Among the 10 papers considered for publication in this issue, the five articles selected cover intelligent, communication, and educational technologies.

The first paper presents a knowledge discovery strategy based on the structure and context of Web courseware, to generate personalized tutorials for students. Students are divided into different groups according to their ability of understanding theoretical concepts and practical experiments. Tutorial trees are generated for each group after the classification, based on student profiles, a learning schema (i.e., a tutor tree), and the performance evaluation of students. Five algorithms are designed and tested on several distance learning courses.

The second paper summarizes building blocks as the essential elements of interactive distance learning systems. These building blocks are integrated in a Java-based system, which is used to establish a platform-independent virtual classroom. The heterogeneity of network infrastructure is also considered by using application-level gateways. For asynchronous distance learning, a recording and playback system is also implemented.

As a contribution to communication technology, the third paper proposes a simplified scheme for the Carry-Over Round Robin mechanism, which is used in ATM networks. Complexity is reduced in the revised mechanism, which can be used in synchronized distance learning environments.

The fourth paper discusses pedagogical issues and the quality control of distance learning materials. The Content Engineering Agent proposed is a tool based on Task-Based Learning. The agent tool helps instructors design on-line courses, which are then delivered by the Smart Tutor tool. With an integrated system, the fourth paper provides an environment for distance education with Total Quality Management.

The last paper looks at communication technologies from the perspective of security, based on Simple Object Access Protocol (SOAP). Confidentiality of information is achieved through the Advanced Encryption Standard (AES) mechanism whereas authenticity of the user and data integrity is verified using the digital signature embedded as part of the SOAP document. The mechanism can be used in any Web-based services, including distance learning.

As usual, we welcome any comments on this or the previous issue of JDET and you are encouraged to submit your work for publication consideration in future issues.

Co-Editors-in-Chief
Shi-Kuo Chang, University of Pittsburgh, USA
Timothy K. Shih, Tamkang University, Taiwan