

Press Release

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Winners of the SPRINT Robotics Awards 2019 announced

Hilversum, 31 October 2019

During the SPRINT Robotics World Conference for Inspection and Maintenance Robotics 2019 in Rotterdam, the winners of the SPRINT Robotics Awards 2019 were announced.

The SPRINT Robotics Awards acknowledge and reward exceptional work in inspection and maintenance robotics in our society. In 2019, three awards categories were introduced: Groundbreaking Collaborative Work towards Acceptance of Inspection and Maintenance Robotics, Scaling of a Robotic Solution, and New Innovative Technology in Inspection, Maintenance or Cleaning.

Tjibbe Bouma, Chairman of SPRINT Robotics: "It is a privilege to present the SPRINT Robotics Awards to the winners at the World Conference for Inspection and Maintenance Robotics. These companies are trailblazers for accelerated global acceptance of robotics for inspection and maintenance. This will make inspection and maintenance safer, more productive and more environmentally friendly. SPRINT Robotics is very happy with the rapid progress and growing momentum that was evident at the conference. This prize is an important recognition for the recipients and I congratulate them on behalf of the SPRINT Robotics Collaborative".

GE Inspection Robotics was awarded first prize in the category Groundbreaking Collaborative Work towards Acceptance of Inspection and Maintenance Robotics.

The Boiler Wall Cleaning and Inspection Robot (BWCI) is an automated robotic system for water wall cleaning and inspection, removing the need of sending human inside confined spaces. GE Inspection Robotics' collaboration with BASF Antwerp focused on operational procedures and implementation, resulting in a final industrialized system which is in operational use at BASF.

"With the technology we develop, we are disrupting current inspection and maintenance practices. We rely on and we embrace collaboration with industrial partners enabling to deploy robotics. BASF has been an enabler for many years and we appreciate the trust and exchange we get implementing robotic solutions", says Ekki Zwicker, CEO of GE Inspection Robotics.

Other winners in the Groundbreaking Collaborative Work towards Acceptance of Inspection and Maintenance Robotics category were:

2nd prize, Nexxis, in partnership with Australia's Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), for the development of Magneto, a robotic platform designed to naturally climb and inspect complex industrial geometries;

3rd prize, IRISNDT, the first NDT company to commercially test 3D localization on the GE Bike, in collaboration with GE Inspection Robotics.

Dow was first place winner of the SPRINT Robotics Award for Scaling of a Robotic Solution.

While many companies pursue eliminating confined space entries (CSEs), Dow has pivoted to embrace ZERO CSEs. Dow has accelerated their robotic deployments for inspection and maintenance activities across their global sites; their safety-first initiative has ignited the drive for robotic deployments, quickly enabling many sites with a comprehensive robotic toolbox of platforms and sensors.

Peter Voorhans, MEC TS Global Improvement Leader at Dow: "Our primary goal is increasing safety; by using robots, we bring back the number of confined space entries, make working at high altitudes safer and even diving under water is done by robots. It is not only safer, but working with robots is also more efficient and yields more consistent data that further improves maintenance work. 48.000 hours of confined space entry have been avoided by the use of robots."

Second prize in the Scaling of a Robotic Solution was awarded to Total for their ATEX-type of ground robot which was able to execute many operational tasks in both tele-operated and autonomous mode.

Nexxis was the first place winner of the SPRINT Robotics Award for New Innovative Technology in Inspection, Maintenance or Cleaning.

Magneto, designed and developed by Nexxis, is the next generation of multi-limbed, climbing inspection robots that are able to exceed the mobility and versatility of operations from current inspection solutions. Magneto provides an autonomous and spatially aware robotic platform, using advanced sensors and cameras coupled with artificial intelligence (AI).

Jason De Silveira, Director at Nexxis commented: "Nexxis has focused on a collaboration framework together with our partners CSIRO Data61 and NERA to ensure our robotics roadmap delivers the outcomes our customers are looking for. Magneto is focused on providing the dexterity needed to manipulate in order to become part of the autonomous intelligent working robot. Winning the award is validation that we are in fact on track in the technology space and very humbling."

Other winners in the category New Innovative Technology in Inspection, Maintenance or Cleaning were:

2nd place, Diakont, for the Diakont Underwater Robotics Decontamination tool used in nuclear power plants;

3rd place, RoNik Inspectioneering, for the RoNik UT drone which can execute a number of different tasks for tank shell and roof plates.

The SPRINT Robotics Awards are awarded annually. This year they were presented on October 22nd in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, during the conference banquet of the SPRINT Robotics World Conference for Inspection and Maintenance Robotics 2019. The winners were selected by means of a majority vote by the SPRINT Robotics Program Committee.



About SPRINT Robotics

Launched in 2015, the SPRINT Robotics Collaborative is a global not-for-profit foundation, driven by asset owners and operators to promote the development, availability, application and commercialization of robotics techniques in technical inspections and maintenance of capital-intensive infrastructure.

With industry progress and acceptance of inspection and maintenance robotics globally, the SPRINT Robotics Collaborative network continues to grow at a rapid speed. Participants include asset owners and operators, technology developers and suppliers, and service providers in the robotic inspection and maintenance field around the world.

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Photos courtesy of the SPRINT Robotics Collaborative / Marlou Pulles