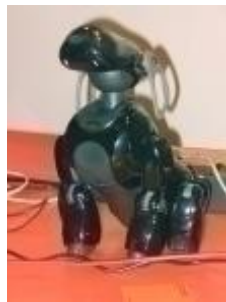


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COST Showcases its Support for Technology at ICT 2008

A robot dog that analyses human behaviour and a user-friendly system for classifying digital media drew crowds to the COST stand at ICT 2008. This year's edition took place in the French city of Lyon from 25 to 27 November 2008.



European Commissioner Viviane Reding opened the exhibition cutting the ribbon alongside the Mayor of Lyon, Gérard Collomb. ICT2008 is Europe's biggest ICT research event, examining how Europe can lead the ICT agenda for the next decade through some 200 exhibits, demonstrating cutting-edge research in web-based services, energy efficiency, lifestyle and eHealth.

Two COST Actions were onsite, reflecting the results of COST's successful formula for supporting European technology. They

showed how ICT will affect the future of our professional and personal lives.

Managing digital multimedia and structuring it to produce effective services continues to be a constant challenge. As digital recorders become accessible to everyone, the size of collections grows. This applies to professional digital libraries and private digital picture collections stored on conventional personal computers.

For the last four years, COST Action 292 Semantic Multimodal Analysis of Digital Media has tried to push forward current research in recognising digital content. The motivation behind this Action: a need for fully automatic annotation systems that index content at the same speed these digital libraries grow. According to Action participants, this lack of proper indexing and retrieval systems renders significant portions of information useless.


Participants from 18 countries have come up with a modular software system to semantically annotate and retrieve information. Features in this new system include automatic audiovisual content annotation; add a description in human language here maybe with an example, and a user interface able to build up a knowledge base through past experience and adaptive learning.

Most involved in COST Action 2102 Cross-Modal Analysis of Verbal and Non-verbal Communication were present at the other side of the stand, including those of the canine kind. By analysing verbal and non-verbal communication signals through face-to-face interaction, the robot dog records human emotional states. This data can then be used to develop intelligent avatars and interactive dialogue systems that could be exploited, improving user access to future telecommunication services. One example is a 3D self-training environment to prepare for job interviews.

Labs involved in COST Action 2102 developed four databases on emotional speech. Emotional speech processing recognises the user's emotional state by analysing speech patterns. Chair of the Management Committee Professor Anna Esposito commented on how COST Actions 277 and 278 were precursors to this Action: "they identified new appropriate mathematical models and algorithms to drive the implementation of the next generation of telecommunication services such as remote health monitoring systems, interactive dialogue systems and intelligent avatars".

So far, the Action has shown many achievements by promoting international books and papers based on the contributions from the Action's members and working partners, as well as those from experts of related disciplines. It is also in the process of launching a new pioneering interdisciplinary international journal called eCognito. This

platform will disseminate cutting-edge research, current practices and future trends in the emerging discipline of cognitive computation.

Last updated: 18 February 2009 



COST is supported by the EU
RTD Framework Programme



ESF provides the COST
Office through a European
Commission contract



The Council of the European
Union provides the COST
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