

A Milestone in the Transmission of Video - The Vodafone Foundation Awards its 2009 Innovation Prize to Professor Wiegand

Date: 07-01-2009 12:33 PM CET

Category: [IT, New Media & Software](#)

Press release from: [Fraunhofer HHI](#)



The Vodafone Foundation for Research Honors the Achievement of Professor Thomas Wiegand

Videos on the Internet, mobile phones, and Blu-ray-Discs probably wouldn't be what they are today without Professor Thomas Wiegand. The Berlin-based scientist has played a decisive role in the development of the H.264 video standard and for his effort, he has been awarded the 2009 Vodafone Foundation for Research Innovation Prize. The accolade acknowledges his accomplishments, which have significantly advanced the encoding and conveyance of motion pictures. Mobile communications networks in particular have benefitted from the high quality and effective compression of modern video standards.

This year's Vodafone Innovation Prize goes to a German scientist who enjoys the very highest level of recognition internationally: Professor Wiegand has already been honored twice with the renowned American television prize the "Emmy", and he leads the world's most important group of developers working on the standardization of video signals. His team at Berlin's Fraunhofer Heinrich Hertz Institute made a major contribution to the success of the H.264 video compression process.

Vodafone Germany's CEO Fritz Jousen commented, "In honoring Professor Wiegand, we recognize a true pioneer in the use of modern media. His endeavors were the first to make high-quality videos in mobile communications networks possible - and they will shape how we enjoy films or television on the go in the future. Berlin's Technical University and Fraunhofer Heinrich Hertz Institute have certainly benefitted from a scientist of his caliber, but so, too, has the whole German research community."

The H.264 video standard, whose complete name is actually H.264 ISO/IEC 14996-10 MPEG-4 AVC, is applied in various transmission modalities. HDTV programs employ it, as do Blu-ray players, iPods, and videos on the Internet (IPTV) and mobile communication networks (MobileTV). The advantage of H.264 is its powerful data compression with no visible quality loss: a video file is only about half as big as with previous procedures.

Future video-encoding processes will offer completely different possibilities, making it possible, for example to analyze movies fully automatically so they can be catalogued by search engines. Research goals also include 3-D environments and video streams with a 360-degree-panorama, and Professor Dr. Wiegand and his team are already at work in these areas.

In presenting the Innovation Prize and grants since 1997, the Vodafone Foundation for Research has acknowledged

exceptional scientific exploration. The preference has tended toward scientists from the German-speaking countries. A jury composed of eminent representatives of science and industry makes the award to both individuals and groups.

With Dr. Ralf Schaefer, Professor Thomas Wiegand leads the Image Processing Department at the Fraunhofer Heinrich Hertz Institute. He has held the Technical University of Berlin's Chair of Image Communication at the Institute for Telecommunications Systems since summer 2008.

More information and photos are available at:

www.vodafone-stiftung-fuer-forschung.de

Fraunhofer Institute for Telecommunications, Heinrich Hertz Institute

World leaders in the development of mobile and fixed communication networks and their key applications

Founded in 1928, over the course of its more than 80 year history the Fraunhofer Institute for Telecommunications, Heinrich-Hertz-Institut,

has developed into one of the world's leading research institutes for the development of mobile and fixed communication networks and

the key technologies that drive them. Today's R&D focus is on electronic imaging and interactive media, communication networks and photonic components.

In 2008 the Institute had an operating budget of approx. 25 million Euro. The ratio of third party funding lay at 76 percent of which 42 came from industry, 31 percent from contract research for the Federal Government and individual State Governments and 22 percent from funding by the European Union. At

the beginning of 2009 the Institute had a staff of some 250 employees and some 80 students.

Contact

Prof. Dr.-Ing. Thomas Wiegand

Fraunhofer Heinrich Hertz Institute

Tel +49 (0)30 31002-617

eMail thomas.wiegand@hhi.fraunhofer.de

Technical Berlin University

Tel +49 (0)30 314-28777

Mobile: +49 (0)172-3813814

eMail thomas.wiegand@tu-berlin.de

[You can find this press release here](#)