
Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Design to Improve Lives of the Elderly

Active ageing and better public service delivery with product and service innovations for the elderly through design ethnographic studies

Singapore, 1 October 2015 – Design can help to improve the lives of the elderly through enhancing public services and creating innovative products that meet their needs. The DesignSingapore Council (Dsg) is working with designers, healthcare and social service providers, as well as the infocomm technology sector to design human-centred and empathetic technology solutions to address health & wellness needs of the elderly.

Dsg launched two publications today. *Design for Ageing Gracefully* and *Empathetic Technology for Ageing*, feature new design insights, design principles and concepts that can help public service providers and infocomm technology professionals to design solutions to cater to the needs of the elderly.

The two design ethnographic studies observed two groups of elderly to understand how they interact with healthcare services, environment and products. These seniors come from different backgrounds ranging from those who are frail and dependent on others, to those who are active and want to contribute back to society. Through shadowing and in-depth interviews with the elderly, the study yielded insights into the elderly's attitudes and perceptions towards health & wellness and technology. The research also suggested key design principles that could help make infocomm technology accessible for the elderly and to enhance public services to support a rapidly ageing society in Singapore.

"I highly encourage healthcare and social service providers as well as infocomm technology companies to tap on this rich database of ethnographic research to gain insights into the attitudes, mindset and lifestyles of the elderly in Singapore," said Mr Jeffrey Ho, Executive Director of DesignSingapore Council. "Through this research, public service providers and enterprises will also be able to refine their approach to health management and care support systems, and be inspired to design new and improved products incorporating infocomm technology."

Some of the insights drawn from the research include - elderly who want to be independent and to find meaningful activities to occupy their time; some elderly are tech-savvy, while others want to maintain their existing lifestyle using only products that they are familiar with such as television and radio. Some proposed concepts highlighted in the publications include **555* Seniors Helpline for Jobs** that can connect to a backend database that automatically matches the seniors to the opportunities available; **Kopi and Toast**, that involves setting up elderly-friendly mobile cafes at the HDB void decks as well as **Inspa-Life**, a TV-platform that pairs the elderly with younger community members to facilitate the co-sharing of experiences and new



skills. Dsg will work with designers and interested agencies to refine the design concepts in the next few months.

As Singapore embarks on its journey towards a Smart Nation to tap on technology to serve our citizens' needs, such design ethnographic studies become important when designing viable solutions aimed at addressing our aging population needs to gain greater acceptance and wider adoption.

For more details on the research projects and publications, please refer to **Annex A and B**.

ISSUED BY

**DESIGNSINGAPORE COUNCIL,
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About the DesignSingapore Council

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The vision of the DesignSingapore Council is for design to differentiate Singapore from global competition. As the national agency for design, the Council's mission is to develop the design sector, and to help Singapore use design for innovation and growth, as well as to make life better. The DesignSingapore Council is part of the Ministry of Communications and Information.

The DesignSingapore Council also oversees the programming of the National Design Centre (NDC). The NDC supports the Council's efforts to enhance the vibrancy of the design ecosystem as well as catalyse industry collaborations and business opportunities for innovation and growth.

More information about the DesignSingapore Council and the National Design Centre is available at www.designsingapore.org

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Design for Ageing Gracefully and Empathetic Technology for Ageing

1. DESIGN FOR AGEING GRACEFULLY

Rethinking Health & Wellness for the Elderly: Public Services

The 'Design for Ageing Gracefully' project looks into designing services and experiences for the elderly in communities and public healthcare institutions. Ethnographic research with elderly Singaporeans and their caregivers identified trends and gaps in people's experiences of the current healthcare system.

The project highlights **opportunities for design-driven innovation in Singapore public healthcare**, with the aim to support a rapidly ageing society. The publication contains key research themes, eight personas and initial service concepts.

The insights were grouped into five themes – Challenges to Coping, Searching for a New Normal, Cultural Nuances, Caregivers and External Aids and Having a Robust Retirement Plan – of which for each theme, a recognisable challenge was identified for the current healthcare system. To address each of these challenges, five to six experience design guidelines were devised.

This project is commissioned by Dsg and in collaboration with the Ageing Planning Office under the Ministry of Health.

An example of the insights, design principles and proposed concept from the research project:

Kopi and toast Concept

A) Insights

The insights were derived from the "Ceaseless Breadwinner" and the "Ageing Go-Getter" personas, that could represent some of the elderly who participated in the study.

- The Ceaseless Breadwinner neglects health due to time and financial constraints and does not understand the consequences of his lifestyle for his health. This persona also does not consider their eligibility possibility for subsidies and services.
- The Ageing Go-Getter minimises the use of pharmaceutical medication unless necessary but they have sound understanding of alternative medicine and is motivated to live healthily. Unfortunately they also distrust doctors and avoid necessary check-ups.

B) Design principles

To address the needs of these groups of elderly, designers, healthcare and social service providers could incorporate the use of elderly-friendly ergonomic design to increase decision-making freedom, enabling a collective caregiving within the community and providing a whole new meaning to ageing.

C) Proposed concept

Mobile cafés can be set up in HDB void decks. The cafés are managed by ‘senior navigators’, who are paid volunteers helping to provide information on policies, schemes to the less engaged senior citizens. This open café concept serves to disseminate information, provide healthcare and financial counselling as well as other initiatives for meaningful activities such as tech training, cultural awareness-based nutrition counselling etc. Communication means include verbal communicating, flyers and media such as TV/radio and social media. This engagement encourages accessibility to services available, provides meaningful employment and volunteer opportunities and facilitates advice of care options, schemes and subsidies.

2. EMPATHETIC TECHNOLOGY FOR AGEING

Rethinking Health & Wellness for the Elderly: Infocomm Technology Sector

The ‘Empathetic Technology for Ageing’ project looks into designing infocomm technology solutions for the elderly. It explores the challenges the elderly face to remain healthy and meaningfully engaged. With the advancement of technology and the increase of Singapore’s life expectancy, there is also a diverse array of elderly care products and services on the global market. However, these may not be fully utilised due to a lack of awareness and relevance.

The publication featured trends that are clustered into six key elderly needs ranging from physiological to spiritual as well as four key motivations from the different elderly profiles in Singapore based on observations through the ethnographic research.

By sharing the insights discovered via the human-centred design thinking approach, this research study also aims to help enterprises gain empathy towards the needs of the elderly in Singapore, and inspire solutions that can create a positive impact on the elderly’s lives.

This project is commissioned by Dsg and in collaboration with the Infocomm Development Authority.

Examples of the insights, design principles and proposed concept from the research project:

555* Seniors Helpline for Jobs and Inspa-Life Concepts

A) Insights

The insights were derived from the “Up-Keeper” persona, that could represent some of the elderly who participated in the study. The Up-Keeper is unwilling to be left behind by their tech-savvy children and peers, so they learn social applications such as Whatsapp and Facebook to stay connected. However, this persona is not interested to learn private and yet functional

applications such as internet banking, unless they observed that their peers are using them as well.

B) Design principles

To address the needs of these groups of elderly, designers, healthcare and social service providers and technology professionals could enable independence for the elderly while employing interfaces that they are familiar with and will likely to access, learn and use without assistance. The research also suggests creating an environment that helps the elderly recognise their capabilities and value, and encourages them to remain productive in the community.

C) Proposed concepts

- 555* Senior Helpline for Jobs is a personal one-stop job/interest matching service that connect to a backend database. The system automatically matches the seniors to the opportunities available. On the other hand, it allows the job providers to offer feedback to the seniors to encourage and affirm their self-worth and achievement. In this case, the phone helpline is an interface that the seniors are familiar with.
- Inspa-Life is a TV platform that supports mutual learning for the elderly and their community. The seniors are paired up with community members to learn new skills as well as pass on their experiences to the younger generation from the comfort of their homes. Not only does it bridge the generation gap between the elderly and youths, but it also empowers the elderly with new found knowledge.

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Profile of Design Consultancies Involved in the Projects

The DesignSingapore Council commissioned design/research consultants to conduct the ethnographic research, and develop insights and personas. The consultancies also conducted a global trend study and design workshops for designers, healthcare and social service providers and technology professionals.

The *Design for Ageing Gracefully* project was researched by Experientia, and the *Empathetic Technology for Ageing* project was researched by Orcadesign Consultants and SupraCopula.

About Experientia

Experientia is an international experience design consultancy helping companies and organizations to innovate their products, services and processes by putting people and their experiences first.

More information about Experientia can be found at www.experientia.com



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Michele Visciola

President and Co-Founder
Experientia

Michele is an international expert on user-centered innovation and is often in Singapore to run the business development in Asia. In the international projects that he works on, he addresses innovation challenges from a design perspective and brings in conceptual frameworks that range from the most recent advances of evolutionary anthropology through behavioral economics principles. Michele's expertise also revolves around the digital transformation of finance and healthcare services, the service design and the behavioral modeling.



About Orcadesign

Orcadesign Consultants is a forward-thinking innovation and strategy consultancy firm with over 20 years of experience in creating impactful solutions.

We work closely with our clients including SMEs, start-ups and global brands to solve problems, uncover business opportunities, innovate and grow sustainably. We advocate and adopt a human-centred and dynamic approach towards innovation. We also identify consumer trends and understand underlying user needs and motivations, before we translate them into meaningful insights and drive product and service design innovation.

Our work has gained international recognition such as the President's Design Award (Singapore), iF, Universal Design Award, IDEA Award and Geneva Innovation Awards.

More information about Orcadesign can be found at www.orcadesign.net

About SupraCopula

SupraCopula is an innovation consultancy that integrates business and design thinking. We bridge consumer insights, business viability and technical know-how to define and support our clients' innovation strategy.

We help our clients to discover business opportunities through consumer insight research and business model design, as well as develop and deepen innovation capabilities via process re-design, and customised innovation training. Through innovative and implementable solutions, we help clients achieve maximum design impact. Since the founding in 2012, we have been providing insightful advice to MNCs and SMEs across different sectors including consumer electronics, FMCG, retail and digital experience.

More information about SupraCopula can be found at www.supracopula.com.



Jeremy Sun

Creative Director

Orcadesign Consultants

An innovation designer with over 20 years of rich experience, Jeremy has lent his expertise to MNCs, SMEs and start-ups. He helps them to reframe challenges, identify opportunities and create innovative products and services that resonate with their target audiences. An avid design educator, Jeremy also conducts collaborative workshops to build innovation capabilities amongst diverse groups and organisations.

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