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Abstract:

Internet use of older adults is increasing steadily and is highly desirable in various fields such as political and consumer information, health communication, and education or training in terms of e-inclusion of older adults. The use of Information Communications Technology (ICT) and, in particular, social media use may fulfill other needs and wishes beyond these general desiderata, such as promoting social connectedness and alleviating loneliness by increasing the social circle and maintaining contact with relatives and friends. However, social media use in old age is to date still very low. To develop best practices for engaging older adults in social media use, this contribution will provide a theoretical framework of social media use in old age focusing on user profiles, potential effects of social media use, and recommendations for the development of interfaces facilitating social media use in old age. Concerning *user profiles*, the need for a differential approach to ICT use will be presented with a special focus on ICT experience and physical limitations in older age. Regarding the *effects of social media use*, potential benefits and caveats are presented, highlighting the psychological benefits of self-efficacy, control, and social connectedness in using social media, as well as problems arising with anonymity and the validity of information given in social media. To illustrate *recommendations* in making social media more accessible for older adults, the user-centered design of a mobile platform developed in the European AAL project V2me in order to alleviate loneliness in old age will be presented.