

ExcITE

Enabling Social Interaction through Embodiment



Project acronym	ExcITE
Duration & start date	36 month; 1.07.2010
Budget	Total € 2.9 millions
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Project website	www.excite-project.org

The purpose of the project is – in an in-situ, longitudinal, and pan-European scale – to evaluate user requirements for robotic telepresence employing the Giraff robotic platform.

The Giraff is a mobile Telepresence device that allows anyone—professional caregivers, family and friends to virtually visit a home, move about freely and communicate with residents via videoconferencing.



The Giraff is at a mature stage of development, and is designed to accommodate future needs in terms of computing power and flexibility.



On one end, there is a mobile robotic base equipped with a web camera, a microphone and a screen. A user interacts through the robotic device with a peer, who connects through a client interface, which also allows the other end user to teleoperate the Giraff.

A standard computer, its pointing device (such as a mouse) and a web camera is sufficient for the remote client.

The overall methodology in the ExCITE project adopts the philosophy that end users' feedback is necessary in the early development phases of the prototype in order to reach a marketable solution. The methodology is based on

a cyclic user-validation loop where feedback from the users is considered and re-evaluated. User feedback is gathered from evaluations that are performed in-situ, on a reasonable scale and with a longitudinal perspective. The longitudinal aspect of the user based evaluation allows a better understanding of important parameters such as user acceptance, added value of social interaction, integration in a domestic environment, technical viability and scalability.

The Giraff will be deployed at several different types of end user locations in Italy, Spain and Sweden. A large study, outside laboratory premises, allows better correlation of the above parameters to important social factors such as gender, cultural aspects and lifestyle.

Examples of intended uses of the platform may include a Giraff placed at a nursing home or group residence where a health care professional, unable to be physically present can connect to the unit and interact with the elderly. Alternatively, another scenario could include placing the unit in an individual residence and family members located in other countries can easily connect via internet. Another use of the Giraff within this context is in conjunction with the currently



deployed alarm device: upon receiving an alarm, an operator may monitor the elderly person through the Giraff in order to assess what kind of assistance the user needs.

The partners in the consortium are:

- Örebro University (Sweden)
- Giraff Technologies (Sweden)
- University of Malaga (Spain)
- ISTC-CNR (Italy)
- Ratio Consulta (Italy)

