

Introduction to the CARE Workpackage on Legal Societal and Ethical Issues.

David Bisset iTechnic Ltd.

david@itechnic.co.uk

This talk will provide a brief introduction to the work to be undertaken as a part of the CARE project funded under Framework 6.

CARE is the Coordination Action for Robotics in Europe and is funded by the European Commission to support the European Technology Platform (ETP) European Robotics Platform (EUROP). EUROP is a network of some 250 industrial, and academic participants ranging from the major European robotics manufacturers to SME's and consultants. Its function is to provide a forum for discussion and to coordinate activities and planning within the robotics community in Europe.

As a part of the CARE action a package of work on Legal Societal and Ethical issues is defined to explore the issues that will face robot manufacturers and users as robots become able to work in cooperation with Humans in everyday environments. It is inevitable that there will be barriers caused by legal, societal and ethical issues surrounding co-working between humans and robots.

The broad range of end users and environments raise many different issues, from ethical ways of using robots to help an aging population, through handling workplace displacement, to issues of liability for domestic robots.

These issues will be framed by existing national laws and international conventions, as well as different ethical perspectives and societal expectations across the different states of Europe.

It is already possible to see many technical areas, for example invasive medical robotics, where legal and ethical issues have a greater influence on the delivery of systems to the market than the technology. This trend is likely to continue as robots become increasingly integrated into our society. In order for manufacturers and designers to become aware of these issues it will be important to build better cross discipline understanding and education and create a legal and ethical infrastructure that can successfully underpin the deployment of robots in human environments within a viable commercial framework.

The work under CARE will encourage a dialogue between experts in non-technical domains and manufacturers and designers in Europe on the exploration of these issues. This will take place through workshops and seminars.