

Transcript of Opening Speech
By



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@
Launch and Press Conference of
“Silicon Valley World Creative Robot Competition” (SVWCRC2017)
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VIPs, Guests, and Everybody,

Thank you for coming to the Launch & Press Conference of Silicon Valley World Robot Competition (SVWCRC2017).



Launch & Press Conference poster of SVWCRC2017.

I do not want to give you the impression that this project happened overnight. It was three years ago, may be more than three years ago, that Carmelita first proposed to me the idea of robots that culminated in today's launch. I found the idea interesting in several ways.



The Panel:

Dian J. (Beacon Light, USA), William C. (Attorney), Carmelita C. (President, UNESCO CID SFS), Dr. Hwa A. L. (Chairman, UNESCO CID SFS), Hong Y. (China), Hang L. (China), Dr. Richard C. (Stanford Univ.)

First, a more personal one. In 2004, I published a book titled “Multiplicity Yours”, which talks about cloning, stem cells and regenerative medicine. In the closing chapter of the book, I discussed a scenario in which two people were in a conversation. When the conversation got more intimate, how might a person react when (s)he discovered that the “person” (s)he had been talking to was a clone? Now if you substitute the clone with a robot, you see what I am getting at.

Second, a more technological one. Trends were already heading the way of robots. Robotics is moving forward so rapidly that it is imminent that robots will be a major part of the workforce. So in the future, instead of talking only about human resources, we will have robot resources to compete against. In fact, this is already happening. And think about it, robots can be replicated (instead of cloned), and the verisimilitude is amazing!

After years of back and forth discussions, and countless hamburgers and McCafe coffee afterwards, here we are – The launch of SVWCRC2017. SVWCRC2017 has three components: The first component is robot dance competition; the second is human, that is, *Homo sapiens*, dance competition. And between these two, there is also human/robot competition in which humans dance with robots.

This might sound very straightforward. But when it comes to robots, “hard things are easy, and easy things are hard.” For those of you who are in the trade, this is Moravec’s paradox.

We, *Homo sapiens*, are a product of million years of evolution. Many of the (easy) activities that we take for granted, for example vision and motion, are actually very hard for robots. A child can tell the difference between a cat and a dog; to survive, we have to be able to tell danger looming when we see silhouettes of predators, and run for our lives. We can tell, for example, a tiger, under different shades of light. These are easy things for us, but are hard for robots.

Robots are a product of rational thinking. Thus hard things for *Homo sapiens*, such as solving mathematical problems, are easy for robots.

In our so many years observing dancing, we have noticed that while roboticists are working hard to get robots to dance more like *Homo sapiens*; *Homo sapiens* are going the other way – trying to dance like robots through rote-memorizations of dance patterns or standardization of dances, that is, to the point of dancing fixed sequences of dance moves with complete disregard to music!

This is going to be the first time where we have *H. sapiens*-robots partnering in a *coopetitive* (competition by cooperation) manner to outperform competitors, that is, the *H. sapiens*-robot partnership has to compete while cooperating! An oxymoron of sort, but nonetheless an interesting partnership.

A less conspicuous element is the cross- and trans-disciplinary of humanity, science and technology – the arts of dancing through the nuances of body movement, expressiveness, creativity, with a product of technology that is much less so in the nuances but great in repetition and accuracies!

This will suffice to show you that the human-robot partnerships can be very exciting, and it is a matter of human-robot partners who can *creatively* complement each other's strengths and skills (or compensate for the weaknesses and ineptness of partners) that will eventually prevail at the finals of SVWCRC in October of this year.

Lest we forget, we are part of United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) c/o CID, which has a mandate to help the less fortunate. This is where the third component of SVWCRC2017 – “Creativity Seed Plan” – comes in. “Creativity Seed Plan” will provide scholarships to help bring people in less fortunate countries to SVWCRC, which is to be held in Silicon Valley, California – one of the havens of robotics – to learn and to assimilate. Hopefully, upon their return, these people will help disseminate what they have learned to others in their respective countries – sort of as the tide rises, each and every one, has to rise with the boat.



The Launch: Carmelita C., William C., Dr. Hwa L., Dian J., Hong Y., Hang L., Dr. Richard C.

To the end of discouraging the more well-to-dos of taking advantage of “acquiring” a robot instead of building one, there is an interview before robot dance competition to make sure that the “owner” knows the ins-and-outs and minutiae of the robot; that is, (s)he builds the robot, and not purchases or hires experts to build one!

Another unique feature of SVWCRC is the process of participatory synchronous voting. During the competitions, 10% of the scores will come from public voting, that is, worldwide, those who have Internet access can participate in the voting process simultaneously and interactively. This is a reason why most of our collaborators at this point are Web or social network entities. In fact, the software for synchronous voting is now in a beta-testing phase.

So far we have collaborators from USA, UK, Pacific Rim nations, India and especially China. More countries will definitely join in. SVWCRC is going to be an exciting competition – a first of its kind!



Launch and cake cutting.

And now, last but not least, a quote from US Congressman Ro Khanna of Congressional District CA-17, which came from Washington D.C. on Feb 23 at 7:41am:

“It’s my honor to represent Silicon Valley, a diverse constituency, leading the way in innovation and technology. I encourage all residents to explore careers where their passions lie. We must work to bring these jobs and opportunities across America, not just in our district. Many thanks to the Silicon Valley World Creative Robot Competition for their work in inspiring creativity in this field.”

With all these, SVWCRC has got on to a great start, and let us wish SVWCRC many more successes.