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Anybots Partners With RoboMatrix to Distribute Telepresence Robots

RoboMatrix and Anybots, Inc., have partnered to market a telepresence service robot in Japan and Taiwan, with trans-Pacific rentals beginning as early as mid-2010. The Anybots QB robot—essentially a wheel-driven, mounted camera—enables the operator using a computer and a wireless Internet connection to control the device from a remote location, guiding it to interact with people at eye-level, inspect the area, or give a presentation. The robot is able to navigate in tight spaces such as a factory floor or a laboratory—or a family home. RoboMatrix, a division of industrial robotics distributor Innovation Matrix, will have exclusive distribution rights for QB rentals in Japan and Taiwan and non-exclusive regional sales distribution rights.

Innovation Matrix co-founder Eimie Onaga said RoboMatrix is still developing rental pricing for the QB. He estimated the QB's retail purchase price at less than \$15,000. He noted that the QB rental pricing structure may vary by the application; for example business use of a mobile QB may be priced differently than a stationary on-site QB, or consumer use to visit a friend. RoboMatrix is initially introducing the QB as a solution for manufacturing, consumer retail, hospitality, and medical industries in Japan and Taiwan to help company executives attend meetings or trade shows without travel. Japan seeks to reduce its CO2 emissions 25% by 2020, and corporations are required reduce their emissions accordingly to meet the goal.



The 35-pound QB has a six- to eight-hour battery life. Its “head” has a video screen and a five-megapixel video camera that streams a high definition video and audio feed to the operator. The camera can zoom-in, and can capture still photos. The telepresence technology enables the operator to speak to others via Internet voice protocols and “gesture” in conversation by controlling a laser pointer to indicate objects. Presentations take place via Justin TV, a third-party web site that enables users to broadcast live streaming video content.

Founded in 2001, Anybots seeks to develop robotic devices to facilitate “simultaneous presence” solutions that enable the user to be in two places at once. RoboMatrix is a division of Innovation Matrix, Inc., a distributor and system integrator of automation applications specializing in industrial robotics, motion control, and machine vision products. Mr. Onaga founded Innovation Matrix in 2004; the company has alliance offices in the United States, Korea, China, Taiwan, and Japan. The RoboMatrix division was founded in 2006 to focus on next-generation robot technology and business matchmaking by collaborating with service robot technology companies. From 2004 through 2006, Mr. Onaga visited robotics companies with products in various stages of development seeking devices with potential as service robots.

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