

## AGEWELL Video transcript

R: Alright, welcome back. It is 1:06, thanks so much for being along on 570 news. We're going to change things up a little bit. We're going to do Tuesday tech spotlight now and coming up at 1:35 we'll hear from Barrie K. He is a political scientist at Wilfrid Laurier University, he specialized in American politics, of course it is election day south of the border and we've been kind of having some fun with our listeners today taking votes for if you did have a vote, who would you vote for south of the border? And just to give you a quick update on that, 25 to 19 right now for Hilary Clinton. So there you go, that's where we stand, so get your votes in- oh wait, Matty had a vote for Donald Trump, he just told me that, so 25 to 20. Umm, okay uh, alright so let's do the Tuesday tech spotlight now and joining me uh in studio right now is Heather Mcneil who is a doctoral student and research assistant, the student part at the University of Waterloo, the researcher part at Wilfrid Laurier University. So, I guess it's good uh that they're on the same street 'cause you just go between the two, right?

HM: yeah, it works out pretty well

R: [laughs] well thanks for being in studio, umm, let me ask you, uh, well first of all let me give everybody an intro to this, umm, what we're going to be talking about, essentially, is the way that technology is playing a role in the lives of older adults. Umm, which is a fascinating conversation I think, because I think we've all had an experience with someone in our lives who, you know, may be older who needs some pointers and so on and so forth. So this is, it's going to be an interesting conversation but on November 9th, which is tomorrow, two groups of researchers from the AGE-WELL National, nation's Centre of Excellence partnering with Communitech, hosting an event and it's bringing older adults, their caregivers, other people together. Uh so tell me about that.

HM: Yeah, and thanks so much for having us in studio today, I'm really excited to share with you and the listening world a little bit more about what we're doing. Umm so basically, we're from the AGE-WELL Centres of Excellence grant

R: right

HM: Which funds this work and what we're really trying to do is to bring together older adults, their caregivers, other stakeholders who work with those groups of people with tech developers, innovators, researchers to learn from each other about how to innovate for health and aging.

R: Mhm. Umm, so, alright. And, and so that is the goal of tomorrow. Umm, but also obviously this isn't something that you want to be a one day event, this is something that you want to carry on and become a conversation, really, right?

HM: Yeah. So if I can just take a moment, I'd love to tell you a little bit about the different projects that are coming together

R: Sure, yeah

HM: And how this kind of all links up and how we see this moving forward.

R: Mhm

HM: Perfect, so I'll just go ahead and do that. Umm, so first of all I'll tell you about Dr. Arlene Astell, who is from Ontario Shores. And we're partnering with her because she has expertise in the methodologies

that we're going to use tomorrow. So she's coming over, up to KW, she's run a few smaller workshops of this sort in the UK and in the GTA, umm but she's come up to help us to build some trust between the stakeholders that are going to be there tomorrow to use some methods that she knows works to get some conversations going between these stakeholder groups.

R: Mhm

HM: Umm and she's going to take this data and learn from it and publish it so that other people can fully learn from tomorrow. My supervisor, so you mentioned I was at both Waterloo University and Laurier

R: Yes

HM: So my supervisor over at University of Waterloo, Dr. Paul Stolee, is actually the person who leads the project that we're funded through, which is Workpackage 7 if you wanna go and Google it on the Internet under AGE-WELL. And uh what he's trying to do is basically understand the policy and regulatory frameworks for these aging innovations. Umm currently a lot of the technology is being developed within our AGE-WELL network and across Canada to support aging and health is in this gray space of regulations. So he's doing some really important work with the team over there to understand how to improve that.

R: What do you mean, 'gray space'?

HM: Well I mean in Canada we have some really great regulatory bodies that help us to make sure that the technologies or drugs and medical devices are going through a proper accord so it's safe for patients and all of Canada.

R: Mhm

HM: But the innovations that we're working on, for example, an app, or a wearable device that has very important implications for improving quality of life we think for older adults moving forward, there's not really a regulatory process or any sort of way for innovators to understand how to get their idea to the market. So they might have this great idea and they might have industry partners that are working with them, but when they want to get it out to affect the people that matter the most, there's lots of challenges that they come up with.

R: Right

HM: So, what Dr. Stolee and his team are working on specifically to try to resolve.

R: Right

HM: And this all kind of falls within the third project, that's coming together, which is run by my supervisor over at Wilfrid Laurier University, Josephine McMurray. And that's called the DRiVE project, which is Developing Regional Innovation health Ecosystems. And what we're doing is as you said, we hope that tomorrow will be a start of momentum to kind of learn more about what's happening in the KW region around innovation for health and aging and to build up this, we use the word ecosystem. Some people think about it as a community, a hub, there's lots of different languages for it. Umm, and so we're trying to build out a model for how people understand that and we are working to do that.

R: What uh, let me back up a little bit. What made you interested in this field?

HM: [laughs] From the beginning?

R: Yeah, well... I mean, it's just, it seems you know if I can be completely honest with you it just seems like a field that- and this might be horrible to say- but one that might be looked over a little bit, you know? So what personally made you kind of interested in this?

HM: Yeah, umm, I guess going way back I've always had a really close relationship with my grand parents. Shout out to Nana, who I think is listening today.

R: Really? Okay there you go.

HM: And so from a very early age I've just always had an interest in the experiences of older adults, the wisdom that we can gain, and the value of intergenerational relationships. Umm, and when I was doing my undergrad at the University of Western Ontario, I took an undergrad aging course and I think that's what sparked it so when I graduated I went to work in assisted living and realized that there were some areas that I thought could be improved there. So went back to school to try to learn how I could do that and just through the journey of education I stumbled upon the power of innovation and I really think that what we're doing to try to build up connections and collaborations between community members will be a really valuable and really powerful way for improvement.

R: That's really, it's really good to hear to be honest with you because I think sometimes you know, our seniors are a segment of the population that is maybe ignored or you know kind of pushed aside and we're all going to be there someday, right? So that, I mean, that's the other part of it that when it comes to older people and technology, I think we need to make it, get it to a place where you know, they understand, everybody else understands, right? So, umm, let's talk about that a little bit if you don't mind. In terms of understanding you know what, what seniors need. I mean, obviously before you get anywhere else you need to understand what some of the needs are right?

HM: Yeah for sure. Um, I guess I should hurry up and tell you a little bit about one of the ways that we're trying to understand that, you know, from a broad level. So when I started my under—or my doctoral work, have to think about when this all started, right? At the University of Waterloo, Dr. Stolee's research had pointed to a desire and a need in the community for older adults to want to get more involved in their health. So at a personal health level, and more broadly at a health systems level. And so together with my colleague Dr. Jacobi Elliott, we developed what is called the Seniors Helping as Research Partners or the SAHRP group. And what this is, is a partnership with local older adults and their caregivers who are interested in sharing their experiences with us. And we partner so that we can develop research agendas together, we can analyze our data together, we can create events like tomorrow together, and really start to build a relationship so that in the research world, when we're thinking about what next to study, or we're trying to get the information out there, we have the people with the lived experiences really partnering with us, and guiding the way that we're doing that. And so that type of model, that collaboration effort has really under-plied or is under a lot of what we do in our research group. And so that's why tomorrow, with this event, it's all about, as you say, how do you learn this? Well you get the experience of the people who are...

R: You talk to people, yeah!

HM: living it yeah! And you listen to build a partnership or build a relationship. And what we know from the literature is that you need to have some sort of a partnership with folks, a relationship of some sort to be able to understand and to be able to collaborate and communicate in an effective way.

R: What are some of the um, major areas that you look at when it comes to, you know, the way technology fits into—are their categories that you talk about in terms of, you know, older people, seniors, when you think about their health and you think about some of the technologies that are helping people on a daily basis, are there kind of, general categories that you can talk about?

HM: Yeah, I mean, I can talk about... Well there's lots of different ways to break that down, but I think I like the approach that I, I know I like the approach that the AGE-WELL network has taken as they've divided up their work project. So if folks in the listening world want to head on over to the AGE-WELL website, you'll see that they've divided themselves up into eight different work projects, and this, as I say, is just one way of thinking about this relationship, but they think about the needs of older adults, the needs of caregivers, we think about supporting the functional autonomy and independence, supporting active participation in society. More and more, especially with the SHARP group, hear about this idea of social isolation being really important to folks. And it's going to be a theme that's going to continue to develop as our population ages so that's an important area to be looking into. We talk about prevention and health promotion, so preventing diseases and disabilities, which is going to be a major impact on the health care system as we move forward. Maintaining good mental and cognitive health systems for health practice, policy and regulatory issues, so as I said, that's where my supervisor combined and he's looking at all these, these issues. And then ethical, cultural and social aspects of technology is another really interesting area that people are looking into to think about how we can understand, as this technology is moving forward and playing a more significant role in our lives, how that actually affects us on a societal level.

R: What would be an example of something that is a technology that you know, ethical questions surround?

HM: Yeah, I mean, I think there could be lots and we, it's important to think about our ethics with all the technologies that we're developing, but a common one that people like to talk about is this idea of video monitoring for older adults. So people want to, we know that people want to age in place and live at home and independently as long as possible, so there's lots of solutions that we're trying to think about to help support that, and one of the ways that we think might be important in the future is video monitoring so that we can check in on folks, make sure that they're doing things, that they,

R: All sorts of questions are popping in my head with that, yeah!

HM: Exactly, and that's just one component of a broader picture of a smart home that people talk about right? So with everything being connected...

R: Yeah exactly.

HM: So you can see some data sharing, privacy issues, protection of um, everything that's going on there.

R: Caregivers is a big one because, I mean, look at the unfortunate news not too long ago coming out of London and, and Woodstock with you know, somebody that's been charged in a horrible case of, you

know, first-degree murder in the, in the deaths of eight people, I believe it was, who are living in long-term care facilities. So when you talk about something like the monitoring and ethical decisions that need to be, debates are surrounding that, and then caregivers as well. How big is that portion? The understanding the needs of the caregivers because if there's one thing that we're hearing about or from caregivers as well is the lack of support that they have, right? Which, which means that they have more to do with less, constantly, you know, it's a big problem going forward and as you say, that our population is just, it's aging.

HM: Exactly, I mean, in our lab group, and I think in age will in general it's kind of this hand in glove. You can't talk about older adults without talking about the caregiver, and so it's a big thing that comes up in our researcher, where we're trying to understand how best to support folks and whether that's you know, an aging spouse that's moving along a care journey as an older adult as well, whether that's a son or daughter, or friend, and I think it's important to, to think about the expanded circle that could be a caregiver, right? Because more and more people are choosing alternative lifestyles, it's not a homogeneous population, so we have lots of different types of caregivers as we move forward with an aging population. So it's really important to be considering.

R: It's a lot going on here, uhh, 1:21. We got to take a quick break, we'll be back with more after this. It's the Tuesday tech spotlight in studio with Heather McNeil doctoral students and research assistant at Waterloo, student at Waterloo, research assistant at Laurier. We're gonna take a quick break we'll be back with much more after this on 570 news.

R: Alright, welcome back its 1:24. We are joined by Heather McNeil who is a doctoral student at the University of Waterloo, oh research assistant at Wilfred Laurier University. We have been talking about AGE-WELL and something that is, it's something that's happening tomorrow, November 9<sup>th</sup>, it's happening at Communitech. I want to give you an opportunity to talk a little bit more about that because I just learned during the break that it is an event that is sold out, so which is great right? Because there's lots of interest in it, but what about for people that want to follow along, or you know, know exactly what's happening who can't come obviously because it's sold out?

HM: Yeah so thanks so much. Yet we've been overwhelmed by the response in the community. I think I was sharing with you over the break that we had to go back to the drawing board and figure out how we could get space for more folks so that's been really exciting and so we're mindful that people might be interested. If you're on social media you can follow us along. We're going to be tweeting throughout the day and you can follow us specifically at AGE-WELL\_drive. That's the research project I was talking about earlier and the hashtag for the day is engAGEDtechKW with the age capitalized because we want to keep the focus on that. I just wanted to say a quick word of thanks to our Communitech partner actually because they've been incredible to work with and often times when you think about events that might involve older adults you know certain spaces where those events might take place,

R: like long-term care facility or a nursing home or something

HM: that might be what you typically comes to mind

R: and here you are coming to Communitech which is a really cool place.

HM: Yeah I mean, I think it's pretty cool. The people that are there always make me feel older than I am...

R: Well 'cause you see a lot of these 18 and 19 year olds running around, you know trying to save the world and a lot of them are doing a great job at it.

HM: Exactly so we really see this as a great opportunity. They've opened their doors to a different population that isn't always hanging out there and they're going to be giving our people who are visiting all tours during the lunchtime hour and they're actually creating a selfie booth for us. So we're going to be playing around, having some fun with the tech, um you know, because it doesn't have to all be very serious right? We're hoping this can be a fun event for folks.

R: Right yeah! Absolutely. On the website by the way is AGE-dash-WELL- dash nce dot-ca. That's AGE-WELL-nce.ca. A lot of great info up there as I'm just-just on the website right now, so be sure to check that out. But you know, it's interesting, I was just thinking about this as you were talking, I mean, I don't know if there's gonna be a bigger field than this in the near future, I mean with the population aging with boomers retiring. This is something that's going to be a huge area of research, a huge area of conversation going forward.

HM: Yeah, I mean the potential is massive and it's exciting right? This is an area when we talk about innovation, it's extremely optimistic. There's a lot we have to consider as we were talking about before the break, but the potential is just incredible and I mean, the amount of people that I interact with on a daily basis in the AGE-WELL network at the University of Waterloo, at Wilfred Laurier, the older adults that are getting involved with this, there's just so much potential and what I've been excited about with my dissertation is that I've been trying to learn how better to engage older adults in these innovation communities so that they can help build these innovations for themselves.

R: Are they open to it?

HM: Yeah! Well that's been really cool, right from the beginning, I engaged members of the SHARP group and of course they were on board, but thinking more broadly to the other, like the outer community. I went to long-term care, I went to different members that are living in different circumstances in the community and yes, people want to get involved, but early on, I found that maybe they didn't know how, where there might not be as many opportunities as people would like, both on older adult and caregiver side and on the researcher and industry side, we don't necessarily know how to bring these world together in a meaningful way, so we're going to evaluate what happens tomorrow, we're gonna ask people what they liked what they didn't like, see if this is a starting point and build on this.

R: Well listen, it's been a pleasure speaking with you this afternoon. Thanks so much for taking the time and coming to a studio and sharing all the information with us. There's a lot there to try to digest, which is what you do and, and do it very well, so thank you very much for doing this and once again, let me throw out the website AGE-WELL-nce.ca as well, if you want to follow along on Twitter it's at AGE-WELL\_drive. The one that will be tweeting the hashtag is hashtag engAGEDtechKW with the age capitalized. So there you go Heather MacNeil. Thank you so much

HM: and thanks to everybody listening today.

R: Alright when we come back with a quick break

---end of transcript---