

ROBOTS 11
17th INTERNATIONAL
SYMPOSIUM ON INDUSTRIAL
ROBOTS

Conference Proceedings

April 26-30, 1987
Chicago, Illinois

Sponsored by:



Society of Manufacturing Engineers
Robotics International of SME
One SME Drive
P.O. Box 930
Dearborn, Michigan 48121

ROBOTS II

17th INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON INDUSTRIAL ROBOTS

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

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Society of Manufacturing Engineers
Dearborn, Michigan

First Printing

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Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 87-060244
International Standard Book Number: 0-87263-273-3
Manufactured in the United States of America

PREFACE

As we move through the 80s, we are becoming increasingly aware that "systems" are where our future lies. And it is more obvious as we tackle assembly systems that "solutions" are a scarce commodity. The manufacturing industries of the world are driving automation systems into assembly areas of their factories. In search of solutions to the problems of assembly automation, we must turn to robotics. Therefore, we have set for our theme of ROBOTS 11, "Systems and Solutions."

Because this is not a unique problem to any one country in the world, it is most fitting that RI/SME is hosting the International Federation of Robotics 17th International Symposium on Industrial Robots in conjunction with ROBOTS 11.

Our search for systems and solutions must be on a global basis. We have made an effort to present a conference and exposition that addresses the problems of the 80s and 90s. The dedication and hard work of those you see, and those you do not see, are the elements that make this event a success. The many contributors to this conference and exposition have addressed solutions from around the world. The IFR National Coordinators are taking an active role in ROBOTS 11. You will see them as honorary chairs of many of the sessions. They have contributed papers to many of the technical sessions and are here to present those papers. Eight of the National Coordinators will give overviews of the State of the Robotics Industry in their countries during the Plenary Session.

It is what you, the attendees, take away from this event that really matters; what you put to use in your workplace in your country is what really counts. You would not have come if you were not searching for solutions to your problems. I urge you to participate fully in the Conference and Exposition. Take an active role in your attendance. Ask questions, request clarifications, build networks with the presenters and attendees. Regardless of the country, industry or language, our problems are truly common. Your thirst for knowledge will never be fully satisfied but a deep drink from the fountain of ROBOTS 11 will be most satisfying for now and you will know where the oases are for future knowledge.

Welcome to the conference and show. I and all who have worked the past 12 months to put on ROBOTS 11 thank you for taking the time and effort to attend. You are the people who make all our work worthwhile.

Paul A. Misegades
Conference Chair
ROBOTS 11/17th ISIR

about RI/SME

A member organization founded in 1980, Robotics International of SME is both applications and research-oriented—covering all phases of research, design, installation, operation and maintenance of industrial robots. In addition, RI/SME serves as a liaison between industry, government and education to determine areas where technological development is needed. RI/SME is the vital link in the chain that connects the individual to the many aspects of robotic-oriented manufacturing.

Members of RI/SME are involved in any of these three categories:

- Planning, selecting and applying robots.
- Research and development leading to the creation or improvement of robots.
- Other creative robotic activities in administration, education or government.

The members of RI/SME update their knowledge and skills through educational programs, chapter meetings, conferences, expositions and publications including *Robotics Today*.

The largest American scientific and educational association exploring the expanding use of robots, RI/SME is an official association of the Society of Manufacturing Engineers and is headquartered in Dearborn, Michigan. RI/SME addresses the informational needs of the engineer involved in the application of robots and provides a forum for discussion among concerned individuals. It is, in a very real sense, industry's partner and a major force in an engineer's professional advancement.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTERS

REMOTE SYSTEMS APPLICATIONS

1	Autonomous Vehicle Development at the Savannah River Laboratory <i>J.J. Fisher, J.S. Byrd, T.P. Martin</i> E.I. du Pont de Nemours & Company	1-1
	The Skywasher: A Building Washing Robot <i>Patrice Kroczyński, Brian Wade</i> International Robotic Technologies, Incorporated	1-11
	A Flexible, Computer-Integrated Robotic Transfer System <i>W. Ivan Lewis, III, R. Montgomery Taylor</i> E.I. DuPont, Savannah River Laboratory	1-28
	Kinematic Redundancy—Key to Dexterous Manipulation in Confined Environments <i>H. Lee Martin, Paul E. Satterlee, Jr.</i> TeleRobotics International, Incorporated	1-37
	Robotic Solutions in the Nuclear and Mining Industries <i>Peter Pickerill</i> Spar Aerospace Limited	1-47
	Design, Construction and Testing of an Anthropomorphic Robot <i>J.A. Yount, D.W. Bennett</i> Pacific Northwest Laboratory	1-77

SENSOR SYSTEMS

2	A Three-Dimensional Fiber Optical Proximity Sensor System <i>Lennart Damm</i> Chalmers University of Technology	2-1
	The Robotic Applications Development Laboratory <i>Kenneth P. Demers</i> Adaptive Automation, Incorporated	2-19
	Signature Analysis of Robotic Assembly Forces—A Flexible Sensor System <i>David M. Fullmer</i> Xerox Corporation	2-39

Evaluation of Voice Input/Output Systems as Viable Tools within the Production Environment

Christopher T. Irwin
Lord Corporation 2-67

A Pose Measurement Sensor

Michael Tucker
FASTMAN Incorporated

N. Duke Perreira
The Robotics Institute, Lehigh University

David H. Nyman
Westinghouse Hanford Company 2-83

Deblurring the Uniform Notion Degraded Picture

Li Yunming, Zhu Weidong
China Textile University 2-99

MANAGEMENT ISSUES

3 Transformation of Direction—Corporate Support or Advanced Manufacturing Activities

Richard W. Hammond, Aldis J. Liubinskas
Borg-Warner Automotive 3-1

Justifying Flexible Automation: A System Value Model

Joel W. Troxler
Utah State University

Leland Blank
Texas A & M University 3-9

Flexible Automation Implementation in Europe, Australia, Japan, and North America

Murray D. Wikol
GMF Robotics Corporation 3-39

ELECTRONIC ASSEMBLY

4 Data Driven Robot Based Surface Mount Module Production

Sal D'Agostino, Ron McCleary
UAS Automation Systems, Incorporated 4-1

A Precision Vision-Aided Dispensing System for Circuit Boards

Andrew V. Fisher
Texas Instruments 4-19

Robotic Assembly for Printed Circuit Boards

John Garin, Tracey Stiles
GMF Robotics Corporation 4-33

Precision Automated Assembly in a Clean Room Environment <i>Jonathan M. Rourke, Donald S. Seltzer, Thomas M. Stepien</i> The Charles Stark Draper Laboratory, Incorporated	4-49
The Design of a Clean Room Robot for Wafer Handling <i>Craig L. Stevens</i> Watkins-Johnson Company	4-59
Research and Construction of Flexible Robotized Assembly Lines <i>Daniele Fabrizi</i> Pavia University	4-91
Design and Test of a Robot for Class 10 Clean Rooms <i>Dr. Tom Papanek</i> Adept Technology	4-101

CONTROL SYSTEMS I

5 Robot Accuracy Issues and Methods of Improvement <i>Dr. Chia P. Day</i> GMF Robotics Corporation	5-1
Six-Axes Digital Torque Servo for Robotics <i>Eimei M. Onaga, Lane L. Woodland</i> Unimåtion Incorporated	5-25
Interpolative Digital-to-Analog Conversion for High-Resolution Positioning of D.C. Driven Motion Axes <i>Dr. Emil Petriu</i> University of Ottawa	5-37
A General Purpose Numerical Calculation Engine for Dynamic Motion Control and Simulation in Manipulators <i>Nobuaki Takarashi</i> C&C Systems Research Laboratories, NEC Corporation	5-45

CONTROL SYSTEMS II

6 Control of an Industrial Robot with Nontactile Slip Sensor Using Auto Correlation Processed Laser Scattering Signal <i>Fumio Matsuda, Hiroshi Morimoto, Hideo Kitagawa, Shuzou Hattori, Minoru Ueda</i> Nagoya University	6-1
High-Level Design of a Spray Finishing Robot Controller <i>Theodore A. Nesse</i> The DeVilbiss Company <i>Kang G. Shin</i> University of Michigan	6-15

A Distributed Knowledge-Based System for Robotics <i>Irene Mina</i> Ume Corporation	6-31
Screw/Line Transforms for the Rapid Determination of Jacobians <i>Roger C. La Brooy</i> Chisholm Institute of Technology	6-55

MECHANICAL ASSEMBLY

7 Robotic Applications in the Assembly of Automotive Engines <i>Kalyan Ghosh</i> University of Quebec at Trois-Rivieres <i>Anthony Caracciolo, Jr., Walter Cwycyshyn</i> General Motors Corporation	7-1
Refrigerator Case Pre-Foam Assembly Cell <i>James P. Jackson</i> General Electric Company	7-15
The Architecture of a Small Automated Assembly Line <i>Theodore W. Leverett</i> IBM Corporation	7-25
Robotics: A Flexible Alternative to Electronic Assembly <i>Michael R. Oquist</i> Control Data Corporation	7-39
Nontactile Range Cavity Measurement System <i>Thomas M. Williams</i> General Electric Company	7-49

MANIPULATOR DESIGN

8 Design of a Fully Programmable Electric Servo Robot Gripper <i>Mark Kempf, Chi-Haur Wu</i> Northwestern University	8-1
The Design and Development of a General Purpose Gripper <i>E. R. Snow</i> Jet Propulsion Laboratory <i>M. C. Leu</i> Cornell University	8-23
Operating Barriers within the Workspaces of Manipulators <i>Kenneth J. Waldron</i> Ohio State University	8-35

HUMAN FACTORS AND SAFETY

9	A Cause-and-Effect Analysis of Industrial Robot Accidents from Four Countries	
	<i>Charles A. Gainer, Jr.</i> 3M Corporation	
	<i>Bernard C. Jiang</i> Auburn University	9-1
	Toward Development of Inherently Safe Robots	
	<i>James H. Graham</i> University of Louisville	
	<i>Donald L. Millard</i> Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute	9-11
	Animate Sensing for Industrial Automation Safety	
	<i>Don Lewis Millard</i> RPI-Center for Manufacturing Productivity and Technology Transfer	9-23

STUDENT PAPERS

10	Robot Calibration and Performance Specification Determination	
	<i>Donald L. Riley</i> Washington State University	10-1
	A Distributed Flexible Assembly System	
	<i>L. Anderson, R. Bouchard, T. Enos, R. Giordano, P. Kennedy, S. Pfeffer, M. Tadros</i> Worcester Polytechnic Institute	10-19
	Control of Robot Manipulators	
	<i>Russell Benson</i> Washington State University	10-31
	The Integration of Visual and Tactile Sensing for the Definitions of Regions Within a Robot Workcell	
	<i>Edward C. De Meter, Michael P. Deisenroth</i> Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University	10-51
	Torque Optimization of Redundant Manipulators	
	<i>Ashok Nedungadi</i> University of Connecticut	10-65
	Optimizing the Impact of Robots on the Labor Force	
	<i>Mark Gerard Verschelden</i> Kansas State University	10-85

AEROSPACE APPLICATIONS

- 11** **Templateless Robotic Drilling of Complex Aerospace Assemblies**
Jeffrey A. Kartak
Lockheed-California Company 11-1
- Robots Refurbish Space Shuttle**
Gary Sweet, Leonard Hutto
United Technologies—USBI Booster Production Company, Incorporated 11-9
- Robotized Wire Harness Assembly System**
Camissa A. Gage, Virginia C. Thomas
The Boeing Company 11-29
- Aircraft Engine Maintenance: A Problem and Robotic Solution**
Philip MacBain, Ralph B. Stevens
Engineered Systems & Development Corporation 11-45

SEALING AND PAINTING APPLICATIONS

- 12** **Robot Requirements in Processing Applications**
David E. Suica
Cincinnati Milacron 12-1
- Implementing a Flexible Robotic Sealant System in the Appliance Industry**
Bill Wittner, Ronald Potter
Advanced Manufacturing Systems, Incorporated 12-13

MANIPULATOR TOOLING

- 13** **On an Algorithm Negotiating Wrist Singularities**
Bernard Huang, Veljko Milenkovic
Ford Motor Company 13-1
- Singularity-Free Hollow Spray Painting Wrist**
Mark E. Rosheim
Ross-Hime Designs 13-7
- New Nonsingular Robot Wrist Design**
Veljko Milenkovic
Ford Motor Company 13-29
- Checking a Gripper for Engineering Integrity**
Jon Hoshizaki
GMF Robotics Corporation 13-43

WELDING SYSTEMS

- 14** **Adaptive Robotic GTA Welding for the SSME: An Integrated System**
Karen E. Sliwinski, Corinne Clinton Ruokangas
Rocketdyne Division, Rockwell International 14-1
- A Seam Tracking System with a Visual Sensor**
Koichi Nishine, Akihira Nishikawa, Nobuyuki Otera, Toshihiko Nishimura, Satoru Taniguchi, Saburo Tsurutani
Kobe Steel, Limited 14-13
- Use of Robotic and Expert Systems in Welding Arc Applications**
Ernesto Di Chio
Universita' Di Bari 14-29
- Coordinated Motion of Industrial Robots and 2-DOF Orienting Tables**
John J. Craig
Silma, Incorporated 14-37

AUTOMOTIVE APPLICATIONS

- 15** **Corvette Uniframe Automation**
Peter J. Liccardello
General Motors Corporation 15-1
- Robotic Water Jet Cutting of Automotive Carpeting**
John A. Foster
Consultant 15-15
- Conference Reading: Robotic Cell**
K. Terry Jackson, Jr.
General Motors Corporation 15-21

MATERIAL HANDLING & SPECIAL APPLICATIONS

- 16** **Developing Robotic systems for the Laboratory Environment**
Ronald D. Jones, J.B. Cross, H.R. Pinnick, Jr.
Phillips Petroleum Company 16-1
- Overhead Vs. Floor Mount Robot Comparison**
Harry Smiles
Advanced Manufacturing Systems, Incorporated 16-17

KINEMATICS & MOBILE ROBOTS

- 17** **Robot Mobility: Which Direction and How Far?**
S. Y. Harmon
Robot Intelligence International 17-1
- Design of an Automatic Guided Vehicle**
Greg W. Lof, Pah I. Chen
Portland State University 17-13
- Repeatability Accuracy Analysis of Manipulators**
Huang Yuzhong, Hu Yufang
Shanghai Jiao Tong University 17-27
- Application of the Joint Excitation Gear Adjustment Technique to Low Frequencies and Heavy Robot Joints**
Nicholas G. Dagalakis, Donald R. Myers
National Bureau of Standards, Robot Systems Division 17-43
- Development of a Direct-Drive Manipulator for Automated Sewing System**
Tomoaki Yano, Tatsuo Arai, Tatsuya Nakamura, Eiji Nakano
Mechanical Engineering Laboratory, MITI
Ryoichi Hashimoto
Industrial Products Research Institute, MITI
Ichiro Takeyama, Syouji Sugioka
Kubota Limited
Jun-ichi Takahashi
Nissinbo Industry Co-operation 17-55
- Analysis and Evaluation of '3D Link' Mechanism for Clean Room Robot**
Katsuya Tomiyama
NEC Corporation 17-63

SPECIAL PURPOSES SOFTWARE

- 18** **On-Line Statistical Process Control**
Michael C. Barrett
IBM Corporation 18-1
- Multicircular Curvilinear Robot Path Generation**
Ming Loo, Veljko Milenkovic
Ford Motor Company 18-19
- An Improved Numerical Technique for the Control of the Tip Motion of One-Link Flexible Robot**
Dr. Eduardo Bayo
University of California 18-29
- AIM: A Task-Level Control System for Assembly**
Bruce E. Shimano, Clifford C. Geschke, Charles H. Spalding III, Ron Goldman, David W. Scarborough
Adept Technology, Incorporated 18-45

HAL, A Work Station Based Intelligent Robot Control Environment <i>Dr. Shahid Mujtaba, Dr. William D. Fisher</i> Hewlett-Packard	18-63
Knowledge-based Diagnosis for Robotic Workcells <i>Peiya Liu, Ming-Yee Chiu, Steven J. Clark, Cheoung N. Lee</i> Siemens Research and Technology Laboratories	18-81

GRINDING & DEBURRING

19 Force-Controlled Deburring Robots <i>Hisaaki Hirabayashi, Shin'ichi Ohwada, Isao Yoshida, Masao Miki</i> Hitachi, Limited	19-1
✓ Development of a Force and Monitoring Sensors for Deburring Robot <i>Akira Morikawa, Kouichi Nishine, Saburo Tsurutani</i> Kobe Steel, Limited	19-13
Metal Removal Models and Process Planning for Robot Grinding <i>Dr. Daniel E. Whitney, Matthew L. Brown</i> The Charles Stark Draper Laboratory, Incorporated	19-29
Cleaning Gray Iron Castings with Robot Controlled Plasma-Arc <i>J. Gerin Sylvia</i> University Rhode Island	19-45

MULTIROBOT SYSTEMS/NETWORKING

20 ✓ Distributed Robot System for Real Time Sensory Controlled Operation <i>Takaharu Matsumoto, Hajime Kuwahara</i> Yokogawa Electric Corporation	20-1
Retrofitting Today's Telecommunications into Existing Robot Controllers: A Case Study of MAP, SECS, and VAL-II <i>Graham G. Yarbrough, Francis H. Krout, Jr.</i> Unimation Incorporated	20-15
Motion Coordination of Two Industrial Robots and Their Controlling Computer System <i>Yuan F. Zheng, Pei J. Jia</i> Clemson University	20-45

OFFLINE PROGRAMMING

21 Offline Programming for Industrial Robots with CAD/CAM Assistance <i>Ron Speed</i> Cincinnati Milacron Incorporated	21-1
--	------

Application of Offline Programming <i>Clyde Jones</i> National Aeronautics & Space Administration	21-25
The Use of Computer Graphic Simulation in the Development of On-Orbit Tele-Robotic Systems <i>Ken Fernandez, Elaine Hinman</i> National Aeronautics & Space Administration	21-45
Flexible Manufacturing Cell Simulation <i>I. Imam, J.E. Davis, T.J. Fougere</i> General Electric Company	21-55
Programming and Simulation of Two Robot Arms on a Microcomputer <i>Ahmad Hemami</i> Concordia University	21-75
Workcell Simulation Case Study: A Spot Welding Application <i>Nathan A. Yoffa</i> Deneb Robotics, Incorporated	21-85
AUTHOR INDEX	22-1

CHAPTER 1

REMOTE SYSTEMS APPLICATIONS

Autonomous Vehicle Development at the Savannah River Laboratory

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Some process applications performed in the nuclear industry with remote teleoperated vehicles, and approaches of integrating intelligent mobile systems are described. A control hierarchy allows vehicles to autonomously navigate and perform simple tasks in known environments and knowledge-based expert systems are being evaluated to assist in navigation functions, to analyze sensory information, and to simplify operator control. Development work using two research vehicles are developed to demonstrate semi-autonomous operations in process areas. A description of the mechanical equipment, control systems, and operating modes of these vehicles is presented.

INTRODUCTION

Nuclear process operations provide many incentives for applying remote mobile robot technologies. Human operations in certain areas are restricted to short durations due to radiation levels. In addition, operating personnel may be required to wear nuclear contamination protective clothing, which limits their productivity. Traditionally, inspection and monitoring tasks in inaccessible areas (i.e., process rooms of operating reactors) have been difficult to perform, since operating personnel have only had access to fixed mounted cameras, viewing ports, or periscopes. Remote maintenance tasks can require costly process shutdowns before human intervention is allowed. Mobile vehicles provide solutions to many of these problems.

Currently, the nuclear industry is serving as a testing ground for mobile vehicle applications development [1]. White [2] describes a cylindrical, three-wheeled, teleoperated vehicle, which is being tested for inspection tasks in nuclear processes, such as looking and listening for leaks, checking valve positions, and performing radiation and contamination surveys. Whittaker [3] discusses the use of several remote teleoperated work vehicles to perform decontamination, material handling, and decommission work. These vehicles consist of rugged, stable platforms that support a variety of remote manipulators and tools.

Teleoperated mobile vehicles by their very nature have significant drawbacks. Since people are required to guide the vehicles to the worksites, sophisticated camera systems must be used to locate obstacles (i.e., narrow passages and overhead pipes) that might impede motion. When wall-mounted process cameras or windows are not present, human operators have difficulty keeping track of the vehicle position and orientation in the work area. Another drawback is that important sensory and