CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY AFRICA

Minutes of the CSSR4Africa Team Meeting

Date and Time: 10th March 2025, at 12:00pm
Venue: Zoom
Status: Draft.

Participants
Adedayo Akinade
Birhanu Shimelis Girma
Clifford Onyonka
David Vernon, Chairman
Eyerusalem Birhan
Ibrahim Jimoh
Muhammed Danso
Muhirwa Richard
Tsegazeab Tefferi
Yohannes Haile

Prof. David Vernon welcomed the participants to the meeting and made the following strong remarks:

Submitting weekly reports on time (by Friday) is an obligation, and every employee must adhere to this requirement. In fact, every research assistant and research associate read this in the shared document on professional conduct and ethics before the start of their contracts. Failure to comply in the future will result in consequences, including sanctions. This may include withholding recommendation letters from those who fail to meet professional standards. He emphasized that he will no longer tolerate such behavior.

The Committee members then discussed all the items of the meeting agenda. These discussions are summarized below.

1.   Approval of the minutes of the last meeting
The participants reviewed the minutes of the previous meeting held on 3rd March 2025 and approved them as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

2.   Matters arising from the minutes
Agenda item 1: Use the CMU-Africa robotics email on Github.
Action: Completed

Agenda item 2: Update the software installation manual to reflect changes to be made by Prof. David Vernon.
Action: Necessary updates are required. Refer to table 1

Agenda item 3: Environment knowledge base in D5.4.2 deliverable document.
Action: Necessary updates are required. Refer to table 1

Agenda item 4: Environment knowledge base helper class
Action: Necessary updates are required. Refer to table 1

3.   D5.3 Attention Subsystem
Prof. David Vernon, after reading and reviewing the report, highlighted that most of the sentences in the document were written in the future tense. Additionally, in some sections, the names of other individuals were mentioned as responsible for completing the remaining work. He suggested that, like many others had done, these issues should be corrected by converting all sentences to the present tense. Muhammed Danso agreed with these suggestions and will update D5.3 accordingly.

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4.   Culture knowledge base & Environment knowledge base helper classes.
      a.   Availability on GitHub in the utilities package.

The person responsible, Prof. David Vernon, the helper classes will not be uploaded to GitHub since their intended purpose was not to be used alone. Instead, it will be better to upload them together with the behavior controller.

      b.   Python wrapper.
A solution proposed by Clifford Onyonka, Team has decided to not proceed with this option given that TTS and ASR will initialize their nodes with the assumption of only one language either Kinyarwanda or English.

5.   Interim demonstrations
      a.   Modes of attentions

Adedayo Akinade suggested that when *overtAttention* (in scanning mode) reports a face and mutual gaze, a switch to social mode, deactivation of *animateBehaviour*, welcome speech and gesture can be invoked. After which *overtAttention* reverts to scanning mode and *animateBehaviour* enabled at the end of the welcome process. Team agreed on this approach, and it is the one which will be followed during interim demonstrations.

      b.   Person detection vs. face detection

After productive discussions it was concluded that none of the scenario is using person detection therefore the focus should be on face detection and mutual gaze.

6.   Issues with a multilingual mission
It was concluded that from now on approach is going to be monolingual and to switch the language the behavior controller will overwrite current language and make service request to change the language. Both ASR and TTS will have to add this service into their current ROS node implementation.

7.   Issues with distributed system implementation.
Responsible person, Muhammed Danso is exploring the possible solutions including the use of more than one jetson nano.

8.   Failure handling
Failure handling is on hold, awaiting Robot Mission Language (D5.4.2) to be completed first before it is resumed.

9.   Any Other Business
Professional practice

Prof. David Vernon highlighted unacceptable behaviors exhibited by some research associates:

- Tsegazeab Tefferi was given a final warning to adhere to professional standards and was reminded to "promise less and overdeliver." If he repeats the same mistake, he will be required to submit his letter of resignation by March 31, 2025.
- Muhirwa Richard was also called out for routinely submitting reports on Sundays. He was reminded that such behavior is not acceptable in the professional industry.
- Yohannes Haile was reminded that lacking access to a physical robot does not justify inaction. He was encouraged to contribute to the team by assisting peers whenever his assigned tasks are completed, ensuring the overall project progresses within the specified timeline.

He concluded by acknowledging and appreciating Birhanu Shimelis Girma and Eyerusalem Birhan for volunteering to work on the interim demos.

10.   Date and time of next meeting
The next meeting will be held on 17th March 2025 at 12:00pm on Zoom.

End of the Meeting
There being no other business, the Chairman thanked the participants for their contributions and closed the meeting.

Action items following the meeting of the CSSR4Africa project

Action	Action description	Responsible	Completion date
1	Send updated helper classes software to Tsegazeab Tefferi and cc everyone.	D. Vernon	14th March 2025
2	Update table 10 in D5.4.1 to add English language.	D. Vernon	14th March 2025
3	Update Environment knowledge base in D5.4.2 deliverable document. 1. Append the three languages to the keys. 2. Update subsection 5.3 3. Update software to read the data.	D. Vernon	14th March 2025
4	Environment knowledge base helper class	D. Vernon	14th March 2025
5	Update D2.1 by removing Person detection from the scenarios.	D. Vernon	14th March 2025
6	Update GitHub directory structure by removing utilities and add dashboard.	D.vernon, B. Eyerusalem and A. Akinade	14th March 2025
7	Removing utilities from D3.3 and D3.2	D. Vernon	14th March 2025
8	Updating D5.3 Attention Subsystem	M. Danso	14th March 2025
9	Adding service request to change the language in D4.3.2	C. Onyonka	14th March 2025
10	Adding service request to change the language in D5.5.2.1, D5.5.2.3, D5.5.2.4	R. Muhirwa	14th March 2025
11	Send a Kinyarwanda translation of the example messages included in D5.4.2, Table 3.	R.Muhirwa	13th March 2025

Table 1: Action Items