

# Social IT Programs for the Social Wellbeing of Home-Based Seniors

Helen Hasan, Kate Crawford  
Australian Health Services Institute  
University of Wollongong

# Seniors and Computers



# Community-based Care

Strong on

- Nutrition
- Cleanliness
- Medical
- Safety

Weak on

- Personal control,
- A voice in the community
- Meaningful and valued occupations,
- Social interaction through participation in their community

# Increasing Isolation

- At home - decreased mobility, more difficult to get out and about
- In care – distance from family and community
- Out of touch: Families now communicating on FB, via Email
- Detrimental to health and wellbeing
- More focus on bio-medical health issues
- Also a problem for carers and families

# Social computing solutions

- Young people, with similar problems, use social media to maintain social contact and stay connected with the community.
- Many seniors and their carers do not have, and cannot use, these technologies because of their age, educational opportunity, technical access, or because services are not usable by them
- However, the potential is there! Learning new things is good for mental health

**Social Media and On-Line services Provide New Ways for Seniors and their carers (from 55years through to 85 years) to stay connected and participate meaningfully in community events.**

# Programs in aged-care facilities



# The in-Care Experience

- Provision of a space with computers, desks, power
- Internet Connections
- Tutors and Mentors often 1-1
- Work at the learners pace,
- Allow for reduced capabilities, physical, cognitive, understanding
- Weekly sessions
- Lots of fun and patience

# The Challenge at Home - **Technical**

- Suitable, affordable device (computer, laptop, tablet)
- Reliable, affordable, fast enough Internet
- Learning on their device
- Learning to manage privacy and security
- Learning to do just one thing first
- Ongoing support



# The Challenge at Home-**Social**

- Forming, joining online communities
- Finding help as needed
- Sharing pictures and experiences with friends and family
- Organizing shared social outings
- Using on-line services – Banking, Shopping, Creative Arts and Entertainment
- Self Development and Productivity - MOOCs, Blogs

# Potential areas for wellbeing

- connection,
- communication
- occupation,
- self-sufficiency,
- self-worth/esteem,
- productivity,
- personal development,
- being in control,
- and enjoyment.

# ICT care Packages

- Free for those who cannot afford it
- 4 stages – get a device, get the Internet, learn the basics, ongoing support
- Work within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (i.e know what they are able to do, adjust as they learn and gain confidence)
- Involve partners and volunteers
  
- Engage local organisations in on-line services for seniors
- Involve the seniors themselves and their carers
- Increased wellbeing and social inclusion known to be preventative of a range of health problems

# Your ideas

- ?