways to bring users in the discussion:
engaging users means acquiring efficiency, efficacy
and consistency.**

User Involvement: Overarching issues 3/4

2. Involving users at all stages



- **No one-fits-all solution**
- **Early user involvement is the best option for research:** it is quite complex, as it means overcoming barriers, like enabling people to use their own voice, engaging in a long-term creative dialogue with users or recruiting experts to carry out sociological work, etc. but leads to the best results.
- **Late involvement:** high risk that the feedback from the users will not be implemented

User Involvement: Overarching issues 4/4

4. Funding challenges



- **Funding conditions a principal concern:** user involvement means to ensure accessible travel & accommodation, accompanying guides, translations and interpreting, ect.
- **The resources matter:** not only money, but also human resources (that must be trained and aware of user needs)
- **Local authorities important actors**
- **Better link and coordination** among European research with the local, national and regional level
- **Exchange of good practices**

Some conclusions

- **User involvement not separate but a cross-cutting issue**, which also bridges research and policies
 - **Catalyzing a strong recommendation for User Involvement:** AGE next brochure as *practical guidance* for user involvement in research and policy making serves the scope
 - **Inclusive approach to involvement:** pooling different stakeholders together and empower people to get involved
 - **Involve at all stages**, also by means of the opportunities and challenges offered by the European and International framework
- ✓ ***The European Year 2012 for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generation:*** raising awareness on older people's concerns and added value
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/ey2012.jsp?langId=en>
- ✓ ***The European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing - EIP AHA:*** enabling citizens to lead health, active and independent lives when ageing, responding to the challenges of ageing
- ✓ ***The International Action Plan on Ageing:*** mainstreaming ageing issues into development and implementation agendas



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