

With the use of an open source platform, mobile internet crossing platform barriers

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Living in a fast-changing world and always being on the go forces researchers to conceive, develop and bring to market advanced technologies. A case in point is the mobile internet which is growing faster than the blink of an eye. An EU-funded group of experts from mobile web research and industry have joined forces to create an open source (OS) platform and software components that will enable the cross-platform use of services and allow technologies to run on multiple screens.

The WEBINOS ('Secure webOS application environment') project is funded to the tune of EUR 10 million under 'Information and communication technologies' (ICT) Theme of the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7).

The 20-strong consortium, headed by the Fraunhofer Institute for Open Communication Systems (FOKAS), represents consumer electronics and the automotive industry, among others. They will offer standardised, interoperable technologies that will give software designers the tools they need to make web applications and services that can be used and swapped across the board a reality. Today's restrictions stem from hardware specifications and operating systems; people use different systems to get similar results. The WEBINOS [open source](#) tool will change all that.

The industry set to benefit most from the development of this open source tool is multimedia. In a statement, the WEBINOS partners said

users will be able to 'share photos on their mobile phones, televisions (TV) and personal computers (PC) by using the same photo application across the platforms'.

Industry partners that are making key contributions to the WEBINOS project include Sony Ericsson Mobile Communication (Sweden), Telecom Italia, Deutsche Telekom, the Research and Technology unit of BMW Group (Germany) and the UK unit of Samsung Electronics. Research partners include the National Technical University of Athens (Greece), the Interdisciplinary Institute of Broadband Technology (Belgium) and Politecnico di Torino (Italy).

In terms of ensuring standards for the reference platform, support is being given by the France-based World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), a global internet standards body that develops protocols and guidelines that guarantee long-term growth for the web.

'The vision of the project is to create "a universal application platform",' explained project leader Dr. Stephan Steglich from Fraunhofer FOKUS. 'That means we aim to enable the use of web applications consistently and securely across all internet-enabled screens, including mobile, PC, TV and in-car entertainment units.'

Under the project plan, the consortium will develop requirements that are based on industry and not on any particular organisation. This open source technology will be a major boon for the market, the experts believe.

'We want to overcome restrictions applied by proprietary and vendor-specific technologies, enabling the rapid design of more personalised, secure and innovative applications,' Dr. Steglich pointed out. 'Our goal is the development of a secure platform that facilitates the creation of applications for multiple, heterogeneous, devices and operating systems.'

This novel technology is also expected to foster stronger ties between businesses, developers, manufacturers and operators. 'The new technology will eliminate some of the economic barriers associated with developing mobile internet platforms,' the statement read.

The end result will be companies being able to develop new business models and re-examining their foothold on the mobile multimedia market.

Provided by CORDIS

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