

Integrated Wireless Communication For The Future

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Fully integrated worldwide [wireless](#) communication has come a step closer with the help of a grant of almost EUR 4 million from the Information Society Technology (IST) Programme of the European Union's Framework Programme.

The OPIUM project carried out trials of 3G services in China, Portugal, Spain, Germany, the UK and Ireland, in support of the accelerated rollout of commercial services. These trials dealt with the protocol and application programming interfaces (APIs) that allow Internet services to be reapplied to telecommunications networks to result in the emergence of new services.

“OPIUM has developed an open platform for the integration of 3G UMTS middleware and is addressing key issues such as interoperability, roaming and billing,” says Barry Downes, OPIUM's project coordinator from Telecommunications Software Systems Group. “Such issues need to be tackled to enable Mobile Operators to support third party service providers, to create the mobile services that will make 3G a success.”

"The trials have offered up some very interesting results so far. Real people have been using services on the platform applications and we have been using these scenarios to identify issues.”

Peter Walters, UK National Contact Point for IST within the EU's 6th Framework Programme, believes that EU funding of projects like OPIUM is essential, saying: “As the demand for instant access to

information by people on the move continues to grow, we must ensure that Europe is at the forefront of research and development. With total costs of more than ^8.5 million, projects like OPIUM are unlikely to be viable without the help of EU funding.”

“The Framework Programmes are the EU’s main vehicle for support of leading edge, internationally collaborative R&D. The current Framework Programme (FP6) runs until 2006 and organisations wanting free information on how to access some of the ^17.5bn available should log on to fp6uk.ost.gov.uk or call central telephone support on 0870 600 6080.”

The OPIUM project had to overcome a number of difficulties in making all the technology fit seamlessly together. However, this had been expected in a project trying to integrate existing applications and deliver innovative services such as location based services, call control, media messaging, SIP services, and streamed video and audio.

"It is very difficult even to get a demonstration of 3G end-user services, so the trials we conducted were vital," Barry Downes added. He believes OPIUM's pan-European network and middleware platform should really take off with operators, vendors and end-users as it is very difficult for organisations to gain access to the networks of the large operators.

Already commercial interest in the project's findings has been expressed and Barry Downes expects this to increase as the project draws to a conclusion.

Source: The Glasgows Group

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