i3 roadmap news

The front page of Issue 2 of i3magazine (March 1998) presented the unfolding i3 roadmap in terms of a distributed yet tightly coherent community that will continue its research far beyond the existing i3 projects. The vision and its aim of attracting substantial industrial sponsorship was subsequently discussed and rather strongly supported in one of the panel sessions during the i3 Annual Conference in Nyborg end of June 1998. The background for the panel session was a first meeting between i3net, the Commission, and potential industrial sponsors that had taken place immediately before the i3 Annual Conference. Following the i3 Annual Conference, the i3net Coordinating Group (CG) met in mid-July 1998 to prepare briefing material on the i3 vision for the second meeting which took place between the potential sponsors and the Commission acting as "midwife" end of July 1998. More news on the talks will follow on i3net's 'Members only' web pages and in the next issue of i3magazine. Meanwhile, the following text on the emerging i3 vision has been extracted from the briefing material presented to industry at the end of July meeting.

What is i3?

i3, which stands for Intelligent Information Interfaces, is a next-generation research and innovation community. It seeks new ways to enhance communication and information exchange among people in their everyday lives. i3 is a dynamic new 'European way' in the search for critical mass in research and innovation. Launched in 1997, i3 consisted initially of thirteen collaborative research projects, and a Network of Excellence (i3net). i3 currently undertakes fifty million ecus worth of research; nearly 200 researchers from 61 companies are involved. This unique network includes corporate and university research laboratories, end-user organisations, public institutions - and real communities in fifteen European countries. By the end of 1998, with the launch of a new cluster of projects to do with experimental school environments, i3 will have grown to seventy million ecus ($60m) of research, 300 researchers, and more than 100 organisations.

What is the research agenda of i3?

Information technology is transforming markets for travel, education, entertainment, news and information, health care, social interaction, trade. From play and learning in childhood, through new forms of work as adults, to self-help in old-age, a vast and largely untapped market will only take off if new forms of communication and community are provided.

i3 develops scenarios and pilots for these new services. i3 research brings together an understanding of people and communities, the generation of new interaction concepts, and the deployment of novel technological solutions to implement them. i3 therefore creates new markets, new tools and services, and new innovation techniques. i3 projects are currently grouped in three clusters: Connected Community, Inhabited Information Spaces, Experimental School Environments:

Connected Community explores the situated use of information by communities of ordinary people, future services and technologies to enhance social interaction, devices to help children and adults stay in contact.

Inhabited Information Spaces projects examine new ways to embody information, and to support virtual communities, new ways of managing access to online resources, new forms of interactive television, new forms of community participation.

Experimental School Environments investigates learning environments of the future for four to eight-year-old children - and their teachers and parents -. visualisation of ecological processes, or sound and gesture interfaces…

Niels Ole Bernsen and the i3net CG