

Terms of reference for the TAHI Interoperability Group.

Background

TAHI and DTI

TAHI was formed in 2002 by an independent group of organisations from industry, research and technology institutes and universities. The purposes of TAHI were to:

- Establish guidelines for Interoperability that would allow multiple applications and services to be delivered into the home
- Develop trials that would enable TAHI members to test multiple applications and services in real homes using a wide variety of appliances, devices and displays
- Develop relationships between organisations to help deliver solutions to the market
- Promote the need for Interoperability to a wider audience
- Work with UK government on the development of the market and with the EU on standards

Since 2002, TAHI and its members have achieved much. In particular,

- With DTI support, it has conducted two extensive trials:
 - The Equipment Management Trial (EM) demonstrated extensively the ability to build networks of utility meters, domestic appliances (white goods) and home security.
 - The Service Aggregation Trial (SA) demonstrated the ability to integrate automatic meter reading technology with Broadband and additional services to provide energy efficiency information to the consumer via PC and TV.
- It has produced the 'TAHI Open Architecture'. An open structure designed to help build interoperable solutions, used as the basis for the TEAHA (The European Application Home Alliance) an EU funded project titled 'Towards Secure, Zero-Configuration Seamless Interworking'.
- TAHI has established specialist groups working in the field of Interoperability and its members are active in Europe, particularly within CENELEC and in the development of the Smarthouse initiative. TAHI has had established for some time a working group focused on Energy & Sustainability and this proposal is drawn from members of this forum with highly relevant skills and knowledge.

Authority of group reporting line (Standing expert group set up by TAHI Board)

One of the initial actions of TAHI when it was formed was to create a number of Working Groups. Each of these reports to the TAHI board through a TAHI Board Director who has specific responsibility for the Working Group. TAHI Board has the remit of the members of TAHI to deliver activities within the Scope of TAHI for the Members best interests. In the case of The Technical Working Group (now the Interoperability Group), the Board Member with responsibility for reporting to the Board is Mike Windsor

The TAHI Interoperability Working Group has evolved from the TAHI Technical Working Group. The TWG developed the outlines for an Open Architecture that covers the whole of the residential sector. One of its outputs and realisations is that almost everything is converging in Information & Communications Technology (ICT) and needs to work together. Interoperability is the general term for making things work together across the whole area of ICT services and applications in and for the residential sector.

The group is formed to:

- Define Interoperability Requirements that are universal across ICT Sectors and value chains (Leading to a set of Interoperability Requirements Specifications that may be standardised.)
- To be involved with Interoperability work in UK and International Consortia and Fora and in RTD (Research & Technological Demonstration) Projects. (It is seen that the TAHI Interoperability Group is an ideal centre for ensuring that diverse interoperability projects interoperate among themselves)
- Support the TAHI Industry Sector Groups (ISGs) where they require application interoperability solutions. (Leading to application models that can be standardised)
- Ensure that through interoperability the cost of systems, equipment and products is optimised.

Objectives

For the full range of applications and services relevant to the residential ICT sector:

- Extend the TAHI Open Architecture (TOA) work into developing a set of basic requirements for Interoperability that will influence the development of standards and implementations.
- Be the prime driver for European work on Interoperability to ensure that diverse RTD projects whose aims include "Interoperability" actually align their work. (It is suggested that this might form the basis of a Co-ordination Action under FP7)
- Deliver requirements specifications and detail implementation for the outline requirements of ISGs.
- Promote the ideals of Interoperability in as many communities as possible.

Activities and Outputs.

- The IWG meets approximately once per month to discuss and work on the objectives. It is expected that members will implement actions towards these aims between meetings.
- The IWG and its members will take part in standardisation activities especially in the areas of European ICT (and the scope of CENELEC SmartHouse) to help ensure that a strong set of Interoperability standards are developed and ratified for Europe.
- The IWG and its members will interface with as many RTD projects that have Interoperability as part of their objectives to ensure that any interoperability research is steered towards the general objectives of Interoperability and will therefore interoperate with the work from other RTD projects as possible. This may result in the creation of projects to Co-ordinate interoperability outputs within the UK, across Europe (and internationally)
- The IWG will hold regular Forums as part of the TAHI policy to promote forums of value to industry and its membership.
- Documents of the IWG and produced by it will be made available to IWG and TAHI members.
- Formal release of interim and final drafts and approved documents (according to standard TAHI release procedures).
- Prepare specifications for Interoperability Conformity and the development of a TAHI Conformance requirement

Membership

- The members of the TAHI Interoperability Working Group shall be drawn from the membership of TAHI. (It is accepted that non-TAHI personnel may wish to

attend meetings to evaluate the benefits of joining TAHI, but the number of meetings so attended is to be no more than 2).

- Members of IWG are expected to have a reasonable knowledge of some aspect of Interoperability and contribute to the group.

Funding

- The IWG is currently funded by TAHI and its constituent membership.
- It will seek to become involved in RTD projects that will deliver funding to the group
- It may also carry out consultancy work for other organisations.
- The IWG will work with Government and the EU Commission to seek additional funding.

SP January 2007 Version control to be added.