Towards the Co-Construction of Web 2.0 with Older Users?

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Kirkwood, 2001 Reith lecture

- 'IT can transform the lives of older people, providing contacts, information, entertainment and access to specialised services. It can enable radical new models of health care and support for older people living at home, effecting savings that would amply repay the costs of installing an internet connection in every house…'

Disconnected Older People

- Age still significant variable for internet use.
- UK - 84% aged 16-24, 52% aged 55-64, 15% aged 65+ Office National Statistics 2007.
- Younger Old (55 - 64) more likely to be online. 55% in USA.

Does it Matter?

- Contrasting images of aging: Dependency culture vs. third age active identity.
- Construction of older people as demographic burden vs. independent empowered
- Former invites excessive socio-medical intervention and lower self esteem
- Latter envisions older people's engagement, choice and sense of worth.

Netting the Older User?

- Older user as homogenous, frail, immobile & dependent
- Telecare surveillance and monitoring
- Ignorant of value of ICTs
- Need access, awareness and skills training

Why don't older people use internet

- Access, health or wealth not significant
- Many older people find internet irrelevant
- Public access often not appropriate
- Concerns over privacy & surveillance
- Often prefer f-t-f communication (particularly with service providers)

Co-Construction of ICTs

- Challenge linear model of great inventor, design, development and diffusion.
- Instead technologies capable of interpretative flexibility - different social groups could construct radically different meanings of technology
- SCOT developed co-construction or mutual shaping of social groups and technologies. I.e. users involved in framing technologies. - "agents of technological change" Pinch

The Third Age Go Online?

- Eric von Hippel - innovation increasingly undertaken by users & networks of users freely sharing innovations. - open source software.
- Manufacturers provide tools for user construction
- "Lead users" important for shaping technology

Web 2.0

- Not technical but socio-economic development - e.g.wikis & social networking, blogs, RSS feeds, podcasting
- User-centred, community sharing online development. E.g. co-construction
- Changing relationship between user-producer
- Visual and creative - flikker

Older people & web 2.0?

- Web 2.0 predominantly for younger people & may increase divides
- Who are relevant social groups of older people - representative groups? Age Concern, Help the Aged in UK
- Who are lead users? Absorbers - self starters (Ofcom)
- How to engage Non-users? Rejecters - disengaged

Policy research

- What gov/EU policies can stimulate open source & info sharing?
- Public services which demonstrate co-construction of telecare?
- Incentives for designers/companies to work with older users?
- Multidisciplinary sandpits including lead users?