

Study Group on Intelligent Home Appliance Networking
The Sixth Meeting Proceedings Summary (Draft)

1. Date and Time: July13, 2006 (Thur), 14:00-15:00
2. Location: 3F Main Conference Room A/B, Mita Kaigisho
3. Attendees (Honorifics omitted): Chairman Ishii, Vice-chairman Murakami, Okinaka (Proxy for Mizuike), Koriyama (Proxy for Yoshimoto), Seki, Chiba (Proxy for Ueda), Tsuga, Tokoro, Hashimoto, Fujimoto, Nakagawa, Fuwa (Proxy for Kadono), Muraki
4. Agenda: Initiatives of Relevant Parties for Promoting Intelligent Home Appliance Networking
5. Proceedings:
 - (1) Chairman Ishii presented the opening remarks, followed by speeches from the newly-appointed METI Director-General Koezuka, Commerce and Information Policy Bureau and MIC Deputy Director-General Katsuno.
 - (2) The Secretariat described the above agenda based on the reference materials. METI Director Kato, Information Economy Division, and MIC Director Takeuchi, Research and Development Office, explained the status and future of the initiatives taken by their respective ministries.
 - Director Kato

Visualization is important. We will make efforts for visualization on such occasions as CEATEC.

The current initiatives are in their first phase. The keyword in the second phase would be commercialization, which includes globalization, standardization, e-learning and telemedicine.
 - Director Takeuchi

Infrastructures that support human services, such as context awareness, are important. We would also like to advance our initiatives through collaboration with METI for CEATEC or other occasions.
 - (3) Chairman Ishii gave his presentation.
 - (4) The members voiced the following opinions:
 - Vice-chair Murakami:

We have discussed the importance of inter-ministry collaborations so far, but are entering a phase where inter-company collaborations will also become important. There should be vertical collaborations that cover telecommunications, broadcasting, devices and content as well as horizontal collaborations among companies in the same field. An initiative such as a private sector forum can be an option.

We have mainly studied in-home networking, but mobile phones are likely to play a critical role in connecting inside of houses and the outside. Various services are currently offered for mobile phones, and many platforms exist independently for respective services. Competition between similar coexisting platforms is important for revitalization of the market, but it is also crucial for Japan as a whole to aim at a global standard. I am wondering whether we could create something like iPod in Japan.
 - Tokoro

The presentation by Chairman Ishii provided a good opportunity to change our thinking, which tends to be preoccupied with stereotypes. There could be some regulations or barriers,

even if new services or business models are conceived. We may need to study intelligent home appliances beyond what are now imaginable. In that case, mobile devices for outside the house as well as in-home networks will be important, as Vice-chairman Murakami said.

○ Tsuga

A corporation that offers common TV portal services was inaugurated on July 7 of this year, aiming to create a base that enables users to enjoy the services with safety, security and convenience. However, as incorporation does not mean that solutions have been developed, we would like to join forces in creating various services and then link them together on the base.

○ Seki

This company is a good example of inter-company collaboration. How to coordinate hardware and software will be a future issue.

The one-segment broadcasting that started this April has primarily offered simulcast, but has already started collaborations with carriers and content providers. In several years, various services other than simulcast could be provided.

○ Muraki

Coordination between hardware and software is critical. It is essential for end-users to be able to enjoy highly convenient services, and the services should cover areas that support our daily lives—e.g., energy saving, security and education—because these areas would link with our services. I agree that inter-company collaborations should be steadily made by such an initiative as a private sector forum.

○ Nakagawa

YouTube, which Chairman Ishii introduced in his presentation, is working because it has human resources who extract and collate information. The intelligence to extract and collate information seems important. The company we have established may need to consider extracting services skillfully. We hope that our company will steadily grow to provide Japan-original services and serve as a base to disseminate new information related to those services, and I appreciate your cooperation.

○ Fujimoto

The key is whether the picture on Page 4 of Reference 4 would really be actualized. It would not become a reality unless it has appeal for the provider side.

“Verification of connectivity of respective intelligent home appliances and terminals,” which is listed in the R&D/demonstration experiment items on Page 2, is a decisive factor for usability. We need to join forces to achieve this.

○ Hashimoto

We have already identified applications that allow individuals to participate in disseminating information, which is indicative of a Japan-original ubiquitous society.

I would like to set up an opportunity for a next-generation network demonstration experiment around December of this year. I will announce the details when it is finalized, and would appreciate it if many people would participate in it. I hope that private-sector collaboration would be accomplished and lead to proposals for new synergies.

(5) MIC Director-General Takeda, Information and Communications Policy Bureau, and METI Director-General Koezuka, Commerce and Information Policy Bureau, summarized the meeting.

○ Director-General Takeda

I thank you all for your valuable opinions. As diversifying services have expanded, we need to establish a system to react to these moves; and in establishing such a system, forum activities at various levels, including national, intermediate, or private sector levels, would

become vital, as already mentioned. We would like to continue studies together with METI and other relevant ministries.

○ Director-General Koezuka

I thank you all, and hope that this study group will continue to be a strategic center that has shared understanding. I recognized again the importance of the view that outside the home should also be covered, and the global perspective. I appreciate your continued efforts.

(6) The secretariat explained the future direction of this study group.