



**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

## ***The Lintec Senior Club PC***

*Marketing computer technology to senior 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)

## Short Title

---

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>The Lintec Senior Club PC. Marketing computer technology to senior citizens. ....</b>	<b>Fehler! Textmarke nicht definiert.</b>
2.1	Description .....	Fehler! Textmarke nicht definiert.
2.2	Analysis .....	Fehler! Textmarke nicht definiert.
2.3	Acknowledgements and links .....	Fehler! Textmarke nicht definiert.

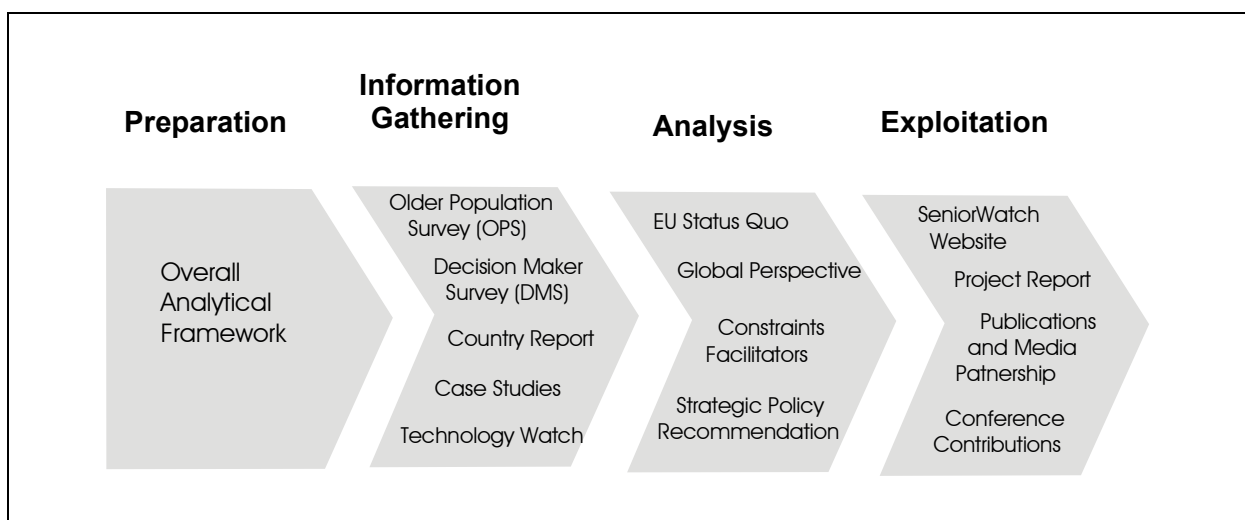
# 1 Introduction

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.5 is described.

## 2 The Lintec Senior Club PC. Marketing computer technology to senior citizens.

### 2.1 Description

#### Senior Club PC

With its "Senior Club PC" Lintec aims at a market segment of about 27 million potential customers in Germany. Extensive market research led to the perception, that there is in fact a large interest in using PC and internet among older people. In Lintec's view, biographies and life circumstances of older people are major obstacles for them to concern themselves with IST products and services. According to Lintec's analyses, aspects that are to be taken into consideration when addressing the elderly market include:

- adequate design of hard- and software,
- focus on applications which are of use for older people,
- availability comprehensive customer services,
- adequate information and training,
- distribution strategies oriented towards life circumstances of older people.

Right from the beginning, Lintec was seeking co-operations with strategic partners for developing - and later marketing - its new product. Co-operations were established with the University in Leipzig (Gesellschaft für Wissenschaft und Marketing - GEWIMA) and an association promoting the inclusion of older people in the information society (Verein Seniorinnen und Senioren in der Wissengesellschaft - VSiW) to develop a home computer which meets the particular requirements of older users. Finally, a product bundle was developed which includes hardware, software and a comprehensive customer services. All features of a traditional PC are available. However, the focus is on applications which serve the particular needs of older people.

The requirements of older users were carefully investigated. Several hundred seniors were involved in user requirement analyses. One result was that older persons tend to deny any hard and software components which claim to be particularly designed for senior citizens. Such components are seen rather as assistive technology stigmatising the user. Easy to use off-the-shelf components (e.g. multimedia keyboard) found larger interest. In principle, the PC was seen as piece of equipment disturbing common furniture arrangements. Therefore the Lintec PC is designed to look like a piece of HIFI equipment. Instead of a usual PC monitor an ordinary TV screen can be used. The keyboard and the mouse are connected via wireless technology. Thus, the PC system can easily be integrated in the living environment of older users without disturbing the usual furniture arrangement. The requirement analysis performed further revealed that up-to-date technology standards and multimedia features are very important for older people. Also, features such as health monitoring (e.g. of vital data) or smart home features were regarded as very useful. High attention was paid to the user interface. A clearly structured menu with simple icons together with various training tools were developed.

High priority was also given to the provision of adequate support services. The Lintec PC is distributed exclusively through certified dealers. More than hundred dealers received special training courses up to now. They are prepared to provide extensive after sales support to the customers. Moreover, it is planned to establish a network of local facilities where potential customers with little or now computer skills can gain first hands-on experiences with computer technology. Meanwhile, the first so called "computer-experience world" was

opened. It received high public attention. This facility can best be described as an interactive showroom with a comfortable atmosphere. PC classes are offered in co-operating with local educational establishments.

Purchasing of a Lintec Senior club PC includes home installation of hard and soft ware as well as an extensive introduction on the spot. Personalised link lists can be implemented in the menu prior to delivery. After sales support is available from authorised dealers, from a telephone hotline and from a network of contracted senior consultants. These consultants are retired persons themselves and provide advise on request of the customers.

### Policy context

Lintec Information Technologies was founded as a stock company in 1990 in Taucha, Germany. Its current product portfolio ranges from mainstream computers via network technologies (server, clients) and mobile computing (notebooks and wired/wireless connectivity) to specialised software solutions. Also the world wide first Internet-based photography service offered by PixelNet was developed by the Lintec group.

The Lintec-Senior-Club PC was developed in co-operation with various non-for-profit organisations including the University of Leipzig, a regional association for further education (Verband Sächsischer Bildungsinstitute e.V. - VSBI) and an association for promoting inclusion of older people into the Information Society (Verein Seniorinnen und Senioren in der Wissensgesellschaft e.V.). Lintec invested approximately 600 000 Euro in the development its Senior PC. Further more, a grant was received from the Federal State of Saxony. An extensive user requirement analysis was carried out by utilising a newly established testing laboratory at the premises of the University of Leipzig. The laboratory was established with financial support of the Saxonian Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and is jointly run by the University, Lintec Information Technologies and VSBI.

## Results

Store sale of the Lintec PC started only at the end of November. Sales figures are therefore not yet available. However, orders from the authorised dealers could hardly be satisfied according to a representative of the company. Sales figure of 30.000 to 50.000 units are expected for 2002. Return of investment is expected to be reached with 20.000 units sold. The forecast is supported by feedback received from various non-for-profit organisations and enterprises which tested approximately 200 units since last summer.

Marketing activities have just been started. For instance, a broad information campaign has been launched in co-operation with strategic partners such as saving banks and pharmacies. It is planned to considerably expand both the sales network as well as the network of senior consultants during the coming year. Also, Lintec aims at approaching international markets from next year on.

## 2.2 Analysis

### Impact and perspectives

It remains to be seen whether the Lintec PC will ultimately become a market success. However, extensive co-operation with research organisations as well as with testing groups suggest that user requirements have been adequately taken into account during the product development process. Moreover, a multifaceted marketing approach was developed on the basis of targeted market research. Lintec believes that there is a strong demand among senior citizens for a product bundle including both hard and software as well as support services. This assumption is supported by experiences made by non-for-profit initiatives such as SeniorWeb where retired volunteers offer Internet courses to older people.

The target-group oriented training of retailers together with the implementation of a network of senior consultants seems to be a promising approach to adequately serve particularly

older customers as many of them possess no or at least low computer skills. This model could arouse the interest not only of older customers but also of younger people who have no chance to acquire sufficient IT skills in an educational or working context, and this would open up further market potentials for the Lintec PC. This assessment is obviously shared by the strategic partners of Lintec such as saving banks and pharmacies who expect to ultimately broaden their online customer base by promoting the Lintec product bundle.

### Lessons to learn

The example of Lintec demonstrates that European IST suppliers have begun to recognise the market opportunities opened up by the ageing society. Similar approaches are pursued by other German companies such as Golden Web and Linearus. Also, the recent co-operation between IBM and SeniorNet in providing education and programs that focus on older adults in the USA illuminates industry's interest in this target group.

Also, it becomes apparent from these examples, that it may not be enough to merely rely on targeted advertising if the existing customer base is to be extended to older consumer segments. Rather, a holistic approach seems to be required including both, the particular user requirements of older customers as well as the life circumstances in which the product is ultimately used. As suggested by the results of the user requirement analysis carried out by Lintec, current products do obviously not sufficiently meet the requirements of a large proportion of the older population. Furthermore, many have no opportunities to gain hands-on experiences with IT within their day-to-day live, e.g. in an occupational context. Thus, there seems to be a need for enabling potential customers to use IST - e.g. through adequate training measures - before respective products can be sold to them. Co-operation with strategic partners such as educational organisations and user groups may be a suitable approach to cope with this challenge.

### Trends and opportunities

In times of saturated consumer markets, industry increasingly needs to develop new markets. With its "Senior Club PC", Lintec initially aims at developing the senior market for its current product range, i.e. computer hardware and software. Converting non-users into computer users may however open up further business opportunities over the medium term. The fact that the Lintec PC provides interfaces for online applications such as health monitoring clearly points into this direction.

## 2.3 Acknowledgements and links

### Person to contact

Uschi Frenzel-Altmann, empirica. ursula.frenzel@empirica.de. telephone 49 0028 985300.  
Dr. Grunau, Lintec Information Technologies. telephone +49-(034298)-71300.

### Literature

- Lintec AG brochure
- Lintec-Broschüre
- The Senior-Info-Mobil, un-published final report

### WWW links

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

## Short Title

---

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

[www.golden-web.de](http://www.golden-web.de)

[www.uni-leipzig.de/presse2000/seniorenpc.htm#top](http://www.uni-leipzig.de/presse2000/seniorenpc.htm#top)

<http://www.vsiw.de/>

<http://www.vsbi.de/index.htm>

<http://www.sicl.de>

<http://www.seniornet.org/php/>

[www.ibm.com](http://www.ibm.com)