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Foreword

The 2001 IEEE International Conference on Robotics and Automation will be held in Seoul, the capital city of Korea. This is the fourth conference to be held outside the USA, and the second to be held in Asia. Seoul is the economic and cultural center of Korea, and offers a unique setting combining tradition and modernism for a conference on high technology.

We are witnessing the beginning of the new millennium, and the theme of this conference reflects the timely objective, "Frontiers of Robotics and Automation in the New Millennium". This conference will provide an opportunity to promote new emerging concepts in robotics and automation technology.

A record number of papers totaling over 1150 have been submitted to the program committee, by authors from more than 50 countries. Of these, 678 papers were selected for presentation at the conference. Geographically, the accepted papers come in roughly equal proportions from North America, Europe, and Asia.

The conference will be running in 13 parallel sessions with three plenary speeches and two panel discussions. The scope of the plenary speeches ranges from medical robotics and machine tool technologies to nano-robotics. We will also have panel discussions on manufacturing automation and rehabilitation robotic systems. We believe these topics will surely be critical issues for the future robotics community.

A number of special efforts were made in the preparation of this conference. For the first time in the history of this conference, an on-line electronic system was used to handle paper submissions, reviews, and registration. This contributed greatly in eliminating paperwork and communication delays. The conference will be held at the same time with KOFA2001, a full-scale annual exhibition on factory automation. A series of workshops and symposiums related to robotics and automation were also scheduled around the conference dates, to enable participants to attend more than one meeting while attending ICRA2001. Special sessions on Korean industrial automation have been scheduled during the conference in order to provide an opportunity for visitors to become acquainted with the local robotics and automation activities. These special sessions will focus on technology developments in automation of the automobile industry, semiconductor industry, and steel industry in Korea.

We are very grateful for all the hard work of many people and would like to express the deepest thanks to all the supporting organizations.

All the best,



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CONTENTS

SESSION : WA01

Motion Planning

Planning Motion Patterns of Human Figures Using a Multi-layered Grid and the Dynamics Filter	1
Shiller, Zvi and Yamane, Katsu and Nakamura, Yoshiniko	
Extending Procedural Reasoning toward Robot Actions Planning	9
Ingrand, Felix F. and Despotys, Olivier	
Let's reduce the Gap between Task Planning and Motion Planning	15
Guere, Emmanuel and Alami, Rachid	
An Adaptive Framework for 'Single Shot' Motion Planning: A Self-tuning System for Rigid and Articulated Robots	21
Vallejo, Daniel and Remmler, Ian and Amato, Nancy M.	
Optimal Line-sweep-based Decompositions for Coverage Algorithms	27
Huang, Wesley H.	
Global Nearness Diagram Navigation (GND)	33
Minguez, Javier and Montano, Luis and Simcon, Thierry and Alami, Rachid	

SESSION : WA02

Petri Nets and Related Methods in Agile Automation

Combining Fault Detection and Process Optimization in Manufacturing Systems Using First-order Hybrid Petri Nets	40
Balduzzi, Fabio and Di Febraro, Angela	
A Petri Net Graphic Method of Reduction Using Birth-death Processes	46
Zemouri, Ryad A and Raccanu, Daniel I and Zerhouni, Noureddine	
Modeling and Analysis of Semiconductor Manufacturing Systems with Degraded Behaviors Using Petri Nets and Siphons	52
Jeng, MuDer and Xie, Xiaolan	
Developing Software Controllers with Petri Nets and a Logic of Actions	58
Simon, Carlo	
Resource-oriented Petri Nets in Deadlock Avoidance of AGV Systems	64
Wu, Naiqi and Zhou, MengChu	
Algebraic Deadlock Avoidance Policies for Conjunctive / Disjunctive Resource Allocation Systems	70
Park, Jonghun and Reveliotis, Spyros A.	

SESSION : WA03

Control for Dextrous Manipulation

On a Two-level Hierarchical Structure for the Dynamic Control of Multifingered Manipulation	77
Casalino, Giuseppe and Cannata, Giorgio and Panin, Giorgio and Caffaz, Andrea	
Robust Manipulation of Deformable Objects by a Simple PID Feedback	85
Wada, Takahiro and Hirai, Shinichi and Kawamura, Sadao and Kamiji, Norimasa	

Robust Stabilization of the Plate-ball Manipulation System	91
Oriolo, Giuseppe and Vendittelli, Marilena	
Robotic Pinching by Means of a Pair of Soft Fingers with Sensory Feedback	97
Han, Hyun-Yong and Arimoto, Suguru and Takara, Kenji and Yamaguchi, Mitsuharu and Nguyen, Pham Thuc Anh	
Fast Dextrous Regrasping with Optimal Contact Forces and Contact Sensor-based Impedance Control	103
Schlegel, Thomas and Buss, Martin and Omata, Toru and Schmidt, Guenther	
DLR-hand II : Next Generation of a Dextrous Robot Hand	109
Butterfass, Joerg and Grebenstein, Markus and Liu, Hong and Hirzinger, Gerd	

SESSION : WA04

Micromanipulation and Microsystems

Micromanipulation Using a Friction Force Field	115
Sui, Jeongsik and Winther, Tobias and Stephanou, Harry	
On the Coarse/Fine Dual-stage Manipulators with Robust Perturbation Compensator	121
Kwon, Sangjoo and Chung, Wan Kyun and Youn, Youngil	
Development of Global Vision System for Biological Automatic Micro-manipulation System	127
Li, Xudong and Zong, Guanghua and Bi, Shusheng	
A Flexible Experimental Workcell for Efficient and Reliable Wafer-level 3D Microassembly	133
Yang, Ge and Gaines, James A. and Nelson, Bradley J.	
Mechanical Micro-dissection by Microknife Using Ultrasonic Vibration and Ultra Fine Touch Probe Sensor	139
Arai, Fumihito and Amano, Takaharu and Fukuda, Toshio and Satoh, Hiroshi	
Design and Analysis of an Electromagnetically Driven Valve for a Glaucoma Implant	145
Bac, Byunghoon and Kim, Nakhoon and Kee, Hongseok and Kim, Seonho and Lee, Yeon and Park, Kyihwan	

SESSION : WA05

Trajectory Generation & Control

A Path Generation Algorithm of Autonomous Robot Vehicle Through Scanning of a Sensor Platform	151
Park, Tong-Jin and Han, Chang-Soo	
Hybrid Control of Formations of Robots	157
Fierro, Rafael O and Das, Aveek K and Kumar, Vijay and Ostrowski, James P	
Tracking Control of a Mobile Robot Using a Neural Dynamics Based Approach	163
Yuan, Guangfeng and Yang, Simon X. and Mittal, Gauri S.	
Backward Line Tracking Control of a Radio-controlled Truck and Trailer	169
Altafini, Claudio and Speranzon, Alberto	
The Scalar Epsilon-controller: A Spatial Path Tracking Approach for ODV, Ackerman, and Differentially-steered Autonomous Wheeled Mobile Robots	175
Davidson, Morgan E and Balil, Vikas	
Normalized Energy Stability Margin and its Contour of Walking Vehicles on Rough Terrain	181
Hirose, Shigeo and Tsukagoshi, Hideyuki and Yoneda, Kan	

SESSION : WA06**Programming Architecture**

Creating the Architecture of a Translator Framework for Robot Programming Languages	187
Freund, Eckhard and Luedemann-Ravit, Bernd and Stern, Oliver and Koch, Thorsten	
A Multi-processing Software Infrastructure for Robotic Systems	193
Jones, Andrew H. and DeSouza, Guilherme N. and Kak, Avinash C.	
Open Real-time Interfaces for Monitoring Applications within NC-control Systems	199
Weck, Manfred and Kahmen, Andreas	
Robot Behavior Engineering Using DD-designer	205
Bredenfeld, Ansgar and Indiveri, Giovanni	
Object-oriented Design Pattern Approach for Modeling and Simulating Open Distributed Control System	211
Tomura, Toyooki and Kanai, Satoshi and Uehiro, Kiyoshi and Yamamoto, Susumu	
Implementation of Internet-based Personal Robot with Internet Control Architecture	217
Han, Kuk-Hyun and Kim, Shin and Kim, Yong-Jae and Lee, Seung-Eun and Kim, Jong-Hwan	

SESSION : WA07**Visual Servoing Experimental Issues**

Computer Animation: A New Application for Image-based Visual Servoing	223
Courtly, Nicolas and Marchand, Eric	
Design and Implementation of Visual Servoing System for Realistic Air Target Tracking	229
Yau, Wei Guan and Fu, Li-Chen and Liu, David	
Robust Visual Servoing: Examination of Cameras Under Different Illumination Conditions	235
Bachem, A. and Mueller, T. and Nagel, H.-H.	
Asymptotic Motion Control of Robot Manipulators Using Uncalibrated Visual Feedback	241
Shen, Yantao and Liu, Yun-Hui and Li, Kejie and Zhang, Jianwei and Knoll, Alois	
Image-based Visual Servoing on Planar Objects of Unknown Shape	247
Collewet, Christophe and Chaumette, Francois and Loisel, Philippe	
Localization of a Mobile Robot Using Images of a Moving Target	253
Kim, Byung Hwa and Roh, Dong Kyu and Lee, Jang Myung and Lee, Man Hyung	

SESSION : WA08**Mobile Robot**

Extracting Navigation States from a Hand-drawn Map	259
Skubic, Marjorie A and Matsakis, Pascal and Forrester, Benjamin and Chronis, George	
On Eye-sensor Based Path Planning for Robots with Non-trivial Geometry/Kinematics	265
Gupta, Kamal and Yu, Yong	
Optimizing Schedules for Prioritized Path Planning of Multi-robot Systems	271
Bennowitz, Maren and Burgard, Wolfram and Thrun, Sebastian	
Autonomous Characterization of Unknown Environments	277
Pedersen, Liam	
Towards a Meta Motion Planner A: Model and Framework	285
Adam, Amit and Rivlin, Ehud and Shimshoni, Ilan	

Towards a Meta Motion Planner B: Algorithm and Applications	291
Adam, Amit and Rivlin, Ehud and Shmshoni, Ilan	

SESSION : WA09	Flexible Automation (I)
-----------------------	--------------------------------

Efficient Scheduling of Behavior-processes on Different Time-scales	299
Birk, Andreas and Kenn, Holger	
An Efficient Depalletizing System Based on 2D Range Imagery	305
Katsoulas, Dimitrios K and Kosmopoulos, Dimitrios I	
Automatic Generation of Assembly Instructions Using STEP	313
Mok, Swee M. and Ong, Kenlip and Wu, Chi-haur	
Furniture Polishing Robot Using a Trajectory Generator Based on Cutter Location Data	319
Nagata, Fusaomi and Watanabe, Keigo and Izumi, Kiyotaka	
Force-guided Assemblies Using a Novel Parallel Manipulator	325
Morris, Daniel M. and Hebbar, Ravi and Newman, Wyatt S.	
Path Planning for Robot-assisted Grinding Processes	331
Wang, Y.T. and Jan, Y.J.	

SESSION : WA10	Control and Mechanism for Production Systems
-----------------------	---

Data Filtering and Regression in Estimating Slew Motion Timing Model	337
Hua, Wei and Zhou, Chen	
An Exact Representation of Effective Cutting Shapes of 5-Axis CNC Machining Using Rational Bezier and B-Spline Tool Motions	342
Xia, Jun and Ge, Q. Jeffrey	
Design of Programmable Passive Compliance Shoulder Mechanism	348
Okada, Masafumi and Nakamura, Yoshihiko and Ban, Shigeki	
Kinematic Control of Parallel Robots in the Presence of Unstable Singularities	354
O'Brien, John F. and Wen, John T.	
Complex Behaviors from Local Rules in Modular Self-reconfigurable Robots	360
Kubica, Jeremy and Casal, Arancha and Hogg, Tad	
Control of a Suspended Load Using Inertia Rotors with Traveling Disturbance	368
Yoshida, Yasuo	

SESSION : WA11	Haptic Devices and Teleoperation
-----------------------	---

Variable Position Mapping Based Assistance in Teleoperation for Nuclear Cleanup	374
Manocha, Karan A. and Pemalet, Norali and Dubey, Rajiv V.	
Human-centered Scaling in Micro-teleoperation	380
Sano, Akihito and Fujimoto, Hideo and Takai, Toshihito	
Haptically Augmented Teleoperation	386
Turó, Nicolas and Khatib, Oussama and Coste-Manière, Eve	

Elements of Telerobotics Necessary for Waste Clean Up Automation	393
Hamel, William R. and Kress, Reid L.	
Design and Implementation of Remotely Operation Interface for Humanoid Robot	401
Kagami, Satoshi and Kuffner, James J. and Nishiwaki, Koichi and Sugihara, Tomonichi and Inaba, Masayuki and Inoue, Hirochika	
Model-based Teleoperation of a Space Robot on ETS-VII Using a Haptic Interface	407
Yoon, Woo-Keun and Goshozono, Toshihiko and Kawabe, Hiroshi and Kinami, Masahiro and Yuichi, Tsumaki and Masaru, Uchiyama and Mitsushige, Oda	

SESSION : WA12

Space and Underwater Robotics

Analysis on Impact Propagation of Docking Platform for Spacecraft	413
Lee, Sang Heon and Yi, Byung-Ju and Kim, Soo Hyun and Kwak, Yoon Keun	
Flyaround Maneuvers on a Satellite Orbit by Impulsive Thrust Control	421
Masutani, Yasuhiro and Matsushita, Motoshi and Miyazaki, Fumio	
Nonlinear Control Methods for Planar Carangiform Robot Fish Locomotion	427
Morgansen, Kristi A. and Duijndam, Vincent and Mason, Richard J. and Burdick, Joel W. and Murray, Richard M.	
Quaternion-based Kinematic Control of Redundant Spacecraft/Manipulator Systems	435
Caccavale, Fabrizio and Siciliano, Bruno	
Zero Reaction Maneuver: Flight Velification with ETS-VII Space Robot and Extension to Kinematically Redundant Arm	441
Yoshida, Kazuya and Hashizume, Kenichi and Abiko, Satoko	
A Novel Adaptive Control Law for Autonomous Underwater Vehicles	447
Antonelli, Gianluca and Caccavale, Fabrizio and Chiaverini, Stefano and Fusco, Giuseppe	

SESSION : WA13

New Tools for Personal Robotics

Ethological Modeling and Architecture for an Entertainment Robot	453
Atkin, Ronald C., and Fujita, Masahiro and Takagi, Tsuyoshi and Hasegawa, Rika	
Human-like Robot Head that has Olfactory Sensation and Facial Color Expression	459
Miwa, Hiroyasu and Umetsu, Tomohiko and Takanishi, Atsuo and Takanobu, Hideaki	
Acquiring Hand-action Models by Attention Point Analysis	465
Ogawara, Koichi and Tanuki, Tomikazu and Kimura, Hiroshi and Ikeuchi, Katsushi	
New Architecture for Mobile Robots in Home Network Environment Using Jini	471
Lee, Byoung-Ju and Lee, Hyun-Gu and Lee, Joo-Ho and Park, Gwi-Tae	
Implementing Tolman's Schematic Sowbug: Behavior-based Robotics in the 1930's	477
Endo, Yoichiro and Arkin, Ronald C.	
Generating Linguistic Spatial Descriptions from Sonar Readings Using the Histogram of Forces	485
Skubic, Marjorie A. and Chronis, George and Matsakis, Pascal and Keller, James	

SESSION : WP01

Robot Learning

Real-time Robot Learning	491
Bhanu, Bir and Leang, Pat and Cowden, Chris and Lin, Yingqiang and Patterson, Mark	

Learning Task-relevant Features from Robot Data	499
Vlassis, Nikos and Buitrago, Roland and Krose, Ben	
Autonomous Learning Algorithm and Associative Memory for Intelligent Robots	505
Kojima, Kazuhiko and Ito, Koji	
Learning Hierarchical Partially Observable Markov Decision Process Models for Robot Navigation	511
Theodorou, Georgios and Rohanimanesh, Khashayar and Mahadevan, Sridhar	
Towards Automatic Shaping in Robot Navigation	517
Peterson, Todd S. and Owens, Nancy E. and Carroll, James L.	
Obstacle Avoidance Learning for a Multi-agent Linked Robot in the Real World	523
Daisuke, Iijima and Wenwei, Yu and Hiroshi, Yokoi and Yukinori, Kakazu	

SESSION : WP02

Discrete Event Manufacturing Systems (I)

Performance Modeling of Supply Chains Using Queueing Networks	529
Viswanadham, N. and Raghavan, N. R. Srinivasa	
Dynamic Scheduling Rule Selection for Semiconductor Wafer Fabrication	535
Hsieh, Bo-Wei and Chang, Shi-Chung and Chen, Chun-Hung	
A Deadlock Prevention Policy for Flexible Manufacturing Systems Using Siphons	541
Hung, Yi-Seng and Jeng, Ma-Der and Xie, Xiaolan and Chung, Sheng-Luen	
An Effective Search Strategy for Wafer Fabrication Scheduling with Uncertain Process Requirements	547
Lin, Ming-Hung and Fu, Li-Chen	
Model-based Control for Reconfigurable Manufacturing Systems	553
Ohashi, Kazushi and Shin, Kang G.	
Design of Reconfigurable Semiconductor Manufacturing Systems with Maintenance and Failure	559
Tang, Ying and Zhou, Meng-Chu	

SESSION : WP03

Sensing for Dextrous Manipulation

Dynamic Contact Sensing of Soft Planar Fingers with Tactile Sensors	565
Kinoshita, Genichiro and Kurimoto, Yujin and Osumi, Hisashi and Umeda, Kazumori	
Interpretation of Force and Moment Signals for Compliant Peg-in-hole Assembly	571
Newman, Wyatt S. and Zhao, Yonghong and Pao, Yoh-Han	
Dome Shaped Touch Sensor Using PZT Thin Film made by Hydrothermal Method	577
Arai, Fumihito and Fukuda, Toshio and Hoigawa, Kouichi and Thakurara, Yasunori	
Heuristic Vision-based Computation of Planar Antipodal Grasps on Unknown Objects	583
Morales, Antonio and Recatala, Gabriel and Sanz, Pedro J. and Pobil, Angel P. del	
Feature-guided Exploration with a Robotic Finger	589
Okamura, Allison M. and Cutkosky, Mark R.	
Identification of Contact Conditions from Contaminated Data of Contact Force and Moment	597
Mouri, Tetsuya and Yamada, Takayoshi and Iwai, Ayako and Minura, Nobuharu and Funahashi, Yasuyuki	

SESSION : WP04**Nano / Micro Robotics**

Three-dimensional Bio-micromanipulation Under the Microscope	604
Arai, Fumihito and Kawaji, Akiko and Luangjarnkorn, Poom and Fukuda, Toshio and Itoigawa, Kouichi	
Force Control System for Autonomous Micro Manipulation	610
Tanikawa, Tamio and Kawai, Masashi and Koyachi, Noriko and Arai, Tatsuo and Ide, Takayuki and Kaneko, Shinji and Ohta, Ryo	
Micro Fluid Device Using Thick Layer Piezo Actuator Prepared on Si Micro-machined Structure	616
Lee, Sukhan and Chung, Jaewoo and Lim, Seungmo and Lee, Changseung	
Microrobotic Cell Injection	620
Sun, Yu and Nelson, Brad	
Force Feedback-based Microinstrument for Measuring Tissue Properties and Pulse in Microsurgery	626
Menciassi, Arianna and Eisingberg, Anna and Scali, Giacomo and Anticoli, Claud	
3D Nanorobotic Manipulations of Multi-walled Carbon Nanotubes	632
Dong, Lixin and Arai, Fumihito and Fukuda, Toshio	

SESSION : WP05**Real-Time Sensing and Supervisory Control of Robotic Operations**

Observations Concerning Internet-based Teleoperations for Hazardous Environments	638
Hamel, William R. Hamel and Murray, Pamela	
Internet-based Teleoperation	644
Tarn, Tzyh-Jong and Brady, Kevin	
Language Model Approach to Nonblocking Supervisor Synthesis for Nondeterministic Discrete Event Systems	650
Park, Seong-Jin and Lim, Jong-Tae	
A Bone-reaming System Using Micro Sensors For Internet Force-feedback Control	656
Ho, Antony W. T. and Li, Wen J. and Elhajj, Imad and Xi, Ning and Mei, Tao	
Modeling and Control of Internet Based Cooperative Teleoperation	662
Elhajj, Imad H. and Xi, Ning and Fung, Waikung and Liu, Yunhui and Hasegawa, Yasuhisa and Fukuda, Toshio	
Supervisory Control for Systems of Vehicles in Path Networks	668
Roszkowska, Elzbieta K.	

SESSION : WP06**Collision Avoidance and Sensor Based Control**

Sensor Based Online Path Planning for Serpentine Robots	674
Gevher, Mustafa and Erkinen, Aydan M. and Erkinen, Ismet	
Reactive Behaviours of Mobile Manipulators Based on the DVZ Approach	680
Cacitti, Alessio and Zapata, Rene	
The System Development of Unmanned Vehicle for the Tele-operated System Interfaced with Driving Simulator	686
Shin, Jae-Heung and Kim, Min-Seok and Park, Young-Hoon and Kim, Jung-Ha	
Motion Planning for Humanoid Robots Under Obstacle and Dynamic Balance Constraints	692
Kuffner, James J and Nishiwaki, Koichi and Kagami, Satoshi and Inaba, Masayuki and Inoue, Hirochika	

Exact Cellular Decomposition of Closed Orientable Surfaces Embedded in R^3	699
Atkar, Prasad N. and Choset, Howie and Rizzi, Alfred A. and Acar, Ercan U.	
Obstacle Detection Using Adaptive Color Segmentation and Color Stereo Homography	705
Batavia, Parag H. and Singh, Sanjiv	

SESSION : WP07

Collision Avoidance and Sensor Based Control

Visual Servoing Based on Multirate Sampling Control-application of Perfect Disturbance Rejection Control	711
Fujimoto, Hiroshi and Hori, Yoichi	
Stacking Jacobians Properly in Stereo Visual Servoing	717
Martinet, Philippe and Cervera, Enric	
Visual Servoing: Path Interpolation by Homography Decomposition	723
Borgstadt, Justin A. and Ferrier, Nicola J.	
Design and Tracking of Desirable Trajectories in the Image Space by Integrating Mechanical and Visibility Constraints	731
Mezouar, Youcef and Chaumette, Francois	
A Visual Servoing Algorithm Based on Epipolar Geometry	737
Chesi, Graziano and Pratichizzo, Domenico and Vicino, Antonio	
A Solution to the Adaptive Visual Servoing Problem	743
Astolfi, Alessandro and Hsu, Liu and Netto, Mariana S. and Ortega, Romeo	

SESSION : WP08

Mobile Robot Design & Application

An Industrial Application of Behavior-oriented Robotics	749
Birk, Andreas and Kenn, Holger	
Automated Container-handling System for Container Production Nurseries	755
Schempf, Hagen and Graham, Todd and Fuchs, Robert and Gasior, Chris	
Actively Steerable Inpipe Inspection Robots for Underground Urban Gas pipelines	761
Roh, Se-gon and Ryew, SungMoo and Yang, Jonghwa and Choi, Hyoukryeol	
Design of Continuous Alternate Wheels for Omnidirectional Mobile Robots	767
Byun, Kyung-Seok and Kim, Sung-Jae and Song, Jae-Bok	
Holonomic Omni-directional Vehicle with New Omni-wheel Mechanism	773
Damato, Riichiro and Cheng, Wendy and Hirose, Shigeo	
Dynamic Simulation of Actively-coordinated Wheeled Vehicle Systems on Uneven Terrain	779
Hung, Min-Hsiung and Orin, David E.	

SESSION : WP09

Flexible Automation (II)

A Methodology for Software Development Cost Analysis in Information-based Manufacturing	787
Sun, High-Way and Zhou, MengChu and Wolf, Carl	
Optimal Fixture Layout Design in a Discrete Domain for 3D Workpieces	792
Wang, Yu M. and Pelinescu, Diana M.	

Holonic Robot System: A Flexible Assembly System with High Reconfigurability	799
Sugi, Masao and Maeda, Yusuke and Aiyama, Yasumichi and Arai, Tamio	
New Architecture for Corporate Integration of Simulation and Production Control in Industrial Applications	806
Freund, Eckhard and Hypki, Alfred and Pensky, Dirk H.	
Vision-based Automatic Forming of Rheological Objects Using Deformation Transition Graphs	812
Tokumoto, Shinichi and Saito, Takuya and Hirai, Shinichi	
Off-line Error Prediction, Diagnosis and Recovery Using Virtual Assembly Systems	818
Baydar, Cem M. and Saitou, Kazuhiro	

SESSION : WP10

Design and Planning for Production Systems

Network Distributed Virtual Design Using Coevolutionary Agents	824
Subbu, Raj and Sanderson, Arthur C.	
Multi-component Genetic Algorithm for Generating Best Bending Sequence and Tool Selection in Sheet Metal Parts	830
Thanapandi, Chitra Malini and Walairacht, Aranya and Ohara, Shigeyuki	
A Hybrid Software Agent Model for Decentralized Control	836
Balduzzi, Fabio E. and Brugali, Davide	
A Time Window Based Approach for Job Shop Scheduling	842
Chen, Haoxun and Luh, Peter B. and Fang, Lei	
FMS Scheduling Based on Timed Petri Net Model and RTA* Algorithm	848
Kim, YoungWoo and Inaba, Akio and Suzuki, Tatsuya and Okuma, Shigeru	
Optimal Configuration and Partner Selection in Dynamic Manufacturing Networks	854
Viswanadham, Nukala and Gaonkar, Roshan S and Subramaniam, Velusamy	

SESSION : WP11

Haptic Systems

Development of a Scaled Teleoperation System for Nano Scale Interaction and Manipulation	860
Sitti, Metin and Aruk, Baris and Shintani, Hiroaki and Hashimoto, Hideki	
Haptic Display Device with Fingertip Presser for Motion/Force Teaching to Human	868
Kikuuwe, Ryo and Yoshikawa, Tsuneo	
A Framework for Haptic Rendering System Using 6-DOF Force-Feedback Device	874
Kim, Dae-Hyun and Ko, Nak Yong and Oh, Geum Kun and Kim, Young Dong	
A New Haptic Interface Device Capable of Continuous-time Impedance Display within Sampling-period: Application to Hard Surface Display	880
Kawai, Masayuki and Yoshikawa, Tsuneo	
Design Of A New 6-DOF Parallel Haptic Device	886
Lee, J.H. and Eom, K.S. and Yi, B-J. and Suh, I.H.	
Wearable Master Device Using Optical Fiber Curvature Sensors for the Disabled	892
Lee, Kyoobin and Kwon, Dong-Soo	

SESSION : WP12**Underwater Robotic Vehicle Control**

Maneuverability of a Flat-streamlined Underwater Vehicle	897
Guo, Jienhua and Chiu, F.C.	
Closed Loop Time Invariant Control of 3D Underactuated Underwater Vehicles	903
Aicardi, Michele and Casalino, Giuseppe and Indiveri, Giovanni	
Interoperability and Synchronisation of Distributed Hardware-in-the-loop Simulation for Underwater Robot Development: Issues and Experiments	909
Lane, David M. and Falconer, Gavin J. and Randall, Geoph and Edwards, Ian	
Planar Motion Steering of Underwater Vehicles by Exploiting Drag Coefficient Modulation	915
Aicardi, Michele and Casalino, Giuseppe and Indiveri, Giovanni	
Underwater Cable Following by Twin-Burger 2	920
Balasuriya, Arjuna P. and Ura, Tamaki	
A Virtual Collaborative World Simulator for Underwater Robots Using Multi-dimensional, Synthetic Environment	926
Choi, Song K. and Yuh, Junku	

SESSION : WP13**Applications of Robotics Techniques to Computational
Biology and Chemistry**

Capturing Molecular Energy Landscapes with Probabilistic Conformational Roadmaps	932
Apaydin, Mehmet Serkan and Singh, Amit P. and Brutlag, Douglas L. and Latombe, Jean-Claude	
Physical Geometric Algorithms for Structural Molecular Biology	940
Donald, Bruce R. and Bailey-Kellogg, Chris and Kelley, Jack and Lilien, Ryan	
A Motion Planning Approach to Folding: From Paper Craft to Protein Folding	948
Song, Guang and Amato, Nancy M.	
Ligand Binding with OBPRM and User Input	954
Bayazit, O. Burchan and Song, Guang and Amato, Nancy M.	
Molecular Docking: A Problem With Thousands of Degrees of Freedom	960
Teodoro, Miguel and Phillips, George and Kavraki, Lydia	
Programmable Assembly at the Molecular Scale: Self-assembly of DNA Lattices (Invited Paper)	966
Reif, John H. and LaBean, Thomas H. and Seeman, Nadrian C.	

SESSION : WE01**Motion Planning and Learning**

A Simple Algorithm for Determining of Movement Duration in Task Space without Violating Joint Angle Constraints	972
Jin, Young G. and Choi, Jin Y.	
Design of Jerk Bounded Trajectories for On-line Industrial Robot Applications	979
Macfarlane, Sonja E. and Croft, Elizabeth A.	
Control of Uncertain Flexible Joint Manipulator Using Adaptive Takagi-Sugeno Fuzzy Model Based Controller	985
Park, Chang-Woo and Hyun, Chang-Ho and Park, Min-Sick and Lee, Chang-Hun	

Sensor Based Planning for Rod Shaped Robots in Three Dimensions: Piece-wise Retracts of $R^3 \times S^2$	991
Lee, Ji Yeong and Choset, Howie and Rizzi, Alfred A	
Actor-Q Based Active Perception Learning System	1000
Shibata, Katsunari and Nishino, Tetsuo and Okabe, Yoichi	
Inverse Kinematics Learning by Modular Architecture Neural Networks with Performance Prediction Networks	1006
Oyama, Eimei and Chong, Nak Young and Agah, Arvin and Macda, Taro and Tachi, Susumu	

SESSION : WE02

Teleoperation

Virtual Repulsive Force Field Guided Coordination for Multi-teleoperator Collaboration	1013
Chong, Nak-Young and Kotoku, Tetsuo and Ohba, Kohtaro and Tanie, Kazuo	
The Visual Acts Model for Automated Camera Placement During Teleoperation	1019
Brooks, Bernard G and McKee, Gerard T and Schenker, Paul S	
Sliding-mode-based Impedance Controller for Bilateral Teleoperation under Varying Time-delay	1025
Cho, Hyun C. and Park, Jong H. and Kim, Kyunghwan and Park, Jong O.	
Ground-space Bilateral Teleoperation Experiment Using ETS-VII Robot Arm with Direct Kinesthetic Coupling	1031
Imaida, Takashi and Yokokohji, Yasuyoshi and Doi, Toshitsugu and Oda, Mitsuhige and Yoshikawa, Tsuneo	
A Numerical SC Approach for a Teleoperated 7-DOF Manipulator	1039
Tsumaki, Yuichi and Fiorini, Paolo and Chaffant, Gene and Seraji, Homayoun	
Bilateral Controller Design for Telemanipulation in Soft Environments	1045
Cavusoglu, Murat Cenk and Sherman, Alana and Tendick, Frank	

SESSION : WE03

Part Handling

Orienting Parts by Inside-out Pulling	1053
Beretty, Robert-Paul M. and Goldberg, Ken and Overmars, Mark H. and van der Stappen, A. Frank	
Compliant Grasping Force Modeling for Handling of Live Objects	1059
Lee, Kok-Meng and Joni, Jeffry and Yin, Xuecheng	
Design of Robot Gripper Jaws Based on Trapezoidal Modules	1065
Zhang, Tao and Goldberg, Ken	
Attractive Regions Formed by Constraints in Configuration Space-attractive Regions in Motion Region of a Polygonal or a Polyhedral Part with a Flat Environment	1071
Qiao, Hong	
A Geometric Approach to Designing a Programmable Force Field with a Unique Stable Equilibrium for Parts in the Plane	1079
Sudsang, Attawith and Kavraki, Lydia	
Effect of Conformability on Grasp Static Stability	1086
Hurtado, Jose F. and Melkote, Shreyes N.	

SESSION : WE04

Navigation

Distributed Sensor Fusion for Object Position Estimation by Multi-robot Systems	1092
Stroupe, Ashley W. and Martin, Martin C. and Balch, Tucker	