

Microsoft Releases New Robot-Building Software

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Microsoft has released Robotics Developer Studio 2008, the third edition of the company's robot-building platform.

(PhysOrg.com) -- As part of its belief that robotics is an important emerging technology, Microsoft has released Robotics Developer Studio 2008, a software program that enables users to create applications for robots.

The new software, which Microsoft unveiled at the RoboDevelopment Conference and Expo in Santa Clara, Calif., this week, is the third edition of the company's robot-building platform. Microsoft says previous versions of the software have been downloaded 250,000 times, and more than 60 companies currently use the software for developing commercial robots.

The latest edition comes in three versions. The Express version is available as a free download and is intended for hobbyists. The Standard version, which is aimed at professional developers, costs \$500. The Academic version, intended for students and educational developers, is

not yet available. Also, whereas the previous edition restricted professionals and academic users from licensing more than 200 copies, the new edition allows users who buy the license to distribute an unlimited number of copies of the Concurrency and Coordination Runtime and Decentralized Software Services runtime components.

The 2008 edition has several improvements over the earlier versions. For example, the runtime performance is up to three times faster, and developers can define more specific messages to optimize data processing.

The new edition also offers developers greater flexibility when working with a drag-and-drop tool, a part of the program's Visual Programming Language (VPL). In addition, the Visual Simulation Environment (VSE) tool includes new features, such as allowing developers to record and play back simulations in virtual environments, including three sample ones: an apartment, a city, and a mountain environment. The new edition also provides more support for importing content from different applications, and allowing developers to run applications in many devices at the same time across a network.

By providing developers of all levels a tool for building robots, Microsoft's robotics department hopes that its support and investment will pay off in the future. Many hardware manufacturers, including iRobot and Lego, already support Microsoft's robotics software. With its latest software, Microsoft hopes to stimulate greater participation across the robotics community. Already, ABB, a supplier of industrial robots and robotics software, is releasing a connectivity package that teaches university students how to build a complete virtual robot controller.

More information on Robotics Developer Studio 2008 is available at <http://www.microsoft.com/robotics>.

via: [Microsoft Press Release](#) and [Seattle Tech Report](#)

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