

OA-INVOLVE Older Adult Twitter Takeover

1 **AGE-WELL** Network supports the development of solutions that will help older Canadians maintain their independence, health and quality of life. AGE-WELL does this by promoting research and innovation within the areas of technology and aging that will positively impact current and future generations of older adults and their caregivers.

OA-INVOLVE is one of the core AGE-WELL research projects and stands for Older Adults' Active Involvement in Aging and Technology Research and Development. The OA-INVOLVE project focuses on understanding the ways in which older adults are involved in every stage of technology research and the development process with the aim to develop best practices to support the active involvement of older adults in AGE-WELL projects.

2 **Engaging older adults** in technology research and development projects has several benefits including addressing older adults' needs, improved early adoption and diffusion of the products and increased functionality, usability and quality of the products. These benefits have been recognized by the management and researchers affiliated with the AGE-WELL network and as such, older adults' involvement is a cornerstone of the AGE-WELL network. Our success depends on the active engagement and participation of the people who will use the technologies and services developed through our research.

3 **The OARPG** stands for Older Adult Research Partner Group and consists of **12** older adult members located in four Canadian cities in which the OA-INVOLVE project's investigators are located: Halifax, Toronto, Guelph, and Vancouver.

The OARPG provide **advice** and **guidance** about the development, implementation and progress of the OA-INVOLVE project

WHY A TWITTER TAKEOVER EVENT?

A Twitter Takeover is a novel participatory research tool. Our objectives in using this tool were the following:

- To encourage older adults to become engaged and to promote team building on the OA-INVOLVE project
- For older adults to share their experiences attending the 2018 AGE-WELL annual conference
- To learn about the effectiveness of Twitter as a way to share knowledge
- To pilot the 'Twitter Takeover' as a suitable tool for future participatory research with older adults



4

A Twitter Takeover

involves guests posting from an agreed upon social media account (e.g. Twitter, Instagram) for a certain period of time. OA-INVOLVE partnered with members of the OARPG to co-create a Twitter Takeover activity. OARPG members tweeted directly from the OA-INVOLVE Twitter account (@OA_INVOLVE) or their own account using #OARPG2018 during the 2018 AGE-WELL Annual Conference from October 16-18 in Vancouver, BC, Canada.

5

CO-CREATING A TWITTER TAKEOVER EVENT

We introduced and discussed the idea of a Twitter Takeover event at a meeting that involved both OA-INVOLVE researchers and OARPG members. Next steps included individual meetings between researchers and OARPG members who expressed interest in using the tool at the 2018 AGE-WELL Annual Conference in Vancouver, Canada. A poster was also developed and circulated to advertise the activity to individuals outside of OA-INVOLVE.

6

The OARPG

members had various levels of familiarity with Twitter, as well as with the use of smartphones. Some members were experts who owned smartphones and had a personal Twitter account, while others were beginners who had no experience with Twitter and limited experience with smartphones. Varying levels of training and support was provided accordingly. In addition, a general orientation to the Twitter Takeover activity was offered to all the OARPG members. We used a one-page information sheet as a guide for discussion and the introduction of Twitter-specific terminology. OARPG members who attended the conference had the opportunity to meet with the researcher leading the activity one-on-one to clarify all details upon arrival at the conference. When using the Twitter account, OARPG members identified themselves using their initials so that followers would know which OARPG member tweeted. OARPG members also used the hashtag #OARPG2018 in their tweets, as well as #AGEWELL2018, which was the official hashtag of the conference. OARPG members used the Twitter account in the following ways:



Members could tweet their own messages and post photos/videos directly from the OA-INVOLVE Twitter account or their own Twitter Account



Members could take their own photos/videos and email or text them to the appointed contact researcher along with the messages to be tweeted



Members could seek assistance from the appointed contact researcher to tweet on their behalf e.g. members dictate the tweet while the appointed contact researcher types



Members could like, re-tweet, share, and comment on any tweet of their choice

7

USING A TWITTER TAKEOVER TOOL FOR TEAM-BUILDING AND STIMULATING ENGAGEMENT

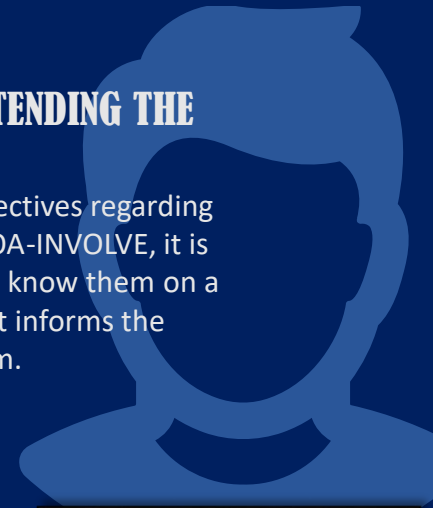
The majority of the OARPG members were involved in the OA-INVOLVE project for approximately 1.5 years, communicating via videoconference between their locations across Canada. For some, the 2018 AGE-WELL conference was the first time they had met in person since joining the OARPG. As noted by OARPG members, the Twitter Takeover provided an opportunity for them to interact with and learn more about each other. For example, members would frequently and spontaneously gather together to talk about the tweets they posted or planned to post, or to take photos for each other to include in their tweets. OARPG members described the event as a valuable and enjoyable learning experience. OARPG members who could not attend the conference were able to view live updates from the conference through the Twitter account and discuss them afterwards.

Go to our Twitter account to read more about OARPG experiences at @OA_INVOLVE

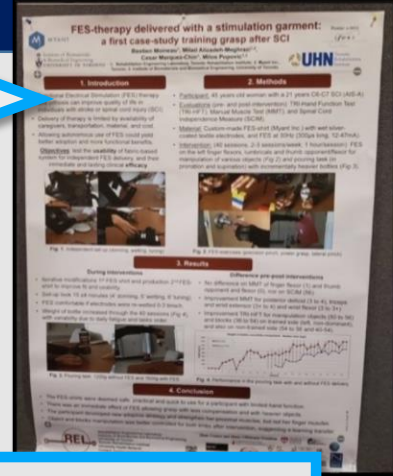
8

LEARNING ABOUT OLDER ADULTS' INTERESTS AND EXPERIENCES ATTENDING THE CONFERENCE

OARPG members tweeted spontaneous insights about their interests and perspectives regarding conference activities. As discussed by the OARPG members and researchers of OA-INVOLVE, it is important to understand older adults' perspectives and to spend time getting to know them on a personal level. This is key to creating long-term engagement of older adults, as it informs the researchers how to design research activities that both interest and benefit them.



"CL: love the scientific talk about rural indigenous communities on Manitoulin Island. It made it really down to earth and human. And realized how much they rely on each other"



"IG: At the @OA_INVOLVE poster #OARPG2018 @IG talks with Greg from @AGEWELL_NCE new Digital Health hub about involving older adults and caregivers in technology innovations"



"JF: @RC helping me type my tweets while I dictate #OARPG2018 #AGEWELL2018"



A TOTAL OF 36 TWEETS WERE MADE BY OARPG MEMBERS



THESE TWEETS RECEIVED 136 LIKES, 10 RETWEETS, AND 11 REPLIES.



THESE TWEETS RECEIVED 11,968 IMPRESSIONS (I.E. NUMBER OF TIMES USER SAW THE TWEETS ON TWITTER)

9

TALKING WITH EXPERTS AND LEARNING

OARPG members stated that they enjoyed interacting with the researchers and learning first-hand about the progress the projects are making in the field of technology research and development. The tweets posted by the older adult members showcased the topics that interested them, including:

- Technology for seniors with disabilities, stroke, spinal cord injury, wheelchairs, fall prevention
- Canadian landscape for aging population (innovation, digital hubs)
- Aging in rural indigenous communities
- Older adults' taking responsibility in healthy aging (healthy lifestyle, meditation)

10

REPORTING ON OARPG MEMBER PARTICIPATION

Some OARPG members chose to participate in committee meetings and give presentations at the conference. The Twitter Takeover event provided a venue to share learnings from these activities and their contributions with a broader audience:

"IG: With #oarpg2018 Principal Susan Kirkland I attended the Older Adult and Caregiver Advisory Committee as a guest. I heard about strategies and efforts to ensure older adult participation in ongoing and future @AGEWELL_NCE projects."

11 THE BENEFITS OF SOCIAL GROUP TIME

The value of social interactions amongst the group members cannot be underestimated. OARPG members noted they thoroughly enjoyed meeting other members to connect, to learn more about each other, and to share experiences from the conference:



“CL: This is the gang having a lovely lunch and bonding #OARPG2018 #AGEWELL2018”

12 FINAL OLDER ADULTS' FEEDBACK

Some OARPG members provided very positive feedback on both Twitter and during conversations about the conference while also identifying areas for improvement:

“WH: I found the conference interesting. A bit of information overload. I'll need some time to digest all the information #OARPG2018 #AGEWELL2018”

“CL: I feel so happy and optimistic about aging when I see all the things that are being researched and created for me as I age! #OARPG2018 #AGEWELL2018 @AGEWELL_NCE”

What we learned about using a Twitter Takeover as a participatory research tool

Benefits to Older Adults:

The Twitter Takeover activity provided new insights into older adults' perspectives, interests, and experiences in attending the 2018 AGE-WELL Annual Conference. In addition, this novel tool proved to be very engaging and enjoyable for the OARPG members in this project.

Our pilot of the Twitter Takeover activity showed that it has great potential for team-building. It stimulated discussions amongst the team members and other conference attendees. In addition, this tool helped strengthen the connection between older adults who attended the conference and older adults who were unable to attend but could still stay engaged. Furthermore, this tool also has the potential to identify new connections and new target audiences through Twitter activity (by sharing, liking, or commenting on tweets).

Benefits to Researchers:

A Twitter Takeover activity has many benefits to researchers who are considering the use of participatory methods for the first time. For example, using social media as a participatory research method presents new questions and perspectives for the researchers. In particular, social media platforms like Twitter offer new ways for researchers to share data in real time and to share this data with a broader audience.

Limitations:

While there are many benefits of using Twitter Takeovers, we do recognize that there are limitations as well. In particular, we acknowledge that social media is not accessible to everyone. Overall, as long as older adults are provided with the resources and training to use social media platforms, we believe it can be beneficial in gaining insights into older adults' experiences.

Future Uses:

We suggest that a Twitter Takeover activity can be applied in many settings to shed light on various aspects of older adults' preferences, perspectives, issues or needs in real time and different contexts. For instance:

- In long-term care settings, where caregivers/family, advocates, or staff could tweet on the behalf of residents to learn about their experiences in the facility
- For information gathering about accessibility for older adults in various places
- To get an insight of how given services work for older adults from their perspectives (e.g. meal and transportation services geared to older adults)

A Twitter Takeover activity can further promote older adults to take part in social media platforms to share their opinions, communicate, and promote their social connectedness.

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OA-INVOLVE

Older Adults' Active Involvement in Ageing
& Technology Research and Development

AGE-WELL



Aging Gracefully across Environments using Technology
to Support Wellness, Engagement, and Long Life

Twitter Takeover Blog

A New and Rewarding Experience in Co-Creating a Twitter Takeover Event with Older Adults

OA-INVOLVE is dedicated to engaging older adults in technology research and development projects. Part of the research we conduct is exploring different participatory tools and methods that engage older adults. There are many reasons why active engagement and participation of older adults in technology research and development is so important. In part, it helps to develop technology that addresses older adults' needs. In exploring ways of involving older adults in participatory ways, we introduced and discussed the idea of a Twitter Takeover event at a meeting in 2018 that involved both the Older Adult Research Partner Group (OARPG) and OA-INVOLVE researchers.

For those who are unfamiliar with the concept, a Twitter Takeover involves a specific guest or guests posting from, or "taking over" an agreed upon social media account for a short period of time. For our Twitter Takeover, OARPG members took over the OA-INVOLVE Twitter account (@OA_INVOLVE) during the 2018 AGE-WELL Annual Conference from October 16-18 in Vancouver, BC, Canada. OARPG members who attended the conference and wanted to part-take in the Twitter Takeover could do so by tweeting and posting photos about their experiences to the OA-INVOLVE Twitter account. Some of the OA-INVOLVE researchers were also on-hand to assist OARPG members in tweeting messages and posting photos.

During the conference, OARPG members tweeted spontaneous insights about their experiences with, and perspectives on, the conference activities. OARPG members included their initials at the beginning of their tweets to help identify themselves to OA-INVOLVE Twitter followers. For example, OARPG member Carole tweeted "*CL: love the scientific talk about rural indigenous communities on Manitoulin Island. It made it really down to earth and human. And realized how much they rely on each other*".

Given the many activities at the conference, OARPG members tweeted about various experiences. Some of the OARPG members tweeted about how much they enjoyed speaking with the researchers presenting at the conference and learning first-hand about different projects in the field of technology research and development. Other OARPG members tweeted about their experiences in attending committee meetings and giving presentations at the conference. One OARPG member Ian tweeted, "*IG: With #oarpg2018 Principal Susan Kirkland I attended the Older Adult and Caregiver Advisory Committee as a guest. I heard about strategies and efforts to ensure older adult participation in ongoing and future @AGEWELL_NCE projects.*"

OA-INVOLVE and the OARPG are national groups that primarily meet online, as such, a face-to-face meeting with other members is rare. Many OARPG members enjoyed the opportunity to meet, interact, and bond with other OARPG members and the OA-INVOLVE researchers in person and demonstrated this through their Tweets. Carole shared this photo on the OA-INVOLVE Twitter account with the caption "*This is the gang having a lovely lunch and bonding #OARPG2018 #AGEWELL2018*":



Based on our experience running this Twitter Takeover, we believe it was a successful participatory research tool with older adults. In addition to providing insights into older adult's perspectives, experiences, and insights in attending the 2018 AGE-WELL Annual conference, it proved to be a very enjoyable and engaging experience for both researchers and OARPG members. Furthermore, we learned valuable insights in what is effective and ineffective in using a Twitter Takeover as a participatory research tool with older adults. We learned that providing training to older adults in learning how to tweet is essential in older adults feeling comfortable using Twitter. We also learned that a Twitter Takeover can be restrictive in who is able to feel engaged. For example, not all of our OARPG members were able to attend the conference which resulted in some members being unable to participate aside from following tweets. We plan to take these "lessons learned" into account for future Twitter Takeovers. Stay tuned for another Twitter Takeover event in late 2019!

To read more about our Twitter Takeover event please click on the following link:
<https://www.oa-involve-agewell.ca/our-reports.html>

To check out the OA-INVOLVE Twitter Account click here: https://twitter.com/oa_involve