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Scientifics develop computer software that permits tourists to customize their visits

This release is available in Spanish.

Luis Castillo Vidal, computer engineer of the University of Granada and one of the authors of the study, points out that, in order to design the customized visit plans, they have used Artificial Intelligence techniques, "a science that provides computers with abilities to solve problems which, in principle, can only be solved by humans". This technology, researcher adds, is open and interoperable, and therefore it is very appropriate to be integrated in existing systems, such as web sites.

Users must have access to the internet, either through a computer, a mobile phone or a PDA, in order to be able to access a web where they can define their preferences and needs, such as their artistic, cultural and gastronomic preferences, their lifestyle and favourite hours, whether they are disabled or not and the spending capacity.

The software compares these personal requirements with information from a tourist database and offers the client a tailor-made visit plan excluding all those details he is not interested in. The system is available in the so-called Service Oriented Architecture (SOA), software design that allows interoperability between different platforms in an efficient way and with flexibility before changes.

Participation of five institutions

Researchers of the Universities of University of Granada, Technical College of Valencia, UNED (Spanish Open University), Carlos III of Madrid and the Research Institute on Artificial Intelligence of the CSIC have entirely financed the SAMAP project. Castillo states that the technology developed to carry out the prototype has started to be transferred to a spin-off of the University of Granada called "IActive Intelligent Solutions" for its possible commercialization.

The new "adaptive user-focused system to plan tourist visits", as their authors describe it, means "step forward" in the current trend of tourist activities automation, such as the online payment of transport tickets and accommodation, or the use of audio-guides in the monuments tours .

Artificial Intelligence, says Castillo, can play an important role in future, as it combines computer's capacities of memory and fast execution with faculties as human as common sense, intuition and imagination.

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