

# CN&SC IN3 Workshop

1 February 2017  
15.30 – 17.30

Jane Vincent



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## Workshop: Realising the potential of octo/nonagenarians

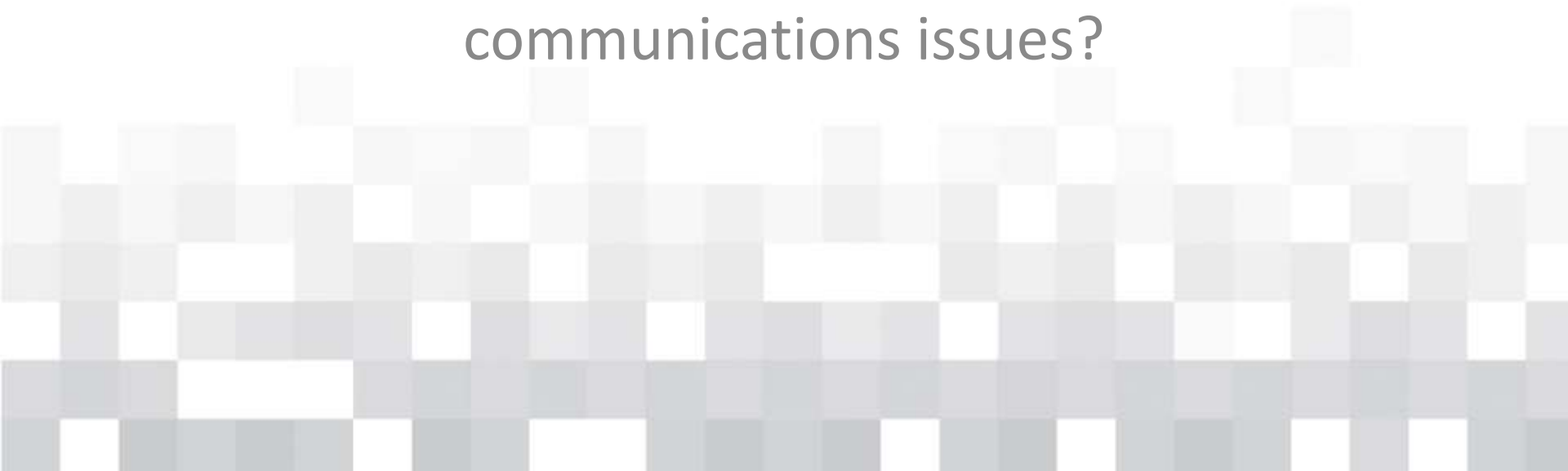
David Barche · 2017-01-17

The Communication Networks & Social Change Research Group (CN&SC) is pleased to organize a workshop offered by [Dr. Jane Vincent](#), Guest Teacher in the Department of Media and Communications at the London School of Economics and Political Science and Visiting Fellow in



# Realizing the potential of octo and nonagenarians

Exploring loneliness, boredom and exclusion among octo & nonagenarians – what are the media and communications issues?



# Agenda



- Introductions
  - About EU COST Action IS1402 & Short Term Scientific Missions
  - Participants institution and research interests
  - Expectations for the Workshop
- Aims of Workshop
- Why the over 80s?
- Sample UK/EU Projects past, present, future
- Discussion (including Twitter Dialogue)
  - What areas are less well researched?
  - Are there ageism/media and communication issues specific to the very old?
  - What research could make a difference, to whom and where?
- Sum up and next steps
- 17.30 End

# About EU COST Action IS1402 and STSMs



- [www.notoageism.com](http://www.notoageism.com)
  - ‘aims to challenge the practice of ageism and allow older people to realize their full potential’
- Short Term Scientific Mission
  - Exchange visits aimed at supporting individual mobility, **strengthening existing networks and fostering collaboration between researchers.**
  - Learn new techniques, **gain access to specific data**, instruments and/or methods not available in their own institutions/organisations
  - 5 – 90 days (My STSM is 5 days)

# Introductions & Expectations



Please introduce yourself by name, institution and a couple of sentences about your research interests relevant to this workshop

What are your expectations for this workshop?



# Aims of the Workshop



- To highlight & explore gaps in research about octo/nonagenarians experiences of media and communications
  - To focus on issues of loneliness, boredom and exclusion
- Consider new research topics that will deliver a greater understanding of media and communication issues that impact their lives.
- Build/grow network for possible further collaboration
- The workshop outcome will be included in my STSM Report to the European COST Action IS1402 and UOC IN3

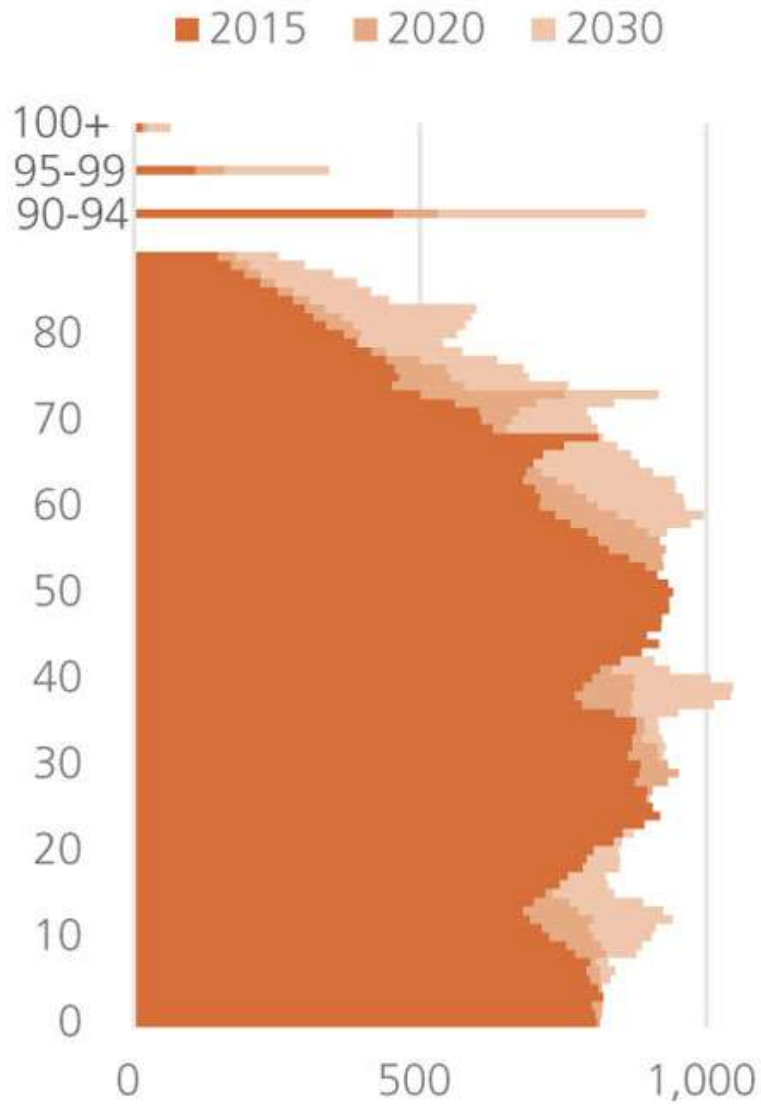
# Why the over 80s?



- Appear to be less well researched as an age cohort
  - Is it reasonable to assume people aged 80 and older are the same as people in their 60's and/or 70's?
- Number of people living into their 90s and older is growing
- Many over 80s are still active and without mental impairment but the research focus is often on managing poor health, frailties, dementia, alzheimers
- They appear to be more likely to have limited mobility (do not drive, may be physically inactive) but still desire to 'be involved'
- Is media representation of this age group ageist, fair...?
- What communications issues are peculiar to this age group?



# The UK has an ageing population



Age structure of the UK population in 2015, 2020 and 2030, by single year of age to 89 and bands thereafter, ONS 2012-based principal projections, thousands

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/research/key-issues-parliament-2015/social-change/ageing-population/>

- “the costs of old age have arisen because growth in total life expectancy has outpaced growth in healthy life expectancy (i.e. the number of years we can expect to live in good health). Policies that improve preventative healthcare, and help people to remain active and healthy in later life, could help increase the proportion of life spent in good health and reduce costs”
- “Increased numbers of older people in work need not disadvantage the young. Indeed, previous attempts, both in the UK and abroad, to create jobs for young people by encouraging older people to withdraw from the labour market have failed”.

# Why does a person's age become the trigger for media attention?



- “Senior citizen, 89, seeks employment in Paignton [UK] area. 20hrs+ per week. Still able to clean, light gardening, DIY and anything. I have references. Old soldier, airborne forces. Save me from dying of boredom!”

<https://www.theguardian.com/money/2016/dec/01/eager-89-year-old-seeks-job-cafe-snaps-him-up>

# Sample UK/EU Projects – past present and future



- Dundee University User Centre <http://usercentre.ning.com/>
  - Utopia Trilogy 2004  
[www.computing.Dundee.ac.uk/projects/utopia](http://www.computing.dundee.ac.uk/projects/utopia)
- What older people want – a catalogue of co-designed ICT concepts 2012
  - <http://sus-it.lboro.ac.uk/>
- Mobile Technology for Older People 2016
  - [http://www.surrey.ac.uk/dwrc/projects/mobile-technology-for-older-people/mobile technology for older people.htm](http://www.surrey.ac.uk/dwrc/projects/mobile-technology-for-older-people/mobile%20technology%20for%20older%20people.htm)
- Ageing Studies Theme – reimagining loneliness
  - <http://www.brunel.ac.uk/research/Institutes/Institute-of-Environment-Health-and-Societies/Ageing-Studies-Theme>

# ENRICHME – European H2020 funded robotics research



<http://www.enrichme.eu/wordpress/video/>

<https://www.facebook.com/www.enrichme.eu/>

“ENRICHME” refers to the goal of enriching the day-to-day experiences of elderly people at home (with mild cognitive impairment) by means of technologies that enable health monitoring, complementary care and social support, helping them to remain active and independent for longer and to enhance their quality of life

Emphasis of these projects is on designing/tailoring products & raising awareness of issues - loneliness

# Self help and helping others – are communities making the difference?



What goes on where you live?

In the UK in my village (pop. 7,000) there are many clubs in which people aged over 80 participate including:

Women's Institute; Townswomen's Guild; Trefoil Guild; Rotary Club; The Community Centre Lunches; Link Up; Coffee Clubs; Coach trips; Horticultural Club; Churches, Health & Fitness, Day Centre, Volunteer Bureau...

But what happens once you become housebound, cannot drive or access public transport, and your friends are in the same situation?

Many of the very old are still isolated, lonely & bored – they don't need a research project to tell them that - but are there any universal solutions?

# The social capital of the very old matters



Meika Loe :

‘If there is one common pattern it’s the social capital piece ... social connections are valuable for health and well being... daily checking by phone by a family member, visit with a scrabble club, connection with a Sunday church group, whatever it is , that social community, social groups, contributes to well being’

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aNpbWxahsrs>

- (2011) Aging Our Way – Independent Elders, Independent Lives OUP

# What does best practice media and communication for the very old look and feel like?



- How can we find out?
- Are there complementary studies that could be replicated for this age group?
- What difference could another study of this age group make?
- What can we do now?

# Discussion (including Twitter Dialogue)



- What areas are less well researched?
- Are there ageism/media and communication issues specific to the very old?
- What research could make a difference, to whom and where?
- Can we build on existing and/or create new collaborations?

What else?



# Sum Up and revisit aims of the workshop



- To highlight & explore gaps in research about octo/nonagenarians experiences of media and communications
  - To focus on issues of loneliness, boredom and exclusion
- Consider new research topics that will deliver a greater understanding of media and communications issues that impact their lives.
- Build/grow network for possible collaboration
- The workshop outcome will be included in my STSM Report to the European COST Action IS1402 and UOC IN3

# Thank you

Jane Vincent

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CN&SC IN3 Team for organising and hosting the workshop  
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# Workshop Abstract



The number of octo and nonagenarians is increasing. Many live independently and without dementia or Alzheimers but are lonely, isolated and excluded from society. Despite the span of 40+ years elderly, old and very old are often viewed as a single cohort within media and communications research and there are few studies of this 'very old' age group: research more typically includes respondents aged 60-75years with occasional older participants.

This workshop will explore gaps in research about the everyday lives and wellbeing of this very old age group with a view to framing new research proposals that will deliver a greater understanding of media and communications issues that impact their lives. The workshop outcome will report to the European COST Action IS1402 that aims to challenge the practice of ageism and allow older people to realize their full potential.

Key words: octo/nonagenarians; media and communications; ageism; wellbeing;

# Jane Vincent – Biography

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Senior Researcher, Guest Teacher in the Department of Media and Communications at the London School of Economics and Political Science and Visiting Fellow in the Digital World Research Centre, Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences University Surrey.

Jane has published widely on the topic of the social practices of information and communication technology users and her academic career since 2001 builds on over 2 decades of senior industry involvement in the design, development and implementation of digital mobile communications in Europe. Her Doctorate from University of Surrey in sociology on emotions and mobile phones, was awarded in 2011

Joint Editor of: *Electronic Emotions – the mediation of emotion via information and communications technology* (Peter Lang 2009), 'Participation in Broadband Society' series (Peter Lang 2010 - 2012); *Migration, Diaspora, and Information Technology in Global Societies* (Routledge 2013); *Social Robots from a Human Perspective* (Routledge 2016); *Smartphone Culture* (Routledge forthcoming)

Jane was a member of the Net Children Go Mobile and EU Kids Online projects and is an active participant in European COST Networks researching students' use of digital and paper technology for reading and writing, and ageism in media.