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INTERACTIVE
MULTIMODAL
INFORMATION
MANAGEMENT

The (IM)2 Newsletter

Every month the (IM)2 Newsletter brings you the latest and hottest
scientific and administrative news about the (IM)2 NCCR and related topics

Budget cut for the NCCR

Following the decision by the Swiss Parliament to cut the Education, Research and Technology budget, the Swiss National Science Foundation has seen its 2004 budget reduced by approximately 1.3%, and had no other choice but to reduce in turn the SNSF funding for the 3rd year of the NCCR by 50'900 CHF. As the leading house of (IM)2, IDIAP regrets this decision of the Swiss Parliament which significantly reduces the flexibility of the funds allocation. IDIAP also fears that further and deeper cuts will happen in the future and renews its plea to all the NCCR partners to increase their matching funds in order to maintain the same volume of activity.

ICASSP papers

Last year IDIAP chaired a Special Session on Smart Meeting Rooms at the IEEE International Conference on Acoustics, Speech, and Signal Processing (ICASSP'03). This year, Swiss research will again play a prominent role in this major conference as 10 papers, or 1% of all accepted papers, come from our researchers. ICASSP'04 takes place in Montreal from May 17 to May 21, 2004. www.icassp2004.com.

Workshop on Human-Computer Interaction Research within (IM)2

(IM)2.MDM would like to propose a one day workshop on Human-Computer Interaction in March. The full announcement is on the local (IM)2 web site. For further details, please contact Agnes Lisowska at Agnes.Lisowska@issco.unige.ch before February 20th, 2004.

New support staff

Fully committed to offering the best conditions for the research activities within the (IM)2 NCCR, and thanks to the important leveraging through major new European projects such as AMI, PASCAL, MAIA and EURON, IDIAP will significantly increase its support staff in technology transfer and public relations with two new people starting March 1st, 2004.

Dr Frank Crittin: Technology Transfer and Industrial Relations

In addition to the continuous collaboration with CIMTEC (now CimArk, see Newsletter issues 2 and 16), IDIAP has hired Dr Frank Crittin to strengthen the technology transfer efforts of the (IM)2 NCCR. Frank has completed his PhD at EPFL under the supervision of Dr Michel Bierlaire, working on "New algorithms for the consistent route guidance generation problem", a topic loosely related to the (IM)2.SA.BEHAVE white paper project. In parallel to his research work, Frank has originated and contributed to more than 10 industrial projects in the field of logistics and simulation of complex systems. He is a lecturer for the EPFL Executive Master Program organised by the international Institute for the Management of Logistics.

Frank's primary mission will be to identify potential partnerships between (IM)2 and industry - in close collaboration with CIMTEC - and then to assist scientists during all phases of the projects, from contract preparation to its execution. The CTI/KTI will be the main source of financial support, but he will also be the link between (IM)2 and other initiatives such as the Ark or the DEWS.
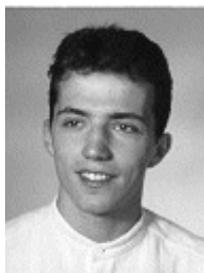
Marie-José Villar   *Frank Crittin*

Marie-José Villar: Communication and Public Relations

In order to increase the visibility of its own activities and those of the large projects it hosts, IDIAP has hired Mrs Marie-José Villar as Communication and Public Relations Manager. Marie-José has a degree in international relations and over eight years of experience in similar positions. She was in charge of the public and press relations of several swiss and international telecomunications and IT companies.

Acting against Valais's «brain drain»

Both Marie-José and Frank spent their childhood in Valais and left the canton for their studies and career start. Thanks to the growing activities at IDIAP, they now have a unique opportunity to return to their roots and contribute to the scientific and economic development of the canton.

It is estimated that less than 15% of graduate students return to Valais within five years of their degree. Increasing this return rate is generally considered as a prerequisite for boosting the economic development of the canton.

Events

(IM)2 Scientific and Industrial Advisory Boards   12–13.2.04

The second joint meeting of the (IM)2 Scientific and Industrial Advisory Boards will take place in Martigny on February 12 and 13, 2004. The two day meeting will start with a general presentation of the NCCR, its objectives, and its achievements since last year's visit, followed by presentations of the IPs and posters. Day two will focus on discussions between Board members and IP heads.
The following Board members have confirmed their attendance this year: Prof. Maurice Bellanger, C.N.A.M.; Dr Aldo Bussien, Vice President of engineering, Logitech SA; Dr Jordan Cohen, VoiceSignal Technologies Inc.; Prof. Renato De Mori, Université d'Avignon; Prof. Stephen Emmott, Director of University Relations, Microsoft Research; Prof. Julia Hirschberg, Columbia University and AT&T Labs; Prof. Fred Jelinek, Johns Hopkins University; Prof. Joseph Kittler, University of Surrey; Dr Tom Malzbender, Hewlett-Packard Laboratories; Dr Christophe Meier, CCSO.

Spring school   01–05.03.04

The Spring School on "Mutimodal and Mobile Interfaces" will be held from March 1st to 5th, 2004, in Anzère, www.anzere.ch. Full details and on-line registration at diuf.unifr.ch/diva/springschool04.

On June 21–23, 2004, the Centre du Parc in Martigny will host the first joint AMI PASCAL (IM)2 M4 Workshop on Machine Learning for Augmented Multiparty Interaction. This issue's backpage features the announcement and call for papers.

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Joint AMI / PASCAL / (IM)2/ M4 Workshop on

Machine Learning for Multimodal Interfaces

Centre du Parc (www.hotelduparc.ch), Martigny, Switzerland, 21–23 June 2004

AMI (Augmented Multiparty Interaction, www.amiproject.org) is a newly launched (January 2004) European Integrated Project (IP) funded under Framework FP6 as part of its IST program. AMI targets computer enhanced multi-modal interaction in the context of meetings. The project aims at substantially advancing the state-of-the-art, within important underpinning technologies (such as human-human communication modeling, speech recognition, computer vision, multimedia indexing and retrieval). It will also produce tools for off-line and on-line browsing of multi-modal meeting data, including meeting structure analysis and summarizing functions. The project also makes recorded and annotated multimodal meeting data widely available for the European research community, thereby contributing to the research infrastructure in the field.

PASCAL (Pattern Analysis, Statistical Modelling and Computational Learning, www.pascal-network.org) is a newly lauched (December 2003) European Network of Excellence (NoE) funded under Framework FP6 as part of its IST program. The NoE brings together experts from basic research areas such as Statistics, Optimisation and Computational Learning and from a number of application areas, with the objective of integrating research agendas and improving the state of the art in all concerned fields.

(IM)2 (Interactive Multimodal Information Management, www.im2.ch) is a Swiss National Center of Competence in Research (NCCR) aiming at the advancement of research, and the development of prototypes, in the field of man-machine interaction. (IM)2 is particularly concerned with technologies coordinating natural input modes (such as speech, image, pen, touch, hand gestures, head and/or body movements, and even physiological sensors) with multimedia system outputs, such as speech, sounds, images, 3D graphics and animation. Among other application, (IM)2 is also targeting research and development in the context of smart meeting rooms.

M4 (Multi-Modal Meeting Manager, www.m4project.org) is a EU IST project launched in March 2002 concerned with the construction of a demonstration system to enable structuring, browsing and querying of an archive of automatically analysed meetings. The archived meetings will have taken place in a room equipped with multimodal sensors.

Given the multiple links between AMI, PASCAL, IM2 and M4, it was decided to organize a joint workshop in order to bring together researchers of the different communites around the common theme of advanced machine learning algorithms for processing and structuring multimodal human interaction in meetings.

Call for papers

In the framework of this workshop, all participants in the above projects (AMI, PASCAL, IM2, M4), as well as external contributors, are invited to submit full papers for oral or poster presentation (see guidelines below) in the following areas of interest, related to the context of meetings:

- human-human communication modeling
- speech and visual processing
- multi-modal processing, fusion and fission
- multi-modal dialog modeling
- human-human interaction modeling
- multi-modal data structuring and presentation
- multimedia indexing and retrieval
- meeting structure analysis
- meeting summarizing
- multimodal meeting annotation
- machine learning algorithms applied to the above

Guidelines for submissions

The format of the full papers should follow the IEEE 2-column standard (see details and template files on the workshop web site) and be of no more than 6 pages. The best papers should then be published in an edited book. Alternatively, one-page abstracts can also be submitted for poster sessions (but will not be considered for publication in the book).

Programme Committee

(*to be confirmed*)

- Samy Bengio, IDIAP
- Hervé Bourlard, IDIAP
- Jean Carletta, Univ. Edinburgh
- Phil Green, Univ. Sheffield
- Jan Larsen, Technical Univ. of Denmark
- Nelson Morgan, ICSI Berkeley
- Erkki Oja, Helsinky Univ. of Technology
- Barbara Peskin, ICSI Berkeley
- Thierry Pun, Univ. of Geneva
- Steve Renals, Univ. Edinburgh
- John Shawe-Taylor, Univ. Southampton
- Steve Whittaker, Univ. Sheffield

Sponsoring

This workshop will be jointly sponsored by the AMI, PASCAL, IM2 and M4 projects, which means that there will be no registration fees for members of those projects. In addition, a number of student grants to cover extra cost, such as travel and housing, may also be available on request.

Important dates

Submission deadline: **15 April 2004**
Notification of acceptance: **15 May 2004**
Workshop date: **21-23 June 2004**

Program overview

Day 1, morning:
Introductory talks on AMI, PASCAL, IM2 and M4; Invited talks (to be decided)

Day 1, afternoon:
Talks and poster presentations of regular papers; Panel discussions on common challenges, open problems, etc

Day 2, morning:
Invited Talks

Day 2, afternoon:
Regular talks and poster presentations

Day 3, morning:
Regular talks

www.idiap.ch/events/workshop-mlmi04