

ABOUT "OUDE BELGEN", COMPUTING AND THE WEB



DIRK REPORTING...

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Hi dad,

It's Monday morning, a holiday, it's raining outside, I've hurt my foot and I'm stuck to this computer... a good time to catch up with you. Last night I read your little report on the history of Belgium and was duly inspired to contribute a little to the "Bertels Bank of Knowledge" myself. By the way, I truly enjoy reading your reports. They constitute all of the dutch literature I ever read here, and so it is always a special experience for me. [One aspect of our language always catches my eye, the length of some words. Like *onafhankelijkheidsstrijders ... gemeenschapsregeringen ... Volksvertegenwoordigers ...*]

As regards Belgian history, I'm glad to have read up about it so now I can at least answer some of the questions people ask me... I must admit that I new little about it. Anything I learned at school as regards history (and geography) quickly vanished in thin air. But I've always had the excuse that I thought history to be a subject that can only be appreciated after the "*perspective of years*".

Though I do remember, I must have been 12 or so, having an unexpected encounter with history. I was frantically collecting "historia zegeltjes" - to the chagrin of mother, who would discover several of "Fluppe Merx's" food packets partly (and, in the case of chocolate, wholly) mutilated - Anyway, after I had accumulated enough of them I would send them off, to be rewarded (after many disappointing trips to the mailbox) by a set of prints. These prints for me were the most precious things on earth, possibly because I actually had to do something for it to get them... I remember being fascinated by one particular set. It started with the "Oude Belgen" then went on to pre-Roman times, to the Roman times, and so on...

So here is my request... Can you elucidate me on the old (pre 1815) history of the Belgians? I assume that a "Belgian" tribe existed before the Roman empire annexed it as one of its provinces (Belgica) of Gaul... Or at least that's what Asterix told me... I also was taken by these tribal leader characters like Ambiorix, etc... So there are a lot of questions here, I don't know, maybe you would like to write about this...

I really am enjoying my time at uni this second year. Various aspects of it are only now starting to make sense... I also decided, for several reasons, to do only 75% full time, ie. to do 3 units per semester instead of 4. This enables me to get deeper into the subjects, and it also allows me to work part-time. Though work at Nunatak is very slow at the moment, I am hoping it will pick up soon...

My main vision is to, after I finish the course, do full time work and take up mathematics as a major. This again will allow me to concentrate more fully on the subject. There is apparently a great demand in "Mathematical Modelling" in computing...

I still do music, and once I have a decent computer I will be able to do digital recording, CD distribution, maybe some net-teaching and marketing. I plan to create a WEB site that functions more like a data base for all things written, composed and programmed by my humble self. God knows, I've been doing some heavy typing here... so far I've compiled about 10 books, (popular science literature, mathematics and some philosophy). I also have lots of my own on music (which needs to be type-set), and on science (which is slowly being structured in some kind of coherent form).

An interesting feature of AI is that as soon as a goal is reached it ceases to be / chess programs are now regarded as "mechanical").

AI is leading strongly into biological fields. AI evolution runs something like this:

- symbol processing : Uses extensively logic languages (like prolog). Game p such as chess
- Little programs imitate neurons and are allowed to interact like a (very much simplified) brain in neural network processing. This type of processing is esp effective in perception tasks.
- Or there's the idea of the intelligence in an ants nest. This forms the basis of intelligent agents. Intelligent agents are autonomous virtual entities which ca instructed but which can also learn. An application would be for intelligent ag act in cyberspace on our behalf. This would include cooperation and negotia which leads us to...
- Game theory. This theory describes the interaction of two or more autonomo entities.
- From here onwards AI becomes so strongly associated with biology that it is renamed AL (artificial Life field).

The evolution of AI is especially useful on the WEB. Internet networks are evolvi today's WWW to the SEMANTIC WEB. Whereas now the WWW provides inform a human-accessible form, the Semantic Web will be able to provide this informa computer-accessible form.

So this is my little contribution. As a last point, I have been thinking about develc forum web site for all the family. You just call up a URL and everyone can contril his/her own comments on whatever topic, with the option of real time communici and whatever else. The sky's the limit ...

Until later, greetings to everyone

Dirk
