



"Always Interesting" AI in the news

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Editorial: Time to Think about Artificial Intelligence. *New Scientist*. April 23, 2005 (www.newscientist.com). "AI pervades our world and may soon start evolving faster than humans can track it—in whose hands should this awesome power reside? When it comes to emerging technologies, we know what we're afraid of, even though we may not know why. There is no shortage of public debate about genetically modified crops, nanotechnology and cloning. And policy makers have responded: many countries have laws that restrict the way these technologies can be used. So why the deafening silence about the potential dangers of artificial intelligence? Here is a technology that is already changing the world: AI is used in everything from guided missiles to air-traffic control. It is not yet 'intelligent' in the human sense, but that looks likely to change."

'Dormouse' Retells Silicon Valley History. Opinion by Chris Nolan. *eWeek*. April 20, 2005 (www.eweek.com). "A new book chronicles the development of computer culture in political terms, showing that computer programmers were always aware of the world outside the office—or the Valley. ... [John] Markoff's *What the Dormouse Said: How the 60s Counterculture Shaped the Computer Industry*—the title's from Jefferson Airplane's 'White Rabbit,' a paean to pills and other substances—details the valley's early history, which involves computers, LSD, some marijuana and a lot of time in hot tubs and saunas, not to mention the occasional acts of civil disobedience and arrests for protesting against the Vietnam War. ... In this book they attend raucous parties, do a fair amount of LSD, smoke a goodly amount of marijuana and generally rabble-rouse, not just with machines but with household names from the era like Ken Kesey and the Grateful Dead. 'If you were inside someplace like SAIL (the Stanford Artificial Intelligence Lab) it's a very social world,' says Markoff of one of the institutions that fostered these men and their work. 'It's a different kind of sociability.' ... All them share a few common understandings, primary among them that technology can—and should—make a difference in people's lives. Accompanying that

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—Jon Glick, Webmaster, AI TOPICS

belief is the conviction that technology will almost always change people's lives for the better."

The Origins of Cyberspace—A Library on the History of Computing, Networking, and Telecommunications. *Christie's*. Auction date: February 23, 2005 (www.christies.com). Items being auctioned include: Edmund C. Berkeley's *Giant Brains or Machines that Think*; Karel Capek's *R.U.R. Rossum's Universal Robots*; John McCarthy's *Programs with Common Sense*; Allen Newell, John Clifford Shaw and Herbert A. Simon's *Chess-playing Programs and the Problem of Complexity*; Arthur Lee Samuel's *Some Studies in Machine Learning Using the Game of Checkers*; Claude E. Shannon's *A Symbolic Analysis of Relay and Switching Circuits*; Alan Mathison Turing's *On Computable Numbers with an Application to the Entscheidungsproblem*; and a reel of half-inch wide nickel-coated bronze tape for use in the UNIVAC I.

Ancient Geek Treasures Fetch Modern Moolah. Mike Cassidy. *Mercury News*. February 24, 2005 (www.mercurynews.com). "... 'The Origins of Cyberspace' auction in New York. These were the treasures of the ancient geeks. Deep thinking on paper about mathematics, computing and the machines that could make them both easier. And those who are fascinated by such things (and also a touch rich) were so moved by the collection that they shelled out. In all, about half the 254 lots in Novato book dealer Jeremy Norman's

collection sold for a grand total of \$714,060. Not bad in the cash department, given that Christie's had valued the full collection at about \$1 million. 'In financial terms, it was a bit of a mixed sale,' Christie's spokeswoman Bendetta Roux said Wednesday. Some items sold for well beyond what Christie's expected. Others didn't sell at all."

Moore's Law Original Issue Found. *BBC News*. April 22, 2005 (news.bbc.co.uk). "David Clark had kept copies of the magazine for years, despite pleas from his wife to throw them away. Now the couple are celebrating after collecting the \$10,000 (£5,281) reward which was offered by chip maker Intel. ... 'We're delighted to at last have an original copy of the April 1965 edition of *Electronics Magazine*,' said an Intel spokesperson. ... Mr Clark, who admits he is 'a bit of a hoarder,' collected the *Electronics* magazine issues, as well as others, after the Philips Central Library in the UK—now closed—started to clean them out. 'In the 70s, they started throwing out large quantities of these magazines,' he said. 'I was in my 20s at the time and thought you shouldn't throw them out because they are recording the golden age of electronics.'"

Latest from MIT: Artificial Stupidity. Jay Fitzgerald. *Boston Herald*. April 14, 2005 (business.bostonherald.com). "Welcome to wack-ademia. Fed up with invitations to submit papers for science conferences, three MIT students devised a software program that deliberately churned out nonsensical scientific gibberish. Now one of their computer-generated 'papers' has been accepted by a Florida conference. Their fake report—'Router: A Methodology for the Typical Unification of Access Points and Redundancy'—is intended to show that many so-called academic conferences have few or no minimum standards. The gatherings' purpose: simply to make money. 'We decided to test the limits,' said Jeremy Stribling, a graduate student at MIT's Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Lab in Cambridge."