Got Elves?

By Jean Oh

Have you ever been stuck at the airport because your flight was delayed or even cancelled? It would be great if someone monitors the status of a flight and lets us know when there is a critical change. It may be a tedious job for humans to check the status of a flight every minute, and well, that’s what (the) machines are for.

The Elves Dynamic Travel Folder is a (software) multi-agent system that can monitor various aspects of a trip for travelers. (Travel) Elves monitoring agents provide immediate notification of changes and cancellations through the user’s preferred notification device such as a text message to a cellular phone or e-mail. There are existing commercial systems that provide small pieces of these various capabilities, but our technology and application is unique in providing a complete end-to-end solution for (Continued on page 8)

A PALM VII with a GLOBAL POSITION SYSTEM (GPS) RECEIVER. The GPS, a collection of 24 earth-orbiting satellites, has a number of possible applications, spanning across several areas of society. The basic function of a GPS receiver is to figure out its location on Earth. It does this by communicating with at least four satellites overhead. For this reason, a GPS receiver is limited as to where it can function. Since it has to be able to “see” the satellites, it usually doesn’t work inside. Nevertheless, a standard GPS receiver will not only place you on a map at any particular location, but will also trace your path across a map as you move.
Schedule of Events

- March 1, 2002 – Craig Knoblock and Kristina Lerman’s Birthday!
- March 2, 2002 – Lauri Grier’s Birthday!
- March 8, 2002 – Maria Muslea’s Birthday!
- March 11, 2002 – Jeff Rickel’s birthday!
- April 5, 2002 – Greg Barish’s Birthday!
- April 25-27, 2002 – AIPS 2002: Toulouse, France. The format of the conference will be a 3 day, single track, technical program, highlighted by 3 invited talks. This technical program will be preceded by 2 days of workshops and tutorials by the 3rd edition of AIPS planning and scheduling competition. AIPS’02 will be co-located with the 8th International Conference on Principles of Knowledge Representation and Reasoning (KR’02), the 2nd International Conference on Knowledge Systems for Coalition Operations (KSC’02), and the 8th International Workshop on Non-Monotonic Reasoning (NMR’02).

MARCH 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sun</th>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Tue</th>
<th>Wed</th>
<th>Thu</th>
<th>Fri</th>
<th>Sat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APRIL 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sun</th>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Tue</th>
<th>Wed</th>
<th>Thu</th>
<th>Fri</th>
<th>Sat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THE INSIDER
MAY 2002

Schedule of Events

- May 1, 2002 – COLING 2002: Notification to Authors.
- May 8, 2002 – Jafar Adibi’s Birthday!
- May 12, 2002 – Kenji Yamada’s Birthday!
- May 19-22, 2002 – dg.o 2002: Crowne Plaza Redondo Beach & Marina Hotel. Vint Cerf, sometimes called the Father of the Internet, will open the conference. Panels, papers, system demonstrations, birds-of-a-feather themes, and case studies are invited, relating to any aspect of digital government, such as: privacy and security, Government and social policy, technology transfer: from research lab to Government use, data integration and statistics, cooperation among federal, state and local government agencies, delivery and tracking of public services, commercial and economic incentives for Digital Government, useful and user-friendly interfaces and human-computer interaction, multimedia presentation of geospatial, textual, audio-visual, statistical and other information, delivery of public surveys and data gathering. As a special theme, the conference will highlight personal and societal safety in today’s digital world.
- May 27, 2002 – ISI Holiday!

ISD Publications


Hello, I am Rajat, currently in my first year for the PhD program in Computer Science at USC. I am working with Dr. Lewis Johnson in the ESPEECH project since this spring.

I am from India where I completed my bachelor's in Computer Science and Engineering and worked in the industry for a couple of years before I decided to go for some meaningful research through a PhD program.

I have found California to be a very nice place and ISI to be a very productive workplace.

Apart from Computer Science I am interested in music - especially of the classical variety - both Indian and Western. Unfortunately never learnt any instrument though I still haven’t lost hope of doing so at some point in my life (if you know one and would like to teach me do let me know J). I used to be fairly interested in literature till CS books elbowed out the others since I was in college. O' Henry is one of my favorite short story writer.

(Continued on page 5)
Well more about me when we meet - since you took interest to read this I hope to catch you sometime in ISI and get to know you better. Cheers.

MANISHA JOSHI
MJOSHI@ISI.EDU

Hi,

My name is Manisha. I am a graduate student working for Prof Eduard Hovy.

I was in born in a city called Kolhapur in India. I did my schooling in Pune very near to Kolhapur. Pune is a city well known for good education. It is also a very beautiful place to live because of the pleasant weather.

I studied in the University of Pune, and obtained a Bachelor's degree in Computer Engineering. I worked in a software company as a systems engineer in India for 2 years, before coming to the United States.

Before coming to Los Angeles I was in Illinois in a very small place called Urbana Champaign.

SHOU-DE LIN
SDLIN@ISI.EDU

Hello, I am Shou-de Lin. I came from Taiwan, the beloved small island (The CIA fact book mentions Taiwan is slightly smaller than Maryland and Delaware combined) where I spent the all my childhood with my family. I received my BS degree in Electrical Engineering department, National Taiwan University before coming to University of Michigan in Ann Arbor three years ago for further study. I worked with Prof Michael Wellman as a member of Trading Agent Competition development team and received my master degree in EECS department last year. I enjoyed the peaceful life in Ann Arbor except for the bone-chilling cold winter. Afterwards I transferred to USC and now pursuing my Ph.D. degree in the computer science department.

I’m currently working with Dr. Hans Chalupsky as the third member in Loom knowledge representation group on KOJAK (http://www.isi.edu/~hans/eeld/) project, which seems to me an interesting and challenging aspect in AI.

I am currently living in the southern part of USC, which is said to be a not-so-nice area. But as my roommate, who is a CS Ph.D. student from Yugoslavia, said "If there is no good guy like us to move into this area, then it will never been turned into a good area", and I buy it! The good thing of living there is that it takes just half an hour driving to go everywhere (ISI, Best-buy, Walmart, Disney, Little Taipei...). The bad thing is I have to drive half an hour no matter where I’d like to go.

As to my hobbies, I enjoy Chinese literature(prose, novel, Essay) writing and occasionally contribute a piece of writing for publishing back in my country. I used to play bridge while I was young. I like it very much but unfortunately I have not found partners

(Continued on page 11)
Last month, the AI-Grads held their semi-annual Beginning-of-Semester lunch at the C&O Trattoria on Washington Boulevard. AI-Grads is an informal group consisting mainly of graduate students here in ISD. It is hard to define what it is we actually do, but one thing is certain, we try to have fun doing it and we try to make the ISD graduate student experience more social and enjoyable for all. In particular, at the beginning of each semester, we get together for a group lunch. The purpose of this lunch is to meet the new students who arrive at ISD every semester, perhaps say goodbye to departing students, and of course, to just catch up with those we may not see regularly around the 9th floor.

16 people attended the AI-Grads lunch on January 30th --- many of whom did not previously know each other. Many interesting discussions could be heard around the table: "What courses are you taking this semester?", "Did you schedule your qual yet?", and of course: "So when are you finishing up?". It was an especially notable lunch since it also marked the end of the student careers of two legendary pillars of AI-Grads: Drs. Sheila Tejada and Jafar Adibi. Congratulations to them both, their presence in AI-Grads will be missed. Finally, these lunches are generously paid for by ISD and the AI-Grads would like to say thanks to Yigal for supporting us.

Other semi-regular activities of AI-Grads include Friday evening gatherings at the On-the-Waterfront Cafe in Venice Beach (Phillip Koehn is the man to see.) Stop by if you can!

For more information on AI-Grads, check out the AI-Grad's webpage – http://www.isi.edu/isd/ai-grads.

Note to Project Leaders: When you hire new graduate students, please inform them of the AI-Grads group, perhaps by pointing them to our webpage. Thanks!
Sheila Tejada passed her PhD defense December 12, 2001! 😊 YAY!!!

Jafar Adibi passed his PhD defense January 14, 2002! 😊 YAY!!!

Varun Ratnakar as a new research programmer working with Yolanda Gil. Varun was a GRA in the EXPECT group since last January, and just joined our group after graduating with a Masters from USC. Varun brings us expertise in Web-based user interfaces and tools as well as semantic Web markup languages. He developed our new TRELLIS interface for annotating decisions and information analysis (trellis.semanticweb.org).

New Research Contracts at ISI

Congratulations to Carl Kesselman, Yolanda Gil, and Hans Chalupsky on the SCEC-ITR: The SCEC Community Modeling Environment: An Information Infrastructure for System-Level Earthquake Research award on October 1, 2001! USC Southern California Earthquake Center (Geophysics Dept) is lead on this project. ISI funds go to both Div 8 and Div 3. This project is a five-year, multi-site collaboration to develop an integrated framework for creating, executing, and managing physics-based earthquake simulations required to predict strong ground motions. Working with members of the Southern California Earthquake Center (SCEC), the goal is to provide effective delivery of simulation products to a broad-based user community of geophysicists, civil and structural engineers, city planners, and emergency managers.

The plan for this project is to develop new techniques for describing, configuring and executing complex computational pathways resulting from the composition of various simulation components. This entails solving a number of challenging problems in information technology. Many object types must be manipulated, and a number of algorithms must be employed. Algorithm inputs and outputs can be very complex and take different meanings for users in different disciplines. Models are developed in distributed collaborations, and any model component may require access to remote databases and data sets, as well as require remote high-performance computing resources for its execution.

To solve these problems, this project will build on technology from three research groups at ISI: 1) knowledge representation and reasoning, by the PowerLoom project, to manage the heterogeneity of the simulation models and capture the complex relationships between physical processes, research simulation models, simulation code, and data products; 2) Grid resource-sharing environments, through ISI’s Center for Grid Computing and Globus, to support the execution of simulation scenarios in high performance computing resources; and 3) interactive knowledge capture, by the EXPECT project, to enable users with a wide range of sophistication to compose multi-step simulations from libraries of simulation codes and data. While the work will focus on seismic hazard analysis, the techniques and integrated modeling framework that will be developed in this project will be applicable to many other disci-
Elves, cont.

(Continued from page 1)

Elves also recommended five closest restaurants based on the location of his hotel. In addition to these, Travel Elves can monitor the flights leaving earlier than the scheduled one, keep track of the status of the connecting flights and (its) gate information, and (do) many more (things) tasks.

This neat service is now available for free to ISD insiders exclusively. Go to the Travel Elves site (http://www.isi.edu/e-elves/travel) for more information and register today!

New Contracts, cont.

(Continued from page 7)

Congratulations to Ed Hovy on the CORCO: Content Representation Canonical Ontology award November 30, 2001! CORCO. What kinds of knowledge can one learn, and how accurately can one learn in a structured knowledge base by reading newspaper and other text? This project assembles a number of existing and to-be-developed methods into a toolkit that extracts information about concepts and instances (e.g., unleaded gas is a type of gasoline; Schwartzengger is an actor; Chernobyl is a place). The ultimate aim is to build models of new domains automatically.

“Thank you for calling. Please leave a message. In case I forget to check my messages, please send your message as an audio file to my e-mail, then send me a fax to remind me to check my e-mail, then call back to remind me to check my fax.”
Where in ISD?

Do you look around your colleague’s offices when you visit them? Check out the neat things they have? Test your observation skills! Where in the division can you find these items?

Object 1 = Liz Hall's Office (RM 902); Object 2 = Kate Labore's Office (RM 926); Object 3 = Lauri Griar's Office (RM 925); Object 4 = Jean Oh's Office (RM 903)
Here's something for you to do...

Each of the 12 items below is a separate puzzle. First person to figure out all 12 gets one (1) free snack from the Div 3 snack cart!!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birth</td>
<td>1111</td>
<td>Death</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YELLA</td>
<td>VADER</td>
<td>1 T 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>GET IT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>older</td>
<td>JET</td>
<td>busines</td>
<td>HOROBOD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
to play in LA yet. I played Ultimate Frisbee in Ann Arbor and again, have not gotten a chance to play here. If you are trying to recruit people for these above activities or intend to know more about me, please send me an email or drop by my office (944, the same one with Jay).

MACK REED
MACK@ISI.EDU

Mack Reed has joined ISI project to overhaul the NSF's Digital Government web site (http://www.diggov.org) and communications strategy.

A Connecticut native, Reed was a journalist for 17 years, most recently at the Los Angeles Times, where he worked for seven years as a staff writer (and sometime columnist). He covered a gamut of beats at the times, from criminal courts, defense contract fraud and natural disasters to the California AIDS Ride and the Burning Man festival.

He left the Times in 1997 to join Cox Interactive Media's bid to establish a nationwide network of urban portal sites (http://www.cimedia.com).

After helping design, launch and oversee content development and production at OCnow.com in Orange County for Cox, he developed, launched and ran Cox's Los Angeles-based portal, LAinsider.com.

The Cox sites provided free databases of events listings, classified ads and hiking trail maps, as well as live traffic maps and online communities. But the burgeoning online ad recession forced the company to shutter LAinsider last fall, and Reed found his way to ISI. OCnow is still operating.

An incurable dabbler, Reed juggles hobbies including photography, sailing, musical instrument construction and velocipede restoration and endurance testing. He lives in West L.A. with his wife and two young children. His online home is Factoid Labs: http://www.well.com/~factoid/

He can be found in Room 707 Monday-Thursday, 8:30 - 5, or any time at mack@isi.edu.

LEI QU
LEIQU@USC.EDU

Hi! This is Lei Qu. I was born in QingDao, China. It is a small city near the sea, very beautiful and peaceful. I got my Bachelor and Master of Computer Science in Peking University. I came to USA in August 2001. At first I went to Resseenalae in New York State to pursue my Ph.D degree. After half a year, I transferred to USC because my wife is also studying here and there are interesting projects in ISI.

I like sports, such as swim, basketball, tennis and so on. I also like pc games, like Quake, sc... I enjoy them! But I cannot spend much time on them now, L. I like the beautiful environment here and nice people in ISI. I will like it more if I can spend few time to reach ISI.

MAKOTO YOKOO
YOKOO@ISI.EDU

Makoto Yokoo, founder of distributed constraint satisfaction algorithms and many other multi-agents and agents concepts, and member of board of directors of Inter. Foundation for Multi-agents, received the B.E. and M.E. degrees in electrical engineering, in 1984 and 1986, respectively, form the University of Tokyo, Japan, and the Ph.D. degree in information and communication engineering in 1995, from the University of Tokyo, Japan. He is visiting ISI for the month of February 2002 and working with Milind Tambe.