

Applied AI News

By David Blanchard

Color Tile Inc. (Fort Worth, Tex.), a home improvement retailer, has automated its help desk operations with an expert system. The system has reduced time spent by store personnel on the telephone seeking answers to point-of-sale technical problems, and it allows the help desk analysts to handle a wider range of responsibilities for the company.

Traversum AB, a company that specializes in share and stock dealing in the Swedish stock exchange, has developed an intelligent system to advise on how to deal in stocks and shares. The company's "hit rate" of dealing correctly with stocks has reportedly increased from 60% to 90%.

IntelliCorp Inc. (Mountain View, Calif.), an expert system vendor, and James Martin & Co. (Reston, Va.), a computer-aided software engineering (CASE) consulting group, have launched a field test program for an object-oriented information engineering environment. The new product, called Object Management Workbench, directly supports rapid application development, and will either generate a system immediately or draw information from currently available CASE tools based on James Martin's Information Engineering methodology.

Kurzweil AI Inc. (Waltham, Mass.), a developer of turnkey medical applications of speech recognition technology, has been awarded a federal grant totaling more than \$380,000 to complete the development of a commercially viable voice-activated clinical reporting system for gastroenterology. The grant will result in a commercial product called VoiceGI, which will permit gastroenterologists to use voice to create report texts and capture associated digital images during patient examinations, and store them in a database format.

First USA Bank (Philadelphia, Penn.), a provider of Visa and MasterCard services, has installed a neural network-based credit card fraud detection system. The Falcon system, developed by HNC Inc. (San Diego, Calif.), employs neural network technology to learn and identify unusual transaction patterns that are indicative of fraudulent charges.

The Monsanto Co. (St. Louis, Mo.), a producer of chemicals and fibers, has signed a licensing agreement with Gensym Corp. (Cambridge, Mass.) to use Gensym's G2 as its recommended system for developing and deploying on-line expert system applications. Linked to Monsanto's control system, G2 continuously monitors the chemical process, enhancing an operator's ability to look into the process to avoid accidents, improve product quality and increase on-stream time.

DARPA, the R&D Branch of the US Department of Defense, is sponsoring an effort to assess the state of the art of natural language text-processing systems — computers that can read and make sense of documents written in everyday English. The evaluation effort involves 16 teams doing natural language research — half from industry and contract research organizations, and half from universities.

Union Electric (St. Louis, Mo.), an energy utility, has installed a speech recognition system, developed by AT&T (New York, N.Y.), to improve customer service. Calls from touch-tone or rotary telephones can now be automatically routed to the appropriate service group, such as billing or trouble reporting. Emergency calls are automatically given priority in the event of a service outage.

Talarian Corp. (Mountain View, Calif.), vendor of the RTworks real-time expert system development tool, has signed a site license agreement with Pacific Gas & Electric Co. (San Francisco, Calif.). PG&E intends to use RTworks to operate and control its electric utilities system, as well as to improve its operating efficiency.

The NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory (Pasadena, Calif.) is using a virtual reality stereo viewing system to accurately analyze and interpret pictures of Venus being sent back to Earth by the Magellan space probe. The system, developed by StereoGraphics (San Rafael, Calif.), uses a video projector equipped with a modulator to polarize images which are projected onto a 4" x 3.5" screen. Viewers wear passive eye wear which allows each eye to view the appropriate image, thereby providing depth perception.

Inference Corp. (El Segundo, Calif.), a supplier of expert system development tools, has teamed up with IDS Financial Services (Minneapolis, Minn.) to jointly develop Macintosh versions of Inference products. IDS plans to use the products to implement its enterprise-wide application development and systems downsizing strategy, which includes moving from a host-based to a client/server environment that supports multiple computing platforms.

Microsoft Corp. (Redmond, Wash.), the software market leader, has adopted speech recognition technology in its Windows Sound System, a set of software applications and an add-in sound board that provides audio features for business computing. Using technology developed by Dragon Systems Inc. (Newton, Mass.), the Windows Sound System includes Voice Pilot, which provides voice command/control of the system and related software applications.

Cybertek-Cogensys (Dallas, Tex.) has licensed its Judgment Processing expert system to Great Western Bank (Phoenix, Ariz.), a federal savings bank, for use in its mortgage lending operation.

David Blanchard is editor of *Intelligent Systems Report*, the monthly newsletter of applied artificial intelligence. For further details on the above stories, or to report information on other applications of AI, contact ISR at 2555 Cumberland Parkway, Suite 299, Atlanta, GA 30339, (404) 434-2187, FAX: (404) 432-6969. Subscription price: \$299 for 12 issues.