# Autumn issue: sweet memories and good prospects

The i3 Annual Conference in Jönköping (Sweden) this September provided an impressive display of results from more than 20 advanced research efforts in computing for local and virtual communities and school environments for young children. These inevitably attracted eager attention and interest, and the conference organisers, taken aback by the behaviour of the i3 crowd as usual, had to accept the fact that the 250 or so participants spent more time in the exhibition areas than in the lecture halls. Yet for many the pleasure involved in experiencing such a peak in technological research achievement was accompanied by a sense of loss, because many of the projects on display were ending. In that respect, i3AC2000 marked a juncture.

Life has lots of junctures. They are all different in nature and individual experience, which is why none of them can be a true analogy for any of the others. I don't know which analogy comes closest to the recent juncture for our i3 community, but the one that comes to mind is this one. Let's say that you and your friends have just done one of the easier eight-thousanders in the Himalayas. You now know that you're good and that the world is full of opportunity — to ascend Everest without a paid guide to hold your hand, to climb one of the really difficult peaks, or all of them, or the highest points on all continents.

The finishing of many i3 projects leaves that kind of feeling, of great heights achieved and exciting new prospects opening up. We knew projects were bound to end after three years or less; but i3 was never primarily about the individual projects anyway. It is about those doing the work, about the path-breaking alliance between design technology and people, and about a new way of carrying out advanced systems research. These things provide continuity beyond project endings.

The way we do research in i3, together across projects, has become a role model for the research to be done in Europe in the sixth Framework Programme (FP6). Moreover, the emerging theme for research for the Information Society in FP6 is Ambient Intelligence everywhere, in schools, traffic, homes, sports, play, in and for all sorts of communities. It would appear that i3 has been preparing for this theme all along, and that the i3 community is uniquely placed to play a major

role in tackling the multitude of research issues which must be solved for ambient intelligence to make life easier for people, rather than becoming a growing threat. There is probably no way this can be done except for the one we are intimately familiar with — the one we created, and demonstrated at i3AC2000.

Junctures mean new beginnings as well as closures: the Disappearing Computer colleagues, many of whom were in i3 already, have now put representatives on the i3 Coordinating Group. To everybody in DC: a warm welcome to the i3 community!

To look back to what's been achieved by i3 people, and forward to what lies ahead, tune in to another fresh i3 venture: i3net now has its own webTV channel, i3labTV. Go to www.tvropa.com and you'll find us there.