CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

The Blizzard Challenge 2017
Evaluating corpus-based speech synthesis on common databases
Simon King, Alan W Black and Keiichi Tokuda
December 2016

In order to better understand and compare research techniques in building corpus-based speech synthesisers on the same data, the annual Blizzard Challenges 2005-2016 were held. We are now pleased to call for participation in the twelfth challenge: Blizzard Challenge 2017. The basic 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.

• **Main task 2017-EH1: UK English Children’s Audiobooks** - About 6.5 hours of speech data from professionally-produced children’s audiobooks will be released. This includes the data from last year’s Blizzard Challenge. All data are from a single speaker. The task is to build a voice from this data that is suitable for reading audiobooks to children.

• **Optional pilot task:** to be decided.

**Blizzard Workshop:** The systems will be presented by the participants at the Blizzard Challenge 2017 workshop, which we anticipate will be held in Stockholm, after Interspeech 2017.

**Website:** http://www.synsig.org/index.php/Blizzard_Challenge_2017

**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.

**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 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_2017#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.