Europe unveils a technology platform for active aging

Researchers at the University Carlos III of Madrid, in collaboration with the Spanish firm Aliad Conocimiento y Servicio, have developed a software platform to help promote active and healthy aging in the context of an European project. The system contains news, forums, videos, social networking, mobile applications and games to promote mental activity and a training program. The offer has already attracted more than 11,000 users and is expected to reach 20,000 at the end of this year

uc3m / SINC   3/3/2015 10:10 CEST

The situation of digital divide affects particularly the older.. / uc3m

The main purpose of this system, which already has 11,000 users, is to build a "meeting point for social agents, older citizens and society in general in order to contribute to healthy, active ageing," explains one of the researchers involved in the project, Professor Yago Sáez, of UC3M's Computer Science Department. Moreover, this "*Social Ecosystem for Anti-Ageing, Capacitation and Wellbeing*" (the project's initials are SEACW) comes as a response to one of the provisions established during the UN's Second World Assembly on

Ageing: we are facing a historical fact that is unprecedented on the European continent; in the year 2050, the elderly population will be twice that of the young population.

In addition, another of the important challenges that this digital ecosystem faces is that one out of four Europeans lack the knowledge and skills to remain connected (to and through technology), a "digital gap" that especially affects the elderly, according to research. This is not the only challenge. Professor Pedro Isasi, the head researcher on the project, highlights that the challenges presented by a project like this begin with making it simple and easy to use; it must accessible, use an adequate typeface and present no barriers; this will guarantee its effectiveness and facilitate digital inclusion.

Towards an active ecosystem

"The most complicated part is to reach a high enough number of users so that they not only consume information but they also begin to produce it; that way the digital ecosystem will begin to take on a life of its own, a life created by the users themselves," points out Sáez. To sum up, the system attempts to promote intergenerational solidarity, the usability of tools of social inclusion by the elderly, and to contribute to increasing a healthy life expectancy for European citizens.

Contains news, forums, videos, social networking, mobile applications and games to promote mental activity and a training program

With the goal of being effective and dynamic, the SEACW ecosystem enables users to find news, forums, videos, a social network, mobile applications, games that foment mental activity and even a training program for active, healthy ageing through the use of ITCs. For now, the offer has attracted over 11,000 users and, according to the developers' forecasts, will reach approximately 20,000 by the end of the year.

In setting *Action for Healthy Ageing* in motion, UC3M was responsible for the technological development of this ecosystem. Thanks to this work, thousands of Europeans now have access to this space and are able to connect with forums, videos and other online tools. The goal is to implement the pilot program in fifteen regions, in addition to carrying out studies: one on

the state of the technique and another on the impact of ITCs on healthy, active ageing.

SEACW (Social Ecosystem for Anti-ageing, Capacitation and Wellbeing) is a European project lead by Aliad Conocimiento y Servicio, whose objective is to become an Internet meeting place for anyone interested in healthy, active aging using Information Technology and Communications (ITC). Financed by the European Commission's European Program CIP-ICT-PSP 2012, it has been carried out by a consortium of partners from five European countries: Bulgaria, Spain, France, Italia and Malta. In addition to the project's coordinator, the Spanish firm Aliad Conocimiento y Servicio, the following entities have also participated: Eseniors, Exorgroup, Go to our Site, Gruppo Sigla, the Institute for Neurobiology of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, the University for Technology of Troyes (France) and the University of Vic.

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