

Montréal Chapter Event on Smart Assistant Technology

The members of the Montréal Chapter Organizing Committee were intrigued by the technology behind the growing presence of smart assistants entering into homes. On that note, they developed a program showcasing some of Montréal's leading start-ups, established artificial intelligence research groups, and assembled academics to present the underlying technology used to support these smart assistants. More than 55 students, academics, and software and hardware engineers attended the event at the Montréal WeWork offices to explore the theme of "Alexa, Siri, Cortana.... What Technology Makes You Work?"

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The technologies explored included the following: "Speech Recognition," described by Vikrant Tomar of Fluent.ai; "Chatbots and Conversational Systems," presented by Frederic Ratle of Automat.ai; and "Natural Language Processing and Intent Parsers," presented by Tavian Barnes, from Microsoft Research. The final two presentations described systems including "Robotics Use of Internet-of-Things Platforms," by Soodeh Farokhi from C2RO; and an overview of "Human-Computer Interaction and Interfaces for Health Monitoring Applications," offered by Dr. Besam Abdulrazak from the University of Sherbrooke, Québec, Canada.

The event was successful in spurring a high level of interaction from the audience with the speakers, and the

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Montréal Chapter was pleased to attract two new volunteers. Some of the mysteries of the smart assistants' underlying technologies were revealed, and the promise of new services could be envisioned for the future.

—Nigel Maund

Technical Writing Course Offered to YPs

Technical writing is not easy when you do not have the proper training. The IEEE Consumer Electronics (CE) Society provided a full-day technical writing course for Young Professionals (YPs) at the

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IEEE 2018 International Conference on Consumer Electronics Taiwan held at National Chung Hsing University, Taichung, on 19–21 May 2018. Akihiko (Ken) Sugiyama was invited as the lecturer for the course.

The course consisted of two parts: a lecture and an interactive practice session. During the lecture, Sugiyama proposed a

useful concept of "slides first" and a powerful "three-sentence introduction" template to improve the logic of one's writing. He then explained some typical traps and presented tips for slide preparation. After the lecture, the participants got

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