

# Crossing Boundaries: bringing together researchers from diverse disciplines

Anne Smith, Ushma Gudka

The Institute for Environment, Health and Societies joined with the Human-centred Design group to explore novel areas of synergy. Our approach was to use a series of workshops where researchers expressed their research passions and aspirations, participants were encouraged to look beyond their current research and focus on what they would do if all barriers were removed.

## Final project proposals:

Objects of disgust/desire: assistive technology design through life transitions  
*(Ageing Studies/Design)*

Development of technology for emotion recognition through posturography  
*(Rehabilitation Psychology/Ageing/Design)*

Psychological determinants of fall risk in older adults  
*(Engineering/Ageing/Rehabilitation Psychology/Computer Science)*

Digital health and wellbeing apps  
*(Design/Ageing Studies/Welfare, Health & Wellbeing/Toxicology)*

Measuring economic viability of the personalised assistive devices  
*(Occupational Therapy/Computer Science)*

### Participants found the exercise stimulating and productive, typical comments were:

*"You could tell that people had made connections and were buzzing about discussing ideas afterwards."*

*"Getting to know what other people are doing, transcend the usual collaboration already established, be exposed to new ideas, get to know what methodologies other colleagues use."*

*"Our small group has developed a potentially interesting project idea."*

*"Getting to know people from other parts of the university and becoming familiar with their subject and their research [was the most useful element of the exercise]."*

#### Workshop 1

- 12-14 Pecha Kucha presentations
- Post-it notes to record connections

Five  
Themes  
identified

#### Workshop 2

- Discussed potential projects
- Funders identified
- Aided by facilitator

Groups  
meet to  
develop  
ideas

#### Workshop 3

- 5 projects pitched to peers
- Audience feedback

#### Outcomes

- Five projects submitted to internal and external funding bodies.
- Two internal Inter-disciplinary Catalyst Fund awards made.
- Two external proposals submitted.
- Celebrate Successes.
- Promotional video produced.

#### Lessons Learned

- Allow more time between workshops for thinking, networking and developing ideas.
- Give clear guidance for the Pecha Kucha presentations.
- Second workshop to be more flexible to allow people to spend time at more than one table.
- Add a workshop to translate ideas into firm proposals.