Virtual and imaginative travel in later life

Dr Charles Musselwhite
Associate Professor (Reader) in Gerontology, Centre for Innovative Ageing, Swansea University
c.b.a.musselwhite@swansea.ac.uk
www.drcharliemuss.com

ONE-DAY OPAN CYMRU WORKSHOP ON:

PROLONGING SAFE MOBILITY IN LATER LIFE FOR INDEPENDENCE AND WELLBEING

Wednesday 11th December 2013, SURF Room, Swansea University, 10am-5pm
Introduction
Internet usage is growing

Use of Internet over 65s
• Daily: 29% (67% all ages)
• Weekly: 11%
• Monthly: 4%
  (OFCOM, 2013)

• Main reasons for not using
  – don’t need it
  (ONS, 2013; OFCOM, 2013)

• Moving to “Can’t use it” as no longer being an excuse?

Internet access at home

Age: 25-54, 65-74, 75+

%
Wider beneficial effects of computer/Internet use

• Users of internet = feel more in control of lives

• Owners of computers = feel more ability to learn new skills.

• People who reported not using the internet were more likely to say that they ‘often’ felt isolated from others.

• Conversely, people who said they did use the internet were more likely to respond that they ‘hardly ever or never’ felt isolated. The same pattern was found for loneliness.

(Mason, Sinclair and Berry, ILCUK, 2012).
What would older people like technology to help them with (Soparano et al., 2009)

- **Social isolation** (loneliness, depression, boredom, social exclusion and disruption of patterns of daily living);

- **Mobility inside and outside the home** (challenges to personal mobility in terms of walking in the neighbourhood and use of public transport).

- **Keeping healthy and active** (included physical and mental activity, exercise, good nutrition, daily routines and adherence to medications);

- **Getting access to shops and services**

- **Increase community participation and contribution to local community**;

- **Safety and Security**: (falls, disorientation, control of household equipment);

- **Reduce forgetfulness** (appears to be a challenge to independence for many and concerns, for example, taking medication or finding objects in the house);

- **Accessing information/keeping up to date** (was a crucial issue as well as finding help and tradesmen to do jobs around the home);

- **Quality management of care provision** (is an important issue to ensure that the right amount and right quality of care is delivered in people’s homes);
Travel needs
Needs for travel

PRIMARY MOBILITY NEEDS
Practical/utilitarian Needs
e.g. get from A to B as safely, reliably, cheaply and comfortably as possible.

SECONDARY MOBILITY NEEDS
Social/affective Needs
e.g. The need for independence, control, to be seen as normal.
Linked to status, roles, identity, self-esteem. Impression management

TERTIARY MOBILITY NEEDS
Aesthetic Needs
e.g. The need for the journey itself, for relaxation, visit nature.
No explicit purpose.

 PRIMARY MOBILITY NEEDS
Practical/utilitarian Needs
e.g. get from A to B as safely, reliably, cheaply and comfortably as possible.

SECONDARY MOBILITY NEEDS
Social/affective Needs
e.g. The need for independence, control, to be seen as normal. Linked to status, roles, identity, self-esteem. Impression management

TERTIARY MOBILITY NEEDS
Aesthetic Needs
e.g. The need for the journey itself for relaxation, visit nature, use and test cognitive skills

A reduction in mobility can result in an increase in isolation, loneliness and depression and an overall a poorer quality of life.

On giving-up driving this level of needs is adversely affected

Isolation, no longer part of society, no longer feel normal

Not so easy to ask for discretionary travel

On giving-up driving this level of needs is usually met

 friends
 accessible transport
 public transport
 teleshopping?

“...You can’t ask other people to take you out for “a drive”. They’d think you’ve lost their senses. Anyway they have got better things to be doing with their time, then ferrying me about just for the sake, like”

(female, gave-up driving at 80)

“It’s hard to explain I suppose. You just don’t seem like you belong. I suppose yes there are feelings that you might be ready for the scrapheap now. The first step to it, you know”

(Male, given-up driving at 76)

“Well Dorothy and David from number 3 take me shopping every week, we all go, we have a bit of a time of it you know, it’s a kind of outing. I never expected that.”

(Female, gave-up driving at 80)

Satisfying travel needs by virtual technologies
There are replacements on the Internet to reduce actual mobility

**TERTIARY MOBILITY NEEDS**
Aesthetic Needs
- e.g. The need for the journey itself, for relaxation, visit nature.
- No explicit purpose.

**SECONDARY MOBILITY NEEDS**
Social/affective Needs
- e.g. The need for independence, control, to be seen as normal.
- Linked to status, roles, identity, self-esteem. Impression management

**PRIMARY MOBILITY NEEDS**
Practical/utilitarian Needs
- e.g. get from A to B as safely, reliably, cheaply and comfortably as possible.
Examples: E-health
Carefully track own health -

Independence, esp. rural areas, ownership over health
Reduce emergencies

A tele-health monitor is installed at home allowing patient to measure pulse, blood pressure, lung capacity, lung function, electrical activity in her heart and other health indicators.
Examples: Shopping online
Shop online
Browse time, still do it yourself, no need to move from comfort of own home

Preferred when done in a group.

AGE UK help sessions (e.g. Come Dine with Us – Tyne & Wear)
AGE Concern, Dorset – Musselwhite (2006)
Teleworking:
1993 by 2010: 80% of office workers would work from home/remotely
Telehubs etc. (AT&T, 1993)

• Remove the need for physical/literal/corporeal travel
• Reduce need for workspace
• Did it happen? No?
• Why?
• Technology IS there and IS good quality.

PRIMARY MOBILITY NEEDS
Practical/utilitarian Needs
  e.g. get from A to B as safely, reliably and comfortably as possible.
Facebook big growth in use: 65% over 65s use. But many do not use frequently/give it up.

Twitter: 13% 50-64 year olds; 5% 65+ (compared to 30% 18-29 year olds)
• 40% of older people speak to their children on the phone every day (7% of never speak to their children on the phone.

• 85% of people that use Skype say that it helps them feel more connected. However, there is recognition that it’s not the same as seeing your children (87%).

• The majority of older people do not use Skype to talk to their children (95%). This is because, for many (42%) they don’t know how to use it.

• The regularity of Skype use varies across the nations: in England 21%, of those who use Skype, do so weekly, in Wales it’s 38% and Scotland 75%.

WVRS (2012)

SECONDARY MOBILITY NEEDS
Social/affective Needs
  e.g. The need for independence, control, to be seen as normal. Linked to status, roles, identity, self-esteem. Impression management
Examples: Outside world in
TV
Radio
Still Walks
Webcams
Pictures

Biophilia – innate need to be with nature
Relaxing, calming.

Missing? – Control and movement,
moving between things and sensory
information. Interaction. The ordinary.
TERTIARY MOBILITY NEEDS
Aesthetic Needs
e.g. The need for the journey itself, for relaxation, visit nature.
No explicit purpose.
TERTIARY MOBILITY NEEDS
Aesthetic Needs
e.g. The need for the journey itself, for relaxation, visit nature.
No explicit purpose.
TERTIARY MOBILITY NEEDS

Aesthetic Needs
e.g. The need for the journey itself, for relaxation, visit nature.
No explicit purpose.
Need for interaction

Simulated worlds
Need for interaction
Virtual worlds.
Immersion for relaxation (Baños et al., 2012)
Second life

TERTIARY MOBILITY NEEDS
Aesthetic Needs
e.g. The need for the journey itself, for relaxation, visit nature.
No explicit purpose.
Virtual reality caves
Need more research with older people

TERTIARY MOBILITY NEEDS
Aesthetic Needs
e.g. The need for the journey itself, for relaxation, visit nature.
No explicit purpose.
Potential

- Increase in technology and networking
- Increased accessibility
- Increased use – buying, talking, making friends, "visiting", watching, interacting
- Own time

Challenges

- What is missing from the "virtual" world compared to "reality"?
  - Touch, smell, sense, continuity, impression managed, staged
  - Informal, random, chance meetings
- Equal access?

"I will order stuff on the Internet rather than going to town to buy it, so I don't make that journey and it is just so much simpler on the Internet. Somebody else comes and drives and delivers it to your door (Male 60s)."

"I certainly see more of my grandson because of Skype (Female 60s)."

"If I couldn't get to places..., although I've got a computer, I would stagnate. Because I like the social aspect of things. And I like the different characters you come across and it stimulates your thinking and makes life worthwhile to be able to go out and meet others (Male 70s)"

Need to bring it together

**TERTIARY MOBILITY NEEDS**
Aesthetic Needs
- e.g. The need for the journey itself, for relaxation, visit nature.
- No explicit purpose.

**SECONDARY MOBILITY NEEDS**
Social/affective Needs
- e.g. The need for independence, control, to be seen as normal.
- Linked to status, roles, identity, self-esteem. Impression management

**PRIMARY MOBILITY NEEDS**
Practical/utilitarian Needs
- e.g. get from A to B as safely, reliably, cheaply and comfortably as possible.
Imaginative travel
Imaginative TERTIARY MOBILITY NEEDS
Aesthetic Needs
e.g. The need for the journey itself, for relaxation, visit nature.
No explicit purpose.

I would miss not getting out and about. But look at the view from my garden of the fields. Look at it. If I really couldn’t go out again I’d be a lot more better off than other people and other people in urban areas (Po2).

“look out my window don't you think I am very privileged…. people have got pictures like that hanging on their walls… I sit by here and I see the changing seasons and the sunrise on it….” (Female 80s)
People remember places they have travelled.

TERTIARY MOBILITY NEEDS
Aesthetic Needs
e.g. The need for the journey itself, for relaxation, visit nature.
No explicit purpose.

“As far as I am concerned, I have spent 40 years of my life overseas anyway so I have no desire to go to these places or to move around” (Male Dyfed)
Conclusion
• Technology not direct satisfaction
  – often satisfies only one need at a time
  – Could be brought together
  – But not the same as in-person
  – Random, informal – can this really be mimicked?
  – Touch, smell, feel – can technology provide?

• But could give you more
  – Shopping with family on other side of the world
  – Keeping people independent – ageing in place
  – Locus of control with the person

• Essence and importance of literal travel
  – Importance of being co-present
  – Of the informal
  – Of the random
  – Of the ordinary, in order to get at the extraordinary
  – Interaction, mastery, discovery, formulating
References


