

# Technology

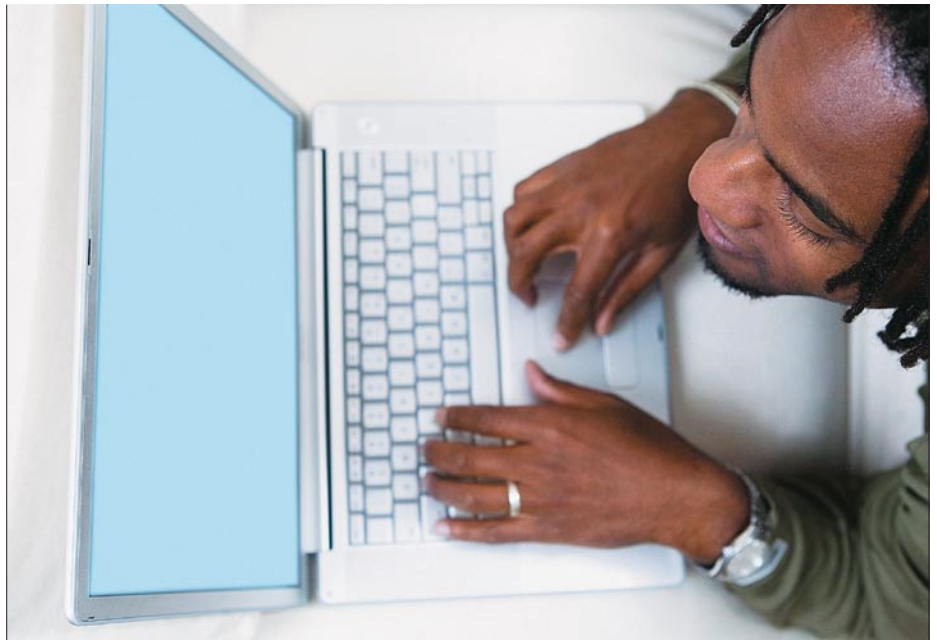
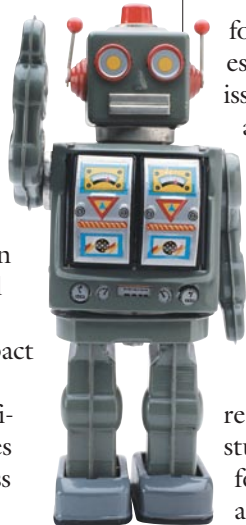
## A.I. and the Art of Negotiation

Could computer networks actually conduct business negotiations and legal arguments, without human intervention? Experts in artificial intelligence at the British University in Dubai (BUiD) in the United Arab Emirates say it could happen.

The field of artificial intelligence already has developed a process by which computers network to solve problems. Researchers at BUiD's Institute of Informatics are discussing the possibility of artificial intelligence-driven processes that could also argue and negotiate "in a fully or semi-automated market in order to influence the price of goods and services," according to the *Middle East Company News*.

The technology could prove useful in numerous contexts, including business, law, science, and politics, say researchers. They even speculate that someday robots could use their argumentation programming to make decisions on unmanned space missions.

Argumentation and negotiation are key elements of human communication, Iyad Rahwan of the Institute of Informatics told *Middle East Company*. By replicating even part of these processes, he adds, researchers can better tap the potential of automation in the marketplace. "The impact of this development would be hugely significant for both businesses and communities across the world."



## What's in Your Blog?

Among the latest entries into the b-school blogosphere include blogs from Babson College in Wellesley, Massachusetts, and Indiana University's Kelley School of Business in Indianapolis. Both were launched to foster stronger, more immediate communication with the larger community.

Babson College's Institute for Family Enterprising recently established a new blog to address issues surrounding family business at [www3.babson.edu/ESHIP/family\\_enterprising/blog](http://www3.babson.edu/ESHIP/family_enterprising/blog). The Family Enterprising Blog will feature contributions from the STEP Project, the research arm of the Institute.

The Kelley School recently launched Kelley BizBlog at [www.kelley.iupui.edu/blog](http://www.kelley.iupui.edu/blog). The resource is an upgrade to an older student-centered blog. It now also features blogs by faculty, staff, and alumni.

"Interactive" is the key word to describe blogging's appeal to business schools, says Roger Schmenner, associate dean at Kelley and a blogger himself. "The Web log and other online media are changing the way businesses and consumers talk to and about each other. We want our students to understand the new dynamics," he says. "The blog is a valuable tool to spark conversation."

## Blackboard Supports Open Source

In February, Blackboard Inc., a provider of course management systems, announced its support of learning institutions worldwide that use or develop open-source and home-grown course management software. As part of its "Blackboard Patent Pledge," Blackboard promises never to pursue patent actions against professors contributing to open source projects, open source initiatives,

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commercially developed open source add-on applications to proprietary products, and vendors hosting and supporting open source applications.

“As a member of the e-learning community, we are committed to the open exchange of ideas, collaboration, and innovation,” says Michael Chasen, president and CEO of Blackboard.


For more information about the pledge, and to read answers to frequently asked questions, visit [www.blackboard.com/patent](http://www.blackboard.com/patent).

### NEWSBYTES

#### ■ ENGINEERING AT THE B-SCHOOL

In what the school describes as a first in France, Grenoble Ecole de Management plans to participate in the design and management of a degree of engineering at the Grenoble Institute of Technology (GIT). Paul Jaquet, president of GIT, notes that the partnership may lead to new degrees “associating the science of engineering with that of business.”

#### ■ NEW TIME, NEW NAME

The eBusiness Research Center at Pennsylvania State University’s Smeal College of Business in University Park recently announced that its name will be changed to the Center for Digital Transformation. The name change reflects changes that have taken place in the business environment, says John Jordan, executive director of the center. “Today’s corporations are relying more and more on digital technologies and communications,” he says. The center’s focus is to study how the use of networked digital resources alters competition, strategy, and execution. 

## Ethics and Governance Conference

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