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PPP – Personalized Plan-Based Presenter

Deutsches Forschungszentrum für Künstliche Intelligenz

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Dr. Dr. D. Ruland
Director

PPP - Personalized Plan-Based Presenter

Elisabeth André, Winfried Graf, Jochen Heinsohn, Bernhard Nebel, Hans-Jürgen Profitlich, Thomas Rist, Wolfgang Wahlster

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PPP

Personalized Plan-Based Presenter

Project Proposal

Dipl.-Inform. Elisabeth André
Dipl.-Inform. Winfried Graf
Dipl.-Inform. Jochen Heinsohn
Dipl.-Inform. Dr. Bernhard Nebel
Dipl.-Inform. Hans-Jürgen Profitlich
Dipl.-Inform. Thomas Rist
Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Wahlster

German Research Center for Artificial Intelligence (DFKI)
Stuhlsatzenhausweg 3, W-6600 Saarbrücken 11, Germany
e-mail: {last-name}@dfki.uni-sb.de

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1 *PPP* Project Outline

The aim of the project 'Personalized Plan-Based Presenter' (*PPP*) is to explore and develop innovative presentation techniques for future intelligent user interfaces. The central issues of the project are:

- Planning Multimedia Presentation Acts
  A presentation system not only has to synthesize multimedia documents, but also has to plan how to present this material to various users. One objective of the *PPP* project is to emulate more natural and efficient presentations by using an animated character as a presenter who will show and explain the generated material.

- Interactive Multimedia Presentations
  Since it is impossible to anticipate the needs and requirements of each potential user, a presentation system should allow for user interaction. The *PPP* system responds to follow-up questions about the domain as well as to meta comments on the presentation act.

- Monitoring the Effectiveness of a Presentation
  In order to find out whether the user has really understood an instruction, a system must monitor the effects of its presentation. One way of getting feedback is using a data bus to physically connected technical devices, which are to be manipulated by the user, with the presentation system. Based on such a connection, the *PPP* system keeps track of the user's behavior and continuously adapts its presentations to the current situation.

- Providing a Firm Representational Foundation
  In order to allow for easy adaptations of new domains, representational techniques flexible and powerful enough to support a wide range of applications have to be employed. Further, these representation techniques should be accompanied by appropriate reasoning techniques that support the implementation of the multimedia presentation system.

Presentation design can be viewed as a relatively unexplored area of common-sense reasoning. Unlike most research on common-sense reasoning to date, the *PPP* project does not deal with metadomain research on general design principles, but focuses on formal methods capturing some of the reasoning in the design space of presentations for specific and realistic domains. The development of an interactive, multimedia presentation system requires efforts from various research areas such as planning, knowledge representation, constraint processing, natural language, and knowledge-based graphics generation.

2 *PPP* Project Description

2.1 The Need for Interactive Multimedia Presentation Systems

Rapid progress in technology for information processing, storing, distribution, and displaying is paving the way for the information society of the next century. It is one thing to have great potential in producing and accessing vast amounts of information, but quite another to make information available to human users in a profitable way. Since presentation of information is becoming more and more crucial in an expanding field of applications, intelligent presentation systems are needed as important building blocks for the next generation of user interfaces. Such presentation systems should be able to generate interactive multimedia presentations in order to account for:

- *Adaptivity*
  Interactive multimedia presentation systems translate from the narrow output channels provided by most of the current application systems into high-bandwidth communications tailored to the individual user. The need for adaptation is based on the fact that it is impossible to anticipate the needs and requirements of each potential user in an infinite number of presentation situations. In an intelligent presentation system like *PPP* design decisions concerning the presentation can be postponed until runtime and all parts of the presentation can be generated on the fly and so customized for the intended target audience and situation.

- *Effectiveness*
  In many situations, information is presented efficiently and effectively only through a particular combination of communication modes. For example, when explaining how to use a technical device, humans will often utilize a combination of language and graphics. It is a rare [illegible]

  [illegible]

  Multimedia presentation systems take advantage of both the individual strength of each communication medium and the fact that several media can be employed in parallel, e.g., natural language and graphics to produce a flexible and efficient information presentation. Moreover, facilities of modern computer technology provide the potential to generate advanced presentations that go beyond the linear, static nature imposed by paper-printed documents. Examples are hyperdocuments, simultaneously commented animation, interactive graphics, and virtual realities. If carefully designed, these presentations will be much more effective than presenta- [illegible] presentation system the user could even criticize the ongoing presentation. Apart from direct user interaction, the presentation system could also obtain indirect feedback on the user's reaction to a presentation. This would make sense especially in a maintenance and repair application where the presentation system instructs a user. Based on an evaluation of the user's physical behavior after he has received instructions, the presentation system will be able to keep track of the relevant behavior of the user, monitor the effectiveness of the presentation and continuously adapt its presentations to the current situation.

- *Consistency* -
  Intelligent presentation systems guarantee the consistency over several presentations. This is useful especially in technical documentation since companies will not have to waste time and money in designing similar instruction manuals again and again after small product changes.

Rapidly expanding activities in intelligent multimedia interfaces provide evidence that the importance of multimedia in human-computer communication has been well recognized world-wide. There are new funding programs currently in preparation, e.g., in USA, Japan, and France. Universities have founded multimedia groups (e.g., MIT Media Lab, Stanford University, UC Berkeley). Industrial interest and support have been shown by nearly all larger companies (e.g., Apple, IBM, Microsoft, SUN, Intel, NeXT, and Siemens). In Japan the Human Interface Laboratories at NTT and the FRIEND 21 project funded by all major companies are the driving force behind the research in this area. Specialized new conference series have been set up, e.g., IJCAI-89 Workshop on 'A New Generation of Intelligent Interfaces' (cf. [Arens *et al.*, 1989]), ACM Symposia on 'User Interface Software and Technology' (UIST, cf. confererence proceedings 1988-1992), International Workshop on 'Intelligent User Interfaces' (cf. [Sullivan and Tyler, 1991]), Workshop on 'Task Communication through Natural Language and Graphics' (cf. [Badler and Webber, 1990]), NATO Workshop on 'Computational Theories of Communication and their Applications' (cf. [Ortony *et al.*, 1992]), AAAI-91 Workshop on 'Intelligent Multimedia Interfaces' (cf. [Maybury, 1992]), International Workshop on 'Aspects of Automated Natural Language Generation' (cf. [Dale *et al.*, 1992]), and Advanced Visual Interfaces Workshop (AVI, cf. [Costabile *et al.*, 1992]). Furthermore a new ACL special interest group on Intelligent Multimedia Interfaces has been established and the first international book on 'Intelligent Multimedia Interfaces' will be published by AAAI Press ([Maybury, 1992]).

For the next International Joint Conference on Artificial Intelligence, IJCAI-93, a panel on 'Instructions and Language' has been organized by Prof. Webber (UPenn) and the $\mathcal{PPP}$ team has been invited to prepare a contribution on multimodal instructions for this panel discussion. Finally, in Saarbücken two spin-off companies have been founded by former members of Prof. Wahlster's research group, that develop, sell and deploy multimodal interfaces. The HQ company developed various multimodal information systems for Sony and multimodal entertainment systems for Philips and Ravensburger. The TransModul company sells an interactive multimodal interface to the DOS operating system (DOS-MAN) that integrates natural language and pull-down menus.

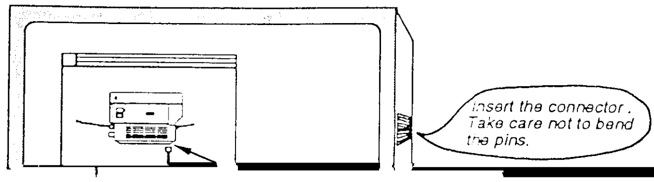


Figure 1: On-line Presentation Acts

tation of temporal relationships between presentation acts. For example, we must express that a pointing gesture and speech output should start or finish at the same time. The following plan for the above presentation acts could be formulated by using ...

(AND (DURING p-act-3 p-act-1)
  (BEFORE p-act-2 p-act-3)
  (DURING p-act-4 p-act-1)
  (DURING p-act-2 p-act-1)
  (OR (OVERLAPS p-act-2 p-act-4)
    (DURING p-act-4 p-act-2)
    (FINISHES p-act-4 p-act-2)))

An important objective of $\mathcal{PPP}$ is to represent these temporal relationships in the framework of a terminological logics and to use the $\mathcal{PPP}$ knowledge representation formalism for representing domain plans as well as presentation plans.

2.2.2 Interactive Multimedia Presentations

It is obvious that a presenter cannot always have a detailed model of each individual conversational partner. Often the presenter's assumptions about the wants and beliefs of his audience are incomplete or even incorrect. Consequently, humans sometimes do not understand an instruction or they are rarely satisfied with the presentation. In such cases

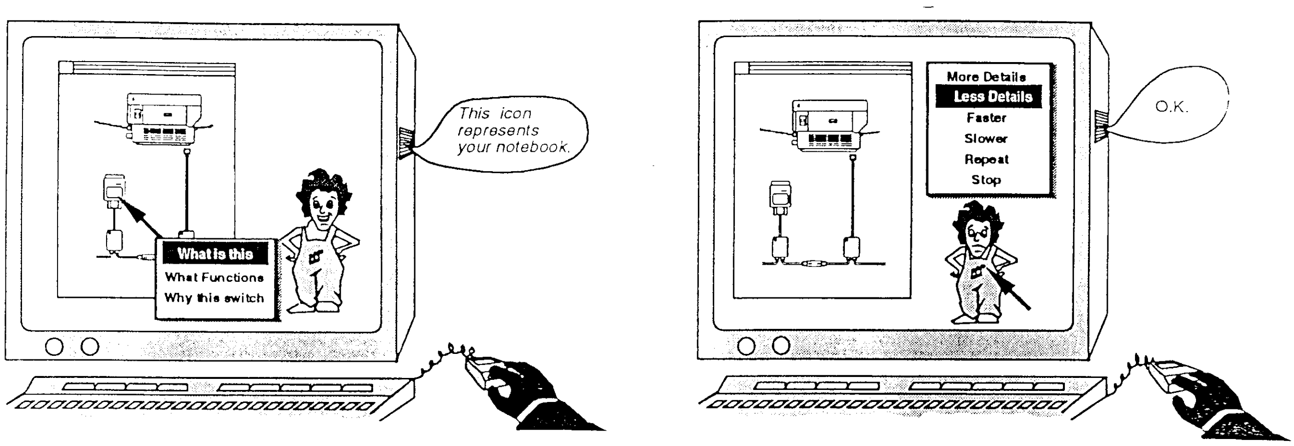


Figure 2: (a) Asking Follow-Up Questions, (b) Criticizing the Presentation Style

2.2.3 Monitoring the Effectiveness of a Presentation

Most approaches in the automatic presentation of information do not consider the user's reaction to a presentation. However, this is a severe limitation for most application scenarios where the presentation system has to communicate instructions, which must be carried out on-line by a user. In such an environment, problem solving becomes an iterative process involving the user, the application, and the presentation system (cf. Figure 3(a)). The presentation system must get feedback as to whether the user really understood the instructions in order to monitor the effectiveness of presentations and to continuously adapt these presentations to the current situation. A visual observation of the user's physical behavior after he has received instructions could provide the necessary information. However, this would require a sophisticated vision system which unfortunately is not available to date. An alternative is to physically connect the presentation system with the device to be manipulated via a data bus. This seems to be a more realistic alternative since data buses for technical devices are already available in many working areas. Such a situation is exemplified in Figure 3(b). In this case, the presentation system provides on-line help in maintaining a printer. By using the data bus, the presentation system receives information about whether instructions are carried out as intended. Since in $\mathcal{PPP}$ we will concentrate on presentation issues, we do not aim on diagnosis for trouble-shouting in the application domain. In place of a diagnosis component, we will exploit status reports of the connected hardware in order to trigger predefined domain plans for problem solving. Of course, the integration of diagnosis components, e.g., an expert system for the diagnosis of printer problems such as the μ-UNIXPERT (cf. [Lessel and Boley, 1987]) would be a reasonable augmentation.

This application scenario also illustrates the need for reactive planning since existing plans have to be flexibly modified to adapt them to the new situation.

2.2.4 Providing a Firm Representational Foundation

Building a multimedia presentation system that can be used for more than one application domain requires the use of representational techniques which are powerful and flexible enough to cover a wide range of possible application domains. In addition, these techniques should be accompanied by appropriate reasoning techniques that support the

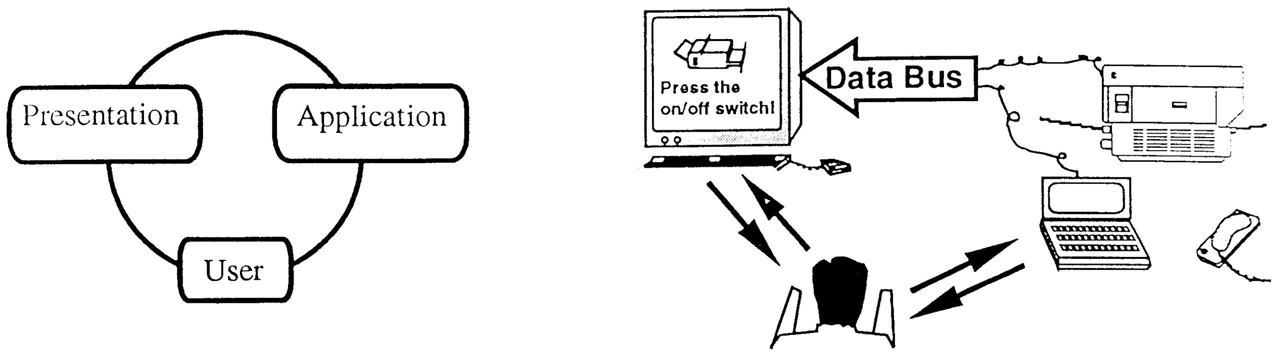


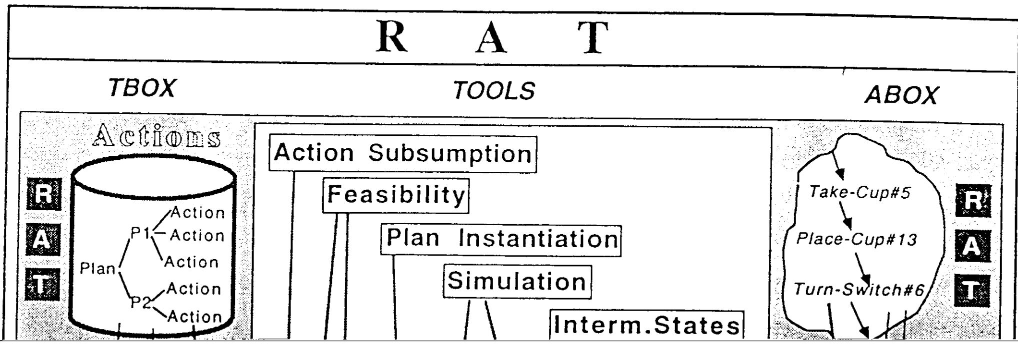
Figure 3: (a) Presentation Situation in $\mathcal{PPP}$, (b) $\mathcal{PPP}$ Application Domain

implementation of multimedia systems.

Since one of the design principles behind $\mathcal{PPP}$ is that the theoretical basis of all components should be sound enough to allow for scaling up, we will use and combine only relatively mature techniques, such as tree adjoining grammars for natural language generation, hierarchical planning and RST-theory for presentation planning, constraint-propagation techniques for layout design, and terminological logics for the representation of domain knowledge. The generation of interactive multimedia presentations creates challenges for the representational and reasoning subsystem that go beyond those usually encountered in generation systems. For instance, in order to deal with user interactions that express misunderstandings, the system must revise its beliefs about the user beliefs dynamically. Furthermore, in order to coordinate the presentation with the actions of a user, temporal reasoning must be incorporated into the presentation planning task. Finally, in order to allow for conceptually simple ways of representing and manipulating the knowledge, it seems desirable to provide a uniform representation for apparently different tasks that are structurally similar, such as domain and presentation knowledge.

Terminological Logics Terminological logics have been successfully applied in a number of different systems to represent important parts of the application domain. Basically, these logics provide a functionality offered by most semantic network formalisms extended by the facility to automatically *classify* new objects and concepts. This reasoning service can be exploited in the context of word-choice, when evaluating the specificity of presentation strategies and the applicability of such strategies as well as in the retrieval of presentation plans and canned multimedia units, such as video clips and graphical material. Terminological logics represent a mature technology which has even been subject to a standardization effort as part of the "DARPA Knowledge Sharing Effort." These logics will serve as the "representational backbone" around which all other representation and reasoning services are centered.

Reasoning about Action, Change, and Time Reasoning about actions and time takes place at the level of domain plans (representing operating instructions, for instance) and at the level of actual multimedia presentations. In order to represent and to reason about operating instructions, it is necessary to use some representational tools that are able to represent temporal orderings of actions and the causal relationships between actions and state changes. The RAT system (which is based on KRIS [Baader and Hollunder,



R A T
TBOX
TOOLS
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Actions
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P1
P2
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Action
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Action
Action
Action Subsumption
Feasibility
Plan Instantiation
Simulation
Interm.States
Take-Cup#5
Place-Cup#13
Turn-Switch#6
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A
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Reasoning about Belief For personalized plan-based presentation, the most important issue is the *interactivity* of the planning process, that takes into account criticisms of a user and applies revision strategies. If revision of the (maybe partial) presentation plan is deemed necessary, the represented *knowledge about the user and user beliefs* must be taken into account. Therefore, representation and reasoning services must be provided, that allow for *reasoning about beliefs*. For example, to detect the more or less probable explanations for the interaction of the user that allow the revision of the presentation planning process, *(weighted) abductive techniques* may be appropriate.

Retrieval of Multimedia Units In the automatic layout of multimedia presentations in complex domains generally a large set of representational units such as text fragments, graphics, videos, animation, and virtual reality is employed. Thus the *retrieval of multimedia units* appears as an important task in knowledge representation and reasoning.

Closely related to information retrieval is the potential *reuse* of parts of this knowledge retrieved. In the framework of the $\mathcal{PPP}$ project, reuse can be viewed as the reapplicability of various kinds of knowledge including, e.g., design decisions previously made for parts of the document, knowledge of the document structure, and parts of the presentation plan. Taking presentation planning as an example, reuse of parts of the presentation plan means saving time and costs and reducing the risk of redundant and/or partially inconsistent knowledge.

Efficient Inference Mechanisms While the main problems in designing knowledge representation and reasoning (KR&R) systems to support multimedia presentation systems are of a conceptual nature, the efficiency of these systems cannot be completely ignored. First of all, the KR&R services must be efficient enough to allow for a reasonable overall performance of the system. Secondly, in order to permit scaling up of the system, algorithms must be provided, such that the runtime does not unreasonably increase in the size of the knowledge base.

Since most representation formalisms must be flexible enough to deal with a wide range of different situations, and since the reasoning services have to be powerful enough to support non-trivial tasks, usually it is not possible to guarantee that a KR&R system is efficient in all cases. Indeed, most reasoning services that are needed to support, for instance, multimedia presentations are computationally intractable in the worst case. Nevertheless, some level of performance must be guaranteed for the cases that occur in practice.

2.3 Application of Intelligent Presentation Systems

There is a growing application base for intelligent interactive multimedia presentation systems. Some interesting applications scenarios will be sketched below:

- **Multimedia Instructions**
  A good example for the $\mathcal{PPP}$ system are instructions for the maintenance, service and repair of technical devices. Computer-based presentation techniques provide more effective media for instructing people in task performance since they overcome

problems arising from the static and non-interactive nature of conventional technical documentation. Furthermore, interactive presentation systems provide a low-cost way of allocating personal trainers to learners. This has already been noted by industries, e.g., most car producers have begun introducing multimedia technology to train their mechanics (cf. [BDW, 1992]).

- **Adaptive Control Panels**
  With increases in the amount of information that must be communicated to the users of complex technical systems, a corresponding need arises to find new ways to present that information flexibly and efficiently. Siemens and Daimler-Benz are developing adaptive user interfaces for control panels in aircraft cockpits, cars, industrial plants and traffic control stations. They are already using multimodal systems, but are dissatisfied with the current level of media coordination and adaptability. The next generation of intelligent control panels must include the explicit planning of situated and tailored presentations. It is clear that *PPP*'s approach to monitor the effect of presentations via a data bus is very attractive in the above mentioned applications. For the next generation of Mercedes cars a single data bus will collect information about the driver's behavior, the sensor measurements and all critical electronic and mechanical parts of the car, so that data fusion and multimodal presentation in a *hands-and-eyes-busy* situation will be an essential innovation. In particular, the combination of speech output coordinated with animated graphics is the wave of the future for the corresponding divisions of Siemens and Daimler-Benz.

- **Computer-Supported Collaborative Work (CSCW)**
  The concept of tailoring presentations for the user can be seen as an extended version of the view concept known from database technology. One step on the way to intelligent interfaces for computer-supported collaborative work (CSCW) is to use multimodal systems like *PPP* as presentation experts that map fragments of a shared knowledge-base onto a variety of presentations satisfying the information needs of the individual group members. It is clear that in a distributed setting various constraints for the individual members of a team supported by a groupware system have to be satisfied. Thus the same information should be displayed in different forms to the members of a team, e.g., in the setting of an international collaboration the information should be conveyed in the various mother tongues of the participants. At the same time the group members may have a diverse set of technical backgrounds, so that the presentation has to be tailored to various levels of expertise. Siemens has various strong CSCW groups that are interested in exploiting the techniques developed in *PPP* for their product development.

System	Media	Generation of Graphics	Communication between the Generators	Current Visual Domain	Project Team
XTRA	NL, graphics, pointing	manual	None	tax forms	Wahlster et al. (Saarbrücken)
CUBRICON	NL, graphics, pointing	partially automatic	None	geographic maps	Shapiro/Neal et al. (Buffalo)
ALFresco	NL, video, pointing, hypertext	manual	None	frescoes	Stock et al. (Trento)
MMI²	NL, graphics, pointing	automatic	None	computer networks, charts, tables	Wilson et al. (Oxon)
II	NL, graphics, menus	partially automatic	None	geographic maps	Arens et al. (Marina del Rey)
PEA	NL, hypertext	-	None	-	Moore (Marina del Rey)
IDAS	NL, hypertext	-	None	-	Reiter et al. (Edinburgh)
Weather Report System	NL, graphics	partially automatic	None	weather maps	Kerpedjiev (Sofia)
Map Display System	NL, graphics, pointing	manual	None	geographic maps	Maybury (Bedford)
SAGE	NL, graphics	automatic	None	business charts	Roth et al. (CMU)
FN/ANDD	NL, graphics	automatic	None	network diagrams	Marks/Reiter et al. (Harvard)
WIP	NL, graphics	automatic	between NL and graphics generator	espresso machine, mower, modem	Wahlster et al. (Saarbrücken)
COMET	NL, graphics	automatic	between NL and graphics generator	portable radio	Feiner/McKeown et al. (Columbia)
AnimNL	animated graphics	automatic	None	cooking devices	Badler et al. (Pennsylvania)

Figure 5: Current Research on Combining Natural Language, Graphics, Hypertext and Pointing

3 State of the Art

3.1 Presentation Planning and Design

3.1.1 Multimedia Presentation Systems

In the last few years, a number of projects have entered the area between natural language processing and multimodal communication, often focusing on a single specific functionality, such as the use of pointing gestures parallel to verbal descriptions for referent identification ([Kobsa *et al.*, 1986; Cohen *et al.*, 1989; Neal and Shapiro, 1991]). The automatic design of multimedia presentations has only recently received significant attention in artificial intelligence research. The most extensive discussion of active research in this field is documented in the proceedings of a series of workshops on intelligent multimedia interfaces (e.g., [Arens *et al.*, 1989; Sullivan and Tyler, 1991; AAAI-92, 1992; Costabile *et al.*, 1992]). Overviews on intelligent multimedia presentation and dialog management systems can be found in [Roth and Heffley, 1992; Edmonds and Murray, 1992]. Fig. 5 gives a survey of research activities in this area.

The first group of systems compared in Fig. 5 (XTRA, CUBRICON, ALFresco, MMI², I², PEA and IDAS) consists of multimodal dialog systems with an analysis and generation component. XTRA (cf. [Allgayer *et al.*, 1989]) provides multimodal access to an expert system that assists the user in filling out a tax form. CUBRICON (the CUBRC Intelligent CONversationalist, [Neal and Shapiro, 1991]) is an intelligent interface to a system for mission planning and situation assessment in a tactical air control domain. ALFresco (cf. [Stock, 1991]) displays short video sequences about Italian frescoes on a touchscreen and answers questions about details of the videos. Whereas the pointing actions and natural language utterances in these systems refer to visual presentations provided by the system builders, MMI^2 (A Multi-Modal Interface for Man Machine Interaction with Knowledge-Based Systems, [Wilson *et al.*, 1992]) also offers several graphical tools to assist the user in designing computer networks. In order to avoid many of the difficult referential problems in understanding natural language, I^2 (Integrated Interfaces, [Arens *et al.*, 1991]), PEA (Program Enhancement Advisor, [Moore and Swartout, 1990]) and IDAS (Intelligent Documentation Advisory System, [Reiter *et al.*, 1992]) do not have a natural language analysis component, but offer the user menus and forms or even a hypertext-style interface.

The second group of systems listed in Figure 5 focuses on the presentation task. They are designed more or less as presentation systems although the eventual application environment may also be that of an interactive system. SAGE (a System for Automatic and Graphical Explanation, [Roth *et al.*, 1991]) is a presentation system that uses text and graphics to explain the changes in the results generated by quantitative modeling systems. The ANDD (Automated Network-Diagram Designer) system automatically designs network diagrams from a list of relations and a basic network model whereas the FN system generates natural language expressions describing certain attributes of a particular object shown in the diagrams (see [Marks and Reiter, 1990]). Kerpedjiev has designed a system that transforms a dataset about a particular weather situation into a multimodal weather report consisting of a text illustrated by tables and weather maps with various icons and annotations (cf. [Kerpedjiev, 1992]). Maybury (cf. [Maybury, 1991]) is concerned with the planning of multimedia directions for a knowledge-based cartographic information system.

All the systems in Figure 5 *combine* natural language and graphics, but only systems that generate both forms of presentation from a common representation and allow for communication between the media-specific generators can address the problem of automatic *media choice and coordination*.

WIP (Knowledge-Based Presentation of Information, [Wahlster *et al.*, 1989]) and COMET (COordinated Multimedia Explanation Testbed, [Feiner and McKeown, 1990]) are the only systems in which the media-specific generators communicate with each other in order to achieve a fine-grained and optimal division of work between the selected presentation modes. Both systems deal with physical objects (espresso-machine, radio) that the user can access directly. For example, in the WIP project we assume that the user is looking at a real espresso-machine and uses the presentations generated by WIP in order to understand how the machine works. Likewise, COMET generates directions for the maintenance and repair of a portable radio, using text coordinated with 3D graphics. Although many similarities exist, there are also major differences between COMET and WIP, e.g., in the systems' architecture. To handle dependencies between content and mode selection, WIP selects the medium in which information should be presented during

	Informational Graphics	3D Graphics of Physical Objects
Static Media	Maps, Charts, Diagrams Example Systems: SAGE, FNN	Rendered Pictures Example Systems: WIP, COMET
Dynamic Media	Hypermedia Presentations Example Systems: AlFresco, IDAS	Animation Example Systems: VITRA-SOCCER, AnimNL

Figure 6: Combining Text Production with Four Types of Graphics Generation

content planning and not after as in COMET. Furthermore, WIP enables bidirectional communication to take place between the presentation planner and the layout manager. During one of the final processing steps of COMET the media layout component combines

text and graphics fragments produced by media-specific generators, while in WIP a layout manager interacts with a presentation planner before text and graphics are generated, so that layout considerations can influence the early stages of the planning process and constrain the media-specific generators.

Whereas the majority of work has concentrated on combining static media, the VITRA-Soccer project (cf. [Herzog *et al.*, 1989]), for details of VITRA's animation component see [Schirra, 1992]), the AnimNL project (cf. [Badler *et al.*, 1991b]) and recent extensions of COMET (cf. [Feiner and McKeown, 1992; Feiner *et al.*, 1991]) and WIP in addition deal with dynamic media, such as animation. Systems like AlFresco (cf. [Stock, 1991]) and IDAS (cf. [Reiter *et al.*, 1992]) demonstrate that natural language generation can be enhanced by integration with hypermedia systems. In such systems the generated text may contain links to hypercards and canned text or images can be combined with generated text for a hypermedia presentation.

Figure 6 summarizes the various types of graphical presentations that have been combined question of how to automatically design and generate particular graphics for particular purposes on the fly in a context-sensitive way.

Previous work on the automatic design of graphics can be distinguished in view of the kind of graphics to be generated and the underlying design methods. The spectrum of graphics

IBIS system, they start with a more or less complex presentation goal to be accomplished by graphics. Using a plan-based approach, presentation goals are refined in a top-down manner and eventually mapped onto realization operators which effect either 3D object models, functions for projecting 3D models, or the 2D constituents of a picture.

In most approaches the design process is driven by the information to be presented, and the communicative goal of a graphical presentation. Design decisions then frequently rely on heuristics and rules-of-thumb which are more or less empirically substantiated. An attempt towards a more analytical design approach has been made by Casner in his BOZ system (cf. [Casner, 1991]). Starting from an analysis of the task to be performed by the user, BOZ transforms a logical task description into a perceptual task description by substituting perceptual inferences in place of logical inferences. It then designs a graphics such that each perceptual inference is supported and visual search is minimized. On the one hand this seems to be a promising approach since it provides a means to characterize the effectiveness of a graphics by counting perceptual operations to be performed, whereas on the other hand, it is questionable whether the approach actually mirrors human perceptual behavior, e.g., in BOZ perceptual tasks are always modeled as a sequence of operations. Furthermore, it is less clear how to model perceptual tasks concerning the processing of complex 3D graphics.

An interesting approach for the synthesis of mental images has been taken by Kosslyn (cf. [Kosslyn, 1980]). Starting from a hierarchically structured propositional representation of domain objects, he instantiates a 2D cell matrix as a(n) (quasi)analogical representation of the object's shape, size and orientation. The instantiation process begins with a so-called skeletal image which will be recursively refined until all the available propositional information is mentally visualized. This visualization process is context-sensitive, e.g., if attention is focused on a specific part, a zoom operation is performed on the analogical representation of that part.

3.1.3 Automated Design of Animations

Animation as the computational control of images or objects over time is one of the most fascinating forms of presentations a computer system can support. Although animation is widely used in the entertainment industry and in scientific visualisation, it plays a subordinate role in research on intelligent user interfaces. Reasons for this are, among others, the fact that the fine-tuning of animation is a tedious and time-consuming task and that budgets of research projects are often overstrained by the costs of powerful high-speed graphics workstations which are indispensable in most applications including animation.

Previous work on animation concentrated on animation techniques and scripting systems. The spectrum of animation techniques includes key-framing (e.g., [Mezei and Zivian, 1971], [Reeves, 1981]), parametric interpolation (e.g., [Shelly, 1982], [Kochanek and Bartels, 1984], [Steketee and Badler, 1985]), tracking live action (e.g., [Ginsberg and Maxwell, 1983]), kinetics (e.g., [Thalmann and Thalmann, 1990]), inverse kinematics (e.g, [Badler *et al.*, 1980], [Korein, 1985], [Girard, 1987], dynamics (e.g., [Wilhelms, 1986], [Isaacs and Cohen, 1987], [Wilhelms, 1987]), and constraints (e.g., [Badler, 1987], [Witkin *et al.*, 1987], [Barr and Barzel, 1988]). Animation techniques are usually embedded in a scripting system that provides an interface for a higher-level description of animation. Some scripting systems are conceived as imperative programming languages. There, animation scripts are written in special languages usually based on linear-list notations (e.g., [Catmull, 1972], [Gomez, 1984], [Strauss, 1988], [EXPLORE, 1992]), or in a general-purpose programming language with embedded animation directives (e.g., [Reynolds, 1982], [Thalmann and Thalmann, 1990]). Other scripting systems allow for a graphical specification of animation parameters (e.g., [Baecker, 1969], [Feiner *et al.*, 1982], [S-Dynamics, 1985]).

There are only a few projects in which the automated design of animation has been issued. Kahn's ANI system (ANImation, cf. [Kahn, 1979]) was one of the first attempts at the automatic scripting of animations. Starting from natural language story descriptions of physical actions the ANI system generates icon-based 2D animations. A similar approach, but for stories written in Japanese, has been taken for the system SDA (Story Driven Animation) (cf. [Takashima *et al.*, 1987]). The design of 3D animations has been investigated by Feiner and Karp ([Karp and Feiner, 1990]). They have implemented an expert system called ESPLANADE (Expert System for PLANing Animation Design and Editing) that uses a rule-based approach to automatically choose animation parameters such as camera trajectories. Important work on articulated human figure modelling, task performance assessment in a 3D environment, and animation has been done at UPenn ([Badler *et al.*, 1991b; Zeltzer, 1991]). They are concerned with both natural language-driven generation of animation scripts as well as the automatic synthesis of narrated animations (i.e., animations accompanied with natural language utterances) from propositional task descriptions.

Another context in which the problem of automatic design of animation has been addressed are help systems. There, animation is typically used to visualize a sequence of actions that must be carried out by the user of an application program. Neiman's system GAK (Graphical Animation from Knowledge) was one of the earliest attempts to extend an existing help system with animated help facilities (cf. [Neiman, 1982]). An approach towards domain independency has been made with the Cartoonist system (cf. [Sukaviriya and Foley, 1990]). Instead of developing an animated help system for a specific application programm, Cartoonist retrieves a specification of interaction techniques with the application programm and uses that knowledge to plan animated interaction examples. The animation component AniS$^+$ of the plan-based help system PLUS (cf. [Thies and Berger, 1992]) not only considers the screen context, - as Cartoonist does - but also takes into account the user's task when planning animated help. An extension of this approach to the animation of 3D interaction techniques has been proposed in [Graf and Thies, 1992].

An alternative to the generation of animations from scratch are approaches in which movies are assembled form video clips recorded, e.g., by human camera operators. In this case, the design of an animation is reduced to the selection and linearization of video clips stored in a database. This technique has been used in the Movie-Maps system that simulates driving a car freely through an assortment of US cities (cf. [Lippman, 1980]), and in a system by Rubin (cf. [Rubin, 1989]) that assembles a coherent visual narration from prerecorded video clips.

3.1.4 Automatic Layout

As graphics hardware becomes more and more sophisticated, computer-based graphical communication achieves a crucial role in intelligent user interfaces. While much research in this area has been focused on the automatic synthesis of graphics for either presenting relational information and realistic depictions of 3D objects (cf. Chap. 3.2), the automatic layout design of graphical presentations has remained unexplored. Beach (cf. [Beach, 1985]) has shown that the general layout problem formalized as a random packing problem, i.e., determining whether an unordered set of non-overlapping rectangular table entries can be arranged into a minimum space, is strongly *NP-complete* and thus, there is no general and efficient algorithm for solving it. So even the problem of finding an aesthetically pleasing layout for multimedia documents under certain outward restrictions seems to be intractable. Current work on layout design is essentially influenced by ideas and approaches known from general graphics design (e.g., [Müller-Brockmann, 1981; Lieberman, 1990]), computer graphics (e.g., [Foley *et al.*, 1990]), and psychology of visualization (e.g., [Arnheim, 1966; Csinger, 1991; Tufte, 1991]).

Layout of Static Presentations Some interesting early efforts in automating layout include Eastman's work on a *General Space Planner* that addressed the task of arranging objects (e.g., furniture) in a space subject to given constraints (cf. [Barr and Feigenbaum, 1981], Chap. III). Feiner's *GRIDS* (GRaphical Interface Design System, cf. [Feiner, 1988]) was constructed as an rule-based experimental system to investigate approaches in the automatic display layout of text and illustrations. The layout process is guided by the concept of a graphical design grid. The current version of the testbed system has been implemented using an OPS5-like production language. Other approaches using computer-based grids, modeled by a human designer, can be found in the system *VIEW* (cf. [Friedell, 1984]) for synthesizing graphical object depictions from high-level specifications and by [Beach, 1985] for low-level table layout, whose high-level topology was specified by the user as a matrix.

Recent approaches investigate the use of constraint-based and case-based reasoning methods for representing graphical design knowledge. So *Laylab*, WIP's knowledge-based layout manager (cf. [Graf, 1992] and Chap. 4.4), exploits advanced constraint formalisms, such as finite domains and constraint hierarchies for specifying graphical design principles as well as a technique for propagating prioritized constraints to position individual document fragments on an automatic generated design grid. WIP deals with page layout as a rhetorical force, influencing the intentional and attentional state of the reader. In WIP, layout is viewed as an important carrier of meaning. A system that combines both rule-based representation and case-based reasoning in a system that generates and adapts effective layouts of information is the *TYRO* graphics designer developed at MIT (cf. [MacNeil, 1990]). *LIGA* (Layout Intelligence for Graphics Automation, cf. [Colby, 1992]) is a prototype system that generates new layouts by modifying example layouts from its case library. Similar to the approach in WIP, the graphic design knowledge about so-called 'cases' is represented in the system using constraints.

Other systems have tried to drive the automatic generation of the layout of interfaces portance of a deeper treatment of multimodal constraints in information presentation in order to address the ergonomic aspects of layout has also been stressed by [Dale, 1992]. An interval logic for reasoning about space, which is based on regions and connection is proposed in [Randell *et al.*, 1992].

Moreover, layout problems are inherent to most configuration tasks, e.g., the configuration of the passenger cabine of an AIRBUS A340 is addressed by constraint processing techniques (cf. [Kopisch and Günter, 1992]), and in [Paaß, 1992] associative methods are used to determine the geometrical arrangement of office furniture.

The importance of the layout dimension is also stressed by recent work at ISI that involves the generation of formatted text exploiting the communicative function of headings, enumerations and footnotes (cf. [Hovy and Arens, 1991]). A similar approach to text layout is followed by WIP's automatic typographer (cf. [Soetopo, 1992]). Here, high-level specifications of relations between textual devices are expressed by constraints which can be compiled into low-level text formatting routines. Other systems in the area of text layout exploit rule-based approaches for formatting text automatically (e.g., [Oemig *et al.*, 1991]).

Layout of Interactive Presentations Since constraint-satisfaction techniques have become more sophisticated during the last decade, and with the growing availability of advanced graphics hardware, there has been an upward trend in applying constraint techniques to user interface design. Thus, most of the related work on applications of constraint languages and systems has been done in the area of computer graphics and graphical interfaces, especially interactive geometric layout (e.g., [Borning and Duisberg, 1986; Kramer *et al.*, 1991]).

A pioneering system in both constraint-based languages and systems and interactive graphics was *Sketchpad* (cf. [Sutherland, 1963]) written by I. Sutherland at MIT in 1963. The Sketchpad system allowed a user to create complex objects by sketching primitive graphical entities and specifying constraints on them. Many of these ideas have been explored by Borning in the *ThingLab* system at Xerox PARC [Borning, 1979; Borning, 1981], a graphical constraint-oriented simulation laboratory implemented in Smalltalk-80. Later versions of ThingLab were concerned with extensions supporting constraint hierarchies, incremental compilation, and graphical facilities for defining new kinds of constraints (e.g. [Borning *et al.*, 1987; Freeman-Benson *et al.*, 1990]). Both systems exploit numeric techniques such as relaxation for solving constraint networks containing cycles, in contrast to symbolic techniques, e.g., used in Steele's constraint language (cf. [Sussman and Steele, 1980]). Further research activities in constraint-based graphics include the systems *Juno* [Nelson, 1985], *IDEAL* [van Wyk, 1982], *Magritte* [Gosling, 1983], *Bertrand* (cf. [Leler, 1988]), and the work of Cohen et al. on constraint-based tiled windows (cf. [Cohen *et al.*, 1986]).

An increasing number of interface-design systems mostly based on a graphical editor, have been developed during the last few years to make the interactive interface design process more efficient and comfortable than with conventional techniques. Here, constraints provide a means of stating layout requirements, e.g., the *Peridot* system deduces constraints automatically as the user demonstrates the desired behaviour (cf. [Myers, 1991b]). This approach has also been extended for text formatting by demonstration (cf. [Myers, 1991a]).

A similar system designed by Kurlander and Feiner (cf. [Kurlander and Feiner, 1991]) is able to infer constraints from multiple snapshots. The *Metamouse* system (cf. [Maulsby *et al.*, 1990]) is a demonstrational interface for graphical editing tasks within a drawing program. The user can specify a procedure by performing an example execution trace, manipulating objects directly on the screen and creating graphical tools. A grid-based approach to specifying simple number independent layouts by example is introduced in [Hudson and Hsi, 1992].

Further work has concentrated on methods for automating the layout of graphs. E.g. the up to then had suffered from ambiguities and misunderstandings caused by the unclear meaning of their primitives [Woods, 1975].

In order to better meet the characteristic properties, the name for KL-ONE-like systems has been changed from the original term Semantic Networks over Terminological Reasoning Systems, Term Subsumption Languages, Terminological Logics, Concept Languages to the current term *Description Logics.* The paradigm itself that is described by these names, however, remained unchanged: the structural description of classes of individuals–so called *concepts*—and binary relations between them—so called *roles.* The main advantage of these formal descriptions is that a well-defined formal semantics can be given for them and that they can be automatically classified into taxomomic hierarchies according to their generality. The classification process is based on the subsumption relationship and puts new concept descriptions automatically in the "right" place.

Most of the KL-ONE successors like KRYPTON [Brachman *et al.*, 1983; Brachman *et al.*, 1985], KANDOR [Patel-Schneider, 1984], NIKL [Moser, 1983; Schmolze, 1989; Schmolze and Mark, 1991], KL-TWO [Vilain, 1983; Vilain, 1985], LOOM [MacGregor, 1991a; MacGregor, 1991b], BACK [von Luck *et al.*, 1987; Nebel and von Luck, 1988; Peltason, 1991], MESON [Owsnicki-Klewe, 1988], KRIS [Baader and Hollunder, 1991], K-REP [Mays *et al.*, 1988; Mays *et al.*, 1991], SB-ONE [Profitlich, 1989; Profitlich, 1990; Kobsa, 1991a; Kobsa, 1991b], CLASSIC [Borgida *et al.*, 1989; Brachman *et al.*, 1991; Patel-Schneider *et al.*, 1991], or YAK [Cattoni and Franconi, 1990; Franconi, 1991; Franconi *et al.*, 1992], that have been developed up to now, have also comprised a second language to state assertions about instances of concepts and to reason about relations between instances and concepts, which led to yet another name: hybrid reasoning systems.

Brachman and Levesque [Brachman and Levesque, 1984] showed that the desired goal of sound, correct and tractable inferences (esp. subsumption) leads to a trade-off between the expressive power and the computational complexity because, even for small languages, subsumption can be intractable. The far ends of this discussion are taken by the KANDOR system on one side, which supported only a very small language and claimed to have complete algorithms (but see [Nebel, 1988]) and the LOOM system on the other side with a large variety of language constructs and inference mechanisms known to be incomplete.

During the late 80s more and more papers [Levesque and Brachman, 1987; Nebel, 1988; Patel-Schneider, 1987; Patel-Schneider, 1989; Schmidt-Schauß, 1989; Hollunder, 1989] showed that all reasonably expressive languages are intractable. In [Nebel, 1990b] it is shown that terminological reasoning is inherently intractable. The theoretical efforts in the area of pure terminological reasoning have come to an end as the sources of complexity now seem to be determined [Donini *et al.*, 1991a; Donini *et al.*, 1991b; Donini *et al.*, 1992]. This pushes the focus of attention on two old objections (see, e.g., [Doyle and Patil, 1991]), namely, whether classification is the central inference mechanism at all and whether these worst case results are really important for real applications (see, e.g., [FallSymp-92, 1992; MacGregor, 1992; Schaerf, 1992]). A very interesting contribution to the latter question has been published in [Heinsohn *et al.*, 1992a]. In this paper the results of an empirical analysis of six current terminological representation systems with respect to their "normal case" performance is documented.

The major interest of the KL-ONE developers now seems to be concentrated on the design of systems which meet the requirements of their applications by providing reasonably expressive languages, accepting the incompleteness of their algorithms in cases which–following the statements of the developers–do not occur in everyday use. The only exception to this trend is the design of the KRIS system [Baader and Hollunder, 1991], which provides complete subsumption algorithms in combination with a very expressive language (including, e.g., negation and disjunction of concepts). Although an initial empirical evaluation seemed to indicate that such an approach leads to a disappointing preformance [Heinsohn *et al.*, 1992a], a study of optimization techniques [Baader *et al.*, 1992b], showed that the [illegible]

[illegible] results. Now a kind of "pay-as-you-go" state seems to be achieved, i.e., the runtimes are roughly proportional to the complexity of the used language constructs.

Another direction on current research on description logics is the integration of other kinds of knowledge, e.g., temporal relations [Schmiedel, 1989; Schmiedel, 1990; Schild, 1991], actions and plans [Devanbu and Litman, 1991; Weida and Litman, 1992; Heinsohn *et al.*, 1992b], concrete domains [Baader and Hanschke, 1991], or defaults and nonmonotonic inferences [Baader and Hollunder, 1992; Quantz and Royer, 1992; Padgham and Nebel, 1992; Patel-Schneider, 1992].

Since description logics have reached a certain maturity, and since a number of systems have been implemented, the KRSS (Knowledge Representation System Specification) group [Neches *et al.*, 1991; Patil *et al.*, 1992] now aims at defining a standard for terminological representation systems.[1] The importance of these efforts has recently been confirmed in practice by observations during the empirical analysis described in [Heinsohn *et al.*, 1992a]. One result of this study was that sharing knowledge between several KL-ONE-alikes (which had been thought to be similar in that they are all based on the same paradigm) requires a surprising amount of effort caused more by differences in the design principles (like, e.g., allowing forward references) than by the differing languages.

A description of KL-ONE's different language constructs can be found in [Schmolze and Woods, 1990] together with the history of the KL-ONE-family starting from the origins of the KL-ONE system itself (see also [Nebel, 1990a]). A study of theoretical aspects of Description Logics is given in [Nebel and Smolka, 1991] and a good survey over the most logical point of view. The *frame problem*, i.e., the problem to compute what is unchanged by an action, identified by McCarthy and Hayes [McCarthy and Hayes, 1969] played a key role in this context. In fact, most of the research is centered around the problem of how to "solve" the frame problem using nonmonotonic logics. While it was originally believed that nonmonotonic logics are suitable for solving this problem (see, e.g., [Reiter, 1980]), the paper by Hanks and McDermott [Hanks and McDermott, 1987] demonstrated that this is not the case. This negative result applies not only to the usually employed *situation calculus* but to all temporal represenation languages and logics and is independent of a particular nonmontonic logic used to specify the frame default. While there have been a number of proposals to account for the problem identified by Hanks and McDermott (e.g., [Shoham, 1986; Kautz, 1986; Morgenstern and Stein, 1988; Sandewall, 1989], more principled approaches to address the problem have, only recently, been developed [Lifschitz, 1991; Lin and Shoham, 1991; Sandewall, 1992a; Sandewall, 1992b].

Other approaches to cope with the frame-problem have been to use a procedural "update semantics" avoiding the problem altogether. Most prominently, the STRIPS-framework [Fikes and Nilsson, 1971] should be mentioned in this context. Although this approach avoids the frame problem, it has the disadvantage of not including time and the flow of actions into model, handling this only on the meta-level. Further, as pointed out by Lifschitz, one must be very careful when modeling actions and plans using STRIPS [Lifschitz, 1986].

Nevertheless, the STRIPS approach of modeling action and change has been very popular, in the area of planning in particular, because of its conceptual simplicity. Recently, the STRIPS model has been extended to allow for a richer modelling bringing back again the frame-problem, which is handled procedurally on the meta-level, though [Ginsberg and Smith, 1988a; Ginsberg and Smith, 1988b; Winslett, 1988; Katsuno and Mendelzon, 1991].

One elegant way to deal with the frame problem is provided by a logic programming approach to maintaining events and their effects over time—the *event calculus* [Kowalski and Sergot, 1986]. It should be noted, however, that the expressiveness of the event calculus and its nonmonotonic reasoning techniques is not comparable to the above mentioned work.

Even abstracting from the logical problems and assuming a simplified model of propositional STRIPS, there are considerable computational problems. If context-dependent effects are allowed or the ordering of the actions is only partial, temporal projection even for propositional STRIPS is intractable [Chapman, 1987; Dean and Boddy, 1988]. As shown in [Nebel and Bäckström, 1992a; Nebel and Bäckström, 1992b], however, projection over partially ordered, context-independent actions is tractable, provided a realistic execution model is assumed.

Most of the research in reasoning about action, including the work described above, assumes that actions do not occur simultaneously and there are only few approaches that go beyond this assumption (see e.g. [Große, 1992a]). In general, one can distinguish between approaches that require more or less independence of simultaneously executed actions (e.g., [Horz, 1992]), approaches that handle additional synergistic positive effects of simultaneously occuring actions (e.g., [Große and Waldinger, 1991;

Große, 1992b]), approaches that require simultaneous occurence for successful execution [Sandewall and Rönnquist, 1986; Bäckström, 1988; Allen, 1991], and approaches that permit the suppression of some effects in case of simultaneous execution [Lin and Shoham, 1992]. In short, the problem does not yet seem to be well understood. On the contrary, there seem to be a long way to go before the different perspectives on this problem will converge.

When representing simultaneously occuring event, one problem is to specify the exact or relative order (including overlap) of occurences. This, of course, is not possible in the *situation calculus* since actions happen in unit time [Gelfond *et al.*, 1991]. Hence, if actions and events are required to have duration, another formalism must be employed. One possibility is to use Allen's interval algebra [Allen, 1983] to specify the occurences of events (see also [Allen, 1991]), a formalism that also has attractive computational properties, at least for a reasonable subset [Nökel, 1989; van Beek, 1990; van Beek and Cohen, 1990] of the algebra, which is intractable in general [Vilain *et al.*, 1989], however. In addition, implemented systems are available that support reasoning with interval relations (e.g., the MATS system [Kautz and Ladkin, 1991]).

Until now only few attempts have been made to extend terminological representation systems in order to handle additional kinds of knowledge, e.g., temporal or causal relationships.

Three approaches to represent actions and plans that are similar in some aspects of their architecture are CLASP [Devanbu and Litman, 1991], T-REX [Weida and Litman, 1992], and RAT [Heinsohn *et al.*, 1992b]. They all use a terminological logic to represent the world states and atomic actions and add a second formalism to compose plans and reason about the temporal relationships. Caused by different requirements and objectives, however, the focus of the RAT system and with that the design of its language is different from that of CLASP and T-REX. Whereas in RAT the states to express preconditions and effects of actions can be *described* using a subset of the terminological language, actions and states in CLASP and T-REX are primitive, non-decomposable units. On the other hand, their language to compose plans goes beyond the linear sequences supported in RAT. CLASP provides regular expressions over actions (incl. conditionals, loops and disjunctions), T-REX uses Allen's temporal constraints [Allen, 1983] to construct plans. The inference services of the three systems are also determined by their applications: CLASP and T-REX both use the computed plan hierarchies mainly to support plan recognition tasks whereas RAT's services comprise consistency checks, simulated execution of plans and temporal projection of conditions.

Another approach has been made by Swartout and Neches [Swartout and Neches, 1986], who classified and retrieved plans according to their goal descriptions, which are formulated in a terminological logic. However, they made no attempt to represent plans in the terminological logic. Wellman [Wellman, 1990] also builds plans from actions represented in a terminological logic, and organizes plan classes into a hierarchy based on a notion of subsumption. His language, however, is completely atemporal and he does not reason about plan individuals but plan classes only.

A plan abstraction hierarchy is central to the plan recognition work of Kautz [Kautz, 1991]. However, in his taxonomy, plan nodes are still atomic rather than structural, and the suitability of the representation for computing terminological inferences is not of concern.

In the field of plan synthesis, Tenenberg [Tenenberg, 1989] uses a plan hierarchy to construct abstract plan solutions that restrict later search, where any abstract solution can always be specialized by choosing a specialization of each abstract plan step. Thus, while plans in Tenenberg's hierarchy are compositions of actions, plans must always be structurally isomorphic across abstraction levels.

Finally, there are approaches that try to integrate the notions of time with terminological logics by extending a terminological logic by a temporal logic [Schmiedel, 1990; Schild, 1991]. However, these approaches have been only theoretical efforts so far, and it is not clear in how far (reasonably efficient) systems based on these theoretical efforts can be built.

3.2.3 Reasoning about Uncertain Knowledge

For the application underlying the *PPP* project the *inherent uncertainty* of several kinds of knowledge (about the user, presentation task and plan, and layout planning, for instance) is one important feature that has to be taken into account. Apart from the question which uncertainty model is appropriate for which kind of uncertainty phenomenon, another important question is how to represent the uncertainty of knowledge in a uniform framework and how to perform inferences in the case of uncertainty. Such inferences may, for instance, allow for decision making if several non-conflicting solutions exist, support presentation planning in the case of uncertain knowledge, and allow to generate explanations in a (weighted) abductive manner, for instance, if the interaction with a user leads to an interruption of presentation planning.

Prompted by this application, we sketch below the state of the art concerning (i) numerical models for handling *uncertainty*, (ii) handling of *uncertainty in terminological logics*, and (iii) *planning and abduction under uncertainty*. While for the first item several models for handling uncertainty have been proposed and their foundations, advantages, and disadvantages are well explored now (see, e.g., [Kruse *et al.*, 1991; Shafer and Pearl, 1990] for overview and analyses) the examination of the influence of uncertain knowledge for neighbouring fields, such as knowledge representation in general and knowledge representation in (termino)logical formalisms in particular, planning, and abduction, etc. has started only recently.

Uncertainty Models The characteristic feature of *heuristic uncertainty models* is that their mathematical foundations are traced only partially or not at all to some sound theory, as given by probability theory, for instance. This is because heuristic approaches aim at avoiding certain "problems" arising from the use of, e.g., probability theory. The reasons that are often mentioned in this context are the amount of data needed (prior and conditional probabilities, joint probability distributions, etc.), the inability to distinguish between absence of belief and doubt, and the fact that it is impossible to represent ignorance. One of the most important (heuristic) uncertainty models that aim at solving these problems is the *certainty factor approach* developed by Shortliffe et al. [Shortliffe and Buchanan, 1975; Shortliffe, 1976; Buchanan and Shortliffe, 1984]. The certainty factor model has to be seen in relation to the development of the well known expert system

MYCIN which was built during the years 1972–1976 and is an expert system for advising physicians on how to treat patients suffering from bacteriogenous infectious diseases. Later systems related to MYCIN are EMYCIN [van Melle, 1980], a domain-independent system based on MYCIN's control mechanisms and data structures, and RMYCIN [Cendrowska and Bramer, 1984] which is a reconstruction of MYCIN. Since the certainty factor approach makes use of measures and algorithms that are heuristic and at most "syntactically similar" to probabilistic ones, it has often been criticized (e.g. in [Adams, 1976; Heckerman, 1986; Horvitz *et al.*, 1986; Horvitz and Heckerman, 1986]). Another heuristic model is based on the concept of *triangular norms* and *conorms* [Schweizer and Sklar, 1961; Schweizer and Sklar, 1983]. It is important to notice that, because of their generality, T-norms and T-conorms give an infinite number of different "calculi of uncertainty." The selection of a special pair describes a particular calculus uniquely and completely. An application of this general uncertainty model is the expert system RUM ("Reasoning with Uncertainty Module") [Bonissone and Wood, 1989; Bonissone, 1987; Bonissone *et al.*, 1987]. They are also discussed in [Smets and Magrez, 1987; Magrez and Smets, 1989]. The system INFERNO has been developed by Quinlan [Quinlan, 1983a; Quinlan, 1983b; Quinlan, 1985]. One characteristic feature of INFERNO's architecture is that the inference model is mainly based on *bounds propagation*: it can be used for both forward and backward inferences. Since the model does not make assumptions about (in)dependencies of data, all the propagation constraints can be proven to be correct. Because of this philosophy, and the resulting fact that computed bounds may sometimes be weak, INFERNO is also called a "cautious" approach to uncertain inference. Meanwhile, several modifications and improvements have been proposed ([Liu and Gammerman, 1988; Saunders, 1989]).

As often argued *probability theory* offers a theoretically sound model for representing uncertainty and for embedding it in reasoning techniques. Just in the last few years a revival of using the probability theory in representing uncertainty has taken place, giving considerable insight into the application of probability theory and pointing out some misconceptions about its applicability. Also, new theoretical results from statistics and probability theory present arguments for the utility of probabilities for reasoning. Simple early models, that may be viewed as *straightforward approaches* for making use of probabilities in rule-based uncertain reasoning, are introduced in [Ishizuka *et al.*, 1982] and in [Adams, 1976]. In the approach of "inference networks" [Duda *et al.*, 1976; Duda *et al.*, 1978; Duda *et al.*, 1981] expert rules are interpreted as directed links labelled with so-called *likelihood ratios* based on a probabilistic interpretation. A concrete expert system based on inference networks is the system PROSPECTOR. Discussions are mainly related to the restrictive independence assumptions [Glymour, 1985; Johnson, 1986; Steve, 1986]. A promising approach is that of "decomposable graphic models", also called *belief networks* (see, e.g., [Pearl, 1986; Pearl, 1988; Spiegelhalter, 1989]). A characteristic feature of this approach is that uncertainty and belief is propagated through a network by local operations only: each node of the network is viewed as a single processor which exchanges messages with its neighbor nodes. A prototype expert system based on this model is the system MUNIN [Andreassen *et al.*, 1987]. Based on this system the expert system shell HUGIN [Andersen *et al.*, 1989] has been developed. Also the system PATHFINDER [Heckerman, 1990] is based on the idea of belief networks. Analyses of decomposable graphic models and exhaustive references are also given in [Kruse *et al.*, 1991].

Like probabilistic approaches, the *Dempster-Shafer theory of evidence* aims to model and quantify uncertainty by *degrees of belief*. But, in contrast to probabilistic approaches, it permits assignment of degrees of belief to sets of hypotheses rather than to hypotheses in isolation. The underlying idea is that the process of narrowing the hypothesis set with the collection of evidence is better represented in terms of this theory than in terms of probabilistic approaches. For this reason the theory can be viewed as an alternative to probability theory. The classical approach to evidence theory has been proposed by Shafer [Shafer, 1976]. His mathematical model is essentially based on the notion of *belief functions* and *Dempster's rule of combination* [Dempster, 1967]. The ability to express (total) ignorance is one of the main features that has to be mentioned as an advantage of belief functions against the use of a single probability. The Dempster-Shafer theory of evidence has received wide attention since the "7th IJCAI" in 1981 where the three papers [Barnett, 1981; Friedman, 1981; Garvey *et al.*, 1981] considering aspects on the Dempster-Shafer theory presents LP, a logical formalism for representing and reasoning with statistical knowledge. However, in spite of providing a very powerful representational formalism, Bacchus does not offer a deep discussion of consistency requirements and inference mechanisms. There exist several other proposals which are, however, outside the scope of this section.

As *terminological formalisms* play an important role in knowledge representation and reasoning in general, as well as in the framework of this project in particular, these formalisms have to be extended w.r.t. handling of incomplete and uncertain knowledge. The importance of providing an integration of both term classification and uncertainty representation[2] was recently emphasized in some publications. Yen and Bonissone [Yen and Bonissone, 1990] consider this integration from a general point of view which, for instance, does not require a concrete uncertainty model (e.g., probabilistic, fuzzy, Dempster-Shafer). In [Yen, 1991] Yen proposes an extension of term subsumption languages to fuzzy logic [Zadeh, 1965] that aims at representing and handling vague concepts. His approach generalizes a subsumption test algorithm for dealing with the notion of vagueness and imprecision. Since our application is mainly influenced by the existence of uncertainty, our general objectives differ from those underlying Yen's proposal. Saffiotti [Saffiotti, 1990] presents a hybrid framework for representing epistemic uncertainty. His extension allows one to model uncertainty about categorical knowledge, e.g., to express one's belief on quantified statements such as "I am fairly (80%) sure that all birds fly". Note the difference from "I am sure that 80% of birds fly", which requires a completely different formalism. In [Heinsohn, 1991a; Heinsohn, 1992; Heinsohn, 1991b] a probabilistic extension of terminological logics is proposed that maintains the original performance of terminological logics of drawing inferences in a hierarchy of terminological definitions. It, however, enlarges the range of applicability to real world domains determined not only by definitional, but also by uncertain knowledge (arising with, e.g., "typical" properties) which can be modeled on the basis of the language construct "probabilistic implication". To guarantee (terminological and probabilistic) consistency, several requirements have to be met. Moreover, these requirements allow implicitly existent (probabilistic) relationships, including knowledge about exceptions, to be inferred.

Planning and Abduction under Uncertainty As argued in [André and Rist, 1992], for the automatic generation of illustrated documents a plan-based approach is adequate. However, because of the presence of several kinds of incompleteness and uncertainty also the inferences that allow to *reason about plans* have to cope with these phenomena. Below, we give an overview of the work that has recently been done in the areas of *planning under uncertainty* and *(weighted) abductive techniques*. In the framework of the $\mathcal{PPP}$ project *abduction* can be characterized as a method for finding, for instance, the "best" explanation for an interaction that has been performed by a user during presentation.

For the task of *abduction in the presence of uncertain knowledge*, proposals have recently been made by Appelt and Pollack [Appelt and Pollack, 1990], Charniak and Shimony [Charniak and Shimony, 1990], Poole [Poole, 1991; Poole, 1988], and Peng and Reggia [Peng and Reggia, 1990], for instance. In their approach of "weighted abduction" Appelt

[2] Brachman [Brachman, 1990] considers "probability and statistics" as one of the "potential highlights" in knowledge representation.

and Pollack assign weighting factors to all literals in the premise of a rule for being able to single out the "best" hypotheses. These factors are used to compute the assumption cost of literals, and in the abductive procedure the assumption set with the lowest cost is preferred. Similarly, the model of Charniak and Shimony is based on a probabilistic semantics for cost-based abduction. The basis of Poole's work is the examination of (default) logics and non-monotonic formalisms in the framework of abduction. In [Poole, 1991] he presents a framework for Horn-clause abduction, including probabilities associated with hypotheses. His main contribution is in finding a relationship between logical and probabilistic notions of evidential reasoning. Peng and Reggia [Peng and Reggia, 1990] (see [Thagard, 1991] for a book review) consider abduction as the generation and comparative evaluation of explanations for a set of facts. Apart from analyses they provide a computational theory of abductive inference in medical diagnosis. It is important to mention that abductive techniques are also inherently present in some numerical methods for handling uncertainty such as belief networks introduced by Pearl. Also there exists a close relationship between the incompleteness and uncertainty of knowledge and the non-monotonicity in reasoning. For an overview about abduction in a *logical view* and respective references we recommend [Merziger, 1992]. Complexity analyses of abduction can be found in [Bylander *et al.*, 1991].

The central element of the book [Wellman, 1990] is the formulation of tradeoffs in *planning under uncertainty*. In particular, Wellman presents his SUDO-Planner, a program that formulates tradeoffs by constructing decision models from a multilevel knowledge-base of qualitative relations. A language for planning with statistics is provided by Martin and Allen. The paper [Martin and Allen, 1991] combines Allen's temporal interval reasoning with statistical inference to facilitate planning using inferences about probabilities. An overview about the recent state of the art in "reasoning about plans" is given in [Allen *et al.*, 1991b]. Shanahan [Shanahan, 1989] analyses the relations between deductive and abductive techniques.

An analysis of the proposals made in the area of planning and abduction under uncertainty visualizes that it is necessary to clarify in general the relationships and conceptual differences of numerical and logical approaches for both abduction and planning in order to provide an appropriate integrated formalism which aims at supporting presentation planning and explanation finding in the $\mathcal{PPP}$ project.

3.2.4 Efficient Inference Mechanisms

While the main problems in designing knowledge representation and reasoning systems to support multimedia presentation systems are of conceptual nature, considerations of efficiency cannot be completely ignored. Indeed, most reasoning services that are needed to support, for instance, multimedia presentations are computationally intractable in the worst case. Nevertheless, it is necessary to guarantee some level of performance for the cases that occur in practice. This issue has been recently recognized as important, as demonstrated by explicit sessions on computational complexity and tractability in AI conferences and by workshops on this topic, for instance, the AAAI'92 workshop on tractability [AAAI-WS, 1992] and the upcoming AAAI 93'Spring Symposium on NP-hard problems in AI.

A quite detailed investigation of reasoning with terminological logics has shown that this kind of reasoning is intractable for all reasonably powerful terminological logics [Donini *et al.*, 1991a; Donini *et al.*, 1991b]. Worse still, restricting the logic to be of "minimal" expressivity leads to a NP-hard inference problem provided we allow for the definitions of new concepts—something which is supported in all implemented representation systems supporting terminological logics [Nebel, 1990b].

Turning to temporal reasoning, a similar picture evolves. Planning is, of course, a kind of reasoning that is quite difficult as has been recently shown for a number of different planning models [Bylander, 1991a; Bylander, 1992; Erol *et al.*, 1992; Gupta and Nau, 1992] and severe restrictions on the quality of the solution and/or the allowable forms of action rules are necessary to guarantee tractability [Bylander, 1991a; Bäckström and Nebel, 1992a; Selman, 1992]. However, even less ambitious modes of temporal reasoning such as computing the implied ordering of events given a description in terms of interval relations following [Allen, 1983] is an NP-complete problem [Vilain *et al.*, 1989]. Also computing consequences of actions in a comparably simple setting or validating a given plan is a difficult problem [Chapman, 1987; Dean and Boddy, 1987; Dean and Boddy, 1988; Nebel and Bäckström, 1992a; Bäckström and Nebel, 1992b].

Finally, in considering reasoning about beliefs, it is a well-known fact that most propositional logics of beliefs have inference problems that are harder than reasoning in ordinary propositional calculus [Garey and Johnson, 1979; Halpern and Moses, 1992], which is already an NP-complete problem. Similarly, propositional abduction is a problem that is more difficult than ordinary propositional reasoning [Selman and Levesque, 1990].

Although the above results may be considered as very discouraging, from a more practical point of view they only indicate that it is impossible to come up with algorithms that are efficient in *all* cases. However, they do not rule out methods that give satisficing answers in almost all practical cases. While it would be, of course, desirable to have provably efficient reasoning methods [Brachman and Levesque, 1984], this goal is simply not achievable in most cases. For this reason, formal computational complexity results are often considered as non-informative and irrelevant for practical purposes. It should be noted, however, that complexity results provide us with insights into the computational structure of a problem that can guide us in developing efficient reasoning methods, for instance, by concentrating on special cases.

Efficient reasoning methods for worst-case intractable problems sometimes rely on the fact that in practice the full expressiveness of a representation formalism is not needed, leading to the situation that worst cases hardly occur. A prototypical example is the above mentioned problem of terminological reasoning in the presence of concept definitions [Nebel, 1990b]. Although the problem is worst-case intractable, algorithms that are usually employed in implemented systems do not encounter problems in practice.

This is however a rather unusual situation. Most of the time, some trade-offs along the line of reasoning accuracy or expressiveness have to be made—which may allow for a satisfying overall behavior. Although it is often difficult to restrict the expressiveness, sometimes non-trivial special cases that are expressive enough for a given application can be solved efficiently. For instance, while the temporal projection problem is intractable if events are conditional and are partially ordered, restricting events to be unconditional leads to a polynomial problem [Nebel and Bäckström, 1992a]. More generally, it is often possible to identify parameters of the problem that can be used in order to give a reasonable accurate characterization of the difficulty of given problem instances [Cheeseman *et al.*, 1991; Mitchell *et al.*, 1992].

Approaches that trade-off ... [illegible] is based on the knowledge representation language KANDOR [Patel-Schneider, 1984]. LaSSIE incorporates a large knowledge base, a semantic retrieval algorithm based on the classification inference, and a powerful user interface incorporating a graphical browser and a natural language parser. LaSSIE primarily intends to process queries about actions and, on this basis, to help programmers to find useful information about a large software system. One basic observation underlying the development of LaSSIE is that a developer whose task it is to implement, modify, or add a special operation to the system often cannot determine if it has already been done. Given this difficulty, programmers, instead of reusing existing primitives, often reimplement. Thus, a library of reusable parts is required, along with a helpful access mechanism. Although the application domain of LaSSIE is software, the general principles used in this system seem to applicable to the task of multimedia management and retrieval.

The development of LaSSIE is partially based on the work that led to the ARGON system [Patel-Schneider *et al.*, 1984]. ARGON is an information retrieval system designed for use by non-expert users on heterogeneous knowledge bases. It assists users in retrieving information from its knowledge base by continually presenting a query and an example individual that satisfies the query. Similar to LaSSIE, ARGON stores information in the frame-based knowledge representation system KANDOR.

A model for retrieving software components for possible reuse that employes semantic nets or taxonomic knowledge representation is also proposed in [Prieto-Diaz and Freeman, 1987]. Prieto-Diaz and Freeman describe a taxonomic domain model for the set of data operations embodied in a library of software components, categorized along different facets. This domain model is used in query formulation/reformulation. There are some other semantic-net-based systems that are intended to be general-purpose software librarians: The AIRS system of Ostertag and Hendler [Ostertag and Hendler, 1987] employes a heuristic retrieval algorithm based on a numerical conceptual-distance measure that has to be specified by the user. Woods and Somerville [Woods and Somerville, 1988] use conceptual dependency diagrams, the associated query mechanism is based on a set of verbs. For a given verb the conceptual dependency graph is identified and by prompting for further information it is possible to further narrow the search for components. Beside partially orders the space of behavior abstractions. The overall goal of Johnson and Feather [Johnson and Feather, 1992] is to support the evolution of requirements and specifications for hardware and systems. In the proposed system ARIES the knowledge is organized into specialization hierarchies, folders and domains in order to facilitate reuse. The topic of reuse has also been discussed in the framework of *software engineering* (see, e.g., [Biggerstaff and Perlis, 1989a; Biggerstaff and Perlis, 1989b]).

In particular, the reuse of plans has been considered recently as an interesting research topic. Plan generation in complex domains is normally a resource and time consuming process. One way to improve the efficiency of planning systems is to avoid the repetition of planning effort whenever possible. For instance, in situations when the goal specification is changed during plan execution or when execution time failures happen, it seems more reasonable to *modify* the existing plan than to plan from scratch again. In the extreme, one might go as far as basing the entire planning process on plan modification, a method that could be called *planning from second principles*.

Instead of generating a plan from scratch, that method tries to exploit knowledge stored in previously generated plans. The current problem instance is used to find a plan in a plan library that—perhaps after some modifications—can be used to solve the problem instance at hand. Current approaches try to integrate methods from analogical or case-based reasoning to achieve a higher efficiency [Hammond, 1990; Veloso, 1992], integrate domain-dependent heuristics [Howe, 1992] or investigate reuse in the general context of deductive planning [Koehler, 1992; Biundo *et al.*, 1992]. The range of applicability for such techniques has not been investigated yet, though [Nebel and Koehler, 1992].

4 Previous Work of the Project Team

We have been engaged in work in the area of multimodal communication for several years now, starting with the HAM-ANS ([Wahlster *et al.*, 1983]) and VITRA systems ([André *et al.*, 1986], [Herzog *et al.*, 1989]) which automatically create natural language descriptions of pictures and image sequences shown on the screen. These projects resulted in a better understanding of how perception interacts with language production. Furthermore, we have been investigating ways of integrating tactile pointing with natural language understanding and generation in the XTRA project ([Kobsa *et al.*, 1986], [Wahlster, 1991]).

Our work on knowledge representation draws heavily on the experience gained in designing knowledge representation tools in the project HAM-ANS [Marburger and Nebel, 1983] and on designing of and working with terminological representation systems in the KIT-BACK project [Nebel and von Luck, 1988], in the JANUS project [Sondheimer and Nebel, 1986], in the XTRA project [Profitlich, 1990], and in the MESON project [Heinsohn and Owsnicki-Klewe, 1988]. In WIP, this experience was used to provide support in the area of knowledge representation in the form of adapting and enhancing existing tools and designing and implementing a system that supports representation of and reasoning about actions and plans.

Since 1989, we have been concerned with the coordination of text and graphics in the WIP project. Today, WIP is considered to be one of the leading projects in the area of multimodal presentation systems. This is reflected by numerous publications (among others two chapters in the first volume on intelligent multimedia interfaces and two articles in the AI Journal) and invited talks at major conferences and workshops. The knowledge representation work of the WIP group is internationally recognized as being very significant as can be seen from the group's two books, a number of publications at international conferences and in scientific journals, and invited talks at conferences and workshops.

In WIP, we have developed a computational model for the generation of multimodal communications (cf. [Wahlster *et al.*, 1991; Wahlster *et al.*, 1992a; André *et al.*, 1992; Wahlster *et al.*, 1992b]). The basic principles underlying the WIP project are that the generation of all constituents of a multimodal presentation should start from a common representation and that the design of a text-picture sequence can be modeled as a non-monotonic planning process.

For the automatic generation of illustrated documents, the presentation strategies have been treated as operators of a planning system (cf. [André and Rist, 1990b], [André and Rist, 1990a], [André and Rist, 1992]). The presentation planner receives as input a formal specification of a presentation goal. The result of the presentation planning process is a hierarchically structured plan of the document to be generated. This plan reflects the propositional contents of the potential document parts, the intentional goals behind the parts as well as rhetorical relationships between them. While the top of the presentation plan is a more or less complex presentation goal (e.g., introducing an object or explaining how to make coffee), the lowest level is formed by specifications of elementary presentation tasks (e.g., formulating a request or depicting an object) that are directly forwarded to the mode-specific design components.

4.2 Graphics Generation

When generating illustrations of physical objects, WIP does not rely on previously authored picture fragments or predefined icons stored in the knowledge base. Rather, we start from a hybrid object representation which includes a wireframe model for each object. Although these wireframe models, along with a specification of physical attributes, such as surface color or transparency, form the basic input of the graphics generator, the design of illustrations is regarded as a knowledge-intensive process that exploits various knowledge sources to efficiently achieve a given presentation goal. For example, when a picture of an object is requested, we have to determine an appropriate perspective in a context-sensitive way (cf. [Rist and André, 1990]). In our approach, we distinguish between three basic types of graphical techniques. First, there are techniques to create and manipulate a 3D object configuration that serves as the subject of the picture. For example, we have developed a technique to spatially separate the parts of an object in order to construct an exploded view. Second, we can choose among several techniques that map the 3D subject onto its depiction. For example, we can construct either a schematic line drawing or a more realistic looking picture using rendering techniques. The third kind of technique operates on the picture level. For example, an object depiction may be annotated with a label, or picture parts may be colored in order to emphasize them. The task of the graphics designer is then to select and combine these graphical techniques according to the presentation goal (cf. [Rist and André, 1992b], [Rist and André, 1992a]). The result is a so-called design plan which can be transformed into executable instructions of the graphics realization component. This component relies on the 3D graphics package S-Geometry and the 2D graphics software of the Symbolics window system.

4.3 Text Generation

WIP's text generator is based on the formalism of tree adjoining grammars (TAGs). In particular, lexicalized TAGs with unification are used for the incremental verbalization of logical forms produced by the presentation planner (cf. [Harbusch, 1990; Schauder, 1990; Harbusch *et al.*, 1991; Finkler and Schauder, 1992]). The grammar is divided into an LD (local dominance) and an LP (linear precedence) part so that the piecewise construction of syntactic constituents is separated from their linearization according to word order rules (cf. [Finkler and Neumann, 1989]).

The text generator uses a TAG parser in a local anticipation feedback loop (cf. [Jameson and Wahlster, 1982]). The generator and parser form a bidirectional system, i.e., both processes are based on the same TAG. By parsing a planned utterance, the generator makes sure that it does not contain unintended structural ambiguities.

As the TAG-based generator is used in designing illustrated documents, it has to generate not only complete sentences, but also sentence fragments such as NPs, PPs, or VPs, e.g., for figure captions, section headings, picture annotations, or itemized lists. Given that capability and the incrementality of the generation process, it becomes possible to interleave generation with parsing in order to check for ambiguities as soon as possible. We have explored different domains of locality for such feedback loops and trying to relate them to resource limitations specified in WIP's generation parameters. One parameter of the generation process in the current implementation is the number of adjoinings allowed in a sentence. This parameter can be used by the presentation planner to control the syntactic complexity of the generated utterances and sentence length. If the number of allowed adjoinings is small, a logical form that can be verbalized as a single complex sentence may lead to a sequence of simple sentences. The leeway created by this parameter can be exploited for mode coordination. For example, constraints set up by the graphics generator or layout manager can force delimitation of sentences, since in a good design, picture breaks should correspond to sentence breaks, and vice versa (cf. [McKeown and Feiner, 1990]).

4.4 Constraint-based Layout

In order to communicate generated information to the user in an adequate manner, we have integrated *LayLab*, an automatic layout manager, into the cascaded architecture of the WIP system (see also [Graf, 1991; Graf and Maaß, 1991; Graf, 1992]). In order to achieve a coherent output, this multimedia layout component is able to reflect certain semantic and pragmatic relations specified by a presentation planner to arrange the visual appearance of a mixture of text and graphics fragments delivered by the media-specific generators, i.e., to determine the size of the layout objects and the exact coordinates for positioning them on the document page.

WIP's presentation design process treats the layout problem as a constraint satisfaction problem. So, the design of an aesthetically pleasing layout is characterized as a combination of a general search problem in a finite discrete search space and an optimization

4.5 Knowledge Representation and Reasoning

Most of the representation of domain knowledge in WIP is based on terminological logics. As far as only static knowledge about objects and their structure is concerned, "conventional" terminological representation systems are appropriate for this task. The KRIS system [Baader and Hollunder, 1991] which we employed in WIP, however, turned out to be inadequate in two respects. First, the interface to the application did not provide the required functionality. Second, the system was orders of magnitudes slower than other systems [Heinsohn *et al.*, 1992a; Heinsohn *et al.*, 1992c]. Both of these shortcomings stem from the fact that the system was only intended to be an experimental testbed for subsumption algorithms. As we were able to show, these limitations were not inherent to the general approach [Baader *et al.*, 1992b]. As a side effect of this work, a specification of a common terminological language has been developed jointly with the WINO project, which has become part of the KRSS standard effort for terminological representation systems, which is one of the projects of the "DARPA Knowledge Sharing Effort" [Patil *et al.*, 1992]. On the theoretical side, a number of existing features and possible extensions of terminological logics were explored and analyzed from a computational and logical point of view [Nebel, 1990b; Nebel, 1991; Nebel and Smolka, 1991; Baader *et al.*, 1992a; Heinsohn and Hollunder, 1992].

Since terminological representation formalisms are only aimed at representing categorical knowledge, but it is often also necessary to represent knowledge that is uncertain and/or vague, an integration of probabilistic approaches and terminological approaches appears to be desirable. Based on research that has been carried out in the area of representing uncertain and vague knowledge [Kruse *et al.*, 1991; Heinsohn and van Loon, 1988], we have designed an extension to terminological formalisms, the language ALCP, that allows the representation of and reasoning about uncertain knowledge in terminological representation systems [Heinsohn, 1991a; Heinsohn, 1992]. While this work has been purely theoretical up to now, we anticipate an implementation and application of this approach in the $\mathcal{PPP}$ project.

Another extension of terminological representation formalisms that proved necessary was an extension that supports the representation of actions and plans in order to adequately represent operating instructions. In order to support the presentation planning and generation task, new reasoning services such as computing the feasibility of a plan and the state of affairs after executing part of a plan have been implemented [Heinsohn *et al.*, 1992b; Heinsohn *et al.*, 1991]. Some of the theoretical problems associated with these reasoning services, such as computing the consequences of a plan, have been investigated in [Nebel and Bäckström, 1992a; Nebel and Bäckström, 1992b], showing that this problem is not as hard as other authors have claimed.

5 Research Plan

5.1 Presentation Planning and Design

In $\mathcal{PPP}$ we view the design of a multimedia document as a non-monotonic process that includes various revisions of preliminary results and negotiations between the system and the user.

Reactive Planning When planning presentations, unexpected situations may arise that require the system to revise the initial plan. Such revisions might be due to new high priority goals in the back-end system or the addressee's reaction to the output generated [illegible]

However, we will not only store reactions for possible situations in advance, but also examine how reactions to unexpected situations can be computed at execution time.

hypertext system), a further graphics, or a new text-picture combination presented by *PPP*. In contrast to this, *PPP*'s interactive presentation strategies involve the user in the explanation process. For example, in order to inform a user about certain object properties the user may be requested to zoom and pan on a particular part, to scroll a graphics in a window, or to simulate a walk-around by continously changing the viewing specification. To cope with interaction on graphics we have to maintain an explicit representation of the surface structure and the semantics of a graphics on display. In *PPP*, a propositional picture description will be built up during the graphics generation process.

There is also a technical dimension when producing graphical output. From our experience with commercial graphics software we know that there is no ideal graphics tool available on the market that meets all the requirements a system like *PPP* demands. Consequently, we also will have to address problems like adaptation, integration and augmentation of graphics tools at hand.

Controlling the Animated Presenter As elaborated in Section 2.2.1 the planning of presentation acts is one of the central research topics in *PPP*. In order to demonstrate and evaluate our results, we need a component that realizes planned presentation acts in a natural way. In *PPP*, we will use an animated character that plays the role of a presenter showing, commenting and explaining the generated material. It is clear that within the *PPP* project we cannot aim at sophisticated character animation; this is a hard and complex task in its own right and has been a hot topic for several years now in the computer graphics community. Rather, we will rely on a simple 2D icon-based character and concentrate on synchronizing some animated pointing gestures with natural language output.

Layout of Interactive Multimedia Presentations While our previous work in WIP has concentrated on automatically generated grids and constraint formalisms for supporting the layout design of static text-picture presentations, the *PPP* system will be enriched by further media including informational graphics (e.g., charts, diagrams) and dynamic as well as canned presentation parts (e.g., animation, hypermedia). So, a layout manager designed for *PPP* will be concerned with arranging the generated multimedia output as well as managing the interface to the user and the application. As we have proven in WIP, constraint processing techniques provide an elegant mechanism to specify layout requirements in graphical environments as well as to declaratively state design-relevant knowledge about heterogeneous geometrical relationships, characterizing properties between different kinds of multimedia items that can be maintained by the underlying system. Therefore, we will generalize the constraint-based approach used in WIP towards dynamic interactive layout design.

Editing of Incrementally Laid Out Presentations In *PPP* we will allow the user to tailor the interface to his needs by editing incrementally laid out presentations, changing default layout schemata interactively or working on virtual displays. We will address these goals through the extension of an existing incremental constraint hierarchy solver with regard to dynamic layout tasks. Here, we have to consider the fact, that in interactive graphical environments, not only the constraint hierarchy changes frequently, but the constraint solver must be capable of finding solutions without reducing the direct manipulation responsiveness. Another important topic will be concerned with the representation of layout stereotypes and the use of multimedia units retrieved from a 'case library' (see also Chap. 5.2).

Animated Layout Animating layout is an area of active research that is mostly based on experiences gained from algorithm visualization. In $\mathcal{PPP}$ animated multimedia presentations can enhance the effectiveness and expressiveness of both, the visualization of the incremental layout process and dynamic application scenarios, such as configuration tasks, process monitoring and viewing the dynamics of simulations. So, one of our efforts will be concerned with the evaluation of current work on animating layout of multimedia presentations in order to realize the flow layout technique for 2D graphics in our application domain. Constraints will be useful to describe the appearance and structure of multimedia items as well as how those items evolve over time. Thus, the layout of presentations including animation requires an extension of the exploited constraint language by introducing temporal constraints and mechanisms for satisfying them.

5.2 Knowledge Representation and Reasoning

Extensions of the RAT system and Plan Monitoring In the WIP project, terminological logics have been successfully employed for the purpose of representing knowledge about the domain and they have served as a base for extensions, such as modelling plans and actions. We intend to use terminological logics also in $\mathcal{PPP}$, in particular, we will further use the KRIS system and our extension RAT, which has been built on top of KRIS.

As the requirements of the $\mathcal{PPP}$ system with respect to knowledge representation and reasoning about knowledge will go beyond those of the WIP system, the RAT formalism developed and used in WIP must be extended in various ways. The lanuguage provided by RAT currently supports only atomic actions and linear sequences. In order to allow for the representation of more complex plans, it should include additional constructs as. e.g., partially ordered actions, simultaneous actions, conditionals, and complex temporal orderings of plan steps like those of Allen.

In order to achieve a firm design of an extended RAT formalism, existing approaches dealing with actions and plans will be studied. In the area of plan synthesis and recognition various attempts have been made to enrich the representation formalisms to handle plans more complex than linear sequences of actions. These formalisms, however, are not coupled with terminological logics and most of them add only one new aspect of plan compositions whereas the new RAT formalism must comprise all the above mentioned constructs. For example, when combining non-linear plans and the possibility of simultaneous actions new problems may arise. In order to provide a theoretically well-founded approach, we will study the existing approaches carefully and design an extended RAT-language.

Another aspect of the new RAT system is new inference services which are caused by the new requirements of $\mathcal{PPP}$. For instance, the validation of a plan execution with respect to the abstract description of a plan will be one of the tasks of RAT. This problem will arise especially when monitoring the user's execution of a presented domain plan. The user's actions and their effects must be mirrored by assertions in RAT's assertional knowledge base. Additionally, external events which may occur during the execution must be taken into account because they may effect the further execution of a plan.

Uniform Representation of Domain and Presentation Plans One of the objectives of $\mathcal{PPP}$ is to have a single formalism for the representation of knowledge about the domain plans as well as about the presentation plans. Therefore these two knowledge sources will be modeled using the RAT formalism. This includes on the one hand knowledge concerning the different application domains and temporal and causal relationships in these domains and on the other hand knowledge concerning strategies to present this knowledge to the user. Since the representation of presentation strategies requires a more powerful representation formalism than currently offered by KRIS, in particular, it is necessary to deal with modal belief operators, a necessary prerequisite for this task is an evaluation of the reasoning requirements in this context.

Reasoning about Beliefs Presentation planning in the $\mathcal{PPP}$ system is based on a theory of beliefs and intention similar to the one described in [Cohen and Levesque, 1990]. In particular, the planning process aims at satisfying goals of the form "the user should know ..." In the WIP project, reasoning about the user's beliefs has been already dealt with, however, in a limited form. We anticipate a number of necessary extensions and generalizations which are necessary to support this kind of reasoning in the broader *generic* knowledge with a statistical interpretation and the drawing of inferences on the basis of terminological and statistical knowledge, several other uncertainty phenomena exist. An important one is related to the consideration of *individual beliefs* that require an extended assertional formalism.

Besides the task of implementing and extending ALCP, we have to note that uncertain and incomplete knowledge does not only exist in terms of *facts* but also in relation to *actions and plans* in the case of both domain modeling and presentation planning. Further, the automatic *constraint-based layout* is also influenced by design criteria that are "weighted" to allow for an optimal layout of multimedia documents in different situations—a process that has to be be supported by an appropriate uncertainty model.

Efficient Inference Algorithms Certain inference procedures that are needed in our applications are inherently worst-case intractable. Although good implementation techniques and clever algorithms can reduce the "average" runtime in most cases, there is the problem of designing methods that are provably fast or simply faster than other comparable methods. Our main emphasis will be on designing efficient methods for subsumption computation. Since approximation methods and probabilistic approaches have recently been shown to give quite satisfying results for a number of different problems, we will apply these methods in order to design new algorithms for subsumption/satisfiability computation in terminological logics. One particular point we will focus on is the computation of satisfiability for feature structures, which is of relevance because it is an important representation structure used in RAT and has relevance in the area of unification grammars. Due to the latter, we intend to cooperate with DISCO on this topic.

Retrieval of Multimedia Units From the viewpoint of information retrieval, terminological languages have several advantages: they allow the description of classes of objects with complex relational structure, they allow the handling of taxonomies, and, most important, they provide classification as key inference. By classifying descriptions of multimedia units, e.g., the most specific instances associated with the description can be retrieved. In order to support *interactive retrieval*, a "query by example" interface must be developed that will allow to process queries, to present sample individuals that satisfy the query, and, depending on the precision of the answer, to generalize or to specialize the query. In addition, in order to allow program interaction between the different modules of the $\mathcal{PPP}$ system, syntax and semantics of a *query language* for terminological information retrieval have to be developed.

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