

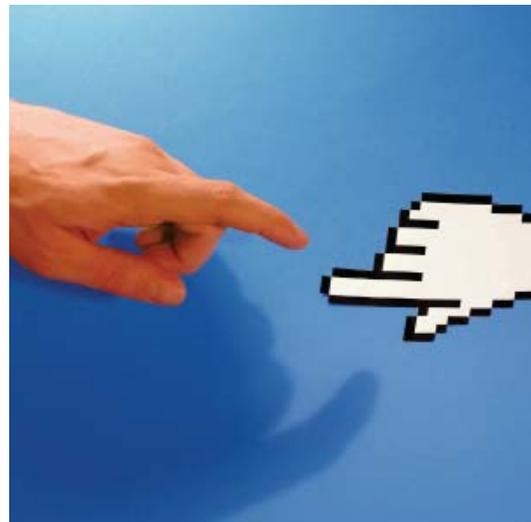
RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

It's All About Me

Professor Simeon Simoff from the School of Computing and Mathematics is collaborating with Professor John Debenham from the University of Technology Sydney, Professor Carles Sierra from the Spanish National Research Council and Professor Ian Wilkinson from the University of NSW, to explore concepts of trust, reputation and believability in electronic markets through an Australian Research Council Discovery Project.

'The ways we do business are changing, with more and more business being conducted online and in marketplaces that may be entirely electronic, with no corresponding 'real-world' outlets' says Professor Simoff. 'Electronic or virtual marketplaces are populated by computerised 'players' that represent the variety of human and software traders, intermediaries, and information and infrastructure providers. To be 'believable' a marketplace must be perceived as involving alive people, engaged in meaningful interactions (anthropomorphised), rather than just a collection of digital processes and transactions.'

To test the idea that anthropomorphised e-marketplaces are believable when they provide a market that adjusts to the players specific individual needs and desires. The investigators will use normative virtual worlds populated with electronic traders who have been provided with personalities, that is, the capacity to display human behaviour traits such as distinctive language and thought patterns, emotions, communication styles and motivational drives, as well as graphic 'human-like' appearances. 'Real world' players will then interact with this virtual marketplace and measures will be taken about how trading takes place and the



responses of the 'real' humans to the 'virtual' ones and the environment in which they operate, in order to build a picture of what traits and activities enhance believability, and which detract from it.

The results of this project will provide trustworthy business environments that will open up e-markets to a greater number of traders and facilitate the establishment of robust business structures built on trust and reputation similar to the mechanisms that operate in 'real-world' face-to-face trading relationships.

Project Title: "It's all about me" – Anthropomorphised Trading in Believable Electronic Markets

Funding has been set at: \$353,210

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