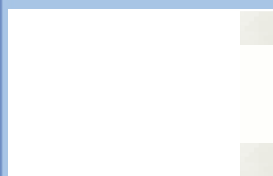




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## Functional Products on the market within two years

Professor Yoshiki Shimomura of Tokyo Metropolitan University thinks that, so called Functional Products, or Product Service Systems will replace the development of traditional, physical products in Japanese industrial companies within a couple of years, putting the companies at great challenge.

Professor Shimomura was one of the participants of the conference "Functional Products - Development and Sales", co-organised by the Division of Functional product development, the Faste Laboratory, and VINNOVA, during 24-25th of October.

- Today, Japanese companies have problem in identifying needs of customers, resulting in decrease in sales, according to professor Shimomura. One important reason is that companies often forget to find the customer value of the product. To develop competitive products, new methods are needed to identify needs of customers. This goes for both business-to-business, as business-to-consumer industries. I'd like myself to buy PSS that fills important needs of my everyday life.

Professor Shimomura and his research group collaborates with several universities in Europe regarding the PSS area.

- The conference in Luleå is a great opportunity to discuss new

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collaborative projects, he says.

PSS, or Functional Product Development, is about developing products/services that are rooted in the needs of the customer regarding the life-cycle view of the customer. The implication is that you as a customer buy, not only a cell phone, but a package of services tightly coupled to the developed phone, like maintenance, repairs, recycling etc.

- For the companies this view on product development puts great challenges.

To early on in the development process find out about the needs, Needfinding, is one of the challenges. Another challenge is to develop methods, production systems and processes where costs for maintenance, recycling etc. are included already in product development, ha summarizes.

Besides some 60 researchers from Japan, Germany, Denmark, Finland and Sweden, company representatives from Japan and Sweden were among the visitors of the conference./Åsa Svedjeholm



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