

SENIOR LAUNCHING WORKSHOP

Social, Ethical and Privacy Needs in ICT for Older People: A Dialogue Roadmap

3 March 2008, Brussels



Executive Summary

The SENIOR Launching Workshops, held on the 3rd March, 2008 in Brussels at the Centre Albert Borschette provided an opportunity to reflect on the social, ethical and privacy needs in ICT for older people in order to plan strategies for governing future trends. The conference drew a wide range of people from different backgrounds, industries, social activists, academics and policy-makers.

With the introduction of ethical and social questions into age-based e-inclusion, this workshop offered a good opportunity to all of us to see and study critically current developments closely. The SENIOR Launching Workshop was significant as one of the first meetings on e-inclusion to focus on ethics, ICT and senior citizens. Therefore, the meeting was truly challenging.

We think this workshop brought us much useful information to which we can refer when exploring ethical, social needs in ICT for the elderly. We believe it has stimulated interest in the next event to be held in Brussels in June 2008, and we look forward lively stakeholder participation.

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1. Introduction

SOCIAL, ETHICAL AND PRIVACY NEEDS IN ICT FOR OLDER PEOPLE: DIALOGUE for a ROADMAP (SENIOR) is a 24-month support action which aims to provide a systematic assessment of the social, ethical and privacy issues involved in ICT and Ageing, to understand what lessons should be learned from current technological trends, and to plan strategies for governing future trends. While new technologies hold great promise, they also pose risks to privacy and ethical principles. The SENIOR consortium is committed to investigating how new ICT can meet the needs of senior citizens without compromising privacy and ethics. Thus, SENIOR is based on three main principles, which determine the main phases of this project: its goal is inclusion, dialogue is its instrument and technology design is its target.

The SENIOR contribution to policy implementation is twofold. First, SENIOR will describe the ethical and privacy impacts of ICT for inclusion. This objective will be achieved through a series of thematic expert meetings. Each meeting will (i) define ICT system solutions and technology trends, (ii) discuss relevant ethical and privacy issues and (iii) weigh the trade-offs between privacy, ethics and technological innovation. Second, the project will identify ICT services and solutions that avoid exclusion and promote inclusion of senior citizens and will develop a roadmap showing how ethics and privacy principles could be incorporated in technology design. The roadmap will set out key actions, investment strategies, resource requirements, risks and milestones.

2. Opening session

The opening session was chaired by Serge Gutwirth (VUB) . SENIOR project co-ordinator Emilio Mordini (CSSC), the SENIOR project officer Silvia Bojinova (ICT for Inclusion; European Commission) and the head of Unit DG INFSO, Paul Timmers (ICT for Inclusion; European Commission - HoU) welcomed participants and emphasised the importance of the meeting. Stefano Rodotà (University of Rome, La Sapienza) delivered the keynote address. Prof Mordini introduced the SENIOR project and focused on some key concepts and issues, e.g., the concept of ageing as a culturally constructed notion. Mordini presented a critical introduction to the historically constructed age categories of western societies, i.e., infancy, adulthood and the elderly. Paul Timmers and Silvia Bojinova spoke of their expectations of the SENIOR project in the context of current EC activity on ageing and e-inclusion. Prof Rodotà put privacy policy in context and raised important questions regarding privacy impacts on senior citizens as a result of new technologies. He explored critically the notion of the *human divide*, and a market-oriented approach to the

inclusion of senior citizens as active participants in our society. Prof Rodotà said inclusion should not be driven only by the market logic because in that case the wealthy elderly will be included while the poorer will not. The social divide would not so much be between senior citizens and young people, but rather between the rich and the poor. Prof Rodotà suggested that a fresh approach to privacy issues is needed regarding the elderly. He said senior citizens must be respected and that interventions affecting their lives, environment and bodies should be based on their informed consent. He pointed out the challenges of informed consent, however, by stating that it is a necessary, though not a sufficient, condition when dealing with vulnerable people.

3. Morning session

The first panel was chaired by Guido Van Steendam (IFB) and focused on Industrial Strategies on Privacy and Ethics. The first presentation was given by Peter W. Ravn (Bang & Olufsen Medicom). He spoke about user friendly medical devices, compliance enhancement, drug administration and diagnostic systems. He said his company aims to contribute to better health by creating innovative solutions to improve patient compliance. Mr Ravn pointed out the main principles underlying the development of such devices (e.g., non-stigmatising, non-medical appearance, respectful, intuitive, easy to use, emotional appeal).

Peter Hanel (Motorola), the next presenter, dealt with “Embedding Principles and Ethical Principals into Industrial Technological Strategies”. He opened his presentation with a general consideration on how to define elderly, and emphasized the importance for strategic reasons of defining the environment in which technologies are to be used. He mentioned the subjective considerations for various industries and his main conclusions were indeed on subjectivity, diversity and technological development. He said that “there is hardly one solution for everybody”. He pointed out the following:

1. Ethical and privacy matters are treated differently in the various regions of the world.
2. Industry has to consider development in terms of time and costs.
3. The purpose of any new development has to be defined precisely.
4. Technology exists or can be made available but different national standards and unclear procedures make integration complex.
5. Fall-back scenarios have to be in place.
6. Customer information is of the highest importance.

Peter Went (WCC), the next speaker, talked about importance of perception with a focus on the “big brother” notion and the lack of focus on “what is in it for me”. Media like to talk about and common people like to learn about the evil “big brother”, magnified by US Visit referring to foreigners as “aliens”, “Minority report” and other such things. When technology and biometrics are being “sold” to the common people,

typically then is referred to global threats (eg. Terrorism) and global fraud (eg. People claiming welfare multiple times) as argumentation to implement such technologies. It seems that no one is focusing really on the benefits that technology and biometrics bring to an individual. Surveillance cameras in my neighborhood allow me to safely stroll the streets in the evening, biometric identification when claiming welfare reduces fraud reducing my tax burden with so many euros per month etc.. He argued about creating more awareness on these personal benefits and by doing that improving the public perception with regards to technology and biometrics. Mr. Went also gave several examples how the industry is working hard to address the legitimate concerns with regards to privacy. He mentioned specifically encryption, where biometrics can be used as private key allowing for convenient authentication, strong authentication and highly secure/private authentication. He also mentioned anonymous recognition, which physically separates biometric properties of a person by which that person can be identified from descriptive properties like name and address. Such initiatives are often taken by niche players/smaller companies and Mr Went urged the commission/government officials to consider embracing/sponsoring such great initiatives with pilot projects, loans or possibly funding. The last presenter in this panel was Thomas Myrup Kristensen (Microsoft) Kristensen who began his presentation with a critical introduction on stereotyping the elderly and framed his presentation on how Microsoft tries to combat these stereotypes by including older people into the market of their technologies. Following the presenters, there was a question-and-answer session with a discussion on how ethics and market-oriented technology can go together and whether there are ethical limits to the market.

The second panel, chaired by Kush Wadhwa (GSI), looked at various technology perspectives. The first presentation was given by Ase Kari Haugeto (Norwegian Board of Technology), who introduced her project on *Future Aging*. She gave some specific examples of the role of technology in meeting the needs of older people. She talked about the challenges, noted some useful technologies, discussed their ethical implications and how the project is dealing with the dilemmas and planning for the future in Norway. She several important questions such as:

- Who decides the technology to use?
- On what basis are the decisions made?
- What alternatives exist?
- Who gets the information?
- How is the information handled?

The second speaker of this panel was Paul de Hert (VUB) who pondered the concept of inclusion, the politics and ethics of digitalization, and meeting the social, ethical and privacy needs of senior citizens. He said the recently adopted Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) pointed to two possible and different approaches to ‘weak’ people, a minority rights approach and a human rights approach.

He compared formal and substantial equality and how these perspectives protect the right to obtain positive measures from the community. He suggested that a human rights or universalist approach to inclusion had advantages compared to a minority rights approach where the emphasis was on difference and deviance from the norm. According to Prof De Hert, the universalist approach values social diversity and membership. This panel final presentation was made by Yolande Berbers (University of Leuven) who talked about ambient intelligence. Ambient intelligence refers to electronic environments that are sensitive and responsive to the presence of people. She made reference to Mark Weiser who said that “There is more information available at our fingertips during a walk in the woods than in any computer system, yet people find a walk among trees relaxing and computers frustrating. Machines that fit the human environment instead of forcing humans to enter theirs will make using a computer as refreshing as taking a walk in the woods”. In this view, *intelligent* refers to three characteristics in the context of ambient sensitive technology: 1. “aware” of the specific characteristics users; 2. adapting to needs and context of users; 3. unobtrusive, intuitive.

4. Afternoon session

There were two panel sessions in the afternoon. The first dealt with fundamental rights in the information society and the second was on the ethics of ICT and e-inclusion with a focus on EC initiatives.

The first panel in the afternoon was chaired by David Wright (Trilateral Research & Consulting). In his introduction, he mentioned his work on the first SENIOR report which was an environmental scan of relevant policies, projects and resources with the aim of identifying the most important issues, clustering of projects and issues, junctures, gaps and steps towards a dialogue roadmap. He then referenced key articles in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights in the context of the Information Society. He asked if we are adequately protecting those rights in the Information Society and, if not, what issues we need to be concerned about and how we should address them.

The first speaker in this panel was Anne-Sophie Parent (AGE). She discussed what ICT can bring to older people in three contexts: ageing at work, ageing in the community and ageing at home. Ms Parent raised the main concerns of her members regarding ethical and privacy issues and stressed the need to address the reluctance of many older people, in particular the very old, for what they consider as intrusive systems. She concluded her presentation with a few words on the role NGOs can play in helping older people to make the best of ICT in assisting them to live independently, monitoring their health and remaining active in their community.

The second speaker was Roberto Tavano (UNISYS) who addressed the importance and role of trust building with consumers and citizens. He described how to increase and strengthen trust in a global perspective. He also discussed the concept of privacy exchange.

He was followed by Renee Coen (Mutualite Socialiste) who talked about her empirical experience in teaching older people how to use computers and mobile phones. She spoke of the initial psychological barriers and challenges and then explained how she and her colleagues try to help these people overcome their apprehensions and unwarranted concerns about being too old to learn how to use these devices, and their feelings of isolation. She especially drew attention to their great happiness and sense of purpose when, after their training, they realized that they could master these technologies.

5. Closing session

The closing session, chaired by Emilio Mordini (CSSC), provided a round table discussion with representatives of the European Commission. Maurizio Salvi (EC) gave an overview of the policies regarding ICT and Ageing in the EU context. Peteris Zilgalvis (DG Research) described the current works of his Ethics Unit. Next, Paul Timmers (DG Information Society and Media) spoke about the EC's action plan on Ageing Well and e-Inclusion. He noted current challenges and referred to what has been done in this field since 2005. He also addressed the notion of ethics in ICT, which, as he put it, "goes beyond the obvious and it is not only about privacy". He said ethics in ICT deals with phenomena such as access and accessibility, choice, conduct, identity, misuse, harmful content (e.g. spam, virus, ID theft, hacking), rights, transparency and trust. Following this overview, Mr Timmers made reference to upcoming events including the Bled Workshops on Ethics and ICT organised by the European Commission under the Slovenian EU presidency and the next SENIOR workshop.

In his final remarks, SENIOR co-ordinator Emilio Mordini (CSSC) said that all technologies are assistive and the question really is what ethical, social and political factors are taken into account when planning assistive technologies; that is, what needs do they assist. Prof Mordini reminded participants that not all human limitations can and should be solved through technology.

6. Conclusion

With the introduction of ethical and social questions into age-based e-inclusion, this workshop offered a good opportunity to participants to discuss current developments and to exchange views. Participants were invited to take part actively in the SENIOR project. The SENIOR consortium offered three main ways to involve interested people in the project: 1. Participating in the socio-anthropological workshop in June; 2. Joining the expert meetings and 3. Taking part of in the interview series with internationally renowned, opinion leaders.

