



University New South Wales
Faculty of the Built Environment
The Home Modification Information
Clearinghouse

NEWSLETTER

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Our stated mission is "to develop a leading edge Home Modification & Maintenance information clearing project designed with the assistance of and accessible to the full range of industry and consumer target groups."

Welcome to 2009: Our apologies for not producing a December edition, but we have been moving to and settling into our new home since our relocation from the University of Sydney in late August 2008. The HMinfo project is now located at University of NSW, within the Faculty of the Built Environment. This move strengthens our links with the disability sector, industry and the construction industry while providing exciting new opportunities for research, knowledge creation and information dissemination.

We have produced a number of new publications since our move but are still negotiating our new look and International Serial Numbers so please stay tuned as before April you should see several new publications and a new training video entitled "Off the Rails".

Please note the website remains www.homemods.info

Recently released HMinfo Publications

The Clearinghouse has continued to research and produce new publications, the latest two being;

1. *Evidenced based research: the effectiveness of ceiling hoists in transferring people with disabilities.*

After systematically identifying and reviewing twenty three articles it was identified in the literature that the majority of research occurs within hospital settings. Therefore, little is documented about the use of ceiling hoists within peoples own homes. However the following points were

identified in the literature which is pertinent to use of ceiling hoists by people in any environment, including their own home.

- Ceiling hoists reduce musculoskeletal injuries and were preferred by carers and care recipients.
- Ceiling hoists are easier, quicker to use and work better in confined spaces when compared to mobile hoists.

This review was undertaken by Mr Yong-Moon Jung, a Research Associate at HMinfo.

2. *Evidence Based Research Bulletin; The application of colour contrasts in the home environment of the elderly and visually impaired individuals.*

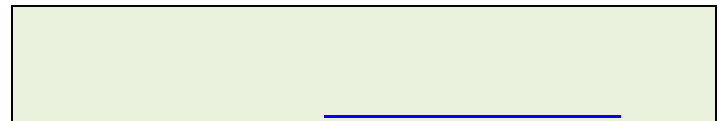
Literature in relation to the theme of design features pertaining to colour and its effect on the performance of the elderly and visually impaired people was systematically reviewed and salient issues were identified. The current review on colour and colour contrasts yielded some basic guidelines for improving environmental legibility including:

- Bright, sharp colour contrasts should be used for coding and cueing.
- Colour coding and cueing should be used sparingly in order to avoid visual confusion and clutter.
- Neutral colours and lack of contrast minimize attention and should be avoided in areas that require patient's attention.
- Individual and cultural colour associations should be considered as an interior design tool to enhance a desired atmosphere. Such colour choices should

also reflect the functional purpose of the area: warm colours (e.g. red, yellow, orange) are considered aggressive and may promote activity. Cool colours (e.g. blue green) are considered passive and may promote relaxation.

Generally the application of environmental colour is inexpensive, non-invasive and harmless. It is therefore reasonable to recommend that colour should continue to be used for purposeful reasons: to prevent the adverse effect of sensory deprivation commonly associated with ageing; to promote mood enhancement; and to act as a means of cueing and coding for function.

This review was undertaken by Dr Navit Gohar, a Research Associate at HMInfo.



Featured Web Sites: Ouch!

www.bbc.co.uk/ouch/

By Andrew Clark

“Ouch!” is the BBC online site for people with disabilities.

This site describes itself as a “website from the BBC that reflects the lives and experiences of disabled people. It has articles, blogs, a busy message board and an award-winning downloadable radio show - The Ouch Podcast.

Ouch! is aimed at all the disability stakeholders: family, friends, professionals and most importantly, people with disabilities themselves.



The site has a strong sense of social justice and effectively voices the rights of people with disabilities to live full and engaged lives as citizens in their community.

Ouch! uses humour to get many of its messages across. One example is Liz Carr's piece "*Tis the season of inaccessibility*," where she describes going home to her parents' inaccessible home at Christmas time. It is both a funny and wonderful description of what inaccessibility actually means for someone and how it impacts on their lives. Click [here](#) to be directed to Liz's article.

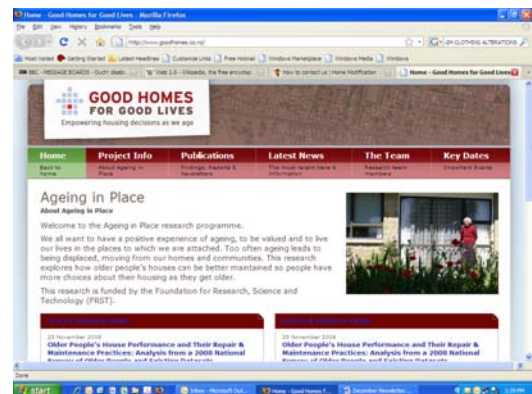
It also has online discussion where people raise issues and support each other for example, "*Quick I've just seen a disabled person on TV*" which explores the portrayal of people with disabilities in the media. Click [here](#) to go to this part of the Ouch! site.

The Ouch website integrates many different elements of the standard BBC news website from which it is hosted using the new Web 2.0 framework. For instance, Ouch inherits many standard BBC website features such as the Podcast; Opinion; Interviews; Features; Fact; Play and News sections familiar to its BBC users. However, it also facilitates user ownership and postings, thus evolving in the manner its users determine.

According to Wikipedia "The term "Web 2.0" refers to a perceived second generation of web development and design, that aim to facilitate communication, secure information sharing, interoperability, and collaboration on the World Wide Web". Web 2.0 business innovations have led to the development and evolution of web-based communities, hosted services, and applications; such as blogs, u-tube and face-book. For more information on Web 2.0, click [here](#) to be directed to the Wikipedia site. As a result, there is a significant amount of input from the UK Disability Community, in submissions, content. For instance, it uses humour and syntax that not coming from people with disabilities in their personal stories might otherwise be deemed politically incorrect

While the web site is primarily about the UK and the lives of people there, it has a much broader appeal, mainly because of the anecdotes people tell about their lives. This includes text and multimedia (audio and video casting) from its users. Overall this is an excellent site that is worth visiting to make you think about the lives of people with disabilities and their cares in new and different ways using a broad range of internet tools.

Good Homes for Good Lives
<http://www.goodhomes.co.nz>



Dwellings in poor repair are cold, uncomfortable, unsafe, and are associated with fuel poverty, ill-health, neighbourhood decline, dependency and negative environmental impacts. Older people are disproportionately exposed to dwellings in poor condition and find it difficult to cope with houses that are poorly repaired, cold, and expensive to run. They become unhealthy, stressed and at risk of injury. Dilapidated housing and the burden of maintenance and repair have been identified as major factors in prompting older people to leave their communities. The aim of the research is to ensure that older people can keep living comfortable and productive lives in their homes and communities by developing services and products that will ensure that the houses older people live in are kept in good repair.

Sizing up Australia: How contemporary is the anthropometric data Australian designers use

<http://www.ascc.gov.au/ascc/AboutUs/Publications/ResearchReports/SizingUpAustraliaHowcontemporaryistheanthropometricdataAustraliandesignersuse.htm>



The Australian Safety and Compensation Council (ASCC) has released a research report on the occupational health and safety (OHS) implications of accurate data for the design of Australian workplaces. The accuracy of anthropometric data is an emerging issue that is a focus of research for the ASCC. Anthropometric data are the measurements of the human body form used by designers to represent the human shape and size in the design of workplaces. The report makes clear that currently there is no coordinated process in place for collecting and aggregating anthropometric data across Australia. Further data was used in an unsophisticated manner and many questioned the validity particularly in regard to bariatric and disabled Australians. Concern was also raised about the inconsistency of Australian Standards in particular AS1428 and thus there was evident concern overall as to its credibility as a design tool for building and interiors.

Latest Events & Training

Include 2009 Conference, London.

5 - 8 Apr 2009

Include 2009 builds on the previous four Include conferences by exploring how inclusive design practice in design, research and business can lead towards innovation in people centered design.

SHED Training

SHED is practical, interactive, theory based workshop run by the NSW Home Modification State Council for Occupational Therapists and new HMMS employees who would like to broaden their knowledge of environmental modifications in the home. For further information click [here](#)

Various dates and locations

Tuesday March 10th - Tamworth

Tuesday March 17th - Blue Mountains

Tuesday May 5th - Lismore

Thursday May 7th - Kempsey

Tuesday May 19th - Bathurst

Thursday May 21st - Dubbo

Environments for Aging 09

29 to 31 March 2009

Boston, United States

Environments for Aging is a comprehensive three-day experience, during which attendees and presenters will explore and share new ideas for creating attractive and functional living environments that meet the needs of our aging population. For more information, click [here](#).

New Publication Review: The role of home maintenance and modification services in achieving health, community care and housing outcomes in later life.

By Andrew Jones, Desleigh de Jonge and Rhonda Phillips. AHURI Publication #123 (2008).

Reviewed by Lyndal Millikan & Catherine Bridge

**All quotes are taken directly from the report itself.*

The final report for this Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute funded project aimed to provide an analytical framework and research foundation for understanding the impact of home maintenance and modification (HMM) services on health, community care and housing outcomes in later life, and for developing more effective public policies relating to provision of these services. The project was predicated that this particular area of housing policy and service provision was under-researched within the Australian context.

Australian modification and maintenance policies and services are sparse, reflecting the lack of a public identity of these services in Australia. HMM services have both inside and outside the HACC program, although in an incremental and somewhat haphazard manner. This has resulted in the complex patchwork of HMM services that currently exist Nationally. There are two key findings documented in this study. The first is that Australia lacks a systematic approach to the organisation of home modification and maintenance services and that this impacts negatively on the capacity to provide these services to older Australians. The second is that, the people who have used home modification and maintenance services value them very highly. The shortcomings of service organisation create difficulties at all stages of service provision, including access to services, assessment of consumers, the actual delivery of services and review and evaluation.

The main difficulties identified in the study include:

- a lack of awareness of HMM services by many older people and the community generally
- the uneven and sometimes poor quality of referral processes to HMM services, especially from hospitals, other health services and general medical practitioners
- consumer perceptions of inequity of eligibility and subsidy arrangements
- the affordability of the services and the deterrent impact of user charges
- those experienced by private renters due to the reluctance of HMM providers to invest in modifications and opposition from landlords
- insufficient occupational therapists or other suitably trained professionals to undertake assessments for home modifications
- delays in home modifications as a result of the lack of funding and/or the lack of skilled personnel
- overall lack of funding for services resulting in the dilution of services and delays
- problems in provision of services due to an increasingly complex and demanding regulatory environment.

The report puts forward a strong case for reconsidering the current approach to the organisation of home maintenance and modification services for older Australians, citing the complex mix of programs and organisations that has developed in an ad hoc manner over the past two decades, and that “an explicit, comprehensive and effective approach to housing older people is fundamental to policies

designed to meet the challenges of an ageing population, and HMM services are an important part of that approach”.

The looming spectre of Australia’s aging population is no secret and managing the issues of keeping people in places where they can be safe, functional and maintain security of tenure seems to be regularly discussed by politicians, welfare agencies and peak bodies however, evidence to support “the potential role of home maintenance and modification services to achieve health, community care and housing outcomes for older Australians is yet to be realized”.



One of the issues with campaigning for improved services based on consumer driven demand is that many people lack knowledge about what can be done and/or do not wish to hand over autonomy/control of their home as it shapes perceptions of others and their own their sense of self.

This report lays a foundation for future research and gives some interesting references that may or may not give this report the gravitas required to make an impact in areas of public policy.

To access this publication click [here](#)

ACCESSIBLE BUILDINGS TRAINING

The Accessible Buildings and Environments Course consists of three units of competency from the Access Consulting section of the Property Development and Management Training Package.

It is recognised by the Master Builder Association of NSW, the Building Designers Association of NSW and the NSW Architects Registration for members' professional development.

For more information click [here](#).

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