Postdoctoral research position:

Localisation of the Mozilla Common Voice platform for South African languages

Stellenbosch University, South Africa

A postdoc position focussing on the localisation of the Mozilla Common Voice Platform\(^1\) in South Africa is available in the Digital Signal Processing Group of the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering at Stellenbosch University, South Africa. The project will involve the translation of the Common Voice interface into ten target languages as well as sourcing a minimum of 5 000 public domain (CC-0) sentences per language. The successful candidate will liaise with relevant members of the Common Voice Community and Mozilla Foundation, be responsible for coordinating the translation process and for designing and implementing quality assurance measures to verify the quality of the translations. The project will also entail identifying possible sources of appropriate public domain text as well as obtaining, cleaning and checking the data. Specific project objectives include setting up and managing the translation process, validating translations, gathering text data and developing a “Common Voice sentence preparation” protocol. In addition, the project will provide an opportunity to conduct new and original research in related areas such as machine translation and/or language modelling and topic modelling in South Africa’s official languages.

Applicants must hold a PhD (preferably obtained within the last 5 years) in the field of Computational Linguistics, Information Engineering, Computer Science, Electronic/Electrical Engineering, or other relevant disciplines. Suitable candidates must have practical and research experience with text processing and analysis, topic modelling and/or machine translation and should have an excellent background in statistical modelling. Applicants should also have proven prior experience in text corpus compilation, have good programming skills and be able to use high level programming languages for developing prototype systems. Finally, candidates must have excellent English writing skills and have an explicit interest in scientific research and publication.

The position will be available for one year, with a possible extension to a second year, depending on progress and available funds.

Applications should include:

- A covering letter explaining why the applicant is interested in the position and what his or her most relevant qualifications are.
- A curriculum vitae that includes a list of publications and describes research projects and conference participation.
- The details of three contactable referees.

Applications should be sent as soon as possible by email to Prof Febe de Wet (fdw@sun.ac.za). The successful applicant will be subject to University policies and procedures.

Interested applicants are welcome to contact me at the above e-mail address for further information regarding the project.

(Date posted: 14 February 2022)

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\(^{1}\) https://commonvoice.mozilla.org/en