

The (IM)2 Newsletter

A complete overview of FP6 projects with (IM)2 partners, a new (IM)2 program manager

Eurospeech'2003

Several (IM)2 partners are organising the largest speech conference of the year.

Issue N° 17

September 2003

Editor: Jean-Albert Ferrez

www.im2.ch/nl nl@im2.ch



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

First round of FP6 projects

In the previous issue, we disclosed some early information about the status of proposals submitted to the first call of the EC's 6th framework program (FP6) and featuring one or several partners of (IM)2. Although no contract is expected to be signed before October — with projects starting in December or early next year — we now have a better vision of the proposals that have been selected by the EC for funding and are now in the negotiation phase.

While most of these projects belong to the "Multimodal Interfaces" strategic objective (SO), closely related to the (IM)2 core topics, some (IM)2 partners also extend their scope to other SOs, thus broadening the visibility of (IM)2.

We give here a brief list of these projects, bearing in mind that the negotiation phase is not over, and that modification could still happen.

- **AMI** (Augmented Multiparty Interaction), an Integrated Project (IP) submitted and coordinated by IDIAP, with Swiss industrial partners Fastcom and Spiderphone, ranked first among 20 IP proposals in the "Multimodal Interfaces" SO. www.amiproject.org.

- **SIMILAR** (Seamless Integrated Multimodal Interfaces for Learning and Augmenting communication in the Real world), a Network of Excellence (NoE) with Swiss partners EPFL and the University of Geneva, ranked first among 10 NoE proposals in the "Multimodal Interfaces" SO. www.similar.cc.

- **PASCAL** (Pattern analysis, statistical modeling and computational learning), a Network of Excellence also in the "Multimodal Interfaces" SO, with Swiss partners IDIAP, ETHZ, and the Universities of Geneva and Basel. www.cs.rhul.ac.uk/colt/pascalprop.htm

- **EURON** (European Robotics Network), a Network of Excellence in the "Future and Emerging Technologies – Beyond Robotics" SO, ranked 1st in the selection process, with Swiss partners IDIAP, EPFL and CSEM. www.euron.org.

- **ECRYPT**, a Network of Excellence in cryptology, ranked 1st in the "Towards a global dependability and security framework" SO, featuring the University of Geneva.

- **DIP** (Data, Information and Process Integration with Semantic Web Services), an Integrated Project in the "Semantic-Based Knowledge Systems" SO, featuring EPFL. www.nextwebgeneration.org/projects/dip.
- **KNOWLEDGE WEB** (Realizing the Semantic Web), a Network of Excellence in the "Semantic-Based Knowledge Systems" SO, featuring EPFL. knowledgeweb.semanticweb.org.

Having (IM)2 partners involved in no less than 7 major FP6 projects is a clear indication of the strength of Swiss research in these areas. For this first round of IPs and NoEs, the rules for the Swiss participants are almost the same as for the previous framework program: Financial contribution will not come from the EC but from the Swiss government, and Swiss entities are still not allowed to coordinate the projects. The latter constraint is especially hurting IDIAP who is the uncontested driving force behind AMI and PASCAL. IDIAP remains the Scientific Coordinator of AMI, and will be the bridge between the AMI IP and PASCAL NoE, but loses a unique opportunity to further promote Swiss research in the field – in particular (IM)2 – within the European Research Area.



A new Program Manager for (IM)2

In response to its growing activity, IDIAP has appointed a new Program Manager. Nancy-Lara Robyr has joined the admin team and will gradually take over some of the tasks including the administration of the NCCR, the organisation of (IM)2 events, etc. Jean-Albert Ferrez remains active in (IM)2, in particular as editor of the Newsletter.

Nancy-Lara has a background in finance and management, with several positions held in Switzerland and in Californian start-ups, and an MBA from the University of Southern California, Los Angeles. Before joining IDIAP, she was the manager of Sierre's Technopôle. She can be contacted at Nancy-Lara.Robyr@idiap.ch.

Events

Eurospeech'2003 1–4.09.03

As you read this issue of the (IM)2 Newsletter, the lights will have gone down on Eurospeech'2003, the largest conference on speech and language technologies organised this year in Geneva by IDIAP in collaboration with the University of Geneva, EPFL and ETHZ. Read everything about this major event in this issue's backpage.

(IM)2 Summer Institute 6–8.10.03

On October 6–8, the (IM)2 teams will meet in Crans-Montana for the second Summer Institute. Aside from oral and poster presentations of all the projects, the meeting will feature external invited speakers. It will also give project leaders the opportunity to discuss the new workplan of their IPs for 2004–2005. Full details of the program will be posted on the local pages of the (IM)2 web site.

NCCR Site Visit 30–31.10.03

On October 30 and 31, IDIAP will host the second Site Visit of the (IM)2 NCCR. The Review Panel will focus this year on the scientific achievements of the NCCR teams now that all projects have reached their cruising speed. Although based on the annual progress report, the review will focus on oral and poster presentation and discussions between the panel members and young scientists and IP heads.

The review panel has been appointed by the SNSF. Members are Dr Phil Janson (SNSF, Chairman), Prof. Marco Baggolini (SNSF), Dr Giordano Bruno Beretta (Hewlett Packard Laboratories, Palo Alto, USA), Prof. Shih-Fu Chang (Columbia University, New York, USA), Prof. Beat Hirsbrunner (SNSF), Prof. Mari Ostendorf (University of Washington, Seattle, USA), Prof. Steve Renals (University of Sheffield, UK), Prof. Gerhard Rigoll (Technische Universität München, D).

Prof. Ramesh Jain (Georgia Tech, Atlanta, USA) and Prof. Dan Jurafsky (University of Colorado, Boulder, USA) have agreed to join the panel, while we regret the resignation of Dr Andrew William Senior.

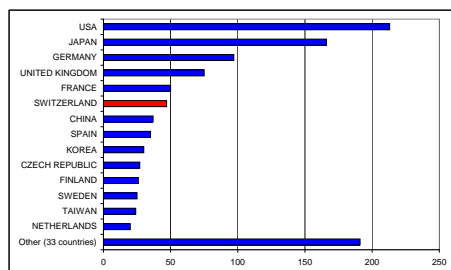
Eurospeech'2003 – www.eurospeech2003.org

As the largest interdisciplinary conference on speech processing and language technology, the 8th European Conference on Speech Communication and Technology has been held at CICG (Centre International des Congrès de Genève), Geneva, Switzerland, during Sept. 1–4, 2003. Eurospeech'2003 was organized by IDIAP, in close collaboration with the University of Geneva, the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology at Lausanne (EPFL) and the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology at Zurich (ETHZ). Eurospeech'2003 was the eighth biennial conference of the International Speech Communication Association (ISCA) and the fourth in the annual series of INTERSPEECH Events. Previous Eurospeech conferences took place in Paris (1989), Genoa (1991), Berlin (1993), Madrid (1995), Rhodes (1997), Budapest (1999) and Aalborg (2001). Eurospeech'2003 also followed on from the previous INTERSPEECH Event - the International Conference on Spoken Language Processing (ICSLP) held in Denver in 2002 - and precedes ICSLP-2004, to be held in Korea, and Eurospeech'2005, which will be held in Lisbon.



Prof. R. Siegwart (EPFL) at the opening ceremony.

This year's Eurospeech conference was an exceptional success, with an exceptionally large number of contributions (amounting to a total of 1081 papers submitted and 743 papers accepted for presentation), and an exceptionally large attendance, numbering 1110 registered participants coming from 47 different countries. In this respect, it was also good to see the impact of (IM)2, since Switzerland appeared in the top 6 most represented countries at this conference (as illustrated in the table below).



Countries of origin of the participants.

The conference was of exceptional quality, with high quality papers spread across 27 oral and 33 poster sessions, covering truly

multi-disciplinary areas such as: phonetics and phonology, speech production, speech perception, acquisition, learning and pathology of spoken language, discourse and dialogue, signal analysis, processing and feature estimation, speech coding and transmission, speech recognition and understanding, speech generation and synthesis, spoken dialogue systems, multimodality, resources, assessment and standards.



The Eurospeech'2003 audience.

Eurospeech'2003 also offered a few extra events, including a full Tutorial Day program (which took place on August 31) and 12 special sessions. The Tutorial Day program featured six in-depth tutorials from world-class experts in their field and provided valuable up-to-date overviews in a wide range of topics, covering:

- State-of-the-art in language modeling (by Joshua Goodman, Microsoft Research);
- Introduction to VoiceXML-The markup Language for web-based voice applications (by Jim Larson, Intel Corporation);
- Adaptive Learning: Technology and challenges for ASR and SLU (by Giuseppe Riccardi et al., AT&T Research Labs);
- Markup languages Voice XML and SALT (by Jin Liu and Felix Burkhardt, T-Systems);
- Conversational and multimodal user interaction (by David Nahamoo and T.V. Raman, IBM Research);
- Tools for annotating natural interactivity corpora (by Niels Ole Bernsen et al., Univ. of Southern Denmark).

Keynote Talks were also presented by

- Kenneth Church (AT&T Labs-Research) on "Speech and language processing: where have we been and where are we going?"
- and Birger Kollmeier (Universität Oldenburg) on "Auditory Principles in speech processing - do computers need silicon ears?"



A hint of traditional Swiss culture at the banquet dinner in the UniMail building.

Student reception sponsored by (IM)2

(IM)2 sponsored one of the key events of the conference, the student reception where some 250 students had the unique opportunity to meet and discuss their future with about 20 key seniors covering the five major fields of research represented at Eurospeech.

Satellite events

Leveraging on the presence in Switzerland of the better part of the speech community worldwide, a number of satellite events were organized, among which:

- VOQUAL'03, a Tutorial and Research workshop on Voice Quality: Functions, Analysis and Synthesis, held in Geneva, 27–29.08.03
- Error Handling in Spoken Dialogue Systems, a Tutorial and Research workshop held in Château d'Oex, 28–31.08.03
- COCODSA (Committee for the Co-ordination and Standardisation of Speech Databases and Assessment Techniques) workshop, held in Geneva, 31.08.03
- The EC funded HOARSE (Hearing Organisation And Recognition of Speech in Europe) and the US-DARPA funded EARS (Effective Affordable Reusable Speech-to-text) projects both held review meetings at IDIAP on 5–6.09.03



The participants socializing in the CIGG.

hb

