

Minutes of ICCS/HCRC Staff Meeting

Thursday 05 May 2011 at 12.30 pm

In Attendance: Steve Renals (Chair), Ron Petrick, Euan Kline, Keith Edwards, Henry Thomson, Claire Grover, Bea Alex, Miriam Wester, Michael Lincoln, Miles Osborne, Charles Sutton, Victor Lavrenko, Jon Oberlander, Bonnie Webber, Simon King, Moreno Coco, Johanna Moore, Junichi Yamagishi, Myrosia Dzikovska, Frank Keller, Sharon Goldwater, John Lee, Andrea Ross, Nicola Drago Ferrante

Apologies: Alex Lascarides, Philip Koehn, Colin Matheson, Maria Wolters

1. Matters arising from previous minutes

Steve Renals commented that at the last meeting, people seemed really keen to encourage more dialogue between staff and it was agreed to open the meetings with a couple of presentations about current projects. However, only one person came forward to volunteer, which was disappointing. Steve urged people to come forward as there are lots of new projects so there should be no shortage of people.

2. Research overview talks.

2.1 Henry Thomson presented a talk about his research to evaluate semantic web systems using the Amazon Mechanical Turk. This has involved running three competitions over the last two years, with various four labs putting up 12/13 systems. He has been working with Yahoo! To develop this.

2.2 Natural Speech Technology – This is a five year EPSRC funded project called, which is collaboration between the universities of Edinburgh, Sheffield and Cambridge. The project is concerned with significantly advancing the state-of-the-art in speech technology by making it more natural, approaching human levels of reliability, adaptability and conversational richness. One of the aims is to develop a model for accents which will enable it to adapt to any situation.

3. Directors Report

It was reported that ILCC is performing well in terms of research funding within the School. The budget for next year will not be known until the end of the university financial year in July. It is anticipated that it will not be as austere as this year.

The group were informed that Caroline Hastings will be returning to work on 6th June. Dominique Balharry, who is the maternity cover for Caroline, has commenced a new position as the SICSA Executive Officer, therefore Fred Max-Lino will be looking after all of the grants in the interim until Caroline returns.

Steve indicated that he would like to have a general discussion at some point in the future about how we can forge stronger links with the business community. EPSRC are now pushing for 50% of all studentships to be case awards. The right awards will add value to the program. When compared to other schools such as Manchester, there is less interaction with industry.

4. Finance Report

A list showing submissions and awards since the last meeting was distributed to the meeting (see appendix A).

It was noted that since March 2011, there had been nine grant submissions, with a further three in the process of being submitted. There have been five awards, amounting to £4 million, mainly from the research councils. A further five are in the negotiation stage.

5. Discussion on industrial and commercial support for research

Keith Edwards spoke about the ProspecKT programme, which has been running since 2007, as part of the Commercialisation and Knowledge Transfer effort within the School. According to the web site: <http://www.spinoutsuk.co.uk/> Edinburgh comes very high on the list in the UK for spinouts, and the School of Informatics rank 5th highest in the UK.

The plan is to take 'ProspecKT' and use it with a new programme called 'AspeKT'. There is a sectoral slant with SICSA in mind and the programme will have a dedicated Business Developer. The programme will be part funded by the School of Informatics. Scottish Enterprise is yet to commit funds.

6. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting will be Thursday 16th June 2011 at 12.30.

Submissions since March 2011

Name of Grant Giving Body: Title of Proposal	PI & CO-I	Submitted	Awarded
1. JISC - An open framework for providing automated formative feedback to students in the Humanities	Oberlander	Mar-11	
2. Leverhulme - Artist in Residence (Ms V Adams)	Oberlander	Mar-11	
3. EU-ALPHA	Anderson	Mar-11	
4. Edinburgh Campaign IIG - Turing twitter test	Oberlander, Hillston	Mar-11	
5. Newton International Fellowship	Hillston, Bortolussi	Apr-11	
6. EU- MASS-Multilingual Accessible Social Sentiment	Osborne	Apr-11	
7. EU- MANTA- Multilingual Networked Travel Assistant	Osborne	Apr-11	
8. EU- SCOLANTICS - Social Media: Language and Analytics	Osborne	Apr-11	
9. EU-TERA LINGUA - New Tools to Manage Corpora to Produce Customized MT Systems, Dictionaries & CMS	Osborne	Apr-11	

Awards since March 2011

1. ESRC - 1st language attrition meets 2nd language learning	Keller	Mar-10	£18,656
2. EPSRC - Ultrax: Real-time tongue tracking for speech therapy using ultrasound	Richmond, Renals	Aug-10	£732,693
3. EPSRC - NST	Renals	Sep-10	£2,836,167
4. EPSRC - Synsem	Keller, Lapata	Oct-10	£398,575
5. EDTC technology gateway- developing a clustering/faceted search application	Byrne	Apr-11	£5,000