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Microsoft Robotics Studio Now Available to Provide Common Development Platform

More than 30 vendors offer support for creating broad range of innovative robotics applications.

REDMOND, Wash. — Dec. 12, 2006 — Among the many remarkable innovations emerging out of the robotics industry, from surveillance robots that can defuse roadside bombs to robotic arms that perform surgeries, one persistent challenge has been the lack of a common development platform that would allow developers to easily create robotic applications for varied hardware platforms. Today, Microsoft Corp. is closing this gap with the release of Microsoft® Robotics Studio, a new Windows®-based development environment for creating robotic software for a wide variety of hardware platforms. Microsoft also introduced a new third-party partner program featuring Microsoft Robotics Studio-enabled applications, services and robots from independent software vendors, service providers, hardware component vendors and robot manufacturers. Already more than 30 third-party companies have pledged support for the new robotics development and runtime platform, which is available for download and evaluation at <http://microsoft.com/robotics>.

“Microsoft will help us extend the reach of the iRobot Roomba Open Interface to a broader community of developers,” said Helen Greiner, co-founder and chairwoman of iRobot. “A common development platform like Microsoft Robotics Studio will help ignite the robotics industry and encourage more developers to design new robot applications.”

The Microsoft Robotics Studio environment is an end-to-end, scalable and extensible robotics development platform that includes the following:

- A visual programming language that enables nonprogrammers to easily program robots using a drag-and-drop environment
- A 3-D tool that simulates robotics applications in physics-based virtual environments, using the licensed PhysX™ engine from AGEIA™ Technologies Inc.
- A lightweight, services-oriented runtime that enables applications to communicate with a wide variety of hardware

“Microsoft Robotics Studio is our response to requests from many hobbyist, academic and commercial robotics developers,” said Tandy Trower, general manager of the Microsoft Robotics Group. “We have quickly built a strong community with over 100,000 downloads of our preview releases, and we are excited to see the breadth of partner support across a wide variety of hardware platforms.”

With Microsoft Robotics Studio, robotics applications can be developed using a selection of programming languages, including those in Microsoft Visual Studio® and Microsoft Visual Studio Express languages (Visual C#® and Visual Basic®), which are free to download, as well as Microsoft IronPython. Third-party languages that support the Microsoft Robotics Studio services-based architecture are also supported.

For hobbyists, students and academics, Microsoft Robotics Studio is available to license free of charge. Commercial robot developers interested in generating revenue from applications, services and robots based on Microsoft Robotics Studio can license the development platform starting at \$399. Full licensing details are available at the Microsoft Robotics Studio Web site.

Robotics Industry Shows Broad Support for Microsoft Robotics Studio

Microsoft Robotics Studio is now compatible with applications, services and robots from the following companies: Camelot Robotics ApS, CoroWare Inc., ED Co. Ltd., fischertechnik,

iRobot, KUKA Robot Group, the LEGO Group, Lynxmotion Inc., Parallax Inc., Phidgets Inc., RoboDynamics Corp., Robosoft, RoboticsConnection, Senseta, Sharp Logic and WhiteBox Robotics Inc. In addition, many leading companies from around the world have joined the Microsoft Robotics Studio Partner Program with plans to ship compatible applications, services and robots in the future. They include Braintech Inc., Cerebellum, Graupner, Hanulkid Co. Ltd., InTouch Health, JADI Inc., Larsen & Toubro InfoTech Ltd., LG CNS, MicroInfinity, Mostitech Inc., RE2 Inc., RidgeSoft LLC, Robo3, SRI, Surveyor, VIA Technologies Inc. and Yujin Robot.

Microsoft also continues to work closely with many top universities and research institutions in the area of robotics, such as the Institute for Personal Robots in Education (<http://roboteducation.org>) hosted at Georgia Tech with Bryn Mawr College, and the Center for Innovative Robotics (<http://www.cir.ri.cmu.edu>) hosted at Carnegie Mellon University.

“We hope to put a robot in every home in Korea by 2013,” said Dr. Ho-Gil Lee, director of the Korea Institute of Industrial Technology (KITECH). “We welcome the advanced technologies of Microsoft Robotics Studio to our rapidly growing, emerging robotics industry, as it will help us get to this level of competitiveness in the decades ahead.”

Microsoft Supports RoboCup 2007

Furthering its support for innovation in robotics, the Microsoft Robotics Group is a primary sponsor of RoboCup 2007. The ultimate goal of this leading international robotics competition is to develop a team of fully autonomous, humanoid robots that can defeat the human world champion team in soccer by the year 2050. At the RoboCup 2007 competition, set for July 1 through July 10 on the Georgia Tech campus in Atlanta, contestants will participate in a demonstration soccer competition using Microsoft Robotics Studio. In addition, Microsoft hopes to work with the

many robot manufacturers that are drawn to the RoboCup competition. More information can be found at <http://www.robocup-us.org>.

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