



The 12th ISCA Speech Synthesis Workshop

26-28 August 2023 – Grenoble, France

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Welcome message from the chair

Dear Participants,

Thirty-three years after the first SSW, the 12th edition returns to Grenoble. The cover page of SSW1 was illustrated by an old-looking robot telling stories to two teenagers. How far our TTS technology has gone to endow conversational agents with the capability of capturing attention with tales starting with "Il était une fois" (once upon a time)? Undoubtedly quite far in terms of speech quality thanks to the recent advance of generative AI but there is still a long way to go to generate voices that are able to captivate the audience. SSW 2023 will be a great opportunity to discuss these issues during presentations of the latest work in the field, as well as during social events!

It's of course a pleasure, an honor and an engaging responsibility to welcome you here. SSW proceedings witness the mutations of our research field : peaks of attendance correlated with the emergence of new methodologies (concatenative, statistical vs. end-to-end synthesis), disappearance of the frontiers between related disciplines (phonetics, phonology, linguistics, neuro-science, etc.), new connections with others (voice conversion, affective computing), etc. We hope that this edition will pave the rich history of our active research community and will draw new inspiring directions.

All SSW2023 submitted papers were reviewed by at least two members of the Scientific Committee. The acceptance rate is 82%: we accepted 38 papers and rejected 8. Following initiatives of some previous workshops (demos in 2013, short papers in 2004 and 2016), 7 Late Breaking Reports (LBR) were accepted. Contradictory to peer-reviewed long SSW papers (5-7 pages), short LBR (2 pages) are not peer-reviewed but allow a communication during the workshop. At the time of writing this welcome message, we have more than 90 participants registered to attend the workshop.

The papers will be presented during 6 oral sessions of 4 papers each and two poster sessions (one for SSW regular papers and one for LBR). On each day, the morning starts with a keynote followed by a first oral session and each afternoon starts with one poster session, followed by a second oral session. Except for the second day, where a round table on "Ethics and generative AI" is organized around two presentations: Ambre Davant from the MIAI "AI & ethics" chair will present the various ethical issues of the use of AI technologies; Patrick Kuban, founding member of lexvoix.fr , and Mathilde Croze from Lerins will discuss ethical and legal issues of the voice talents' ecosystem.

The first plenary speaker is Rob Clark from Google. His talk entitled "Text-to-speech in 2023" will suitably introduce the workshop. Our second keynote speaker, Alejandrina Cristia from CNRS/LSCP Paris, will discuss the drastic differences between human children's and AI's language training in particular in non-western cultures. Our last but not least speaker is Chloé Clavel, from Telecom-Paris. Her talk "Socio-conversational AI: Modelling the socio-emotional component of interactions using neural models" will focus on putting speech synthesis technology in the loop of speech production and perception, with the challenge of modeling the social aspects of human-agent interactions.

Note that SSW is followed by the 18th Blizzard challenge that will compare the performance of 18 state-of-the-art text-to-speech systems on French for the first time. Olivier Perrotin and his organizing committee has rustled a unique set of benchmarks that provides a rather complete view on the merits of the different models. I strongly encourage you to attend the Blizzard workshop and have a look on the results!

Of course, such an event could not be organized without the joint effort of numerous people. The Scientific Committee members spent several hours thoroughly evaluating the papers and give helpful feedback to the authors. We do think that the public reviews and comments nicely complement the papers. We thank the OpenReview staff (in particular Rachel and Rachel) for their highly valuable help for program chairs beginners. I would like to thank members of the Organizing Committee for all the effort that made SSW12 possible. My colleagues Thomas Hueber and Olivier Perrotin have taken up the burden of the local organization, the website management and the financial administration. Damien Lolive did an essential job in chasing sponsors. Nicolas Obin helped me in managing the review process and took in charge the organization of the roundtable on "Ethics and Generative AI". With such an organizing team, every twist of fate are just obstacles to be bypassed. A special thank also to the GIPSA-Lab and CNRS delegation administrative teams for their support.

Our sponsors, Apple, Google, Samsung, Amazon, ISCA, and the local institutions (Grenoble-Alps University (UGA), the Multidisciplinary Institute in Artificial Intelligence (MIAI) and Persyval-Lab), allowed us to keep registration fees low while providing high-quality services to the audience.

On behalf of GIPSA-Lab of the Grenoble-Alps University, you are all welcome anytime when you visit Grenoble. I hope that one of the young researchers participating at SSW12 will chair SSW 30 years from now. That would be a remarkable result. Looking forward to meeting you at SSW2023, Grenoble, August 26-28.

On behalf of the SSW2023 organizing committee,

Gérard Bailly,
Chairman