Recommendation for the defense of Ph.D. thesis

Ph.D. candidate: **Marcel Kockmann**
advisor: **Jan Černocký**

I am happy that Marcel Kockmann has submitted his thesis under my supervision, although "supervision" must be detailed: while I acted as administrative supervisor and was responsible for launching this company-sponsored PhD, its scientific part was largely directed, advised and criticized by Lukáš Burget. Marcel obtained also lots of useful input from world renowned speaker recognition specialists gathered around the BOSARIS workshop.

Marcel's PhD was special in several aspects: he enrolled in so called 'external PhD programme' and except the 1st year, he spent most of his time in the company. To be frank, most of 'external PhD students' are considered with quite a despect here at FIT BUT, and their thesis are barely passable. Moreover, Marcel's company changed during his PhD, as the speech R&D group was transferred from Siemens R&D to SVOX (both in Munich, Germany).

Despite these circumstances, I was (and I continue to be) amazed by the quality and quantity of work produced by Marcel. He has quickly grasped the basis of modern approached to speaker recognition and prosodic modeling and was soon able to come up with original results that were comparable or better than state of the art. Without lack of modesty, I think that his PhD thesis will become recommended reading to anyone wanting to experiment with prosody in speaker verification.

Marcel has also shown great potential for cooperation. Despite the Brno-Munich distance, he had (and continues to have) more intense cooperation with people in my group than many 'insiders'. I must also mention his cooperation and help to the goals of the IARPA BEST project – his work with Luciana Ferrer has been an example of very productive scientific cooperation. He has also participated in the BOSARIS workshop (2010) and in Agnitio/BUT/CRIM submission to the NIST 2010 Speaker recognition evaluation.

The submitted thesis covers only part of Marcel's activities – as important as speaker recognition were his efforts to port the sub-space representations to the area of emotion, and age. Although these tasks were never explored in our lab, he was able to win two categories in the "Emotion Challenge" and "Paralinguistic Challenge" organized by Humaine Network of Excellence in 2009 and 2010 respectively (http://emotion-research.net/).

From the personal point of view, I appreciate Marcel's sense of responsibility, fun and ability to help under any circumstances, and I was the most happy to have him in the group, although distantly.

To conclude, I fully recommend Marcel Kockmann's Ph.D. thesis for the defense, I am looking forward to future work with him, and wish him many great (but safe!) motorbike rides.

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