Preface

First International Workshop on Reminiscence Systems, Cambridge, UK - 5 September 2009

These proceedings include nine papers accepted for the Reminiscence Systems Workshop, which was held at Churchill College, Cambridge on 5 September 2009. Intentionally, the papers reflect the broad swathe of academic and care-based disciplines that are involved in the research and provision of services using reminiscence systems.

The first short paper 'Reminiscence Systems' provides an introduction to the area of reminiscence systems and describes some of the technologies that impact or will impact in the design of such systems.

The second paper 'REAFF - A framework for developing technology to address the needs of people with dementia' describes a protocol that provides guidance on the development of technologies to support people with dementia. The set of principles has been developed from needs-based research but it is argued that they have a broad applicability to aid those seeking to develop technology to support all people with dementia.

The paper 'Computerized personal intervention of reminiscence therapy for Alzheimer's patients' describes early usage results in the development of a multimedia-based reminiscence system, which show high satisfaction levels from those using the system as well as a strong tendency towards repeated use. There was also a clear preference for personal rather than general material when both were available in the prototype system. This finding contradicted the results from the use of the CIRCA system (Astell et al. 2008) where generic images were used, and this issue was one of the key areas discussed at the workshop.

The paper 'Reminiscence Processes Using Life-Log Entities for Persons with Mild Dementia' explored the use of 'life-log' technologies to promote autonomy for people with mild dementia by helping to maintain episodic memories. An early prototype of the tool that enables a person with dementia to review their day's activities, recorded by the life-log technology, was presented.

The paper 'MemoryLane: Reminiscence for Older Adults' explored the use of story telling as a socially beneficial activity for older people, where the telling of stories of past events and experiences defines family identities and is an integral part of most cultures. The reminiscence system described was a mobile-based device designed to enhance the reminiscence capabilities of older people, employing techniques from artificial intelligence to create an adaptive interface for them.

In her paper, 'My Stories are My Identity', Sarah Reed describes the use of her card-based technique with residents and staff from care homes. She describes how the cards can also be used in inter-generational work where local school children use the cards as aids to trigger conversations with the residents of care homes.

The paper 'Experiences with a Publicly Deployed Tool for Reminiscing' described work on a system called 'Pensieve'. The system was designed to prompt people to reminiscence using emails with textual prompts or social media content. The research found that users valued the system and that prompts with images interestingly drew more responses but less thoughtful ones than textual prompts.

In his paper 'Drawn from Memory: Reminiscing, Narrative and the Visual Image', Professor Terence Wright discusses the value of photographs as triggers for reminiscing using case studies from several research projects that demonstrate personal reminisces as well as social memory. He explores the function of photographic-based images as memory aids or as stimuli for reminiscing, placed in the context of the narratives that can be constructed around the image. Interestingly, he discusses the search for 'narrative potential' in construction of material for one of the projects, thus mirroring the concept of significant life events that make up the 'reminiscence bump' (discussed in the workshop by Astell) in the sense that both are indicators of key potential reminiscence triggers.

Finally, the paper 'Group Reminiscence Intervention for Institutionalized Demented Elders in Taiwan' described research that explored the significance of using group reminiscence therapy for dementia elders in order to promote their health and quality of life. The reminiscence intervention demonstrated effects for alleviating depressive symptoms and cognitive impairment; however it did not show any effectiveness or increase in behaviour competence and physical functioning in elders with dementia.

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References

Astell, A. J. Alm, N., Gowans, G., Ellis, M. P., Dye, R., & Campbell, J. (2008). CIRCA: A communication prosthesis for dementia. A. Mihailidas, L. Normie, H. Kautz & J. Boger (Eds). Technology and Aging. IOS Press.