

A Roel-Based Expert System

In Artificial Intelligence, *rule-based systems* are widely used as a way to represent knowledge by a collection of rules that record what one could do or conclude in different situations. A classic example of a rule-based system is some domain-specific expert system that uses rules to make deductions or choices. For instance, it might help a doctor choose the correct diagnosis based on a cluster of symptoms, or select tactical moves to play a game.

I consider myself very fortunate to have such an expert system at work, which one could call a *Roel-based system*. This expert system is conveniently located in the office opposite to my own. Also it has a very user-friendly interface, and provides smiles and witty remarks for free.

Roel is what one could call a strategic thinker. He has a sharp mind not only in research, but also in educational and bureaucratic matters. Whenever there is a plan for say a new Bachelor curriculum or a management overhaul of the department, I knock on the door of room U341 to get instant and very useful feedback. Roel is an expert system in flesh and blood, because this feedback always comes with crystal-clear explanations and motivations, founded on rock-solid logic.

Ever since I came to the Theoretical Computer Science Group at the VU, I have felt very much at home. This is due to the excellent atmosphere that Roel, together with Jan Willem and Femke, have created, consisting of a unique mixture of congeniality, and dedication to science and teaching.

Wan Fokkink