WaveSurfer and SpeechMark Configuration Files

Using WaveSurfer Configuration Files

WaveSurfer makes use of text configuration files to allow the user to specify and automatically set up and reuse specific configurations of panes for purposes of speech analysis, recording, labeling, and so forth. WaveSurfer comes with a handful of predefined configurations, and users can easily define and use their own custom configurations.

Once a user has established a set of panes (and other operational characteristics) that they would like to name and be able to reuse later, they can create a new configuration by simply right clicking in a WaveSurfer pane to call up a context menu, and selecting ***Save Configuration…*** from that menu. This selection initiates a process that results in configuration information being saved for all of the currently open panes. Once a configuration file has been created or updated, it can be recalled by right clicking in a WaveSurfer pane to bring up its context menu, and selecting ***Apply Configuration…*** from that menu.

The information about a pane that is stored in a configuration file differs from pane to pane, but always includes at least the size and basic visual appearance of the pane. Configuration files reside in the ~/.wavesurfer/<version>/configurations/ folder. Because configuration files are text files, it is possible with a bit of inspection and experimentation to edit them by hand.

Warning—Configuration Files May Constitute a Security Risk

Configuration files are text files. In particular, they contain Tcl code. (WaveSurfer is written in Tcl.) Configuration files can be edited manually. When the **Apply Configuration…** command is executed, the selected configuration file is opened, and its Tcl code is executed. This situation constitutes a classic security risk. We have not investigated the degree of risk represented by WaveSurfer configuration files, and it may be minimal, but users are advised to proceed with caution.

Setting the Default Configuration

The default configuration to be used when WaveSurfer is launched can be specified by clicking on the **File** menu, selecting **Preferences…**, clicking on the **Misc** tab, and selecting one of the known configurations from the "Default Configuration" drop-down list.

Command Line Options

When WaveSurfer is launched from the command line, the command line switch "-config" can be included to specify that a particular configuration should be applied as WaveSurfer is initialized. For example:

C:> wavesurfer.exe -config my_config …

means that WaveSurfer should search for and apply the "my_config.conf" file, rather than asking the user which configuration to use. WaveSurfer uses the first matching configuration. If no available configuration file has the specified name, a wavebar will be displayed.

Configuring the SpeechMark Plugin

All of the SpeechMark characteristics that can be configured by right clicking in a landmark pane and selecting "Landmark Configuration…" will be saved in any configuration file that is subsequently created or updated while the landmark pane is open. These characteristics include:

- The landmark pane height and position;
- Landmark text properties: size and color;
- Landmark "flagpole" properties: height (expressed as a percentage of pane height), orientation (above or below pane centerline), pole color, width, and style (solid, dashed, etc.)