

To the international press

Contact Gudrun Litzenberger
Phone +49 69 66 03-1502
Fax +49 69 66 03-2502
E-Mail gl@worldrobotics.org
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2008 World Robot Market – Already affected by the economic downturn

Slump in 2009 – recovery between 2010 and 2012

In 2008, the worldwide sales of industrial robots stagnated at the second highest level ever recorded. More than 113,000 units were supplied worldwide. More than one million industrial robots were operating in the factories worldwide at the end of 2008, reports the IFR Statistical Department in the new study “World Robotics 2009 – Industrial Robots” which was published on Wednesday in Frankfurt. Following a strong record in the first half of 2008, sales of robot installations were affected by the worldwide economic crisis. In many countries orders and sales were reduced dramatically in the last quarter of 2008.

In 2009, sales will slump by about 40% provided the global economic recovery starts that same year. If the investments of the robotics customers stay restrained until 2010, the situation will become even grimmer. The recovery of the worldwide economy is forecasted to be slow and long-term. Therefore it will take years until the robotics industry can attain the high production levels of its most successful years 2005, 2007 and 2008. This high annual sales level of industrial robots since 2005 has two reasons:

- The automotive industry strengthened its investments in automation in order to increase production in emerging markets as well as to gain market shares in traditional markets.

- Many non-automotive sectors like the rubber and plastics industry, the metal and machinery industry, the food and beverage industry and the electronics industry made large investments to optimize their production processes.

The financial crisis of 2008, which was the leading cause of the global economic crisis, put a halt to this worldwide trend toward automation.

Value of the market increased to \$6.2 billion

The total value of the world industrial robot sales was about \$6.2 billion in 2008. It should be noted that this figure does not include the cost of software, peripherals and systems engineering. This may result in the actual robotic systems market value to be about two or three times as large. The world market for robot systems in 2008 is therefore estimated to be \$19 billion.

Recovery between 2010 and 2012

The trends in manufacturing industries can be summarized in one term: "Green Automation". Energy-efficiency, reduction of CO² output and quality management are the main factors of future production processes in all industries. The successful robot suppliers will be the ones that can provide the right solutions for the industry in order to face the challenges ahead. After the substantial fall of robot sales in 2009, an increase will resume in the period between 2010 and 2012 about 15% per year on average attaining a level of more than 100,000 units. The strong decrease in 2009 and the slow recovery will result in a more or less stagnating operational stock in the forecasted period. In most of the traditional robotic markets the stock will stagnate or even decrease, while in the emerging markets it will further increase.

The trend towards automation will go on! Industrial robots are a key component in the automation of processes, and automation is the key to a more eco-friendly production, to rising productivity, to more quality and safety of the work place and to solve the problem of demographic shifts in our societies.

World Robotics 2009 Industrial Robots and Service Robots can be ordered at www.worldrobotics.org

The IFR Statistical Department, which is hosted by the VDMA Robotics + Automation association publishes the study World Robotics every year. In 2009, for the first time, we will have two studies:

1. World Robotics 2009 Industrial Robots:

This unique publication presents comprehensive global statistics on industrial robots in uniform tables allowing consistent country comparisons. It contains detailed statistical data for some 40 countries, broken down by application areas, industrial branches, types of robots and by other technical and economic variables. Data on production, exports and imports are presented for a selection of countries. Trends in robot densities, i.e. number of robots per 10,000 persons employed in relevant sectors, are also featured.

2. World Robotics 2009 Service Robots:

This unique publication presents comprehensive global statistics on service robots, market analysis, case studies and international research strategies of service robots. The study is evaluated in cooperation with our partner the Fraunhofer IPA, Stuttgart, Germany.