Virtual Community Center: Socialization Concepts for Elders

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Group Interviews with Seniors

How do we find out what is engaging and fun to elders?

- Discover what activities seniors who are still independent like to do (gardening, knitting, golfing, fishing, games....)
- Find or invent virtual analogues for these activities that scale to the mental and physical limitations of older, more frail seniors.
- Discover and characterize their current social circle and how they can maintain social contact through technology.

Interview ➔ Prototype ➔ Focus group or test ➔ Refine Concepts
Group Interviews With Seniors

• Four groups of 8-12 people each at senior centers in Minneapolis area

• Seniors in the age 65-75 range (e.g. still largely independent) form a wide range of socioeconomic status

• Asked them to describe what activities they currently engage in and how they see their activities changing ten years from now (the latter usually provoked a lot of dead silence…not a question for these people like to think about?)
Group Interviews With Seniors

• Strong recurring themes (topics that raised the decibel level in the group discussion)
  – **Volunteer activities** (organizing and doing) are a major source of social interaction and occupy a great amount of their time. Seniors also believe that these are among the first activities they would have to stop if they became homebound.
  – **Sharing personal perspectives on history** is a way they connect with their peers and with younger generations.
  – **Games and puzzles** are great if they provide the opportunity to interact with other people (by means of organizing the game or playing the game).
Socialization technical challenges

• Do our analogue forms of interaction really capture the essence of social interaction? What’s good? What’s missing? Does audio help? Does video help?

• Need to replicate some of the dynamics of social interactions in much the same way as happens spontaneously in real life. Ex. Provide users the ability to turn down invitations to join an activity or event, contingent on who else is invited; automatic matching with people of similar interests; provide capability to initiate and organize activities with others.

• User interfaces need to be adaptable to the changing psychomotor and cognitive abilities of aging people
  – UI’s need to be simple
  – Games need to be “decelerated”

• Auditory interface may be necessary

• Screen size is issue for some applications

• Security for vulnerable participants
Socialization Next Steps

- Complete illustrative prototypes of 3 or 4 major application concepts and present to the same Mpls. seniors groups for discussion.
- Refine application concepts and develop interactive prototypes for demonstration at the WHCOA
- Conduct controlled experiment with one application prototype to investigate question about the validity of these substitute forms of socialization.
Virtual Community Center
Concept Prototypes

Tom Plocher
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Virtual Community Center

December 16th, 2005

Good Morning Alice

All equipment is operating normally. Did you have a restful sleep?

Yes, I did

Not really

Plocher, Kiff, Ho
November 2005
Virtual Community Center

December 16th, 2005

8:00 AM  Measure Vital Signs
8:30 AM  Breakfast
9:00 AM  Morning Meds
9:15 AM  ?  Go to the Community Center
11:30 AM ?  Jean picks you up to shop

Later
The Virtual Community Center

December 16th, 2005
St. Andrew’s community center

The daily jigsaw
Play bingo
Organize a game
Send a greeting
Share a story
Go home
Virtual Community Center

December 16th, 2004

Check out the daily jigsaw puzzle

Play

I Can’t Play Today

Easy □ Medium □ Hard

Puzzle of the day is shown to the elder. Elder chooses to Play.
Screen comes up showing work completed already on the puzzle and who in the group worked on it most recently. Elder selects Start to begin moving pieces. User drags pieces into place. Display shows current user’s progress on puzzle. He or she also has the option to just send it, as is, to another senior.
Current user completes puzzle and gets verbal reward. Also now gets to
Select the next puzzle for the group to work on.
User has option to select new puzzle, play the current puzzle from the beginning, or send it to someone. In illustration, he chooses to Select a new one.
Buttons with different puzzle topics appear on the display. This user selects Travel.

December 16th, 2004

Choose a puzzle topic

- Travel
- Cats
- Dogs
- Sports
- Art
- Gardens
Pictures of Travel puzzles appear on the display. The user selects The Golden Gate Bridge puzzle.
The puzzle appears on the screen. The user decide to choose a different one, play the new puzzle, or send it on to another player. This user chooses to send it on.
The Virtual Community Center

December 16th, 2005

St. Andrew’s community center

The daily jigsaw

Play bingo

Organize A game

Send a greeting

Share a story

Go home
December 16th, 2004

Bill has asked you to join a Bingo game!
The game will begin
In 10 minutes at 9:30 AM.

Join The Game

I Can’t Play Today

Virtual Community Center

Plocher, Kiff, Ho
November 2005
Virtual Community Center

December 16th, 2004

To play, touch the squares that match the current call, or any call already made in this game.

When you are ready to join, press the button to continue.

CONTINUE
Virtual Community Center

Possible Game UI
The leader of the game must start the game.

December 16th, 2004

Bill, please start the game when the group is ready.

START GAME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agnes</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gina</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connie</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Possible Game UI:
- Bill must start the game.
- The leader must start the game.

Game Board:
- B: Candy
- I: Gift
- N: Bell
- G: Free Happy Holidays
- O: Ornament

Plocher, Kiff, Ho
November 2005
Virtual Community Center

Possible Game UI

Players must wait until everyone has joined.

December 16th, 2004

Please wait for Bill to start the game...

Calls so far:

B I N G O

- CANDY
- GIFT
- BELL
- FREE Happy
- ORNAMENT
- WREATH
Virtual Community Center

December 16th, 2004

Next Call:

Calls so far:
The Virtual Community Center

December 16th, 2005
St. Andrew’s community center

- The daily jigsaw
- Play bingo
- Organize a game
- Send a greeting
- Share a story
- Go home
Virtual Community Center

August 16th, 2005  9:30 AM

Organize A Game

Choose a Game:

Invite Players:

Choose a Time:

Ann
Mrs. Hayes
Jean
The Virtual Community Center

December 16th, 2005
St. Andrew’s community center

The daily jigsaw
Play bingo
Organize A game
Send a greeting
Share a story
Go home
Virtual Community Center

Sample volunteer application using history artifacts

August 16th, 2005

Today’s Sunshine Committee Work

Birthday greetings for Ann, Mrs. Hayes, Jean
Virtual Community Center

Sample volunteer application using history artifacts

August 16th, 2005

Today’s Sunshine Committee Work

Ann is 89 years old today
Born in Minneapolis
On August 16th, 1915

Make a Birthday Greeting
Virtual Community Center

Sample volunteer application using history artifacts

August 16th, 2005

Today’s Sunshine Committee Work

Make a birthday greeting for Ann
Born in Minneapolis
On August 16th, 1915

Choose a story  Choose a movie  Choose a song  Choose a picture
Virtual Community Center

Sample volunteer application using history artifacts

August 16th, 2005

Today’s Sunshine Committee Work

Make a birthday greeting for Ann
Born in Minneapolis
On August 16th, 1915

Choose a birthday greeting song
Blue Moon
Stompin at the Savoy
…….

Same method for movie clips, stories, and still images.
List is tailored to be historically appropriate
The Virtual Community Center

December 16th, 2005

St. Andrew’s community center

- The daily jigsaw
- Play bingo
- Organize A game
- Send a greeting
- Share a story
- Go home

Honeywell

Plocher, Kiff, Ho
November 2005
On this day in 1951, President Truman signed a treaty that ended The Korean War.
Virtual Community Center

August 16th, 2005

On this day in 1951
President Truman signed a treaty that ended
The Korean War.

Speak into the microphone and
Tell your story

Memory joggers  Send to group  Return
August 16th, 2005

On this day in 1951
President Truman signed a treaty that ended
The Korean War.

Where were you at the time?
Speak into the microphone and
tell your story

Memory joggers  Play back  Send to group  Return