

## RoboCup 2009 will be held in Graz, Austria

The RoboCup is an international initiative to foster and promote education, development and research in robotics and Artificial Intelligence. The idea of RoboCup is to define an ambitious long-term goal in order to stimulate the development of Science and Technology. This is similar to the Apollo program of the NASA in the sixties.

The vision of RoboCup is "By the year 2050, develop a team of fully autonomous humanoid robots that can win against the human soccer world champion." To choose soccer as a test-bed for robotics research was a brilliant idea because of two reasons. First, soccer is an ideal platform to present cutting edge technology to a broad general audience. Second, the game itself is complex, highly dynamic, and requires interaction between the agents and their environment. Hence, it is hard to handle for machines and thus fosters researchers to invent new ideas and methods in order to solve the challenge. In order to allow different researchers to use RoboCup as a test-bed for research it is divided into several leagues like small and larger wheeled robots, robot dogs, humanoid robots or simply simulated robots.

RoboCup was always a frontier of robotics research. Therefore, in 2002 and respectively in 2007 RoboCup introduced new leagues for search and rescue robots and for robots providing services at home. Since 2000 RoboCupJunior is part of RoboCup that is an education initiative for young people in the age from 10 to 19. The goal is to interest young people for Science and Technology.

Every year the RoboCup community meets for about a week to hold international competitions in the different leagues and an international conference. This world championship for intelligent robots has become the largest and most important event for robotics research in the world.

In 2009 the RoboCup will take place in Graz, Austria. It is the first time that Austria hosts this prestigious event. The event will be organized by the Graz University of Technology. From June 29 to July 5 2009 Graz will be the worldwide center of robotics research. Up to 400 teams with 2000 to 3000 participants from more than 40 countries from all over the world are expected for the event. The participants will show exciting games and competitions. Furthermore, a number of supporting programs like panel discussions, technology demos or robots meet arts are planned. The event will take place at the Convention Centre Graz. With approximately 33.000 m2 of available space it is the ideal location for such

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a big high-tech event. All these activities are open to the general public. More than 10.000 local and international visitors are expected. The RoboCup 2009 Graz, the largest annual event in Robotics, will be an ideal platform to present Graz and Austria as a high-tech location. It will attract a lot of interest from national and international media and visitors. Moreover, Graz will be for more than a week the meeting point of top researchers. This fact eases the promotion of Science and Technology to young people. Furthermore, the event will be an ideal opportunity for Austrian universities and companies to get in contact with their international counterparts. Last but not least, the event can be used to easily present and explain cutting edge technology and research to a broad general audience. It will bring together cutting edge research and the public.

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