

Helpful app for people with dementia

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Bangor University is providing expertise to support the development and effectiveness of 'Book of You', an 'app' being welcomed as having the potential to revolutionise reminiscence therapy for people with dementia.

Reminiscence is widely used with people with [dementia](#), and involves reminiscence sessions, which use objects and photographs from the past to encourage memories and conversations or creating books of memories and life-stories relating to each individual.

The 'Book of You' takes those sessions and individually created books onto a mobile device- with all that that brings- the ability to incorporate sound and moving images as well as an easy way to create each individual's content.

Developers Tom & Kathy Barham have created a social enterprise to develop and sell the Book of You- with any profits being put back into the venture. They approached Bangor University dementia care expert Professor Bob Woods for advice regarding the app.

A clinical psychologist, Prof Bob Woods is considered one of the leading experts in [dementia care](#) and has been researching reminiscence therapy for many years.

Prof Bob Woods of the University's Dementia Services Development Centre explains: "What this 'app' does, is to focus on what many people with dementia can do- which is to access their long-term memories.

Sharing those memories not only helps them maintain their own sense of self, it also helps family and carers looking after them, and they, in turn, can learn about the individual and have greater empathy with them, through sharing their life story."

Having spoken with Prof Woods, the couple from Ruthin have embarked on a KESS partnership with the University. The KESS enables them to recruit a KESS Associate to work on developing a particular project with the company under the guidance of an expert academic.

"We were very excited when Laura O'Philbin applied for the post, her CV could not have been more appropriate, and we're even more delighted now that she's helping us. The KESS scheme is enabling us to take advantage of expertise we couldn't access any other way'" said Tom Barham.

With a background in psychology, Laura has been able to work with people trialling the app at a number of care homes. Gaining their feedback has already led to improvements before the product launch.

Laura will now be conducting a qualitative evaluation of the app and how useful it is to both the individuals with dementia and to their carers and families.

She explains: "As this is a new service, it's important to gather qualitative information and feedback from users before embarking on any larger quantitative studies.

"The KESS project will provide the Book of You with valuable data so that they can be sure of the effectiveness of their product, and its benefits to the user."

Tom Barham added: "We want to develop something that is of value to people- the bottom line is: if it's no good then we shouldn't be doing it. Our aim is to create a model that can be replicated elsewhere and want our app to have a positive impact for as many people as possible- whether they're being supported to use the app or using it on their own- or whether they're finding the [app](#) useful to relate to the people they're caring for."

Provided by Bangor University

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