

# **Minutes of ICCS/HCRC Staff Meeting**

## **6<sup>th</sup> February 2008, 12.30PM, Conference Suite**

### **1. Attendance**

Present: Mark Steedman, Johanna Moore, Henry Thompson, Alex Lascarides, Miles Osborne, Ewan Klein, Frank Keller, Oliver Lemon, Hiroshi Shimodaira, Ron Petrick, Chris Geib, Helen Hastie, Adam Lopez, Caroline Hastings, Alyson Macdonald.

Apologies: Steve Renals, Bonnie Webber, Helen Pain, John Lee.

### **2. FP7**

There are a number of academics intending to submit proposals under the Cognitive Systems and Technology Enhanced Learning calls later this year.

Johanna Moore is collaborating on a proposal which is being coordinated in Sheffield. It is called 'Personal Listener' and the project aims to provide speech recognition for people with speech problems. Miles Osbourne, Bonnie Webber, Oliver Lemon and John Lee are also working on FP7 proposals.

### **3. Research Funding Opportunities**

Oliver Lemon and Simon King will be resubmitting the CSTR Platform proposal.

There is a general consensus that we should be concerned about how few of the proposals submitted to EPSRC and ESRC have resulted in grants being awarded. See item 4.

Frank Keller has offered to help anyone who is submitting a proposal for an ERC advanced grant for the approaching deadline, as he has experience with these applications.

### **4. Grant Submissions/Awards 2007**

It was pointed out that a large number of grants were submitted in 2007, but that very few were awarded. This appears to be a problem which not only affects ICCS/HCRC, but NLP research in general.

Various explanations were offered for why this has occurred. It may be because reviewers have attempted to block funding to institutions researching similar areas by giving unnecessarily negative reviews to their proposals; because the style which has been used for interdisciplinary proposals is being rejected by panels more used to straight computer science proposals; or because the way in which panels are selected means that they may often have very little knowledge of this type of research.

There will be a visit from EPSRC in May 2008, and it was agreed that it will be particularly important to make a good impression, and to demonstrate that valuable research will have to be discontinued without further funding.

It was decided that Mark Steedman and Johanna Moore should set up a working group to look into this issue and possible ways forward.

## **5. Visitors**

Current Visitors: Leo Ferres (Carleton University)

Akira Otani (Osaka Gakuin University)

Ivan Himawan (Queensland University of Technology)

Umut Ozge (Middle East Technical University)

Chongde Shi (Peking University)

Alexander Koller (Columbia University)

Blaise Potard (Lorraine Laboratory of IT Research and its Applications)

Roberto Navigli (University of Rome)

Future Visitors: Michael Minock (Umea University)

Yi-Jian Wu (Nagoya Institute of Technology)

Matthias Buch-Kromann (Copenhagen Business School)

Javier Tejedor (Universidad Autonoma de Madrid)

Roberto Barra Chicote (Polytechnic University of Madrid)

Dr.S.R. Mahadeva Prasanna (Indian Institute of Technology)

Prof B. Yegnanarayana (International Institute of Information Technology)

Mark Steedman commented that recent visitors have had their DICE accounts switched off on the date that their visit was originally scheduled to end, and that this has meant that sometimes the accounts have stopped working before a visitor has actually left the building. Alyson Macdonald responded that the accounts are switched off automatically after the last day of a visit period which has been approved in advance. MS requested that in future a way of providing a grace period is found.

## **6. AOB**

New Building: the current advice is that we can expect to move in June or July. The building work is expected to finish before then, but it will not be useable until furniture, etc has been installed. However, it has been noted that staff in other departments expect to move in to 1-6 Buccleuch Place in May.

ICCS/HCRC may be asked to hand over the 4 Buccleuch Place conference suite to Estates and Building in May, although this has not yet been confirmed. Marije Vugts is currently in negotiations about this and will be requesting that we are given access to another suitable room free of charge until the move takes place.

Although it was recently advised that the bike shed would be out of use from 11<sup>th</sup> February for asbestos removal, the work has now been postponed until 3<sup>rd</sup> March. After this has been completed the bike shed and adjacent room (known as the call centre or plant room) will be handed over to another department, and there have been complaints from members of staff who do not want to lose this resource. There is an alternative bike storage areas in the Adam Ferguson Building, but it is only available 8am-6.30pm, and another in Appleton Tower, where space is very limited. These arrangements are not considered to be satisfactory by members of staff who cycle.

The barriers have been removed from the car park behind 1-6 Buccleuch Place, which has led to an increase in unauthorised parking. University parking wardens have the authority to issue fines or clamp cars without a valid permit, and it is hoped that this will create a deterrent.

Miles Osborne will be submitting a bid for Edinburgh to host the ACL 2010 conference, and there is a possibility that this will be the only bid. The proposed dates of the conference are 13-18 June 2010.