Intelligent visions for 2050

A forerunner of the 'Home of the Future' will be unveiled when the University's new intelligent apartment - the iDorm2 – is opened later this year.

The official opening will take place during a cutting edge international conference on intelligent environments, hosted by the Department of Computer Science and organised by the Intelligent Inhabited Environments Group.

The conference, organised to celebrate the Department's significant role in artificial intelligence research over much of the University's 40-year history, will also share a vision of what domestic homes might be like in 2050.

Keynote speaker Professor Margarita Gutman from New School University, New York, will give a public lecture based on her projects across three continents: 'New York 2050', 'Barcelona 2050' and 'Buenos Aires 2050'.

The two-bedroomed iDorm2, located within the new Networks Centre on campus, will build on the networked embedded technology developed within its forerunner, the iDorm (intelligent dormitory), which

featured on the BBC *Tomorrow's World* programme in 2002.

Intelligent Environments are becoming one of the most vital topics for industrial and academic research. They are defined as public and private spaces such as cars, shopping malls, work, homes, and even our own bodies, which respond 'thoughtfully' to our individual behaviours.

Commonly such spaces would contain embedded intelligent agents enabling these environments to personalise themselves in response to the occupant's presence and behaviour.

The IEE International Workshop on Intelligent Environments will be held at the University on 28 and 29 June. It will be sponsored by the Institution of Electrical Engineers and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council.

The workshop will bring together researchers from industry and academia from across the world to present their latest research and to discuss future directions. The aim is to stimulate new research and break down barriers between the different disciplines contributing to the concept of intelligent environments.

For further information, see http://iieg.essex.ac.uk/ie05/. ■

Photographed by Van Cols Ltd

The iDorm2's windows look out on to Square 1

Raising awareness of Islam

The University's Islamic Society will be hosting a series of public events in March to celebrate the Muslim faith and way of life.

The events, starting on 7 March, will include lectures, discussions, movie sessions, exhibitions and other social activities.

The aim of the events is to help the University community to understand this diverse religion and the contributions Islamic civilizations have made to the progress of science, political and economic ideology and the arts.

For further information about the programme of events, see the Society's website: http://islamicsociety.sytes.net. ■

Bringing people together

The European Society continues to go from strength to strength.

From having a mere 30 members last year, this year the membership has grown to more than 100 and it is now regarded as one of the largest student societies on campus.

As well as successfully recruiting more members, the Society has also held a number of popular events on campus focusing on the social, cultural and political aspects of Europe.

The European Summer party, organised in cooperation with the Socrates/Erasmus Society and the French Connexion Society, saw a huge turnout - the European music and free sangria luring many students from their studies. A showing of the film *L'Auberge Espagnole* also proved to be very popular. Amongst the activities planned for the new term are more social events, film nights and a discussion about Turkey joining the European Union.

To find out more about the European Society, e-mail eurosoc@essex.ac.uk. ■