Recent innovations from UW Engineering are benefiting consumers, public agencies, and businesses through patents and licensing agreements arranged with the assistance of the UW Office of Technology Transfer.

Web Crystal Ball Predicts Air Fare Trends

Ever bought an airplane ticket well in advance of departure to get the cheapest price and then learned the fare later dropped significantly? In the volatile world of seat pricing, fares constantly fluctuate as airlines strive to pack planes and maximize revenue. A new Web-based service, Farecast.com, is aiming to ease at least one significant frustration of air travel — estimating when to whip out the credit card to get the best possible fare to your destination.

Farecast is the inspiration of Computer Science & Engineering Professor Oren Etzioni. He and colleagues created a data-mining program to gather airline pricing information from the Web and then developed sophisticated algorithms to predict whether ticket prices on specific routes are likely to rise or fall within the next seven days. Backed by $8.5 million in venture capital, the site went live in June and consumers can now compare prices — and, unique to this site — check fare predictions for most major U.S. airlines to more than 55 airports nationwide. Farecast plans to expand to cover all significant markets in the U.S. and abroad.

The site has generated considerable media buzz with articles in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Boston Globe*, and inclusion in *Time Magazine's* 2006 list of "50 Coolest Websites."

To Learn More: Visit www.farecast.com to see all the truly cool features and learn more about the predictive technology. Try it for your next trip!

Where Is My Bus? Tracking System Lets You Know

When does the next bus leave my stop? Is it on time or behind schedule? Riders in Seattle and Chicago with Internet access through a computer, cell phone, or other hand-held device can get quick answers through Bus Tracker, an online system using My Bus software developed by Electrical Engineering Professor Daniel Dailey.

Clever Devices, a New York company, licensed the software from the UW and links it with GPS devices on buses that continually feed location data to a transit agency computer. On a Bus Tracker Web page, a rider enters a route number and stop to get arrival time or track the bus in real time on a map. The Chicago Transit Authority is testing Bus Tracker on one route to enthusiastic response. "We hope to extend it system wide and then take it to other major U.S. cities," said Bill Long, president of Clever Devices. Chicago Mayor Richard Daley said it will "revolutionize customer satisfaction."

King County METRO adopted Bus Tracker in 2004 and records 145 million visitors annually.

To Learn More: See how Bus Tracker works at http://transit.metrokc.gov/oltools/tracker.html, or http://ctabustracker.com/bustime/home.jsp

Civil Engineering Professor Joe Mahoney (left) and Assistant Professor Steve Muench are big wheels in online paving education.

Pavia Gets Green Light on Internet Highway

Our highways and byways may appear to be simple ribbons of asphalt and concrete, but dig deeper and you will learn about the complexities of isolation and construction joints, load transfer, and aggregate interlock. According to Steve Muench, assistant professor of civil and environmental engineering, contractors and their employees are often challenged to find time in their pressured schedules for needed training and updates on paving technology.

The solution is Pavia Systems, Inc., an online training company that allows employees to better fit training into their schedules and provides organizations the ability to easily track their progress. Pavia Systems evolved from research by Professor Joe Mahoney and Muench that was adapted for online learning as part of Muench's doctoral work. The pair arranged licensing agreements with the UW Office of Technology Transfer and Pavia Systems sped onto the Web this July.

To Learn More: See a longer article in *Washington Engineer*, www.engr.washington.edu/enews/2006-08/17.html or visit www.paviasystems.com.