Iolaus: A Robotic Partner

Ellen Lau
Interactions Lab
Department of Computer Science
laue@cpsc.ucalgary.ca
University of Calgary

Ehud Sharlin
Interactions Lab
Department of Computer Science
ehud@cpsc.ucalgary.ca
University of Calgary

Ariel Shamir
The Interdisciplinary Center
Efi Arazi School of Computer Science
arik@idc.ac.il
Herzelia, Israel

Purpose
Design a robotic information partner whom the user can ask for information very much as if it were a real person. Iolaus is designed as a companion and acceptable partner that will behave in a socially unobtrusive manner.

Design Goals
The intent is to make Iolaus available to the user at any time. Iolaus should stay with the user to retrieve information as required.

The design and the placement of Iolaus must fit the social norms of the user's environment.

Iolaus will be perched on the user’s shoulder like a parrot. Users can interact very discretely with Iolaus as it is close to the user’s ear.

Interaction Flow

Query Collection: Verbal queries
Data Retrieval: Dynamically retrieve data from information sources.
Analysis: Determine correct answer
Response: Verbal communication with subtle physical movements (i.e. head pointing).

Experimental Implementation
Prototype: Sony Aibo ERS-7M2 robot dog.
Goal: Aibo is to correctly identify and locate a person in a room. The room physically contains the person with other false choices.
Task: Aibo receives verbal query from the user, translates it into text form, autonomously performs a search on the Internet for the information, determines the correct match and responds back to the user.

Iolaus perched on the user’s shoulder.