

New Technologies and Older People's Quality of Life

Design and Technology to Assist Ageing in Place

A symposium convened by
Professor Gail Mountain
Sheffield Hallam University
Professor Peter Lansley
University of Reading

Agenda

- Introductory Comments
- SPARC
- Four SPARC Projects
- Discussion

What is Interdisciplinary Research?

- Research involving a group of researchers from seemingly disparate disciplines
- The common goal is to investigate questions which cross traditional boundaries of the humanities, natural, medical and social sciences
- Involvement of end users can be a common thread extending across projects

Importance of Interdisciplinary Research

- Able to address complex questions which span different discipline areas
- Can avoid “reinventing the wheel”
- More likely to result in outcomes of value to end users

Fostering Interdisciplinary Gerontological Research

AgeNet

NCAR

EQUAL Consortia and Network

SPARC

NDA

The EQUAL Initiative: Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council

- Aims to stimulate high quality, novel research addressing the needs of older people and others that need additional support to lead a full and active life
- Collaborative research between engineers, scientists and organisations that can bring the user perspective to bear

Examples of Interdisciplinary Collaborations under EQUAL

Design + Health + Engineering + Psychology

Humanities + Architecture + Social science +
Clinicians

Medical physics + Social Science + Researchers
from voluntary sector + Industry

Impact of EQUAL (1997-2001-....)

- Multidisciplinary, collaborative, user-engaged approach
 - Housing, urban design, accessibility, product design
 - Physical, sensory and cognitive impairment
 - Especially important contributions in relation to vision, stroke recovery and dementia
- Major impact on British Standards, Building Regulations, Housing Corporation requirements....
- Influence on best practice in a range of social, health, planning and design professions
- Disproportionate contribution made by designers

SPARC (2005-2008)

- Response to lack of progress and leadership in ageing research in early 2000s
- Focused on preserving commitment to ageing research fostered by EPSRC between 1997 and 2002 (researchers, practitioners and older people) and maintaining momentum and success of its interdisciplinary, collaborative user-involved approach
- Concerned with building capacity especially amongst early-career academics

Three Activities - Awards

- 34 Small Awards to newcomers to ageing research
 - across design, engineering and biology (only EPSRC and BBSRC prepared to support SPARC) but many projects include a large contribution from social and medical sciences
 - nearly 200 proposals

Awards

- £20,000 - £60,000
- 1 year - 18 months
- mentoring
- editorial assistance
- platform
 - national workshops
 - entree to international networks
- Lifelong networks

From Furniture Design to Stem Cells

■ Projects

- Life in the Home - 3
- Care Systems - 1
- The Older Worker - 2
- Product Design - 2
- Urban Design - 1
- Interface Design - 2
- Transport & Driving - 3
- Cognition & Communication - 3
- Vision - 3
- Activity, Exercise & Nutrition - 3
- Oxidative Stress & Ageing - 3
- Fundamental Mechanisms of Normal Ageing - 5
- Chemical Biology of Ageing - 3

■ People

- 100 investigators and researchers
- 100 scientific and professional collaborators
- Smallest Research Council ageing activity in terms of funding but largest in terms of numbers

Three Activities - Workshops

- Workshops for all stakeholders in ageing issues
 - showcasing ageing research and challenges for ageing research
 - 33 workshops since early 2005, some overseas, more to come

Workshops for All

- One week in March 2007
 - *Ageing Research and Occupational Therapy: building partnerships, creating opportunities*
 - included presentation from HRH The Princess Royal
 - *Anglo-Japanese Werner's Syndrome Consortium*
 - Tokyo
 - *Designs for a Caring Society*
 - British Polio Fellowship, Caversham Methodist Church Hall

Three Activities - Advocacy

- Advocacy of ageing research
 - to policy makers and influencers
- Making the case that ageing research can and is making a difference
- Lobbying
- Developing a good track record
 - MPs do listen!
 - Two questions in Parliament on: Ageing Research; Older Workers
 - Ministers do listen (but most Civil Servants don't!)

Today's Presentations

- Perm any 4 from 34!
- Chosen to illustrate the theme of **New Technologies and Older People's Quality of Life**

- Design and the home
 - *Professor Paul Chamberlain, Sheffield Hallam University*
- Synthetic Speech for Older Ears
 - *Dr Maria Klara Wolters, Edinburgh University*
- Multimodal augmented reality to support ageing in place
 - *Dr Shaun Lawson, University of Lincoln*
- Older Better: Improving transport – practical options for Leeds
 - *Dr Mima Cattan and Jennifer Woodward, Leeds Metropolitan University*

A taste of SPARC

- There is a great deal more to SPARC
 - so, please see brochure and contact me
- www.sparc.ac.uk
- p.r.lansley@reading.ac.uk