

EE Times: Semi News  
Korea tests combat, English-teaching robots

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SEOUL, South Korea — Korea has moved to advance its growing robotics industry by developing separate “horse-like” combat and English-teaching robots. On the defense front, Korea plans to develop a mobile combat, “horse-like” robot that would fight alongside human soldiers on the battlefield, according to the Korea Times. Officials heading the project have requested 33.4 billion won (\$32.4 million) in funding between 2006 and 2011, according to the report.

“The robot will have six or eight extendable legs with wheels allowing it to move like an insect over uneven terrain,” according to the report. “The robot will be armed with various weapons and will operate both by remote control and its own artificial intelligence system.”

The Defense Ministry will develop the robot’s mobility systems. The Ministry of Information and Communication will provide the remote control systems. Researchers at the Agency for Defense Development and the Electronics and Telecommunications Research Institute will be tasked with developing most of the technology.

Separately, the Korea Advanced Intelligent Robot Association (KAIRA) said that it has begun testing a robot that can help teach English to younger students, according to a report from the JoongAng Daily news.

KAIRA, part of the Ministry of Information and Communications, said the robots can perform basic tasks such as reading to children and teaching them to pronounce certain words, according to the report. The association plans to add more complex teaching functions like mathematics for older students, it added.

The agency plans to test 64 robots at apartment complexes in Seoul, Bucheon and Bundang in Gyeonggi province by year’s end, according to the report.

The testing process will enable the association to improve the robots’ weaknesses. It plans to commercialize the robots as early as next year at a price of 1 million won (\$960) each, the report said. Those with high-speed Internet access can connect to the robots via the Net for teaching purposes.

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