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1. Message from the Coordinators

Dear All,

Welcome to the November 2011 edition of the V&L Net Newsletter. After getting up to a somewhat subdued start in 2010 we have been aiming to make up for it this year. We have put out two calls for proposals for the V&L Net Pump-priming Scheme, organised the VL’11 Workshop, extended the website, and are currently working on a number of other plans and activities. All the above are described in different sections below.

We would like to draw your attention in particular to the winners of the 2011 Pump-priming calls in Section 4, and the list of V&L Net members with specific responsibilities in Section 7 (whom we would like to take this opportunity to thank for taking on these tasks).

The biggest change over the coming year will hopefully be the more active involvement of the wider V&L Net membership. We are currently preparing a questionnaire to discover more about what you would like to get out of V&L Net. We will also post a call for contributions for the next edition of the V&L Net Newsletter. Please do also let us know directly of any ideas you might have.

With best wishes,

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The V&L Net Workshop on Vision and Language 2011 (VL’11) took place in the brand new Huxley Building at the University of Brighton on 15th September. The chief purpose of the workshop was to bring the computer vision and language processing communities together and to facilitate community building and networking between them. It was organised by V&L Net (the EPSRC Network on Vision and Language), and endorsed by EACL (the European Chapter of the Association for Computational Linguistics) and BMVA (the British Machine Vision Association).

The University of Brighton’s new Huxley Building, opened in July 2011 by Prof Lord Robert Winston.

The day started with two introductory invited talks that were intended to provide overviews of the computational linguistics and computer vision fields, respectively. First, Prof. Khurshid Ahmad (Trinity College Dublin) discussed how statistical analysis of large volumes of text facilitates learning of specialised ontologies, drawing on examples of how ontology terms are linked to visual features. Next, Prof. Roy Davies (Royal Holloway) presented an introduction to computer vision, highlighting the significance of low-level feature extraction from images and videos for high-level tasks, such as object and activity recognition.

The other two invited talks focused on specific cases of cross-disciplinary research between vision and language. The title of Prof. Yiannis Aloimonos’s (University of Maryland, see picture) presentation was Robots need language: A computational model for the integration of vision, action and language. Specifically, he discussed an interaction model of vision and language that can boost the performance of vision tasks and lend cognitive capabilities to active robots. Prof. Ted Briscoe (University of Cambridge) presented research on Integrating textual information extraction and visual similarity search for biomedical research papers.
Keynote speaker Y. Aloimonos taking a morning stroll on Brighton beach, within sight of the pier.

The afternoon session was dedicated to the presentation of 17 posters. First, poster authors presented short ‘teaser’ presentations of their work. This was followed by a traditional poster session, which allowed participants to discuss the work presented in more detail and to explore opportunities for collaboration. Networking was further facilitated by pre-arranged meetings between workshop participants, and by the mini-poster board, for which all participants were invited to bring A3-sized mini-poster, presenting their research group, project or research idea.

The technical programme of the workshop was wrapped up by an informal discussion on the future of cross-disciplinary research between vision and language. The workshop was rounded off by an evening drinks reception accompanied by superb live jazz music.

Overall, the workshop provided a plethora of networking opportunities between V&L Net members and at the same time set up a technical dialogue on bridging the research areas of vision and language. Feedback from the participants has been enthusiastic, as exemplified by the following two (of many) messages:

"Thanks once again for organizing the VL’11 Workshop last Thursday: it was a truly inspiring event, and I hope the first of many."

"Thank you for the very well organized workshop, we actually had the chance to make a lot of hopefully productive contacts with other groups!"

All abstracts, slides, posters and mini-posters from the workshop are now available online: www.vlnet.org.uk/VL-Workshop-2011.html

3. V&L Net Prize for Best Poster at NIPS 2011 Workshop on Integrating Language and Vision

V&L Net are sponsoring a prize for the best poster presented at the NIPS 2011 Workshop on Integrating Language and Vision. The authors of the winning poster will be awarded a certificate and a $200 voucher for Amazon.

4. Winners of Pump-priming the 2011 Vision & Language Research Calls for Proposals

1. Crook et al. (Oxford Brookes, Oxford and Gothenburg): Development of a project proposal on Vision and language processing in intelligent transport systems.


5. Plans for VL’12

Meanwhile, we have also started planning next year’s V&L Net meeting (VL’12), likely to be held in September 2012, and hopefully at the beautiful Tudor castle of Herstmonceux in East Sussex (see picture). We will again have technical presentations and networking activities. An outcome of VL’11 was the need to have more in-depth tutorials at VL’12 on Language Processing for Computer Vision folk, and on Computer Vision for Language Processing folk.

6. Upcoming Activities and Developments

Upcoming V&L Net activities and developments include the member’ mailing list, the searchable database of members, and the V&L Net wiki pages going live over the next month. Planning is also underway for two technical workshops on vision and language themes, to be co-located with major vision and language conferences, and for two special issues, one in a leading language processing and one in a leading computer vision journal.

7. V&L Net Specific Responsibilities

Newsletter editors: Yannis Goulermas (Leeds and Katja Markert (Liverpool) with support from Roy Davies (Royal Holloway).

Industry liaison and round table meetings: Khurshid Ahmad (Trinity College Dublin).
V&L Net MediaWiki site administrator: Roger Evans (Brighton).

Software, datasets and other resources: Frank Keller (Edinburgh).

Workshops, bursaries and prizes: William Smith (York).

Roadmapping and future of V&L Net post EPSRC funding: Network Mentors.

Planning for Annual meetings 2012 and 2013: Darren Cosker (Bath) and Kalina Bontcheva (Sheffield) in collaboration with the network coordinators.

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