56TH COMMISSION for SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Strategies for eradicating poverty
to achieve sustainable development for all

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Division for Social Policy and Development

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Why are Digital Skills Critical for Older Persons?

02 February 2018 1:15-2:30pm

Conference Room 12, United Nations Headquarters, New York

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AGEWELL
Aging Gracefully across Environments using Technology to Support Wellness, Engagement, and Long Life

UHN Toronto Rehabilitation Institute

IATSL Intelligent Assistive Technology and Systems Lab

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

AGE-WELL NCE: Canada's technology and aging network

Discussion questions

1. How can we invest in life-long learning and continuing education to ensure that older persons have the chance to acquire digital skills?

2. In what ways can we make innovation and technology accessible to older persons so that they don't miss out on their benefits?

To do list
("wish list" for supporting digital inclusion of older persons)

- ❑ Eliminate ageism
- ❑ Embrace diversity of seniors
- ❑ Ensure citizenship of seniors

- ❑ Be user-centred and inclusive: engage seniors in the design of technology products and services, programs and policies

Ageism

- Societal and individuals' stereotypes and prejudices directly influence what is expected of seniors, what is believed they can achieve, what they do, and how they experience the world.
- Ageism is harmful and exclusionary and yet pervasive and "normalized" (WHO, 2018).

"Ageism leads to the invisibility of senior citizens, making it vitally important to name ageism wherever and whenever we experience it. It is only by naming ageism that we can resist it."

(B. Trentham, Care Watch Ontario, 2017)

Many implications of ageism

- Needs are ignored: Technology products and services are not designed with seniors in mind, resulting in poor usability, user dissatisfaction, and low uptake.
- Design processes do not adequately engage seniors: There are significant gaps in methods for design of technology for seniors (Munteanu et al. 2017).
- Learning how to use technology is influenced by ageist attitudes (Legace et al. 2015).
- Without technology use, seniors miss opportunities to influence policy decisions that impact them (Trentham et al. 2015).

Diversity

- There is more diversity among older persons than among any other age group.
- Diversity arises from multiple factors, in addition to long life and the high differentiation of experiences.
  - Characteristics – e.g. age cohorts, sex/gender, sexual orientation, work life, marital status, cultural backgrounds, spirituality
  - Abilities – e.g. physical, cognitive, functional
  - Social and family structures
  - Living situations, socioeconomic status

Citizenship

- Citizenship means having rights and responsibilities.
- Seniors are devalued in an ageist society (considered “not productive”, “not contributing”, “dependent”) and lose their citizenship and rights.
- We need to recognize and support the full citizenship of seniors – recognizing their contributions and using a rights-based approach.

- Further, we as citizens have a responsibility to ensure that we design the world for everyone to participate in, and that everyone has the opportunity to achieve their goals and have their needs met.

User-centred and inclusive

- User-centredness and inclusivity are critical as we engage seniors in the design of technology products and services, programs and policies.
- This requires shared understandings of people's values, abilities, and goals in order to co-create environments that are supportive for learning, use of products and services, and development of technology and policies.
- This means committing to development with seniors who are not only the mainstream, but seniors with disabilities and others who are at risk for marginalization.

From user-friendly to senior-friendly digital technologies: improving the practice of user experience design

Cosmin Munteanu, Taciana Pontual, Karyn Moffatt

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Perspectives on ICT for daily activities and social inclusions among older Canadians with cognitive impairments and their caregivers

Rosalie Wang, Virginie Cobigo, Vanessa Chenel, Hajer Chalghoumi, Winne Sun, Mike Wilson, Jeff Jutai

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Rural/remote Indigenous technology needs exploration - Development and use of health-related technologies in Indigenous communities: a critical review

Louise Jones, Kristen Jacklin, Megan O'Connell

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Jones L, Jacklin K, O'Connell ME. Development and Use of Health-Related Technologies in Indigenous Communities: Critical Review. J Med Internet Res 2017;19(7)

Thank you!

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1. What are the needs of older adults and caregivers and how could technology be used to meet those needs?
2. What technology-based systems and services should be used to enhance the health and well-being of older adults and support independent living?
3. How can innovation be fostered in the short and long-term to benefit older people, health care providers and Canadian industry?

Myths about older persons

They are frail, weak, senile and disabled.

They have difficulties learning new things or do not like to change.

They are no longer productive and stop contributing to society.

They don't like new technology.