

# 1 Agenci programowi

Podejście od strony agentów.

Here is the rather picturesque way in which we presented the agent categories on our Web site in 1996. Even if this classification remains generally accurate, many other categories have come into being since.

## The first generation of agents

Their role consists of carrying out a simple search quickly. In fact, they do no more than use existing engines (Lycos, AltaVista, Yahoo...) to make successive requests. Their principal qualities are extreme speed (a few seconds) and their (they provide their services for free...), but unfortunately they are a bit superficial and don't like going into much depth... They are good for students and people who have a lot of time to spend ... MetaCrawler, SavvySearch, and Use-It form part of this "brigade of meta-motors"...

## The second generation of agents

The second category of software agents are definitely more advanced and are able to satisfy precise requests more thoroughly. For each query, they do not limit themselves to locating sites where the information could be found, but even crawl inside each site, analyze and sort information, and save the results on your hard disk! Even if they are definitely more competent than the previous category, they also have their defects. You have to train them, they are often slow, and their answers are not always very relevant... One cannot really qualify them as "intelligent"... Sometimes, they take several hours to satisfy your request. WebWhacker and Autonomy form part of this large family of semi-intelligent agents ...

## The third generation of agents

The third category brings together even more advanced agents, which love human interaction. They try to satisfy the most precise and complex requests. But they are also humble, they recognize their limits and they sometimes call on human assistance for guidance. This symbiosis leads to interactions that have never been seen before. Together, agents and humans are able to meet the need for the most strategic and confidential information. However, agents of this type are still rare...

Naturally, on the "mother of all networks", terminological uncertainty is not a small issue. You just need to see the range of names used: intelligent agents, search agents, software agents, Internet agents, interface agents, Web agents, personal agents, autonomous agents, bots, softbots, knowbots, userbots, robots, personal assistants, wizards, etc. In any event, the "traditional tools" (search engines, directories, meta-motors...) are absolutely not sufficient when you wish to undertake strategic and business intelligence activities on the Internet. Traditional tools are very useful for occasional information retrieval. Indeed, their immediate response makes them sometimes more interesting than search agents, which as we will see it, can be very slow. But as soon as the search process becomes more complex or recurring, it is time to think about installing agents that are more or less intelligent... It is possible to identify various categories of agent. That said, these categories as well as the agents that compose them are in perpetual evolution. Each month, several new agents are introduced on the Internet. Since the writing of this text, many new agents will have been born.

## Search agents

As their name indicates it, the goal is simple: to optimize information retrieval on the Internet. They are of a great diversity and one can distinguish several subcategories. However, their slow speed means that they are used particularly to perform very complex searches, or when you need to do an exhaustive search.

## "On-line" meta-motors