



The University of Edinburgh

## *News Release*

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### **Computer clean-up helps companies save a tidy sum**

Scientists have helped to tackle a computer problem that costs businesses and consumers around the world billions of pounds each year.

Database experts at the University of Edinburgh have developed a method of correcting the many errors and inconsistencies in commercial database information.

Recent statistics show that businesses typically expect between one and five per cent of all data to be wrong, or 'dirty'. In the US alone, dirty data costs businesses 600 billion dollars annually, and wrong price data in retail databases costs US consumers 2.5 billion dollars each year.

Professor Wenfei Fan, a database researcher at the University who is hailed as the best among his generation, has been awarded the 2008 BCS Roger Needham Award. The accolade is given annually to the best UK researcher in computing within 10 years of completing their PhD.

Professor Fan, who is credited with having taken forward the UK's global position on database research, receives £5000 as part of his prize and will give the annual Roger Needham lecture at the Royal Society in London today (Wednesday).

The researcher has also recently been awarded China's highest academic accolade, the Yangtze River Scholar award, which is given by the Ministry of Education.

Professor Fan said: "I am flattered by these awards. On behalf of the database research group at Edinburgh, which is recognised as one of best database groups in the world, I would like to thank the School of Informatics and the University for their unfailing support."

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