

Agora

– Internationality and Innovation

Agora (in Greek) = a market or a meeting place

The Agora Center is fulfilling the prophecy of its name: for six years now it has acted as a meeting place for humanity and technology, bringing together high-quality research groups from various academic disciplines. The Agora Center facilitates research that integrates the human, social and technology sciences, aiming to develop information technology so that it can address human and social needs.



JYVÄSKYLÄ UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATION

Several international meetings are held in Agora's premises every year.

News in Brief

International Doctoral Students at the University of Jyväskylä

- Networking with foreign universities is important for the university and we have had great success in this, states Eija Ihanainen, Head of Academic Affairs of Faculty of Information Technology in the University of Jyväskylä. In 2004, the Faculty of Information Technology had a new record in foreign doctoral students. At times, half of the doctoral theses published were written by foreign students. Most of the foreign students are from Russia and the Ukraine, but in addition

there are students from 11 other countries. Eija Ihanainen believes that the reasons for Jyväskylä's popularity among foreign students are the high quality of research, its good reputation among the students, and free education.

PaperIT-project looking towards the future

The Agora Center has been acting as a core partner in the successful PaperIT collaboration, a program that has been aiming for more efficient paper manufacturing since the year 2002. With the present project continuing until 2006, PaperIT-partners are already looking forward to the next step, starting in year 2007. The new project will concentrate on

enhancing cooperation between small and large companies and building networks. In addition to the Agora Center, the "Three Titans" Metso Paper, TietoEnator and TeliaSonera will continue with the new project.

Graphogame Makes Reading Easier

The research project *Graphogame*, coordinated by the Agora Center, is an interdisciplinary project that combines language studies, information technology, developmental psychology and neuropsychology. *Graphogame* is an online computer game aimed at children aged 4-7 who are at risk of developing dyslexia. The game helps children to practice the con-



Agora is situated in central Finland in the city of Jyväskylä, watching over the Lake Jyväsjärvi. Agora is a cooperative network which emphasizes a multi-disciplinary, human-centered approach to information technology and to the future knowledge society, where research, education and enterprise are integrated into one functional whole.

Melting Pot for Research and Business

The Agora Human Technology Center was created in September 2000, when the two notions "psycho-center" and "infotech-center" were realized and combined functionally in a new building. The idea of the psycho-center was to integrate research on human behavior and life span. The idea of the infotech-center, realized as the Faculty of Information Technology,

was to combine existing approaches in the field of mathematics and natural sciences with the fields of economics and social sciences. The synergic combination of these two research missions resulted in the Agora Human Technology Center, which organizes research intersecting the Social Sciences with Information Technology.

The Center's collaborators comprise a network of research groups within the University of Jyväskylä's faculties, as well as external regional and international organizations, including other universities, businesses, as well as public organizations. The City of Jyväskylä and local businesses have been active in developing Agora.

The Agora Center is a new kind of melting pot for research, education, enterprises, and the local community. Agora Center's vision is to develop the future knowledge society from a human point of view.

International Approach

In addition to regional and national networking, the Agora Center is also involved in several international collaborations. One example of these projects is Graphogame, an international project aiming to develop computer based games which help children with reading disorders.

Agora also welcomes numerous foreign exchange and doctoral students every year. To enhance international collaboration and the exchange of ideas, several international seminars and meetings are held in Agora's premises every year, bringing together top researchers from all over the world.

Text: KERTTU INKERÖINEN

nection between letters and phonetic forms before the elementary school. At present, children in Finland, Great Britain, Switzerland and the Netherlands play *Graphogame*.

Human Technology - an Academic Online Journal

Human Technology; an Interdisciplinary Journal on Humans in ICT Environments, is a new interdisciplinary online journal launched by the Agora Center. It provides an open access forum for innovative and original research on current and relevant topics with the goal of revealing today's issues regarding the human dimension of evolving technologies, thus providing new ideas and effective solutions for

addressing the challenges. One of the aims is to make the latest research findings on Humans and Technology accessible to both researchers and companies as quickly as possible. *Human Technology* has reached readers from all around the world. The journal can be accessed for free at www.humantechnology.jyu.fi

International Events in Agora

The Agora Center is active in hosting international and interdisciplinary events. One of the most important events in 2005 was the first international SCOMA (Scientific Computing and Optimization in Multidiscipline Applications) seminar in October 2005. The scholars of the SCOMA network represent the interna-

tional top of the scientific computing. (For photos of the seminar, see page 16) In the same month, Agora Center hosted an international psychology conference "Human Development and Its Risk Factors", which brought together academics investigating the human mind from Europe as well as the USA. (For photos of the conference, see pages 24-25)

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