PaeLIFE Newsletter

July 2012, No 1

Project description

PaeLIFE is a European Ambient Assisted Living Joint Programme (AAL JP) Project and joins a consortium of 8 partners, located in Portugal, France, Hungary and Poland. Our Project focuses on individuals who are recently retired and who are used to some level of technology usage and who want to keep themselves active, productive and socially engaged. PaeLIFE is our proposal for a Personal Life Assistant, a new solution of Human Computer Interaction, making the elderly relationship with computers and technology easier and more natural.

Project goals

- The main goal is to fight isolation and exclusion and to allow the elderly to be more productive, independent and to have a more social and fulfilling life.
- The Personal Life Assistant will mediate and facilitate the interaction of these senior citizens, with technological devices by improving the accessibility to existing services in the web.

Partners

- MSFT - Software para Microcomputadores (Company, Portugal)
- Instituto de Engenharia de Sistemas e Computadores, Investigação e Desenvolvimento em Lisboa (R&D Institute, Portugal)
- Budapest University of Technology and Economics (University, Hungary)
- The Bay Zoltán Nonprofit Ltd. (R&D Institute, Hungary)
- Knowledge Society Association (Secondary End User, Poland)
- Genitech (Company, France)
- University of Technology of Troyes (University, France)
- Universidade de Aveiro (University, Portugal)

Ongoing activities

In June there has been several research activities concerning the Paelife project. Knowledge Society Association organized in Warsaw 3 workshops with potential end-users, whereas an extended workshop and questionnaire survey were organized in Budapest by Bay Zoltan Applied Research Ltd. and the Budapest University of Technology. The first workshop in Warsaw, **Introduction to Human-Computer Interfaces (HCI) and use of online resources** was chance to present participants the scope and objectives of PaeLife project and AAL Programme, to discuss about how we communicate with each other nowadays using such tools as the Internet, mobile phones and computers.

The discussion was continued during the second workshop - **Use of online resources - gap analysis**. It investigated the use by end-users of online resources and strengths and weaknesses, as well as barriers and motivations for their usage of eLearning; eGovernment or

eHealth. We also discussed about the use of online social networks; online entertainment networks; Unified Communication services; house gadgets (audio-visual media control).

The third meeting was dedicated to **Human-Computer Interfaces modalities**. Participants were provided smartphones, tablet and 2xBox consoles with Kinect sensors. The researchers tried to investigate the easiness and difficulty of interaction with such devices. More than 16 participants were eager to try and use how to talk, touch or make a gesture with interaction with computers. They were surprised how easy and intuitively people could communicate with such devices and with other people.

The workshops at Budapest were held in a day-long session with 14 elderly persons, almost all over 60 years of age. The morning workshop focused on Human-Computer Interface modalities with smartphones, an xBox with Kinect sensor, a tablet, and a text-to-speech device that is being developed by the University at Budapest. The afternoon session was dedicated to online resources gap analysis, and included several interesting tasks such as controlling a TV set by human voice (another development of the University) and obtaining information on medicines via an automatic, sound controlled telephone system. It was very surprising to see how little was missing in several cases for our everyday IT devices easy to make their use easy for the elderly. There were two persons in the workshops who had never used any IT devices before. Even those persons performed at more than acceptable level, and considered the day as a great personal success.

There has also been a questionnaire survey in Hungary to support the workshop study with quantitative data on HCI modalities as well as on current use of online resources - gap analysis. This intended to reveal the strengths and weaknesses of IT devices used by the elderly.