

press release

Sony Collaborates with European Universities on Robotics

Research & Development Projects

Sony AIBO robot 'enters' University of Versailles

Brussels, 19 June 2003 – Sony's AIBO, the world's favourite four-legged entertainment robot, is about to make appearances at renowned universities throughout Europe. Ever since its market introduction in 1999, AIBO has been bringing unique artificial intelligence entertainment into consumers' homes. In addition, AIBO also represents one of the most advanced and stable platforms for research and development, particularly in the area of mobility and programming in robotic sciences. The reason for the great acceptance of AIBO as a research theme is the fact that no initial investment needs to be made by the universities to build a dedicated prototype. This would commonly be the case for similar projects. Instead, AIBO provides a ready-made and comprehensive solution enabling the immediate start of designated research activities.

One outstanding example representing a successful collaboration with a university in Europe, started in 1997 with the Laboratoire de Robotique de Versailles (LRV, a division of the Université de Versailles- Saint Quentin en Yvelines). Since then, the LRV has shown great commitment to using Sony's AIBO and has carried out several research projects in line with the progressing product development of AIBO. The LRV is specialised in mechatronics and mobility research using a variety of legged robots including the four-legged robots by Sony. "We are pleased to have Sony as an innovative partner who provides us with excellent support and know-how for our research activities. It enables us to test our research results in practice, for example the mobility of the robot's legs, its visual ability in terms of distance control and others," said Pierre Blazevic, Professor at the LRV. "Moreover, we have established a team of four Sony robots, which participates in the annual global RoboCup events where university teams from throughout the world compete against each other in the so-called 'Sony Four-

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Legged League'. The research goal in this area is the refined interaction between the four robots within one team and ultimately, to be able to take truly artificially intelligent decisions without any intervention from a human being," he added.

Linked to the LRV is also the ISTY school (Institut des Sciences et Techniques des Yvelines). The school is now starting a mechatronics class teaching students about robotics. They will now start using AIBO as a robotic platform and will study all aspects of AIBO as an official part of the curriculum that students will follow.

For Sony Entertainment Robot Europe, these types of collaborations are crucial to stay on the edge of technological developments and eventually implement them into future products. "After pioneering the entertainment robotics market, Sony is continuously looking for new opportunities to explore innovative aspects of entertainment robotics. In particular, long-term and continuous co-operations with scientific institutions fostering excellent expertise and know-how like the Laboratoire de Robotique de Versailles will help us to define our future direction. Moreover, this will enable us to bridge consumers' expectations and needs with cutting edge technological innovations," commented Nicolas Babin, Director of Sony Entertainment Robot Europe.

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About Sony Europe:

Sony manufactures audio, video, communications and information technology products for the global consumer and professional markets. With its music, pictures, game and online businesses, Sony is uniquely positioned to become a leading personal broadband entertainment company in the 21st century. In Europe, Sony recorded consolidated annual sales of EUR 13.88 billion (yen 1,666 billion) for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2003, based on an average market exchange rate for the same period of yen 120 to the EUR. Sony Europe, headquartered at the Sony Center am Potsdamer Platz in Berlin, is responsible for the company's European electronics business and registered consolidated sales of EUR 8.62 billion for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2003. For more information, please visit <http://www.sony-europe.com>

Sony Entertainment Robot Europe (SERE) is headquartered in Brussels and is responsible for the marketing and sales of Sony's entertainment robots in Europe. For more information, please visit <http://www.eu.aibo.com>