



## Aging Technical Group

The Aging Technical Group consists of people interested in human factors applications appropriate to meeting the needs, capabilities, and limitations of older people, the elderly, and other special populations in a wide variety of life settings. This includes understanding the performance capabilities and user needs of these populations and identifying and designing environments, products, and activities that best fit these capabilities and needs. The focus of the group encompasses work, home, and leisure settings.

### TECHNICAL FOCUS

It is generally acknowledged that age-related changes in physiological and cognitive functioning affect, to some extent, the ability of older people to perform or function in many life activities. Meeting the needs and preferences of this population is becoming increasingly important as the “baby boomer” generation reaches their 60s and retirement age. Human factors engineering, with its emphasis on the analysis of human capabilities and design to fit these capabilities, is highly suited to addressing the needs and limitations of the older individuals in work, home, and leisure activities.

The human factors practitioner is concerned with incorporating information regarding the functional capabilities of older adults, the elderly, and those with special needs into the design of products, transportation, safety, work, home, and other environments, and recreation. Specific areas of emphasis for these populations include the following:

- Designing home, work, and other environments to maximize safety and optimize the functional abilities within these environments
- Designing user interfaces, controls, and displays that accommodate their needs of the elderly
- Understanding the relationship between aging and work performance - specifically how aging affects or does not affect specific jobs and job functions
- Understanding aging in relation to driver and pedestrian skills and developing strategies to allow older individuals to maintain these skills and successfully perform these activities
- Developing and evaluating training strategies that are effective in teaching older people new skills (e.g., job) or how to maintain skills (e.g., driving)

Most research related to human factors and aging is carried out at universities, governmental agencies, and companies concerned with the design and manufacturing of products. Current research activities include the following:

- Developing effective training strategies to teach older people computer skills
- Identifying problems older people encounter in the performance of daily living activities such as meal preparation, and identifying design solutions

- Understanding the range of functions that are crucial to driving, developing an appropriate test battery to assess these skills, and examining how these skills change as a function of age
- Designing highway environments to accommodate the older driver
- Collecting anthropometric and biomechanical data for older populations
- Examining the relationships among aging, exercise, and performance

## **MEMBERSHIP**

The ATG consists of about 300 members. These individuals work for government agencies, universities and colleges, branches of the military, research and consulting firms, and manufacturers. The ATG seeks to foster the exchange of information among members and to promote the development and application of human factors data to age-related issues. Most ATG members are members of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society.

## **BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP**

The Aging Technical Group, like other technical groups within the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society, performs a variety of functions and services for its members. Its sponsorship of technical sessions at the Annual Meeting of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society provides the opportunity for exchange of information among leading professionals in the field.

A newsletter is sent to all members about four times a year. Annual dues are \$5. Additional information on the Aging Technical Group is available on the HFES Web site at <http://hfes.org>.

It is not necessary to belong to the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society in order to join the Aging Technical Group