EDITORIAL

Welcome to the second issue of the ASSTA Newsletter for 2008, a special issue giving you an update on Interspeech 2008 incorporating SST 2008, to be held in Brisbane from 22nd to 26th September 2008. Read in the President’s report of this issue for more details on this, an event of great interest to speech and language researchers. Don’t forget the early bird specials available to registrations received before 14th July 2008.

Also, you will find information about upcoming conferences, and a list of recent job opportunities in speech and language technology. Thanks to those members who have sent me the submissions for this issue. If you have received an ASSTA travel award, please be sure to send along your conference report. Remember, this newsletter is a forum for you to share information about your travels, research and labs. We look forward to your contributions in the next issue.

Dr. Giriya Chetty

Contents

President’s Report 3
Conference Log 5
Job opportunities 8
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ASSTA Corporate Members

Appen Pty. Ltd.

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CRC for Cochlear Implant and Hearing Aid Innovation
http://www.bionicear.org/crc

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PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Interspeech 2008 incorporating SST 2008 is upon us! From 22-26 September 2008 top Australasian and international researchers with expertise in the engineering, behavioural, and linguistic aspects of speech science and technology will converge on sunny Brisbane to give and receive 775 oral papers and posters, attend 8 tutorials and 9 special sessions, to mingle socially and scholastically, and maintain existing collaborations or set up new ones – either planned or serendipitously.

This is the ideal opportunity for Australasians from industry, health and related areas, and academia to attend the two premier speech science and technology conferences in the world: Interspeech and our own Australasian SST rolled into one.

Both Interspeech and the SST have a relatively long heritage. Interspeech events began in the year 2000 when two conference series (Eurospeech, which began in 1989 in Paris) and ICSLP (International Conference on Spoken Language Processing, which began in 1990 in Kobe) united. SST conferences, hosted by ASSTA, began in 1986 in Canberra. The only other time these two conferences overlapped was in 1998 when the highly successful ICSLP incorporating SST was held in Sydney. (See http://www.isca-speech.org/conferences.html and http://www.assta.org/sst/history/ASSTA_and_SST_History_080402.pdf for more details of the background of these conferences.)

Interspeech 2008 incorporating SST 2008 has an impressive array of events. There will be:

- **Keynote** addresses by Professor Fujisaki on models in speech communication research, Professor Alwan on
automatic speech recognition, Professor Gonzalez-Rodriguez on forensic automatic speaker recognition, and Professor Cassell on embodied conversational agents;

- **Special Sessions** throughout the conference with two particularly Australasian-flavoured sessions, the Phonetics and Phonology of (i) Australian Aboriginal languages (OzPhon08) and (ii) Australian and New Zealand English (PANZE 2008) on the first full conference day (Tuesday Sept. 23) and another 7 throughout the conference, from ‘Talking Heads and Pronunciation Training’ through to ‘Forensic Speaker Recognition’, and a ‘Visual Speech Synthesis Challenge’;

- A full day of **Tutorials** on the pre-conference tutorial day, Monday Sept 22, with offerings from ‘Phonetics of Australian indigenous languages’ and ‘Signed Languages’ through to ‘Speech Recognition by Mind and Machine’, ‘History, Hardware and Sound Processing for the Bionic Ear’ and ‘Forensic Speaker Comparison’;

- A range of **social events** including welcome reception and conference dinner; and

- Special **student-centred events**: a student reception on the evening of Monday Sept 22, and two roundtable lunches (Tuesday, Sept 23, and Thursday, Sept 25) at which students can interact with senior academics and industry members over lunch to discuss speech science, jobs, and much more.

I encourage all ASSTA members to be there, and especially students, even if you are not presenting a paper – this is an opportunity for you to attend an international speech science and technology conference on a domestic airfare. Do so before the Early Bird registration date (July 14) and it is even cheaper. For more details and to register, please go to [http://www.interspeech2008.org](http://www.interspeech2008.org) and for more science go to Brissy on September 22. See you there!

*Denis Burnham*


CONFERENCE LOG


27 Feb. – 1 March 2009, Bi-directional Perspectives in the Cognitive Sciences, Marburg, Germany, http://www.staff.uni-marburg.de/~callies/BCPS/BCPSindex.html


4 March 2009, Insertions and Deletions in Speech, Wednesday, Osnabrueck, Germany http://linguistlist.org/issues/19/19-2014.html


CONFERENCE LOG


JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Speech Research Engineer, VOCALIZE. Speech and Language Technology Solutions based in Campinas, SP, Brazil are looking for a Speech Research Engineer. [http://www.isca-speech.org/jobs/isca_speech_research_engineer.htm](http://www.isca-speech.org/jobs/isca_speech_research_engineer.htm)

Computational Linguistics Researcher, VOCALIZE. Speech and Language Technology Solutions based in Campinas, SP, Brazil are looking for a Computational Linguistics Researcher. [http://www.isca-speech.org/jobs/isca_computational_linguist.htm](http://www.isca-speech.org/jobs/isca_computational_linguist.htm)

Head of NLP, VoxID. VoxID are now looking for a very experienced Computational Linguist to lead their efforts in the natural language processing area. [http://www.techid.co.uk/vacancies.php](http://www.techid.co.uk/vacancies.php)

Speech Recognition Engineers. VoxID is recruiting Speech Recognition Engineers, [http://www.techid.co.uk/vacancies.php](http://www.techid.co.uk/vacancies.php)

Computational Linguist. VoxID is recruiting for a Computational Linguist for various UK locations -Research & Development Engineer Senior / Junior, VoxID. A member of a team of research and development engineers working both independently and in teams developing algorithms and models for large vocabulary speech recognition. [http://www.techid.co.uk/vacancies.php](http://www.techid.co.uk/vacancies.php)

Senior/Principal Research Engineer, Auraya Company, [http://www.isca-speech.org/jobs/ResearchEngineer2.htm](http://www.isca-speech.org/jobs/ResearchEngineer2.htm)


Position Summary:
Remuneration Package: Academic Level A, Step 6 to 8, $75,869 to $81,219 p.a. (comprising Salary, 17% Superannuation, and Leave Loading)
MARCS Auditory Laboratories, University of Western Sydney has been awarded a prestigious $3.4M ARC/NHMRC “Thinking Systems” grant to develop a 'thinking head' – a breakthrough system that can learn from and interact with humans.

The University of Western Sydney invites applications for a postdoctoral fellowship to work with the Thinking Head Evaluation Team on this exciting project at MARCS Auditory Laboratories (commencing: January 2009 - negotiable). The Postdoctoral Fellow will conduct high-level research and development activities in areas related to systematic evaluation of an Embodied Conversational Agent (ECA) and ECA-user interaction. Rigorous evaluation is critical to informing design and refinement of ECA capabilities, usability, intelligibility and naturalness, especially in areas of speech recognition/synthesis, non-verbal communication, turn-taking and emotion. The Fellow will have a PhD in experimental psychology, cognitive science, computer science or speech science and an interest in new technologies including ECAs. The successful applicant will report to Associate Professor Kate Stevens, and work closely with the Evaluation Team at the University of Western Sydney, and collaborate with Thinking Head researchers at University of Canberra, Macquarie and Flinders Universities. Enquiries: Assoc. Prof. Kate Stevens, email: [kj.stevens@uws.edu.au](mailto:kj.stevens@uws.edu.au)