

# Things Computers Can't Do

**Freshman Seminar INT94JC , Winter 2006**

Wim van Dam

Room 5109, Engr. I

vandam@cs.ucsb.edu

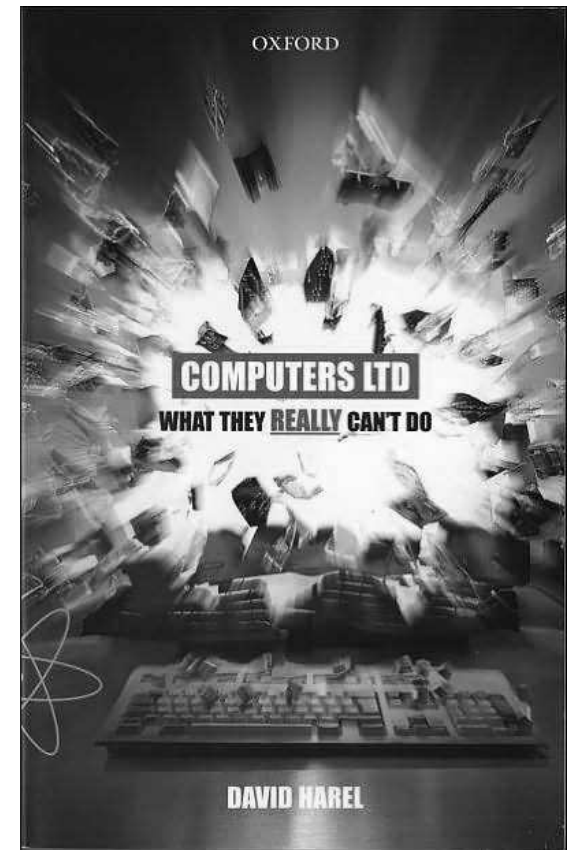
<http://www.cs.ucsb.edu/~vandam/>

# Formalities

Latest news and additional information always found at [www.cs.ucsb.edu/~vandam/teaching/W06\\_SEMINAR/](http://www.cs.ucsb.edu/~vandam/teaching/W06_SEMINAR/)

Required book: *Computers Ltd.: What They Really Can't Do*, by David Harel, OUP (2000)

One unit, Pass/Fail.  
To get a “Pass” you will have to participate actively in the seminar.



# Seminar Newsgroup

There is a Google group where everybody can read and post messages about the seminar:

<http://groups.google.com/group/thingscomputerscantdo/>

If you do not sign your emails, I will probably not reply.

If you email me a general question, I probably will cc my reply to the discussion group.

# From answers.com

sem·i·nar (sĕm'ə-när')

*n.*

- A small group of advanced students in a college or graduate school engaged in original research or intensive study under the guidance of a professor who meets regularly with them to discuss their reports and findings.
- A course of study so pursued.
- A scheduled meeting of such a group.

A meeting for an exchange of ideas; a conference.

[German, from Latin *sēminārium*, seed plot. See seminary.]

# Introduction...

# How it Works

You have to attend the seminars and participate to get a “Pass” grade.

As preparation for the seminar you will be asked to read a chapter from “Computers Ltd.” *beforehand*.

To show that you indeed read the text and to get food for our discussion you will have to email me *no later than Monday* “something inspired” about the material.

# Huh?



**“Something inspired?”**

## Possibilities:

- A provocative thought
- A follow up question
- A haiku
- A cartoon

## Criteria:

- It should show that you read the material and that you seriously tried to understand it.
- It should be interesting, no dull summaries please. I want to use them in my slides.
- They do *not* have to be long or complicated.

# Tentative Schedule

Here, in Phelps 1401, from 3:30 to 5:30pm (max.)

Wednesday Feb 8: today

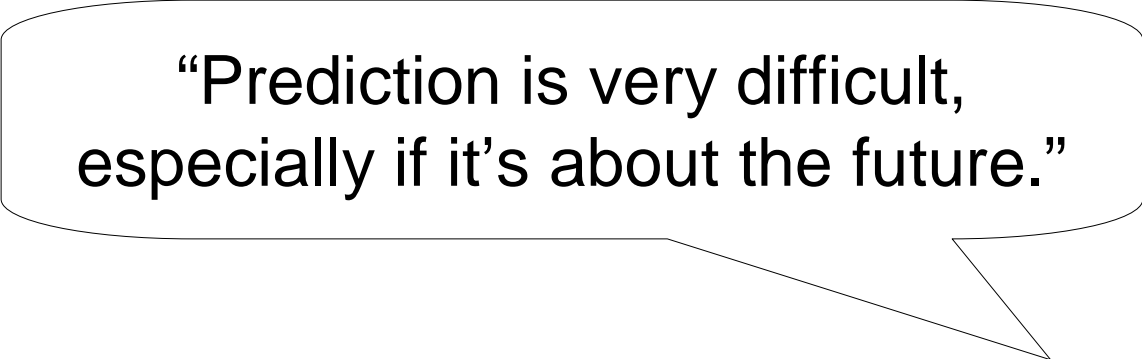
Wednesday Feb 15: What's it all about?

Wednesday Feb 22: Sometimes we can't do it

Wednesday Mar 1: Sometimes we can't afford to do it.

Wednesday Mar 8: ...

Wednesday Mar 15: ...



“Prediction is very difficult,  
especially if it's about the future.”

Niels Bohr

# Staying Up-To-Date

Frequently check the web site of the course at:  
[www.cs.ucsb.edu/~vandam/teaching/W06\\_SEMINAR/](http://www.cs.ucsb.edu/~vandam/teaching/W06_SEMINAR/)

**In case of exceptional situations:  
email me as soon as possible.**

**Give me a working email address...**