AVIOS speech conference in Israel draws both academia and industry

An international audience and presenters

The **Applied Voice Input Output Society** (AVIOS), the speech industry's non-profit industry organization, organizes a number of conferences and local chapter meetings to serve the needs of its members and the general speech community. The sixth annual AVIOS Israel Conference took place on June 22, in Tel Aviv, Israel, with support from the AVIOS Israel chapter and the **Afeka Center for Language Processing** (ACLP). The joint effort, the first annual "Speech Processing Day," was a conference intended to bring together the local speech community from both academia and industry.

The first day of the conference was devoted to four professional seminars presented by Prof. Al Oppenheim of **MIT**, Dr. Sara Basson of **IBM Research**, Prof. Lawrence Rabiner of **Rutgers University**, and Dr. Matthew Yuschik, an independent consultant. The keynote lecture at the second main day of the conference was given by Dr. Michael Cohen, who leads speech recognition research at **Google**.

Out of the 180 participants, about 40 were from outside Israel—including Spain, Portugal, Russia, France, Germany, and the US. The Conference sessions dealt with different technologies—speech recognition, speaker recognition, and emotion recognition—and the commercial opportunities they create.

According to Dr. Nava Shaked, Chairman of AVIOS Israel, "This year we cooperated with Afeka College to organize an international conference, aimed to expose the activities of Israeli companies engaged in speech technology while learning about activities carried out in the international field."

According to Professor Ami Moyal, who heads ACLP, "Speech recognition technology will impact all areas of our life, from the operation of the smart home by speech, using game consoles by young and old, interacting with the mobile phone with many apps, self-service customer service centers, web search by voice, the creation of medical reports, and more. This technology will be pivotal to human communication."

Dr. Basson commented, "I come from IBM's global research in the United States, but have just returned from a research mission in India, where I engaged in developing methods for searching the Web by voice using a simple mobile phone, a solution supporting populations that have no direct internet access. Speech technology is of international interest."

The Israeli Local chapter AVIOS Israel was officially announced in 2005. Dr. Nava Shaked, the conference organizer, is the chairperson of the local chapter and an active member of the AVIOS board.

Dr. K. W. 'Bill' Scholz, AVIOS President, commented "We have been encouraging the growth of AVIOS local chapters across North America, Europe, the Middle East, and Australia in an effort to reach across many geographies in an effort to raise awareness of speech technology as a tool that that helps the general public. This objective is met…also by our annual trade show, the Mobile Voice Conference (www.mobilevoiceconference.com), scheduled for next March in San Francisco."

AVIOS has been the speech industry non-profit organization for over 27 years. AVIOS is dedicated to promoting the practical use of speech technology, including technologies such as speech recognition, text-to-speech synthesis, speaker identification and verification, speech analytics, speech understanding, and voice search.

Interview with Jonathan Taylor, Voxeo

Jonathan Taylor, CEO, Voxeo, was interviewed by Bill Meisel in late July. In 1999, Taylor set out to fundamentally change an industry fraught with poor customer service, product mediocrity, and unnecessary barriers to entry. Voxeo's products and approaches have driven positive change in the market – forcing vendors to move away from proprietary solutions and arcane infrastructures that lock customers in.

Please provide a brief overview of Voxeo's products and services.

Voxeo offers a multi-purpose communications platform that addresses evolving customer interaction preferences. In addition to traditional touchtone and speech-enabled IVR, we provide an integrated solution for building and deploying applications that support communication channels such as SMS, instant messaging, mobile web and social networks like Twitter, as well as Smartphone apps. Multi-channel and multimodal applications can be developed within a single environment and deployed to Voxeo's global hosted cloud, a private premise cloud, or a hybrid cloud that utilizes both.