



IU BLOOMINGTON

EMERGING AREAS OF RESEARCH

Abstract Template -- Due June 30, 2017

Title of initiative to be proposed:

The Nest: An Incubator for Co-Design of Technology, Spaces, and Media for Aging in the Community

Name of lead PI, with title, department/school:

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Key team member names and departments/schools (up to 10 names):

Kay Connelly (School of Informatics and Computing); Jennifer Piatt (School of Public Health); Lesa Huber (School of Public Health); Jiangmei Wu (School of Art and Design); Jonathan Racek (School of Art and Design); Phillip Stafford (Department of Anthropology, Center on Aging and Community)

Description of area to be proposed. What constitutes this area of research or creative activity as emerging?
(Word limit=500)

This proposal seeks to establish an interdisciplinary, campus-community research network and incubator – The NEST -- that will demonstrate the individual and socio-economic benefits of co-design with older adults of new spaces, technologies, and media to address the social, cognitive, and physical challenges of aging. By 2050, one fifth of the world's population will be over 60 years of age. 38% of households in counties adjacent to Monroe already have one or more persons over age 60. These population shifts produce both challenges and opportunities; our initiative employs co-design to address the former and take advantage of the latter in collaboration with local communities.

Co-design is a participatory form of design practice equalizing the roles of expert designers and end-users as co-creators of environments, technologies, and media. It is increasingly recognized as necessary for the rapid and societally beneficial implementation of new digital and physical artifacts and spaces, particularly for marginalized populations such as older adults. It privileges local knowledge in a way that can re-define the university/community relationship with rural Indiana communities dominated by a global system, and aligns with the rapidly growing social economy by redefining humans as producers rather than users, consumers, and spectators (Ostrom, Manzini 2013). As a model for collaboration and participation, co-design mirrors major transformations occurring in other social domains, which are moving from centralized to distributed systems to create sustainable solutions, and takes into account the need to “design for change and transition within complex systems” (Irwin et al: 2015).

Projects undertaken through the NEST incubator will reflect diverse local needs and research and design priorities at IUB, focusing on three areas of co-design research: (1) The development of a robust and self-sustaining university-community network for soliciting participation in and supporting co-design activities; (2) The identification and evaluation of appropriate co-design methods to enable inclusion of diverse stakeholders affected by aging; and (3) The ideation, development, and testing of co-designed technologies and digital and physical spaces among NEST participants and the broader Indiana community.

The NEST will draw upon the social research, design, architecture, and engineering capabilities of the School of Informatics, the School of Public Health, the School of Art and Design, and the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community to create a vibrant, creative space in which users, researchers and developers can innovate, test, and launch new products, services, and environments to the growing aging population while developing productive relationships among designers, developers, and users. Users in the NEST will include younger, older, healthy, and frail older adults, their caregivers, and community members invested in age and dementia-friendly communities. This co-design initiative will provide a significant opportunity for IUB to re-define its relationship with surrounding communities, and will serve as a hub, spawning an active program of outreach and participatory research and development within south central Indiana. It would also be one of only a few co-design projects in the US, as well as among the first in the nation to emphasize the needs and design capabilities of older adults.

Please submit to earprogram@indiana.edu