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## New Cellphone-based Touch Technology Trial at Oulu City Theatre



*Oulu City Theatre Press Release, Thursday November 22nd, free to release*

*Press material, inc. images of the SmartTouch cellphones in action available at Oulu City Theatre website,  
<http://www.ouka.fi/teatteri/kuvagalleria/Kuvasivut/smarttouch.html>*

### New Cellphone-based Touch Technology Trial at Oulu City Theatre

Oulu City Theatre is testing the latest cellphone technology as the first cultural institution in the world. In the SmartTouch pilot project, lasting until December 19th, audiences are testing a set of new touch-based cellphone services while enjoying their evening at the theatre.

Members of the audience can use the touching telephones, equipped with NFC (Near Field Communication) technology, to browse smart posters and download video clips of, for example, a director's words of welcome and scenes from plays. They can also browse through further information in the form of text and images.

An electronic ticket is sent to NFC-enabled cellphones given to pilot users, and the touch technology can be utilized at various points to order refreshments for the intermission in advance; to purchase the programme leaflet for the play; at the door for ticketing; and to order a taxi while departing.

The smart posters offering additional content are placed prominently in the foyer spaces at the theatre, and everyone with access to an NFC-enabled cellphone, not only pilot users, are welcome to experiment with the posters.

Oulu City Theatre and Theatre Restaurant Vänmanni are collaborating in the SmartTouch theatre pilot, which is one of many pilot venues in the city of Oulu. Piloting technology has been

realized by TeliaSonera. The digital media research and development project Neo Arena has also collaborated with the theatre in creating multimedia content.

"Oulu is a city of technology, and so the theatre also wants to welcome new innovations. The world is changing with the rapid development of communications technology, and the arts should keep their finger on the pulse of the times as well. Young people, for example, are quite fluent in the use of new communications and entertainment technology. Still, the heart of the theatre remains a unique, communal experience between the stage and the audience. New technologies are helpful in the challenges of public relations and marketing as well. On the other hand, new technologies have been incorporated into the making of theatre at all levels.", says theatre manager Ahti Ahonen.

### **All of Oulu as a Provider of an Authentic Piloting Environment**

The whole City of Oulu acts as a provider of an authentic piloting environment in the SmartTouch-project, which aims to research applications for touch-based mobile services utilizing Near Field Communications technology. The city's aim is to define new services that are useful for citizens, innovative and easy to use-in collaboration with other members of the consortium, taking advantage of international expertise. The City of Oulu provides a living pilot environment and a client-based approach, while having the opportunity to produce services based on the high technology of the future.

The City of Oulu was the first public sector in the world to utilize Near Field Communication technology in co-operation with the Technical Research Center of Finland (VTT) and Nokia in 2005, as part of the Oulu Innovation Environment project. The SmartTouch project has since piloted, among others, meal services for the elderly, mobile lock management, and SmartParking applications. Next year NFC technology will be brought into schools with various applications to ease the everyday life of educators.

SmartTouch is an ITEA/Eureka project, which focuses on the practical application of NFC technology. The project includes 23 members from eight European countries. The Finnish consortium is comprised of Fara, Idesco, Nokia, TeliaSonera, VTT, Nordea, TopTunniste and the City of Oulu. VTT (Technical Research Center of Finland) is the main coordinator of the entire ITEA SmartTouch project. Financing for the Finnish consortium is provided by TEKES.

### **Further information:**

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On the internet: <http://www.smarttouch.org> and as a video presentation: <http://www.ouka.fi/video/smart/index.html>

See also

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