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Press Release

*Rackham, LAAS-CNRS' interactive robot, one of the **COGNIRON** platforms, goes on a trip to the UK, to attend the international conference RO-MAN 06, which will take place from Sept. 6-8 at the University of Hertfordshire in Hatfield..*

RO-MAN 06, the 15th IEEE International Symposium on Robot and Human Interactive Communication, whose topic this year is '*Getting to Know Socially Intelligent Robots*' is organized and hosted during 6-8 September 2006 by the University of Hertfordshire, Hatfield, United Kingdom.

The European Commission FET – 'Beyond Robotics' projects have been invited to display some of their work and platforms during that international event, for the 200 expected visitors.

On that special occasion, LAAS-CNRS will exceptionally send one of its **COGNIRON** platforms, the robot Rackham (see picture on the right) to the UK, together with a team of researchers, engineers and doctoral students.

Rackham is a robot equipped with cameras and a laser telemeter which has the specificity to be an autonomous interactive mobile robot. It is equipped with various sensors (cameras, a laser range finder, ultrasonic proximity sensors) and is able to map its environment and to navigate autonomously in presence of the public. Rackham detects humans visually and interacts with them. He is able to guide people to a given location using menus on a tactile screen, and is able to address humans with an animated avatar and voice synthesis.

Rackham has already demonstrated its capacities as a museum tour guide robot at the Space City in Toulouse, where it took part of the exhibition 'Biospace mission' for a year and a half.

During the demonstration at RO-MAN 06, Rackham will show its cognitive capacities and be able to guide visitors between the different project exhibitions.

The **COGNIRON** partners will also be actively involved in the conference itself with a presentation of the latest research results of the on-going work on 'robot companions' (by Rachid Alami, LAAS-CNRS) and a tutorial on '*Social Interactions with Robot Companions*', which will involve several partners. Finally the project will also sponsor a robot design contest for students (poster contest).



Rackham is an interactive robot able to interact with humans and guide them on an exhibition.

Additional Information:

- RO-MAN 2006 : <http://ro-man2006.feis.herts.ac.uk>
- Robot design contest: <http://ro-man2006.feis.herts.ac.uk/contest.php>
- Rackham at the Space City in Toulouse: <http://www2.laas.fr/robots/rackham/>
- COGNIRON Project: <http://www.cogniron.org>
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