Older Adults, Computer Training & Health Literacy

Bo Xie, Ph.D.
College of Information Studies
University of Maryland, College Park
boxie@umd.edu
May 29, 2008
The Aging Trend: The American Population is Aging

In 2000: Age 65+ (12%)
The Aging Trend: The American Population is Aging

In 2000: Age 65+ (12%)

In 2011, the baby boomers will begin to turn 65
The Aging Trend: The American Population is Aging

In 2000: Age 65+ (12%)

By 2030: Age 65+ (20%)

In 2011, the baby boomers will begin to turn 65

Source: http://www.census.gov/
Older Adults & Health Information

• Older adults have great needs for health services and information

• Health info. is increasingly moving online

• Online health information is not always easily accessible to older adults
How can we help the aging population to make better use of online health info.?

• **Training**
  - Project #1: Promoting Older Adults’ e-Health Literacy in Public Libraries

• **Design**
  - Project #2: Usability Testing of a Prototype Web Site to Locate and Evaluate Nursing Homes
Project #1: Research Questions

• What training procedures are effective for older adult computer users?

• Will increased access to online health information change health-related behavior?

• Will direct experience change older adults’ attitudes toward computer technology?
Research Sites

• Two branch libraries of the Prince George’s County Memorial Library System:
  • Hyattsville
  • New Carrollton
Study Sample

• 110 older adults
Age: 56-85 (M=69.6, SD=8.1)

- 56-59: 6%
- 60-69: 13%
- 70-79: 32%
- 80-85: 49%
Procedures

• Pre-test

• Training
  – 2 hours a session, 2 sessions a week for 4 weeks
  – NIHSeniorHealth & MedlinePlus Web sites

• Post-test
NIHSeniorHealth.gov

Featuring Health Information from the National Institutes of Health

Click to Begin

This website for older adults was developed by the National Institute on Aging and the National Library of Medicine, both part of the National Institutes of Health.
Pre- & Post-Training Measures

Pre:
- Demographics
- Prior experience with computers and the Internet
- Computer/Internet knowledge
- Computer attitudes (anxiety, efficacy, & interest)

Post:
- Views of the training procedures
- Use and usability of the NIHSeniorHealth and MedlinePlus Web sites
- Change of behavior
- Computer attitudes (anxiety, efficacy, & interest)
Results
What do you think of the length (2 hours) of each session?

- Longer: 19%
- Just right: 80%
- Doesn't matter/I don't care: Unknown
What do you think of the class frequency (2 times a week)?

- 83%
- 15%
- More often
- Only one time a week
- Just right
- Doesn't matter/I don't care
student/instructor ratio of class

96%
What do you think of the duration (4 weeks) of this class?

- Longer: 67%
- Shorter: 67%
- Just right: 26%
- Doesn't matter to me/I don't care: 0%
- Missing: 0%
Has anything that you’ve learned from this class affect your decision about a health- or medically-related issue?

- Yes: 70%
- No: 26%
- Missing: 4%
Limitations of Study & Future Directions

• Control group

• Random sample

• Follow-up

• Cognitive tests
Consumer Health Informatics Workshop

• When: 9:30 am – 5:00 pm, May 30, 2008

• Where: CSIC 3118

• URL:
  http://www.cs.umd.edu/hcil/soh/tutorials-workshops.shtml#W1
Acknowledgements

• National Library of Medicine

• University of Maryland

Thank you! Questions?