

Huge EU project goes to the IT-City of Katrinebjerg

- PalCom has been chosen as the EU's suggestion for a new infrastructure for pervasive computing

Danish IT researchers have succeeded in attracting a prestigious EU project to Århus. The PalCom project is a so called Integrated Project (IP) and has gained status as flagship project under the EU's 6th framework program. The purpose of the program is to strengthen Europe's position within the area of advanced technology.

The PalCom project has to create an infrastructure for pervasive computing, 'IT in everything'. The IT development moves towards computer power seeping into still more of the things we surround ourselves with in our daily lives from mobile phones and cars to televisions and cameras. Hence the name pervasive computing. Among other things, the PalCom project has to work on a future IT infrastructure, which can combine all these appliances.

An important aspect within the project is that the technology must be transparent to the user. When there is IT in everything, it becomes a necessity for the people who come into contact with the IT systems to be able to understand them, to see when they are active, to control them and to adjust them to a particular assignment. Hence the name – palpable.

The PalCom project focuses its scope of application on health care services. The project members work towards the vision of being able to combine "everyday technology" such as televisions, mobile phones and PC's with biosensors and other measuring instruments. The purpose could be to support a treatment program containing a medicine and exercise program with guidance 'on demand' and check of blood pressure and weight. The technology should be compiled by doctors, nurses and patient. And it has to function in many different situations: in the hospital, in the home, while travelling, etc. That is why flexible compilation of the appliances, their integration, comprehensibility, control and uniformity in spite of different usage situations and places are key words in the PalCom project.

The project has a volume of 243,000 man hour and a budget of 12,5 mill. Euro over a period of 4 years. PalCom will involve eight European research institutions and four companies, of which the largest is the German industrial giant Siemens and the smallest is the Århus based up-start company OOVN.

Researchers in the IT-City of Katrinebjerg are initiators as well as project managers at PalCom, which is the EU commission's flagship project on the area of 'Future and Emerging Technologies/Disappearing Computer'. PalCom is the only IP that has made it through the EU demands in the area of 'disappearing computer'. This achievement in itself is unusual and a recognition of the IT research environment in Århus. The PalCom project further emphasises that the combination of technical aspects and user involvement is a discipline where Århus is among the absolute international leaders.