



**European SeniorWatch Observatory and Inventory -**  
*A market study about the specific IST needs of older and disabled people  
to guide industry, RTD and policy*

[www.seniorwatch.de](http://www.seniorwatch.de)

IST-1999-29086

## **Senior-Info-Mobil**

*A German awareness rising campaign on IST targeting  
older citizens*

Report Version:	1.0 by <i>empirica</i>
Report Preparation Date:	December 28, 2001
Classification:	<i>public</i>
Contract Start Date:	1 <sup>st</sup> of October 2000
Duration:	18 Month
Project Co-ordinator:	<i>empirica</i>
Partners:	WRC, STAKES, EURAG, NPOE



Project funded by the European Community under the  
"Information Society Technology" Programme (1998-2002)

Project Co-ordinator: *empirica*  
Communication and Technology Research  
Oxfordstrasse 2

D-53111 Bonn  
Phone:+49 (228) 985300  
Fax: +49 (228) 98530-12  
e-mail: [seniorwatch@empirica.com](mailto:seniorwatch@empirica.com)  
URL: <http://www.empirica.com/>

Partners:

WRC - Work Research Centre  
1 Greenlea Drive  
Dublin 6W  
Ireland  
Phone:+353 1 4927 042  
Fax: +353 1 4927 046  
e-mail: [wrc@wrc-research.ie](mailto:wrc@wrc-research.ie)  
URL: <http://www.wrc-research.ie/>

STAKES - National Research and Development Centre  
for Welfare and Health  
Siltasaarekatu 18 A  
Fin-00531 Helsinki  
Phone:+358 9 39 671  
Fax: +358 9 761 307  
e-mail: [asiakaspalvelu@stakes.fi](mailto:asiakaspalvelu@stakes.fi)  
URL: <http://www.stakes.fi/>

EURAG - European Federation of the Elderly  
Wielandgasse 9  
A-8010 Graz  
Phone:+43 316 81 46 08  
Fax: +43 316 81 47 67  
e-mail: [eurag.europe@aon.at](mailto:eurag.europe@aon.at)  
URL: <http://www.eurag.ch/>

NPOE - The Netherlands Platform Older people and Europe  
Christiaan Krammlaan 2-10  
3500 AE Utrecht  
The Netherlands  
Phone:+31 (0)30 273 23 93  
Fax: +31 (0)30 271 36 49  
e-mail: [npoe@seniorweb.nl](mailto:npoe@seniorweb.nl)  
URL: <http://www.seniorweb.nl/>

## Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Senior-Info-Mobil: A German awareness rising campaign on IST targeting older citizens .....</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1	Description.....	6
2.2	Analysis .....	7
2.2	Acknowledgements and links .....	8

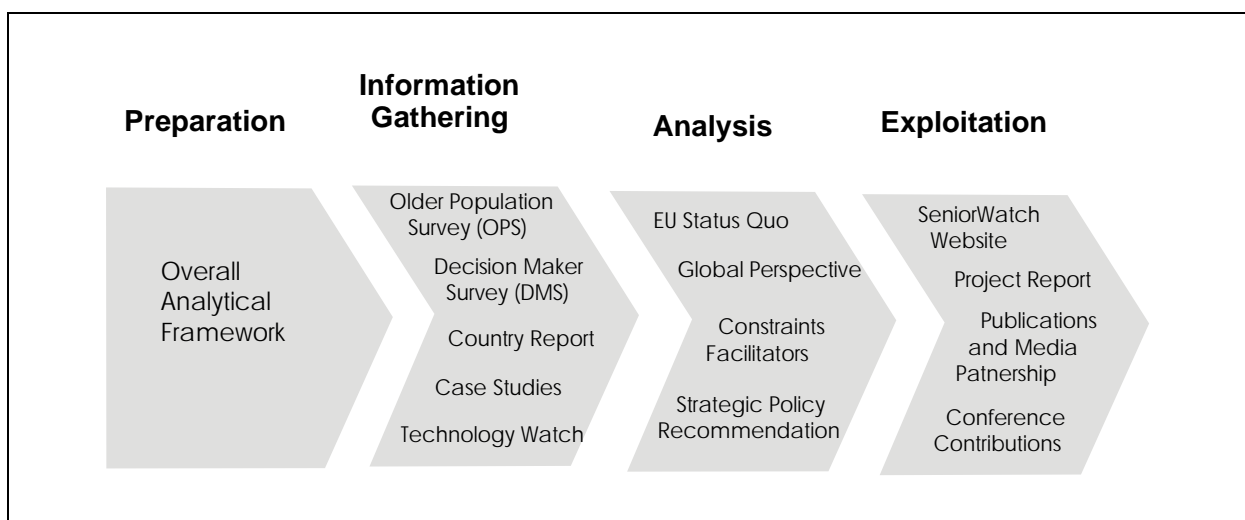
# 1 Introduction

The SeniorWatch project addresses the need to understand better and to monitor the market dynamics of Information Society Technologies (IST) applications and services targeted at older (and older disabled) citizens. Currently, there is insufficient empirical data about the needs of older citizens which could be met by IST-based applications and services, and a lack of awareness on the part of industry, users and politicians that hampers the rapid exploitation of new market opportunities arising from IST developments. In order to redress this state of affairs SeniorWatch will provide a European single source of empirical information on the market potential of IST-based products and services targeted at older people. The main objectives can be summarised as follows:

- to help and encourage European industry to address the market opportunities, and particularly challenge current competitive advantages of the US industries,
- to enable policy to really influence the current situation and to benchmark achievements between different European regions and countries and to make comparisons with competing world economies (Japan, US) most relevant to the field,
- to inform citizens about what is now possible with the support of IST and, thus, encourage them to demand IST products and services which meet their requirements.

As illustrated by Figure 1-1, these objectives require a comprehensive methodological approach to be applied. On the basis of an overall analytical framework, it integrates a set of complementary research methods such as European-wide surveys of older people and of decision makers in care services, best practice case studies, technology watch work shops and country reports. Synthesising the various types of empirical information gathered with help of these methods will finally enable the project to arrive at an holistic overview, to establish a technology and market observatory, and to derive policy recommendations to accelerate market development. Research results will be exploited by means of different measures.

**Figure 1-1: The Project Phases of SeniorWatch**



Source: © SeniorWatch, 2001

As part of the project's overall methodological approach the SeniorWatch case studies aim at providing a useful source of information on how the IST-related needs of the target groups in question can adequately be served. They are also intended to help to understand - in a qualitative manner - more deeply specific aspects of the market situation related to IST

products and services relevant for older citizens. To allow a comparative analysis of real-life examples, a common approach for selecting and describing suitable cases was developed. The main selection criteria applied in this context include:

- suitability of the case to provide input to the overall understanding and analysis of the market for IST among older people;
- suitability of the case to serve as an example of a success story (or failure) that can guide and motivate others to take actions that will support the diffusion and take-up of IST by or for older people.

In the following the SeniorWatch case study no.1 is described.

## 2 Senior-Info-Mobil: A German awareness rising campaign on IST targeting older citizens

### 2.1 Description

#### Aims and objectives

The aim of the so called Senior-info-Mobil is to increase the knowledge about information and communication technology (ICT) among older people as well as among so called multipliers such as social workers and providers of elderly care. The knowledge about the potentials ICT generally holds is quite limited among these target groups. Many older people as well as professional mediators have a rather vague perception of these technologies. In fact, professionals in the social and care sector even use to have strong reservations against new technology.

Against this background, the nation-wide awareness rising campaign was launched as a private-public partnership. The campaign has been carried out all over Germany since 1998. Older people are invited to make their first hands-on experiences with computers, the Internet, video telephony and smart home technology. A selection of off-the shelf products is being presented. A two-level omnibus bus was donated by IBM Germany. It was re-designed and equipped with a LAN (Local Area Network) with six Internet terminals. Moreover, a special PC with speech-output for blind and visually impaired people is available. A further, removable LAN with seven Internet terminals is available for being used within buildings, e.g., in an older people's home. A beamer together with a stand alone PC is available for presentations usually held by tutors. Finally, a removable „smart home“ shows current off-the-shelf products. All devices are fully operative and can be tried out by the visitors.

#### Context

In 1996 a task force was established by the federal government in order to actively shape the country's way towards the so called Information Society. This task force, initiated a nation wide discussion forum, the so called Forum Info2000, in which all relevant societal groups were invited to participate. In this context several working groups were launched. One of these discussion groups was particularly dedicated to senior citizens. The so called working group on 'Older People in the Information Society' finally published its working results in a short report. One of the main recommendations was that particular emphasis should be given to enable older people to „get in touch“ with ICT as they merely missed the opportunity to collect hands-on experienced with these technologies in an educational or working context.

Core members of the working group founded the Association for Older Citizens in the Knowledge-based Society (Verein für Seniorinnen und Senioren in der Wissensgesellschaft - VSiW) in order to put the recommendations developed by the group into practice. The Senior-Info-Mobil was the first project which to be approached. The idea was to initiate an information campaign which „takes the offer to the people“ rather than „the people to the offer“. In technical regard, a movable internet café together with a movable exhibition of smart home technology should be at the core of the campaign.

The Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs supports the Senior-Info-Mobil in financial regard. A two level omnibus was donated by IBM, Germany. The required telephone connections are provided by German Telecom for free. T-Online, one of the largest Internet providers in Germany, sponsors the required internet accounts. Moreover, a range of further industry sponsors support the information campaign. On local level, the information campaign is supported by a multitude of volunteers, e.g., as senior tutors.

### Results

Since it was launched the campaign has found tremendous interest. By the beginning of 2001 more than 60 municipalities had been visited. Knowledge gained within the campaign was transferred to industry. For instance, a German computer manufacturer has developed a specific personal computer for older users taking the results of the campaign into account (see the case study about the LINTEC PC for senior citizens in this report).

More than 60 000 senior citizens between 50 to 96 years of age visited the "Senior-Info-Mobil" by the beginning of 2001. The campaign received extensive media attention, even beyond national borders. According to official advertising rates more than two million people in the age of 50 years and more had listened to radio transmissions or had watched telecasts about the Senior-Info-Mobil by the beginning of 2001. Requests for a stay of the Senior-Info-Mobil were received from several European countries, e.g., the Netherlands and Austria.

## 2.2 Analysis

### Impact

The campaign can be regarded as a very successful approach to inform a large part of its target group about the potentials the presented technologies generally hold for them. Most of them had for the first time in their life the opportunity to collect hands-on experiences with computers, the Internet and smart home technology. In many of the municipalities visited by the Senior-Info-Mobil internet cafés for older citizens were set up as a result.

A visitors survey conducted during the information campaign revealed that there is large interest in ICT among older Germans, particular in the Internet. The didactic approach and the educational material which had been particularly developed for the Senior-Info-Mobil were very positively assessed by the visitors. Over 80% of the visitors had no prior experiences with a personal computer or the Internet. About 70 % were older than 60 years, and more than 20% were older than 70 years. About 50% of the visitors state that they definitely would further employ themselves with the Internet. After having visited the "Senior Info Mobil" only 5% explicitly state that they do not want to use the Internet.

Less enthusiastic was the visitor's interest regarding presented smart home technologies. Although the campaign was capable of informing older people and professional multipliers about this technology, it is difficult to say whether uptake of smart home technology was finally accelerated through this measure. It was stressed out by most of the visitors that they had considerable doubts about the affordability of the devices presented.

### Lessons

Although the targets set out for the Senior-Info-Mobil were clearly reached, a long list of unconsidered requests, particularly from rural communities, demonstrates that there is still a need for enabling older people to „get in touch“ with ICT.

The Senior-Info-Mobil has facilitated a new trend. ICT-related offers such as Internet cafés and computer courses increasingly become part of the services spectrum of organisations professionally working with older people. As already mentioned, in many municipalities Internet cafés for seniors were established as a direct consequence of the Senior-Info-Mobil's stay. For instance, in Frankfurt/Main one was founded by a local social service provider organisation. In the meanwhile it has been visited by more than 21.000 older people. Two further cafés had to be opened to meet the huge demand. Some commercial Internet cafés were stimulated to target older people in particular through the overwhelming success of the Senior-Info-Mobil. The Association of Senior Citizens within the Knowledge-based Society currently plans to broaden the approach of the Senior-Info-Mobil. It is planned to take further target groups into account, and further educational offerings will be made available to the visitors. Moreover, further ICT devices - such as mobile phones - are planned to be presented in the context of the information campaign.

As regards the didactic approach developed for the Senior-Info-Mobil, the involvement of senior tutors applying a target group-oriented teaching methodology proved crucial for the success of the initiative. Older people appear to have no principal resistances against new technology, but many of them need adequate support enabling them to use it. Moreover, older people seem to be critical consumers. The visitors of the Senior-Info-Mobil pragmatically assessed whether or not using the technologies presented may hold any benefit to them. Visitors often mention that they would be interested in buying e.g. a personal computer if adequate customer service and advice were available. There seems to be a considerable market potential for industry.

Despite its great success, the Senior-Info-Mobil struggles with budget problems as the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs considerably reduced its grant. The decision to refinance parts of the costs by taking a fee from the municipalities visited proved very difficult as their budget often is quite small, particularly in case of smaller municipalities.

## 2.2 Acknowledgements and links

### Persons to contact

Uschi Frenzel-Altmann, empirica; tel.: + 49 228 98530 0, e-mail: [ursula.frenzel@empirica.com](mailto:ursula.frenzel@empirica.com)

Lutz Kubitschke, empirica, tel.: + 49 228 98530 0; e-mail: [lutz.kubitschke@empirica.com](mailto:lutz.kubitschke@empirica.com)

Thomas Erkert, VsiW; tel.: +49 (171) 4772272; e-mail: [thomas.erkert@t-online.de](mailto:thomas.erkert@t-online.de)

### Literature

- Thomas Erkert, Jürgen Salomon, Senioren und Seniorinnen in der Wissensgesellschaft, Kleine Verlag, 1998.
- empirica, ISAP, ZAWiW, unpublished evaluation report 1998/1999, Bonn/Ulm/Köln 2000
- Erkert, Laske, Salomon, unpublished evaluation report 2000, Leipzig 2000