FUTURE OF PRIVACY FORUM



AGING AT HOME:

Caregiving, Privacy, and Technology

What is AgeTech?

AgeTech includes wearables, remote monitoring, and software that support older adults and enable aging-at-home. AI enables many of these solutions to deliver personalized interventions; robust data and privacy protections are needed to protect the sensitive data they collect. Consent is complex because caregivers frequently purchase devices and manage settings on behalf of the older adults. To safeguard older adults' autonomy, AgeTech needs intuitive controls to easily support users' needs and manage their preferences.

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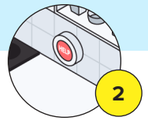
Risks and Solutions

Because data categorized as "sensitive" or "consumer health" is needed for many AgeTech features and functionalities, good governance requires thoughtful awareness of how and who is using the technology. Cluttered interfaces that can cause cognitive overload, access controls that may limit collaborative care, and ambiguous disclosures that create privacy uncertainty may deter adoption among older adults. To mitigate risks and foster trustworthiness, developers should implement privacy-by-default architectures, adaptive dual-consent models, and age-appropriate design standards that prioritize user autonomy.



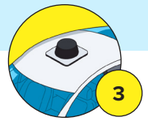
Health & Remote Monitoring

Ambient smart home tech, emergency buttons, and wearables passively track vital signs and locations, raising privacy and autonomy considerations. Data collected by AgeTech on the **market today is largely not protected health information (PHI) under HIPAA but is subject to state laws on health or sensitive data, and federal and state privacy and consumer protection rules.** Stakeholders should consider settings that turn off passive tracking until activated by the user unless needed for essential functions.



Emergency & Safety

These technologies mitigate physical risks and alert caregivers during incidents like falls. **They may collect sensitive location, movement, or health data with state-varying protections.** Default settings often track continuously for functionality and emergency detection. Developers should provide clear, accessible toggles to adjust emergency tracking sensitivity while preserving core user safety features. Policymakers should also consider how emergency context may shift the data privacy balance.



Mobility & Accessibility

This group covers physical mobility, transit, and sensory aids like smart wheelchairs, robotic walkers, and captioning glasses. **They sometimes collect sensitive gait, location, and audio data and may raise bystander privacy concerns when capturing third-party movements and conversations.** Stakeholders should consider edge processing to perform real-time data anonymization and feature extraction without remote transfer and storage of raw spatial or audio recordings.



Daily Task Support

These solutions help with household chores, grocery ordering, or cleaning. **They may require detailed data on lifestyle preferences, routines, or medical histories.** Voice assistants may record interactions for personalization. Standard smart appliances are regulated by consumer protections (e.g., the FTC) and privacy laws rather than healthcare rules. To minimize risk, companies should limit data collection to task needs and provide simple routine-deletion tools.



Social Connection and Communication

Including robotic pets, VR headsets, and conversational AI, these aim to reduce isolation and enhance well-being under consumer privacy laws. **Deployers should implement safeguards against manipulative design and prohibit monetizing emotional or conversational data.**



Family Caregiver Coordination

These tools assist caregivers with scheduling and estate planning. Centralizing medical, financial, and personal records increases breach and fraud risks, with oversight from state privacy and federal laws. Platforms should use dual-consent models with granular permissions and audit logs to preserve older adult autonomy.



Cognitive Support and Dementia Care

Brain training apps, care portals, and caregiver monitors assist those with cognitive or physical decline. **They often gather data deemed sensitive under state laws.** Because cognitive impairment can affect informed consent and shift authority to caregivers, these tools should use adaptive proxy consent directives with legal safeguards that adjust to changing cognitive needs.