

# Meet MiLo

*MiLo* was initially a research project, initiated in late 1998, documenting and representing the knowledge and expertise of key experts in the Phosphate industry. It is now the name for a knowledge system in pilot use, intended for use in support of the Florida and wider phosphate industry.

The *MiLo* concept was validated using as a pilot case study the knowledge of G. Michael Lloyd Jr., Director of Chemical Processing at the Florida Institute of Phosphate Research (FIPR). This knowledge was recognized as both unique in character, and “at risk”, and for both reasons worthy of intense scrutiny.

The validation phase, thanks to grant funding from FIPR, has just been completed and it is now reaching out to further selected experts in this domain to elicit their reactions and potential collaboration. The system name, *MiLo*, is derived from the first letters of Mike Lloyd's first and family names.

## **A Phosphate Knowledge System: Three Facets**

There are three facets to *MiLo*. It is a working multimedia resource, focused on the Florida phosphate industry, for use by FIPR staff and those closely associated with FIPR's work. It is also a portrait in multimedia form of a major figure in phosphate. And it is an instantiated methodology for capturing the knowledge of other phosphate industry personnel, present and past, whose knowledge deserves to be made accessible and useful to others. So *MiLo* is both a knowledge base and an interpretative guide.

## **The Subject**

Mike Lloyd was an ideal subject to use as a model for the pilot system. He has extraordinary knowledge of phosphate but is also exceptional in his ability to interpret people's questions and needs and offer, or direct them to, intelligible and useful answers. He is the ideal “friendly colleague”.

## **The System**

As a knowledge base, *MiLo* has both formal and informal characteristics. In a formal sense, the system stores and cross-references a wide range of source materials that make queries easy to answer, but also supports wider formal research. In an informal sense, the system captures experiences and insights through a variety of modes, such as stories, illustrative anecdotes, heuristics and best practices. Taken together, these constitute an operational map of key aspects of phosphate mining, production and use.

## **The Research Project**

*MiLo* is a research project in two ways. First, it is attempting to capture and represent back to its users, the special knowledge and signature of an exceptional expert. This is a notoriously difficult task, as any expert, or knowledge-based, system developer knows. But it is also attempting to stretch the envelope of search and retrieval techniques in advanced computing by building a mixture of epistemological (knowledge management) tools and query mechanisms that, within the phosphate domain, replicates some of the value Mike Lloyd represents to the phosphate community.

*MiLo* is highly conscious, however, of the limits of such an endeavor. No system can do justice to the humanity of Mike Lloyd or any other similar expert in the field. But Mike, and his FIPR colleagues, now see in *MiLo* the potential of a significant benefit FIPR's work in Florida. Your support, comments and participation are warmly welcomed.

## **For further information, including a program overview, please contact:**

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