Becoming old in the age of civic technology: Co-creating online public services with and for people in later life

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The mediatization of government-citizens relations: open data

• Digitalisation of access to public services
• Increasing transparency & accountability in government through the release of government data
• ‘Open data is data that can be freely used, re-used and redistributed by anyone’ (Open Data Handbook, 2012)
The mediatization of government-citizens relations: civic tech

• New modes of civic participation and engagement
  – “civic hacking” & “civic apps”
  – co-production of public services
• Bias towards young, male and technology-savy citizens
Involving senior citizens in the co-creation of civic apps

- Topics are mostly pre-defined and supply driven (mostly data provided by authorities)
- Scope relates often to infrastructure projects (focus on mobility, transport, map-based-reporting)
- Citizens act as data collectors/sensors
- wrt senior citizens often focussed on deficits/limitations
Senior citizens and civic tech – what constitutes the group of “elderly”? 

- As (growing) target group of certain social/public services (focussing on physical decline, frailty, …)  
  - Service users
- As retired people with plenty time for civic engagement (“active ageing”)  
  - Active citizens
- As digitally excluded (“digital divide”)  
  - Marginalised group

- What may be alternative imaginaries on how to become old in the age of mediatization?
MobileAge (2016-2019)

• Objectives:
  – Support and improve senior citizens access to public services through the participatory development of mobile technologies and use of open data
  – Develop methods for the effective involvement of older people in the creation of new public services
• „Co-creation“ approach > Participatory and inclusive research- and innovation practice
• Fieldsites: Bremen (Germany), South Lakeland (UK), Zaragoza (Spain), Thessaloniki (Greece)
Research questions

• How can senior citizens become active participants in civic tech & open government?
• How may their participation impact on open government as well as our understanding of senior citizens & civic tech development?
Generic co-creation process

**Exploration & Recruitment**
- exploration of vision
- stakeholder analysis
- definition of roles
- recruitment & engagement plan

**Idea Forming**
- further exploration of visions and needs
- generation of ideas and the solution to be co-created

**Service & Data Definition**
- developing ideas into concepts
- defining relevant (open) data

**Co-Design**
- prototy pes are designed, build and tested
- collecting, creating and integrating (open) data

**Service & Diffusion**
- finalisation of product
- dissemination of results to ensure adoption

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www.mobile-age.eu
Cultural Probes for map-based application for a district in Bremen

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Socio-spatial dimension of inclusion

Understand social inclusion with respect to primary networks and space.
Biographical dimension
Communicative practices

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Probes Workshop
Personas Workshop

Persona 1: Uwe Meier
71, Rentner, Ledig/Verwitwet, allein lebend in Haus mit Garten
Hein Meier erhält eine sehr gute Rente.
Mobilität: gut (zu Fuß, mit dem Rad). Auto vorhanden, fährt aber auch viel mit öffentlichem Nahverkehr

Persona 3: Ursula Greve
80, Rentnerin, sie pflegt und betreut ihren kranken Mann. Sie lebt einer kleinen Wohnung.
Mobilität: eingeschränkt (kann kaum längere Strecken zu Fuß oder mit dem Rad zurücklegen); Auto vorhanden und intensive Nutzung.
Data Workshops
Co-design Workshops
Reflections

• Challenge of openness of process
  – Engaging with already active and included people
  – Focus on social, cultural and physical activity
  – Image of active ageing is (re-)produced
    ➢ What about elderly who can’t or don’t want to be active?

• Data-driven open government process limited
  – rather citizen-driven service development
  – Local knowledge as important resource for data (co-)
    creation
  – Modified understanding of the role of open data for
    co-creating public services
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Thank you for your attention!