

## Foreword

Economics and the Internet are the main topics of the IJCEM this issue, with some attention given to underlying technical issues in the development of neural nets that can be used in a variety of applications.

In “Unified Messaging: A System for the Internet” Chai Kiat Yeo, Siu Cheong Hui, Ing Yann Soon, and Gupta Manik, propose a means of making electronic communications even more convenient and productive than they are at the present time. We now must manage a wide variety of emails, faxes, and voice-mail messages every day. It would be much more efficient, however, if we could integrate these communications into a single system. The authors explore a vision of such unified messaging and investigate some of the technical issues involved. Such techniques promise to have a significantly positive effect on our economic performance.

The efficiency of a different mode of communications is considered in “Trader’s Quality of Service Specifications and Effects on System Performance for Video-on-Demand” by Edward Babulak. By examining trade-offs in speed and performance the author seeks to find an optimal use of network bandwidth in a very demanding application.

Increased convenience of the Internet depends as much on the underlying systems as on the human interface. Chin Wen Cheong and V. Ramachandran consider the use of fuzzy logic for increasing the efficiency in web servers in “Fuzzy Linguistic Decision Analysis for Web Server System Future Planning”. Somewhat paradoxically, by mimicking some of the subjectivity of human decision-making machines can become better at helping human activities.

We move towards specific economic applications in “A Hybrid Time Lagged Network for Predicting Stock Prices” by S.C. Hui, M.T. Yap, and P. Prakash. Here again, computer techniques, from the field of artificial intelligence, are used to support human decision-making in a non-mechanical manner.

Mohd Yusoff Mashor’s “Performance Comparison between Back Propagation, RPE and MRPE Algorithms for Training MLP Networks” considers neural net techniques that are applicable in neurobiology, psychology, computer science, cognitive science, engineering, economics, medicine, and many other fields. By looking at various training regimens he seeks efficiencies that, again, mimic the activities of the human brain.

The relationship between the brain and computer technology, indeed, is an important theme of this very diverse issue. As technology advances we can expect this relationship to become more important and more interesting.

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