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News

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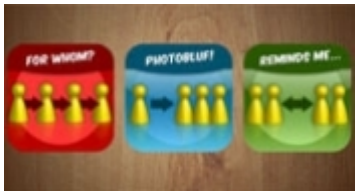
Express to Connect develops games for elderly to aid reminiscing15.12.2011 - 10:07



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Forum Virium Helsinki participates in an international Express to Connect project [2] , which aims to develop web services for elderly to facilitate personal storytelling. The project has produced several game concepts which are being tested and developed further based on the testers' feedback.

?Reminiscing the past with storytelling empowers elderly people and enriches their lives?, says Project Manager **Anne-Mari Sandell** from Forum Virium Helsinki. According to Sandell, storytelling also has a strong social function. In example, when grandparents play storytelling games with their grandchildren, information about their family history is being passed on to the younger generation, and the bond between them grows stronger.

First workshops were organized in April 2010 in Finland, Sweden, Denmark and The Netherlands. Elderly people, their close relatives, and representatives of the city of Helsinki were invited to participate. The workshops concentrated on aging and how it affects the lives of the elderly: what kind of anxieties can arise, for example. The sessions also went through the everyday routines that help maintain social relationships and positive attitudes towards life. Based on the feedback gathered from the participants, the first service concepts were developed and further tested.

User feedback as basis for development

Of several alternative service concepts, one was chosen for further examination. So far, five different versions of this game have been developed. Their attractiveness will be trialed in the spring of 2012 with comprehensive consumer testing in Finland and Sweden. Users will try out the games at home. Feedback on the functionality of iPad tablets used as game platforms will be gathered also at this phase.

?The games will be modified strictly according to the user feedback. Naturally, the development has to take into account the general goals of the project, one of which is the commercial feasibility of the game. The games also have to have a communal aspect, and they must be readily playable at home?, Sandell states.

Express to Connect, funded by the European Union, will be executed in Finland, Denmark, Sweden and The Netherlands in the years 2010 to 2012. The main coordinator for the project is Copenhagen Living Lab from Denmark. The members of the consortium are Forum Virium Helsinki and Laurea University of Applied Sciences from Finland, Waag Society from the Netherlands, and Halmstad University from Sweden. Express to Connect is part of the European Ambient Assisted Living joint program.

Text: Maija Jokiniemi

express2connect.org [3]

facebook.com/express2connect? [4]

aalforum.eu [5]

??AAL projects brochure 2011??copenhagenlivinglab.com [6]

More information:
Project manager Anne-Mari Sandell
anne-mari.sandell(at)forumvirium.fi
Tel. +358 40 903 1922

express to connect

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