Spoken Dialogue Architectures in the US DARPA Communicator Program

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The Communicator Program of the United States Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency is a research program dedicated to the exploration of technologies for spoken dialogue between humans and computers. It has adopted an architecture, the MIT Galaxy System, as the reference architecture for participants in the program. The program has established a policy committee in order to oversee the evolution of the architecture and its movement toward eventual transition into industry. Such processes are not without controversy in any diverse community of researchers. On the other hand, it is seen as essential to not only lower the bar for entry into dialogue research and its evaluation but also an essential step toward setting standards that will be necessary in the transition of the technology to industry. Several models are being explored for industrial participation in a DARPA consortium for the development of a standard dialogue reference architecture.