

## Flotation tank phone rings with success in tech prize

A NUMBER of research projects at Media Lab Europe (MLE) have received international acclaim in the last week.

Two separate initiatives received Honorary Mentions at the 2004 Prix Ars Electronica, the prestigious international competition for Cyberarts in Austria. The competition is open to artists, scientists, researchers and developers who are invited to submit digital media design contributions in relation to technology, art, science and society.

The projects honoured the Iso-phone in the Interactive Art category and BumpList in the Netvision category.

The Iso-phone is a service that can be described as a meeting of the telephone and the floatation tank. The user is immersed in a tank wearing a helmet and all peripheral sensory stimulation is blocked out while the head is kept above the surface of the water. By blocking out outside noises and distractions, the Iso-phone claims to create a telephonic communication space of heightened purity and focus.

BumpList is a mailing list aiming to re-examine the culture and rules of online email lists. BumpList only allows for a maximum amount of subscribers so that when a new person subscribes, the first person to subscribe is 'bumped', or unsubscribed from the list. Once subscribed, you can only be unsubscribed if someone else joins and 'bumps' you off. The focus of the project is to determine whether by attaching simple rules to communication media, the method and manner of correspondences that occur as well as behaviours of connection will change over time.