

Robots face off on football pitch, in kitchen at RoboCup 2009

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A group of students of robotics setup a football robot on June 30, 2009 on the eve of the "RoboCup" the world largest robotic event, hosting 408 teams with 2300 scientists and students in Graz some 200 kilometers southwest from Vienna. robotic scientist student sets up a football robot on June 30, 2009 on the eve of the "RoboCup" the world largest robotic event

RoboCup 2009, the world's largest robotics event, kicked off Wednesday in the southern Austrian city of Graz, with some 400 teams and 2,000 robots ready to compete in sports and rescue operations.

On two or four legs, with wheels or virtually on a screen, robots of all sizes will battle it out on the football pitch -- the most popular event -- but also face off in a dance competition and domestic chores.

Participants from 44 countries are split into two categories, juniors and

seniors, with the former dedicated to robots programmed by young people aged between 10 and 19.

Suitably for the occasion, robots performed the ribbon-cutting ceremony on Wednesday, marking the opening of the five-day event, which is organised by the Graz University of Technology.

Local officials were taken to the event in a driver-less bus using a sophisticated electronic system of lasers to scan the surrounding area and choose the appropriate route, organisers said.

More than just an entertainment event, RoboCup is also a scientific project, said the president of the 2009 edition, Manuela Veloso.

Besides the [robot](#) competitions, experts and electronic engineers can also attend conferences as part of the RoboCup symposium.

Among the participants, Iran sent the most teams with 50 in the running, followed by Germany and Japan, according to the organisers.

The event, which runs until July 5, was first organised in 1997 in Nagoya, Japan, and has since been held in Stockholm, Melbourne and Suzhou, China.

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