

Acquiring services by touching

25.8.2009

Touch an advertising poster with a mobile phone and you will download music into your phone! Rapidly spreading near field communication will enable numerous applications that will make life easier. Companies in the sector are seeking their own grain of gold and believe that the sector will grow strongly.

Near field communication (NFC), which is based on close reading, is a sub-area of RFID, i.e. radio frequency identification, that enables services obtained by touching. In addition to mobile services, the technology has countless methods of application in other platforms.

"The first NFC application have been paying by mobile phone and purchasing tickets. The various applications are in use in countries such as Malaysia, Great Britain, Austria and Japan," says Project Director **Janne Mustonen** at the Oulu company Oulu Innovation Oy.

"The technology is now spreading strongly to other business areas as well, because NFC offers the most amazing applications. Nobody can say everything that will come from R&D but every company in the field sees enormous potential here."

Finland and Oulu in the lead

In Finland VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland, the City of Oulu and Nokia Corporation are the pacesetters in NFC worldwide. Finnish NFC applications are, for example, always among the leaders in the annual application competitions of NFC Forum, which does standardization work in the field.

"In December of 2007 the City of Oulu was the first city and operator in the public sector to be accepted as a member of NFC Forum," says a happy Mustonen.

At the end of August/beginning of September the City of Oulu once again found fame when the global member meeting of the NFC Forum assembled more than 150 global IT companies in the city, including Sony, Samsung, HP, Visa, Master Card and Nokia.

Mustonen says that getting the meeting for Oulu is the result of long-term work and at the same time a distinction for the innovative work done at Oulu and the skills. Previously meetings have been held in major cities with millions of inhabitants such as Bangkok, Athens, Tokyo and Orlando.

"When the biggest companies in the world and the sector's leading experts come together, the outcome may be something totally unexpected," Mustonen says.



The added value brought by NFC to consumers is obvious. For example, ordering food at a restaurant takes on quite new dimensions.

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