

# UU in 'blue-skies' research project

**T**he University of Ulster has won a competitive bid to take part in a EU-funded 'blue skies' research project to develop the next generation of networks - networks that can think for themselves.

The three year project has a 5m Euro (£3.36m) budget and involves 14 partners from throughout Europe.

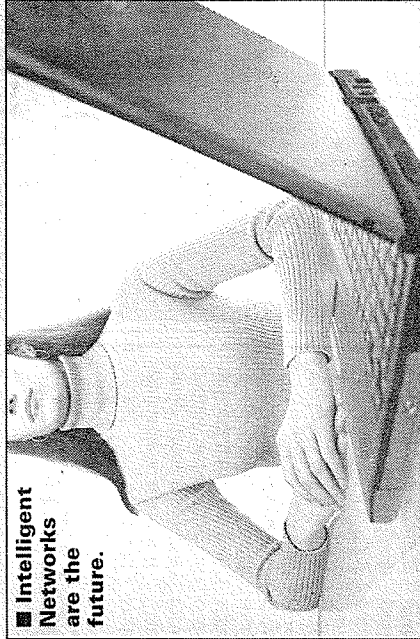
The University's team - Maurice Mulvenna and Dr Chris Nugent, senior lecturers in Computer Science in the School of Computing and Mathematics and Dr Kevin Curran, lecturer in Computer Science in the School of Computing and Intelligent Systems - will contribute their expertise in next-generation networking and artificial intelligence systems.

Mr. Mulvenna said:

"Computers are a common feature of our everyday life and are becoming more and more complex. But their complexity implies more and more human intervention is needed to configure them and to make sure that they work properly.

"Essentially the aim of CASCADAS is to develop networks that can - to an extent - think for themselves. Ideally the systems could run themselves better with little human influence. Of course, this is of great interest to

Intelligent Networks are the future.



business as it offers lower cost services in computing and networks."

The potential of networks that can think for themselves is tremendous and could include cheaper, more effective, monitoring in their own homes

A self-managing network of sensors could flag up problems when they occur without constant monitoring. That would enable healthcare organisations to offer more focused care, more cheaply and more effectively. The UU is already involved in 'smart homes' research and this new research project will complement that work.

## Individual needs

Mobile phones provide an increasing number of services to users, but these services increasingly require each customer to configure the device to their individual needs. CASCADAS offers the possibility of network services that configure and optimise themselves, promoting uptake for telecommunications

companies.

Mr. Mulvenna added: "Most networks only carry information. What we will be exploring is how to make networks aware of what they are carrying and to make decisions based on that information."

CASCADAS is funded by the prestigious Future & Emerging Technologies (FET) section of the European Commission's Information Society Technology (IST) priority, part of the EU Framework Programme for Research and Development. FET is the IST Programme

nursery for novel and emerging scientific ideas. Its mission is to promote research that is of a long-term nature or involves particularly high risks, compensated by the potential of a significant societal or industrial impact.