

For release  
27 February 1996

## **AUTOMATED VEHICLE LICENSE PLATE SYSTEM TESTED AT HKUST**

Drivers entering the main gate of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology will be furthering the cause of research for the next six months.

Dr John Chung Mong Lee of the Department of Computer Science is testing his VELIN, or Vehicle License Recognition system, to demonstrate its capabilities to potential buyers.

In less than one second, a camera captures the license plate of an approaching vehicle and passes the image to a computer which identifies the letters and numbers, checks them against a database of authorized vehicle IDs and beeps approval to the guards.

The VELIN project, sponsored by the Sino-Software Research Centre at HKUST, is the latest application of Dr Lee's systematic integration of artificial intelligence and advanced alphanumeric character-reading technology.

With the help of graduate student Wing-Kin Wong, Dr Lee has developed another highly successful application to read container identification marks. That system, known as VECON, has proven to be 95% accurate under any weather or lighting conditions.

At present in most ports of the world, gatekeepers at container terminals manually enter container ID codes to verify and match their exit and entry with delivery trucks.

"This traditional process of human recognition and inputting of the information is time-consuming and has a higher percentage of error," says Dr Lee. "To ensure security and increase efficiency at the terminals, VECON has been designed to accurately locate and recognize the printed characters on containers and license plates."

Already, VECON has been installed in a Shanghai port depot and is capturing the attention of port managers around the world.

One leading transport industry supplier has said VECON has the potential to "truly revolutionize the industry in a big way".

**Note to Editors:**

Please direct enquiries to the Office of Public Affairs at 2358 6320 or 71163388 call 2652.