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FOUNDATION FOR INTELLIGENT PHYSICAL AGENTS	Reston
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Press release

Background

The Foundation for Intelligent Physical Agents (FIPA) is an international non-profit organisation based in Geneva with the goal of promoting the use of agent technologies in applications, services and products. The goal is achieved through the timely development of technical specifications that are usable across a large number of application domains.

The current effort is aimed at producing technical specification for agent management, agent-to-agent communication and agent-to-software interaction. These technology specifications are supplemented by specifications of four applications: personal travel assistance, personal assistant, audio-visual entertainment and broadcasting, and network management and provisioning. The four application specifications are of an informative nature provided to help those who intend to use FIPA specifications.

All specifications, currently organised in seven parts, will be finalised in October 1997.

The Reston meeting

FIPA had its fifth meeting in Reston, VA, on 14-18 April. The major achievement of the meeting was the drafting of version 1.0 of FIPA 97 specification parts 1 to 7. This was based on a number of comments received from FIPA members and non-members. The agent-to-agent communication language (ACL) defined at the January meeting was revised to facilitate migration of KQML agents to use ACL.

Specifications can be accessed at <http://drogo.cselt.stet.it/fipa/spec/fipa97reston.htm> and are open to comment from anybody. Authors of substantial comments will be invited to attend the next meeting on 23-27 June in Korea

At the same meeting FIPA produced a first draft of technical specifications of field trials that will be used by FIPA members to carry out trials in 1998, designed to validate the FIPA 97 specification.

The Reston meeting also provided opportunity to clarify with The Agent Society the respective roles. It was recognised that The Agent Society is primarily concerned with raising the awareness of Agent technology through providing opportunities for those in the industry to meet and discuss issues of common interest. It will also act as a group representing the 'Software Agent Industry' in appropriate fora and arenas of public debate. FIPA is concerned with obtaining consensus on appropriate technical standards and has a work-plan established to

achieve this.

How to join

Membership of FIPA is open to any corporation and individual firm, partnership, governmental body or international organisation supporting the purpose of FIPA. Full members have the right to attend meetings and to cast a vote when necessary. Associate members have the right to attend meetings but cannot vote.