

Socially Competent IVA's: We are not alone in this (virtual) world! **5th International Working Conference on Intelligent Virtual Agents**

Kos (Greece) September 2005

Organised by Nicole C. Krämer and Nikos Avradinis

Nicole C. Krämer (University of Cologne) started the workshop on “Socially competent IVA's” by presenting an invited talk on “Social communicative effects of a virtual program guide”. She demonstrated that virtual agents affect the way in which users communicate with technological systems. An experimental study with 65 participants indicated that users are more inclined to employ natural speech to address technological devices when they are confronted with an embodied conversational agent instead of a merely text- or speech based interface. Furthermore, the utilisation of specific words (such as thank you, you) differed between conditions.

The full paper “A Conversational Agent as Museum Guide - Design and Evaluation of a Real-World Application” by Kopp, Gesellensetter, Kramer and Wachsmuth (University Bielefeld, University Karlsruhe, University of Cologne, Germany) was presented by Stefan Kopp who stressed the fact that real-world applications of agents will become increasingly important in future. Also, a preliminary evaluation study using the logfiles of the agent's interactions with users was presented, suggesting that human users tend to attribute sociality to the agent.

Kao, Chang, Chien and Soo (AI laboratory in Institute of Information and Systems Applications, Department of Computer Science, National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan; Department of Computer Science, National University of Kaohsiung, Taiwan) presented an account of their full paper “Using Ontology to Establish Social Context”. Aiming at providing agents with reasoning on social relations, they demonstrated a machine readable framework as a standard model which can support social reasoning for agents.

Within their full paper “Integrating social skills in task-oriented 3D IVA” Grimaldo, Lozano, Barber and Orduna (Institute of Robotics, Computer Science Department, University of Valencia, Spain) presented a set of mechanisms to incorporate social information into the decision making of a task oriented 3D intelligent virtual agent. They implemented a social model that enables agents to use communicative acts to cooperate with each other. Especially team formation of the agents and task coordination were focussed.

Altogether, the different contributions highlighted different aspects of social intelligence in virtual agents. While Kao, Chang, Chien and Soo as well as Grimaldo, Lozano, Barber and Orduna presented recent developments with regard to the realisation and implemetation of the agents' social intelligence, Krämer provided a look-out on future “social” agents' effects. The paper of Kopp et al. even integrated both aspects and gave an account on recent developments as well as corresponding empirical findings. In general, the special session thus provided a comprehensive overview of recent developments and findings with regard to social aspects of intelligent agents.

Further attendees of the workshop were participants of the 5th International Working Conference on Intelligent Virtual Agents.

In addition to the further mentioned attendants, a group of 20 Undergraduate students, coming from the University of Piraeus, Greece, also attended.