

Dear Dr. Usui,

December 12 2003

Thank you for the opportunity to visit RIKEN and to speak at the Symposium on Neuroinformatics Research in Vision. Since returning to Yale, I have met with Michael Hines and Tom Morse to discuss ways to implement interoperability between the Visiome Platform and ModelDB. I expect that Michael will soon be sending you a letter about how we might work together to make this happen. In the meantime, I wanted to send you this summary of my own impression, based on what I learned in the course of my visit and my own initial exploration of the NRV Project's WWW site.

One sentence sums it up: the NRV Project has certainly made impressive progress toward the goals of neuroinformatics. The Visiome Platform is a complex and powerful suite of tools for integrating a wide variety of information, and it clearly has strong potential for being very useful in vision research. There is no doubt that experimentalists and theoreticians working on other aspects of brain function will also find it to be helpful—especially Personal Visiome.

Clearly a great deal of thought and effort have gone into the design and implementation of this software, as well as a lot of "in-house" testing and revision. But two millennia ago, the Roman philosopher Cicero wrote "*nihil est enim simul et inventum et perfectum*" ("nothing is invented and perfected at the same time"--from "*Brutus*" by Marcus Tullius Cicero), and these words are especially pertinent to modern software development. The official announcement of the Visiome Platform may be the end of the initial phase of its development, but it will also be the beginning of a new phase that is equally essential to Visiome's success. Use by people outside the development team is an excellent and indispensable way to discover bugs and generate new ideas for improvement, and I am certain that you and your team will be able to handle this new challenge.

Once again, I thank you for your hospitality and for this excellent opportunity to meet and discuss neuroinformatics with you and your colleagues who are working on the NRV Project. Yours truly,

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