

Language Technology II, Summer Semester 2005

Homework for June 9th: call a dialog system

Pick **at least one** of the dialog systems below and experiment with it.¹

Write down **comments on your dialog** with the system (if possible record the dialog and take notes after you're done talking to the system), along the points listed below. Bring your **notes for the discussion** in class. Additionally, submit a brief **report** (approx. 1 page) on your findings by **June 8, 2005** (please send a PDF file by email to Magdalena Wolska, magda@coli.uni-sb.de).

Issues to investigate:

- speech recognition accuracy;
- speech output quality;
- dialog management (e.g. ease of navigation/communication with the system, system's responsiveness, error/ambiguity handling, help, support for barge-in);
- task handling (e.g. goal completion);

Systems to consider

Jupiter is a conversational system that provides up-to-date weather information for about 500 cities worldwide over the telephone². Find out what information Jupiter can give you and how to communicate with Jupiter (e.g. say "help" or "what can I ask about?", "what can I say?"). Think of your own weather questions and ask Jupiter. Then solve the following tasks:

- Find out about what countries/regions the system knows;
- Find out the temperature in a city of your choice a) tomorrow, b) on a particular day (e.g. June 17th);
- Find out about the weather in Birmingham;
- Find a city with interesting weather events, e.g. hail, thunderstorms, hurricanes and tornadoes, floods, etc.

¹This may involve making an international call to the U.S. To reduce the costs (to, e.g., 2 Eurocents per minute), use a call-by-call, cf. for example http://www.bonoestente.com/germany_telephone_prefix_numbers or <http://www.billiger-telefonieren.de/>. To make the call and have Coli pay for it, you can use the phone in office 1.01 in the Coli building. To access the office, ask either Magdalena Wolska or Frau Riedel to let you in. Please follow the instructions we leave for you in the office. Limit your call to maximally 30 minutes, and do not make any other phone calls.

²Jupiter number is number 001-888-573-TALK.

- Find a sunny place in France.
- Find a rainy city.

TellMe is a voice portal whose features include: driving directions, weather, horoscopes, and stock quotes. Call TellMe³ and find out driving directions from a Birmingham to New York.

Deutsche Bahn train time-table information is operated by a spoken dialog system. Call Deutsche Bahn⁴ and find out about available trains between two locations of your choice. Inquire about discounts for students, transfers, availability of a sleeper car, a restaurant car. In order to compare dialogue management strategies, call also the **Philips system**⁵, a research system that can only provide information about train connections for a subset of German train stations, but has more flexible dialogue management. Find out in what respects the behavior of the Philips system differs from that of the DeutscheBahn system.

³TellMe number is 001-800-555-8355.

⁴The DeutscheBahn system number is 0800-1-507090.

⁵The Philips system number is 0241-604020.