

Giraff focal point of new EU-project TERESA

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Västerås, Sweden

Giraff Technologies announced that its Giraff mobile telepresence system will be the focal point of a new EU project titled "Telepresence Reinforcement-learning Social Agent" – or TERESA. The project is part of the EU Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) for research, with the goal to develop a "socially intelligent" telepresence robot system. The TERESA consortium includes six organizations in five EU member states.

The TERESA project aims to develop a socially intelligent telepresence system based on Giraff that will assist visitors by automatically carrying out lower-level navigation tasks, allowing them to focus on the human interaction with those they are visiting. For example, the enhanced Giraff system will automatically navigate among groups of people in a socially appropriate way, and display appropriate body language when interacting with people around it by recognizing and interpreting non-verbal cues such as facial expressions.

TERESA is led by University of Amsterdam and Dr. Shimon Whiteson. "This new system will be used to help elderly people maintain social interaction by remotely participating in activities in elderly day centers when, due to illness or physical immobility, they are unable to physically attend," according to Whiteson.

"The new capabilities this project will develop for Giraff are an important part of our focus on elderly care," said Stephen Von Rump, CEO of Giraff Technologies in Västerås. It is well established that the various movements possible with Giraff provide key visual cues from the visitor indicating feelings, response to something said and even mood. Indeed, it is the reason mobile telepresence can provide significantly more value than "fixed" communications systems in home care.

However, it is also well known that managing these movements can be a distraction to the visitor, especially one who does not have a lot of experience navigating devices like Giraff. "The enhancements developed by the TERESA project will detect, interpret and carry out these visual cues for the visitors, allowing them to focus on the relationship between them and the elderly they are caring for," added Von Rump.

Facts about the FP7 project TERESA:

- Formal project name: Telepresence Reinforcement-learning Social Agent
- The project is funded by the EU Seventh Framework Program under the call FP7-ICT 2013-10, Objective ICT-2013.2.1, "Robotics, Cognitive Systems & Smart Spaces, Symbiotic Interaction, Target (a): Intelligent robotics systems"
- It spans over three years from December 2013 – November 2016.
- It is coordinated by University of Amsterdam.
- The project has a total budget of €3 million across the entire consortium.

- The participating organizations are:
 - o University of Amsterdam – The Netherlands
 - o University of Twente – The Netherlands
 - o Universidad Pablo de Olavide – Spain
 - o Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine – UK
 - o Centre Expert en Technologies et Services (MADoPA) – France
 - o Giraff Technologies AB – Sweden

About Giraff Technologies

Giraff Technologies AB, based in Västerås, Sweden develops and markets the Giraff mobile telepresence system. It is the only such commercial system focused specifically on home care, combining hardware, software and administrative tools to allow care organizations, formal and informal caregivers to support a care network around someone living independently at home. Giraff is currently deployed in eight EU countries and is part of several EU projects with the goal to extend its use as a social contact solution to a more general telehealth solution.

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