

SEVENTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME
FP7-ICT-2009.7.2
 Accessible and Inclusive ICT

Virtual and Augmented **E**nvironments and
 Realistic User **I**nteractions **T**o achieve
 Embedded **A**ccessibility Design**S**
<http://veritas-project.eu/>

Starting date: 1 January 2010
Duration: 48 Months



Editorial Newsletter N°5

This issue of the VERITAS newsletter focuses on pilots, explaining how the testing with beneficiaries and designers and developers takes place. Additionally, it informs readers about future events and VERITAS deliverables, including two videos and a discussion paper on standardisation. External news and policy developments are also presented to complete the picture of current discussions around accessibility in Europe.

Each issue is available both in PDF and accessible HTML format via <http://veritas-project.eu/category/newsletter/>

A newsletter about:

- Project news
- Current policy developments
- Upcoming events
- Relative initiatives

Upcoming Events

The biennial ISMA conference on Noise and Vibration Engineering. ISMA2012 in conjunction with USD2012

17-19 September 2012
 Leuven, Belgium

Interactive Technologies and Games Conference (iTag)

23-24 October 2012
 Nottingham, UK

Last European Year 2012 thematic seminar co-organised by AGE and the Committee of the Regions on the theme "Creating an Age-Friendly EU by 2020"

20 November 2012,
 Brussels, Belgium

VUMS Workshop in the ICCHP 2012



Under the patronage of the UNESCO and the European Disability Forum, the 13th International Conference on Computers Helping People with Special Needs (ICCHP 2012) took place on the 11th till 13th of July at the Johannes Kepler University of Linz, Austria. The focus of this event was on enabling people with disabilities and elderly to live independent lives, improve participation and inclusion in society, and enhance services and support, by using Assistive Technology and other ICT solutions.

A core feature of this conference is that it brings together end users, researchers, developers and practitioners creating a great platform where numerous stakeholders can represent their interests. In this context, the conference discussed topics, such as barriers to eAccessibility, ICT tools helping older people to maintain their autonomy when ageing, the Design for All model in order to meet the broad diversity of users, and more.



VUMS workshop

In the frame of the ICCHP the VUMS cluster (Virtual User Modelling and Simulation Cluster), which gathers together four EU-funded projects, (VICON, VERITAS, GUIDE and MyUI), organised a workshop on Virtual User Models for Designing and Using of Inclusive Products. The event which will take place on the 10th July will present prototypes and discuss concepts of generic interoperable user models that describe the relevant characteristics of users, who will interact with products and user interfaces. These include physical cognitive, and sensory attributes, habits, preferences and accessibility capabilities. With such a model designers can define as many user interaction profiles as needed to address the whole range of requirements from a target population. It will also help designers and developers to maximize the level of accessibility of products and services by providing a comprehensive set of Human Factors design guidelines, which could be used in virtual spaces to visualize accessibility and usability issues.

Participation to the workshop was open. For more information see: <http://www.icchp.org/node/348>.

VUMS STS

In addition, a VUMS Special Thematic Session (STS) “Virtual User Models for Designing and Using Inclusive Products (Chair: Yehya Mohamad, Fraunhofer FIT)” was organised on 11-12 July 2012. This STS brought together papers and presentations in the areas of research and development work; prototypes and products; concepts and; evaluation of usability and applicability of generic interoperable user models that describe the relevant characteristics of users, who will interact with products and user interfaces. These include physical cognitive, and sensory attributes, habits, preferences and accessibility capabilities.

Following papers were presented:

- Creative Design for Inclusion using Virtual User Models - Modzelewski, Markus
- A methodology for generating virtual user models of elderly and disabled for the accessibility assessment of new products - Tzovaras, Dimitrio
- VERITAS Approach for Parameterization of Psychological and Behavioral models - Navarro, Ana Maria
- Integration of a Regular Application into a User Interface Adaptation Engine in the MYUI Project - Sanchez, Victor (s)
- Using Annotated Task Models for Accessibility Evaluation - Malý, Ivo

Link to the STS page: <http://www.icchp.org/node/349>

VERITAS Videos launched

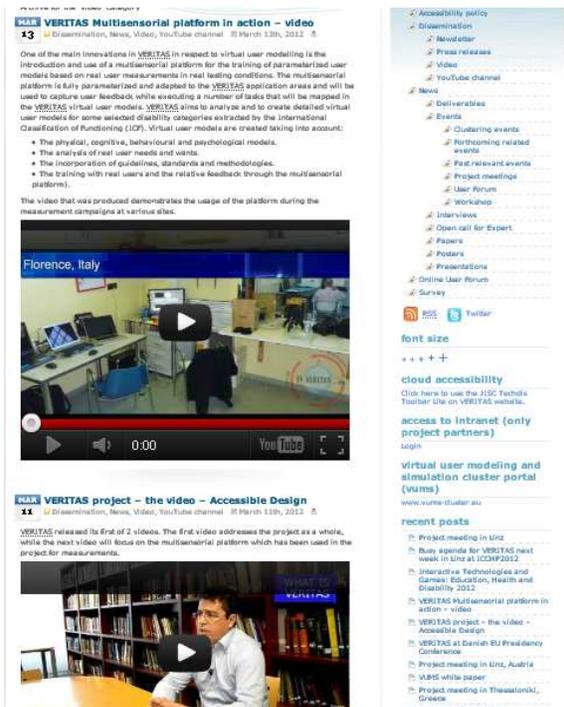
VERITAS prepared two videos, one explaining the main objectives and outcomes of the project through presentations made by the stakeholders comprising the VERITAS consortium and one demonstrating the usage of the platform during the measurement campaigns at various sites.

One of the main innovations in VERITAS in respect to virtual user modelling is the introduction and use of a multisensorial platform for the training of parameterized user models based on real user measurements in real testing conditions. The multisensorial platform is fully parameterized and adapted to the VERITAS application areas and will be used to capture user feedback while executing a number of tasks that will be mapped in the VERITAS virtual user models. VERITAS aims to analyze and to create detailed virtual user models for some selected disability categories extracted by the International Classification of Functioning (ICF). Virtual user models are created taking into account:

- The physical, cognitive, behavioural and psychological models.
- The analysis of real user needs and wants.
- The incorporation of guidelines, standards and methodologies.
- The training with real users and the relative feedback through the multisensorial platform).

The video that was produced demonstrates the usage of the platform during the measurement campaigns at various sites.

Both videos can be accessed through the VERITAS website: <http://veritas-project.eu/category/dissemination/video/>



VUMS white paper on standardisation

The Virtual User Modelling and Simulations cluster (VUMS) in which VERITAS participates issued a position paper providing input to the standardisation of user models. This paper targets designers and developers with the aim of helping them to maximize the level of usability and accessibility of products and services by providing appropriate user models. The table of user models is intended to be used for the generation and adaptation of user interfaces during runtime.

The white paper presents general term definitions and a concept of generic interoperable user models that describe the relevant characteristics of users, who will interact with products and user interfaces. These include physical, cognitive, and sensory attributes, habits, preferences and accessibility capabilities.

The produced tables with user characteristics are being provided for other research groups and standardization bodies to advance the discussions in this area.

The main relevant documents can be downloaded through the following links:

- The white paper: <http://www.veritas-project.eu/vums/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/White-Paperv2.pdf>
- Relevant presentation: http://www.veritas-project.eu/vums/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/Whitepaper_presentation.pdf
- The variable table of the VUMS model:
<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0AnAwpf4jk8LSdDd3TEJWLUtmN290YzVfTkNvcHYyMUE&authkey=CPOO65oE#gid=1>

VERITAS pilot testing with beneficiaries

The VERITAS pilot with beneficiaries is a demonstration pilot. The aim of the pilot is to evaluate the perceived accessibility of the services and products designed using the VERITAS tools from the view of VERITAS’s “chief beneficiaries” – older people and people with disabilities. The pilot will make use of some mock-ups which are created by the developers of VERITAS tools to demonstrate such products and services. A pilot with beneficiaries enables immediate feedback on the accessibility of the mock-ups, provide valuable insight into the improvement of the VERITAS tools, and deliver evidence on how well the goal of VERITAS has been achieved. The pilot is also able to indicate the limitations of a virtual simulation platform for testing and verifying the accessibility of products and services and define under what circumstances a real user is required instead of a virtual one.

The pilot with beneficiaries will be conducted at 11 testing sites located in 6 countries across the 5 application domains (see Table 1). The sites were selected prior to the start of the project based on the following factors:

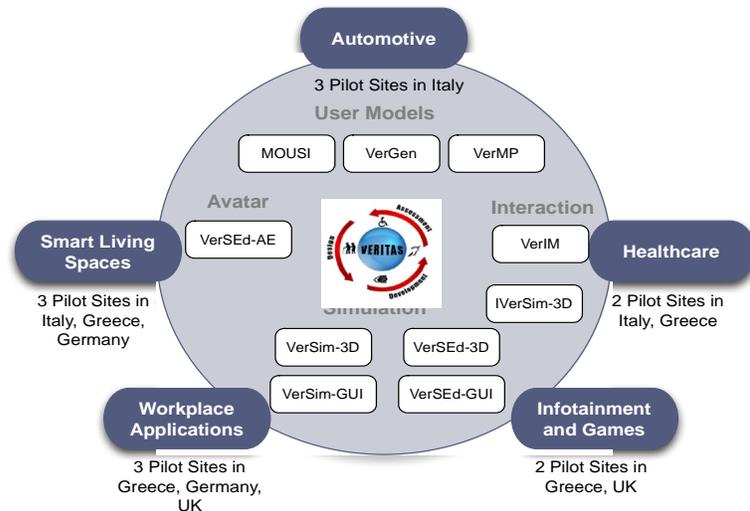
- the representativeness of the geographic regions of Europe;
- the representativeness of the applications and the likely availability of appropriate testing environments (such as driving labs) to reproduce natural user scenarios; and
- the representativeness of VERITAS beneficiary profile, testing tasks and local access to older people and people with disabilities at pilot sites.

Pilot Country	Application Domain				
	Automotive	Smart living Space	Workplace	Infotainment	Healthcare
Bulgaria	-	-	MCA	MCA	MCA
Germany	Continental	BAUUNIO FhG/IAO	-	-	-
Greece	CERTH/HIT	CERTH/HIT	BYTE	CERTH/ITI	CERTH/HIT
Italy	CRF, PIAGGIO, RELAB	INDESIT, RELAB	-	-	I+
Spain	-	-	-	AIJU	-
UK	-	-	-	UNEW	-
Participants (N)	60	90	90	90	50

VERITAS pilot testing with designers and developers

Within the VERITAS project, tools supporting designers and developers during their work have been developed. The VERITAS tools allow the designers and developers perceiving how people with specific handicaps would behave in terms of accessibility and usability of their designs. The tools have been designed to support interactive simulations of user behaviour and activities using means of ICT.

The pilot studies for the designers have the goal to use and evaluate these tools in order to improve the appropriateness, efficiency, and usefulness for using the tools with the final goal to allow the designers and developers developing specific designs perceiving how a person with specific handicaps would behave and act in specific situations. The five different contexts covered by VERITAS participate in the pilots for the designers and developers and provide all together 15 pilot sites in four different countries where in total 155 designers and developer will be participating in the pilot studies.



A well-defined study framework was elaborated to allow evaluating the 10 different VERITAS tools. The tools are covering the whole process of simulating a handicapped user's behaviour during scenarios defined during an in-depth task analysis in the course of the VERITAS project. The process consists of tools supporting the modelling of the users, the definition of appropriate avatars, the enabling of the interaction between the different VERITAS tools and specific interaction tools developed, as well as tools allowing to define and load specific scenarios and simulating a handicapped user's behaviour either on a standard PC, mobile device, or also in immersive 3D environments.

During the pilots the main focus lies on identifying the user experience of designers and developers when using the VERITAS tools, the usability of the tools as well as the appropriateness of the tools for the specific purpose of simulating a handicapped user's behaviour as targeted in VERITAS.

The pilots will be conducted in two phases in the period between July 2012 and 2013 at the pilot sites in four different countries and are followed by an in-depth analysis of the findings. This allows feeding back the findings to the project and an iteration of the tools to enhance their quality regarding the previously mentioned criteria. Additionally the usefulness of the VERITAS tools in the addressed context is shown which indicates the applicability of the tools in multiple contexts.

Policy developments

Committee of the Regions opinion on 'Active Ageing: Innovation – Smart Health – Better Lives'

The Committee of the Regions (CoR) was requested by the Danish Presidency to draw up an exploratory opinion on how to promote active ageing and solidarity between generations through social innovation in order to provide proper response to the demographic ageing that Europe is currently facing.

UNION EUROPEENNE



Comité des Régions



In this Opinion, the CoR stresses the need to promote age-friendly environments to respond to the needs of the ageing population. Since local and regional authorities are key providers of social, health and other services used by the elderly, the CoR calls on the European Commission to launch a European Covenant of Mayors on Demographic Change as a legacy to the European Year 2012. This Covenant would gather and mobilize local and regional authorities interested in promoting innovation, smart health and better lives solutions in support of active and healthy ageing.

The CoR also supports the commitment submitted by AGE Platform Europe, in cooperation with the World Health Organisation, under the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing (EIP-AHA) to set up a European Network on Age-Friendly Environments.

The CoR Opinion is available on the CoR webportal at [this link](#).

For more information see [AGE commitment](#) and the [List of supporting partners](#). For more information on the EIP on Active and Healthy Ageing, other action strands and commitments submitted by other stakeholders, visit the [EIP-AHA website](#)

EU guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network

The EU is currently revising its guidelines for the development of a trans-European transport network, an important process as transport infrastructures have to meet the needs of all in society and the transport industry needs to adapt to such an increasing market opportunity. In this regard, accessibility is key. Art 43 of the draft document stated that “transport infrastructure shall allow seamless mobility and accessibility for all users, in particular elderly people, persons of reduced mobility and disabled passengers.” Nevertheless, the Council has removed article 43 and a coalition of European stakeholders representing passengers and the transport industry has issued a joint statement calling upon the Council and the European Parliament to uphold article 43 of the proposal, as its removal would weaken the document’s effect on economic growth and social inclusion.

A link to the joint statement and proposal can be found here:

http://www.edf-feph.org/Page_Generale.asp?DocID=13855&thebloc=30215

External news

Access City Award

On the 22nd of May the European Commission launched its 3rd version of the Access City award. Following the two previous winners from Avila (Spain) in 2010 and Salzburg (Austria) in 2011, the Commission once again is searching for cities that can be an exemplar for providing an urban environment that is accessible for all and for people with disabilities in particular. The award highlights the European Union's commitment to a barrier-free Europe and goes in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities and the EU's Disability Strategy 2010-2020.

This event will offer a venue to exchange best practices and experiences in the field of accessibility and will hold the potential to foster the quality of life of many urban dwellers in the EU. Under the light of an ageing society, the Access City Award underlines that an inclusive design of the urban environment is a core pillar for the socio-economic sustainability of European cities.

Candidate cities with a minimum population of 50.000 are eligible to apply for this event until the 5th of November 2012. A selection process, including a pre-selection at national level and a final selection at European level, will then determine four finalists which will be allowed to attend the award ceremony in Brussels at the European Day of People with Disability Conference on 3rd and 4th of December 2012. Besides several acknowledgments for cities that accomplished extraordinary progress in specific aspects of accessibility, the winner of this contest will be entitled to call himself as the "Winner of the Access City Award 2013".

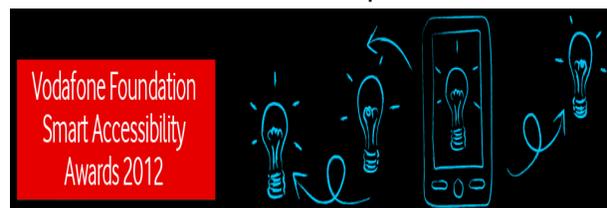
ACCESS • CITY
THE EUROPEAN AWARD
FOR ACCESSIBLE CITIES
MAKING EUROPE'S URBAN ENVIRONMENT ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL

For more information:

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/disabilities/award/index_en.htm

Vodafone Foundation Smart Accessibility Awards

AGE Platform Europe, the European Disability Forum and Vodafone Foundation initiated the 2nd edition of the Smart Accessibility Awards which seek to find and promote smart IT applications which aim to foster the quality of life and social inclusion of elderly and people with disabilities helping them to live more independently. The contest will last from the 30th of May till the 15th of October. In order to be shortlisted in the finals which will take place in December, candidates have to perform best in the following four areas:



- **Social participation:** refers to the degree applications help users to become more involved in today's society by accessing the web and social media through smartphones.

- **Independent living:** refers to applications which help users with everyday tasks in order to live more independently
- **Mobility:** refers to applications which allow users to travel freely and safely regardless of any means of transport that they use. Also, it refers to the use of GPS and locations apps which can help guide people in unfamiliar places.
- **Wellbeing:** refers to applications which improve the users' health and overall feeling of wellbeing.

More details can be found in the joint press release: http://www.age-platform.eu/images/stories/EN/Joint_PR_30May12-Vodafone_Foundation_Awards_launch.pdf

For the link to the Award website click here:
<http://developer.vodafone.com/smartaccess2012/home/>

eHealth week 2012

On the 7th till 9th of May the Danish Presidency hosted the eHealth week 2012 in Copenhagen. Its focus was laying on continuity of care and patient-centric health services through the use of innovative eHealth solutions. Throughout the 3 days numerous workshops and seminars were held discussing topics, such as patient empowerment and chronic disease management involving investment and business opportunities in healthcare IT.



It was during this event that the eHealth Task Force presented their report “Redesigning health in Europe for 2020” which was one of the most important results of the eHealth week. The report discusses how to achieve affordable, less intrusive and more personalised care by discussing the potential of ICT applications and the use of data. The Task Force came up with 5 recommendations aiming at optimizing the benefits that Europe can reap from eHealth.

The following points were recommended:

1. Establishment of a new legal basis for health data in Europe
2. Create a ‘beacon group’ of Member States and regions committed to open data and eHealth
3. Support health literacy
4. Use the power of data (making data more trustworthy)
5. Reorient EU funding and policies

In 2013, the next eHealth week will take place in Dublin from the 13th till 15th of May.

You can find a link to the eHealth week website here: <http://worldofhealthit.org/2012/>

For the eHealth Task Force report follow this link:

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/health/docs/policy/taskforce/redesigning_health-eu-for2020-ehf-report2012.pdf

OECD International Transport Forum Annual Summit

The Annual Summit of the OECD International Transport Forum took place in Leipzig on May 2nd-4th. This high-level event is organised with the support of the Ministers of 53 member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The Japanese Presidency of the International Transport Forum made on various occasions remarks on the ageing of the population and the importance to find solutions for all. Other key topics of the annual summit were: the role of transport for growth; green solutions for transport; the use of ICT in the transport chain; walking and cycling as connecting transport modes; safety and international crises. In addition a young researcher from Hong Kong won an award for her research on walking and assessment of walking environment for older people.

Useful links:

- [Press release](#)
- The [main conclusions](#) of each session are available online clicking on the relevant session of the program
- [Videos](#) of the various sessions

1st International Conference on Systems and Computers Science

Villeneuve d'Acq (France) will host from the 29th till the 31st August the 1st International Conference on Systems and Computers Science (ICSCS). The objective of the Conference is to provide a forum for exchange of ideas in research areas connecting Systems and Computer Science. High level contributions are awaited on various domains, ranging from theory over numerics to various applications. As part of the ICSCS conference a specific session about user-centered design of assistive technologies is organised. For more information see: <http://www-lagis.univ-lille1.fr/ICSCS2012/>

Call for best practices on accessibility of digital documents

In the framework of the European thematic network on eAccessibility called eaccess+, AGE is looking for best practices concerning the accessibility of digital documents. The list of best practices will be published online on the eaccess+ website <http://www.eaccessplus.eu/>. Please send them to Maude maude.luherne@age-platform.eu including a short paragraph explaining the good practice (5-10 lines) and a link to a website or a contact person for more information.

eChallenges 2012 to be held in Portugal

Supported by the European Commission, the 22nd annual eChallenges e-2012 Conference & Exhibition takes place in Lisbon, Portugal, 17 - 19 October. Focused on Applied ICT addressing major Societal Challenges, and showcasing strategic keynote presentations, technical and policy papers, case studies and workshops, eChallenges brings together senior representatives from leading commercial, government

and research organisations around the world to share knowledge and experience, lessons learnt, good practice and innovation.

More at: <http://www.echallenges.org/e2012>

EAHSA Conference 2012: Active Ageing - The challenge for providers - Best Practices and Innovations in Housing, Care and Services

The European Association of Homes and Services for the Ageing (EAHSA) fourth European Conference will take place in Malta on 27-28 September 2012 focusing on the EU theme of the 2012 Year of Active Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity.

The Programme of the Conference is structured around three streams: Issues and Challenges; Research, Models and Frameworks; and Best Practices and Innovations.

A series of Sub-themes will be discussed during the conference including: Dementia; the Informal to Formal Care Spectrum; Partnerships; and Ageing in Place - Housing and Technology.

For more information see the dedicated website of the event:

http://www.eahsamalta2012.eu/view.cfm?page_id=21181

Relevant publications

Two new reports shed the light on discrimination against people with disabilities

The Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) has issued two reports on the situation of people with intellectual disabilities and people with mental health problems which show that inequalities still persist despite the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) by the EU and 21 Member States. These reports capture the experiences of exclusion and discrimination of people with intellectual disabilities or mental health problems. The reports highlight the need to move from institutional to community-based living arrangements and to reformulate laws and policies to make them more inclusive. Both reports were presented at an international conference on "Autonomy and inclusion" in Copenhagen on 7-8 June 2012.

For the full reports see:

- Involuntary placement and involuntary treatment of persons with mental health problems
- Choice and control: the right to independent living - Experiences of persons with intellectual disabilities and persons with mental health problems in nine EU Member States

2012 Ageing Report released

The European Commission has just released the 2012 Ageing Report, prepared by Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs and the Ageing Working Group (AWG) of the EU Economic Policy Committee. The report covers the evolution of age-related public expenditure during the period 2010-2060 in terms of pensions, health care, long-term care, education and unemployment benefits, on the basis of demographic data provided by Eurostat and on commonly agreed calculation methods. It highlights that the demographic changes are expected to have substantial consequences on public finances in the EU. The report finds that in 2060 the EU will have 15 million more citizens. Moreover, the ratio of people of working age and those above 65 will decrease by half. Consequently, age-related public expenditures (pensions, health-care and long-term care) are projected to increase by 4.1 percentage points to around 29% of GDP between 2010 and 2060. Public pension expenditure alone is projected to rise by 1.5 percentage points to nearly 13% of GDP by 2060.



However, the report shows a large diversity across EU Member States, depending notably on progress with pension reforms.

To download the full report (472 p.):

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=nl&catId=89&newsId=1326&furtherNews=yes>

VERITAS project meetings

The 8th VERITAS Plenary Meeting took place in Thessaloniki, Greece, 29 February – 2 March 2012, while the 9th took place in Linz, Austria, on 11-13 July 2012 at the premises of the Johannes Kepler University.

VERITAS Deliverables

VERITAS released a number of public deliverables, which you can download from <http://veritas-project.eu/deliverables/>

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