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Press Release

automatica 2018 – Service Robotics

Robotics is breaking through into multiple service industries

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Robots are moving into the service industries, working collaboratively with people and with each other in logistics, agriculture, medicine, retail, hospitality and more. In Munich, from 19 to 22 June, 2018, [automatica](http://automatica.com) will show why the automation industry is getting excited about new developments in service robotics, how these robots are seeing strong growth and are even emerging within some unexpected areas.

World-renowned Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli had some serious competition for star billing last month, when [ABB's YuMi](http://www.abb.com/robotics/yumi) robot joined him on the stage of Pisa's packed Teatro Verdi to conduct the Lucca Philharmonic Orchestra. "Tonight we're truly writing history and we're writing the future of robotics applications," said ABB CEO, Ulrich Spiesshofer. "YuMi demonstrates how intuitive, how self-learning this machine is, and how quickly such technology can be installed; a robot has learnt to conduct an orchestra in just a couple of days."

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It's an achievement that showcases the advances made in reducing the engineering effort needed to teach a robot what to do and to enable the technology to fit well with existing teams, warehouses and, now, even an orchestra. These are key elements in bringing service robotics technology into the world of logistics, which forms the biggest growth area in the sector and accounts for more than half the overall market. [International Federation of Robotics](#) (IFR) figures indicate that 2016 sales in logistics saw an increase of more than 30% over the preceding year.

Service robotics solutions further rationalise logistic processes

In logistics, an irresistible confluence of rising customer expectations and lack of labour is leading companies to investigate alternative solutions, including automated goods-to-person picking technologies. But it's the work in progress on combining mobile robots and picking arms that is potentially revolutionary, a possible solution to the problem of scaling the technology for small and medium-sized businesses. Advances in semantic mapping are enhancing robot performance in active object search and even in the complex task of shelf-filling, the objective of the EU-funded [REFILLS](#) project (with partners including , dm-drogerie markt, Intel, [KUKA](#) and [Swisslog](#)).

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Boosting healthcare and providing for sustainable agriculture

The most valuable service robots reside in the medical domain and the market is expected to increase by 25% per year on average over the next four years, according to the [IFR](#). Service robots are most commonly used in surgical applications, but it's in logistics that experts believe they may have the greatest potential: reducing running costs in an average hospital by up to a fifth. Straddling the healthcare and logistics sectors, the EU-funded [ROPOD project](#) is working to overcome cost and legacy considerations in care facilities, developing smart, human-friendly automated vehicles.

Exoskeletons are also seeing strong growth. These robot suits enable industrial workers to stay fit and healthy for longer – up to retirement – and provide ergonomic support for heavy manual labour. Forerunners in this area include Swiss startup [Noonee](#), [Laevo](#) and the EU-funded [SPEXOR](#) and [Robo-Mate](#) projects.

In agriculture, robots are being designed to work collaboratively, in concert, to improve yield in a sustainable way. Automation of farming and livestock breeding is increasing and application-orientated projects such as [MARS](#) (Mobile Agricultural Robot Swarms) have been busy building small, smart UGVs (Unmanned Ground Vehicles) that reduce soil compaction and

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energy consumption and lower the amount of seeds, fertilizer and pesticides needed. Another EU-funded project, [SAGA](#), is developing drones packed with sensors, to help farmers make more informed decisions and enable precision farming.

Orchestrating an opportunity for Europe

“Service robots have emerged from academic seclusion and the result is a host of market-ready products and solutions for end users to explore, with the promise of tangible and compelling benefits to positively impact on business,” Klaus Kluger, General Manager Central Region, [Omron Electronics GmbH](#), stated. Europe dominates this field, affording opportunity for investment but also the need to ensure systems’ interoperability and effectiveness.

In 2016, the number of professional service robotics sold grew by 24%, according to the IFR. In 2017, sales forecasts are upwards of 17%, with 20-25% expected for 2018-2020. The sales value of professional service robots worldwide was USD 4.67bn in 2016. Strong growth opens the door to the development of a host of enabling technologies, including software solutions, the current goal of the EU-funded [RobMoSys](#) project. It also throws into sharp focus the need for effective human-robot interaction, particularly as service robots for personal and domestic use gain popularity.

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More than 42 million consumer robots are expected to enter our homes before the end of the decade, according to IFR estimates. “Future product visions point to domestic robots of higher sophistication, capability and value,” says Martin Haegele, Head of Robot and Assistive Systems at [Fraunhofer IPA](#).

The dedicated service robotics area at [automatica](#) 2018 will present the very latest developments within the professional sphere. From hospitality robots — increasingly adopted by retailers and museums as information-providers — to the robotics shaping digitally stitched-together supply chains and distribution centres, the exhibition will showcase the most up-to-date automation for the service industries of the very near future.

[Video: automatica – Medical Robotics](#)
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About automatica

automatica is an international trade fair for robotics and automation and the central meeting point for manufacturers and users of integrated assembly solutions, robotics, industrial machine vision and professional service robotics. With the Trend-setting topics digital transformation in manufacturing, human-robot collaboration and service robotics, automatica makes an important contribution to designing Work 4.0 at places where people bear more responsibility than ever before. At the last event in 2016, a total of 833 exhibitors from 47 countries presented their products and solutions; 43.052 visitors from some 100 countries came to the Munich trade fair. Messe München GmbH and VDMA Robotics + Automation, conceptual sponsor of the trade fair, are behind the industry-driven concept of automatica. automatica takes place every two years. The next fair will be in Munich on June 19 to 22, 2018.

Messe München

Messe München is one of the leading exhibition organizers worldwide with more than 50 of its own trade shows for capital goods, consumer goods and new technologies. Every year, a total of over 50,000 exhibitors and around three million visitors take part in more than 200 events at the exhibition center in Munich, at the ICM – Internationales Congress Center München and the MOC Veranstaltungszentrum München as well as abroad. Together with its subsidiary companies, Messe München organizes trade shows in China, India, Brazil, Russia, Turkey, South Africa, Nigeria, Vietnam and Iran. With a network of associated companies in Europe, Asia, Africa and South America as well as around 70 representations abroad for over 100 countries, Messe München has a global presence.

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