



European Telecommunication Services Association

# **A Guide To The Net At Home Conference 2007 In Nice France**

## REPORT ON THE NET AT HOME CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION IN

NICE FRANCE ON 13<sup>th</sup> AND 14<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2007

Introduction [www.net-at-home.org](http://www.net-at-home.org)

This conference/exhibition, which has ran for the past 10 years, is held annually and has proven to be possibly, the best source of information for those involved in the smart home industry.

The event was well attended with over 158 attendees from around the world with representatives from most European countries. Included in these figures were 17 from the UK, 4 from Spain, 11 from Germany, 6 from Italy with participants from around the world including India, Russia, China, Israel, Japan, Taiwan, Singapore, South Africa, Canada, Hong Kong, Australia, and 18 from the USA.

The Homeplug Alliance [www.homeplug.org](http://www.homeplug.org)

The HomePlug Alliance announced that they had sold over 12 million units this year and that their sales were doubling every year, however, they expected their sales to explode beyond quadruple in the years to come. They announced that there was a considerable growth in the companies who were now producing powerline products with many large names included. Also included were most of the European telecoms providers (BT excepted, who did not attend the conference either) who, it was said, were using it for distributing IPTV.

The HomePlug Alliance 'Command and Control' specification was ratified in November 07. One of the major aims of the specification was reliability and it was stated that the reliability of the product was in excess of 99.9% with smoke alarms using this technology given as an example of the deployment of this product.

During the break I spoke to the home plug alliance representative who told me that versions of HomePlug which handled HDCP were being sold now. Also on display on their stand was a demonstration of the HomePlug and DS2 powerline products on a home environment simulator, which distributed SD and HD Video. Two sources of noise generation were fitted, one being a compact fluorescent and the other being a mobile phone charger. When the DS2 unit was used there was sever pixilation when the HomePlug unit was used there was clear vision. The HomePlug representative stated that Homeplug powerline could be used on

multigang extension socket outlets but not where suppression was used.

**Yitran** [www.yitran.com](http://www.yitran.com)

This company had a stand demonstrating a range of products, particularly communicating utility meters, all of which contained their chips and worked on their protocol, which had been adopted by the Powerplug Alliance as their command and control standard.

Yitran explained that their system could control up to 2000 nodes in each network, based on DCSK modulation communicating in 3 modes:-

Standard Mode 7.5kbps  
Robust Mode 5.0kbps  
Extremely  
Robust Mode 1.25kbps

The system uses AES 128 bit encryption, 32 bit authentication and complies with CENELEC standard EN 50065. It should be noted that EN 50065 has been extended to include low voltage decoupling filters, however, there appears to be few manufacturers who actually make products to this standard.

**CEPCA** [www.CEPCA.com](http://www.CEPCA.com)

This presentation spelled good news for consumers as it was explained that most of the major powerline organisations in the world were coming together to agree a common standard under the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE) umbrella. Work started on this project in 2005 to produce a unified new standard No. IEEE P1901, which is now reaching maturity and is expected to be issued early next year (2008).

Consumer Electronics Powerline Communication Alliance (CEPCA) is a nonprofit corporation established to promote and continuously advance high speed PLC technology to utilize and implement a new generation of consumer electronics products through the rapid, broad and open industry adoption of Consumer Electronics Powerline Communication Alliance Specifications. By developing and promoting managed coexistence of various PLC technologies, the Alliance provides consumers a comfortable and reliable home networking experience.

**Spiedcom** [www.spidcom.com](http://www.spidcom.com)

Spiedcom had products containing their chips on display on their stand, which distributed HD Video using powerline adapters. They also had p.c. cards with co-ax connectors which did the same. At this stage Spiedcom do not have European distribution for their products and are finding it a difficult market to penetrate despite being a French company. They have not yet considered producing products with HDMI or DVI interfaces using HDCP.

**KNX** [www.knx.org](http://www.knx.org)

KNX were proudly proclaiming the fact that they had the only 'open system' to ISO/IEC 14543 and EN 50090. They had been asked to take a speakers slot in the conference because they had substantially increased their market share in the previous year. Amongst the array of speakers who were included in the KNX speakers team was AMX who have only recently added KNX connectivity to their product range " because their customers had asked them to include it"

Another KNX partner WHD introduced their range of products for multi room audio systems, public address and other systems using the KNX protocol. Their 'one box' solution provides a variety of methods to communicate with multiple electronic devices using an room mounted IR transmitter to deliver the signals, which would normally be generated by a hand held remote control unit. With respect to the zoned speakers, it should be noted that the KNX interface only controlled the on-off function of the loud speakers in the WHD system, with all the speakers being wired using individual Cat 7 cables.

KNX were also giving away copies of their starter ETS3 software package on their stand in the exhibition where they had an excellent display of products which all complied with KNX standards. The range of manufacturers alone shows why using KNX to provide an automation solution makes sense for both contractors and clients alike.

It should be noted that KNX still appear not to offer a powerline solution in their product which I consider to be a weakness which should be rectified.

**ICRON** [www.icron.com](http://www.icron.com)

There was a stand run by Icron displaying distribution of USB by cat 5 cable, powerline, fibre and wireless (802.11) their current range covered USB2 @ 480Mbps and were looking to implement

USB3 @ 4.5Gbps and WUSB1.1 @1Gbps both of which are not yet currently available in their product range.

**Firecomms** [www.firecomms.com](http://www.firecomms.com)

For some time plastic optical fibre has promised to make its entry into the home as a home networking product. At another exhibition I attended I found that plastic optical fibre products, which fitted into standard electrical accessory outlet boxes were now widely available together with easy termination kits. At this conference a company called Firecomms from Ireland were demonstrating their pof range of products (or companies who made products using their leds). As part of their ethos, they had to provide an easy cable termination kit and terminations, which were not to current pof standards used by most AV product manufacturers, but were more compact and used Mitsibuti pof. Their product range included RJ45 electrical to optical converters made by Motorola. Their products generally were designed to distribute 100Mbps over 50 – 70m using pof in the home or small business premises.

### **The NEM Initiative**

This session looked at networked and electronic media present and past. The opening speaker showed a vision from 1956, which accurately depicted some of the technology either imminently near or in use today.

The speakers spoke about current technology and current trends, identifying areas which they considered need to change including some of the work being done under the feel the **feel@home** project which looks at technology beyond the current state of the art.

One speaker gave a presentation on the HGI and must have been from a telecoms service providers company as he could not understand why consumers asked broadband providers who provide home networking services for help when they have a problem with their system.

The last speaker in this group considered the extended home and such aspects as the extended hospital and what could help people to be autonomous and what assistive technology could be used to help people in need.

### **The European Monami Project** [www.monami.info](http://www.monami.info)

This European IST project has been set up to demonstrate how accessible useful services delivered by digital television, mobile telephones and the internet can support and help disabled people

to live more independently. The project is being led by The Swedish Handicap Institute who are working with a number of companies to provide a range of products aimed at helping Monami achieve their goals, this includes the company 'In View AB' [www.inview.se](http://www.inview.se) who make an easy to use interface which works in conjunction with a television software interface package.

#### **The European ESTIA Project** [www.ist-estia.org](http://www.ist-estia.org)

This European IST project focuses on the design and development of technologies for efficient personalised management of audiovisual content and white goods functions, locally within the home. Their goal is to develop a specification which details the required resources for network infrastructure, communications components (residential gateways and communication interfaces), machine-to-machine, middleware and service levels, with a view to enable seamless audiovisual content manipulation on users terminals in a personalised manner.

The project will produce a brochure in Spring 2008, which will explain the deliverables of the project.

#### **The European i2home Project** [www.i2home.org](http://www.i2home.org)

This European IST project I2HOME, is the Intuitive Interaction for Everyone with Home Appliances based on Industry Standards. In this way, I2HOME will make devices and appliances at home more accessible to persons with mild cognitive disabilities and older persons, using a new mainstream user interface standard – the Universal Remote Console (URC). I could not help wondering if they had looked at the Logitech Harmony 1000 touch screen programmable universal control with RF extender, as that appears to achieve much of what they are trying to do.

#### **The European Ask-IT Project** [www.ask-it.org](http://www.ask-it.org)

The ASK-IT integrated project is working to establish Ambient Intelligence (Aml) in semantic web enabled services, to support and promote the mobility of Mobility Impaired people, enabling the provision of personalised, self-configurable, intuitive and context-related applications and services. It is also facilitating knowledge, content organisation and processing.

This year this mature EU IST project which started in October 2004, had a stand and were disseminating the project progress and publicising their forthcoming conference in Nuremberg, Germany, 26-27 June, 2008. A newsletter and other information concerning the project may be downloaded from the Ask-IT website.

Charité - Healthcare at Home [www.op2000.eu](http://www.op2000.eu)

This presentation by the 'Surgical Research Unit OP 2000' at Europe's largest hospital Charité, covered a similar theme as some other participants in the event and briefly covered their work on tele – healthcare. This is a major area of work throughout the world with some systems connecting sensors to people which connect them to a local doctor or hospital and others providing a range of services on-line.

Macrovision [www.macrovision.com](http://www.macrovision.com)

This presenter explained the general views of major media providers and how most tend to use their technology in order to prevent theft of their digital media. He explained that Macrovision technology was on DVDs, DVD players, set top boxes, etc. Amongst their current programmes Macrovision are looking at ways to make buying digital media more fun and less constraining.