

The MonAMI Declaration

Stockholm, May 20th, 2011

1 ICT and Demographic Ageing: a Social Necessity and an Economic Opportunity

Ambient Assisted Living (AAL) systems refer to “intelligent systems that will assist elderly individuals for a better, healthier and safer life in the preferred living environment and covers concepts, products and services that interlink and improve new technologies and the social environment” [1]. AAL systems address socio-political issues created by the demographic development in Europe: care and assistance needs to elderly persons will drastically increase in the future with a situation in 2050 where there will be two retired persons for one working person [2].

AAL systems can help support older people in various application domains [1]: at work, as persons will remain active and productive for a longer time, with an improved quality of work; in the community, by staying socially active and creative through ICT solutions; at home, by enjoying a healthier and higher quality of daily life for a longer time, assisted by technology, while maintaining a high degree of independence, autonomy and dignity.

AAL systems are not only a social necessity but also an economic opportunity.

2 Inclusion is an Integral Part of the Digital Agenda for Europe

Inclusion and AAL systems are integral parts of the Digital Agenda for Europe [3]. Further to the 2006 Riga Ministerial Declaration on e-Inclusion policy [4], the European Commission has defined an ageing well action plan [5] and a European strategy in ICT for Ageing Well [6]. The result is a series of measures that involve more than one billion euro in research and development between 2006 and 2013: the Seventh Framework programme [7] funds longer-term research and development, the AAL Joint Programme [8] is dedicated to market-oriented research and development and the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) within the ICT Policy Support Programme [9] supports initiatives with deployment priorities.

3 Challenges towards a Mainstream AAL Market

The challenge is to create a mainstream market for AAL applications, i.e. an ecosystem that provides economic opportunities while addressing the social necessity of our ageing society. MonAMI [10], one of the AAL projects supported by the European Commission has identified a three-phase roadmap.

In the first phase, the *proof of concept phase*, research and development investigation work is carried out in order to propose solutions in terms of applications and ICT technology. This is currently taking place in particular through projects within the FP7, AAL and CIP programmes.

The second phase is a *transformation phase* which is ahead of us. In this phase convergence takes place towards common ICT platforms solutions and interoperable applications. This phase must involve (1) initiatives for the creation of common platforms and (2) initiatives for the creation of interoperable applications.

The third phase is the *ecosystem phase*. This phase is what the Digital Agenda is aiming at. In this phase, service providers will provide global solutions to the market based on a wealth of interoperable applications, themselves developed on mainstream ICT technology.

The challenge is therefore the transformation phase. How do we ensure convergence towards common ICT platform solutions? How do we ensure convergence towards interoperable applications?

4 Measures are Needed

4.1 Coordinating the Creation of Platform Communities

Policy makers are well aware of the need for ICT platforms and initiatives are underway with the support of the European Commission.

In the eInclusion domain, many projects¹ have been carried out with various specific objectives. Community initiatives have been launched². In parallel, the Future Internet public-private partnership (FI-PPP [11]) has been launched.

We call for a measure to coordinate the multiple platform initiatives so that the AAL community does not fall into the trap of relying on incompatible technology not supported by the mainstream future internet technology.

4.2 Managing the Interoperability Consensus Building Process

Interoperability will not be easy to reach for AAL. First of all, AAL is a complex and multidisciplinary³ field. Secondly, AAL is today a very fragmented market. The “AAL industry” cannot rely on a well-established community of major industrial stakeholders that invest in standardisation activities.

We call for a measure to help the AAL community be involved in interoperability consensus building. This measure should take into account the evolving nature of applications and therefore be long-term, i.e. it should be applied during the time it will take to transform the AAL community into a mainstream community. This measure could be implemented under the responsibility of the European Commission as part of the first action of the ageing well action plan set [5] which states the following: “The Commission will therefore facilitate efforts of business stakeholders and civil society organisations to establish an innovation platform for ageing well”.

5 Signatories

This declaration is supported by the organisations involved in MonAMI: Swedish Institute of Assistive Technology, OpenHub, University of Zaragoza, France Telecom research and development, Electricité de France, Kungliga Tekniska Högskolan, London School of Economics, HMC International, Siemens, Telefonica I+D, Trialog, Technical university of Košice, University of Passau, Europ Assistance France.

It is also supported by the local stakeholders involved in the MonAMI field trials in Zaragoza, Košice and Stockholm.

References

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¹ E.g. Oasis, Persona, I2Home, MPower, OASIS, MonAMI. UniversAAL in particular (<http://www.universaal.org/>) is perhaps the most ambitious undertaking as it has the objective to integrate the various features developed in the previous projects and to make available to the R&D community an unified platform

² AALOA (<http://www.aalooa.org>), OpenURC (<http://www.openurc.org>).

³ The Interoperability working group of the German BMBF/VDE Innovation Partnership on AAL [12] includes experts from more than 10 domains.