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## Symposium to highlight 'ambient intelligence'

By [Junko Yoshida](#)  
EE Times

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PARIS — The first European Symposium on Ambient Intelligence (EUSAI) will be held in Eindhoven, the Netherlands next week. Philips is sponsoring the event, promoting "ambient intelligence," a technology concept still embryonic but gathering interest in research communities in Europe.

The goal of ambient intelligence is to surround one's environment with enabling technologies in a friendly non-intrusive way by conspicuously hiding the technology behind the intelligence emanated by the technology.

The two-day conference (Nov. 3,4) is expected to be attended by 160 scientists from a broad range of



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industrial and public research institutes in Europe and [will zoom in on three key areas of ambient intelligence](#): ubiquitous computing, context awareness, intelligence and natural interaction.

Recent research results on all aspects of the theory, design and application of Ambient Intelligence will be presented, according to the conference organizer.

Ambient intelligence has been adopted by the European Union as the leading theme for the Information Society Technologies (IST) activities in its 6th Framework Program for Research and Technological Development. The EU has allocated a budget of more than 3.6 billion Euros for research on the subject in the next four years.

Building upon such an emerging support for the concept, organizers of the EUSAI are hoping to bring together different companies and research institutes working on various areas of ambient intelligence.

Boris de Ruyter, senior scientist at Philips Research and member of the organizing committee of EUSAI, explained that ambient intelligence is still a vision and the industry is far from identifying all the technology components necessary to complete its whole picture. Nonetheless, he called ambient intelligence "a vision for the digital environment of the future."

"Ambient intelligence will not come as a big bang, but will materialize gradually over time," said de Ruyter. The broad support by the EU and a wide range of industry and research parties is important to get the necessary research and implementation momentum to make it a reality, he added.

Europe already has an on-going project called "Ambience Project", which was initiated as a part of the ITEA (Information

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Technology for European Advancement) program, itself a part of the pan-European intergovernmental EUREKA initiative. Fruits of the Ambience Project, led by Philips Research, will be showcased for the first time at the EUSAI. They include prototype demonstrations of ambient intelligence applications for home, office and mobile use.

Some EUSAI participants see the end game of Ambient Intelligence in a "disappearing computer." Norbert Streitz of the Fraunhofer Institute IPSI (Integrierte Publikations-und Informationssysteme) in Darmstadt, Germany, one of the keynote speakers at EUSAI said in a statement, "We work on people-friendly environments in which the 'computer-as-we-know-it' has no role and is replaced by information technology diffused into everyday objects and settings, leading to completely new ways of supporting and enhancing peoples' lives."


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