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ABB and Kawasaki announce collaborative robot automation cooperation

World’s first collaboration that focuses on “cobots” and creation of common industry approaches to safety, programming and communications



ABB and Kawasaki Heavy Industries, two global industrial automation and robot suppliers, announced today that the companies will join forces to share knowledge and promote the benefits of collaborative robots, in particular those with dual arm designs. The global cooperation will become effective immediately.

Under the new cooperation, which is the world’s first to focus on ‘cobots,’ both robot makers will continue independently manufacturing and marketing their own offerings while working together on joint technical and awareness opportunities. This includes educating policy makers, NGOs and the general public about the benefits of collaborative automation, and creating common industry approaches to safety, programming and communications.

Collaboration between people and robots, machines and processes is increasingly important as production in many industries has shifted from larger lots with little variation to low volumes with a high mix. This means more variability and more human intervention. Collaborative automation allows people and robots to each contribute their unique strengths - people offer process knowledge, insight and improvisation for change, while robots offer tireless endurance for repetitive tasks.

The cooperation also represents collaboration across borders, with ABB as Europe’s largest robot supplier and Kawasaki one of Asia’s industrial giants. “The scale and pace of change in the robotics industry today is unimaginable,” said Per Vegard Nersest, Managing Director of ABB’s Robotics business. “Beyond the technologies behind collaborative automation, there is also a need for innovative new ways of working together and creating common industry approaches to safety, programming and communications.”

“Collaborative robots, especially those with two arms capable of human interactions, can greatly contribute to society and help the world cope with labor shortages and an aging workforce. We see high potential in

expanding collaborative applications and processes where people and technology work together to create solutions,” said Yasuhiko Hashimoto, Managing Executive Officer and General Manager, Kawasaki Robot Division. “I’m very pleased that ABB and Kawasaki are joining forces to lead the drive for more user-friendly, advanced collaborative automation.”

ABB is recognized as a pioneer in collaborative automation through its YuMi dual arm robot, the world’s first truly collaborative robot. The YuMi robot makes it possible for people and robots to safely share common tasks such as assembling small electronics.

Kawasaki is offering a very unique and innovative Dual-Arm SCARA Robot “duAro”, which has been developed based on extensive application know-how and which can safely collaborate with humans in the workplace.

The first output from this cooperation will be a collaborative dual arm robot demonstration in Booth IR3-56, IR5-22 and SR-82 at IREX, to be held in Tokyo, Japan from November 29 to December 2, 2017.

ABB (ABN: SIX Swiss Ex) is a pioneering technology leader in electrification products, robotics and motion, industrial automation and power grids, serving customers in utilities, industry and transport & infra-structure globally. Continuing a more than 125-year history of innovation, ABB today is writing the future of industrial digitalization and driving the Energy and Fourth Industrial Revolutions. ABB operates in more than 100 countries with about 136,000 employees. www.abb.com

ABB Robotics is a pioneer in industrial and collaborative robots and advanced digital services. As one of the world’s leading robotics suppliers, we are active in 53 countries and over 100 locations and have shipped over 300,000 robot solutions in a diverse range of industries and applications. We help our customers to improve flexibility, efficiency, safety and reliability, while moving towards the connected and collaborative factory of the future. www.abb.com/robotics

Kawasaki was founded more than 120 years ago and has been developing globally while producing revolutionary products by working together to ensure technology synergies across its different divisions.

Kawasaki is now recognized as a global leader in diverse industries in wide ranging fields going beyond land, sea and air, offering state-of-the-art technologies for environmental and energy infrastructure, machinery and robotics, and various types of transportation in marine, railway and aerospace to a leisure vehicles as motorcycles and personal watercraft in global basis with about 35,200 employees. www.global.kawasaki.com

Kawasaki Robotics is a leading supplier of industrial robots and robot automation systems with a broad product portfolio having shipped 170,000 robots in about 50 countries. As a pioneer in Japan, Kawasaki celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2017. As one of the world’s leading robotics suppliers, we are now transforming ourselves from an industrial to a fully integrated robot supplier. Kawasaki is a solution provider having deep application know-how through diverse business and products on land, sea and air. www.robotics.kawasaki.com

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