hp

BRAIN (Behaviorally Robust Aggregation of Information in Networks)
Social Computing Lab, HP Labs Palo Alto

Presented by: Leslie Fine, Scientist

Hewlett-Packard Company
3000 Hanover Street
Palo Alto, CA 94304
www.hp.com

BRAIN is a powerful web-based tool that uses proprietary algorithms to tap into the collective wisdom of employees.

BRAIN was developed to tackle a problem that troubles the corporate world – how to extract accurate information about future events, such as predicted quarterly revenues or expected demand for a product, from small teams of knowledgeable workers working with the latest data. Existing processes tend to be either too data-driven, and therefore lacking the perspective of human insight, or too ad hoc, and therefore inconsistent with the data.

BRAIN harnesses the power and truth-telling properties of market mechanisms and implements it with the simplicity and robustness of a simple survey. BRAIN removes the bias and hierarchy from the forecasting process and drives participants to make more thoughtful and independent predictions. The result: BRAIN enables a pool of 10-15 people to create predictions in a highly repeatable and efficient way.

BRAIN has been successfully applied internally at HP. For example, it has been used by HP Services to predict month-to-month operating profits and revenues. BRAIN improved predictability of the unit's operating profit by a significant percentage over traditional methods.

BRAIN has been piloted by Swisscom, a European-based telecom company, which used a pilot version of it over a nine-month period to predict key financial drivers in its voice, Internet and IPTV business. During this period, BRAIN produced forecasts that were, on average, 27 percent closer to the actual result than the polling group and 17 percent closer to the actual result than the top five experts. These forecasts helped Swisscom improve its overall forecasting of key financial drivers and better quantify growth in the broadband and IPTV market.