Evolution of an Intelligent Web Tutor

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As distance learning courses proliferate on the internet, there is a problem in providing human tutors to manage students’ learning and carry out the marking of their work, and also a problem of providing structured tuition for students. WITS, a Whole-course Intelligent Teaching System, addresses these problems.

WITS is essentially an Expert System shell which simulates the expertise of the teacher. The original system was written in Prolog and used an original form of assessment based on probabilities. It taught Solid State Electronics from a commercially produced videodisc, but a new prototype version uses digital materials on CD-ROM and has been built to run in a web browser. It will be used as the basis of an intelligent, multimedia internet system.

Research funding is currently being sought to validate the probability assessment technique and to develop WITS further, and evaluate its effectiveness as a distance learning tool.