



iRegions

Internet-based and mobile technologies for regions in the net economy

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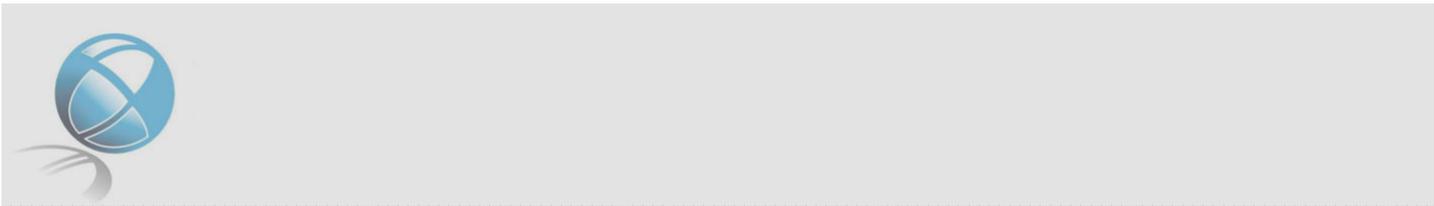
iRegions project showcased at WIRE

The iRegions project had a booth at the latest WIRE conference in Debrecen, Hungary on June 7-9, 2011. Many visitors came by and inquired about the project and the results to date. The focus was on Living Labs as a way to maximize the benefits of research infrastructures in ICT clusters.

By focusing on Living Labs as a way to maximize the benefits of research infrastructures in ICT clusters, the iRegions exhibit showed the synergies between research infrastructures and cluster policy. Living Labs, both existing ones and the ones the iRegions partners are now planning, can be a way to increase the contact interface between companies, public officials, and research & academia. They also contribute directly to the formation of needs-based networks in regions. Furthermore, by working in Region of Knowledge projects such as iRegions, not only is setting up new Living Labs easier because of the support and learning one can have from other partners, but ideas can be tested at an early stage between the regions to see what has worked in the past and what should be avoided. A Living Lab that is well set up will increase the innovation performance of a region because they will, by default, be user-centric and involve many more actors than traditional research projects. The experience of the iRegions project so far is that it has been beneficial to learn about each others research infrastructure capacities and features as plans for future projects rely on using those that best fit together.



iRegions is funded by the European Commission's 7th Framework Programme



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iRegions Awarded 1st Prize for Linking Living Labs, Clusters, and Regional Development

The iRegions project presentation at the Living Labs Summer School in Paris in August 2010 was much appreciated especially for linking Living Labs with Clusters and hence with regional development issues. Roberto Santos, EBC's Vice President for SMEs and Entrepreneurship, particularly liked the idea of using LLs as tools and instruments for increasing the competitiveness of the regions.

The iRegions project is exploring 3 ways to optimize research infrastructure. Living Labs enable the partners to be pilot regions for the creation of new services and technologies. Leading edge projects lead to innovation and creation of new markets. Finally, ecosystems for growth favour interaction between research, business and local/national authorities. All of these tools encourage networking, both regionally and among the partners, strengthening the innovation capacity of the iRegions members.

Smart Park & Ride LL in Kista
FZI Ambient Assisted Living LL in Karlsruhe

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Comparing Living Labs in Sweden and Germany and how Tartu is leap-frogging potential challenges

The partners of the iRegions project used the harmonization cube approach to analyze, contrast and compare two Living Labs:

- Smart Park & Ride in Stockholm, Sweden
- Assisted Ambient Living in Karlsruhe, Germany

The elements of the analysis approach shown as the 6 facets of a cube. The comparison allowed Tartu to avoid some of the pitfalls and focus on the critical issues.

user involvement	service creation	infrastructure
all users involved	user participation	3D infrastructure
users are not involved	no user participation	no infrastructure
users are not involved	users are not involved	users are not involved
users are not involved	users are not involved	users are not involved
users are not involved	users are not involved	users are not involved
users are not involved	users are not involved	users are not involved

governance	innovation outcomes	methods & tools
management	innovation	technology

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Living Labs – a tool for regional growth

The partners of the iRegions project:

- CyberForum, Karlsruhe, Germany
- Electrum Foundation/Kista Science City, Kista, Sweden
- Baltic Innovation Agency, Tartu, Estonia

are looking at Living Labs to contribute insight on synergies between research infrastructures and cluster policy. The iRegions project's main objective is to provide a **strategic aiming at maximising the benefits of research infrastructures for regional economic development** in the ICT-based clusters in Karlsruhe, Kista and Tartu. More information at www.iregions.de

Market relevance of technologies being developed in different regions is a key success factor for Living Labs. For this purpose, **Living Labs aim at involving the end user as early as possible** in the development process – a unique challenge when dealing with technologically sophisticated products. Limited to market relevance and the need to involve different kinds of people in the development process are the challenges related to networking with the right actors, in particular in the early phases of innovation. "Living Labs as motor for cluster development" was the focus of one workshop in Karlsruhe in 2009. European speakers from CAS Software AG, CeTIm Center for Technology and Innovation Management, FZI Research Center for Information Technology in Germany; and the Swedish Institute of Computer Science in Sweden discussed the importance of creating triple helix (industry-research-academia-government) perspective and the integration of infrastructure with process and concept development.

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Selected results from the iRegions project, which is looking at maximizing the benefits of research infrastructures for regional economic development within the ICT clusters of Karlsruhe (Germany) Tartu (Estonia) and Kista (Sweden), were presented. The project includes the evaluation of Living Labs (focus for WIRE), Ecosystems for Growth, and Leading Edge Areas. The iRegions presentation on this topic won a prize at the Living Labs School event in Paris 2010. The harmonization cube approach was applied to the description and comparison of two ongoing Living Labs: Living Lab Ambient Assisted Living in Karlsruhe and Smart Park & Ride Living Lab in Kista. We identified important issues to focus on and lessons learned. Tartu is now building their new living lab in mobile and location-based services based on the results of this comparison.

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