Palpable technology supports emergency response at world's biggest race for sailing ships

In July around 100 sailing ships come to anchor at the harbour in Aarhus, Denmark. Innovative technology from the European research project PalCom will help ensure a safe and enjoyable festival for a million people.

When the world's biggest race for sailing ships, Tall Ships' Race, visits Aarhus (Denmark) July 5.-8. 2007, prototypes from the EU project PalCom will be put to their biggest test so far. In collaboration with fire brigade and police the project's researchers will test a range of experimental technologies to provide emergency response professionals with a better overview of large-scale events. The prototype, originally intended for overview of major incidents, has been developed in collaboration with emergency response professionals over the last two years.

Groundbreaking technology
The purpose of the PalCom project is to develop a new approach to pervasive computing, 'palpable computing':

"PalCom's participation in Tall Ships Race is a huge experiment and a great opportunity for us to test the technology in real life settings. Our experiences from this event will be an important step on our way to make computing palpable," says Vice Coordinator Preben Holst Mogensen from the University of Aarhus.

Fire chief officer: Enormous potential
"Large-scale events such as Tall Ships Race can be very hard to gain an overview of. With a million visitors and a huge area it is challenging to monitor every critical spot. In my opinion PalCom's technology has an enormous potential - not only for events such as Tall Ships' Race, but also for monitoring of major accident scenes," explains Fire Chief Officer Jakob Andersen from the Aarhus Fire Brigade. He is one of many professionals who have taken part in the development of the new technology.

3D-workspace provides overview
Among other things, the experimental technology will enable personnel to interact with a three-dimensional workspace of the Aarhus harbour and surroundings. It will display the locations of key personnel, cars, ships and important equipment, providing managers with an overview of the scene.

The 3D-map will run on a large interactive screen at the central command station. It will also be accessible on tablet PC's for e.g. fire fighters and police officers as they move around the harbour.

Remote-controlled cameras
PalCom's researchers will also mount video cameras at critical areas, for example a concert area with room for around 30.000 people and traffic sensitive spots. The 3D-

workspace at the command station will enable managers to select video sequences for viewing and steer cameras by remote-control.

About the PalCom project
PalCom (IST 002057) is a four-year integrated project that is funded by the European Commission. Over 100 researchers and professional developers take part in PalCom. They come from universities and IT companies all over Europe. Read more about PalCom at the project's web page: http://www.ist-palcom.org

Contact
For further information please contact:
Vice Coordinator Preben Holst Mogensen, preben@daimi.au.dk or
Press Officer Marlene Nybro Thomsen, mthomsen@daimi.au.dk

Links
Tall Ships' Race in Aarhus:
http://www.ist-palcom.org/activities/tall-ships-race-aarhus
http://www.tsr07.dk

More about PalCom's Major Incidents Overview technology
http://www.ist-palcom.org/application-areas/major-incidents