Book Review: Intelligent technologies for bridging the grey digital divide.

Andrew Georgiou

Centre for Health Systems & Safety Research, Australian Institute of Health Innovation, University of New South Wales, Sydney, NSW, Australia

Abstract

BOOK REVIEW - J Soar, R Swindell, P Tsang (eds) Intelligent technologies for bridging the grey digital divide. IGI Global, Hershey, PA, USA, 2011 362pp. ISBN 9781615208258. AUD \$180.

Keywords: aged care; health informatics; evaluation; residential aged care; community care

The health informatics community, has long been aware of the significant contribution that assistive technologies can make to meeting consumer demand for safe and quality health care.[1] This is particularly relevant for the task of providing care for older people, amidst the complex array of challenges related to the burgeoning requirements of an ageing population. Yet, the aged care sector continues to be a technology laggard, falling well behind other parts of the community in its uptake and utilisation of information systems and assistive technologies.[2]

There has been a growing tendency within the health informatics community to promote the importance and relevance of aged care informatics as a sub-specialty that is focused on the role that technology can play in supporting the well being, independence and security of older persons and the coordination of their care and services.[3] The publication of *Intelligent technologies* for bridging the grey digital divide is a welcome and valuable contribution to the literature in this field.

The editors, Jeffrey Soar, Richard Swindell and Paul Tsang, have brought together a rich and diverse collection of contributions featuring current research from across Australia, Asia, Europe and North America. The book is divided into three sections that provide a comprehensive overview of recent technological developments that are expected to support: 1) ageing in place; 2) engagement with daily life; and 3) frail elderly and aged care providers.

areas of ubiquitous computing, technology and smart homes and other assistive technologies including telehealth. These technologies have the capacity to enable seamless care and transform the experience of ageing through coordinated care and guided self care for consumers.[4] Nevertheless, despite the enormous promise of such technologies, they continue to register low adoption levels, and as Neil Bergmann's opening chapter explains, need to be subject to significant trials and greater research to better meet the needs of clients and carers.[5]

Section 2 deals with the role of technology in supporting engagement with daily life. The 7 chapters of this section incorporate examinations of technology in the context of existing gerontological theories and research. This includes areas relating to reducing the "digital divide", intelligent transportation systems to improve safety and extend driving longevity, and the use of technology to build a community of mutual care to organise social resources and promote social connec-

The final 5 chapters contained within section 3 deal with technology's contribution to the lives of older people and their caregivers in nursing homes, and the information needs of family care providers. These are areas that have not been extensively studied and continue to be poorly understood and in substantial need of continued research attention.[6]

Providing quality care for the ageing population in-Section 1 incorporates 7 chapters which deal with the volves a number of challenges for our community, and

there is much to learn about how to deal effectively with these challenges. The book, *Intelligent technologies for bridging the grey digital divide*, makes an important contribution to meeting this task. The aged care and health care community will find it a valuable resource that can inform and optimise decisions about the best use of technology in providing safe and quality care for older people.

Correspondence

Dr Andrew Georgiou Centre for Health Systems & Safety Research Australian Institute of Health Innovation University of New South Wales, Sydney, NSW 2052 Australia

Telephone: + 61 2 9385 3852 a.georgiou@unsw.edu.au

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Conflict of interest

None declared.