Demo: Helping to Tackle Social Isolation and Loneliness of Older Adults Using Mobile Applications

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1 INTRODUCTION

We live in a society with an ageing population in which the number of 65+ will significantly increase within the next 50 years. In parallel, we observe an increasing amount of technology deployed to people – both in the form of more sophisticated mobile phones as well as in the amount of technology ubiquitously integrated into the environment. With the ageing population, it will become increasingly important to accommodate the needs and requirements of older adults when designing systems and applications. We believe that mobile devices offer a unique opportunity to support older adults by, for example, providing access to citizen services to address the risks of social isolation and loneliness of older adults. Related work has been focussed on designing systems (fixed and mobile) that address the physical, cognitive and sensory needs of older adults [2, 3, 5] and on exploring HCI-related issues when designing applications for older adults (e.g. [4, 5]). We have previously conducted a series of co-creation workshops with older adults in which we determined a set of broader design considerations and requirements for developing mobile applications and systems for this demographic [1].

In the context of this demo, we draw on the co-creation workshops in which we have designed and developed a citizen services platform specifically for older adults. The platform consists of a dedicated mobile application (fig. 1) and a series of backend system components. The mobile application was designed for smartphones and tablets and provides a gateway for older adults to major services such as nearby social events and personalised transport information. Through a set of backend components, we analyse interactions with users and provide opportunities to automatically determine opportunities to provide recommendations to older adults, e.g. for relevant social activities nearby.

2 DEMO OVERVIEW

We plan to demonstrate our mobile application on a collection of mobile phones and tablets and allow attendees to interact with the application freely. We will provide insights into the underlaying architecture and its specific characteristics to accommodate the needs of older adults. Using a dedicated analytics dashboard deployed on our backend system, we will further visualise the types of interaction data collected from the mobile application and how the captured insights can be used to improve the quality of the mobile application and specific citizen services in the context of supporting older adults.

Figure 1: Mobile Age application.

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