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Aladdin

ALADDIN – Mobile Destination Management for SMEs

Specific research project for SMEs

Co-operative research projects

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RE	Restricted to a group specified by the consortium (including the Commission Services)	
CO	Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)	

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0 Project overview

The EU project Aladdin aimed to develop a mobile destination system that combines both, the provision of a mobile incoming tour operator workspace and a mobile content and service management system for destinations. Thereby Aladdin considered different usage scenarios, bearing in mind the variety of holiday types, such as culture, city or sun destination trips and different types of travellers, such as business and leisure travellers in groups or as individuals.

A detailed business analysis and specification carried out by the research partners of the project was the basis for the final implementation of the Aladdin system. Field tests in three partner destination areas helped to improve the proper running of the system in real environments. Extensive dissemination in the public and scientific area was to be the basis for good exploitation efforts. In addition the so far non-existent competition in the area of mobile applications for tour guides opens up a promising market for a standard that is supposed to ensure the success of the Aladdin system beyond the co-operative research project.

The consortium consisted of 11 partners from six European countries that were carefully selected to achieve the project objectives. The project started on 1 August 2005 and lasted for two years.

The objectives of the Aladdin project were on one the one hand project technical goals and on the other project scientific and societal goals:

Technical goals

- Identification of processes and derivation of the required system functionality
- Selection of task and user environment oriented devices
- Provision of good and relevant content
- Development and integration of the basic system
- Selection, integration and interoperability of mobile networks and location technologies
- Functionality tests
- Pilot set-up and implementation

Scientific and societal goals

- Analysis of major business and customer processes in the incoming tourist destination lifecycle
- Definition of new services
- Increasing service levels and quality for group and individual travellers
- New work opportunities for tour guides
- New advanced service and sales
- Opportunities for regional SMEs
- Reinforcement of European strengths in mobile and wireless communications

The following partners from six different European countries were involved in the Aladdin project:

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Aladdin project partners	EU country
ISO Software Systeme GmbH	Germany
YellowMap AG	Germany
Language Technology Centre Ltd	UK
University Stuttgart (IAT)	Germany
University St. Gallen	Switzerland
Pannon University (UOV)	Hungary
FHS KufsteinTirol Bildungs-GmbH	Austria
Incoming Tourism Scandinavia AB	Sweden
Altasz World Travel Idegenforgalmi Kft	Hungary
WOTEG Wolfgangsee Tourismusentwicklung GmbH	Austria
Tourismusverband Wildschönau	Austria

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During the two year duration of the project, the following major areas (work packages - WP) were covered within the Aladdin project:

- Requirements analysis (WP1)
- Specification (WP2)
- Implementation (WP3)
- Evaluation (WP4)
- Dissemination & exploitation (WP5)
- Project management (WP6)

Each work package was split up into several tasks and activities and different deliverables documented the results.

1 Project objectives and major achievements

1.1 Overview of general project objectives

The general objective of Aladdin was to research and develop a mobile destination system that combines the provision of a mobile incoming tour operator workspace as well as a mobile content and service management system for destinations. Thereby Aladdin aimed to consider different usage scenarios, bearing in mind the variety of holiday types, such as culture, city or sun destination trips and different types of travellers, such as business and leisure travellers in groups or as individuals.

1.2 Summary objectives

To achieve the general objective described above, the following sub-objectives were identified and scheduled as project milestones:

1. Sound analysis of business requirements and technical infrastructure will deliver substantial input for the system specification.
2. A common agreement on the system specification which initiates the start of the implementation phase.
3. The development of a well defined, tested mobile and multilingual workspace for tour guides and an easy to use, high quality mobile leisure environment for travellers. Therefore the necessary infrastructure and systems will be set-up and tested.
4. Evaluation of the Aladdin system in order to obtain in-depth knowledge about the success of a mobile system such as Aladdin for tour guides and travellers.
5. Dissemination and exploitation of Aladdin results

The plan for the first period was to achieve milestones M1 and M2. With the submission of the three deliverables “Requirement Analysis”, “Aladdin Specification” and “Aladdin Reference Specification” the consortium achieved both milestones on time.

The plan for the second period was to achieve milestones M3, M4 and M5. The delivery of the two software-based deliverables in WP03 formed the background for the two deliverables “Evaluation Guideline” and “Evaluation Report” in WP04. Together with the submission of the deliverables in WP05 and the final reports the consortium achieved all the milestones on time.

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Milestones	Project month	WP	Operational goals	Success measurement
M1	6	1	ALADDIN requirements sound analysis of business requirements and technical infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Description of best practises for tour guide processes and mobile leisure environment ▪ Sound analysis of IT systems and standards in tourism industry ▪ Set up of quantifiable and qualified goals
M2	12	2	ALADDIN specification Consortium-wide accepted specification of the ALADDIN system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development of new services and scenarios ▪ Specification of coherent software components ▪ Selection of suitable hardware devices ▪ Precise definition of broadband requirements ▪ Detailed description of interfaces to external systems
M3	18	3	Basic system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fully functional Aladdin system
M4	21	3	Customised pilot system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Running and adapted Aladdin system per use case ▪ Trial-configuration prepared ▪ All relevant systems tested in test-environment
M5	24	4	Broad evaluation of the system in three phases: In house testing Local pilot test beds Field evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Successful evaluation of the Aladdin system
	24	5	Dissemination and use plan beyond the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Exploitation of the Aladdin System developed as a whole and integrated technological parts

The next chapter will provide a more detailed description on objectives, work performed and results achieved on a work package level.

2 Work package progress of the project

This section provides an overview of the work carried out in the project based on the work packages.

2.1 Work package 01: Requirements Analysis

2.1.1 Work package objectives

The main objective of this work package was to give a detailed and differentiated view on best practice for tour guide processes and activities in the mobile traveller environment and its underlying technologies and to define the goal set-up.

2.1.2 Description of work

The work package 1 “Requirements Analysis” was made up of six tasks, each having a special focus. The results of all tasks were integrated into deliverable 1.1 which was submitted to the EC at the end of month 6. A short summary of the goals of each task is given here.

Task 1.1 - Process analysis: Analysis of processes and weaknesses along the lifecycle of an incoming tour operator system regarding all tour-guide processes.

Task 1.2 - Best practice IT infrastructure: Best practice analysis of back office and front office IT systems concerned as well as interfaces to external systems.

Task 1.3 - Industry standards: Analysis of standards used in the tourism industry and for identity management systems.

Task 1.4 - Broadband networks: Description of existing broadband networks.

Task 1.5 - Usability: Collection of usability requirements and constraints in the field of mobile devices for tour guides.

Task 1.6 - Goal definition: Set-up of quantifiable and qualifiable goals, that are verifiable during the evaluation phase via standard measurement methods.

2.1.3 Results

All results achieved within work package 01 are contained in deliverable D1.1 “Requirements Analysis”. This document is split up into seven documents which cover the results achieved within the Aladdin process analysis and goal definition, and the collated research on relevant best practice infrastructures, industry standards, broadband networks and usability aspects.

For the process analysis the destinations Budapest, Stockholm and Wolfgangsee relating to the three Aladdin user partners were analysed using a predefined interview guideline. Therefore structured information was gathered covering the following areas for each destination:

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- Overview of the destination (geography, statistics about travellers etc.)
- Methodology (details about the interviews)
- Real world scenarios (sample scenarios for identified traveller categories)
- Profiling (profiles of typical travellers with selection criteria)
- Context model (user context and situational behaviour)
- Content (possible content for the Aladdin system, supplied by different organisations)
- Processes (graphical representation of every process)

Furthermore, problem areas for each destination were identified which reveal the relevant aspects to be covered by the Aladdin system.

To find out which components and functions and which interfaces are needed for the Aladdin system, relevant best practice infrastructures (e.g. incoming tour operator systems, booking/reservation systems, etc.) were analysed. Both the systems of the Aladdin user partners and commercial products were studied.

The research performed on industry standards, broadband networks and usability covers all relevant information which will be necessary when specifying the Aladdin system.

Goals for the Aladdin system were derived using the results from the first five tasks. These goals are grouped according to different aspects. On a strategic level, quantifiable and qualifiable goals were defined to allow a proper measurement during the evaluation phase. On operational level it was important for the project alignment and project success, that potential new services were described in a draft in this early stage of the project.

2.2 Work package 02: Specification

2.2.1 Work package objectives

The main objective of this work package was to define new services for guided travel groups and to translate these services into functional and technical specifications.

2.2.2 Description of work

Work package 02 consisted of six tasks, each dealing with a special area of specification. A short summary of the goals of each task is given and detailed below.

Task 2.1 Definition of new services: Definition of new services in scenarios and use cases. Definition of peer-to-peer information flow between tour guide and tourist group member. Definition of information flow between mobile incoming workspace and mobile leisure environment. Definition of general XML-based interface between incoming tour operator solutions and Aladdin. Definition of multilingual requirements.

Task 2.2 Software specification: Specification of software components

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Task 2.3 Hardware specification: Identification and selection of suitable hardware devices (e.g. PDA, laptop, portable printer)

Task 2.4 Broadband requirements: Identification and definition of broadband requirements of the specified applications (bandwidth, synchronisation procedures and frequencies). Selection of suitable broadband services.

Task 2.5 Interface specification: Description of identity management interfaces and interfaces to external systems

Task 2.6 Generation of a reference specification: Creation of a generalised and publicly available specification of a multilingual tour guide and traveller platform.

2.2.3 Results

The results of all tasks were integrated into the deliverable 2.1 “Aladdin Specification”. It covers the results of the definition of new services and the requirements in different technical areas derived from the new services.

As the first step in this work package, based on the results of the requirements analysis carried out in WP1, a set of new services was defined using the methodology of use case models. To define the use cases a template was created which contains all the information needed to describe the use cases comprehensively. Overall nearly 100 single use cases were defined in the definition of new services and grouped into 13 use case packages that are clustered into four different groups according to the main focus of the use case packages.

- **Administration** (“Administration of destination information”, “Administrative Tools”, “Quality assurance”)
- **Using information** (“Using destination information”)
- **Financial aspects** (“Payment and ticketing”)
- **Organisation of travel and conduction of tours/activities** (“Arrival”, “Departure”, “Guided Tours”, “Leisure Activities”, “Business Activities”, “Organisation of Accommodation”, “Transport”, “Meals”)

As the last step to prepare the implementation a prioritisation of the use cases was worked out and agreed during a consolidation workshop by all partners.

Based on these use cases, the requirements for the Aladdin system in the areas of software, hardware and broadband capabilities were worked out and specified. The work carried out in this work package was used as a direct input for the implementation of the Aladdin system which was carried out in work package 03.

In addition to this internal document, deliverable D2.2 “Reference Specification” was worked out, containing a generalised specification. It can be found on the official project website www.aladdin-project.org under “public documentation”.

2.3 Work package 03: Implementation

2.3.1 Work package objectives

The main objective of this work package was to implement the system specified in WP2 and to produce a functional prototype as well as usable pilot systems.

2.3.2 Description of work

The work package 03 “Implementation” consisted of seven tasks, each having a special focus. The consortium partners agreed to start with prototype development as early as possible. It was seen as a proof of concept where possible obstacles could be identified at an early stage in the development process:

- Task 3.1** Basic system development: Implementation of Aladdin system, integration and adaptation of all technological components, including multilingual components. Implementation and integration of ISO’s *Canary* as an example of an incoming tour operator system.
- Task 3.2** Basic system integration (HW/SW): Integration and adoption of all technological components. Definition of technical infrastructure issues.
- Task 3.3** Mobile client: Java application for easy usage and automatic positioning via GPS for easy to use and comfortable positioning. Server connection realised via a web service with standardised SOAP/XML interfaces.
- Task 3.4** Functional Bluetooth communication manager prototype: Development of a prototype Bluetooth communication manager that administrates the personal Bluetooth network of tour guides and provides support on special problem cases.
- Task 3.5** System localisation: Localisation of specific use cases which act as pilot area for demonstration
- Task 3.6** Pilot set-up: Customising of relevant components according to user requirements and use case scenarios. Implementation of necessary IT Infrastructure on a national level. Customising of prototypes for application scenarios. Integration of specific context information.
- Task 3.7** Functionality test: Test and validation of infrastructure, framework, components and services according to the specified services (functionality and usability) in a closed environment. Execution of tests in various test scenarios including usability tests.

2.3.3 Results

The Aladdin system is based on a service-oriented architecture (SOA) and consists of components and interconnections that focus on interoperability and location transparency. The component concept of the Aladdin system provides a better way of managing dependencies in a large system. A component is a smaller group of objects working together to provide a

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system function. The mobile destination management system consists of three main components (see Figure 1):

1. The Professional Mobile Workspace for Incoming Agencies and Tour Operators (yellow)
2. The Mobile Travel Environment for travellers and for local SMEs (purple)
3. The integration between the workspace and the leisure environment through a user profiling interface (grey)

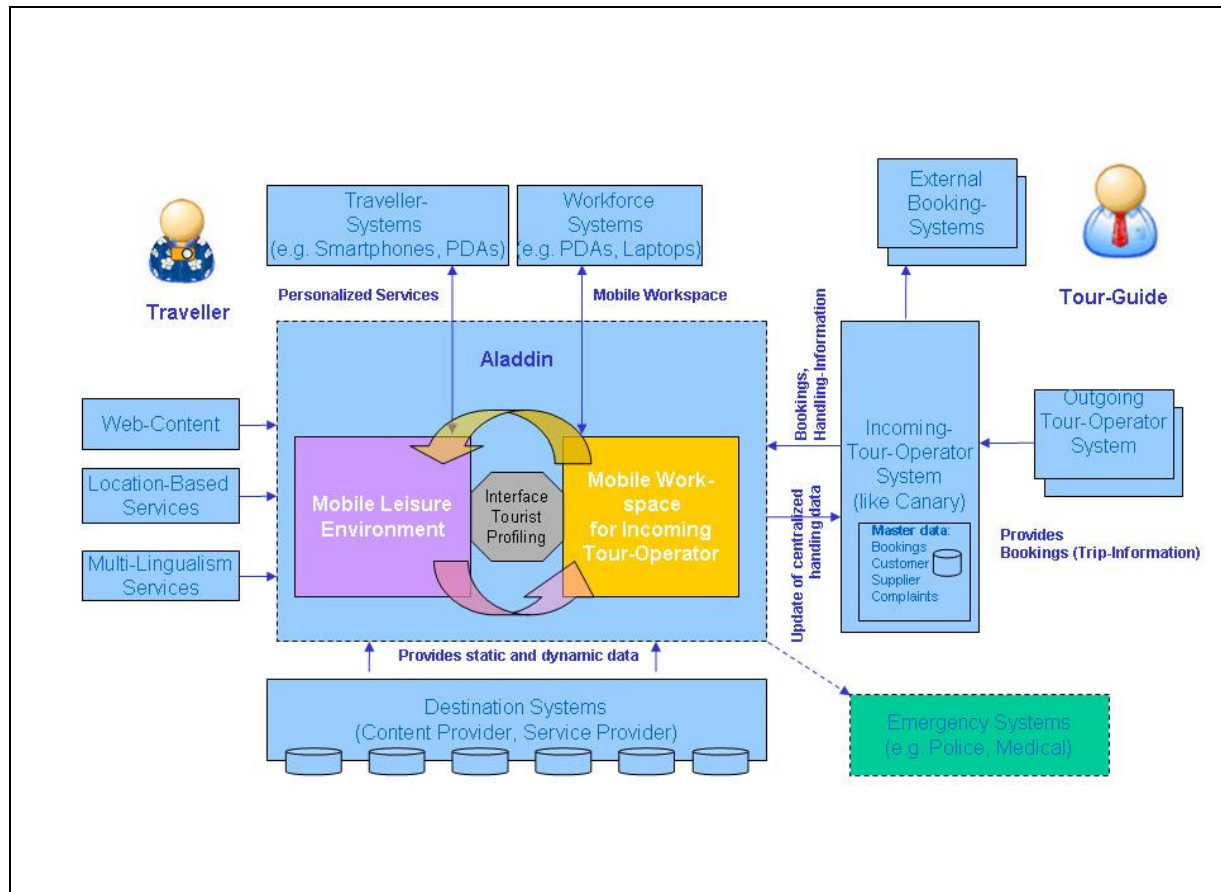


Figure 1: Overview of system architecture

2.3.3.1 Professional Mobile Workspace

The *Professional Mobile Workspace (PMW)* enables a tour guide to provide various downstream and upstream services to travellers. He/she can interact electronically with his/her back office and has access to context information such as arrivals, allotment status, etc. In order to access this information, the *PMW* integrates incoming tour operator systems such as Canary. Profile acquisition and management will be part of the incoming tour operator systems as well.

The *PMW* consists of two major components: the **server** application and the **client** application. The *PMW server* provides services for the client like synchronisation and current flight data, and handles all communication activities between the *PMW* and internal (*MTE*) and external systems (incoming tour operator system). The *PMW client* allows incoming tour

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operator data to be created, maintained, updated and synchronised with the server, and all workflows to be handled on the mobile device. It has functions like searching for points of interest and communication with the traveller.

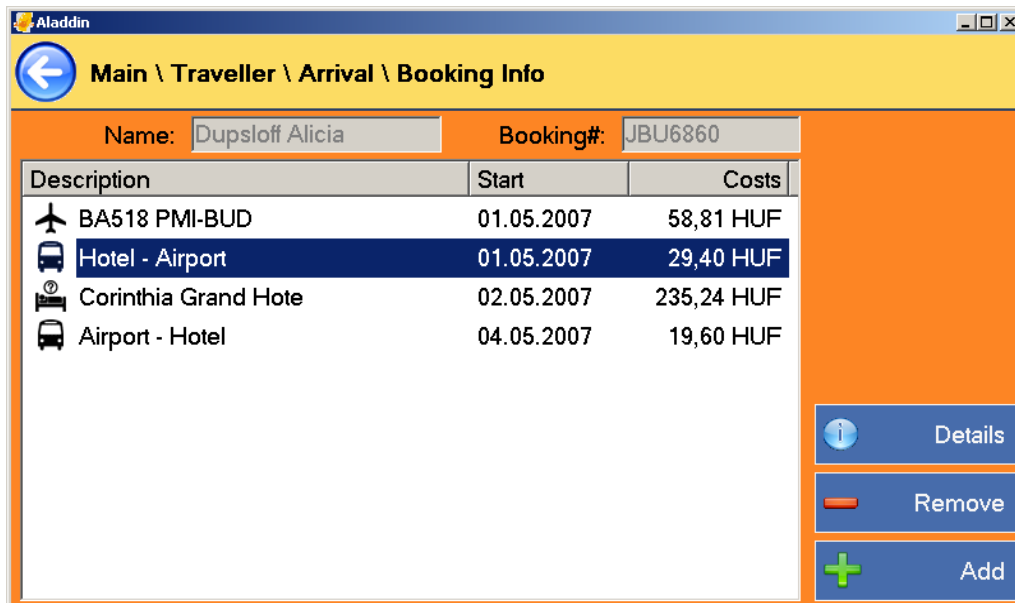


Figure 2: PMW feature "Check a traveller's booking"

2.3.3.2 Mobile Travel Environment

At an application level, the *Mobile Travel Environment* consists of various applications. While the mobile travel application is the main client for travellers during their journey, the travel portal and the administration tool are web-based portals accessed via a client browser on a PC or laptop.

The **travel application** allows mobile access to the destination information. It enables location-based services and content presentation. A traveller may conduct vicinity searches or browse the list of POIs and associated offers. The mobile application also provides city maps with a zooming and panning functionality and directions. If GPS is supported on the mobile device, automatic positioning can be triggered. The mobile application also provides access to additional services (e.g. to show flight information) and enables profile management such as creating, editing and deleting profile settings.

Travellers also have the option of visiting a **travel portal** via the Internet. In a similar way to the mobile application, the web-based portal offers access to destination information. After a user registers, he/she is able to browse through the POI catalogue and save particular POIs for later use.

The **administration tool** is not available to travellers, only to the tour guide and/or service or content providers. The web-based interface is used to manage content integration and user rights. The administration tool also allows enhanced entry administration (e.g. coupons, special offers) and corporate advertising.

Through the integration of a translation service the content provided by the Aladdin system will be available in several languages.

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Figure 3: Different examples for MTE features (travel application)

2.4 Work package 04: Evaluation

2.4.1 Work package objectives

The main objective of this work package was to evaluate the functional prototype and the usable pilot systems from the user SME angle, from the technology SME angle and from the RTD partners' angle.

2.4.2 Description of work

The work in this work package was divided into different stages of testing which included the following tasks.

- Task 4.1** In house testing: Testing the first version of the Aladdin system in a laboratory environment with selected expert users. Focus on usability. Carrying out interviews with the users and collecting feedback, which is useful for adaptations to the system. Implementation of usability improvement measures.
- Task 4.2** Production of evaluation guideline: Creation of a guideline, that outlines the overall strategy as well as evaluation procedures and instruments.
- Task 4.3** Evaluation in local pilot test beds: Organisation and execution of pilot tests with local SMEs as well as partly with tour guides (PMW). Recording and evaluating the results which are mainly derived from qualitative interviews. Writing pilot test reports.
- Task 4.4** Field evaluation: Organisation and execution of field tests with tour guides (PMW) as well as with tourists (MTE). Recording and evaluating the results, derived from quantitative data and qualitative information. Writing field evaluation reports.

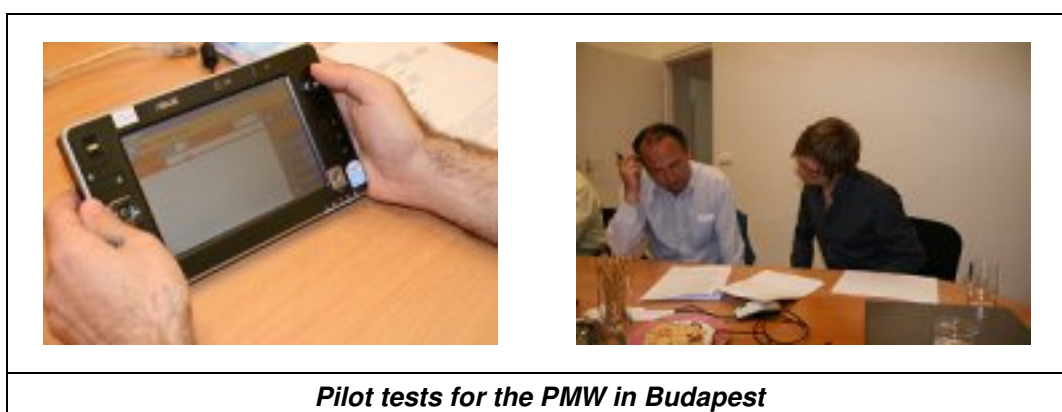
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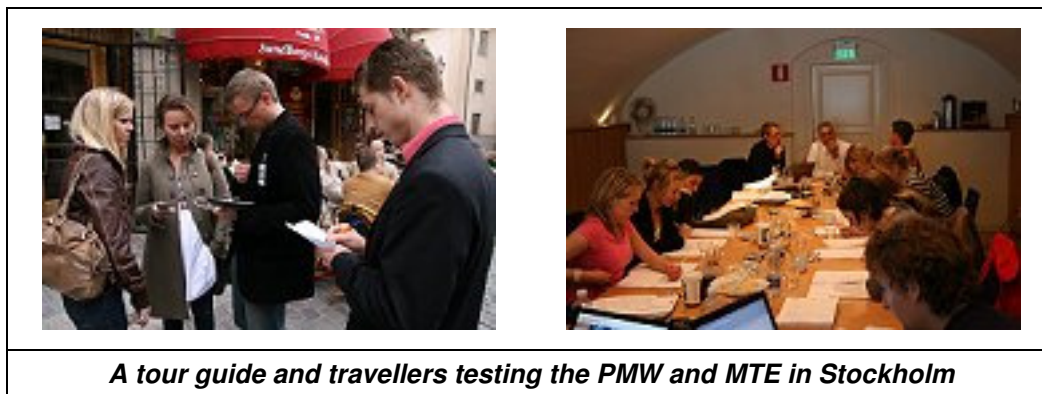
Usability tests at IAT in Stuttgart



Pilot tests for the MTE in Wildschönau



Pilot tests for the PMW in Budapest



2.4.3 Results

Two main results of this work package are the deliverables D4.1 “Evaluation Guideline” and D4.2. “Evaluation Report”.

Deliverable D4.1 “Evaluation Guideline” contains the descriptions needed to understand the purpose, scientific background, technical and organisational as well as resource-related issues associated with the evaluation phase.

The results of all the tests conducted (usability, pilot and field tests) and the consequences for the Aladdin business model are documented in D4.2 “Evaluation Report”. It contains a considerable number of graphs and pictures mainly derived from the quantitative analyses carried out in the three destinations.

For more detailed information on the evaluation results the “Evaluation Report” can be found on the official project website www.aladdin-project.org under “public documentation”.

2.5 Work package 05: Exploitation and dissemination

2.5.1 Work package objectives

The main objective of this work package was to initiate dissemination and exploitation activities towards the main target groups of Aladdin.

2.5.2 Description of work

This work package consisted of five tasks which focused on creating awareness for the project results, especially in the travel and tourism industry and on encouraging the adoption of mobile incoming solutions in the European travel industry.

Task 5.1 Market analysis: Identification of target segments. Quantification of market value for additional services in tourism. Creation of a marketing plan. Selection of qualified tourist destinations.

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Task 5.2 Knowledge transfer: The knowledge of the scientific consortium has to be transferred to the technology providers on a level which can be managed by SMEs.

Task 5.3 Dissemination activities: Holding themed workshops and seminars at the RTD partners' sites including demonstration of system functionality on various hardware devices. Publication of scientific papers, conference and fair attendance. Marketing through project website. Further dissemination of results amongst strong multipliers.

Task 5.4 Exploitation activities: Development of business plans in order to continue the take-up in the industry and to apply the technology to other tourist destinations.

2.5.3 Results

Within work package 5 a huge number of activities have been performed by each contractor. Regular attendance and active participation at conferences and fairs helped to disseminate the idea and results of Aladdin and to establish contacts with interested groups.

More information on past activities and upcoming events as well as on the exploitable results can be found in the Final Plan of Use and Dissemination published on the official project website www.aladdin-project.org.

A complete documentation of the research activities, methodologies and project results can be found in the two books that have been or are to be published by the Aladdin consortium.

Book number one **“At Home in the Destination - the Aladdin Platform: Mobile and multilingual information, communication and services for tour guides, travellers and local SMEs”** summarises the first year of the Aladdin project. It begins with the state of the market(s), the principle technologies to be developed within Aladdin and the approaches to mapping destinations with relevant information for all involved.

Three chapters look at the test beds for the field work and outlining the parameters of Budapest (in the context of the package Chinese traveller), Stockholm (from the point of view of the business traveller) and Wolfgangsee (bringing in the independent traveller).

Then the business process modelling and use case scenarios that had driven the project and the challenge of multilinguality are outlined before looking at the software architecture and efficiency issues involved.

The book concludes by considering the business models and the benefits and future of the Aladdin systems.

The book is available in many libraries and for sale from Fraunhofer in Stuttgart and through Amazon (ISBN 978-3-8167-7136-0).

The second book **Postcards from the field: developing, testing and evaluating the Aladdin Platform** (provisional title) deals itself with the developmental testing of the Aladdin systems in the three locations and with the three different areas of the market. It begins by considering

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the nature of mobility and the challenges this poses to traditional communications within the sector, especially for SMEs.

It outlines the commitment to evaluation throughout the project and demonstrates how the field tests allowed for modifications and continuous improvement to take place before the final test in Stockholm. It reveals the real problems faced by the project in developing appropriate and acceptable hardware and software to gain user confidence.

It considers the issue of language and the need for multilinguality in the provision of tourist information. The book also offers a review of the evaluation methodologies and techniques undertaken.

The book concludes by considering the business models through which the Aladdin system can gain a foothold in the markets and deliver the potential that has been identified throughout the project.

The book will be available in many libraries and for sale from Fraunhofer in Stuttgart and through Amazon in autumn 2007.

2.6 Work package 06: Project management

2.6.1 Work package objectives

This work package ensured the smooth and efficient management of the project.

2.6.2 Description of work

The project management was responsible for the overall success and coordination of the project. This project management work package organised the project as a whole and steered the partners according to the work plan and consortium strategy. To ensure this overall objective of the project management the work package was split into 5 tasks, each dealing with a special field of project management and coordination.

- Task 6.1** Project coordination
- Task 6.2** Project monitoring & contingency
- Task 6.3** Project infrastructure set-up & maintenance
- Task 6.4** Monitoring reports
- Task 6.5** Final reports

2.6.3 Results

The successful finalisation of the project without any major discrepancies from the project plan can be seen as a major result of this work package.

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3 Conclusion

The results that have been achieved over the past two years demonstrate that there is a high level of interest and need for a mobile destination management system like Aladdin. External factors such as the continuous growth of the European tourism market, the growing number of mobile phone users, the increase in the number of people who also take their mobile devices with them when they travel and the shifts observed and forecast in traveller behaviour opens up a promising user market for Aladdin and supports the need for such a system. The trend towards more frequent and shorter holidays, for example, is accompanied by a more dynamic and less predictable market for destinations. The insistence on value for money and added value for business travellers also heightens the need for up-to-date and reliable destination information. The Aladdin system can deliver up-to-date information and services at any time in any place, supporting:

- business travellers during their trips in liaison with conference and event organisers,
- individual travellers on their trips, especially when they are planned at short notice or spontaneously,
- package travellers at the destination,
- the tour guides,
- the tour companies and
- service suppliers.

As a summary of strengths, we can say that the Aladdin system can function as an interactive, personalised and continuously updated guidebook and work tool. It can mean a new paradigm in the business and individual (and partly in the group) travel markets, for both travellers and tour guides, and serve as an additional communication medium for service providers by allowing them to adapt their product and marketing activities as a necessary response to these trends. The target group analysis demonstrated that there is a real need to optimise the working processes of the incoming tour operator and the tour guides that work with them. With Aladdin it would be possible to improve these processes throughout the traveller destination experience. The delivery of personalised navigation and location-based services in Aladdin coincides with the requirements and needs of travellers to access such systems.

In reviewing the analysis of the mobile solutions, it is apparent that there is currently no other mobile traveller solution on the market that combines both B2B and B2C environments. The two environments in Aladdin will benefit from each other and synergy effects can be used. The internal appraisal shows that the Aladdin system can be developed by the technology partners because of their established expertise in developing mobile solutions and the availability of existing software components to be used in the Aladdin system. With the inclusion of the necessary transnational cooperation aspects in the tourism area, the perfection of traveller relationship management by making CRM features mobile and furthermore by including localised content through the use of a translation service, adoption of the Aladdin system would lead to a sustainable enhancement of the competitiveness of European SMEs in the tourism area.

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