

Study Group on Intelligent Home Appliance Networking  
Summary of Fifth Meeting Proceedings

1. Date and Time: December 27, 2005 (Tue) 16:00-17:00
2. Location: Rose Room, Toranomom Pastoral Hotel
3. Attendees (Honorifics omitted): Chairman Ishii, Vice-chairman Murakami, Okinaka, Koriyama, Kokuryo, Seki, Chiba, Tsuga, Tokuda, Tokoro (proxy for Takahashi), Nohara, Hashimoto, Fujimoto, Furukawa (proxy for Nakagawa), Fuwa, Muraki
4. Agenda: MIC and METI Initiatives for Promoting Intelligent Home Appliance Networking
5. Proceedings:
  - (1) Chairman Ishii gave opening remarks.
  - (2) The Secretariat described the above agenda based on references:
    - ① For Promoting Intelligent Home Appliance Networking (MIC)
    - ② For Promoting Intelligent Home Appliance Networking (METI)
  - (3) The members voiced the following opinions:
    - We should make efforts so that the year 2006 will be the year Japan is recognized as having started the mechanism of intelligent home appliance networking ahead of other countries. Two types of proposals need to be actively accepted, those that should be elaborated for the future and those that can be immediately launched.

There are issues not only about technologies, but also about development of social mechanisms and systems. If these are not solved, starting up business in 2007 will be difficult. Institutional issues may not be the focus of this project, but we need to have the viewpoint that system development and this project should be run simultaneously so that the two would be coordinated.
    - As pointed out, the timeline is very critical. With advances in high-speed optical fiber networks and faster CPUs, networking of intelligent home appliances is supposedly progressing without any trouble, but the reality is otherwise. Each manufacturer's initiative remains sporadic and consequently fails to break even, ending up suspended without popularity. On the other hand, the success of i-Pod, a product launched by one company, can be attributed to the existence of the platform. Separate initiatives by each manufacturer would hardly lead to the establishment of a platform. It is important that the private sector, i.e., manufacturers, work together to establish a platform rather than working independently. TV sets are the most representative intelligent home appliances. If manufacturers could take the initiative in establishing a platform by optimizing the timing of the transition to digital TVs, and then be joined by service providers, they could collaborate proactively and a virtuous cycle would be created.
    - With the official start of one-segment broadcasting on April 1 of next year, the styles of watching TV will change. We would like to decide the specifications of server-based broadcasting by next March, but networking of intelligent home

appliances is likely to expand in diverse ways. We would also like to study how content could be developed after the infrastructure is established.

- The references provided by both ministries appear to imply that the issue of integration of broadcasting and telecommunications is not the scope of this study group. Regarding intelligent home appliances, it is difficult to determine how far and on which theme discussions should be made. It is preferable to discuss the issue of broadcasting and telecommunications here without limiting the scope. It should also be noted that these kinds of discussions tend to be seed-oriented rather than user-oriented. Demonstration experiments must be conducted without failing to consider the consumer perspective.
- I would like to stress two points. First, when we think about what we should focus on, focusing on an open source OS such as Linux is a possible option. Second, as it is important to maintain and strengthen the international competitiveness of Japanese consumer electronics makers from the perspective of industrial policy, we need to make a distinction between the scope of the platform and the scope of competition.
- It would be appreciated if the perspective of energy-saving is covered. Energy-saving and reduction of greenhouse gas at home are the difficult areas. Developing networks while improving safety and convenience is important, and providing user-friendly service is essential. The perspectives of user-friendliness and energy-saving should be taken into account when establishing the ubiquitous network society.
- As manufacturers, we would like to make efforts so that the next year will be remembered as the year the ubiquitous network started. Manufacturers are required to think and make proposals from the user perspective because it will be a problem if individuals who do not have many terminal devices cannot access information as the ubiquitous network advances. We need to think about how to increase affluence as well as how to achieve safety and security.  
We need to think about which intelligent home appliance is the most appropriate device to use when building a ubiquitous network at home, but issues on storage devices and interoperability remain. As for device specifications, manufacturers should make suggestions rather than letting the users decide them.
- Too much emphasis is placed on in-home networking. Mobility of content, e.g., you can watch at home what you watched in your car, and safe and seamless connectivity both inside and outside the home are important. Additionally, “open” is the key word for revitalization of this field. Although the reference uses “open authentication platform” as a keyword, it may be required to recommend an open infrastructure as well as an open authentication platform.
- In advancing networking, it is essential to create something new through synergy, rather than through simple addition.

- There is no objection as to the future direction and goals. What matters is how to implement them. It is important to draw a line between the scope of collaboration and the scope of competition. Competition will lead to user-oriented mechanisms and services, which will be welcomed by society.
- To establish the platform around a TV set is what makers should consider seriously. As each maker is currently working independently, service providers and communication carriers should join forces. The primary focus should be on creating something that pleases users.
- Makers should work on the technological aspects such as specifications of devices, but unified specifications are the prerequisite from the user perspective. Makers, communication carriers, broadcasting organizations, and MIC and METI need to join in their efforts and work together in consideration of speed.
- The measures of both ministries are more compact than expected, but we must share what is to be done for next year's CEATEC. Regarding the diagram that shows examples of service applications in the interim report (Page 1 of the METI reference), how will they be implemented in the future?

(Secretariat) The target is to realize them by CEATEC in next October. As pointed out, content that is appropriate for broadband will have considerable capacity as well as centripetal force or appeal. I felt that developing a network around a TV set is a shared understanding on the maker side. The diagrams on pages 5 and 6 in reference 4 describe the details of the diagram on page 1. These cannot be realized by METI alone, but through cooperation between METI and MIC. Please understand that the budgets are just for the sake of providing a prototype in October.

(Secretariat)

What is indicated in the diagram in the interim report has been partly worked on by various forums. While optimizing such efforts, we would like to work on the remaining parts through the cooperation of both ministries. MIC will cooperate with METI as to the network-related technologies, including authentication. We would like to present the results of the above clearly on such occasions as CEATEC.