

State and Local

Research program drawing clients

A&M works on artificial intelligence

By Curtis Leonard
Reporter

Researchers at Texas A&M are developing artificial intelligence programs that are attracting such clients as the Chrysler Corp., the U.S. Air Force and Scott and White Medical Clinic.

Artificial intelligence is one of the newest areas of research for the Texas Engineering Experiment Station, but it already houses one of the largest collections of artificial intelligence applications development software in the country.

The artificial intelligence lab, known as the Knowledge Based Systems Laboratory, has been in existence for about a year and a half, director Richard Mayer says.

Mayer defines artificial intelligence as "the scientific discipline of how people acquire and use knowledge."

A&M researchers are creating software and computer systems that will do the mental work of humans. They are attempting to make computers more productive, easier to use, and, in effect, smarter.

By using artificial intelligence applications software, people in a certain field can access highly valuable

information that has been gathered by experts, Mayer says. Some information would be difficult or impossible to obtain in a usable form without such systems, he says.

Bill Knappenberger, systems analyst for advanced manufacturing of Chrysler Corp. in Detroit, says, "The lab has already completed two prototype systems that were delivered recently to the Chrysler Corp. in the area of automotive engineering."

One of the prototype systems, the cooling systems adviser, aids in the designing of an automobile's radiator, shroud and fan, Knappenberger says.

The other prototype, the fastener selection adviser, helps engineers choose the best type of fasteners for two automotive components, he says.

"There are about 3,000 to 4,000 different fasteners that range from everything to nuts and bolts to tiny glue strips," Knappenberger says. "There are only three experts on fasteners, and the AI (artificial intelligence) system will take some of the current tedium out of fastener selection for the experts."

Both systems are being used in a very limited domain, he says, and

delivery systems are being designed for widespread use.

Chrysler says it is pleased with the work done so far, and other projects for engineering and manufacturing are planned for the future, Knappenberger says.

The lab also is working on an information management system for the U.S. Air Force.

Mayer says A&M researchers are working on a system with several other universities and businesses that will link the different offices and departments of the Air Force with businesses. Linking departments will help increase the productivity of white-collar workers, he says.

The problem now is that most of the departments have different computers which use different languages and data bases, he says.

For example, he says, it's hard for manufacturing and engineering departments to share data when their computing systems are different. Yet communication between the two is vital, he says.

Mayer says the biggest problem with developing a system is getting different departments to agree on the meaning of words.

He says "oil well," for example, means one thing to engineers, something else to manufacturers and still something else to an accounting department.

Scott and White Medical Clinic, which recently opened its doors in College Station, is working with the lab to set up a new type of patient information system.

If data on patients could be cross-listed and a system designed to "read between the lines," medical research would benefit immensely, Mayer says.

For example, if the patient's information sheet says a person was born and raised in a particular city and then moved elsewhere to go to college, Mayer says he would want the artificial intelligence program to realize that the person had spent about 17 years in the city he was born in and then list that person along with other asthma patients who lived in the same city.

This type of record comparison and research is impractical for a doctor to perform manually, Mayer says.

In Advance

Apartheid protest march scheduled

Students Against Apartheid is sponsoring a march against apartheid today at 4:30 p.m. The protest march will begin across the street from College Station

City Hall and will go through campus to Rudder Fountain. The march is to protest investment by Texas A&M in companies in South Africa.

Dutch soprano to perform at Rudder

Critically acclaimed Dutch soprano Elly Ameling will bring German art songs, or "lieder," to Texas A&M tonight at 8 in Rudder Auditorium.

Ameling's appearance, sponsored by the Memorial Student Center's Opera and Performing Arts Society, will feature pieces by Ludwig van Beethoven, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Franz Schubert, Robert Schumann, Johannes Brahms, Felix Mendelssohn and Franz Liszt. Pianist Rudolf Jansen will accompany Ameling.

The "lied," a combination of poetry and music written for piano and voice, has its origins in 19th-century Germany. The lieder were originally written to be sung and enjoyed in homes but later became a popular form

of entertainment for the stage. Germany poetry, particularly the works of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, provided the text for the lieder that usually dealt with nature, legends and love.

Ameling is considered to be one of the world's best female concert singers of the lieder. She performs in several cities around the world each year.

This year critics honored Ameling with the title "La Vestale Del Lied," an Italian term that proclaims she is among the best of women performers of the German art song. Ameling has worked to encourage other singers by establishing the Elly Ameling Lied Prize, awarded each year at the International Vocal Competition of s'Hertogenbosch held in the Netherlands.

Senate to look at evaluation policy

A resolution suggesting uniform course/instructor evaluations be given all Texas A&M professors will be considered by the Faculty Senate in its meeting Monday in 601 Rudder Tower at 3:15 p.m.

A joint committee made up of faculty and student senators has compiled a list of recommendations for evaluating teachers and courses on a University-wide basis, which they hope will be administered no later than Fall 1987. Currently, some evaluations are given at the end of each semester, but not uniformly throughout the University.

In other business, the Senate will elect a deputy speaker from a list of four nominees. The former deputy speaker, Dr. Jerry Gaston, elected last spring, was chosen as

the new associate provost, at which time he resigned his Senate position.

The Senate also plans to discuss requiring graduating seniors to take finals at the same time as other students.

Beginning in Spring 1988, degree candidates will be required to take final exams. But, as the regulation is now written, finals for graduating seniors may or may not overlap with finals for other students. According to the Senate, this does not comply with the intent of the regulation, therefore it is requesting that the undergraduate and graduate catalogues omit the final exam schedule as well as the date for reporting grades for degree candidates.

Motorcycle course helps riding skills

By Greg Bailey
Reporter

With the help of the Motorcycle Riding Course offered through the College Station Community Education Project, some students obtain their operator's license, others get a chance to hone their riding skills, and all learn some things that could save their lives.

The course, which is offered monthly, is given on two consecutive Fridays and Saturdays and sponsored by the Motorcycle Safety Foundation and the Texas Department of Public Safety. The Friday sessions are devoted to classroom in-

struction while Saturdays are reserved for range work — beginning at 7 a.m.

In order to legally ride a motorcycle in Texas, all motorcyclists must pass vision and driving tests, as well as a written test, which are issued by the DPS.

Riders between the ages of 15 and 18 are required to take the MRC and pass both written and skills tests in order to take the DPS licensing examination.

Some insurance companies are offering those completing the course a 10-percent discount on their liability premiums.

The eight hours of classwork in-

cludes instruction on safety rules, riding skills, insurance information, inspections and troubleshooting. At the end of the class, students take the MRC Knowledge Test.

"By the end of the day those students are dragging," says Christine Landphair, one of the four course instructors. "They've driven 32 miles and it's taken them about eight hours to do it."

After their range work, students take the Motorcycle Operator Skills Test.

Landphair and her husband Harlow, both course instructors, assume that students have never ridden a motorcycle and take their time in fa-

miliarizing students with the machines.

The next course will be given on Oct. 17, 18, 24 and 25. Those interested in taking the course should contact Alonzo Wood in the College Station Community Education office at 696-3820.

There is a \$50 fee to take the course, and students must provide leather gloves, a long-sleeve shirt or jacket, and leather boots or shoes that cover the ankles. Motorcycles used in the course have been provided by local dealers and helmets will be provided for those who need them.

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