



** The Mobile PA service from Sirenic highlights a growing trend towards personalisation of content delivery on mobile devices – an area where artificial intelligence could in time come into its own.*

by Rebeca Cliffe, Associate

The age of artificial intelligence (AI) may be a long way off, but nonetheless there are already early signs of how its application could change the way we access and use information. One of these is provided by Sirenic, a small software company whose Mobile PA service gives access to email and other business applications from existing mobile phones, smartphones, PDAs and via any web browser. Users can use Mobile PA to organise personal calendar, contacts and tasks information. News information is also available through the application, and enterprise customers can request additional business applications, CRM systems and data feeds to be integrated too. However, the feature that makes this service most interesting is its ability to ‘learn’ what information the user requires on the move.

The company’s key selling point is its “Relevance Server”, which according to Sirenic, “analyses all the available content, and compares it to each individual’s interests and needs, dynamically adjusted according to their use of the system and their current context”. This enables features such as personalisation, prioritisation, summarising and cross-referencing items to be included in the Mobile PA application. By analysing the user’s interests, previous usage and current context, the tool claims to be able to categorise and prioritise data to meet their needs. It can identify related information and offers a contextual search facility to help individuals deal with the problems of ‘information overload’. While Sirenic is by no means the only information company seeking to provide intelligent personalisation tools – one has only to think of search engines suggesting results based on analysing a user’s past search history – its use in the mobile context is indicative of a general trend and highlights some interesting potential applications.

AI technology seems especially suited to serving information on the move, when users are likely to want information even more quickly and with less investment of time and effort than when they are sitting at their desks. For example, when combined with location-based technologies such as GPS or RFID tags, technology that can learn both from past usage by the user and their immediate local context could provide a compelling level of personalised data support in the area of local information and mapping services. With the major search engines investing considerable efforts in the area of providing local information and mapping services on mobile phones, such technologies are an area they will need to watch. There are already examples of how the combination of location-based and intelligent technology can deliver benefits in the business context. With applications in the learning and training space, Giunti Labs is developing context-aware systems that understand where someone is and what their competencies are in order to send relevant content – for example its eXact Mobile product uses

ambient technology and location based technologies to adapt the delivery of content according to both context (eg light / dark) and location.

While many of the 'personalised' services that are currently available could be more accurately classified as customised – where the user has some active involvement in the tailoring of information to their preferences – companies such as Sirenic are symptomatic of the trend towards the automatic analysis and prioritisation of information for individual users. As technology companies and information providers work together to develop services offering true personalisation, the need for relevance and accuracy will be paramount - users will only befriend smart computers if they can improve their speed and ease of consuming information.

© **Electronic Publishing Services 2006**

RELATED LINKS

Sirenic: <http://www.sirenic.com>

Giunti Labs: <http://www.giuntilabs.com>

FROM THE EPS ARCHIVE

Semantic web: Google has the answers, but not the questions, EPS Insights, 1 August 2006

<http://www.epsltd.com/accessArticles.asp?articleType=1&updateNoteID=2030>

Giunti: Mobile e-learning management is a first, EPS Insights, 5 July 2004

<http://www.epsltd.com/accessArticles.asp?articleType=1&updateNoteID=1310>

Spotlight on... intelligent agents in search, imi, July 2005

<http://www.epsltd.com/accessArticles.asp?articleType=2&articleID=236&imiID=339>

With offices in London and New York, EPS is the only consultancy which concentrates its whole attention specifically on the information industry. Unlike any other provider of this type of service, EPS offers over 20 years' experience and relationships with the key players in the publishing world. For more information, please visit <http://www.epsltd.com>