Engaging Older Adults through World Cafés

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SIFO: involving citizens in deliberative processes
Context: the Assisted Living project

• Multiple aims
  • Implement RRI as research process; develop technological solutions; increase dignity through process and products

• Pluridisciplinary
  • Computer science; nursing sciences; occupational therapy; ethics; sociology

• Plurisectorial
  • Academia; SME; services

• International
  • UK, DE, NO
Object: assistive technology

- Users: older adult (with cognitive reduction)
- Context: home (or not extensive care institution)
- Type of tech
  - Home monitoring
  - Condition I: dependent on SME
  - Condition II: machine learning
- Underlying thought:
  - Users are best at deciding what they want & need
Original idea: large forums

• Partner review on engagement methods
  • Small groups
  • Brief sessions
  • Well-known settings
  • De-personalize / externalize
  • Separate next-of-kin and older adults

• Gave new format: dialogue café
• Stepwise recruitment process

• The researchers discussed the content prior to each of the five dialogue cafes including: aim, content, scenarios of Helmer and Nora, and written instructions were developed

• The researchers performed a 'dry-run' cafe to prepare and make adaptations prior to each cafe

• The researchers had a pre-meeting one hour before each cafe

• The researchers had a meeting after each cafe

• Group leaders and reporteurs made written reports from each cafe

• The written reports were discussed in a project meeting and put to ground for planning the next cafe

• One resident was invited into the preparation of the 5th dialogue cafe, together with engineer, technical adviser and researchers to discuss how to present machine learning
Role of Dialogue Café in development

- Project start – December 2015
- Proposed solutions for the residents at dialogue conference 31.5.2017
- Rolled out to all apartments December 2017

- Discussing needs at dialogue conference 26.10.2016
- Feasibility study in a single apartment June - August 2017
- Rollout strand 2 + abandonment of strand 1 January 2018
Themes and purposes for the 6 cafés

1. Exploratory café – understanding the users and their needs.
2. Dissemination of the potential of future solutions via examples.
3. Evaluate low-tech existing solutions – the residents view.
4. Recruitment of users for a field trial of existing technology
5. Recruitment of users for a field trial to provide data for Machine Learning studies
6. Closing the project
Challenges in everyday lives:

1. **Falls** – the fear of falling, injury and not getting help.
2. **Being outdoors** and access to fresh air. Being safe when out of the house was crucial.
3. **Ability to orient oneself at night.** Dark environment and possibly impaired vision may influence navigation/orientation at night.
4. “**Button-phobia**”. Technology can be difficult to use, due to small buttons and unfamiliar interfaces, passwords, and codes.
5. **Social contact** with others can be challenging.
6. **Safety** at home. This is multifold and associates to not always getting help when required and within short time, access to their apartment by helpers even if the door is locked.
7. **Sleeping** sufficiently and well. Challenges include the difficulty to fall asleep, waking up frequently during the night, and/or waking up too early in the morning.
8. **Self-sufficiency** and autonomy. Even if the residents do feel relatively autonomous and self-sufficient, their daily routines need to conform to the schedule of others.
How did the Dialogue Cafés work?

• A meeting point for the different disciplines
• A social event for the participants
• Computer science felt it valuable
• Focus on needs > very open
• Several disciplines / sectors with different participatory methods
• Field trial > none of the test persons needed the system (and the system didn’t work)
• Little stringency between format, purpose and expected outcome
• Challenge in limiting ourselves to one place for inclusion & testing