



GATEBOX

Gatebox is a device that provides **visualization of a virtual coach using a 3D effect** with four features:

- **rear projection** technology ;
- integration through Internet via wireless LAN and **linking with home appliances and other devices via infrared rays** ;
- a camera, microphone and an array of sensors, to **enjoy conversation with the projected character and voice** ;
- ability to develop and distribute **various character applications thanks to a platform**.

FIRST USER'S OPINIONS

Older participants carried out the experiments in Tohoku, Japan.

In general, participants have found the system as easy to use, using only one main button and then being operated entirely by voice. Despite the difficulty encounters with the conversational aspects, participants were eager to talk to the device;

“This is encouraging to see the older adults respond so well interact with a virtual character. Thus, the device must facilitate this ease of speech interaction, and avoid obstructing the natural flow when such conversations are taking place”, is stating a researcher from Tohoku University.

APPEARANCE OF THE CHARACTER "HIKARII"

A very positive aspect is that some participants could consider the device as a support, assisting their current lifestyle at home. They would like the device to integrate their home, to support their daily lifestyle.



However, we should consider end users' preferences on the appearance of the conversation partner. The character needs to be adapted to the choices of end-user, considering age and sex of the partner. Visual identity seems to be important for older adults, to be comfortable in the conversation as well as the needs that need to be fulfilled and topic of conversation linked e.g. management of health or doing exercise.



As a conclusion, these first experiences with Gatebox raises awareness on the importance of the social perception of humanoid characters. If human characters can create uneasiness, a suggestion would be to use fictional characters or even pets.

Based on these firsts conclusions, Gatebox have set up an European character for the test of the forthcoming Wave 1, in Italy, France and Germany, during which older adults will test the device in their home environment.