

RAS Chapter News from Around the Globe

Region 4

IEEE RAS Dignitary Visits Rose–Hulman Institute of Technology
 Dr. Raj Madhavan spoke at the Rose–Hulman Institute of Technology (Terre Haute, Indiana, United States) on Wednesday, 29 November 2017 (Figure 1). The talk was filled with energy, the room was packed, and students were sitting in stairways just to hear the presentation. Madhavan opened by candidly talking about some misconceptions that go hand in hand with robotics. He addressed issues such as the so-called *Hollywood effect* and how film portrayals of robotics can negatively affect the field as a whole.

He then jumped right into some of the most prominent humanitarian uses of robotics, from machines that check for mines, to robots that help perform search-and-rescue functions and map areas with the global positioning system before and after natural disasters. Madhavan talked extensively about applications for different kinds of robots and delved into

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how robotic automation could be used to improve humanity’s quality of life.

All of these topics served to whet the appetite of students looking to use their robotics knowledge to help society. The speaker was able to show the students the different resources offered by the local IEEE Robotics and Automation Society (RAS) branch and talk about how students could take advantage of these benefits and even enter competitions through it.

Region 8

Italy RAS Chapter Initiates Video Contest

The RAS Italy Chapter organized the first “Robotics Made in Italy” video contest in July 2017. The contest was open to all students, including Ph.D. aspirants and postdoctoral researchers at Italian universities and research centers. The Chapter asked participants to create an original video to show the impact on society and industry of Italy’s robotics style. The RAS awarded prizes for the best three videos. The introductory video of the awards can be found at <https://goo.gl/5pkKhB>.

The Awards Committee was formed by Luca Carlone (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, United States), Raffaella Carloni (Twente University, The Netherlands), Antonio Franchi (Laboratory for Analysis and Architecture of Systems, France), Serena Ivaldi (Inria, France), and Claudio Pacchierotti (Irisia and Inria, France).

The awards ceremony took place during the annual IEEE Robotics and Automation Society Italian Chapter meeting in Milan on 11 September 2017 (Figures 2 and 3). The best three videos were

- 1) “Immersive Teleoperation Using Wearable Devices,” Gianluca Lentini, Alessandro Settimi, and Gaspare Santaera, Università di Pisa, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z0MEdAiPWS0>
- 2) “Making a Pizza: A Robotic Approach,” Jonathan Cacace and Mario Selvaggio, Università di Napoli Federico II, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tijpGTIva3g>
- 3) “Playing Piano by Demonstration,” Clemente Lauretti, Francesca Cordella, and Davide Simonetti, Campus BioMedico di Roma, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GxYs2YCGZ74>.



Figure 1. Dr. Raj Madhavan speaks to a packed lecture hall at Rose–Hulman Institute of Technology.



Figure 2. Lucia Pollottino (center) presents the second-place award to Jonathan Cacace (left) and Mario Selvaggio.