Preface

Context-aware systems

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1. This thematic issue

This issue of JAISE is focused on the theme of Context Awareness. This topic is a key concept in the development of many Ambient Intelligence systems and as such we expect this issue to be well received by the community at large. While the topic of context-aware design has been on the technical agenda of many research groups for more than a decade, there are still several outstanding challenges which stand to keep us busy for some time. For a start, the notion of context is often precisely linked to the application domain and hence is treated as having an ad-hoc nature. Efforts have been concentrated on distilling common features independent from the specificities defined by the application, and on providing universally useful tools which can help enable context-aware methods in all applications. A typical example of such efforts is the creation of languages that can help specify context-aware services. This is still clearly an on-going challenge despite the large collection of publications in this topic, as even after a series of multi-national projects funded by the European Commission there is no adopted standard to specify context-aware features in today's systems. We hope this thematic issue will contribute to shed some light on long-standing challenges and pave the way to the creation of more truly context-aware applications.

This issue also includes a position paper, "Evaluation of Localization and Activity Recognition Systems for Ambient Assisted Living: the Experience of the 2012 EvAAL Competition" by Álvarez-García et al., which explains the EvAAL competition in general and also provides an overview of the latest edition.

As usual for an area active like AmI there are interesting events around the world. The last pages of this issue provide information on some interesting upcoming events and successful vivas by PhD students working in the area.

2. Upcoming issues

As traditional in our journal, the issue to be published in March will be a regular issue and the issue to be published in May will be a Thematic Issue focused on *Agents in Ambient Intelligence and Smart environments*.