

## **TRACK 29. TECHNOLOGY, INNOVATION AND IMAGES OF HEALTH AND AGING**

### *Background*

Demographic aging is among the most striking societal changes advanced societies face today. It is clear that aging poses social care and public health systems with severe challenges, but also that aging market places ask for changes in current practices of technology and innovation. Older adults will become an increasingly important consumer group for a number of everyday technologies and consumer electronics. New solutions are sought to tackle the problems in health and social care systems, thus evoking images of more sustainable health systems including innovation in pharmaceuticals and medical technologies. And finally, with, for instance, e-government becoming more relevant, the problems that many older adults experience with new technologies are likely to translate into more fundamental problems of societal and political participation thus exacerbating the so-called 'digital divide'.

In short, it is about time to address the relationship between technology, innovation and aging on a broad basis. This track investigates this relationship with an emphasis on images of health and aging. Such images differ widely, ranging from those highly associated with physical decline, alienation and illness to those connoted with financial wealth and increasing longevity. The track will explore existing images of health and aging, their creation and construction, and especially their entanglement with practices of technology development across health and non-health sectors.

### *Topics*

We welcome contributions that look at demographic aging, healthcare and innovation with a focus on user-producer interactions or, more generally, usership. How do various practitioners of technology make sense out of health and aging when addressing the aging marketplace, and how do the images thus created influence the public understanding of what aging is and how it can and should be moulded? What images of aging can we find in current practices of technology development? What are the sources of knowledge innovators turn to in order to create and construct images of aging in various sectors? What are the paths of knowledge about health and aging into new technology? How is the performativity of technologically embedded images of health and aging realised?

Contributions may stem from, but are not limited to the following empirical subjects:

- New social and biomedical formulations of aging, especially as being created and re-produced in sociomaterial relations
- Images of aging in consumer electronics, ICTs and mobile technologies
- User-producer interactions and usership in ambient assisted living
- Stakeholder engagement in emerging diagnostics for 'aging' diseases, such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's Disease.
- Images of healthy aging and the role of lifestyle drugs (e.g. Viagra, baldness)

- (Images of) sustainable healthcare systems, including innovation in drugs and medical devices
- Technology-related ageism, the digital divide and social/political participation in aging societies
- Choreographies of technology and the images and realities of 'successful aging'
- Health and aging constructs in technology regulation
- Converging medical technologies and health/aging

Abstracts of no more than 500 words should be sent by email (following website instructions) by 2010 March 15<sup>th</sup>.

### **Convenors**

**Alexander Peine** is an Assistant Professor at the Innovation Studies Group of Utrecht University. His research focuses on the role of users and use as a source of new technology practices and here on innovation in aging societies in particular ([www.geo.uu.nl/staff/peine](http://www.geo.uu.nl/staff/peine)).

**Alex Faulkner** is Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Biomedicine & Society, Kings College London. He has just published 'Medical Technology into Healthcare and Society' (2009) on governance of medical devices. (<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/schools/sspp/interdisciplinary/cbas/staff/acad/af.html>).

**Birgit Jaeger** is professor at the Department of Society and Globalisation, Roskilde University. Recently she managed a research project concerning senior citizens' use of ICT presented in 'Young Technologies in Old Hands' (DJØF Publishing, 2005) and Science Studies (Vol. 17, No. 2). ([http://forskning.ruc.dk/site/research/jaeger\\_birgit\(4489\)](http://forskning.ruc.dk/site/research/jaeger_birgit(4489)))

**Ellen Moors** is associate professor of innovations in life sciences at the Innovation Studies Group, Utrecht University. Her research focuses on innovation processes in life sciences, on technology dynamics and interaction processes, both from a firm's and a user-producer perspective. ([www.geo.uu.nl/staff/moors](http://www.geo.uu.nl/staff/moors))