

NEWSLETTER

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This issue?

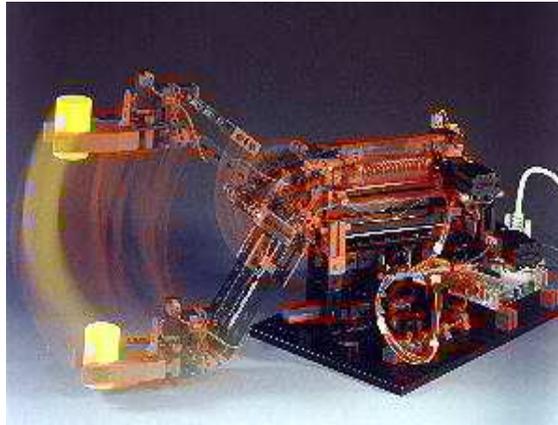
- Edutech 99
- On the Net
- Industry Robots
- New Software
- IR Control Set
- Profi Extension
- Robots 'R' Us
- P.S.
- Special Deal!

Edutech 99

We will be displaying the fischertechnik range of robotic kits and accessories at the EDUTECH exhibition in Melbourne from the 23rd to the 25th of May, 1999 at the Melbourne Exhibition Centre (Jeff's Shed). This is Australia's only major education and training exhibition for 1999!

On stand B10, you will see the latest kits from fischertechnik including: the Mobile Robots Kit, the Industry Robots Kit and the IR Control Set. On demonstration will be a robot arm controlled by computer that is voice activated - an educational demonstration that illustrates the use of robots (such as in medicine) at a fraction of the cost of a 'real-world' robot.

Also on show will be the various programming languages - as full source code is provided for each fischertechnik model; schools, TAFE colleges and universities can incorporate the use of robotics into programming courses in; PC-Logo, VisualBASIC, Delphi or VisualC++ (plus the a large range of DOS based languages). Or, if interested in machine control languages; relay-ladder logic programming is available as well as sequential flowchart control!



Giant posters and stickers will be given away along with the latest catalogue and pricelist.

On Tuesday the 25th of May, the Australian International Engineering Exhibition (incorporating the New Electronics Products Convention) begins in the Exhibition Centre. So why not 'kill two birds with one stone' and visit both exhibitions on this day!

On the Net

Don't forget to check our website for the latest information, software and specials:

www.procontechology.com.au

A pneumatic robots kit is to be released later this year; check out further details at:

www.fischertechnik.de

Industry Robots

Finally arrived in Australia is the Industry Robots Kit (30408). Designed as an add-on to any of the computer kits, this kit provides the parts and software to build four robot arms; a swivel robot, welding robot, column type robot and kink-arm robot (shown here).

Our evaluation shows that these robots are more robust and more flexible (with an extra degree of movement) than the robot arm in the Profi Computing Kit. Contained in this kit is four motors, eight switches and over 500 parts.

On a CD-ROM, in the kit, is example programs in LLWIN (but not the LLWIN programming software) and programs

for three out of the four projects that allow you to train each robot to perform a sequence of steps. A unique feature of this software is that it operates just like a real robot would in industry - as a robot nears a new position the motor speed reduces and it slowly moves into the final position! Please note, this software will only run on Windows 95/98 or NT.

Of course, we have also produced our own documentation and software for Windows 3.1 and 95/98. It's available separately or as a package with interface and power supply. Our software provides source code in VisualBASIC for Windows version 3 and greater. Also available is 32 bit software for VB, Delphi and VisualC++.

New Software

All computer software for VisualBASIC for Windows is now supplied with 16 bit and 32 bit drivers. This means that any version of VB (from version 3) can be used to modify and compile the source code. Versions of software for the parallel port interface (30520) and the serial port interface (30402) are available separately.

Please note, with our software drivers, converting programs from 16 bit to 32 bit or from the 30520

interface to the new 30402 interface is 'a piece of cake'. Programs can now be written to run under Windows 3.1, Windows 95/98 and Windows NT!

IR Control Set

Just released, the new Infra-Red Control Set (part no. 30344) capable of remotely controlling up to three DC motors (with forward-reverse and fast-slow operation) or up to six lamps or relays.

Designed primarily for use with construction sets (such as the harbour cranes or industry robot kit), it can also be used with other 6 to 9 volt systems - with the use of relays almost anything could be controlled in the home, school or office environment.

The 11 button transmitter unit fits in the palm of the hand and provides a range in excess of 15 metres. This high-performance unit does not require direct line-of-sight to the receiver to operate as the infra-red light bounces off the walls. At the press of a button the transmitter can be switched over to control a second receiver unit (available separately). The system uses the standard RCS code - this means that other devices employing this code can be used. For example, the social welfare services in Germany have installed voice recognition software on computers in the homes of disabled people and using a special infra-red module they can control their TV, Hi-Fi etc. Now they can control their fischertechnik models as well!

The receiver units are tiny - measuring just 30 x 60 x 25mm. They are designed to easily interconnect with other fischertechnik components. The eight sockets on the receiver allow up to three motors (M1 to M3) to be connected. Two inputs A and B are also provided. These inputs are used for the servo and traction drive functions.



In the servo mode, motor M2 is used to drive a steering mechanism left and right with a microswitch used to aid the return of the steering to its central (straight ahead) position. In the traction drive mode two motors (M1 and M2) are used to drive the left and right sides of a buggy. The receiver automatically controls the direction of rotation of each motor allowing the buggy to move forward, backward and rotate left and right at the press of a button.

Power to the receiver unit can be provided by the Power Block (30263) or Power Supply (30579PT). The receiver units may also be used in conjunction with the fischertechnik computer interface units for remote 'intelligent' control of models. Further details of this will be provided on our website.

Profi Extension

To make the Profi Computing Kit even more popular, Procon Technology has recently released the Profi Extension Pack (30490-1). This pack provides the assembly instructions, software and additional parts to perform four extra projects with the turtle as well as construct a transfer robot and a welding robot.

The four turtle projects allow you to: 1. add a pen holder to the turtle to draw interesting patterns. 2. to add a light sensor for finding the brightest light source in the room. 3. to add a bumper switch for detecting obstacles. 4. to add a read head for following lines drawn on the floor.

This low-cost kit also provides a convenient way to upgrade software to 32 bits. i.e. to use VisualBASIC for Windows version 4 and above. The complete source code for all additional projects is provided on the diskette.

Robots 'R' Us

A review of the Mobile Robots Kit (30400) appeared in the April issue of the Australian PC-Buyer magazine. Here's what Aldis Ozols had to say: 'The fischertechnik products are clearly inspired by industrial designs, and this is reflected in the "look and feel" of the Mobile Robots kit. There's a distinct ambience of "realness" to these projects, making it seem as if you'd find the same design, only larger, in a factory or laboratory somewhere. The assembly instructions are presented in a clear, technical-drawing style, which makes it pretty easy to work out which of the 280 pieces you need next. Of course, you can design and build your own machines if you're feeling creative.'

P.S.

Just a quick note about batteries. New rechargeable alkaline batteries are now available for use with the Mobile Robots kit. Look out for the BIG or Grandcell batteries and rechargers in stores.

SPECIAL DEAL!

Until the 30th June 1999, all cash and credit card purchases of non-computer kits or the Turtle Kit (30632) will be at the ex-tax price. Yes, we will pay the tax for you!

Check our website for current prices or phone or fax for a pricelist. Please note, this special offer only applies to kits currently held in stock and does not apply to spare parts or in conjunction with other discount offers.