

Press Release

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Winners of the SPRINT Robotics Awards 2020 announced

The winners of the SPRINT Robotics Awards 2020 were announced at the SPRINT Robotics Awards Ceremony, a virtual event to celebrate excellence in the field of robotics for Inspection and Maintenance. The SPRINT Robotics Awards acknowledge and reward exceptional work in Inspection and Maintenance robotics in our society and are comprised of three different categories: 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: “The SPRINT Robotics Awards are established as prestigious awards to celebrate the progress in Inspection and Maintenance Robotics. I warmly congratulate all winners of the SPRINT Robotics Awards and salute the runners up. Their achievements show that robotics for Inspection & Maintenance are developing by leaps and bounds, not only in terms of technological capabilities but also in terms of market uptake. We are on the cusp of a major breakthrough of robotics for these applications, in part accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic that pressed home the realization we cannot and should not rely on human presence at facilities and infrastructure both for personnel safety as well as operational continuity. I hope that the SPRINT Robotics Awards will help encourage everybody to keep pushing the boundaries.”

Hibot was awarded first prize in the category Groundbreaking Collaborative Work towards Acceptance of Inspection and Maintenance Robotics for their partnership with BASF Antwerp.

Hibot & BASF Antwerp joined forces to investigate how a robotic arm could become beneficial for inspection and maintenance in the future. Using hibot’s Float Arm, a new snake manipulator designed for long-reach applications in confined spaces, they defined a roadmap and validation tests. A team was put in place, involving several stakeholders within the plant operations: ranging from operation to inspection and maintenance groups.

“The collaboration with BASF Antwerp has been wonderful. BASF Antwerp has enabled us to make the right choices and to adapt our concept of Float Arm to their needs. The winning point has been the tight collaboration from day one, involving all important stake holders at different level. By doing this, we can make sure that Float Arm will be embraced right away in the field as a new robotic solution.

This award represents a big boost for all hibot members and will help us to speed up even more the innovation we are forging ahead. We are looking forward to the next steps of this cooperation with BASF Antwerp, and to the field deployment of the first units of Float Arm in the next year”, said Michele Guarnieri, co-founder and CEO at hibot.

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

2nd prize, ANYbotics & PETRONAS, a long-term partnership to establish autonomous robotic inspection and remote operation on oil & gas platforms. They recently conducted a successful multi-week installation with the robot ANYmal C on one of their offshore facilities.

3rd prize, Rolls-Royce plc & University of Nottingham & Metallisation for the FLARE project which primarily focuses on the patch repair of aeroengine combustor tiles where thermal barrier coating has been lost in-service.

JIREH Industries was the winner of the SPRINT Robotics Award for Scaling of a Robotic Solution.

JIREH Industries' NAVIC robotic inspection platform is used to facilitate inspections in many environments and applications. It can be used to perform non-destructive testing with various types of sensors mounted. Taking a modular design approach has fueled the growth of the NAVIC platform. Starting with a base crawler capable of operation on many different surface geometries, attachments were then designed to enable operation for many different applications.

“Our JIREH Industries team is so pleased to have been selected to receive the 2020 Scaling of a Robotic Solution Award. We are incredibly grateful to have our work recognized by SPRINT Robotics. The NAVIC crawler is the result of so much hard work and dedication from our team. Our goal from the start has been to provide a means of safe and accurate inspection for many different types of applications, all within a rugged, low-profile housing. Our thanks again to SPRINT Robotics.”

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

The Voliro T, Voliro's flying inspection robot, is a 360-degree flying robot with the unique capability to perform physical work at height and in confined spaces. The unique design of the system combined with various payloads enable the system to conduct lightweight inspection and maintenance jobs safely and rapidly, reducing the risk of human exposure to hazardous environments while increasing speed and quality of the job.

Mina Kamel, co-founder and CEO of Voliro commented: “We are very pleased and honoured to receive the SPRINT Robotics Award for New Innovative Technology. We are working hard to provide safer, faster and reliable aerial inspection and maintenance robotics in close collaboration with end users and asset owners. We are looking forward to expand our operations and industrial collaborations with the support of SPRINT Robotics.”

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

2nd place, Sonobotics, for the SONUS acquisition system, a NDE inspection acquisition system custom-designed to enable the use of Electro-Magnetic Acoustic Transducers (EMATs) with existing robotic platforms;

3rd place, Intero Integrity, for OTIS online robotic tank inspection system which takes online settlement measurements.

The SPRINT Robotics Awards are awarded annually. [This year they were presented on September 21st at a virtual awards ceremony.](#) Being an end user driven organization, the Program Committee (asset owners/operators) selected the winners. An overview of all of the winning solutions can be [downloaded here.](#)



About SPRINT Robotics

The SPRINT Robotics Collaborative is a global, not-for-profit, industry-driven organization that focuses on the development, availability and application of robotics techniques in technical inspections and maintenance of capital-intensive infrastructure. Founded in 2015, it has developed into a strong organization with a support base of more than 90 organizations globally. It has become the internationally recognized platform for Inspection & Maintenance Robotics. One major focus of SPRINT Robotics is to engage and bring together the whole value chain, from end users to service and technology providers.

CONTACT

Catherine Reijans, Marketing & Communication for SPRINT Robotics

catherine.reijans@sprintrobotics.org

+31 (0)35 760 06 85

www.sprintrobotics.org