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NSF Awardees Use Algorithm to Explain Scientific Laws

Posted by Jessica Sabo | Under Fellowships, NSF Fellows, NSF GRFP Wednesday Apr 15, 2009
Cornell University researchers, Hod Lipson and Michael Schmidt, have discovered that their algorithm can be used to clarify fundamental natural laws. This is done with the use of a swinging double pendulum and other simple systems.

The algorithm was able to determine through the use of the pendulum, specific fundamental laws, without being provided any prior knowledge of physics. What had originally taken Sir Isaac Newton years to decipher, took the algorithm only a matter of hours.

The algorithm is based on Lipson’s previous research which he conducted with the NSF CAREER Award. The project was a Starfish, a robot with a ‘self-image’, that could repair itself when damaged.

Lipson’s colleague, Michael Schmidt, also worked on the algorithm research project while being funded by the NSF GRFP. In the future, both Schmidt and Lipson hope to use the algorithm to apply to biological systems as well.

For more information on Lipson and Schmidt’s work, please visit the following NSF Press Release.

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