

Main paths of future research & development on ethics and e-Inclusion

Vesna Dolničar
University of Ljubljana
Faculty of Social Sciences
vesna.dolnicar@fdv.uni-lj.si

User involvement

- making technologies relevant
- user requirements research (different stakeholders)
- → identifying the potential disbenefits and avoid them
- → Improve the design & development process to ensure that technologies are user-driven (R&D needs to involve users at all stages of the process)

Minimising the potential risks...

... in research &

... research design, outcomes

- Research and deployment in accordance with main (national and international) regulations, guidelines, principles and codes of conduct

Ethical concerns regarding research

- Free & informed consent (& right to withdraw consent at any time);
- Protection of personal data & privacy (all information private & confidential, all data anonymised);
- Research conducted by scientifically qualified persons;
- Participants adequately informed of the design of the study;
- Participants treated with respect at all times;
- close attention paid to possible gender issues and relations of power;
- Research carried out within a framework that is acceptable to participants (location, timeframe).

Ethical concerns regarding the research design and outcomes

- risks faced by technological interventions; individuals might have problems with the new ICTs: stress, confusion and frustration
- inclusive society: narrowing the “digital divide” (how to make sure that some people are not excluded from accessing technologies)?
- → attention to the psychological and sociological issues, needs assessment and requirements analysis, intense user involvement in designing and evaluating the ideas and solutions
- → factors that influence acceptability of the ICTs:
 - factors related to the specific group of end users & stakeholders (e.g. socio-psychological factors, socio-demographic factors, degree of limitations...)
 - factors related to the environment (individual level – physical environment, social environment, structural level)
- → the risk predictability & risk benefit assessment
- → raise awareness and questions concerning the ethical dilemmas created by a range of ICT (by authorities, industry, academia and funders); transparency → trust
- → respect fundamental ethical principles: human dignity, integrity, autonomy, privacy & data protection.

Some recommendations

- assure simple usage
- secure the benefits (presented clearly and in a positive way) → recognition of ICT quality and its usefulness (usability and reliability!)
- expectations, needs and interests of the older person
- proper training
- users will most readily use technology that is desirable because it *improves their quality of life* and *enhances their social status*



Slovenian Presidency of the EU 2008

- Thank you on behalf of the Slovenian Presidency!

