

CALL FOR PARTICIPATION (Ver. 2.0)

The Blizzard Challenge 2021

Evaluating corpus-based speech synthesis on common databases

Zhenhua Ling, Simon King

March 2021

In order to better understand and compare research techniques in building corpus-based speech synthesisers on the same data, the annual Blizzard Challenges 2005-2020 were held. We are now pleased to call for participation in the seventeenth challenge: Blizzard Challenge 2021. The 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.

- **Hub task 2021-SH1: European Spanish** - About 5 hours of speech data from a female native speaker of European Spanish. The hub task is to build a voice from the provided European Spanish data to synthesise texts containing only Spanish words.
- **Spoke task 2021-SS1: European Spanish**– The same dataset as the one used by the hub task. This spoke task is to build a voice from the provided European Spanish data to synthesise Spanish texts containing a small number of English words in each sentence. Several natural recordings of such sentences will be provided as references for better understanding this task.

Teams may submit synthetic speech for either or both tasks within their entry.

Blizzard Workshop: The systems will be presented by the participants at the Blizzard Challenge 2021 workshop, which will be held as an online event later this year.

Website: http://www.synsig.org/index.php/Blizzard_Challenge_2021

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. Do not pay the fee at the time of registration.

Licenses: The license for the data can be found via the Blizzard website. Data will be released to each participant from 29th March, 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_2021#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.