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THE ALIGNMENT OF IDEAS

Is it possible for a computer to rate human performances that qualify for a prize? I assume that this is one of the most intriguing challenges in our research world. For the proper construction of an adequate program that executes such a task it is necessary to formulate criteria. However, the set of criteria will always face the obstacle of open texture which implies that even the best computer program will have difficulties in coming up with a precise and correct decision. Human beings are in a situation to relax the criteria if they believe that it is necessary for a proper decision.

Let me give two examples from our own community. In the past, Ken Thompson and Bob Hyatt received Mephisto/Novag Best *Publication* Awards for the contributions Chess Endgames Vol. 3 CD-ROM (Thompson, 1992/93) and the chess program CRAFTY (Hyatt, 1995/96). The open-source publication of CRAFTY was a boost to the computer-chess community. Some used it for updating and further development of their own ideas, others as a means to compare the results of their own program with those of CRAFTY. A third Group may have copied parts of the program and used it in their own program without giving proper credit to the original designer. So, what is the value of Hyatt's publication? Over the years, I would like to say: it is a very valuable contribution to the community.

Is it possible to repeat such a publication for another game? Can we see Bob Hyatt as a trendsetter? I am inclined to answer both questions by 'yes'. In February 2009, the Shogi programmer Hoki made the code of his program BONANZA open-source code. His ideas were based on Hyatt's ideas as incorporated in CRAFTY (of course, they were not all Hyatt's ideas, but see later on this specific point).

Hoki's act of service to the community was a big surprise which was accepted gratefully by colleagues, co-competitors, scientists, programmers, and other shogi aficionados. Thus, it happened that in the 19th CSA World Computer-Shogi Championship the program MONJU took advantage of this publication. MONJU was running six BONANZA programs on three 8-processor machines (see the report by Reijer Grimbergen on pages 121-125). Moreover, it is expected that in the next year many programs will use (parts of) the BONANZA code. When reading the report by Junichi Hashimoto on the 14th Computer Olympiad (see page 111), one understands that the BONANZA framework can be used for a strong Shogi program that can participate in the 2010 Computer Olympiad at JAIST in Japan. The open-source publication of the BONANZA code can be seen as revealing part of the intricacies of the game of Shogi. It is a series of ideas contained in a program published as source code. In Japan there was apprehension by some and negative feelings by others. In summary, publishing open-source is not generally accepted in the world of competitive game programmers.

The same doubting behaviour is well-known in the world of computer chess. Only sporadically do we see a computer-chess publication by programmers belonging to the world top, such as Vasik Raijlich, Amir Ban, Shay Bushinsky, and Stephan Meyer Kahlen. Therefore Fritz Reul deserves applause for giving insight into the intricacies of his program LOOP that achieved second place at the 26th Open Dutch Computer-Chess Championship in Leiden 2006, and third place at the 15th WCCC in Amsterdam 2007. Reul bundled his ideas in a Ph.D. thesis and defended it with success on June 17, 2009. A review is given by Dap Hartmann (see page 93), who distinguished between scientific work and programmer's work. This might be true, but the attempt by Reul to bridge this gap by explaining his ideas is worthy of being copied by others. Hyatt, Hoki, and Reul deserve the admiration of our community. The task for many other members is to align the distributed ideas in a new program that is stronger than the best program so far. This would be the start of an annual open-source competition.

Yet, there is one problem that is more serious than expected at first glance. The competitive element is not only in the WCCC and the Computer Olympiad, it is also in Science. Who is the best? And why? Many yardsticks and measurements exist, and no one can tell you what you should consider in particular for an adequate calibration. However, the unanimous opinion is that a contributing factor is front-ranked papers with excellent ideas. At this point *fair play* comes in. Below I would like to provide you with a simple example from which you see that being too eager is wrong, dumb, and in some cases even disastrous.

In the last half year I have faced this way of conquering behaviour (i.e., being too eager) four times. It means that I had four complaints from four different referees. The causes are similar and can be abstracted as follows. A young researcher submits an article. Three referees look at the article and provide comments. This is usually in the form of suggestions, improvements, advice, ideas, and even pointing at new research directions. The three referee reports are sent back to the author anonymously. Assume that the author is requested by the Editor to consider the suggestions, make appropriate changes, and then to resubmit the article.

An ambitious (young) researcher is eager to do so and incorporates the comments by the referees and promptly returns the article to the Editor together with an accompanying letter. [Please note this is an important point]. The Editor then sends the improved article together with the letter to the referees in order to check whether the author has done a good job.

Four referees in the last half year complained on the behaviour of the author since the advice, ideas, and even new research directions were incorporated without any acknowledgement to the anonymous referees. This can be done in a separate section at the end of the article. If you miss this opportunity then you show your readers ideas which are not yours. Or stated otherwise, if you cannot recognize anonymous referees then you do not deserve a place in our community.

The ICGA community is the place for you, to perform excellent research, and to give credit to all who deserve credit. The same holds for sharing honours. Your Editor feels it as his duty to communicate this point with all readers. Yes, we live in a competitive world and ethics is more difficult than you believe[1].

Jaap van den Herik

The credits of the photographs in this issue are to: Jr-Chang Chen, Carlos Urtasun, Hans van der Zijden, Richard Lorentz, Hideki Kato, and I-Chen Wu.

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[1] The last eighteen lines are taken from my annual address to my Ph.D. students.