

## PRESS RELEASE

### QCRI in deal with UK's Speechmatics to take Arabic transcription technology global

**Doha, May 11, 2016** – UK-based company Speechmatics is to use technology developed by the Qatar Computing Research Institute (QCRI), a research institute of Hamad bin Khalifa University, to take Arabic speech-to-text services to its global customers.

The Cambridge-based Speechmatics will use a QCRI product known as QATS (QCRI Advanced Transcription System) to transcribe Arabic broadcasts and audio files into text and subtitles.

QATS can transcribe modern standard Arabic as well as four major Arabic dialects: Egyptian, Levantine, North African and Gulf Arabic.

QCRI's executive director Dr. Ahmed Elmagarmid said Qatar was leading global research in speech technology for Arabic. He commented: "This is not just a technology transfer - it is much bigger. It will allow information sharing in Arabic around the world."

Speechmatics' chief scientific officer Dr. Tony Robinson said the development, which used the company's recently-announced Auto-Auto framework, would ensure Arabic-based content was "more discoverable and easily consumed". Dr Robinson was a pioneer in developing the application of deep learning in speech recognition in the 1980s and 1990s at the University of Cambridge.

Dr. Robinson said: "Speechmatics will help QCRI expand their reach to a broad range of industries and geographies with market leading speech-to-text services based on the latest research in machine learning and artificial intelligence."

QCRI Arabic Language Technologies principal engineer Ahmed Ali, who has been leading the speech team, said Deep Neural Network (DNN) and Recurrent Neural Network (RNN) architecture were used in QATS' development. Ali said: "We used more than 2,000 hours of Arabic speech to develop and train QATS, in addition to a large archive of the Web 2.0 content."

Ali said the agreement would also give QCRI access to diverse data which would enable it to further hone its Arabic language technologies research.

An independent media monitoring company in May 2015 found QATS consistently outperformed its leading competitors in both standard and dialectal Arabic benchmark tests by at least 10 percent. It also won the "Best in Show" award at the third edition of the BBC's #NewsHACK event in December 2014 for translating BBC Arabic videos into English, including subtitles, and voiceover using speech synthesis.

Al Jazeera Media Network has been using versions of QATS to transcribe its daily Arabic news reports for almost two years. Until now, more than 3,000 hours have been transcribed using the product.

Arabic is now the world's fourth most popular language and is spoken in at least 60 countries.

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### **About Qatar Computing Research Institute**

Qatar Computing Research Institute (QCRI) is a national research institute within Hamad bin Khalifa University. As a national research institute, QCRI aims to build Qatar's innovation and technology capacity by focusing on large-scale computing challenges that address national priorities for growth and development, supporting Qatar's transformation from a hydrocarbon-based economy to a knowledge-based economy. In doing this, QCRI conducts world-class multidisciplinary computing research that is relevant to the needs of Qatar, the wider Arab region, and the world. It performs cutting-edge research in such areas as Arabic language technologies, social computing, data analytics, distributed systems, cyber security and computational science and engineering. The research conducted at QCRI is aligned with the Qatar National Research Strategy and supports the strategic priorities outlined in the Qatar National Vision 2030.

For more information, please visit [www.qcri.qa](http://www.qcri.qa).

### **About Hamad bin Khalifa University**

Hamad bin Khalifa University (HBKU), a member of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, is an emerging research university that is building its foundation upon unique collaborations with local and international partners. Located in Education City, HBKU delivers undergraduate and graduate programs through its College of Science and Engineering, Law School, College of Public Health, Qatar Faculty of Islamic Studies, and its College of Humanities and Social Sciences. It also provides unparalleled opportunities for research and scholarship through its research institutes, and its Center of Executive Education delivers customized programs for the business community of Qatar and the region, in line with Qatar National Vision 2030.