

Munich, 29 March 2022

Press Release

automatica: how humans and machines will learn to better understand one another

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Cobots and no-code: robotics for all

- **Wide range of collaborative robots**
- **Newcomers and start-ups present their cobots at automatica**
- **No-code for low-threshold entry into robotics**

With just under three months to go until automatica, which will be held on the grounds of Messe München from June 21 to 24, one thing is for sure: Never before has there been such a wide range of collaborative robots as this year. And: they are easier to operate than ever. The latter also applies to industrial robots. No-code robotics enable an almost playful approach to robots in this context.

This and many other developments pursue a common goal: the democratization of robotics. In the future, anyone should be able to operate robots without special skills. In cobots, this has already been implemented with simple programming options. And the straightforward integration and operation of these devices are key reasons for their popularity.

The market for this species is currently seeing considerable growth. By its own account, industry leader Universal Robots already deploys more than 50,000 cobots in all kinds of applications. In an interview with Handelsblatt, Kim Povlsen, Managing Director of the Danish company, put the sales potential for cobots at around nine million units and sees the industry on a trajectory to billions of Euros in turnover.

Not all cobots are created equal

So it comes as no surprise that many manufacturers are currently discovering their love for cobots. While some qualify their standard robots for direct human-

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robot interaction by integrating numerous safety features, others focus on the development of special lightweight robots.

Visitors to automatica in Munich can see the advantages and disadvantages of both worlds for themselves. However, the hype is clearly on lightweight cobots. Here, competition between established manufacturers and start-ups leads to unprecedented dynamics.

Fanuc: targeting market leadership

Fanuc presents three new cobot models characterized by their lightweight design and intuitive drag-and-drop programming, which are likely to generate particular interest among first-time users. In order to meet increasing demand, Fanuc is going beyond just ramping up production capacity. Shinichi Tanzawa, CEO of Fanuc Europe, is pursuing another goal: “We want to become the undisputed market leader for cobots in Europe.”

It remains to be seen what other market players think of this idea. Kuka, at any rate, entirely focuses on innovation and, with the LBR iiwa, presents a cobot that is expected to set operational benchmarks thanks to its brand-new operating system. Kuka’s promise: set it up, switch it on, get started.

ABB makes similar promises. The new GoFa and SWIFTI cobot families are also supposed to be particularly easy to operate while featuring high payloads and speeds. “Our new cobot portfolio is the most versatile one on the market”, says Sami Atiya, Head of ABB Robotics and Discrete Automation Business Division.

And Yaskawa? The Japanese manufacturer will present its HC DTP cobot series at automatica under the slogan Easy – Smart – Fenceless. With the new Yaskawa ecosystem, the company offers a variety of proven supplied and in-house plug-and-play products that enable its customers to design their own modular cobot cell.

Newcomers and lots of start-ups

Those who may think that only the large industrial robot manufacturers are capable of designing cobots will be proven wrong at automatica. The number of new manufacturers that are young or hail from other industries is growing exponentially – and the speed of innovation in the shape of various cobot variants for all kinds of applications is picking up accordingly.

For example, igus, previously best known as a manufacturer of energy-conducting chains, will be exhibiting the attractively priced ReBeL plastic cobot, which weighs around ten kilograms and reduces entry barriers to a minimum. Hence, this machine will predominantly be used in simple applications where the use of robotics used to be unprofitable. Neura Robotics, among others, operates at the other end of the range. With the Lara and Maira cobots, the Swabians present sophisticated production assistants with a clean design, voice recognition, and outstanding performance.

Between low-cost and high-end, manufacturers from all over the world, including Comau, Denso, Doosan, Franka Emika, Kassow, Omron, Rethink, Stäubli, Techman, and many more, will present cobot solutions for all kinds of applications. And last but not least: Germany's most valuable robotics start-up Agile Robots will also be exhibiting at automatica. The latest developments of this company are highly anticipated – not just by major investors.

No-code: low-threshold entry into robotics

Programming for traditional industrial robots is also on the verge of a small revolution. Wherever applications allow it, new methods will replace traditional high-level language programming in the future. The purpose of this is not just to provide newcomers with a low-threshold entry into robotics. This is more about no-code robotics' potential to reduce programming time by a factor of – believe it or not – 70 in many applications.

At least that's what the young company Wandelbots is promising. With its pen-based programming, the start up from Dresden is turning the world of programming upside down. For example, to program a welding path, the user simply

draws it with the so-called TracePen. Anyone can do it and it's breathtakingly fast. It also saves costly programming time. An extraordinary innovation that the automatica audience will get to see.

Epson, like many other robot manufacturers, will come to Munich to present a no-code programming environment for robotics beginners with little or no expertise. It enables quick and easy operation of the manufacturer's four-axis robots.

One Horst fits all

Fruitcore Robotics is taking another interesting approach by tailoring robot programming to different levels of user capability. The Constance-based company now offers four software packages for its Horst robots: Starter, Professional, Digital, and Premium. Users can simply book a different package as requirements change. This maximizes flexibility and ensures that future needs will be met.

The exhibits at automatica clearly show: Humans are finally becoming the focus of developments. And the current state of advancement suggests that robots will soon be as easy to operate as a smartphone.

Further information on automatica is available online: <https://automatica-munich.com/en/>

About automatica

automatica is the world's leading marketplace for automated smart production. It is the trend setting event for companies from all industry sectors, providing access to innovations, knowledge, and trends with a high degree of business relevance. automatica focuses and shapes the transformation of industrial production – from automated to autonomous facilities. Messe München GmbH and VDMA Robotics + Automation, conceptual sponsor of the trade fair, are behind the industry-driven concept of automatica.

Messe München

With a stable of more than 50 trade fairs for capital goods, consumer goods and new technologies at its Munich site and abroad, Messe München is one of the world's leading trade fair organizers.

Every year around 50,000 exhibitors and around three million visitors take part in the events at the Munich exhibition site, in the ICM – Internationales Congress Center München, in the Conference Center Nord and MOC Veranstaltungszentrum München, as well as abroad.

Messe München also organizes trade fairs in China, India, Brazil, Russia, South Africa, Turkey, and Vietnam in cooperation with its subsidiaries. With a network of affiliated

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companies in Europe, Asia, and South America as well as more than 70 foreign agencies for more than 100 countries, Messe München has a global presence.