

Willow Garage slashes price (and arm) of PR2 robot for research

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(PhysOrg.com) -- [Willow Garage](http://WillowGarage.com), a company that develops hardware and open source software for personal robotics applications, has announced a modified PR2 robot as a one-arm device for \$285,000, called the PR2 SE. The two-armed PR2 (PR stands for Personal Robot) costs \$400,000.

More limited in capabilities than the two-arm device, the bargain-priced PR2 SE has been released to help grow the robot market. The company's stated goal is to allow more scientists and engineers to get their hands on and explore innovative capabilities for personal robots at a faster pace. Willow Garage offers the PR2 as a platform of both hardware and software. The software, which is [open source](#) under the BSD license, is called the Robot Operating System (ROS).

The PR2 Beta has two arms for manipulation and 16 CPU cores for computation, among other features. The company has promoted its PR2 robot's differentiating characteristic as being out-of-the-box. The combination of PR2 and ROS as integrated hardware and software enables more immediate innovation in the personal robotics field.

The out of the box experience is contrasted with more time-consuming practices where researchers have to set about building both the robot and its operating system before the apps work can even begin.

The collaborative open source ethos runs strong at the company. Team members promote the philosophy that doing your own thing in the [personal robot](#) arena wastes time when teams could be building on each others' results.

Speaking about the latest one-arm PR2 SE, Steve Cousins, President and CEO of Willow Garage, said, "The introduction of PR2 SE will only help to grow an already passionate community of researchers, engineers and robotocists."

This is not the first time that Willow Garage has acted to grow the community. Last year, [Willow Garage](#) gave 11 PR 2 beta robots to research teams who could share their work and keep the robots for up to two years. Recipient sites included the Georgia Institute of Technology, MIT CSAIL, Stanford, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Technische

Universität München and the University of Tokyo, JSK Robotics Laboratory.

About 24 of the PR2 robots are presently deployed at business and academic research institutions.

The PR2 SE one-arm modified robot price is \$285,000. As with the dual-armed PR2 model, an additional 30% discount is offered to individuals if they can show a proven track record of contributions to the Open Source community.

News of getting half the arms at half the price has already sparked innovative ideas:

1. Only show the robot from one side of the room and your visitors will be very impressed
2. Work on an app where the [robot](#) builds itself another arm.

More information: via [Press release](#), [Willow Garage blog](#).

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