



## ▶ Algorithm Optimally Orders Forward-Chaining Inference Rules

**Requirements for exhaustive data-flow analysis are relaxed.**

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People typically develop knowledge bases in a somewhat *ad hoc* manner by incrementally adding rules with no specific organization. This often results in a very inefficient execution of those rules since they are so often order sensitive. This is relevant to tasks like Deep Space Network in that it allows the knowledge base to be incrementally developed and have it automatically ordered for efficiency.

Although data flow analysis was first developed for use in compilers for producing optimal code sequences, its usefulness is now recognized in many software systems including knowledge-based systems. However, this approach for ex-

haustively computing data-flow information cannot directly be applied to inference systems because of the ubiquitous execution of the rules. An algorithm is presented that efficiently performs a complete producer/consumer analysis for each antecedent and consequence clause in a knowledge base to optimally order the rules to minimize inference cycles.

An algorithm was developed that optimally orders a knowledge base composed of forwarding chaining inference rules such that independent inference cycle executions are minimized, thus, resulting in significantly faster execution. This algorithm was integrated into the

JPL tool Spacecraft Health Inference Engine (SHINE) for verification and it resulted in a significant reduction in inference cycles for what was previously considered an ordered knowledge base. For a knowledge base that is completely unordered, then the improvement is much greater.

*This work was done by Mark James of Caltech for NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory. Further information is contained in a TSP (see page 1).*

*The software used in this innovation is available for commercial licensing. Please contact Karina Edmonds of the California Institute of Technology at (626) 395-2322. Refer to NPO-42003.*

## ▶ Project Integration Architecture

**All information of technological processes can be readily originated, manipulated, shared, propagated to other processes, and viewed by man or machine.**

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The Project Integration Architecture (PIA) is a distributed, object-oriented, conceptual, software framework for the generation, organization, publication, integration, and consumption of all information involved in any complex technological process in a manner that is intelligible to both computers and humans. As used here, "all information" signifies, more specifically, all information that has been or could be coded in digital form. This includes not only experimental data, design data, results of simulations and analyses, organizational and financial data, and the like, but also sets of rules, computer programs, processes, and methods of solution.

In the development of PIA, it was recognized that in order to provide a single computational environment in which all information associated with any given complex technological process could be viewed, reviewed, manipulated, and shared, it is necessary to formulate all the elements of such a process on the most fundamental level. In this formulation, any such element is regarded as being composed of any or all of

three parts: input information, some transformation of that input information, and some useful output information.

Another fundamental principle of PIA is the assumption that no consumer of information, whether human or computer, can be assumed to have any useful foreknowledge of an element presented to it. Consequently, a PIA-compliant computing system is required to be ready to respond to any questions, posed by the consumer, concerning the nature of the proffered element. In colloquial terms, a PIA-compliant system must be prepared to provide all the information needed to place the element in context.

To satisfy this requirement, PIA extends the previously established object-oriented-programming concept of self-revelation and applies it on a grand scale. To enable pervasive use of self-revelation, PIA exploits another previously established object-oriented-programming concept — that of semantic infusion through class derivation. By means of self-revelation and semantic

infusion through class derivation, a consumer of information can inquire about the contents of all information entities (e.g., databases and software) and can interact appropriately with those entities.

Other key features of PIA include the following:

- Encapsulation of dimensionality and other semantically appropriate functionality;
- Enforcement of the dimensional nature of information (that is, something that is dimensional in nature cannot be accessed in a dimensionally-unaware manner);
- Exploitation of the object-identification facilities of the Common Object Request Broker Architecture (CORBA) to provide an object "address space" (defining the quantity of information that can be stored) that reaches to a practical infinity;
- Use of the object-etherealization and -incarnation facilities of the CORBA to make feasible the serving of a practically infinite number of objects;