Co-creating "Narratives of Usefulness": advancing self-care through empathy-oriented digital device interventions with an ageing population

Principal Supervisor: Dr Arno Verhoeven, Edinburgh College of Art, University of Edinburgh
a.verhoeven@ed.ac.uk,

Assistant Supervisors: Prof Ian Underwood, School of Engineering, University of Edinburgh
ian.underwood@ed.ac.uk; Prof John Vines, School of Informatics, University of Edinburgh
john.vines@ed.ac.uk

This project sits within the ACRC Academy, a dedicated Centre for Doctoral Training, co-located with the Advanced Care Research Centre (ACRC), a new multi-disciplinary research centre at the University of Edinburgh. The ACRC’s students will deliver key aspects of the ACRC research agenda through a new doctoral-level research and training programme that will also equip them for careers across a wide range of pioneering and influential leadership roles in the public, private and third sectors.

The PhD with Integrated Study in Advanced Care is a novel, structured, thematic, cohort-based, programme of 48 months duration. Each PhD research project within the Academy has been devised by a supervisory team comprising academic staff from at least two of the three colleges within the University of Edinburgh. Each annual cohort of around twelve will include students with disciplinary backgrounds spanning from engineering and data science to humanities, social science, business and commerce, social work, medicine and related health and care professions. This unique level of diversity is a key attribute of our programme.

Project:

Aim

Construct an empathy framework for participatory design practices which contributes to interaction/user-experience design through collected “narratives of usefulness” employing prototypical digital artifacts and services co-created with an aging community involved in self-care.

Objectives

- develop and deliver a series of co-creation workshops regarding technology and its usefulness with the intended audience of aged communities engaging in advanced care via digital means
- Co-create and prototype appropriate technologies addressing advanced self-care with the aged which employ digital technologies through participatory means
- Foster greater, critical awareness of practices of empathy amongst designers and engineers employing human centered perspectives through shared “narratives of usefulness”.
- Provide an empathy framework of “usefulness” through interactive means for improving future design practices and processes
Description

Health and social care are moving increasingly towards digital platforms, but user experience (UX) studies amongst aging populations highlight concerns about “usefulness”. This PhD project will employ a mixed methods approach to co-create a collection of “narratives of usefulness” highlighting interactions between an identified community in the aging population and speculative, prototypical digital devices, aimed at advancing aspects of the digital self-care agenda. Central to the study is the critical analysis of narratives of personal experience with prototypical technologies, leading to an expanded framework of empathy for intergenerational inclusive design, codesign and/or human-centred design practices. Furthermore, the study aims to inform decision-making practices amongst design development teams, leading to more “useful” digital technologies.

Eligibility:

We are specifically looking for applicants who will view their cutting-edge PhD research project in the context of the overall vision of the ACRC, who are keen to contribute to tackling a societal grand challenge and who can add unique value to – and derive great benefit from – training in a cohort comprising colleagues with a very diverse range of disciplines and backgrounds. We advise prospective candidates to engage in dialogue with the named project supervisor and/or the Director of the Academy prior to submitting an application.

Recruitment:

We are running a rolling recruitment process. Projects will be advertised until they are recruited to, and you are advised to apply as early as possible to maximise your chances.

You must read How to apply prior to application.

Please Apply here.