Network for the Digital Inclusion of Older Persons
Roundtable #2 Inclusive Design

July 13, 2022

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The "*Network for the Digital Inclusion of Older Persons*" (or simply *Network*) represents a coalition of stakeholders – from academia, civil society, and governments – supporting the United Nation's Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation. It calls for the global community to work together to connect all people by the year 2030 by ensuring digital inclusion for all. This is especially vital for the underserved communities – including older populations – that have been impacted most by challenges brought forth by lack of access to digital services and solutions. The immediate goals of this *Network* are to: **(1)** identify scalable solutions, **(2)** elevate successful models, and **(3)** offer recommendations to address the digital inclusion barriers for older persons. Additionally, the *Network* will provide pathways to overcome these digital inclusion barriers by spotlighting effective policies and programs, strategic partnerships, emerging technologies, and useful metrics by which to measure progress. The *Network* plans to share these solutions among *Network* members and with the United Nation's Office of the Secretary General's Envoy on Technology later this year.

The second (of three) Roundtable Event, Inclusive Design, was held on July 13, 2022. The Roundtable convened a group of 30 participants – representing multiple countries and constituencies – to share best practices, policy recommendations, and implementation strategies.

The digital world will play a bigger role in all societies moving forward. According to the WHO, by 2030, there will be 1.4 billion people aged 60+. The experiences, particularly lessons learned and challenges, of participants in this roundtable, particularly in 'digital experience design' will lead to recommendations across the public-private sector.

Imagine a world – when all feel empowered with digital experiences – just as college students are today – but at all ages. These experiences keep people confident as they adopt new technology, thrive with it, gaining access to work and education. Research is not just published -- but implemented at scalable levels for every world. What is different in that vision than in the current world? And how can change be achieved?

Goals of the Three Roundtables

1. Collaborate on ideas to advance digital inclusion and to identify and overcome barriers.

2. Share successful initiatives, models, partnerships, technologies, and policies that are helping to address digital inclusion barriers to present back to the United Nations Network-of-Networks.

3. Raise visibility for incorporating older persons into all digital equity efforts at the United Nations and beyond.

4. Disseminate opportunities, best practices, policy recommendations, and implementation strategies to member organizations.

5. Commence the "*Network for the Digital Inclusion of Older Persons*," as a member of the United Nations Network-of-Networks.

Inclusive Design for all persons – *"Human First, Mobile/technology after"*

The problems:

Older adults are not a homogenous group. Approaches taken today are too focused on infantilization – where everyone older is a luddite, not able to learn new technologies or participate as a producer or co-designer in an accelerating digital economy. In today's world, there is greater use of data and surveillance as a means of addressing societal gaps – these gaps justify removal of self-determination and agency of a diverse set of individuals. Wealthier nations use technology to replace relationships – digital inclusion should be about connecting to people – not just technology. Aging and independence are always spoken about together – but the talk needs to shift to interdependence.

There is market friction between disability and aging categories. Assistive technology is a worrisome category – isolating technology for the disabled from the mainstream of technology. Yet there are guidelines for assistive technology that apply to all and should include the needs of the aging population – inclusive of **design for aging**. We need a digital ecosystem that works for us when we become marginalized. And we must attend to those who cannot use the current systems – especially remembering that 70% of the market economy is controlled globally by baby boomers, the oldest now age 76. If your health has gone downhill, if you are losing capacity, having to switch to accessibility technology is increasingly unrealistic.

Concerns about technology cut across all ages. The new digital world is one that reflects everyone**.** The pandemic debunked myths about older adults and technology. Governments and health providers assumed that all had access. But it showed that none of us are safe unless all of us are safe. There is still stereotyping of older adults and their tech limitations – which removes their self-determination of agency. The essence of diversity in technology is to 'respect' differences. Today's tech, including AI, are being built without accountability – yet they must address this human agency, oversight requirements safety, and privacy needs. We must represent the aging population in a positive way and that their experience is valid and good for business – a change that can be made through marketing and media. To obtain long-term loyalty as a brand, product and service innovators must **engage in co-design** and process that serves people across the age spectrum.

Ideas from Breakout Sessions

Design changes – including role of user. *"No Decision About Me Without Me"*

- **Introduce design-for-all concepts into university programs (across disciplines).** This creates a baseline foundation for innovators as they begin their post-graduate job. For example, the importance of understanding older adult preferences when designing a medication adherence app.

- **Consider accessible design – where does it fit in the design world?** Too often it is an afterthought or follows a completely different path. For example, consider the definition differences between accessible design (serving people with disabilities), universal design (products that are easy to use), and usable design (based on standards).

- **Boost interest in inclusive design (versus 'accessible') concepts.** The British Standards Institute defines inclusive design as: "The design of mainstream products and/or services that are accessible to, and usable by, as many people as reasonably possible ... without the need for special adaptation or specialised design." Contrast this approach with the separation of 'accessibility' settings separate from general settings on mobile phones.

- **Reduce bias built into design.** Automation and machine learning create front-end experiences unique for the user but can scale up bad design and harmful biases. For example, research is underway to identify bias in hiring algorithms – which may be filtering out individuals with disabilities.

- **Get rid of the 'dis' in disability.** Focus on maximizing everyone's ABILITIES across ages. Widen the definition of 'ableism' to include the needs of an aging population. Consider absorbing accessibility features into general setting options.

- **Introduce innovations with input from the people.** For example, at the Center for Aging and Brain Health Innovation (CABHI) with Baycrest in Toronto, they have a team of advisors called "LEAP" or Lived experience advisory panel which includes older adults with the intent of weeding out issues with design. The goal is to create the best solutions for older people, people with dementia and those living with their caregivers.

- **Include 'trust' as a key factor in creating designs for inclusivity.** Too often designs (think of many mobile apps) make assumptions about trustworthiness that must be earned, and distrust must be overcome. For example, improve trust by sharing additional information, such as identifying the source of a message (from the CEO) versus just a greeting.

- **Create the UN-AARP seal for inclusive design.** Market the seal (as with the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval which fostered a sense of trust in the product).

- **Expand the role of older people as tech producers, entrepreneurs.** Move focus beyond consideration of the benefit for them and include/enable them to be innovators and inventors in their own right.

Process changes – including partnerships and changing the role of government.

- **Competition mechanism for a global reward to drive change (like the X Prize).** However, it was also mentioned that many small competitions and prizes also drive change over time by encouraging innovators to deliver small, sometimes significant improvements.

- **Create a Challenge.gov prize competition for ideas around this topic.** Issue different calls for innovators to create proof of concept to validate it, scale and grow.

- **Introduce open source design processes to boost inclusion** – by inviting input from varied older adults, those with disabilities and others invested in the results.

- National Institute on Aging **(NIA) has a critical role.** Bring stakeholders together, FASTER. NIA should be promoting design approaches that build on input from the targeted customers. For example, one of their projects: CareVirtue, an online social network to aid in caregiver family communication.

- **Consider ESG in all design.** Incorporate Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance (ESG) principles and metrics into design.

- **Effective partnerships – introduce the concept of the three-legged stool.** Access to digital services, boosting education and literacy and ensuring robust connectivity.

- **Incorporate digital product strategies into ESG Goals.** ESG goals are aligned with the UN, but they do not include digital product design approaches.

- **Policies built on research trials must include older demographic.** For example, 30% of clinical trials for Covid-19 related solutions excluded adults aged 65+.

- **Billions of dollars in pandemic funding – but not inclusive of older adults.** For example, Commonwealth Fund 2021 study showed US older adults, minorities in particular, fared worse in multiple aspects of health and healthcare than in other

wealthy nations. For example, vaccines were available earlier in other countries than in the US.

- **Partnership success story** – T-Mobile/OATS and LG Tablet partnership during the pandemic. Digital services and devices were made available to those who needed them.

- **Partnership success story –** Honor Expert – a one-stop-shop for seniors was conceived as part of the acquisition of Home Instead by Honor, and includes partnerships with multiple companies.

Next Steps

One additional Network Roundtable on Digital Skills is scheduled for September 2022. A synthesized report of recommendations will be provided back to the United Nation's Office of the Secretary General's Envoy on Technology later this year containing a broad-based library of solutions across technology, policy, partnerships, programs, research and measurements. In 2023, we will broaden our focus, as part of the Network-of-Networks, to look at intersectionalities and areas of opportunity that arise from them. Examples might be technology, health, and gender or trust, safety, and age (children).

Roundtable Participants List

Julia Elrod
Evan Nielson
Laurie Orlov
Frances West
Michael Phillips
Christina Mallon
Majaella Ruden
Peter Rundlet
Vijeth Iyengar
Erica Dhar
Ebele Okoli
Deana C McDonagh
Amanda Gimble
Steve Ewell
Miye Mccullough
Wendy Rogers
Kai Stinchcombe
Scott Code
Howard Pyle
Lesil McGuire
Joy Toliver
Tom Kamber
Laura Allen
Jeffrey Bennett
Sam Elder
Meghan Watkinson
Natsuki Matsumoto
Mary Furlong
Trevor Gunn
Miye Mccullough
Howard Pyle
Joy Toliver
Rasha Al-Katta
Mark Shipton
Jutta Treviranus
Mel Barsky
Beatrice Maille
Deborah Gale
Jennifer Cain
John Beard
Georgia Aitkenhead

Resources and Links Noted during the Roundtable

British Standards Institute - inclusive design
Challenge.gov
ESG Principles
Experience Futures
Inclusive Design Research Centre
Lived experience advisory panel (CABHI)
Open Style Lab
The Purpose Xchange
National Institute on Aging
WCAG guidelines
UNHCR
United Nations Network-of-Networks

Roundtable Recap Complied By: