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STAR Analytical Services Receives Grant from AcoustiMap

STAR today announces the award of a $186,000 grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to develop an innovative navigation assistance device for the blind. The system, called AcoustiMap, will consist of three components -- an auditory "display" that places sound sources in three dimensions around the user; a Global Positioning System (GPS) unit with a map database; and a Dead Reckoning Module – to provide precise location and orientation for the user. All three components use proven, commercial products.

Users will be able to listen to existing audio "landmarks" – or place their own waypoints. This device will be the first to implement such an auditory "augmented reality" for the blind, says STAR Principal Investigator Dr. Andrew W. Howitt. "Researchers have experimented for many years with auditory displays as information conduits for blind users. But the ability to synthesize virtual audio landmarks and combine them with real audio landmarks – say a bus stop – stands to give sight-disabled persons unprecedented control and understanding of their auditory landscape."

Both blind and sighted users have found the auditory display more effective and easier to use than either tactile-feedback (haptic) displays or voice directions. The award is made under NIH's Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program. SBIR supports research and development of products and services by small business concerns which show strong potential for commercialization. For further information on NIH's research program at the National Eye Institute, see http://www.nei.nih.gov/

ABOUT STAR Analytical Services

STAR Analytical Services works with information intensive industries that require specialized mathematical and analytical expertise to for innovative projects. STAR provides expertise in mathematical modeling, image and signal processing, and algorithm development, creating the path to a solution for the most complex needs including: analyzing large volume data, creating a solution model & testing mechanism, and delivering a repeatable process for ongoing data analysis

Working hand-in-hand with business problem owners, STAR helps accelerate the solution process in industries ranging from aerospace, mapping, and surveillance to manufacturing, printing and neurosurgery. The company has particular expertise in complex systems, those with strongly interacting parts; in image and signal processing, and in knowledge-based (objective) speech and vocalization analysis. For more information: http://www.STARanalyticalservices.com

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