

First place for Ireland at Ericsson Application Awards

TSSG Team Win with 'Caller Profiler' App

June 16th 2010: A research team from the Telecommunications Software and Systems, Group (TSSG) based at Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT), won first place in a global competition at the Ericsson Application Awards in Stockholm on 11th June.

Targeted at the international academic community, over 120 teams from 28 countries took part in this competition. TSSG researcher, Robert Mullins and team mates Kieran Ryan and Mark Williamson, both part-time students on the MSc Communications Software Development and developers in the TSSG, were awarded a €20,000 prize for their project "Caller Profiler". The competition encouraged innovative applications that incorporated mapping, location and other tools with IP (internet protocol) telephony.

Project-leader Robert Mullins said, "We developed a 'Caller Profiler' application for the Android phone. The application uses the caller identification details to pull together particulars from social networking sites and mapping services to display a range of information on incoming calls.

"When a call comes through to a handset, it looks up background information from social networking sites such as LinkedIn or Facebook and displays a character profile summary with a location map showing where the user is calling from.

"With 450 million users registered on Facebook and 70 million on LinkedIn, it's easy to see how the internet has become an integral part of our daily lives affecting how we communicate, socialise and learn. 'Caller Profiler' uses information available on social networking sites such as LinkedIn and Facebook to enable phone users to immediately see the context of the caller, and understand who they are. When a new caller makes contact, the application will offer an automatic link to their information and opens up the opportunity to broaden social networks.

"We developed the application prototype for the Android handset but it can be easily adapted to run on other platforms such as iPhone, Symbian and Windows mobile. We believe that one of its key commercial and technological strengths is that it has the potential to become a generic application used on any mobile device.

"As part of the competition, we worked closely with Dundalk-based Vennetics who gave us great help and guidance as we refined our ideas," he said.

Congratulating the team on their win, Mícheál Ó Foghlú, Executive Director Research at TSSG said, "Successes like these, on the international stage, clearly demonstrate the TSSG's ability to translate high-level research in

telecommunications networks and services into software development with a real economic value for Ireland.

“This application was created using technology developed at the Next Generation Network Test Centre based in TSSG, which was part-funded by Enterprise Ireland and Science Foundation Ireland and provides Irish industry with a place to trial services on a commercial-grade test network.

“This linkage from academic excellence to real world impact is the stated goal of the SFI SRC (Strategic Research Cluster) FAME, led by the TSSG with 4 other academic partners and five industrial partners including Ericsson, Ireland. In addition to FAME this success draws upon previous work by TSSG in the mobile services sector, funded by EU and Enterprise ILRP IMS-ARCS,” he said.

Congratulating the team on winning the competition, John Hennessy, Managing Director, Ericsson Ireland said. “Continued collaboration between industry and academia, as showcased at Ericsson’s Application Awards is an important step towards enabling a smart economy- something we are keen to continue to build on in Ireland. We are delighted to see the students from WIT being recognised for their innovative “Caller Profiler” application, well done”.

Ivan McShane, Engineering Director at Vennetics said, “Our technology allows mobile network functionality to be integrated with Internet-based features such as VoIP. We have been working with TSSG team for some time and were aware of their skills in this area but we have been hugely impressed by the innovative application developed for this competition.

“As we worked on the implementation it became clear that the distinctive new features being developed would be well received at the awards and within the mobile operator community. Vennetics see significant market potential for a range of applications that improve and enhance the voice telephony experience by leveraging social media. We will look forward to continuing our work with TSSG in order to commercialise these genuinely exciting new applications.”

The competition began with a written submission in January and the group was whittled down to three finalists. The last stage took place on Thursday 10th June at the Nordic Mobile Developer Summit, when the final three entries made sales presentations to a jury panel that included the head of Ericsson Research, A Professor of Human Computer Interaction and the CTO of a Swedish application development company.

Ends

For more information, please contact: Carina O’Neill, Bracken Public Relations on 01-6773277/ 0872228124

Note to editors

The Telecommunications Software & Systems Group (TSSG) is one of the leading Information Communications Technologies (ICT) research centres in Europe. Based in Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT), the research-taking place in the TSSG is re-defining the Future Internet and its services, whether on a PC, a laptop or a mobile phone.

The TSSG is funded by HEA and SFI funds in Ireland. It has secured the largest share of EU FP7 funding in Ireland, and a large share of Enterprise Ireland's (EI's) commercialisation funds for ICT. The TSSG research ethos is to build links between academic and industrial research through the creation of a balanced portfolio of activity in: Basic Research, Applied Research and Commercial activity.

Currently the TSSG is active in around 45 research projects, with budgets ranging from €100k to €3.5M and totalling over €60 Million from 1996-2010. The TSSG has been directly involved in the process of creating 14 spin-out and spin-in companies in this period, contributing directly over 60 new jobs to the region externally. The TSSG itself has 160 staff and a 14-year track record in telecommunications management, with Dr Willie Donnelly, Director of the TSSG, as the principal investigator.