

CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

---

## The Blizzard Challenge 2012

### Evaluating corpus-based speech synthesis on common databases

Simon King, Alan W Black and Keiichi Tokuda

November 2011

---

In order to better understand and compare research techniques in building corpus-based speech synthesizers on the same data, the annual Blizzard Challenges 2005–2011 were held. We are now pleased to call for participation in the eighth challenge: Blizzard Challenge 2012, which runs over TWO YEARS from 2011 to 2012.

The basic challenge is to take the released speech data, build synthetic voices, and synthesize a prescribed set of test sentences. The sentences from each synthesizer are then evaluated through extensive listening tests. The 2012 challenge concerns the use of audiobook data and will take place in two phases. You may participate in Phase Two, regardless of whether you took part in Phase One.

- Phase One, which is already completed (February 2011 – August 2011):
  - Audiobook data from a single speaker, obtained from [librivox.org](http://librivox.org), then segmented and aligned by Toshiba Research Europe Ltd, Cambridge Research Laboratory, was released for use as the corpus
  - The task was to build a text-to-speech system using this data, optionally in conjunction with allowed “external data” as specified in the rules
  - There was no formal listening test for Phase One
  - Some participants have already built voices and demonstrated them at the Blizzard Challenge 2011 workshop
- Phase Two (December 2011 – September 2012):
  - The data for the second phase of the challenge are the same as for the first phase. Additionally, a development set of sentences and synthetic speech from a variety of example systems from Phase One is provided.
  - There are two tasks, a synthesis task and an evaluation task:
    - \* EH2.1: build a text-to-speech system using this data, optionally in conjunction with allowed “external data” as specified in the rules
    - \* EH2.2: design an evaluation method for text-to-speech systems built from audiobook data, and perform this evaluation on the systems entered in task EH2.1

**Blizzard Workshop:** The Phase Two results will be presented at a workshop, which will be a satellite of Interspeech 2012.

**Website:** [http://www.synsig.org/index.php/Blizzard\\_Challenge\\_2012](http://www.synsig.org/index.php/Blizzard_Challenge_2012)

**Registration:** Interested parties should register as soon as possible, by mailing [blizzard@festvox.org](mailto:blizzard@festvox.org). They should identify a contact person in their team, and provide email and postal addresses. During Phase Two, a registration fee will be charged, to partially meet the costs of running the challenge and paying listeners.

**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](mailto:blizzard-discuss) mailing list, which is used to send important information to participants. Instructions are on the Blizzard website.

**Timeline:** this can be found on the website.

**Further Information:** For further information please contact [blizzard@festvox.org](mailto:blizzard@festvox.org).

A description of the challenge was published at Interspeech 2005:  
<http://www.festvox.org/blizzard/bc2005/IS051946.PDF>