

Lessons learnt from LIVING MEMORY @ 1:3 - listening to and developing technology for ordinary people.

USEFUL ...listening to and developing technology for ordinary people sums up what we might refer to as Co-Creative design. Involving the end user in a core and proactive manner at all stages in the product or system creation process. Through Living Memory we research and understand a considerable amount more of why this is relevant, how to do it in both a synthetical and analytical way, how to analyse and measure the results within the project and above all how to begin to integrate what we learnt into our every day "design consulting" services, which we offer to our clients.

In the future of course we are particularly interested in how to involve the end user in the business creation and in the product and system evolution (after purchase) process, which are now becoming so important in a commercial world where products, systems, services are merging more and more and now evolving as a result of the user intervention (use) over time.

RELEVANT ...listening to and developing technology for ordinary people is so relevant because the 'ordinary...ness' is the issue. Much of what we concentrated on in Living Memory was the means by which people interact with each other (the technology) and the interfaces to that technology, which we offer. It became obvious and apparent from, even before the start, that these interaction mechanisms and interfaces had to be, if nothing else, intuitive, non WORK oriented, adaptive, intelligent and embedded in the natural surroundings of our every day ordinary lives. We called it: The Territory as Interface. A measure of the success of these was to what extent people were positively aware and able to experience the "free flow" of meaningful and relevant context driven content across the landscape between themselves (people), the places and the events which connected them. We called this the Connective Tissue, which held the community together.

IMPORTANT ...listening to and developing technology for ordinary people. The world of stuff is not enough... the design discipline is changing fast. As a commercial discipline, design was born into a world whose corporate attributes included the production of stand-alone products and services, a world in which differentiation was achieved through innovation and brand communications culminating in large and complex brand architectures. Design must now respond to an economic model which supports the provision of converged and connected solutions, such as LIME, combining products and services to suit individual needs. Here, differentiation is achieved by providing the right customer experience. Traditionally, design was exploited to create or reinforce product distinctiveness; now, distinction is created through the declaration of values, aligning all enterprise's activities on many levels. The results place design in a position to extract and embrace true customer insights gained across all points of contact.

SUCCESSFUL ...listening to and developing technology for ordinary people. The extent to which the project was successful is the subject of the complete review and validation process, which we conducted. Each of the Partners will have found many points of success. The aspects, which were particularly successful for Philips Design included: The Prototypes: the resolution of all our collective inspiration and insights into the issues of "the role of memory in building social cohesion through open communities" into a connected collection of realised instantiations of the interactive mechanisms, interfaces, information architectures, intelligent agents and associated software, ...called LIME, which could be fully experienced by ordinary people in a real, natural and every day spectrum of environments. The comprehensive

Community Analysis processes, which we developed with Queen Margaret University College...and also very importantly the project, among others has helped us to understand more fully what the conjunction of DESIGN and RESEARCH can bring to a creative agency such as ours. Design is often seen as an applied discipline, where fine art may be regarded as the pure discipline. We believe that this is not the case and that it is possible to: research the 'pure' Design discipline in order to develop its future role in differing contexts; to use Design as a research tool to help us better understand and contribute to the changing nature of People, Culture and Society and in turn assist in the integration of emerging and future technologies into the lives of 'ordinary people'; to find more effective tools and research areas for Design to consult and investigate in order to provide more holistic and relevant propositions within our commercial practice.

INSPIRATIONALlistening to and developing technology for ordinary people. Certainly, ... in all the ways mentioned above...inspired us to find NEW KNOWLEDGE: NEW ROLES FOR DESIGN: ways to integrate SYNTHETICAL and ANALYTICAL research: NEW IP: seeds for NEW OPEN PRODUCTS-SYSTEMS-SERVICES...

DIFFERENT ... Research is by definition, DIFFERENT, especially when it is this trans disciplinary, collaborative, human focused, artistic and scientific driven end results in such enriched experiences for people...

Steven KYFFIN

Philips Design

steven.kyffin@philips.com

<http://www.design.philips.com>

It was with very great pleasure I, as project leader, and my colleague – Lena Winald Möller - at the School of Education and Communication, Jönköping University, undertook the local arrangements for the i3 ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2000, which was held on 13 – 15 September in Jönköping, Sweden.

During the conference days, all roads seemed to lead to Jönköping as some 250 delegates found their way here. For us, as for Jönköping University and Jönköping Municipality, hosting this event was a challenging as well as a most rewarding experience. We sincerely hope that Jönköping made a favourable impression on all the conference delegates, tempting them to return to visit us again.

The conference also had to be given a name – something wise, witty and worthy of i3net philosophy. Putting their thinking caps on, all the male members of the organisation committee generated a veritable storm of brain activity. Possible (and some totally impossible) names were suggested; however, none of them seemed to be quite what we were looking for. At that point, the one female committee member - Lena Winald Möller – spontaneously and effortlessly proposed the obvious answer: BUILDING TOMORROW TODAY, which, of course, was met with overwhelming approval by the mindstorming gentlemen present! Looking back, I find that my own suggestions probably would have sounded like 'building yesterday tomorrow'!

I first became involved with i3 net in my capacity as project leader for the Swedish field tests conducted within the CAB project (Construction kits made of Atoms and Bits). During the progress of this project, I had the great pleasure of meeting and getting to know the representatives of Comune Reggio Emilia, Istituto per le Tecnologie Didattiche (Genoa) and The LEGO Group in Denmark. Following the completion of the CAB project, the School of Education and Communication has since continued our project cooperation with The LEGO Group in the development of a Robotics Learning Center. This comprises Sweden's first LEGO MINDSTORMS Center, as well as continuing research on the LEGO platform, and arranging LEGO Robotics competitions. The Scandinavian finals in the FLL/FIRST LEGO League will take place at Jönköping University on 23 November, 2002. This championship challenges young people from Norway, Denmark and Sweden to apply their theoretical knowledge and program their robots in the realisation of their innovative ideas. This year's FLL theme is "City Sights". The finals are preceded by 15 regional competitions all over Scandinavia. Similar competitions are also arranged in Germany, the UK and France.

Perhaps this could be the basis of a new EU project in the future?

Bo Gustafsson
School of Education and Communication
Jönköping University
bo.gustafsson@hjk.hj.se
www.legoleague.org
www.hjernekraft.org



Netzspannung.org/Semantic Map: representation of heterogeneous knowledge of artist, designers, computer scientists (<http://netzspannung.org/cast01/semantic-map/popup.html>)

Communication of Art, Science and Technology : Call for Building a Consortium to Strengthen Transdisciplinary Research and Success

"The dependence of society on knowledge is accompanied by the decay of the authority of experts. That creates space for global and local networks of distributed alternative knowledge"¹, writes the Heinrich Böll foundation in their online education

¹ See: Portal der Heinrich Böll Stiftung zur Bildung 2010: Bildung in der Wissensgesellschaft, <http://www.bildung2010.de/>

portal. Life in the knowledge society presupposes that diverse disciplines develop ideas together. How are such networks structured? How does information become knowledge? How does knowledge become public? Which knowledge is important for the individual in society? How are journalists, instructors or curators involved in the process of intermediation? What examples are there for a culture of networking, for the linking of public and electronic space? Which new models and formats do networked space and disciplines offer for discussion, exhibition and production?

i3 (intelligent information interfaces) was to promote research focusing on the interaction with and through the information technology by communities of users. The research has contributed to a radical innovation of the software culture opening it to the media art and design culture and proposing a fundamental change in the software development: from interaction patterns to functions instead of from functions to interfaces.

The dialogue among researchers, artists, and designers was intended to stimulate intercultural co-operation to reflect on and improve life in a digital networked society. Especially there was less output to the public on findings and research of European projects. It was not easy to compare the different project results and approaches in terms of their aesthetics, design concepts and technical developments since they addressed different contexts. This mirrors the main problem of the knowledge society: How can invisible connections between different disciplines be made perceivable?

On the European level, the Information Society Technologies (IST)² programme and its constituent Intelligent Information Interface (i3)³ programme did support interdisciplinary co-operation in art, design and technology.

The i3 magazine had been an elaborated information channel over the last few years with a growing number of subscribers. But, unfortunately it seems to disappear and it is not sure how long the resources of this magazine will be available as a historic document on the web. Furthermore: it will stop, being published in a print format. Online magazines are useful virtual archives, but it is always easier to keep a print magazine in hand and in mind - especially when it is nicely designed.

But if we really have to say goodbye to the i3 magazine, what new strategies could we think of? How can we build up on the resources which are already there? Which stronger source for information and communication could be thought of?

As we are all trained in collaborative and networked processes we should first promote the idea of continuation! We should refresh the concept, e.g. and place the i3 network and the i3 magazine in the middle of the IST program. The new i3 initiative must get a powerful instrument, networking, dissemination (via magazine), producing conferences, organizing programs for exchange as well as student forums and artists in residence / guest researchers etc. We should learn from existing models, such as a mixture of Siggraph, Imagina, ISEA ...

² The Fifth European Community Framework Programme covering Research, Technological Development and Demonstration activities, http://europa.eu.int/information_society/newsroom/istevent/programme/index_en.htm

³ European Network for Intelligent Information Interfaces, <http://www.i3net.org/>

The first phase of i3 was to learn to know each other and the different fields of activities. Also there had been a number of successful events and new formats for presentation. The i3 public exhibition in Sienna demonstrated their concepts and ideas for the future to a whole city and the region of Tuscany. Connected to the doors of perception conference Netherlands Virtual Platform set up e-culture fair in Amsterdam – a kind of marketplace where i3 projects had been exhibited within the media art and interactive design community.

The most important prerequisite for making the resources of the European research system⁴ useful is the successful co-operation of artists, computer scientists, designers, media theorists and cultural researchers. Therefore we should define the new initiative as a network of excellence to be presented for FP 6. Let's work on the proposal!

Monika Fleischmann & Wolfgang Strauss
MARS Exploratory Media Lab, Fraunhofer Institute for Media Communication
<http://imk.fraunhofer.de/mars>

i3 and I

Intelligent Interfaces is an oxymoron. People are intelligent, interfaces are not. Interfaces can be well designed.

Initially, i3 seemed to be quite a weird initiative. After some time, the aggregate of strange projects started to make sense, and eventually I had the opportunity to get involved in the KidsLab group. This, in turn, became a vehicle for the most interesting exploration in User Centred Design and ideas about the computing of the future. Apart from direct work with i3 projects, we did workshops with industry, which hopefully will help to make the technology of tomorrow more usable, easier to learn and more enjoyable.

Finally, I think this was only the start. If we allow ourselves to have visions of what's beyond the horizon of today's technology and society, there's hope.

Mikael Fernström
University of Limerick
mikael.fernstrom@ul.ie

Connecting communities or creating communities?

⁴ Edelgard Bulmahn – the federal minister for education and research – concludes that „the substantial resources of our research system are not used effectively enough, and the opportunities for combining competences are not sufficiently utilized.” Press conference on research in Berlin, September 4, 2001.
<http://www.bmbf.de/presse01/463.html>

When I look at the array of conferences and meetings that are now dealing with culture, communication and ‘new’ technologies, I wonder what impact i3 had. Would all this have happened anyway or did the i3 initiative give it a boost. In short was i3 connecting communities or creating communities? To the extent that many of the technical issues remain – and systems are just as difficult to use and increasingly hard to understand – we may consider developments disappointing. I do not inhabit my information space as comfortably as I inhabit my activity space. The seamless integration of modalities and mixing of realities has occurred – with devices like mobile phones fitting naturally into people’s lives – but not on the grand scale envisioned in i3.

Perhaps the rhetoric was too idealistic and communities cannot be so easily connected in the face of political and economic might. Information spaces are inherently abstract and complex and it will be a while before the information infrastructure disappears into the walls. I still think that we need to shift the paradigm of interaction, properly, from ‘interacting with’ to interactive technologies as media. But that is easier said than done. Perhaps i3 has had influence here. Would the Doors of Perception conference be looking at ‘flow’ if it were not for the philosophy and methodology of i3; where architecture meets artistry and comes to information spaces?

There is no doubt that there is now a community of researchers in Europe with some sense of a shared agenda, vision and conceptual base. And i3 must take some credit for the building of that community. But the world has moved on and some of the features of that project - that started some ten years ago with the schema calls – are looking a bit jaded. So, even if we did not succeed in helping people to produce their information spaces and connect their communities in quite the grandiose way we envisaged, we did help to create a community.

David Benyon
Napier University
d.benyon@dcs.napier.ac.uk

Looking Back and Looking Forward...

I recently found myself thinking about i3, thanks to a wonderful meeting I attended in the Netherlands on "Interaction Design and Children". The organizers from the University of Eindhoven thought they were putting together a small workshop to think about how we design new technologies for children. What it turned into was a conference with almost 100 people in attendance from all over the world. As I sat there among many familiar faces, I realized this could never have happened without i3 and the Experimental School Environments (ESE) research. While it has been almost a year since our projects have finished, you could still see the energy and the excitement for this area of research. To be fair, only a small number of the talks over the two days were by former ESE members, but I still had the feeling that the momentum was there thanks to what i3 had started. While it is gratifying to see some of the ESE research continue in some form or another, what is even more gratifying is

to know that this research area concerning children, technology and learning will be carried on for many years to come (as a note: next year's conference on "Interaction Design and Children" is already being organized and details will be announced shortly).

In looking back at my own experience as a part of the ESE research projects, I have to say that it taught me a great deal: (1) helping me to understand how to coordinate research between partners, between sites, and between countries—an experience not often possible as an American; (2) helping me to be explicit about the research I was a part of (the concept of hundreds of pounds of "deliverables" each year is not something that has ever been expected from the United States National Science Foundation); (3) helping me to focus my own research more clearly on storytelling and information access for children-- both of which my team continues to actively pursue; (4) and giving me the opportunity to share my cooperative design research methods for children with many other researchers in Europe (it is gratifying to see so many others bringing children in to their technology design experiences).

In addition to these more personal changes and opportunities, my experience with i3 gave me the courage to talk to my own division director at the National Science Foundation (the equivalent of Jakub Wejchert at the Commission) to challenge them to fund more program initiatives like ESE. I am happy to report they listened, and many more programs are being funded in the US concerned with this area of children, technology and learning.

So while i3 is coming to end, I can safely say it has had a strong impact on my own research, the European research in this area of children and technology, and the research funded by the United States. As for me, I continue to wrack up my frequent flyer miles running over to Europe working on my DC project, InterLiving. I also continue to enjoy my relationship with the Royal Institute of Technology in Sweden and the EU Commission. Yngve Sundblad continues to inspire me and Jakub Wejchert continues to challenge me to think about the future. To both of them, I am grateful.

Allison Druin
University of Maryland and
Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden

When design met IT research

Who frequented (attended) i3 in these years have probably read several times about the involvement and the role of design in the research schema.

For us as designers i3 was THE schema. For the first time researchers and companies in Europe were called to investigate and develop "new human-centred interfaces for interacting with information, aimed at the broad population".

i3 opened the door to a variety of competencies: technology, human science, design, art and business were there. It was the right community. The first time that such a rich and complex, multicultural, multidisciplinary community cooperated.

For us as designers It wasn't always easy. We arrived there and worked sometimes to overcome the heritage: Technology is the serious part of the story (the serious thing), Human Factors and Sciences are "scientific" enough. While design claims to know about individuals and humans, to bridge technology with everyday uses, and deals with aesthetics.

I believe designers played a crucial role in building the dialogue between users and technology: design doesn't follow users needs, not the technology advanced features. Design tries to orient users' expectations and technology potential with ideas of the future. We were often perceived as arrogant like those who want to drive the whole story and know where to go since the very early scenarios.

I also believe design was the element that facilitated the thinking about research methods and approaches. It was probably because a design culture is open enough to hold complexity and diversity, to mediate between diverse components of the process... (probably this mean to not be "scientific" at all).

Through i3 projects we all learned the finest lesson: investigating on meaningful innovation implies an high level of complexity, and there's no way to manage complexity than partially abandon one's rigid methodologies (understanding), and forming the tools to open the dialogue (the *cultural probes* in Presence were overused as an example in this sense).

i3 was all about knowledge sharing and building the dialogue. i3 was a Connected Community. To see the results of i3, even in terms of designs, one must look into the difference competences and practices: how they have been modified, the languages they speak, the tools they manage, how they measure innovation or a success in any research or project frame.

And, finally, i3 demonstrated that developing research and managing complex processes can be pleasurable, that serious results don't exclude a sense of aesthetic and self-irony.

We had fun, we learned a lot about our job, we shaped the way we design with technology, we formed a small community of "interaction design experts" still alive around Europe.

This is i3 now. A network of people who shared an experience of intense work and deep knowledge sharing in the common attempt of understanding what does designing technology for people mean.

This is what I feel the research world is loosing after i3: thinking that research on technology is possible and can reach the highest insights, without any discourse on the quality of the relation between humans and technology.

Elena Pacenti
Domus Academy
pacenti.elena@domusacademy.it

I felt privileged to take part of the ESE initiative as a reviewer – and as a highly motivated end-consumer since I am also a researcher in the field of digital toys.

In retrospect the i3 ESE initiative gives the impression of a bold attempt to initiate interdisciplinary, innovative and explorative research – explicitly stating that work methods could and should be explorative.

When reviewing some of the projects in Siena –99 I didn't have this perspective, but now, at a larger distance it becomes visible how much effort this took in improvising, devising new work formats, creating a common understanding among project partners etc. It is a positive sign that - in spite of initial difficulties - so many of the ESE collaborations are still in vigour within the DC programme.

One problem many of the projects ran into was the fact that technology development didn't go in the direction it was expected to at the startup phase. The 3DVR applications didn't get the energy of a pursued commercial development. On the other hand, the focus on physical interfaces and physical spaces has continued to be relevant.

This says something of the difficulty to plan for 3 or 4 years ahead in working with new technologies. The international/interdisciplinary project teams needed those years to setup working practices, but contentwise shorter project spans could maybe have been better, allowing to readjust the direction with respect to technological advances. From this point of view I find it regrettable that the 6th framework seems to move towards even heavier project organizations, making it difficult for small partners from organizations with a shorter planning/funding horizon to participate.

There is one more emerging practice in i3 that I hope will be pursued in future research programmes: the exploration of alternative forms for presenting research – and disseminating it to a broader audience outside the circle of peers.

Exhibitions, books, “cultural probes”, graphical layout in order to facilitate the understanding of complex sets of data: there were many inspiring examples of how to present research in order to open up both visions and discussions to laymen.

Ironically some of the reports that were the most outstanding in this sense were stamped “CONFIDENTIAL” – and shown only to 2 reviewers and an EU project officer. This is regrettable, because some of these deliverables could be extremely important in raising the standards for communicating research.

Åsa Harvard
Narrativity Studio, Malmö
asa.harvard@interactiveinstitute.se

It was 1996 the first time I joined i3. At that time i3 was mainly an idea, an aspiration that a group of visionary people made it grow up and become an ambition first and a challenging reality few months later. In the years, memories, episodes, failures and achievements still have remained in my mind. First, and maybe the strongest feeling I still have is that from the beginning i3 was a community. People working in the network not only tried to pursue the objectives of their own projects but, they looked at a style, a way of thinking technology that was visionary but for the common people.

At the definition of this vision many different kind of professionals had the opportunity to contribute: artists, designers, engineers, psychologists, computer scientists. These people experimented all the problems of communitating and collaborating with so different backgrounds but, they had a shared vision that was so strong and exciting that none of them gave up. In this sense i3 demonstrated the feasibility of bringing together engineering, design, and human sciences and the capability of co-evolving innovative scenarios and enabling technologies as equal and mutually feeding factors. I would say that in certain cases the creative thinking and the capability of these people to generate innovative scenarios was so ahead of time to reveal the immaturity of technology in supporting such visions. I still remember when we installed the HIPS tourist guide in the Museo Civico in Siena. In the project, we concentrated on designing a new experience of visiting museums and, after three years, it was a pain to see our poor tourists going around in the museum with heavy "portable" fujitsu tablets hanging from the necks (our ideal PDA didn't exist at that time), jumping on wires (the batteries of the tablet lasted only 10 minutes), and shaking their heads to detect IR sensors. Nonetheless, the novelty of those design visions in terms of human experience was convincing enough to fully involve people in the trials and overcome embarrassing situations. I think the merit of i3 was to have demonstrated that innovation cannot sccessfully go ahead without the capability of generating scenarios of human experiences to make sense of the technological development. This capability is nowadays still a rare quality of the IT research and far from becoming a practice.

Patrizia Marti
University of Siena
marti@media.unisi.it

i3 was a great adventure - it widened my horizons and explored issues of research and development which could not be touched on by projects alone.

The sharing of quite different philosophies, research aims and methodologies and the interaction with society, industry and commercial exploitation has created a clearer identity for the work I do and a confidence in my relationships with partners which would have taken much longer otherwise.

My single most significant realisation was that many researchers in technology (and society) don't share my own conviction that people develop new capability in interaction with technology to aspire to new activities, but instead expect us (the research community) to adapt technology to existing needs and capacities.

My greatest disappointment is not finding the means nor modus operandii to really benefit from the online community of practitioners that might have been.

An important facet of i3's work is the way in which it opened doors for young researchers to confront inter-disciplinary issues.

i3 would have not occurred (and future communities will founder) without enthusiasm, commitment and shared idealism from a number of influential people who were prepared to trust others to then steer and operate a complex, dispersed and largely voluntary organisation - the willingness to tolerate failure and to take risks was essential for such a ground-breaking venture.

Richard Millwood
Ultralab, Anglia Polytechnic University
richard@ultralab.net
www.ultralab.net

Reflections on i3

Looking back is always informative and can help to shape what we do in the future. For i3 we can look back on both technological innovation and the development of novel working practices.

During the lifetime of i3 we saw the development of personal assistants that recognise the space around them (eg the COMRIS parrot); the exploration of mixed reality boundaries within the artistic world (eg eRENA); the development of agent supported interfaces embedded in everyday artifacts (eg the Coffee Table in LIME) under the themes of Connected Community and Inhabited Information Spaces. In the ESE projects we saw the development of technologies to support story telling and other learning activities for young children. But how much was there that we didn't know about when we started those projects back in 1997? Perhaps most significantly texting (SMS) was in its infancy - we didn't know that people would want to communicate with each other like that. Napster, with all the legal implications that flared up around its inception, wasn't in use. What we were doing in those early days was exploring the potential use of technologies that were still around the corner. Imagination was one of our greatest assets.

Creative tensions were rife - software developers were learning how to work with concept designers. Ethnographers were learning how to do 'rapid ethnography' and interpret their findings in a way that would support concept design and prototype development. Rapid prototyping was ... well... rapid... though sometimes for those waiting to get on with evaluation it didn't seem to be so rapid. In a way we were all, within those multidisciplinary, multicultural teams, learning how to work effectively with each other. Having just come back from the DC Jamboree in Gothenburg I'm delighted to say that I can see that some of these ways of working that we were exploring have now become embedded in EU projects. Consortia have gained from the experience of the early projects and been able to improve on the working practices they were previously tentatively explored.

Much more has happened too. At Gothenburg I felt I was observing a vibrant and established research community which had a real sense of going places. There was a feeling of collaboration and cooperation, not only within projects but between

projects. My hope for the future is that we can continue to learn from our past experiences - be adventurous, take risks and continue to inform IST research.

Kathy Buckner
Napier University
k.buckner@napier.ac.uk

I remember the first time I heard of i3net, six years ago, about the time that the first two programmes (Connected Community, Inhabited Information Spaces) were in preparation. At Philips Design we were working on the connected community story and at some point we got this 50-page fax of the i3 proposal by Ole Bernsen and his colleagues. To me, just fresh out of art school, it read like science fiction, and the authors seemed high from the sky. It took me some time to get a grip on it all.

Much later I discussed the experimental character i3net with Ole and Rosella Magli in a hasty meeting at Brussels airport. At the time it seemed to me like we were all subjected to this crazy European experiment, trying to reorganise our thinking, our way of doing projects and even the way of organising ourselves and relationships between projects --- all at once.

What I realised only much later was that the i3 initiative had created something like the small freetowns that we had in the Netherlands and in Scandinavia back in the seventies: a place where everything is possible and where people live in a happy state of anarchy outside the official state. The point is not that i3 was a hippie thing but rather that whatever you may think of it, i3 and i3net created this space of freedom and anarchy that I think is the soil for any really new creation. And it worked.

Job Rutgers
Philips Design Eindhoven
job.rutgers@philips.com

When Mimo asked me to write about i3 I accepted with enthusiasm. So many projects, years, new colleagues, new friends, new ideas, and good energy I have in the banks of my memory that are somehow related to i3. But shortly after the first feeling of enthusiasm I realized that precisely this makes the task of writing a short contribution far from an easy task.

So, of the many things, and by the way not all of them positive, I would like to reflect on just two of them: the opportunity offered by the EU to i3 and how a cluster like this should show its results.

When I joined i3 as partner in a project in the Connected Communities area – Campiello – I had experienced only classical stand alone European projects either part

of the mainstream key actions or part of the basic research arena. Nothing like being part of a cluster of the size of i3. And the first impact was quite shocking, we were asked to put a lot of energy in common events, in making the others aware of what the projects were doing in workshops, giving interviews. There was an aim and determination from the EU to support the establishment of a multidisciplinary research community that I never saw before. And me, as many others, I already had my own communities – CSCW, HCI, Knowledge Management – and the effort sometimes was put because the Commission was asking, more than because I could see an immediate personal benefit. I was sceptical; also because of the cost put on the projects for supporting the process was surely high.

It is only now, after some time has passed by, that I can truly see how that new experience, with all the learning process associated to it, has not only created value per se, but also paved the way to other initiatives, that can benefit from all that experience. I think I am not wrong when I say that without the experience accumulated in i3, the Disappearing Computer initiative would not be as successful as it is, and also so well organized. It seems to me that there is a whole community of researchers interested in new technology for common people that is learning, has learned how to create a European critical mass. The bootstrap for multidisciplinary research has been done with i3, the sensitivity to interaction design and social study has been nurtured and sustained. Now the initiatives can be more focussed and all of that will not be lost.

This is a big value in my eyes: to have sustained and created an attitude toward technology that is truly usable, that is truly answering to user needs. And this leads to the second point I wanted to make, about how to measure the value of these big initiatives. I care particularly about this point, because although I know a lot of value has been created, not only along the lines described before, but also in single projects, sometimes I encounter people who cannot see this value. The community was big, for sure there was good work, as well as not so good one. When I am asked to be precise and quantitative about the overall value, I do not have an answer, the projects were many and I don't know a lot about many of them. My suggestion is simple: I would like to see the list of the papers somewhere, that have been published on truly relevant conferences and journals (scientific value) and the number of patents and products that have been originated (commercial value).

The long-term value can be argued on a cultural level, but only when we can show these numbers, we will be able to prove also to the sceptical how much good work was done.

Antoinetta Grasso
Xerox Research Europe
Antoinetta.Grasso@grenoble.xrce.xerox.com

Thinking back on my involvement with i3 brings many things to mind. My background was firmly in the "Inhabited Information Spaces" camp but I ended up working on Campiello, a project in the "Connected Community" camp - so one of the things that i3 meant to me was a change in the direction of my research.

What attracted me to Campiello, and thus to the rest of i3 was the prospect to create technology useful to a community, with a community and put the technology to the service of that community. As part of this "community on" process I have memories of being in Venice trying to use my limited Italian to explain to people how they could use a paper-based user interface to communicate, working with designers on the aesthetics of an interface as well as just its functionality, hearing about the difficulties of transporting large multi-function devices accross Venice by boat, and setting up animated ambient information displays in Venice's naval museum. A lot of fun in other words, but with serious research behind it. How can information technology better support communities and people who are not computer literate? How can we move away from the tyranny of the desktop and web based interfaces to give people something more appropriate for them, their situation and their community? I think in Campiello we made some progress to answering these questions. Our answers weren't complete, but they were a start. A step in the right direction.

So, I think in Campiello, and i3, some good things were achieved, but I do have some regrets which I think could apply to other projects as well. My biggest regret with Campiello was that having got a system that worked we weren't able to deploy that system for longer a month's trial. A month's trial is OK for validating that some software more-or-less works but it is not a long time in the life of a community and it is not a long time for evaluating the effect of a new system on a community. I also feel that having made use of the community to provide content for the system we did not give enough back. I feel that if we are really to create research projects that work with communities then we need to rethink the standard research project. As well as the standard 2-3 year "let's do some research and get something working" phase, there should be a longer term element in which there is time and *money* for giving the results back to the community. Only in this way will we know if what we produce has value beyond papers in conferences and journals that the community members will never read.

Dave Snowdon
Xerox Research Centre
Dave.Snowdon@xrce.xerox.com
<http://www.xrce.xerox.com/people/snowdon/>