This edited collection of cutting edge papers addresses a topic that to the best of my knowledge has not attracted much research, the utilization of information technology for bridging the “Grey Divide” namely, the divide between the aging population and the younger one. As the authors indicate, aging is not new. It has been with us since time immemorial and it is growing because the aged are becoming a much larger sector of the population than they ever were. As the challenges of caring for the age become more significant, so does the need to utilize information technology for this effort. Indeed, as this book indicates, information technology can be utilized in this area in a number of different ways ranging from connecting the aged to their care givers, providing them with social and emotional support from family and friends, assisting in the provision of medical care and enabling an independent and productive lifestyle.

This book is impressive in its scope and breadth. It compiles research from academics and practitioners from a large number of countries, including Canada, Germany, the UK, Greece, the Chinese Republic, Korea, Singapore, Ireland, Spain, the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, Sri Lanka, Japan, Taiwan and Australia.

The articles in this collection shed light on the role that technology can play in a range of emerging areas such as telehealth, telecare, robotics in home care, and mobile health monitoring. Many of the articles in the book emphasize that technology can alleviate some of the challenges that are associated with aging such as the effect of catastrophic events like falls, the accumulative effects of declining cognitive capabilities, and the on-going need for monitoring physical functions and maintenance of relationships with carers family and friends. Furthermore, many of the articles in this collection emphasize the role that information

DOI: 10.4018/jep.2011100106
technology can play in the macro-level, by supporting decision making and resource allocation related to the aging population.

The book is organized in three parts. The first part focuses on innovations supporting the aged “in place”, namely, those who choose to stay at home. Chapters in this part discuss ubiquitous computing for supporting independent living, smart homes, design of user friendly systems for the aged, and the use of robotics in the home. Regrettably, the collection does not include the exciting new developments in verbal and emotionally capable robots that can be cuddled, played with and conversed with. A discussion of these cutting edge technologies would have rounded up the collection of papers in this section.

The second part of the book focuses on innovations that support engagement of the aged in daily life. The chapters in this part discuss psychological frameworks for understanding successful aging, on-line support groups and on-line learning that can stimulate and expand the horizons of the aged, including initiatives like the University of the Third Age, the bridging of loneliness and isolation through social networking services, the promotion of digital literacy among the aged, and the use of truly innovative technologies like 3-dimensional gaming and virtual environments to bring the aged closer to their children, grand-children and great grand-children.

Finally, the third part of the book focuses on IT related innovations that support care providers. This part of the book discusses teleworkers in the aged care area and the technologies that are being used to help them communicate with their patients, the management of relationships within the family, particularly once the aged member of the family is placed in an institution and the impact of culture on how information technology can be used to assist family members in the often complex emotional issues that placing a family member in an institution entails.

I strongly recommend this book to anyone with an interest in the social implications of information and communication technologies. In addition, academics and practitioners in areas related to health and medicine and particularly, as well as, gerontology and aging should find this book thought provoking and useful. As for the general public, with the prominence of the aged in society, who does not have an interest in how technology is changing the life of the aged and how it might change the life of those who are not yet there but will eventually be there?

And, finally, given the special emphasis of the International Journal of E-Politics, I would like to discuss the relevance of this book to politics. Even though the issue of politics is not mentioned directly in this book, I believe that it is central to any discussion of the digital divide. After all, the concept of the digital divide relates to power and to the unequal distribution of power between the digital “haves” and “have nots”. Up until recently, the aged were consider the “have nots”, with the young being seen as the champions of the Internet. This book demonstrates the exact opposite, namely, that the aged are becoming equals to the young in their participation in the digital revolution. Indeed, the chapters in this book demonstrate that the aged are embracing information technology with just as much enthusiasm as the young and for good reasons – they have so much to gain and in areas that are so crucial to them.

If we consider this book from a political perspective, we can argue that it outlines the building blocks of a transformation or a revolution that is changing aging as it was experienced in the past and making the aged much more integrated in main stream society than they ever were before.