

Negotiate Across Cultures

About Raytheon BBN Technologies

For over 50 years, the BBN name has been synonymous with technical innovation. Since implementing and operating the ARPANET, the forerunner of today's Internet, we have pioneered a number of firsts: the first packet switch, the first router, and the first person-to-person network email, which established the @ sign as an icon for the digital age.

Raytheon BBN Technologies is also a leader in the research, development, and deployment of immersive learning technology for military training in both kinetic and non-kinetic operations and for other serious purposes. Raytheon BBN has offered experience, expertise, and technologies in immersive learning since the pioneering days of networked, multiplayer immersive training with the BBN-developed SIMNET training simulator.

The Proverb Selector prototype supports intuitive input of a user's anticipated negotiation situation and provides easy-to-use guidance for selecting an appropriate cultural proverb.

Making Your Point with Tactical Tools

The success of today's international military missions depends on building a common understanding and cooperative working relationship with local populations. To achieve this cooperation, our warfighters must be able to talk with local leaders, hear their concerns and beliefs, and then help these potential allies understand how we can most productively work together to achieve stability and security. But, words are easily dismissed and easily forgotten. We need tools that give the warfighter capabilities beyond just words for tactical negotiation and persuasion.

Communicate Using More Than Words

Particularly in cultures that do not use Western rhetorical and reasoning strategies, mission success may depend on the communicative power of stories, proverbs, and other illustrative or interactive techniques to build understanding. We envision a suite of tactical negotiation tools that deliver the power of oral tradition using innovative technologies. Among the envisioned tools are:

- Proverb Selector - Underscore key messages with culturally resonant nuggets found by searching a digital repertoire of culturally appropriate fables, short sayings, traditional proverbs, and music.
- Case Study Illustrator - Emphasize the benefits of cooperation and the risks of inaction by showing multi-media clips of real stories from similar situations.
- Interactive Consequence Explorer - Develop shared understanding of current choices and potential consequences through simple, illustrative simulation.
- Games with a Message - Educate the populace, challenge beliefs, or change cultural norms through games.
- Emphatic Artifacts - Make a message more memorable with hands-on sharing of a physical artifact connected to a poignant story.

Proverb Selector Demonstration

At I/ITSEC 2010, Raytheon BBN Technologies is demonstrating a mobile, hand-held proverb selector as an illustration of a possible tactical tool for cross-cultural negotiation. Intuitive interfaces are a key requirement for such tools; little or no user training should be required. Our demonstration device allows the user to select tags that describe their desired message and anticipated audience. The proverb selector presents a prioritized list of candidate proverbs and provides more detailed information to guide selection.



Use Case Scenario

Several car bombs attacks have been carried out in this town recently. You are preparing to talk to the local police chief, who seems to think that there is no way to prevent these sorts of incidents. You want to convince him that if his people find out information from the local residents and work together with you, those responsible for such attacks could be tracked down and stopped. You want to emphasize that it is critical that the people who live here actively help find the attackers.

You turn to your Proverb Selector, and pick out a few tags that describe how you perceive the police chief. To you, he seems hesitant and uncooperative. Then, you look through the message tags, and pick out “We’re in this together” and “I need you.” You also add “Expertise matters.”

The Proverb Selector gives you a list of six potential proverbs, which you quickly flip through. Reading the details of the top recommendation, it seems to be a good match for your situation. You go into your meeting armed with an appropriate local proverb: *It takes a local dog to catch a local rabbit.*

Imagine the Future of Tactical Communication

What if, instead of trying to convince local Afghan leaders about the need for security priorities, troops could show people the likely future outcomes of their decisions? What if the local population could quickly, safely, and realistically explore the consequences of their choices? What if NATO forces could tell the right stories and use appropriate cultural expressions to get their message across?



Contact Us

Raytheon BBN is interested in pursuing opportunities to research and develop tactical tools for cross-cultural negotiation, as well as exploring game-based and immersive training for cross-cultural communication skills and competencies. If you have a need for these kinds of tools or training, we'd like to learn more about your requirements.

To discuss tactical tools to support cross-cultural negotiation, contact:

Raytheon BBN Technologies
10 Moulton Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
617-873-1600
technology@bbn.com
www.bbn.com

Raytheon
BBN Technologies