



Press Release

Erlangen,
August 8, 2008

Erlangen International AudioLabs: Cutting-Edge Research in Germany

The Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft and Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen-Nürnberg have opened the Erlangen International AudioLabs. The center will employ an international team of scientists working on audio and multimedia technologies over the next ten years. The Fraunhofer Institute for Integrated Circuits IIS will invest 60 million euros earned from licensing of mp3 patents to fund this effort.

The AudioLabs will be unique worldwide in both its mission and international approach: At this facility, university scientists will develop new technologies for digital processing of multimedia content with Fraunhofer IIS staff and visiting researchers from around the world. The collaborative venture is intended for at least ten years. Creative synergies between researchers from several disciplines, combined with the many years of audio compression experience at Fraunhofer IIS, will drive future research topics and guarantee continuous innovations. One of the first areas to receive particular attention is music and speech processing, for instance, for development of telephone or conferencing systems that offer CD-quality sound.

Fraunhofer Institute for Integrated Circuits IIS

Am Wolfsmantel 33
91058 Erlangen, Germany

Executive Director

Prof. Dr.-Ing. Heinz Gerhäuser
Director

Prof. Dr.-Ing. Günter Elst

Contact

Matthias Rose
Phone +49 9131 776-6175
Fax +49 9131 776-6099
matthias.rose@iis.fraunhofer.de

Public Relations

Marc Briele
Phone +49 9131 776-1630
Fax +49 9131 776-1649
presse@iis.fraunhofer.de
www.iis.fraunhofer.de

“Fraunhofer IIS in Erlangen has been instrumental in developing worldwide standards such as mp3, AAC and MPEG Surround,” said Prof. Heinz Gerhäuser, Executive Director of Fraunhofer IIS. “Our long-term research collaboration with the university will enable us to expand our global leadership and extend it to other areas of research.”



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Today, more than 100 researchers and 60 students work on new audio and multimedia technologies in the Audio and Multimedia Realtime Systems departments of Fraunhofer IIS, which are headed by Dr. Bernhard Grill and Harald Popp, respectively. AudioLabs will be housed next door to this internationally-renowned team of audio coding developers. This will provide direct access to the institute's state-of-the-art facilities, which include an acoustics laboratory, a recording studio and a movie theater laboratory.

The university, in turn, will create six additional professorships in connection with AudioLabs. "The Erlangen-Nürnberg University is proud to be involved in establishing this international research center and is committed to contributing its share to excellence in research and teaching," said Prof. Karl-Dieter Grueske, Rector of the University Erlangen-Nürnberg. He added that AudioLabs would extend the university's long-standing successful working relationship with Fraunhofer IIS in the future.

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Fax +49 9131 776-6099
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Founded in 1985 the Fraunhofer Institute for Integrated Circuits IIS in Erlangen, today with 585 staff members, ranks first among the Fraunhofer Institutes concerning headcount and revenues. As the inventor of mp3 and co-inventor of the MPEG AAC audio coding standard, Fraunhofer IIS has reached worldwide recognition. It provides research services on contract basis and technology licensing.

The research topics are: Audio and video source coding, multimedia realtime systems, digital radio broadcasting and digital cinema systems, integrated circuits and sensor systems, design automation, wireless, wired and optical networks, localization and navigation, imaging systems and nanofocus X-ray technology, high-speed cameras, medical sensor solutions and communications technology in transport and logistics.

The budget of 61 million Euro is mainly financed by projects from industry, the service sector and public authorities. Less than 20 percent of the budget is subsidized by federal and state funds.