

# Gentle Skins – harness apps using Compassionate Interface

by Ana Sarasola, Clark Kellogg, Johan Mullern-Aspegren, and Vinod Kizzhakke



## Gentle Skin puts you in control of the apps you wish to use

The need for tablets specifically designed for us in our older years is as large as the lack of available products. As made tragically clear in the list compiled by Assisted Living Today featuring the ten best tablets for seniors. On top of the list is iPad 9.7, an excellent machine of course but with few features especially developed for elderlies and functionally impaired.

Growing old has many advantages, but it normally comes with a gradual loss of functionality. One of the more unfortunate and unavoidable is cognitive decline that makes it harder to learn new and adjust to changes. The apps in our tablets are crucial for many of us to handle finances, news, contacts and calendars but as we grow older we are less inclined to suffer updates that we feel are unnecessary.

The idea of Gentle Skins is to add a more Compassionate Interface between the user and the app, hiding unnecessary features and bolstering the confusing effects an update to the UI can have. Each app needs to ship with at least 3 levels of complexity or Gentle Skins, or offer APIs for open source designers to create such.

The underlying app can still be used as before, but as a user you can select to use Gentle Skin level 1-3. These are stable over update cycles and expose limited feature sets.

## WHOM IS IT FOR?

For all of us as we grow older and rather have the devices around us adapt to us than the other way around.

## WHY IS IT RELEVANT?

Simply put: the devices we use to connect to the digital realm should be easier to use and not harder as we grow older.

Digital windows are plausible to keep growing in importance and designing them according to Compassionate Interface design is a relevant road that will take us closer to the goal.

## WHAT IS NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT THE IDEA?

The Gentle Skins applies Compassionate Interface in its way to offer skins (think of the way you could change the way your MP3 player looked in windows back in the days)

Some of the apps offer APIs that may be used to create Gentle Skins, but in many cases the companies behind the app must be

## WHO CAN CONTRIBUTE?

Software Developers/ Architects  
Design Researchers  
UX Designers  
UI Designers