PDMS to partner with Network Inference

Network Inference and PDMS (www.pdms.com) have today agreed a partnership aimed at accelerating the adoption of ontology based applications, central to the development of the next stage of internet development - the semantic web.

PDMS specialises in the development and implementation of sophisticated database-driven business solutions. The company has a track record of successful solutions within large organisations such as Black and Decker, Farnell Electronics and the NHS.

Network Inference provides components to power and enhance relational database and Web solutions within and between enterprises. Using ontologies and inference, the core product - CerebraTM - forms the heart of a new architecture for managing and integrating data.

Network Inference CEO Michael Lees welcomed the company's first partner. "PDMS' skills in the design and implementation of solutions involving complex data management will be invaluable as Network Inference embarks on the first commercial implementations of CerebraTM."

PDMS will be exploring the use of CerebraTM across their existing customer base, and in conjunction with their existing solutions. MD, Chris Gledhill said, "PDMS has to date been at the cutting edge of solutions that meet real problems in the representation and querying of complex data- Network Inference and CerebraTM will help us to maintain this position as the web and its underlying applications develop". He went on to add "By integrating Cerebra into our solutions we will be help our clients to maximise the real potential of one of their greatest assets - information".

An ontology is a structured, formal representation of an area of knowledge - it defines and restricts what can be said about that area of knowledge. Represented in a machine understandable language, ontologies allow communication between applications regardless of technology, architecture or domain application. In a business environment the use of ontologies can enable organisations to access relevant information quickly and easily - improving information flow and leading to more effective decision making.

In essence, ontology involves identifying categories and fitting objects into them in ways that make sense. Relational databases on the other hand provide a framework for structuring data without duplication and ambiguity. The combination of ontological software with relational database technology overlays meaning and intelligence derived from our understanding of information onto the technical structure of data designed for efficient machine processing.

CerebraTM, Network Inference's suite of products, integrate with existing data warehouse and content management systems to make them more effective and efficient. By using ontologies, Cerebra overcomes the limitations of relational databases. Manchester based, Network Inference, a member of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), is pioneering the development of semantic web applications and standards - the next stage of web development which seeks

to add logic to the web, enabling applications to process and interpret the data that they can currently only display. Tim Berners-Lee, the inventor of the web, has defined the Semantic Web as "and extension of the current web in which information is given well defined meaning, better enabling computers and people to work in cooperation".

According to the W3C, the development of the semantic web is a high priority as the web can only reach its full potential if it becomes a place where data can be shared, processed and reused across various applications.

Editors' Notes

Network Inference Limited:

Network Inference was founded in January 2001 to commercialise the leading edge inference technology developed by Dr Ian Horrocks and his associates at the University of Manchester. The company's objective is to become a key player in the next generation of computer and Web technology, providing a platform for the Semantic Web. The Semantic Web (see below) is a vision that requires new technologies, new standards, and new attitudes to the interpretive and interoperable power that machines will gain. Network Inference's CerebraTM technology introduces this power.

The Semantic Web

The next stage of web development - the Semantic Web - seeks to reduce the amount of human processing involved in utilising the proliferation of web content. The vision is for applications to form a shared understanding of the content of information resources. Machines will have the power to process and interpret the data that they can currently only display. Adding logic to the Web - the means for machines to use rules to make inferences, choose courses of action and answer questions - is the challenge posed by the Semantic Web.
http://www.w3.org/2001/sw/

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