



The Approach

INDEPENDENT pursues a dedicated programme of service process innovation complemented by adaptation of technology. A digital support infrastructure and related services are set up and piloted:

- using appropriate existing technology to provide as many older people as possible with digital access to the support services they need,
- augmenting and opening sectoral care platforms to enable coordinated cross-sector support delivery,
- adopting a clearly demand-driven, inclusive approach and avoiding all technology 'push'.

INDEPENDENT enables current support services to overcome limitations of sectoral telehealth and telecare service provision. It also empowers informal carers and the voluntary / third sector to participate in delivery of support more effectively. Wider deployment of INDEPENDENT services after the project is supported by a dedicated programme of socio-economic service evaluation.

A Digital Support Infrastructure for Joined-up Care

The INDEPENDENT digital support infrastructure for joined-up care delivery builds on a range of technologies. Different ICT-based services are supported across the pilot sites including telecare and telehealth, video and audio conferencing connecting care recipients and informal carers with a care team, Electronic Health Records accessible not only to health staff but also to other members of the care team, CRM (Customer Relationship Management) tools for the management of the user's information, and web applications to ensure openness and ubiquitous access.

The pilots implement innovative solutions in a flexible manner, thereby responding to actual demand by users and service provider organisations at a given site. To this end, INDEPENDENT has defined a reference architecture that provides the openness and flexibility needed to integrate a wide range of services.

The architecture also ensures the scalability, interoperability and reliability that will be required for the future scaling up of the INDEPENDENT services and integration of any new service components.



Evaluation

The INDEPENDENT services will be piloted at the six sites across Europe. The pilots will be evaluated to gain a better understanding of the new services' added value, user benefits and acceptance, quality of life impacts and economic viability.

The approach involves a multi-perspective (end user, service provider staff and organisational perspectives) and multi-method approach. Triangulation is used to cross-reference data from different sources in order to maximise the reliability and robustness of conclusions drawn from evaluation. Two core themes are emphasised throughout the evaluation – integration and user outcomes. Cost-benefit is also included in the evaluation framework. Other themes are: staff impact, organisational impact, technology, implementation and overall satisfaction.

Based on this overall framework, the specifics of each site have been taken into account in operationally applying the overall framework in each case. The designs to be employed at each site have been developed to be as robust as possible, taking into account the constraints of the realities of the interventions and available resources. This includes 'before and after' comparisons and, where possible, use of control groups.

The Team



Information & Contact

For more information about the project and the potential of coordinated eCare please visit our website at:

www.independent-project.eu

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When it comes to supporting older people living in the community, today's reality is characterised by fragmentation of service provision resulting in disjointed and patchy care and support. The quest for more integrated care is anything but new. Only recently, however, policy and practice are beginning to fully recognise that fragmentation of care can threaten its quality and cost effectiveness. In particular, the potential of ICT-enabled support such as telecare and telehealth could be exploited in a more effective way if they were not, as today, embedded in healthcare and social care services delivered in "silos".

Against this background, INDEPENDENT develops and pilots an integrated set of ICT-enabled services dealing with a range of threats to independent living common to older people. Through innovative usage of ICT, current "silos" in service delivery are broken up to allow for cooperation across relevant care sectors and participation of family members. The INDEPENDENT services are piloted at six sites across Europe. To cater for the individual circumstances at every site, each of them focussed on one or more relevant issues to be addressed within INDEPENDENT and thus improving service delivery. The project started in January 2010 and will come to an end in December 2012.

” INDEPENDENT is about bringing together different services that are currently provided separately. It is about providing a more holistic service working with the existing social alarm service infrastructure, health and social care services as well as carers, friends and family. Ultimately, this will also allow citizens to have more choice, more control over how care is delivered and how they access services. “

Mike Burton, Hull City Council



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Dublin, IE

The INDEPENDENT project in Dublin is built around the collaboration of two separate entities, Emergency Response LTD (ERL), and the Alzheimer Society of Ireland (ASI). The latter is a voluntary (non-profit) organisation providing frontline services as well as information, support and advice services to people with dementia and their carers. Emergency response is a private company providing telecare services to older people with dementia and their carers.



The INDEPENDENT service supports collaboration between both parties by providing a case management tool that enables ERL operators to collate all the information and actions related to an incoming call. Care coordinators at ASI will benefit from close-to-real time information about the condition of users and an improved reporting tool to support the reassessment process. Care teams in ASI can see exactly where and when the client is using the telecare, allowing advanced care planning as changing care needs are evident, safety issues are highlighted and therefore care planning is adapted accordingly.

Geldrop, NL

In Geldrop, the INDEPENDENT pilot involves the collaboration of four different parties in the support of older people suffering from COPD, namely physiotherapists at TopSupport, pulmonology specialists at St. Anna hospital, social carers and family carers.

With a view to enabling COPD patients to better live with their condition, the various parties involved in the overall care process utilise the INDEPENDENT digital infrastructure to coordinate their activities in a more timely and accurate manner than has hitherto been possible. Among other things, this involves the utilisation of an Electronic Health Record system, as well as COPD patients carrying out exercises in their own homes whilst being remotely supervised by a physiotherapist. A video system enables direct communication between them and a wearable device enables remote monitoring of physical activity.



Hull, UK

The INDEPENDENT pilot in Hull is for older people living in sheltered or private homes. The sheltered homes have a version of Tunstall's "MyClinic" Multi-user Device (MUD). This is a touch-screen computer linked to blood pressure monitors, pulse oximeters and weighing scales. It also has an 'interview' facility where people answer questions about their health and wellbeing and a link to a site providing information about locally available services.



The data is stored on the MUD but is also accessed by social and healthcare providers. For private home dwellers the Hull telemonitoring service has been enhanced, a social function has been added to the health related Philips "Motiva" system. Relatives of participating patients and voluntary workers can be linked to it so they can better support the user. This provides the opportunity of measuring whether all visits made by healthcare staff are necessary or if some could be made by carers.

Milton Keynes, UK

The Milton Keynes INDEPENDENT service draws on collaborative work by four parties, in particular CarersMK, ConnectMK, Milton Keynes Council and Adepteq.



Using a Carers support network maintained by CarersMK, it aids "informal care" for older people. The service provides refurbished PC's or laptops with web cams and renders access to a purpose built system "Connecti" via a web browser. The latter was developed by Adepteq. Informal carers and people in need of care can track, monitor and request support or simply have video supported conversations with CarersMK, friends, family and other supporters. They can use the system to reduce their isolation. The service also highlights where earlier interventions and support may be required. The INDEPENDENT digital infrastructure widens the scope for information advice and guidance from informal care organisations, introduces service efficiencies and allows carers to better manage their caring responsibilities. ConnectMK provides the refurbished PC's (ex-Council equipment) and technical support. Milton Keynes Council hosts the service in its data centres.

Málaga, ES

In Málaga, the INDEPENDENT service revolves around the closer integration of the services provided by ASSDA with the services provided by Salud Responde. ASSDA is a public organisation responsible for the provision of social care and independent living services, and operates one of the largest telecare service centres in Europe. Salud Responde is a public organisation which provides several health services throughout the province of Andalusia.



Current social support services provided by ASSDA are improved through better integration of and coordination with existing services provided by the health authorities (Salud Responde). To this end, the INDEPENDENT digital support infrastructure enables sharing of client data and joint call handling in case of requests by clients and informal carers concerning both social care and health care needs.

Trikala, EL

The INDEPENDENT pilot in Trikala responds to the need for closer collaboration of the municipality's care delivery organisations, DEKA and KAPI, in supporting informal carers and those they are caring for.



In particular, the digital infrastructure is utilised for supporting formalised cooperation of community services and family carers of older people with mild cognitive impairment or mild depression. Joint access to extended electronic care records supports easier coordination of service delivery, hence rendering them more integrated, productive and cost-effective. Also, the digital infrastructure enables specialist psychological counselling to be remotely delivered to informal carers, helping them to better care for their relatives and cope with any problems that may occur in this context. Prior to INDEPENDENT no formal interfacing existed between community care services and informal carers.