

Mobile Life Centre: Mobile Applications for Fun and Pleasure

How would you describe your lab? The Mobile Life Centre at Stockholm University in Kista, Sweden, does research in mobile services and ubiquitous computing—focusing on consumer-oriented mobile and ubiquitous services spanning.

It was founded in 2007 as a VINN Excellence Centre with a 10-year grant selected by VINNOVA (the Swedish Governmental Agency for Innovation Systems). The Centre is hosted by Stockholm University with the Swedish Institute of Computer Science (SICS) and Interactive Institute as co-executors. The Mobile Life Centre has quickly established itself as an internationally recognized research locus in the area of mobile services.

In the academic world, the Mobile Life VINN Excellence Centre is known as a vibrant and interesting research facility. After three years, the Mobile Life Centre has emerged as a research endeavor that fully engages in pursuing experiential, leisure-oriented, and playful topics. The Centre's strategic importance lies in doing serious research on slightly unserious activities; results range from publishing ambitious books





on new playful activities, such as pervasive games and social media on the road, to generating and demonstrating innovative mobile as well as leisure-oriented applications.

What is the unique feature of this lab? The Mobile Life Centre is an exciting place to be. The environment is characterized by openness and cooperation cross borders—here you will find academic researchers from different disciplines intermingling with researchers from strong industry partners. The research often results in working prototypes that can be tested by end users.

We provide a neutral arena where researchers and industrial partners work together; we focus on creating new interaction models and finding efficient and user-oriented methods for developing mobile services.

In essence, the Centre explores a range of novel mobile services for mobile media creation, play, social interaction and bodily awareness, and the ways in which such technology shapes everyday life. This exploration results in concrete examples for mobile services that have been designed, implemented, and tested to possibly be deployed to market within the short or long term; results also include studies of various social practices.

What is the focus of your activities? The main focus of our research is applications for pleasure and for the good life. Our approach to research gives us all food for thought and knowledge about the way we live our lives. It is inspiring—not just for us but also for industry and the public—to think about how life will be in the future.

An important feature of the research is studying new ways to interact in a fulfilling manner. The researchers from the industry partners play an important role in the Centre's activities. They often contribute with so-called spin-ins—research ideas that could be deployed by the industrial partners.

What is the one thing you see as the most important thing you do here? In short, we are a sort of playhouse for technology. We want to do research with a twinkle in our eyes, and we want to combine playfulness and seriousness. That is the core of our activities.

How many people are in the studio, and what is their mix of backgrounds and roles? There are currently 50 people working in the Centre itself and another 40 industry partners collaborating with us. That makes a total of around 90 people con-





A Few Key Projects

Mobile 2.0 Mobile-in-the-world

Creating truly mobile services requires a completely different approach from just moving existing, stationary Internet services to the mobile platforms. We call services that take into account these unique properties of the mobile setting Mobile 2.0 services.

A number of such services have been designed and implemented in the project, and we are now seeing how they are being deployed both in real-world situations with public-sector partners such as the city of Stockholm, and used as examples of cutting-edge technology developed by industry partners such as Ericsson. *Contact: Lars Erik Holmquist*

Affective Health

This project explores mobile services that empower people to monitor and understand their own stress levels in their everyday activities. The current prototype aims to provide users with an easy grasp of data visualization captured from body sensors and mobile devices. The system empowers users to take control of their own behavior and cope with stressful situations, and increase activities that promote their well-being. *Contact: Kristina Höök*

MoreVideo–Mobile Collaborative Video Production

We invent and investigate mobile collaborative live-video production. First-generation, mobile-broadcasting applications make it possible to share live video streams from various types of use contexts over mobile networks such as 3G (for example, see bambuser.com and qik.com). We explore second-generation applications, in which professional techniques for collaborative live video editing are made available on mobile platforms.

Patent pending and advanced plan to be incorporated into public, commercial applications. *Contact: Oskar Juhlin*

Pervasive Games

Pervasive games are games that are played in the world around us, rather than on a computer or mobile phone, or on a prepared playground. The main attraction of pervasive games is that they are reality-based, drawing upon a real world that is richer, more varied, and emotionally and historically more interesting than any made-up game world can be.

Two companies have been started within the project. *Contact: Annika Waern*

nected to the Centre in one way or another.

The Centre has two professors, four associate professors, eight senior researchers, and four researchers. Furthermore, there are 12 Ph.D. students, 10 junior researchers, and 11 master students within the Centre.

There are 13 nationalities represented in the Centre. We attract people from computer and systems sciences, sociology, anthropology, design, media studies, and media technology. The interdisciplinary research collaboration is performed within computer-supported collaborative work, human-computer interaction, and ubiquitous computing.

Who are your external partners? The Centre is located in Kista Science City—a world-leading ICT cluster. Internationally, Kista Science City is comparable to Silicon Valley, Bangalore, Sophia Antipolis, and the Multimedia Supercorridor in Malaysia. It's where you'll find many of the world's foremost ICT companies, gathered to take advantage of Sweden's strong position in mobile communications.

The Centre has strong industrial partners: Ericsson AB, TeliaSonera AB, Microsoft Research Ltd., and Nokia. In sub-projects the Mobile Life Centre works with Philips Research, P AB, Bambuser, Street Media 7, and Do-Fi AB. Through Kista Science City AB, we also have access to many small and medium-size enterprises in the mobile-services field.

The public-sector representatives are the City of Stockholm municipality and Kista Science City AB, and our innovation system partner is Stockholm Innovation & Growth (STING).

The Centre has a management team consisting of four senior researchers, two professors, two associate professors, and the Centre coordinator.

There is also a board of directors consisting of representatives from the partner companies, Ericsson, Microsoft research, Nokia, TeliaSonera and City of Stockholm municipality, as well as representatives from Stockholm University, Swedish Institute of Computer Science, and the Interactive Institute.

What is around the corner for Mobile Life Centre? The Centre already has strong industry partners, and through a partnership with Stockholm City Municipality, we have access to a number of exciting research environments in different social areas. The ambition for the future is to get a broader industry-partner base, including companies in retail, fashion, and interior design, for example.

Next, we are going to start a kind of pre-incubator for our researchers. This could be a way for researchers to work with their results in a slightly different manner; it will be a new and strong feature for us.

Any final words? The Centre director, Oskar Juhlin, wants to take the opportunity to invite all colleagues to Mobile HCI 2011, which the Centre is hosting.

