

“Always On” a new way of interacting with information and communication technologies in daily life

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“Always On” technology has far reaching implications for the whole of the IT industry. It has implications with regard to how we live our lives, and this paper attempts to outline some of these effects. This information has been obtained by assessing user needs, user trials (using existing ‘early phase’ technology), and writing scenarios of the future of Always On. Amongst the most important findings are that people are concerned about the changes that Always On will bring, in particular regarding the invasion of their privacy and leisure time, and that this technology will increase the amount of time that the users spend online.

Introduction

Always On (AO) is a new and challenging new service concept for service and network providers, as well as for customers. To be permanently present with the customers offers new business opportunities and is seen as an opportunity to strengthen relationships with the customer. AO is the network functionality of providing sustained access for the user with no or minimal use of network capacity when there is no data traffic.

The rapid increase in devices and services, and the positive attitudes of users towards this equipment and its use, give a clue that a change in usage may be permanent. The user’s expectation of mobile connectivity may well transfer to applications and services usually associated with a fixed net. This poses a challenge to most telecom operators, and may well lead to fundamentally different network characteristics than traditional usage has required, in the telephone system, in the cellular net, in cable and other modes of data transportation. The prevalence of smart, portable and even wearable devices may mean that the mobile net will take the lion’s share of this traffic; the development of “wired neighbourhoods” may mean that the competition between wave and wire will be strong. The user will have the last word in these matters. If the AO connectivity is as attractive as many believe, this will change telecommunications.

The main objectives of the AO project were to:

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