

plementary domains, maintaining good personal relationships between the network members proved to be a major success factor for ALADIN. There is a big difference between collaborating with people you have never met before via the Internet and doing so with friends you meet regularly in cross-border workshops or at conferences. Here, being members of one region is a big advantage for the ALADIN Network universities. Holding joint lessons, exchanging students, and providing students with the possibilities to gain practical work experience from internships (as it is for example the case between University of Trieste and evolaris research lab, Graz) helps building long-lasting relationships and on a higher level even aids in building social cohesion within the Alpe Adria region.

Currently, one of the biggest success stories of the ALADIN network so far is being developed over the platform: mGBL, which stands for mobile game-based learning and is an EU funded project under the Framework Program 6 (see [www.mg-bl.com](http://www.mg-bl.com)). The specific targeted research project (so called STREP) was approved in late summer 2005 and is co-financed by the European Commission with approximately □ 2.3 million. The core project consortium is formed by the original ALADIN network members, namely the Universities of Maribor, Rijeka, Trieste, and the evolaris research lab, which is closely related to Karl-Franzens-University, Graz. The main goal of mGBL is to research on the possibilities of new learning models built around games on mobile phones. Traditional learning methods, such as the pure "Tell-Test Teaching" don't manage to evoke a high involvement from the student, as he is not engaged as an active participant in the learning process<sup>4</sup>. Interactive learning methods, which are supported by digital games, can

put things right. In general, digital games are considered to involve the participants very much; however, commercial games often lack the pedagogically desired learning content. Digital Game-Based Learning – the combination of digital games and high-quality learning content – is in this context a valuable pedagogical-didactic medium, which activates the student. Especially the combination of digital games with the real world, e.g., in the form of pervasive games, offers big chances, but represents at the same time also a challenge.

The core idea of the mGBL project is to trigger social interaction with the aid of the mobile telephone, which result in learning processes. The mobile telephone is used to trigger interactions with other game participants in a playful way, but also with the real world, which is integrated in the games as "stage". In order to realize this core idea, three fundamental characteristics are implemented: ubiquity of the interaction, integration of the real world as interaction area and basic ideas. Throughout the 30 month duration of the project the consortium will develop a platform for practically implementing and empirically evaluating these ideas in mobile game-based learning models.

For the future the Graz members of the ALADIN network hope for further strengthened co-operation with all network partners. The key will be real projects, ideally on a multilateral basis as it is the case in EU programs, which enable the participants to build upon the success factors of the past: Bringing together complementary competencies in the 'e'-domain and building and keeping good personal relationships, which form the basis for a successful Europe.

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## Contributions of ALADIN to eRegion Development: The Faculty of Organizational Sciences, University of Maribor Perspective

Cooperation in ALADIN is very valuable to the Faculty of Organizational Sciences, University of Maribor. Several activities of the faculty and students are closely working with ALADIN members. For example:

- **The Executive Meetings on Cross-border eRegion Development** (twice a year), <http://www.bledconference.org/executive-meeting>.
- **The eUniversity Forum** - eIntegration Challenges for Rectors and Deans: Cross-border Cooperation in eRegion and Ambassadors Involvement, a component of the annual Bled eConference, <http://www.bledconference.org/euniversityforum>.
- **The ALADIN Meeting** of the annual Bled eConference, <http://www.bledconference.org>.
- **Merkur Day** – annual Undergraduate and Graduate Students eConference, Merkur Ltd., Trade and Services, Naklo, Slovenia, <http://ecenter.fov.uni-mb.si/merkurday>.
- **The Workshops on LivingLabs:**
  - **The 1<sup>st</sup> Workshop on Innovation and Collaboration for Productive Economy:** Changing the growth curve, sponsored by the eCommerce Center, Faculty of Organizational Sciences, Univer-

<sup>4</sup> Prensky, M., 2001. Digital Game-Based Learning. McGraw-Hill, New York, USA.

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sity of Maribor, and hosted by the Training Center SRC.SI, Grimsce-Bled, Slovenia on October 21, 2004, <http://ecenter.fov.uni-mb.si/dogodki/innovation-seminar.htm>.

- **The 2nd International Workshop on LivingLabs in eRegion**, November 10, 2005, <http://ecenter.fov.uni-mb.si/elivinglabworkshop>, sponsored and hosted by the Faculty of Organizational Sciences, University of Maribor.

- **The Workshop on Safe and Secure eRegion LivingLab**, sponsored by eCenter, Faculty of Organizational Sciences, University of Maribor and Directorate for Information Society, Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Technology, Republic of Slovenia in the University Medical Centre, Ljubljana, Slovenia on April 22, 2005, <http://ecenter.fov.uni-mb.si/safesecureregion/index.htm>.

- **Cooperation in the EU funded research projects**, for example mGBL – Mobile Game Based Learning, Coordinator: Karl-Franzens University, Graz, Austria, <http://mg-bl.com>.

- **Cooperation in the Finland and Slovenia eInvoicing LivingLab Initiative**: <http://www.elivinglab.org/invoicing>.

- **Cooperation in CEI - Central European Initiative**: <http://www.ceinet.org/index.php>.

- **Cooperation in the Oracle Mentoring Consortium**, <http://www.elivinglab.org/markets>.

The Ministerial Conference Towards a Knowledge Society - the Nordic Experience (Gothenburg, November 14-15, 2005, Sweden),

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional\\_policy/sources/docconf/gotenburg/index.cfm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/sources/docconf/gotenburg/index.cfm),

had important messages about relevance of cross-border coopera-

tion between regions of the European Union.

The success of the Nordic countries in developing a Knowledge Society has been based on sustained and long-term investments into basic ICT infrastructure, research, and technology dissemination. It shows the importance of and substantial benefits from a well-organized effective public private partnership, set up in a triple-helix of co-operation between enterprises, academia, and public authorities. The conference presented this experience to different participating regions and discussed ways and means of transferring this experience to other regions. It focused on three basic elements: ICT development, eGovernment, and innovation clusters. The Nordic example, in promoting infrastructure and education, and especially the triple-helix approach can be considered a good practical example.

Several measures are being proposed as objectives to best transfer the Nordic experience and disseminate this prospective strategy. These objectives aim at integrating the regions into a European Network, at the facilitation of the transfer of expertise, and at disseminating information about the opportunities offered by the EU in the ICT and the regional development fields to promote sustained regional growth via ICT. The European Commission promotes these approaches via the fruitful co-operation between the Information Society Policies and Structural Fund interventions. An idea of the ICT-Powered eRegion, [http://ecenter.fov.uni-mb.si/ict-powered\\_eregion.pdf](http://ecenter.fov.uni-mb.si/ict-powered_eregion.pdf) is a visible example of that in which the ALADIN Network may be very valuable.

From a larger research perspective, it is expected that the Living-Labs will be important vehicles for an accelerated cooperation between researchers, developers, and users. See for example the following reports:

- **ISTAG - Information Society Technologies Advisory Board Reports**, Information Society Directorate-General, September 2004, <http://www.cordis.lu/ist/istag.htm>

- **European Policy Framework for ICT and New Working Environments**. CollaborationŽWork. The 2005 report on new working environments and practices. Information Society and Media, European Commission, October 2005, <http://www.mosaic-network.org/amiatwork>.

- **Barrett, Craig R. & Brody, William R. (editors): Where In The World Will The Next Big Idea Come From?** Council on Competitiveness and the National Innovation Initiative, Washington DC, Wall Street Journal, February 8, 2006, <http://www.innovateamerica.org>.

ALADIN as a cross-border regional university network is very well-positioned in that direction.

Based on our very positive experience in collaborating with colleagues at the universities of the ALADIN Network, we are looking forward to future areas of cooperation and further innovative actions.

**Bernhard R. Katzy<sup>7</sup>**

## Contributions of ALADIN to eRegion Development: Research and Innovation in a Regional “Living Laboratory”

**CeTIM is a research centre at the University Bw Munich** and has created the Virtual Enterprise-Lab (VE-Lab) which in its core is a research environment that allows

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