

LITHME Newsletter: # 1

EU Cost Action 'Language in the Human-Machine Era' (LITHME)



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New language resource

CorCenCC (Corpws Cenedlaethol Cymraeg Cyfoes – the National Corpus of Contemporary Welsh) is now available online (<https://www.corcenc.org>). The project was funded by ESRC/AHRC.

The corpus contains over 11 million words from written, spoken and electronic (online, digital texts) Welsh language sources, taken from a range of genres, regional and social language varieties and contexts. The contributors to CorCenCC are representative of the over half a million Welsh speakers in the country.

The creation of CorCenCC was a community-driven project, which offered users of Welsh an opportunity to be proactive in contributing to a Welsh language resource that reflects how Welsh is currently used.

LITHME on social media

Twitter: twitter.com/LgHumanMachine

Facebook: facebook.com/LgHumanMachine

LinkedIn: linkedin.com/company/lghumanmachine

Instagram: instagram.com/languagehumanmachineera

Introducing newsletters

Let's keep the flow of information less fragmented and more efficient!

The first months of LITHME's existence have been vibrant, so has the network-related email traffic. To prevent an overload of information shared in the mailing list, we are introducing LITHME newsletters.

These newsletters will offer an overview of our recent and upcoming activities as well as a selection of other relevant events and initiatives, for example, conferences, open lectures and workshops, calls for papers, book announcements, or new vacancies.

Everyone is welcome to contribute to the newsletters. If you wish to share information that may be of interest to our action at large or to some working groups, please go to the 'Communications' folder in the Google Drive workspace of LITHME. There, you can find a subfolder 'newsletters' which contains previous newsletters, and a living document for editing the content of the next newsletter.

The newsletters will be sent out biweekly or monthly, depending on the amount and timeliness of the shared information. Thank you, Claudia Soria, for compiling most of the first newsletter.

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Short Term Scientific Missions: Application review in progress

We have received 17 applications for Short Term Scientific Missions (STSMs). They are currently reviewed, and the applicants will be informed of the decision in mid-December.

The research trips are planned mainly between COST Full Member Countries and are scheduled from January to April, lasting from 6 days up to 4 months. More than half of the applications were submitted by PhD students, and 4 applications come from Early Career Investigators. There are also 3 applicants from the Inclusiveness Target Countries.

The missions involve, e.g., the following fields: translation studies; law, language and technology; natural language processing; sign language processing; the use of technological tools in language learning; speech and language technology; human-machine interaction.

Animations about future language technologies: Expert help needed

In spring, LITHME will present four animations that illustrate near-future scenarios of emerging technologies influencing languages and our everyday communication. The aim is to provoke discussion and engage with both the stakeholders and general public by telling tangible, yet stunning stories a wide audience can relate to.

In the workshops, we have chosen the following topics for the videos:

- 'Augmented conversation' (speech-to-speech translation enhanced by wearable technology that alters the voices and changes the movements of people's faces);
- 'VR language learning' (practising conversation with a chatbot in authentic settings);
- 'Equality, accessibility' (focusing on sign language technologies and viability of lesser-resourced languages);
- 'Speechless communication' (speaking through a brain-to-brain interface that uses subvocalization detection).

We plan to collaborate with two creative companies in bringing these scenarios on screen. The production will start within a few weeks.

ATTENTION! Expert input concerning sign languages and neural computing is needed for developing the 'Equality, accessibility' and 'Speechless communication' scripts. Please contact the science communication manager Kais Aikivi-Metsoja (kais@tlu.ee) if you would be willing to contribute or know someone who could be consulted.

The current script ideas can be found in the Drive document 'Animation scenarios' in the 'Communications' folder. Feel free to review and complement them.

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Calls for papers

- Society for Risk Analysis-Europe (SRA-E) Benelux Conference 2021
March 16 online.
Submission deadline: January 4.
Website: <https://www.tue.nl/en/our-university/calendar-and-events/disruptive-technologies-risks-worth-taking/>

- First Workshop on Language Technology for Equality, Diversity, Inclusion (LT-EDI-2021) @EAEL 2021
April 19-20 online.
Pre-submission paper due: January 6.
Website: <https://sites.google.com/view/lt-edi-2021/home>

- The 16th Workshop on Innovative Use of NLP for Building Educational Applications (BEA16).
April 19 or April 20 (TBD) online. Co-located with EAEL 2021.
Submission deadline: January 18.
Website: <https://sig-edu.org/bea/current>

Calls for participation

- Minority Languages in the Digital Age. Usage, Maintenance and Teaching.
December 11-12. International online conference.
Registration deadline: December 7.
Website: <https://www.wiko-greifswald.de/en/program/general-overview/calendar-of-events/veranstaltungen/n/minority-languages-in-the-digital-age-usage-maintenance-and-teaching-59039/>

- 'Language Policy 4.0 – are we ready, are we relevant?'. BAAL Language Policy Special Interest Group 2020 keynote by Prof. Helen Kelly-Holmes (University of Limerick, Ireland).
December 14.
Website: <https://www.langpol.ac.uk/view/langpol/events/2020-agm>

- 'Chatbots: myths and reality', seminar by Sviatlana Höhn in the English subject group at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland
December 16
Registration link on the website: <https://r.jyu.fi/englishseminars>

Recent events

Past relevant conferences with online proceedings:

- The Eighth Swedish Language Technology Conference (SLTC) Held on November 25-27, 2020.
Website: <https://spraakbanken.gu.se/sltc2020>

- Linguistic Forum 2020: Language and Artificial Intelligence Held on November 12-14.
Website: <https://iling-ran.ru/web/en>

- 22nd International Conference on Speech and Computer SPECOM 2020 and affiliated 5th International Conference on Interactive Collaborative Robotics ICR 2020 Held on October 7-9.

You still can freely download full electronic proceedings provided by the Springer publisher and see all the video presentations including keynote speakers in the YouTube channel via the website <http://specom.nw.ru/2020/program/>

Other news

- Inauguration of HiTZ (Basque Center for Language Technology).

The inauguration of the new research center was celebrated with an online event on November 5, featuring an invited talk by Ed Hovy. More information: <http://www.hitz.eus/es/node/238>.

The inaugural speech was the first in a new series of monthly webinars from top researchers in language technologies.

- SIGUL Elections - Call for candidates

SIGUL Special Interest Group: founded in April 2017, SIGUL is a joint Special Interest Group of the European Language Resources Association (ELRA) and of the International Speech Communication Association (ISCA). SIGUL intends to bring together a number of professionals involved in the development of language resources and technologies for under-resourced languages. Its main objective is to build a community that not only supports linguistic diversity through technology and ICT but also commits to increase the lesser-resourced languages (regional, minority, or endangered) chances to survive the digital world through language and speech technology. The SIG is now renewing its board and a call for candidates is now out.

Website: <http://www.elra.info/en/sig/sigul/>

- Master's programme in Voice Technology opened at the University of Groningen (Netherlands).
It is the first Master's programme in the continental Europe that is dedicated exclusively to voice technology. Information: <https://www.rug.nl/cf/studeren-bij-cf/programmas/voice-technology-msc>

Press articles to read

- Despite the pandemic and technology challenges, AILDI presses on with its mission to preserve and promote indigenous languages: <https://uawork.arizona.edu/tap/despite-pandemic-and-technology-challenges-aidi-presses-its-mission-preserve-and-promote>

- Soldiers could one day 'communicate through brainwaves', say researchers: <https://news.sky.com/story/soldiers-could-one-day-communicate-through-brainwaves-say-researchers-12144482>

- Part human, part machine: is Appel turning us all into cyborgs? <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2020/nov/25/part-human-part-machine-is-apple-turning-us-all-into-cyborgs>

- Google's SoundFilter AI separates any sound or voice from mixed-audio recordings <https://venturebeat.com/2020/11/11/googles-soundfilter-ai-separates-any-sound-or-voice-from-mixed-audio-recordings/>

- AI localization tool claims to translate your words in your voice <https://www.engadget.com/resemble-ai-localize-voice-translation-artificial-intelligence-193517036.html>

- DeepMind Says Impact of New End-to-End Machine Dubbing Tech May Be Widespread <https://slator.com/machine-translation/deepmind-says-impact-of-new-end-to-end-machine-dubbing-tech-may-be-widespread/>

- The best AR glasses and smartglasses 2020: Snap, Vuzix and more <https://www.wearable.com/ar/the-best-smartglasses-google-glass-and-the-rest>

- Facebook Says This Is the Culmination of Years of Work in Machine Translation <https://slator.com/machine-translation/facebook-says-this-is-the-culmination-of-years-of-work-in-machine-translation/>

Contact Details

<http://lithme.eu>