

CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

The Blizzard Challenge 2017

Evaluating corpus-based speech synthesis on common databases

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In order to better understand and compare research techniques in building corpus-based speech synthesisers on the same data, the annual Blizzard Challenges 2005-2016 were held. We are now pleased to call for participation in the twelfth challenge: Blizzard Challenge 2017. The basic challenge is to take the released speech data, build synthetic voices, and synthesise a prescribed set of test sentences. The output from each synthesiser is then evaluated through extensive listening tests. The following is an outline description of the challenge – for full details and the rules of participation, please see the web pages.

- **Main task 2017-EH1: UK English Children’s Audiobooks** - About 6.5 hours of speech data from professionally-produced children’s audiobooks will be released. This includes the data from last year’s Blizzard Challenge. All data are from a single speaker. The task is to build a voice from this data that is suitable for reading audiobooks to children.
- **Pilot task:** to be decided.

Blizzard Workshop: The systems will be presented by the participants at the Blizzard Challenge 2017 workshop, which we anticipate will be held in Stockholm, after Interspeech 2017.

Website: http://www.synsig.org/index.php/Blizzard_Challenge_2017

Registration: Interested parties should register as soon as possible, by mailing blizzard@festvox.org. They should identify a contact person in their team, and provide email and postal addresses. A registration fee is payable for each system submitted for evaluation – details can be found on the website.

Licenses: The license for the released data can be found via the Blizzard website. Data will be released to each participant once the appropriate license has been agreed to.

Mailing list: It is essential to join the blizzard-discuss mailing list, which is used to send important information to participants. Instructions are on the Blizzard website.

Timeline: http://synsig.org/index.php/Blizzard_Challenge_2017#Timeline

Further Information: For further information please contact blizzard@festvox.org. A description of the challenge was published at Interspeech 2005: <http://www.festvox.org/blizzard/bc2005/IS051946.PDF>

Please *only* use the address blizzard@festvox.org to contact the organisers of the challenge.