

OLDER PEOPLE AND COMPUTER USE – AN EU-PROJECT FOCUSING ICT COMPETENCE IN OLD AGE

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The internet is gaining importance in everyday life and hence research focusing computer use in the elderly has increased steadily in the past 20 years (Wagner et al., 2010). Internet use in older people is associated with well-being and quality of life (Zaphiris et al., 2007): it helps to prevent isolation (Sayago & Blat, 2010), helps older people to manage activities of daily living (Karavidas et al., 2005), and can be seen as an important cognitive stimulus (Carpenter & Budy, 2007). Despite of the benefits, computer use decreases in old age. In the EU-project Primer-ICT (Promoting the improvement of elderly ICT skills and well being by inter-generational and multi-sectoral education) universities from Slovenia, Austria, UK and Ireland work together on the development of online-course materials for teaching older people ICT-competence. Using an inter-generational, multi-sectoral approach university students will be educated to prepare multipliers (e.g. nurses) for the challenge of promoting computer competence in older people. The didactical concept of the project takes into account the needs of the older learner – e.g. age-related cognitive, visual, psychomotoric and hearing declines (Wagner et al., 2010) – and provides a supportive learning environment (Pfeil et al., 2009). The current process of course material development is supervised by internal and external experts and constant formative and summative evaluation is conducted. The ongoing project and the didactical principles will be presented.