



Challenges for Assistive Technology

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In the 21st century Assistive Technology (AT) should be defined as a scientific and technologic approach to the development of products and services oriented to support the elderly and people with disabilities in their daily activities, maximizing their personal autonomy, independence, health and quality of life. The AT field should bring this theoretical definition to reality more than ever, in order to counteract one of the main challenges that advanced societies will face during the coming years; the population aging. During the past few years, AT has developed quickly, mainly because of the technological revolution. There are better solutions now than there were 20, 10 or 5 years ago. And furthermore we foresee solutions that were unimaginable a few years ago, such as neuroprosthetics for urinary control in people with spinal cord injury or the cochlear implant for people with hearing impairments. This development is evident in 'high tech' products (e-health, computer-based systems...) and also in traditional products such as the wheelchair. The five main challenges identified by AAATE are New Technologies; Socio-Economic Issues, Universal design and its engagement with Assistive Technology, Evidence-based Practice and Aging and disability.

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