

Research Directions

Office of Research Services

Assistive Technology in Australia

Dr Ingrid Schraner, School of Economics and Finance and Social Justice Social Change Research Centre, together with Independent Living Centre NSW has been awarded a UWS Research Partnership Program grant to investigate the costs and benefits of Assistive Technology for people with disabilities and for the growing numbers of older people.



'Assistive Technology (AT) devices allow people to overcome impairments. Together with paid and unpaid care work, these devices form each user's particular AT system', says Dr Schraner. 'Given Australia's ageing population, the number of AT users will significantly increase, and with it the need for affordable AT systems.'

While there may be significant costs in establishing and maintaining an AT system for an individual with moderate to severe impairments, it may enable that person to engage in paid employment or avoid entering residential care. Thus there can be significant economic benefits from AT that need to be evaluated against all the costs involved.

This project will develop a novel methodology for economic evaluation of costs and benefits of AT from the standpoint of users, and will link it with the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF). The project will incorporate personal accounts of those who use AT systems as well as the experiences of those prescribing and selecting AT devices and of those researching and developing AT for Australian conditions.

The project will provide an exploratory account of the relevant economic actors and their incentives and lay the ground work for the development of new strategies to make AT more accessible, more appropriate for Australian conditions, and more affordable for more users.

Project Title: *Assistive Technology in Australia: Economic analyses from a user standpoint - methodological implications*

Funding has been set at: \$17,419.
March 2007.

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For more information on UWS Research Partnership Program, check:
<http://www.uws.edu.au/about/adminorg/devint/ors/fundingopps/internalgrants>