

Press Release English

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Innovative tool to revolutionize care for persons with dementia

Led by the AIT Austrian Institute of Technology, the SUCCESS project consortium develops an app that supports caregivers of persons with dementia in many different ways.

Vienna (AIT): Led by the AIT Austrian Institute of Technology, an international consortium of industry partners and experts in the domain of dementia care is working together in the EU-funded project SUCCESS (SUccessful Caregiver Communication and Everyday Situation Support in dementia care). The aim of this project is to develop a smartphone app that supports both professional caregivers and caring relatives of persons with dementia.

AIT leads SUCCESS project for professional caregiver communication

An engaged team of the AIT Austrian Institute of Technology around the project coordinator Markus Garschall takes care of a wide range of tasks within the scope of the project: In addition to coordinating the international research consortium, the main focus is on collecting specific requirements of the affected parties and developing concrete use cases and scenarios. Based on this, the AIT develops the interaction design concept for the prototypes and contributes its own technologies to provide avatar-based role-plays. Playful elements in the app are intended to motivate users for long-term training. The prototypes are iteratively tested in the field with caregivers and adapted accordingly. This user-centred approach ensures that the final solution will be used and that the training contents of the app are adjusted to the everyday care needs of the target group.

Dementia as a major societal challenge

Due to increasing life expectancy, the number of persons with dementia is growing rapidly. About one out of 50 people are now affected in Europe. The care and support of persons with dementia confronts their surrounding people with great challenges. In many cases, the changed behaviour of persons with dementia overburdens those who care for them, which can lead to stress, feelings of helplessness, and even caregiver burnout.

SUCCESS App supports caregivers and caring relatives

The SUCCESS app will enable caregivers to conduct innovative training sessions and role-plays with an avatar. The avatar for example demonstrates the behaviour of a person with dementia and the user can choose how to respond in order to see again how the avatar will react. The aim is to deal with the behavioural changes of affected persons and to learn

effective communication and interaction with persons with dementia. In this way, caregivers can receive help and advice in specific situations. In addition to receiving knowledge and training, SUCCESS supports caregivers to handle emotionally stressful situations as well as negative feelings created by care activities. Achieving a balance between the caring activity and the needs of the carer is also addressed as an important preventive measure.

Project team member Beatrix Wais-Zechmann: *"Our goal is to provide professional knowledge about communication and interaction strategies in a way that caregivers of persons with dementia and those affected can benefit from it. Simple recommendations and tips can make a big difference in their everyday life."*

About the project

SUCCESS is funded by the European Commission and the national funding agencies of Austria, Cyprus, Norway and Romania as part of the AAL Programme. The project runs from March 2017 until February 2020, with a total budget of 1.7 million Euros. The aim is to collaborate with the industry to design a product that will be available on the market in the near future. For more information about the project, please visit: www.success-aal.eu.

AIT Austrian Institute of Technology

The AIT Austrian Institute of Technology is Austria's largest non-university research institute. With its eight Centers, AIT regards itself as a highly specialised research and development partner for industry. Its researchers focus on the key infrastructure issues of the future: Energy, Health & Bioresources, Digital Safety & Security, Vision, Automation & Control, Mobility Systems, Low-Emission Transport, Technology Experience and Innovation Systems & Policy. Throughout the whole of Austria – in particular at the main locations Wien Tech Gate, Wien TECHbase, Wien Muthgasse, Seibersdorf, Wiener Neustadt, Ranshofen and Leoben – around 1,300 employees carry out research on the development of those tools, technologies and solutions that will keep Austria's economy fit for the future in line with our motto "Tomorrow Today".

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