

Design Enactments of ‘The Elderly’ for Welfare Technologies

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Abstract

I will be presenting a case from the user driven design project LevVel Mødestedet, where a diversity of partners from various disciplinary backgrounds collaborate on exploring and developing social welfare technologies for seniors. My analysis seeks to untangle the multiple enactments of ‘the elderly’ as they emerge both inside the project and in the everyday lives of seniors in the context of a Danish fitness center. The broader scope of this study is to engage with the questions that I pose in my PhD of how user centered and participatory design approaches seeking to represent and inscribe users ‘correctly’ into the design of new technologies might be understood considering the STS emphasis on multiple and emergent realities. Also I wish to explore the phenomenon of welfare technologies and the specific human/technology (re-)configurations that emerge within this domain. Who are the elderly, and how can we understand the alleged benefits that these technologies are presumed to have on social interaction, health and general well-being?