



PsychNology Journal  
SPECIAL ISSUE ON **Designing technology to meet the needs of the older user**  
EDITED BY **Eva Lindh Waterworth and John Waterworth**

The elderly population is growing fast in many developed countries. At the same time, birthrates are low, and the overall effect is that the elderly form an increasing proportion of the population. This raises a variety of problems for individuals, for families, and for societies as a whole. Elderly people often suffer from mobility, memory, communication and general health problems. They tend to become both physically and socially isolated, which leads to distress and poor mood states, all of which contribute to a worsening of their quality of life and health. Despite the potential of recent technology to address needs of older users in areas such as social communication, information and entertainment, they remain largely excluded. Many older people find themselves bewildered by recent developments such as mobile phones, DVD players, set-top cable TV boxes, and even the internet.

There is an urgent need to address this situation, by targeting the design and development of technologies and systems to help increase the quality of life and enhance the functional independence of older people. This can lead to improvements in quality of life for both the elderly and their relatives, and a reduction in the societal costs. But the technology must be designed in ways that address the psychological needs and capabilities of older people, who do not form an homogenous group. The special issue will focus on:

### **Designing technology to meet the needs of the older user**

We welcome case studies, design sketches, theoretical papers, and review papers.

Specific sub-themes include but are not limited to:

- **design approaches for elderly users**
- **interaction for the elderly: what's needed?**
- **technologies for companionship**
- **re-designing existing devices**
- **ambient intelligence fo heath monitoring in the home**
- **the cognitive and emotional effects of ageing**
- **the psychological impact of technological change**

### **Guest Editors**

**Eva Lindh Waterworth** is Manager of the Q-Life research group at Umeå University. Her doctoral thesis (2001) is entitled: *Perceptually-Seductive Technology: designing computer support for everyday creativity*. She is also a senior lecturer in Informatics at Umeå University. Her main research interest is in how technology can be used to improve quality of life, especially for people with special needs. She is involved in several projects on this theme, and is leader of a research team developing technology to support elderly users with varying degrees of dementia.

**John Waterworth** is Professor of Informatics at Umeå University, and has a PhD in Experimental Psychology from the University of Hertfordshire in the UK. He is currently leading a research team focusing on how information and communication technology can support a higher quality of life. John serves on the programme committees of many international conferences and academic journals, and has consulted for several major companies and research organizations.

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Submissions are accepted of any length, discipline and format provided their scientific relevance and accuracy. They should be sent in electronic form to both: [articles\(at\)psychnology.org](mailto:articles(at)psychnology.org), and [eva\(at\)informatik.umu.se](mailto:eva(at)informatik.umu.se) no later than **July, 30 2006**. Inclusion of color pictures, videos and sound files is welcome.

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