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For Immediate Release

University of Otago-based software company wins international award

1000Minds, a University of Otago-based company, has won a prestigious Consensus Software Award in Australia.

Sponsored by Microsoft and IBM, Consensus Software Awards are the only independently judged awards for Australian and New Zealand software.

Delighted to be short-listed as a finalist, co-inventor of 1000Minds and Associate Professor in the Department of Economics, Dr Paul Hansen was extremely pleased to hear 1000Minds announced as a winner at a gala event in Sydney on Tuesday night (1 May).

“Everyone involved with 1000Minds has worked very hard over recent years at refining our systems and methodologies, and at establishing a national and international client base of users of the software.”

“1000Minds has been acknowledged in several national and international innovation awards. Such industry recognition, in addition to academic peer review, has reinforced 1000Minds’ scientific validity and overall credibility,” Dr Hansen says.

In its eighth year, the Consensus Software Awards are judged by some of Australasia’s most respected industry professionals and recognises innovative and ground-breaking software developments in New Zealand and Australia.

The award drew praise from Professor Geoff White, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) at the University of Otago. “We are proud to be associated with this highly innovative software developed by one of our very successful researchers,” he says.

School of Business Dean, Professor George Benwell was thrilled 1000Minds had been acknowledged at the awards because it highlighted how the School can successfully work with researchers in getting their product or service to a point where it was commercially viable. “Part of my vision for the School is to be more connected with industry. The collaboration with 1000Minds is a perfect example of how the School assists with research that results in commercial outcomes that contribute to the economy”.

1000Minds is advanced decision-support software to help users – businesses, government organisations and individuals – to make decisions involving prioritising, ranking or choosing from amongst competing individuals or alternatives.

The software has thousands of possible applications across a wide range of industries and sectors. Examples include: prioritising patients for treatment and managing waiting lists, appraising investments, short-listing job applicants, strategic planning, choosing real estate, marketing research and new product design.

1000Minds has its roots in research started in the mid 1990s at the Department of Economics in the School of Business in the fields of Multiple Criteria Decision Analysis and Health Economics.

“Initially I was trying to find a valid and practical means of prioritising patients for access to elective surgery,” Dr Hansen explains.

In 2002, he teamed up with Franz Ombler to invent the powerful algorithms at the heart of 1000Minds. These algorithms are also available as a software development kit (SDK) for other developers to create their own software applications based on the 1000Minds ‘engine’.

“We developed our discoveries into a fully-integrated solution to the universal problem of how to combine alternatives’ characteristics on multiple criteria to produce an overall ranking of alternatives. This ranking can then be used to prioritise the alternatives or to choose among them,” says Mr Ombler. “A record of decision making is retained that ensures greater transparency and opportunities for ongoing refinements to the decision process.”

The company is currently working with development partners The Street and University of Otago, creating a 3-D, interactive gaming-based product to help students choose their courses, which will be released soon.

1000Minds is also supported by Upstart Business Incubator, New Zealand Trade & Enterprise and Foundation for Research, Science & Technology.

For further information:

1000Minds website: www.1000minds.com

Consensus Software Awards website:
www.consensus.com.au/SoftwareAwards/CSAMastheadSet/CSA1MastheadSet.htm

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