



CENTER FOR
HEALTHCARE ENGINEERING & PATIENT SAFETY
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

PROVIDING BETTER HEALTHCARE THROUGH
SYSTEMS ENGINEERING:

Older Adults, Tech Use, and Social Well-Being During COVID-19 and Beyond

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4:30 PM EST, Monday 9/28 ([RSVP for Zoom Link](#))



Nearly one in three older adults in the U.S. experienced some form of loneliness in 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly restricted older adults' (ages 65+) in-person social interactions, likely increasing loneliness among this demographic. Due to these restrictions, older adults have started to change their relationships with technology to communicate with family and friends at a distance using smartphones and computers. However, these technologies may not be accessible for all older adults. Voice-based technologies such as Amazon Alexa and Google Assistant can be more accessible to those with motor challenges or vision loss/blindness, yet have not been studied in-depth for how they can support older adult's well-being. In this talk, I will discuss (1) a recent interview study with older adults COVID-19 technology use and (2) a recent analysis of more than 50,000 queries older adults made to the Amazon Alexa for social well-being. Early findings point to positive and negative aspects of using technology for well-being and aging.

Robin Brewer is an Assistant Professor in the School of Information at the University of Michigan. She also holds a courtesy appointment in Computer Science and Engineering. Dr. Brewer's research in Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) asks (1) how experiences with technology can be more accessible to digitally constrained communities and (2) how these communities use technology for social well-being. Much of her work focuses on older adults and people with vision impairments. Dr. Brewer holds a Ph.D. in Technology and Social Behavior from Northwestern University, M.S. in Human-Centered Computing from University of Maryland - Baltimore County, and B.S. in Computer Science from the University of Maryland - College Park.

This seminar series is presented by the U-M Center for Healthcare Engineering and Patient Safety (CHEPS): Our mission is to improve the safety and quality of healthcare delivery through a multi-disciplinary, systems-engineering approach. For the Zoom link and password and to be added to the weekly e-mail for the series, [please RSVP](#). For additional questions, contact CHEPSseminar@umich.edu. Photographs and video taken at this event may be used to promote CHEPS, College of Engineering, and the University.