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Octopeek augments its R&D by signing a 4-year partnership with the Idiap Research Institute

Artificial intelligence and big data pioneers Octopeek (France) and the Idiap Research Institute (Switzerland) announce a partnership. A member of Octopeek’s scientific staff will spend four years at the very heart of Idiap, culminating in a PhD—a unique opportunity to use video data to develop research on multimodal learning, and to spur innovation.

Learning to extract relevant semantic information from a mass of data issuing from content with different modalities—including audio, visual data, and text—is a veritable challenge. Mastery and application in this field, known as multimodal learning, would result in our increasing the potential of this type of data tenfold. This is the motivation behind Octopeek’s ambitious partnering with Idiap, a move that will ensure that the company will continue to offer its clients increasingly innovative solutions.

For 10 years, Octopeek has been using artificial intelligence and big data to support major French and international groups’ optimization of how they use their data. In keeping with its tradition of investing in the research and development of ever more innovative, ethical, and responsible solutions, the company announces the signing of a partnership with Switzerland’s Idiap Research Institute, for three decades already a world leader in artificial and perceptual intelligence.

The partnership will enable Samy Tafasca, a data scientist at Octopeek, to carry out a PhD at the Institute on the theme of multimodal learning based on video data. For four years, and supervised by Idiap’s Jean-Marc Odobez, Tafasca will be able to draw on the Institute’s resources and the support of its research teams.

The key value of ethical and efficient AI—Research

“At Octopeek, research is quite simply the motor of our ability to innovate,” explains co-founder of Octopeek, Mahmoud Zakaria. “Thanks to our long-standing proximity with the academic and scientific community, we can accompany companies in their deployment of efficient, ethical AI and big data strategies. The trust that Idiap has placed in us is proof that companies have an active role to play in the technological revolution brought about by the data age.” As though proof of this were required, Zakaria—like a third of his colleagues at Octopeek—has a doctorate in Mathematics and Computer Science.

From Centrale Supélec to France’s National Centre for Scientific Research, Octopeek maintains close relations with the research community, relations now extended to include Idiap. “These ties give us a strong, competitive advantage and guide us in our development,” says Abdelkrim Talhaoui, Octopeek’s other co-founder.

“Integrating this partnership will come very naturally to Idiap,” comments Jean-Marc Odobez, head of Idiap’s Perception & Activity Understanding research group. “The modeling and analysis of what we call unstructured data, including the information flows contained in video, is a very active research field and one in which Idiap has strong competencies. Samy will follow the same curriculum as our other doctoral students, and his work and thesis will be published and will contribute to our research, like every other thesis completed here.”

The Idiap–Octopeek partnership was made possible thanks to the Service de l’économie, du tourisme et de l’innovation (SETI) of the Canton of Valais, Switzerland, in collaboration with the Greater Geneva Bern area (GGBa)—the economic promotion agency of western Switzerland. “SETI’s mission, in collaboration with the GGBa, is to identify companies with know-how and potential and with complementarities with our ecosystem,” explains Dominique Luyet,



case manager at SETI. “The objective is to encourage the creation of high-added-value companies and jobs in Valais. The collaboration between Idiap and Octopeek is a perfect example of this, and we naturally hope that it will strengthen the presence of companies such as Octopeek in the canton. It’s clearly a win-win partnership.”

About Octopeek

Founded in 2010 by Abdelkrim Talhaoui, who holds a Master’s degree in Mathematics from Télécom Paris Tech and an MBA from ESSEC, and by Mahmoud Zakaria, who holds a Master’s degree in Mathematical Engineering and a PhD in Mathematics and Computer Science from Télécom Paris Tech, Octopeek provides businesses with big data and artificial intelligence consulting and training. The company is a major player, and has the mission of democratizing the use of big data and artificial intelligence to improve companies’ business performance and productivity. Octopeek has nearly 50 employees—one-third have PhDs and two-thirds are engineers—and recorded a turnover of 4 million euros in 2020.

More information at <https://octopeek.com/en/>.

About the Idiap Research Institute

Idiap has been a world specialist in artificial intelligence for 30 years. Voice and visual recognition, human-computer interaction, robotics, and language analysis are just some of the Institute’s fields of expertise. Based in Martigny, Switzerland, Idiap is engaged in local, national, and international projects. The non-profit Idiap Foundation was created in 1991 by the city of Martigny, the State of Valais, the l’Ecole polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL), the University of Geneva, and Swisscom. www.idiap.ch

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