PaeLife Newsletter

March 2013, No #3

Project description

PaeLife is a European Ambient Assisted Living Joint Programme (AAL JP) Project with a consortium of eight partners from 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 it easier and more natural for elderly to interact with computers and technology.

Partners

- Microsoft Corporation (Portugal)
- Instituto de Engenharia de Sistemas e Computadores, Investigação e Desenvolvimento em Lisboa (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)

Third meeting in Paris

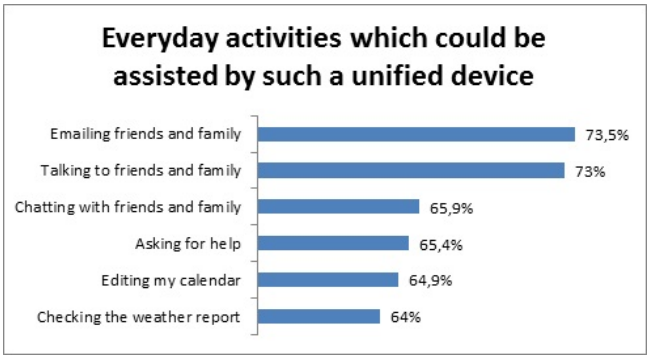
The third PaeLife consortium meeting was held in Paris on the 14th and 15th of February. The meeting was organized by Genigraph (Groupe Genitech), with members from all Project Partners present. Partners discussed the current Project status, the results achieved so far, with important decisions made regarding the PaeLife services and final product. This was the last meeting before the midterm-review (25th of March. Lisbon). Branding ideas for the final product were also brainstormed.

Ongoing activities

Final results of the surveys and workshops in France, Hungary, Poland and Portugal

In the last newsletter we showed the results of the Hungarian and Polish survey. Now after having analyzed the results of the questionnaire surveys from all countries, **let us see – from the perspective of the users themselves – what an ideal "Personal Assistant" should look like!**

For the question "What kind of device would you prefer for such use?" 28% of the respondents said a device which is installed at one point of the flat would be great, another 21,8% would prefer a portable smartphone type device and 21,3% a combination of both answers.



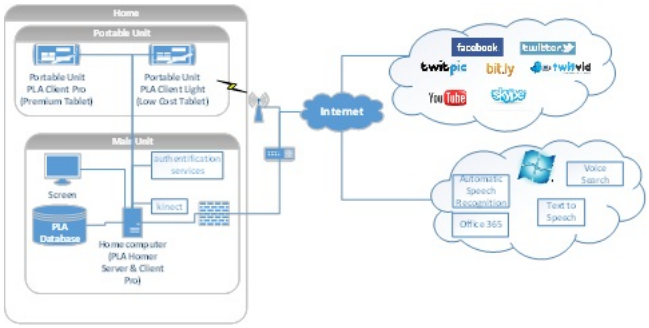
The above diagram displays the percentage of everyday activities that could be assisted by such a device. The popularity of emailing and talking with friends and family is above 70%. Editing a calendar (64,9%) and checking the weather report (64%) are also important for the elderly. The survey and the workshops showed that the use of social networks is getting popular among elderly. Nowadays, more and more people have a Facebook account to follow news and look at the pictures posted by their children or other family members. Social network functionality is very important in our ”Personal Assistant”, because this is one of the main keys in fighting elderly isolation by enhancing seniors' connectivity to family, friends and society.

Following on from the other countries' workshops, the nine people who took part in the French workshop, held on the 10th of October 2012, tried different devices: smartphone, tablet and the Kinect for playing a bowling game. All of the participants found the all-day workshop enjoyable. Since the workshop, two participants have bought a tablet, while another has bought a smartphone. One couple bought a Kinect, and now they share fun moments playing games with their grandchildren, who are delighted!

using Kinect at the French workshop

System Architecture

The PaeLife prototype application, temporarily named Personal Life Assistant, aims to be a multimodal assistant for seniors and mobility impaired users. The PLA System's main objective is to improve and simplify access to social media services, email, calendar, and videoconference communications, and to improve social inclusion by stimulating communication between elderly and their friends and family.



The system will offer a main unit to host the system server components and also to present media content on a big screen. It's also possible to use the system with a mobile unit (a tablet device) to improve mobility and versatility. The main unit and the mobile unit will also be able to communicate with each other to enhance the system's usability (e.g. use the mobile unit to control the main unit). The two units will also make it possible to interact with the system using touch, speech and gestures.

System services

In the prototype application that was already developed, the following services are available and ready to use:

- Email;
- Agenda;
- Social Media (Facebook, YouTube, Twitter);
- Communication (Instant Message, Audio and Video Call) integrated with Skype.

After analyzing user needs and discussion among partners, we are planning to include the following services in the final version of the system:

- Weather information;
- Social activity status (e.g. Geo-Location of friends, Information about a particular person);
- Voice mail;
- Secure content sharing (photos, images, videos, music, text documents);

- TV Schedule;
- Calendar with birthdays and first name days of family and friends;
- Relevant feeds for the elderly (e.g. Local health/pharmacies /care help);
- Social community of interest (using Facebook) – topic agnostic).

Usability Evaluation of PaeLife technologies

The PaeLife project gives a lot of importance to "the user" in its design process. Through the survey and workshops, user requirements have been collected and considered from the beginning. Elderly people will continue to actively participate in the process of evaluating the technologies being developed. The usability evaluation that is part of the PaeLife project will produce feedback and recommendations as part of an iterative design process. Aging occurs on many levels and when adapting the design for the elderly, the context of use and the type of user must be taken into account, to ensure that the technology developed (i) is easy and efficient to use and (ii) provides the features that the elderly need. Identifying these specific requirements and general usability "problems" will be the basis for continuously improving the usability of the interface. Complementary techniques, both qualitative and quantitative – interviews, user feedback, usability tests, field trials, log file analysis and focus groups – will be used at three different stages, according to their coherence with the level of progression in the iterative design process.

Speech Data Collection

The Speech Data Collection Campaign, which involves the collection of speech provided by people using an online platform tool, is now ongoing in France, Hungary and Poland. We are confident of reaching the aim of 100 hours of pure speech (speech without pause) over the next few months of the project.

The Speech Data Collection is essential for the development of the PaeLife final product, where speech will form an important part of the multimodal interface. Therefore we are always looking for people who would be willing to contribute and be a part of this project. The requirements for participation are to be over 60 years old, to be born in one of the countries stated below, to have good reading skills.

If you are interested in participating in this project, or know anyone who would like to donate their voice and who meets the criteria above, please contact the main coordinator of the following countries:

- **Hungary:** Tibor Fegyó - fegyo@tmit.bme.hu
- **Poland:** Artur Kolesiński - artur.kolesinski@ssw.org.pl
- **France:** David Hewson - david.hewson@utt.fr

These coordinators will be able to give you further information and guide you through the process. As we depend on many elderly people to provide their voices, it would be great and immensely appreciated if we could have you on board and count with your participation!

Further information

In order to be informed regarding the PaeLife community and its activities online, please join us on:

- Twitter
- Linked In
- Slideshare
- Blog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