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April 5, 2019

Neural Machine Translation for Low Resource Languages request for proposals

Machine translation (MT) has made significant progress in recent years with a shift to neural models and rapid development of new architectures such as the transformer. However, current models trained on little parallel data tend to produce poor quality translations. This challenge is exacerbated in the context of social media, where we need to enable communication for languages with no corresponding parallel corpora or unofficial languages such as romanized versions.

We are pleased to invite the academic community to respond to this call for research proposals on low-resource MT. Applicants for the research awards will be expected to contribute to the field of low resource MT through innovative approaches to obtain strongly performing models under low-resource training conditions.

Applicants should submit a two-page proposal outlining their intended research and a budget overview of how funding will be used. Awards will be made in amounts up to $80,000 per proposal for projects up to one year in duration. Successful proposals will demonstrate innovative and compelling research that has the potential to significantly advance the state-of-the-art in the field. Award amounts will be determined at the sole discretion of the evaluation committee. Up to five projects will be awarded.

Research topics should be relevant to low resource machine translation, including, but not limited to:

- Unsupervised neural machine translation for low resource language pairs
- Semi-supervised neural machine translation for low resource language pairs
- Pretraining methods leveraging monolingual data
- Multilingual neural machine translation for low resource languages

Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate the effectiveness of the proposed method on actual low resource settings (such as *Two New Evaluation Datasets for Low-Resource Machine Translation: Nepali-English and Sinhala-English*) as opposed to artificial settings obtained through data ablation.

Proposals should include

- A summary of the project (1-2 pages) explaining the area of focus, a description of techniques, any relevant prior work and a timeline with milestones and expected outcomes
- A draft budget description (1 page) including an approximate cost of the award and explanation of how funds would be spent
- Curriculum Vitae for all project participants
- Organization details, i.e. tax information and administrative contact details

Eligibility

- Awards must comply with applicable US and international laws, regulations and policies.
- Applicants must be current full-time faculty at an accredited academic institution that awards research degrees to PhD students.
- Applicants must be the Principal Investigator on any resulting award.
- Applicants may submit one proposal per solicitation.
- Organizations must be a nonprofit or non-governmental organization with recognized legal status in their respective country (equal to 501(c)(3) status under the United States Internal Revenue Code).

Timing and Dates

- Applications are now open. Deadline to apply is May 31, 2019 at 11:59 pm PST.
- Notifications will be sent by email to selected applicants by July 28, 2019.

Additional Information

For questions related to this RFP, please email academicrelations@fb.com.

Terms and Conditions

- By submitting a proposal, you are authorizing Facebook to evaluate the proposal for a potential award, and you agree to the terms herein.
- You agree that Facebook will not be required to treat any part of the proposal as confidential or protected by copyright.

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