



"Always Interesting" AI in the news

<http://www.aaai.org/aitopics/html/current.html>

Robot Telescopes Comb the Skies.

Lakshmi Sandhana. *Wired News*. September 21, 2004 (www.wired.com). "British astronomers have just begun to operate RoboNet-1.0, a global network of the world's biggest robotic telescopes, controlled by intelligent software to effectively act as one giant eye that can be focused anywhere in the sky within a minute. It's a dream come true for the astronomers at Liverpool John Moores University who pioneered the development of a fully automated intelligent robotic network. They developed the network to allow astronomers to follow up unpredictable events or appearances of objects in the sky as rapidly as possible, something that isn't ordinarily possible with a single telescope at a fixed position. ... ESTAR, a joint project of Liverpool John Moores University and Exeter University, developed intelligent autonomous software programs, known as agents, that will function as the brains of the network. Acting as 'virtual astronomers,' the agents will collect and analyze data 24 hours a day, alerting their flesh-and-blood counterparts only when they catch sight of something noteworthy."

Chicago Moving to "Smart" Surveillance Cameras. Stephen Kinzer. *The New York Times*. September 21, 2004 (www.nytimes.com). "A highly advanced system of video surveillance that Chicago officials plan to install by 2006 will make people here some of the most closely observed in the world. Mayor Richard M. Daley says it will also make them much safer. ... Police specialists here can already monitor live footage from about 2,000 surveillance cameras around the city, so the addition of 250 cameras under the mayor's new plan is not a great jump. The way these cameras will be used, however, is an extraordinary technological leap. Sophisticated new computer programs will immediately alert the police whenever anyone viewed by any of the cameras placed at buildings and other structures considered terrorist targets wanders aimlessly in circles, lingers outside a public building, pulls a car onto

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—Jon Glick, Webmaster, AI Topics

the shoulder of a highway, or leaves a package and walks away from it. Images of those people will be highlighted in color at the city's central monitoring station, allowing dispatchers to send police officers to the scene immediately. ...

"'With the aggressive way these types of surveillance equipment are being marketed and implemented,' Mr. [Edwin C.] Yohnka said, 'it really does raise questions about what kind of society do we ultimately want, and how intrusive we want law enforcement officials to be in all of our lives.' ... 'The value we gain in public safety far outweighs any perception by the community that this is Big Brother who's watching,' Mr. [Ron] Huberman said. 'The feedback we're getting is that people welcome this. It makes them feel safer.'"

Potted Plant Offers Friendly Ear.

Sarah Staples. *CanWest /The Windsor Star*. September 29, 2004 (www.canada.com/windsor). "American and French scientists have created a caring house plant equipped with motion sensors and cameras to gather information, complete with a computerized brain that learns its owner's routines and can tell if they stray from the norm. Equal parts leafy adviser and calming potted friend, the plant—a prototype at Accenture Technology

Labs in Chicago that's expected to be ready for sale within about five years—uses artificial intelligence to know if its owner is eating properly, experiencing fear, loneliness and pain, or suffering from memory loss."

Russian Angel Helps AxonX "Bring Fire Safety into the Digital Age."

Robert J. Terry. *Baltimore Business Journal*. October 18, 2004 (baltimore.bizjournals.com). "AxonX, which is developing fire and smoke detection software, will use the money to complete product testing and develop strategic partnerships with security companies. AxonX's software uses artificial intelligence, image analysis and a patented algorithm to quickly detect smoke and fire. Executives say the software can take images from surveillance cameras and analyze a flame's patterns."

Welcome to the Internet 2014.

Bill Thompson. *BBC News*. October 11, 2004 (news.bbc.co.uk). "The mere fact that everyone is online will change the way the world works, of course. But the way we use the processing power available will shift too. A lot of it will go on making things talk to each other. I have my laptop, my mobile phone/PDA, my digital music player and all sorts of other technology in my briefcase at the moment... But these devices do not talk to each other very well, and they do not really talk to other people's devices at all. I think the big change we will see in the next 10 years is that programs will get better at acting independently and communicating over the network without our intervention. Cars will book themselves in for servicing, hospitals will consult online diaries before scheduling an appointment, and fishing boats will sell their catch at market before reaching port, all thanks to these software agents. Of course this brings with it massive risks, and poses threats to privacy and social life which will worry many of us. But we have proven able to absorb the impact the net has made since 1994, and I am optimistic about our ability to do so in the future."