

IFR News

Dates set for '99 ICAR and 30th ISR

The 1999 International Conference on Advanced Robotics (ICAR) and the 30th Industrial Robot Symposium (ISR) will be held in Japan between 25 and 29 October 1999 under the sponsorship of the Robotics Society of Japan and the Japan Robot Association.

The event, to be staged at Keidanren Hall, in Tokyo, has been given the title 'Robot Week' to highlight its importance to everyone involved in the subject of robotics. To add to the significance of the occasion the organisers are holding the '99 International Robot Exhibition in parallel with the conference and symposium.

'99ICAR and the 30th ISR will act as a bridge to the 21st century, combining the themes of ICAR – Basic Research on Advanced Robotics – with those of the ISR – Research Applications for Industrial Robots.

Various plans are being prepared, including a plenary session for both conference and symposium on 27 October – the mid-point of the week – and in particular, organised sessions for both the conference and the symposium.

That both '99ICAR and the 30th ISR are being held in parallel, is an opportunity for people from all over the world involved in robotics to gather together, as they look forward to the 21st century, exchanging views on advanced robotics development as well as the entire robotics business.

The organisers hope to create an opportunity for advanced robotics researchers together with those in the robotics industry to look forward with optimism to the developments for the next century.

A Call for Papers for both the conference and the symposium will be sent out soon, when details are finalised. Technical tours are being planned separately.

Anyone wishing to participate or make a presentation can contact the '99ICAR and 30th ISR Secretariat, c/o The Japan Robot Association, Kikaishinko Bldg, 3–6–8 Shibakoen, Minato-Ku, Tokyo 105-0011, Japan. Tel: +81-3-3434-2919; Fax: +81-3-3578-1404.

ISQ supports welding and robotics

THE PORTUGUESE IFR member–ISQ or the institute of Welding and Quality is a private organisation providing services in specialised areas, including the technical inspection and design review of a wide range of civic buildings, electrical installations, such as elevators, and large engineering structures, such as bridges.

About 400 people work as the ISQ and their main areas of activity can be broken down into a number of areas such as maintenance and structural integrity, metrology, environmental issues, health and safety, materials and product testing, quality assurance, welding and production technologies, professional training and research and development work on various topics.

The welding and robotics department is responsible for maintaining a state-of-the-art interest in welding robotics and associated production techniques.

Another of its roles is to transfer know-how and innovation to industry with the object of improving overall competitiveness.

There is strong interest in robotics and among the core competencies are the analysis and selection of robotised cells; simulation of robotic systems using tools such as Tecnomatix's Robcad; creating on-line and off-line operations; designing welding fixtures to achieve optimum performance; offering advice on systems integration; developing software for both off-line and post-processor environments; providing qualifications for robotic procedures and operations; and finally, and perhaps most important of all, giving robotics training. In the area of welding the ISQ can offer advice on the design and implementation of welding quality systems according to EN729. In addition, it can provide guidance in diagnostics on welding matters and offer solutions to achieve both quality and productivity improvements. There is support too for those seeking to analyse and optimise their welding procedures and the ISQ can carry out weldability tests.

Because of the well established expertise in all welding-related topics the ISQ can offer wide ranging welding related qualifications and, as in the case of robotics, there is ample back-up to provide training to achieve successful welding.

For more detailed information about the ISQ, which has a stake in a number of different companies world-wide, it is worth using the Internet through www.isq.pt or www.portugaloffer.com.

CFR—Canadian Federation for Robotics is born!

As the host country for ISR 2000, Canada has been preparing for this important international event and the increased global attention Canada will attract. One of the major milestones of the planning process has been the creation of the Canadian Federation of Robotics (CFR) (Fédération canadienne de robotique).

In its infancy, the primary role of the CFR is to act as the Canadian organising body for ISR 2000 in Montreal, in conjunction with the IFR, PRECARN Associate Inc, and the Institute for Robotic and Intelligent Systems (IRIS).

The longer term goals of the CFR include: working in conjunction with other national and international organisations with similar objectives; enhancing the exchange of information of robotics research and development among professional and participants in the field of robotics; and promoting Canada's place in the global robotics economy.

In the time leading up to ISR 2000, CFR will develop its membership base and operations, working closely with PRECARN Associates Inc., Canada's pre-eminent R & D

network and IRIS will be concentrated on the furtherance of the robotics industry in Canada and the international promotion of the Symposium in 2000.

With the organisation of ISR 2000 underway, the CFR has been busy co-ordinating efforts with related events to plan what is fast becoming known as "Robotics Week" (beginning May 14) in Montreal. The PRECARN and IRIS Annual Conference, the Montreal Fabricating and Machine Tool Show, and the National Factory Automation Show will all be running in the same week as ISR 2000 and the *Robotics of Tomorrow* Exhibition.

There will be additional information on the Symposium program and Call for Papers in the next IFR newsletter.

For further information on ISR 2000, please contact the ISR 2000 Secretariat c/o Golden Planners Inc. at (613) 241-9333, gpi@intranet.ca or visit the web site for periodic updates at <http://www.precarn.ca/isr2000.htm>

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World Robotics 1998

The new issue of World Robotics 1998, which was published in October. 1997 shows record world sales on units.

Like earlier years the World Robotics 1998 is made in co-operation between IFR and UN/ECE, where Jan Karlsson, Chief of Economics Statistics, has been responsible for the work. Actually the co-operation means that the market information direct from all IFR member countries is combined with UN/ECE's vast knowledge of general world industry statistics.

New Features

There are several notable features this year:
First, the World Robotics 1998 pays special attention to

service robotics. It is the first year of collecting direct statistics for this small but fast growing area. It is not easy to clearly define a service robot, but IFR has taken a first step which will be further developed in coming years.

Second, this year's publication also features a special section with articles on *Robotics in the Food and Agriculture Industry*, edited by Mike Wilson, president of the British Robot Association and vice chairman of IFR.

Third, a new section has been added, containing Case Studies of actual robot installations. The case studies will show the effects robots have had on cost, production and employment structure as well as giving an indication of their overall profitability.

Record Sales—but prices go down

The overall figure of 85.000 units, record world sales of robots in 1997, is significantly up from last year. World robotics 1998 breaks it down into major countries, major applications – showing quite varied market development in different areas.

Prices, on the other hand, are going down, leading to quite different patterns in unit and money value sales. The price reductions seem to be an endless pattern.

Forecast

This year World Robotics also make forecasts of market developments into the year 2001, based on the Robotics Expert Meeting held in Birmingham in May of this year during the 29th ISR, with participation from all major robot countries.

Björn Weichbrod

World Robotics 1998 can be purchased directly from the IFR Secretariat (Fax: +46 8 660 3378, Tel: +46 8 782 0843. e-mail ifr@vi.se) or from the UN Sales offices/agents in your country.