



THE EUROPEAN
AMBIENT ASSISTED LIVING
INNOVATION ALLIANCE

newsletter

The AALIANCE newsletter gives information on the activities of the EU-funded Coordination Action AALIANCE.

Further up-to-date information is available on www.aaliance.eu

Shaping the Future of Senior Living in Europe - AAL Policy Workshop, 25-26 September 2008 in Brussels

Christian Wehrmann (VDI/VDE-IT)

Together with the AAL Association and with the support of the European Commission, the FP7 Project AALIANCE held the first Ambient Assisted Living Policy Workshop on 25-26 September 2008. More than 80 representatives from industry, the academic world and the service sector in Europe and Israel participated in this two-day event. The workshop opened with welcoming addresses from Gérard Comyn (Head of the European Commission's "ICT for Health" Unit), Peter Saraga (Chairman of the AAL Advisory Board) and Gerhard Finking (President AAL Association). They all underlined the importance of AAL technologies and the AAL Joint Programme in coping with the demographic challenges in Europe. In introductory speeches, Erwin van Leussen (Achmea Health Insurance) explained the business view of AAL from an insurance perspective; later, Paul Timmers (DG INFSO) outlined the European Commission's strategy for Ageing Well in the Information Society.

In the first session "Older People at Home" (chaired by Paolo Dario, Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna, Pisa), research and technological strategies for the independent living of older people in a home environment were presented and discussed. In this area, health-care and care-related technologies and applications are the main focus of attention. The speakers agreed that there are a number of important topics to be considered in R&D: real-user needs must be the starting point for research activities, but also the potential benefits for society as a whole need to be considered (i.e., cost-/labour saving effects). Most importantly, solutions need to be flexible enough to adapt to the changing health status and (care) environment of older people.

The main barrier to a wider adoption of AAL applications in the healthcare and care sector is the lack of reimbursement schemes for these new technologies. In addition, the markets for AAL products are not homogeneous and involve different stakeholders – ranging from technology developers to informal carers in the home environment. The workshop participants therefore agreed that active stakeholder involvement and the promotion of cross-sectoral partnerships should be a key priority in research and innovation funding. Large-scale trial projects are essential to providing the necessary evidence for adoption of technologies in the health-care and care sector.

AALIANCE is funded within the specific programme "Cooperation" and the research theme "ICT" of **the 7th European Framework Programme**.



Prof. Paolo Dario during his introductory speech on "older people at home".

In the second session, "Ageing in Society" (chaired by Rodd Bond, Dundalk Institute of Technology and Guus Bross, Orbis Healthcare, Netherlands), the perspective moved from older people as care customers to older people as members of a (local) community. It was emphasized that AAL needs a more holistic approach linked to an overall understanding of the human life cycle within a social environment and a generic policy vision of ageing well in society.

New research results from the health and social sciences can also provide valuable insights for technology research. Further, AAL must be considered in conjunction with social innovations in society.

The third session considered "Ageing at Work", and was chaired by Tom Hussi from the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, which has strong links to issues of social innovation.

"deficit model" in age-related research) related to questions of universal design and accessibility in future AAL work environment, which would benefit all age groups. In the final session, the building of the necessary AAL Community of stakeholders in Europe was discussed. Networking and a shared AAL vision of all the stakeholders are basic requirements not just for AAL research projects within the Framework and the AAL Joint Programme, but also for a successful market deployment of AAL products and services in future.



Participants during the workshop

The strengthening of the role of local communities and the adoption of open innovation concepts (especially in care and hospital environments) in R&D were considered as important answers to these tasks. Applications should address a wide range of age-related matters: from prevention of isolation to (assisted) self-care and local/urban mobility. Looking at deployment, the lack of standards (technical, evaluation/impact measurement, privacy and liability) was seen as a main obstacle. In many European regions, basic requirements such as a good infrastructure and broadband telecommunication connections or a sufficient level of digital literacy of potential AAL users are still lacking. It was also emphasized that AAL deals with real people and social structures.

The participants agreed that from a technological perspective this area of AAL is currently the most embryonic. But demographic changes and the resultant burden for pension and healthcare systems in future years produce an urgent need for innovations in this area. Solutions for providing a better work-life balance for older employees or to prevent degradation of physical and mental degradation in this target groups are needed. It was agreed however, that only a mix of technological and social innovation could provide answers to the demographic changes in the workplace and an ageing workforce. Currently, only a few technology research projects are being undertaken in this area, and there is much to learn here, especially as regards the strengths of older workers (in contrast to the dominant

Different activities targeted towards the European AAL community were presented, for example future AAL conferences, online networking platforms or existing interest groups on a national level that could serve as role models for the future European Community. AAL President Mr Finking made it clear that the AAL Association would foster this networking in the next few months. In his final remarks he stated that the joint policy workshop with the AALIANCE project was a sound basis for future steps towards a developed and powerful AAL community in Europe. •

All presentations from the workshop are available on:

<http://www.aaliance.eu/public/policy-workshop>

News from the AALIANCE members: Fraunhofer IESE Institute given an award as "Landmark in the Land of Ideas"



Fraunhofer Institut
Experimentelles
Software Engineering

An ageing population and the trend in modern societies towards individualization are fresh challenges for researchers and policymakers alike. The German Federal Ministry for Education and Science has recognized that these trends lead to increased demands for new assistive and support solutions for older people. For many older people living alone, life in a nursing home is not their first choice. They would prefer to be in their own homes, but cannot because they are experiencing health- or age-related risks.

quality of life in familiar surroundings. On the 29 October 2008, the Fraunhofer Institute was given an official award as a "Landmark in the Land of Ideas". The award is given to German institutions, clubs and associations -- e.g. universities, research institutes and companies -- that have developed innovations or created ideas or social and cultural projects. In 2008 a nationwide series of events "365 Landmarks in the Land of Ideas" has presented 365 plus 1 landmarks where the future is being shaped.

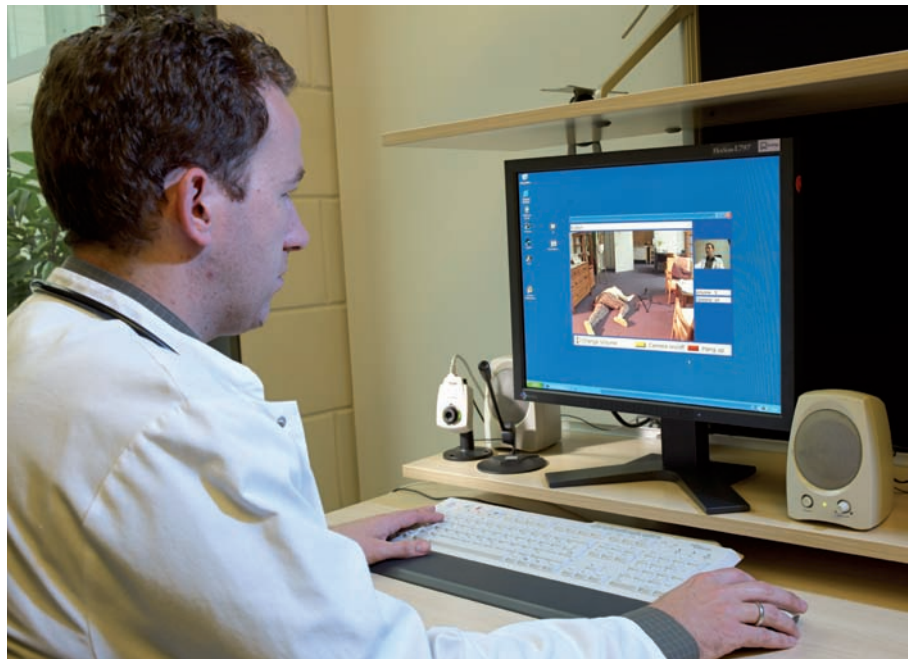
Germany's largest series of events is part of the "Germany – Land of Ideas" nation-branding initiative, which is sponsored by the German government and commerce and industry and is represented by the Federation of German Industries (BDI) and leading German corporations.

Fraunhofer IESE is a member of the AALIANCE consortium.

For more information visit the following websites:

www.iese.fraunhofer.de and
www.land-of-ideas.org

Researchers at the Fraunhofer Institute for Experimental Software Engineering (IESE) aim to solve this problem: "Ambient Intelligence" is an interdisciplinary and multinational project to develop "life assistance systems." Unobtrusive technology monitors the subject's health with sensors. If the system notes any deviations from the previously programmed normal conditions, it initially sends discreet advice and reminders as needed. If the elderly person fails to respond to clear warnings, an alarm call is sent – depending on the level of urgency – to relatives, care workers or doctors. The system quickly identifies acute emergencies or physical collapse. In a specially established "Assisted Living Laboratory", the carers of tomorrow are tested for reliability before being deployed to give greater security and



Remote Alarm System at Fraunhofer IESE

Events

27 - 28 January 2009

2nd German AAL Congress – Berlin (Germany)

www.aal-kongress.de

1 - 3 April 2009

3rd International Conference on Pervasive Computing Technologies for Healthcare – London (UK)

www.pervasivehealth.org

2 - 3 April 2009

Ageing, Wellbeing and Wealth, Maastricht (The Netherlands)

www.ageingsummit2009.eu



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