


THE UPDATE

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The goal of our monthly update is to provide information on timely matters that may impact your practice and professional interests.



DETECTING SPEECH WITHOUT SOUND ?

Thanks to on-going military research entitled Advanced Speech Encoding, some day soon we may have people (including airline passengers) all around us having conversations on their mobile phones but without uttering a sound. What a great idea. One such system now being funded by DARPA at my undergraduate alma matter : WPI in Worcester, Massachusetts relies on a sensor imbedded in a collar worn around the neck employing magnetic resonance imaging to detect changes in the capacitance caused by movement of the vocal cords yet still capable of being heard above loud background noise. Our government is finally serious in helping us solve noise pollution.



NEW ENERGY ADVANCE FUELED BY WOOD ALCHEMY?

The old saying " that what goes around comes around- may be in the cards" for wood in helping us reduce our nation's current, costly dependence on foreign oil. It's a process researchers at the State University of New York call a bio-refinery, which if installed at each of our nation's paper mills, could produce 2.4 billion gallons of ethanol a year. This is equivalent to an estimated 80% of our nation's projected need for ethanol as a fuel additive this year. SUNY researchers recently reported finding an economical way to extract important energy-rich sugars from the trees being already processed at our nation's paper mills and then convert these sugars into ethanol-how's that for "wood alchemy".



VOIP CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS CAN BE SIGNIFICANT

Talk is cheap but essential in an already fragmented construction industry particularly if Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) can be harnessed for powerfully interconnected ,geographically indifferent, data enriched and inexpensively managed networking by in-house staff when moving voices across the Internet rather than over the traditional telephone networks most construction firms use today. VOIP phone systems not only immediately cut expenses but enable a sizeable range of business intelligence

tie-ins that have been excessively expensive, difficult to implement, and simply not feasible before the advent of VOIP. For example, VOIP systems can link to e-mail or databases and go far beyond caller-ID by automatically serving up background information on computer screens when calls are connected. Additionally missed calls can be automatically rerouted "again and again" to chase down recipients while setting up new phones and offices is also greatly simplified.



BOSTON'S BIG DIG MAY BE IN FOR A BIG DUNK

Yes, Big Dig officials announced earlier this month that they will conduct a second, closer inspection in one of their deepest sections of the Interstate 93 tunnels, acknowledging that serious defects might be more widespread and that they are concerned about potential new leaks. This decision was made at the conclusion of a 5 month investigation by project engineers into the soundness of the tunnel walls which was prompted by a leak on 9/15/04 that sent thousands of gallons of water gushing into the northbound tunnel under South Station.

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