



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

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Course book

'Internet and e-mail for seniors'

A private initiative of a Dutch publisher.

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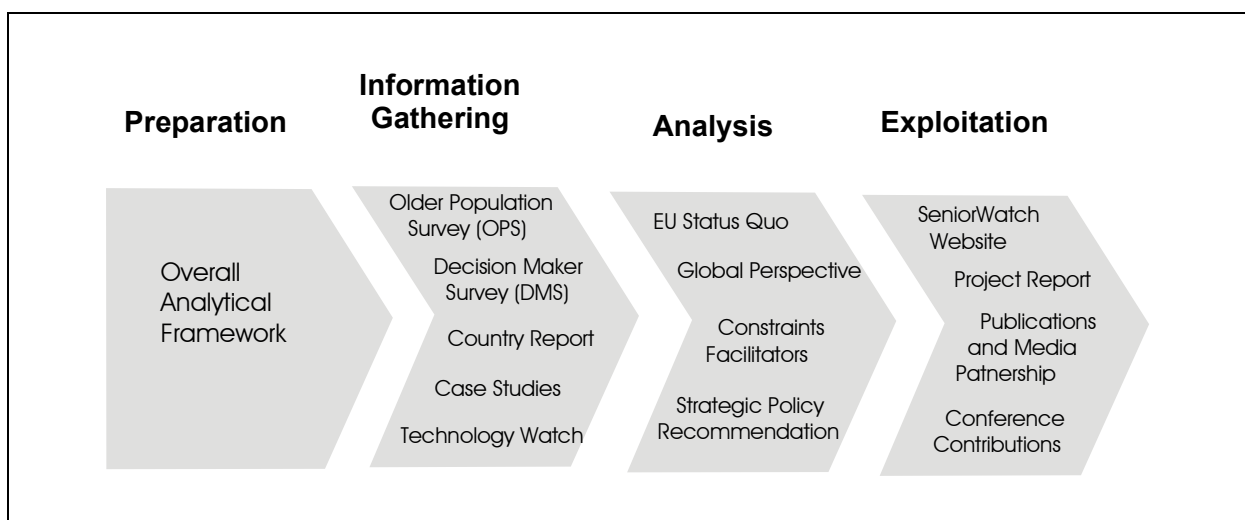
1 Introduction

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.7 is described.

2 Course book 'Internet and e-mail for seniors'. A private initiative of a Dutch publisher

2.1 Description

Publish books that can be understood

The idea of many seniors is that you must be a wizz-kid to use a PC. They think that everything can be lost with one push on a knob.

Elderly people have other needs and wishes concerning the use of PC. They are interested in internet, e-mail, working with text (Word) and working with pictures and photographs. Less relevant are technical aspects. They need clear and convenient text with illustrations and with only relevant information. They need a course book that explains everything step by step in a simple way.

The course book "Internet and e-mail for seniors" uses the so-called Visual Steps method. This is a method, based on simple steps with simple icons at each step, such as a mouse for a click or a movement with the mouse, a keyboard for typing, an arrow for a caution and a plaster for help.

The text is legible because the characters are printed in a large type.

In the Netherlands there is a choice of course books on the market to learn use the PC, Windows and Internet. Some well-know examples are: PC's for Dummy's and Windows for Beginners.

In 2000 Addo Stuur published the first PC-course book for seniors. Stuur studies pedagogy and worked in special education for several years. At the same time he wrote several books and articles regarding software for adults. Later he became well-know for his series of computer books written for children and distributed throughout Europe (for instance: Windows for Children).

Stuur has further developed his method of writing by carefully taking into account the particular demands and desires of the senior population. This method, the so-called Visual Steps, has been based on research done by the faculty of the Department of Instructional Technology, at the University of Twente, Enschede, in the Netherlands. The Visual Steps-concept means: very thorough index, clearly written step by step instructions, guided visually with illustrations, screenshots and icons, special help topics for self-correcting when errors are made by the reader, learning reinforced by repetition through exercises and topics such as: how do I do this again.

The book Internet and e-mail for Seniors was released in November 2000. In this book, the author has laid out all the know-how needed for optimal use of the Internet. Surfing, searching for information, configuring a start page, receiving and sending e-mail, etc.

The course books 'Windows 98 for seniors' and 'Internet and e-mail for seniors' were the first PC-books for seniors in the Netherlands.

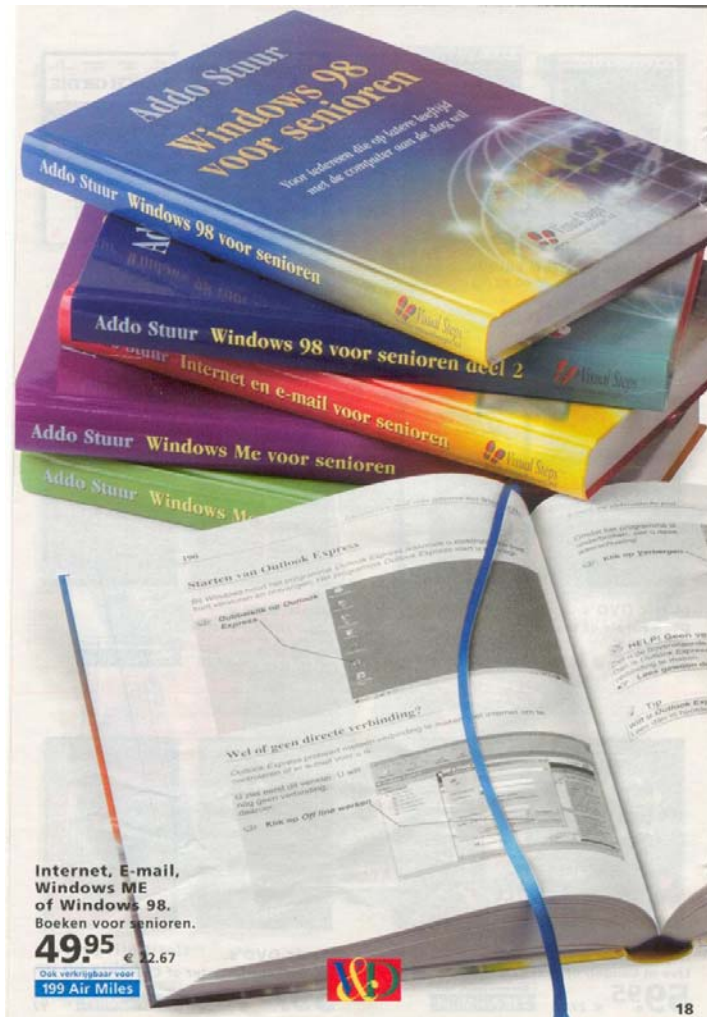


figure: The coursebook internet for elderly available in all big bookshops

Context

The target group are people from 50 years and older who want to learn Windows 98 and/or Internet/e-mail.

On the moment the mother of the author wanted to learn windows and internet, he deepened in the wishes and needs of seniors. The result was the course book 'Windows 98 for Seniors'.

In 2000 the Dutch consumer organisation tested 13 course books for people who want to start to learn Windows and/or Internet. One of these books is specially for older people: 'windows 98 for seniors'.

2.2 Analysis

Impact

The book has been created from the needs, wishes and limitations of the target group, the seniors, it also has been tested with the target group.

Both books are on the Libris-list of the top ten-non fiction (10 best-sellers).

Also people between 40 and 50 years use these books because of the usability.

After the success of 'Windows 98 for Seniors' and 'Internet and e-mail for Seniors', more course books for seniors followed and are following published by other publishing firms and other authors.

There has been exited a successful co-operation between SeniorWeb and Addo Stuur.

The older users have asked a summarised version of the course book. Addo Stuur and SeniorWeb are working on it.

Lessons to learn

No success without a user-friendly manual tested by the users themselves.

Perspectives

In 2000 the course book Windows 98 for Seniors has been published. The next year the course book Internet and e-mail for Seniors has been published.

Both books have a place on the so-called Libris top ten-non fiction (in the Netherlands a well-known list of the 10 most sell books).

2.3 Acknowledgements and links

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links

www.seniorweb.nl

www.addostuur.com/internet

www.visualsteps.nl