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Mimos to build up intelligence sector

The Semantic Technology Center in Mimos has designed and developed a comprehensive Semantic Technology Platform. Izwan Ismail talks to its director, artificial intelligence Dr Dickson Lukose on the new technology.



“ Semantic technology makes data intelligible for computers to perform daily routine tasks automatically.”
– Lukose

Q: Not many people are familiar with, let alone understand semantic technology. What is semantic technology and how important is it?

A: Semantic technology makes data intelligible for computers to perform daily routine tasks automatically without the many manual interventions required today. For example, today's Web pages might be rich in information, but would still need a person to read and interpret it. With semantic technology, these Web pages can be understood and processed directly by computers at our command.

Q: Where does semantic technology fit in the product lifecycle, and what good can it bring to products and users?

A: From a product lifecycle perspective, assuming we are referring to software products, semantic technology separates tacit knowledge from code. Conventional systems will incorporate tacit knowledge within the code that processes a set of data. Utilising semantic technology, the tacit knowledge is extracted out of the code, and is represented in the data directly.

Simple reasoning engines can then utilise this tacit knowledge in the data to carry out the tasks. In other words, with semantic technology, we make data smarter. It's much easier and cheaper to update data than updating code, which means tremendous saving in software lifecycle costs.

Q: What is Mimos doing to promote semantic technology development?

A: We are developing a series of reusable components to form a platform that can be used by our technology recipients to build applications in their vertical markets without spending much time and resources to reinvent these components repeatedly.

In other words, Mimos pools the best talents in Malaysia to create a powerful platform for all Malaysian industries to take advantage of. This is similar to how a Windows platform is being used by all software vendors to build PC applications on.

Q: What are your hopes in terms of semantic technology usage in the local ICT industry? And where do you see this technology being most applicable?

A: As we move to a knowledge-based society, it is inevitable that our local industries will require tools and techniques that perform at the knowledge level, rather than at the data level.

Mimos' intention is to develop this frontier technology, which is two to four years ahead of its time. We want to ensure that our industry gets a headstart in using this technology to compete effectively in the global ICT market. This will be critical for Malaysian industries as we gradually move away from the low value-added manufacturing industries to high value-added knowledge industries.