eLEARNING TOOLS AND PARTNERSHIPS USED BY PROFESSOR EMERITI TO FACILITATE TEACHING /LEARNING AMONG OLDER ADULTS AND THEIR FAMILIES: SOME ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES

Discussant Remarks
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The perspectives I bring to my remarks here have been shaped by my experience over the last decade in the field of gerontechnology, three decades of business experience with research and development addressing information technology applications and programs, and a decade of academic involvements. I hope these observations prove useful in the development of eLearning offerings for older adults.

The internet and world-wide-web provide a framework empowered by many tools and populated by a variety of organizations that provide resources to enrich the lives of individuals of all ages. With respect to life-long and later-life learning the growing pool of education professionals exemplified by the network of Professors Emeriti, together with other qualified individuals, can and are creating content that empower, and accelerate the availability of learning opportunities that span a wide range of topics, ranging from the purely intellectual to more every-day topics and interests.

However, a variety of intersectional factors can significantly impact availability, adoption, and engagement factors related to eLearning across the base of potential users of available resources, especially older adults. This segment of potential eLearning participants poses a variety of issues in this regard, and these must be considered if eLearning is to bring the many significant benefits it offers related to quality of life for older adults.

An article titled *The Wisdom of Older Technology (Non)Users* from the 2018 Communications of the ACM (Association of Computing Machinery) Journal identified several of these key factors based on interviews with a group of older adults in Scotland, that I would like to consider in the context of today's meeting and the presentations given.
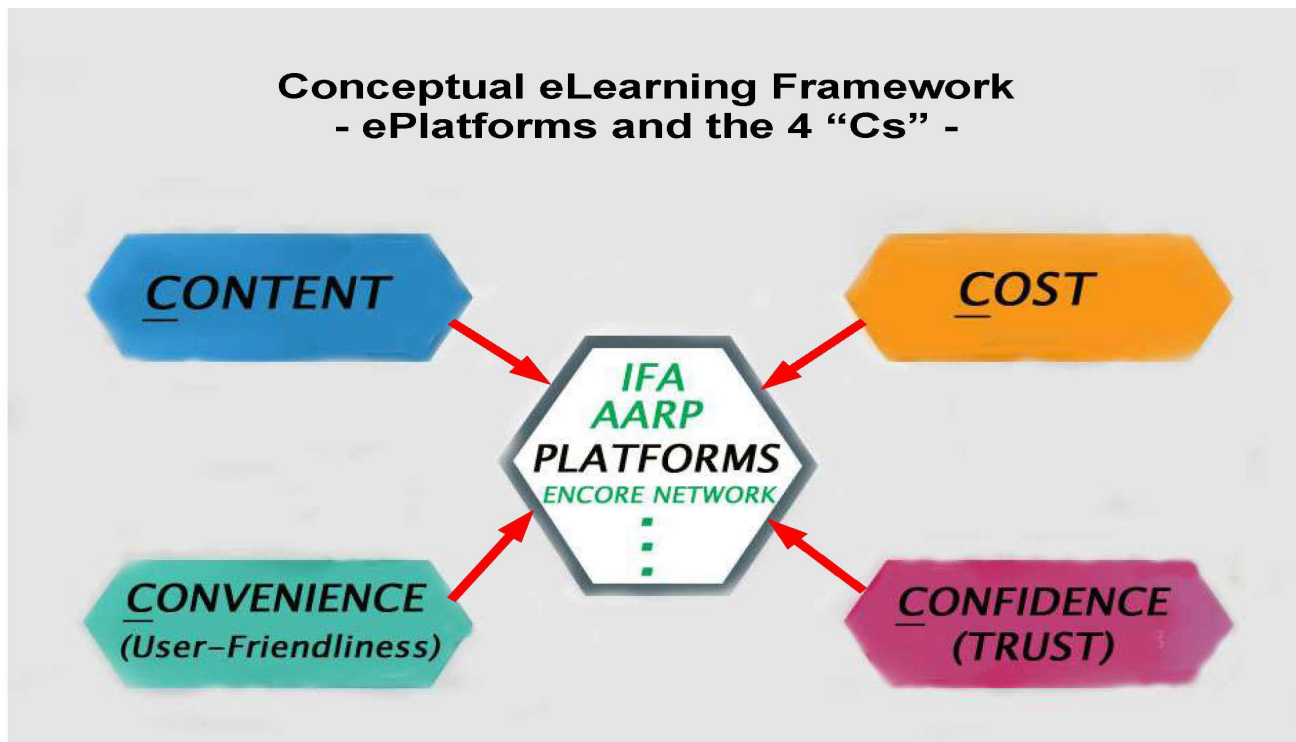
Paraphrasing and expanding on the findings in this article, and based in part on my professional and personal experience over the last 10 years working on gerontechnology applications, I'd like to offer the following three points for consideration here:

- Older adults' "non-use" of digital technologies can be purposeful for a variety of reasons, but cost factors can be especially important both as expense and internal inhibition barriers to online eLearning

- Key factors in non-use beyond cost arise from issues such as feelings regarding personal capabilities and responsibilities, ethical values, cultural expectations/perspectives, and "value" (importance and significance to the individual)
- eLearning technology and applications must be designed with a full understanding of and sensitivity to a variety of "soft" factors that impact user engagement in order to reach and benefit later-life older adult learners, with confidence, trust, and familiarity playing important roles.

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For simplicity, I'd like to highlight four factors that I see as critical to adoption of eLearning offerings by older adults. I'll refer to these factors as the "4 Cs": **C**ontent, **C**onvenience, **C**ost, and **C**onfidence, with user-friendliness being part of **C**onvenience and Trust associated with **C**onfidence:

The following graphic shows how I see these 4 Cs conceptually in the context of a framework for development of eLearning opportunities for older adults. The "Platforms" block lists several national/international nonprofits that could conveniently and simply carry links to eLearning resources under their existing website menu structures, e.g., IFA's "Positions/Portfolios/News&Resources" menu items (see https://ifa.ngo/) , AARP's Virutual Community Center "Menu" (see https://www.aarp.org/?intcmp=GLBNAV-PL-HOME-HOME), and Encore Network's "Public Resources" category item (see https://encorenetwork.org/public-resources/)

Conceptual eLearning Framework
- ePlatforms and the 4 "Cs" -

CONTENT

COST

IFA
AARP
PLATFORMS
ENCORE NETWORK

CONVENIENCE
(User–Friendliness)

CONFIDENCE
(TRUST)

Finally, with regard to the **C**onfidence (Trust) block shown in this graphic, while organizations listed as "Platforms" are trusted by many, these are not familiar names for the majority of the older adult population. Exploring how to make eLearning resources available through universally known and generally trusted organizations such as public libraries, secondary schools, colleges, and universities could provide global geographic and cultural reach for eLearning resources of interest to older adults. To illustrate this point, my concluding graphic is a map that shows the number and distribution of public libraries around the world. Discussions with the IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations (see https://www.ifla.org/) might provide an entry point for exploring global opportunities for distribution of eLearning tools and applications through public library networks.

Public Libraries by Country, 2016

Public Libraries (Number)
- Above 10,000
- 1,000 - 10,000
- 100 - 1,000
- 10 - 100
- Below 10
- Data not available

From the International Federation of Library Associations – see https://www.ifla.org/

*These figures are only for public libraries and do not include academic and other libraries.

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