

New ABB robot control software supports lean cell design

ABB's new RobotWare 5.13 control software delivers even greater performance, ease of use and enhanced safety for industrial robotic applications

ABB has launched the latest version of its robot controller software, RobotWare 5.13. The updated software provides manufacturers with improved programming and control of robotic equipment, as well as enhancing functionality, safety and motion control. For manufacturers this facilitates smarter, leaner robot cell concepts and the enhanced control of production lines.

One key development in this version of RobotWare is in the area of safety, where powerful new features have been added to SafeMove, ABB's market leading, next generation robot safety system. With the new features, even more precise control of robot motion can be achieved, thus allowing integrators to optimize cell design and production flow even further.

Another powerful new feature is the 'indexing conveyor' function, which allows a conveyor to be driven by the robot as an additional axis. When combined with ABB's FlexPicker IRB360, this feature increases picking and packing cycles to 450 products per minute. This function eliminates the need for expensive racetrack installations and helps to significantly reduce the overall cost of a packing installation.

Another new feature integrated into RobotWare 5.13 is ABB's new Torque Slave software, which enables multiple motors to be driven as a single logical axis. Using this function, the robot is able to control heavy-duty equipment, such as large workpiece positioners.

To enable more users to reap the savings associated with the low cost DeviceNet™ Lean bus, ABB has extended it to support up to 20 units (previously 6) and to allow the control of third party I/O units. In addition to significant cost saving, the Lean version of the DeviceNet communications protocol also offers new auto configuration and bus scan tools for seamless communications with all connected devices.

RobotWare 5.13 software is also 100% compatible with ABB's new IRC5 Compact controller which combines the powerful performance of the standard IRC5 controller, including superior motion control and flexible RAPID language, with a significantly reduced footprint.

Commenting on the new software, ABB Product Manager, Mats Myhr says, "What should interest many robot users is that we are rolling out the recently introduced Compact version of the IRC5 controller on a wide range of robot types, in addition to the small IRB 120 robot the new version of RobotWare 5.13 allows the IRC5 Compact controller to be used with the IRB 140 and IRB 1410 robots. This range will be further expanded during 2010."

"In addition to the above examples, we have also introduced a wide range of other improvements delivering added efficiency and ease of use in very many robot applications" comments Myhr. "These changes are a direct result of the feedback we receive from our users. What remains unchanged is ABB's advanced motion technology which still provides the most accurate path following and shortest cycle times on the market".

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