

NTT DOCOMO and Panasonic Collaborate on Pilot Experiment for Full Time Connected IoT Home Appliances Using LPWA Wireless Communication Technology

Tokyo/Osaka, Japan - NTT DOCOMO, INC. and Panasonic Corporation today announced that they have agreed in principle to collaborate on a pilot experiment aimed at creating a business model and developing and verifying technologies towards realizing IoT-based home appliances utilizing Low Power Wide Area (LPWA) technologies. Tests are scheduled to start this fall, with a total of about 1,000 units of LPWA-enabled home appliances deployed in Tokyo, Osaka and Shiga Prefecture, located northeast of Osaka. This will be the first trial in Japan^{*1} that envisions a large number of home appliances connected to LPWA networks on a nationwide scale.

Because LPWA enables long-distance and low power communication, it is attracting a lot of attention from a wide variety of industries as the best suited wireless technology for the Internet of Things (IoT). DOCOMO, Japan's leading mobile operator, is actively promoting services using LPWA technologies. Panasonic has already introduced IoT-enabled home appliances that connect to cloud services via a smartphone or the internet. At present, customers need to individually set up network connectivity to use cloud services. IoT-enabled home appliances with LPWA technologies would allow users without internet connection at home to access cloud services through LPWA technologies, simply by switching on the appliance.

Panasonic, in September 2017, started offering services using DOCOMO's natural language dialogue engine^{*2} that enable users of its Blu-ray recorders and portable TVs to search and schedule programs from their smartphone. The two companies will work together to plan and examine home appliances that are more safe and secure to use equipped with LPWA, as well as devising convenient and user-friendly home appliances powered by artificial intelligence (AI). The companies will also work on cloud services for IoT-based home appliances, eyeing the use of DOCOMO's AI Agent Service^{*2} due this spring in order to respond accurately to the individual needs of each user through dialogue.

Once DOCOMO and Panasonic establish a business model and technology for IoT-enabled home appliances with LPWA communication technology in the trial, they will proceed to the commercial phase. Going forward, they aim to create new experiences and values for customers in the IoT era by connecting millions of Panasonic's LPWA-enabled IoT home appliances per year to the cloud services of DOCOMO and Panasonic via DOCOMO's nationwide wide-area communication network.

Notes:

*1: As of March 1, according to Panasonic data

*2: Services for smartphone and tablet users that use NTT DOCOMO's "AI Agent API" consisting of a proactive support engine and a multipurpose dialogue engine, which are part of the NTT Group's AI called "corevo®," and an IoT access control engine. "corevo" is a registered trade mark of Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corporation.
(<http://www.ntt.co.jp/corevo/e/about.html>)

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