



Project acronym: **Go-myLife**

Project full title: **Going on line: my social Life**

AAL Joint Programme



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## **D 8.3a: Training on interaction with older people**

Authors:

Michael Mulquin / IS Communications

Teresa Holocher-Ertl / ZSI

Maria Schwarz-Woelzl / ZSI

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<b>Author(s):</b>	Michael Mulquin, Teresa Holocher-Ertl, Maria Schwarz-Woelzl
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## Abstract

The training on interaction with older people, developed for the technical and social researchers of the Go-myLife partnership, aimed to tackle potential social barriers such as language, culture and educational background, which may hinder the process of communication with end-users. It aimed further to 'translate' the social research findings within WP2 into technical terms, as a joint process of the entire consortium. A one-day training workshop was conducted on the 12<sup>th</sup> of May 2011 at the National Technical University of Athens, facilitated by IS Communications and ZSI. This deliverable presents the training methodology, conclusion and the agenda.

## Keywords

Older people, technical researchers, social researchers, communication and interaction

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# 1 Interaction with older people – a training methodology for the Go-myLife partnership

The Go-myLife project consortium consists of both technical and social researchers. In the course of the pilot testing and evaluation, both types of partner have an equal need to communicate effectively with older people, either face to face or through their designs for the service.

This deliverable describes a one day workshop that was developed to ensure that the technical and social research members of the consortium were equipped to properly interact with older people in order to understand and meet their requirements for the Go-myLife service.

The workshop was divided into two sessions:

- The first session focused on potential pitfalls in communication between both the technical designers and the social researchers and older people. It provided an opportunity for participants to reflect on any stereotypical assumptions they might hold and consider how they might best tackle these, so that they could properly understand the requirements of older people and design effective services to meet those requirements.
- The second session used a variety of methods to “translate” the user needs and requirements, gained from the social research activities in WP2, into technical terms. These interactive methods ensured that the information gained from the investigation of communication patterns in social networks and the assessment of SN platforms gained from a) desktop research, b) interviews with operators of senior platforms and c) from seven participatory workshops, could be understood and implemented by the technical team. (See chapter 3 in D2.1)

This deliverable provides a detailed description of the programme and the objective of each activity on the agenda, with the aim of providing other AAL projects with a knowledge source of methodology when it comes to creating a common vision between social and technical researchers.

## 1.1 *Session one: Understanding and communicating with older people*

### Introductions

This sets the tone for the workshop by providing a safe and easy way for participants to begin to interact with the group, as well as anchoring them in their work in the project.

Implementation: Each participant had about 1 ½ minutes to tell the group:

- Their name
- The company or organisation they represent

- Their role in the project
- What work they have done on the project in the previous six months.

### **Sociometry – Differences and Commonalities**

This activity demonstrates the differences and commonalities within a particular group. It is a good way to warm-up and can serve as an energizer.

Implementation: A series of questions was asked of the group about their identity or experience and people kept moving into different groups according to their answers to each of these questions. The questions they were asked included:

- Whether it was their first time in that city or whether they had been there before
- Whether they are parents or not
- Whether they thought of themselves as technical or non-technical
- Whether they were men or women
- Whether they were football fans or not interested in football
- Whether they were young people, middle-aged people or older people

At the end of the questions, participants had the chance to share any thoughts or reflections from the exercise.

### **Identifying differences between life stages**

The aim was to help participants focus on the differing perspectives and experiences of people at different stages of life.

Implementation: Participants were split into three groups focusing on three different age groups

- Twenties and thirties
- Forties and Fifties
- Active over sixties

The groups then spent ten minutes on answering the questions:

- What is the life situation in each of those age groups; and
- What is good and what is difficult about being each of those ages

Each group then had a chance to share their ideas with the rest of the participants. At the end of the whole-group session each participant had the chance to say which age they would most like to be and why.

## **Communicating between age groups**

Having allowed participants to get in touch with the life situations of the different age groups, this exercise gave them the opportunity of reflecting on the things that need to be kept in mind when attempting to communicate with people of a different age and life situation to our own.

Implementation: Participants went back into their three groups and discussed what “their” age group would like each of the other two age groups to keep in mind when they talk together with them. A representative from each group then had the chance to address each of the other two groups in turn to tell them what their “age group” wanted them to know.

## **Summing up the learning**

The aim was to enable participants to reflect on what they had learned from these exercises.

Implementation: An open discussion was held addressing the points:

- What have we learned?
- What have we learned about communicating with older people?
- What have we learned about designing Go-myLife for older people?

The key points from this discussion were captured on a flip chart.

This session concluded with a short overview presentation of the Guidelines on Interacting with Older People included as Annex 2 in report D2.1.

## ***1.2 Session two: developing a common vision of how the project should be implemented***

The aim was to build on the work of the previous session and the objectives were; to give people a chance to reflect on the aims of the project, to gain an in-depth understanding of the results of the social research into the user requirements and to agree together the overall technical design of the project.

### **Mission Reflection**

Aim: A reflection and analysis of the (often un-reflected) interests, expertise and missions of the consortium members and/or its representing organisations for this project. The purpose was to reveal potential gaps between the consortium’s mission/interests and the user requirements.

Implementation: each participant noted her/his interests and mission on cards, brought them to the flipchart, and presented them to the others; the facilitator took the cards and grouped them into clusters.

## **Cognitive walkthrough**

With this exercise the consortium members put themselves in the position of their future users and tried to sensitise themselves to the needs and requirements of their target group. In addition they undertook for themselves tasks that had been undertaken by typical potential future users during the requirements elicitation workshops.

Implementation: First, the participants were instructed to put themselves in their grandparents' position and conduct the following tasks, during which they were asked to address the associated questions:

Task 1: Uploading pictures in Facebook

- What kind of usability issues would you struggle with?
- What kind of additional barriers would you face?
- What would motivate you to become a Facebook member and share pictures with your friends?

The participants then talked about their experiences during the task and gained a better sense of the technical barriers that their users might face.

Task 2: Think about the Social Network of your grandparents. The idea was to picture their grandparents as islands, with the different groups of people they related to as different islands around them and to draw this out on flipchart paper.

- What are the most important islands around them?
- How are they connected to these islands?
- How will this island landscape change with increasing age?

Then the commonalities and differences between the “island” landscapes were discussed.

## **Knowledge fair**

The aim was to give the technical researchers insights into the findings of the previously undertaken social research, not in a classical tutorial manner but rather in an interactive format.

Implementation:

- The findings were presented on a number of flipcharts (already prepared before the workshop);
- Participants were split into two groups. One group started off dealing with social networks of older people and the other group started with the assessment findings of SN platforms. The number of participants per group: 7-8;
- Each participant made notes on papers regarding anything considered as important and relevant as basis for further discussions (laptops were not allowed);
- Each group moved on to the other topic after 25 minutes;

Comments:

To have the presentations of findings, not on PowerPoint slides, but rather on old fashioned paper with some drawings, overcame social distance and helped to establish a lively discussion atmosphere.

### **Brain walk**

This aimed to gain a structured overview of what the participants considered as important and relevant as basis for creating a common vision of the technical application.

Implementation: the participants were invited to fill blank cards with issues that:

- came out of the knowledge fair for the technical application that are most relevant for them;
- additional aspects that have not been mentioned yet;

and add these cards to five empty flipcharts which had the following headlines:

- Characteristics of older people's social networks
- Barriers for older people in online SNs
- Motivation/drivers of older people to use online SNs
- Possible application scenarios of the project's platform
- Visions of the ideal SN of older people

Each participant briefly presented the issues noted on his or her card and added it to the empty flipcharts. The moderators structured these individual contributions on the flipcharts and summarized these contributions into five visions for the Go-myLife project.

### **Vision forming**

This aimed to elaborate a common Go-myLife project vision based on the user-requirements, taking into consideration the issues considered most relevant by the project partners.

The session began by a discussion of participants' reactions and then these five visions were prioritized. (Each participant received 3 dots and could attribute these dots to his/her preferred vision/s).

As a result of this task the two visions that gained the highest number of points were agreed as being the most relevant for the consortium. Two groups were then formed around these two visions. Each group elaborated in more detail the benefits of the respective vision they were reviewing for end-users and the sort of Go-myLife services and functionalities that would best support those benefits. This group-work lasted 45 minutes.

The results of this work were presented to all participants and, in a discussion process,

the group decided on one Go-myLife vision which integrated aspects of the two final visions.

## 2 Conclusion

It proved very worthwhile to dedicate an entire day for the process of transforming the findings of the social research into technical terms. This enabled the development of a genuinely common and clear vision, which allowed the consortium to begin together to develop the interface of the Go-myLife platform in a way that produced good results, to the satisfaction of all.

It was also important that the workshop started by focusing on how to communicate effectively with older people, even though many of the technical team would not be required to communicate with older people face to face as part of the project. This was because this allowed every member of the team to focus on how it feels to be an older person and to gain some insight into how older people wish to be treated. With this fresh in their minds, they were better able to review the results of the research into older people's social networks and the issues they faced with the user interfaces of existing online social networks.

## 3 Agenda

	<b>Session 1 Communication training</b>
10:00 – 10:40	<b>Introductions, and differences and commonalities,</b> With these two exercises, you are invited to consider your role in the project and to gain a sense of your similarities and differences with other members of the group
10:40 – 11:30	<b>Communication between age groups</b> With these two exercises, you are invited to consider what you know about the differences between life stages and what people at each life stage would like the other groups to keep in mind when they communicate with them
11:30 – 12:00	<b>Summing up the learning</b> Here you are invited to reflect together on what you have learned about communicating with older people and principles that will help us design the Go-myLife service for them. You are also invited to hear a short presentation of the lessons about communicating with older people that were put together as part of the background research

	<b>Session 2 Developing a common vision</b>
12.00 – 13.00	<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p><b>Mission Reflection:</b> with this exercise you are invited to briefly reflect on your expertise, your interest or your company's mission for this project.</p> <p>Please take a card and write on it your acronym and your initial thoughts about mission that your company has for this project.</p>
13:00 – 14:30	<b>Lunch</b>
14.30 – 15.00	<p><b>Cognitive walkthrough</b></p> <p>With this exercise we invite you to put yourself in the position of our future users.</p> <p>We ask you to take of the role of your grandparents.</p> <p>With this role in mind we will set you some tasks on Facebook and ask you some questions about how you think your grandparents would respond.</p> <p>Then take a pen and paper, think about the SN of your grandparents and map it out.</p>
15.00 – 16.30	<p><b>Knowledge fair:</b></p> <p>Here we ask you to split into two groups. One group starts by looking at the flipcharts providing information about the online SNs that were assessed and the other by looking at the flipcharts describing the findings regarding the SN of older people. The two social researchers are available to provide added explanation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Note on your paper what comes up to you as important and relevant as basis for further discussion.</li> <li>- After 25 minutes, the groups change to tackle the other topic</li> <li>- Afterwards we discuss possible application scenarios based on what we have learned.</li> </ul>
16.30 – 16.50	<p><b>Brain walk</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- You are invited to write down on 5 flipcharts what are the important issues that you consider came out of the knowledge fair</li> <li>- The moderators then structure these and develop a number of potential visions for the Go-myLife project</li> </ul>

16.50 – 18.00	<p><b>Vision forming</b></p> <p>You are invited to discuss ranking: you will receive 3 dots to rank the potential visions</p> <p>Participants are then divided into two groups to define in more detail the two visions with the highest ranking and their benefits to end users</p> <p>The groups then present the results of their discussion to each other and between then decide on the vision which they will progress</p>
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