

Robots get social network of their very own (no kidding)

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(PhysOrg.com) -- This will for some robot-alarmists seem like the last straw. For robot enthusiasts though it will seem more like refreshing innovation. A technology site says it is time to see robots expressing themselves in living rooms as well as labs across the globe: Robots are getting their own Facebook-style social networking site, according to a news release trumpeting this week's launch of MyRobots.com.

This will be a portal designed for [robot](#) owners and builders to connect their robots, monitor their status, and control them. The site invites owners of robotic devices to create profile pages for them and upload photos. The portal also offers an option to have the robots generate their own status updates.

As Gary Cutlack of *Gizmodo* described the new site, "All you need is a

web enabled bit of hardware and the knowledge to link that to the site's API, then your hand-made LEGO robot can start telling the world how many times it's been charged today."

Project coordinator and robotics specialist, Carlos Asmat, of Montreal, said that "You can see MyRobots.com as the Facebook for robots and smart objects." Like Facebook, there is no fee for signing up, although that may change.

"The craziness will last for a limited (albeit undefined) time," says the site. After that, a purchase of tokens will be required, but the sum is not yet specified. "Each one of your robots needs one token per month of access."

The portal is in beta, a point that the up-front language of the new site makes clear: "Such an innovative concept needs testing in the real world with real users. This is why we decided to open up the service to everyone even though there might be some rough edges to sand-off. If rough edges scare you, then you might want to wait until the service becomes more mature."

Internet-enabled robots can be connected to MyRobots with an open API in place. Robots that are unable to access the Internet directly can use a physical device called "MyRobots Connect." The device is designed for any robot capable of serial communication to be connected to MyRobots.

Once a robot is connected, the owner can monitor it via the web, giving it commands and receiving alerts.

"Soon, I will be able to connect to the robots in my home, and MyRobots will provide me with their current status such as if all is well, they have a problem or even if they require maintenance," said Mario Tremblay,

RobotShop CEO. Tremblay's company is running the new site. RobotShop.com, is an e-commerce site specializing in service robotics.

To say that this is the world's first robot-sharing site would not be true, as there is also RoboEarth, described as "a giant network and database repository where robots can share information and learn from each other about their behavior and their environment." The site is designed for robots to upload their experiences at solving a task so that other robots learn from the data. RoboEarth's team members are Europe-based researchers with funding from the European Commission's Cognitive Systems and Robotics Initiative.

As for MyRobots, "Our main focus is to provide services that augment robot performance for end-users in a friendly way," said Asmat.

Information about compatible hardware and the communication API is available on the site. MyRobots.com uses the Open Source ThingSpeak API. This is a data engine created by ioBridge. ThingSpeak provides the basic functionality to MyRobots, such as the transmission, storage and graphical visualization of data and sending messages to communicate with "smart" objects. ThingSpeak's community includes users of the Arduino microcontroller.

More information: www.myrobots.com/

[Press release](#)

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