

From human-robot interaction to collaborative control: A human centered perspective

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(Organizers: Mourad Benoussaad, Arash Ajoudani, Toshiaki Tsuji, Micky Rakotondrabe)*

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Control of Physical Human-Robot Interaction for Safe Collaborative Tasks



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SAPIENZA
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Summary

A survey of pHRI/HRC research at DIAG Sapienza in the last decade



-
- **Control architecture for physical Human-Robot Interaction/Collaboration**
 - **Safety**
 - detecting/isolating contacts and unexpected collisions in the presence of humans
 - reacting promptly in a safe mode
 - **Coexistence**
 - human and robot actively sharing the same workspace
 - coordinated actions without contacts
 - **Collaboration**
 - localization of physical interaction
 - estimation of exchanged forces between human and robot
 - robot control (admittance, force, impedance, hybrid motion-force, ...) for collaboration
 - **Implementation**
 - on lightweight/research robots
 - on standard industrial robots

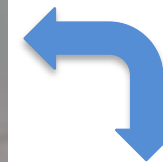
Handling of collisions and intentional contacts

Basic **safety-related control** problems in pHRI

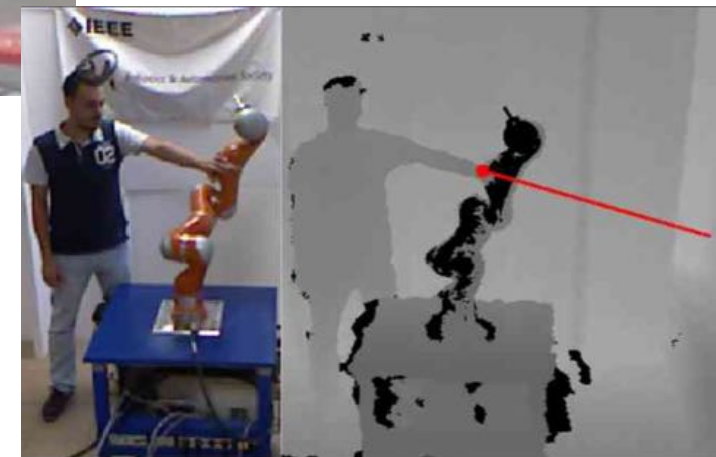


collision **detection/isolation** and **reaction**
(**without** the use of external sensing)

workspace monitoring
for **continuous**
collision **avoidance**
(while the task is running)



estimation and control
of **intentional forces**
exchanged at the contact
(**without** or **with** a **F/T** sensor)
for human-robot collaboration



A control architecture for physical HRI

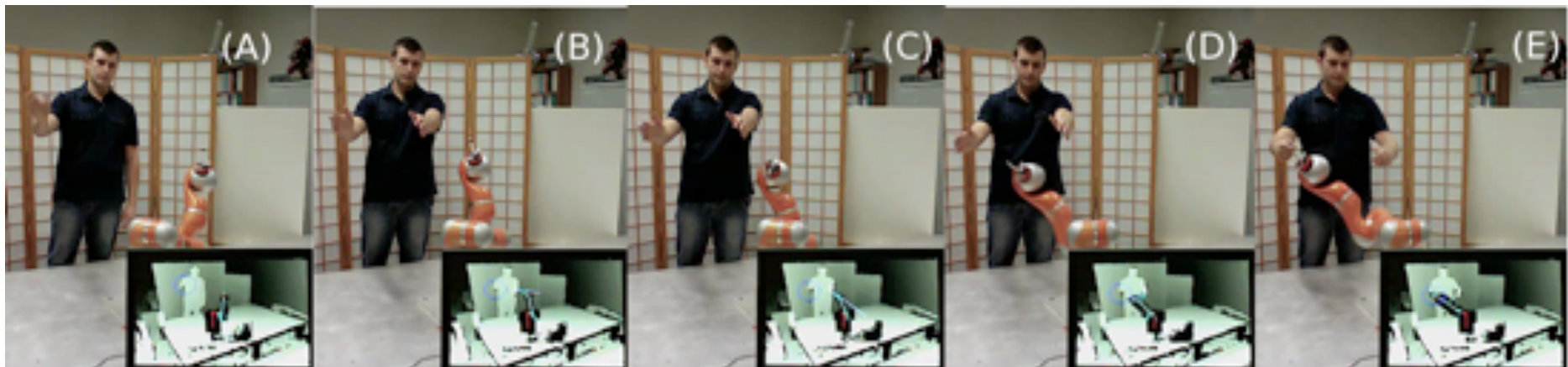
Hierarchy of consistent robot behaviors (BioRob 2012)



Safety is the most important feature of a robot that has to work close to humans (requires **collision detection and reaction**)

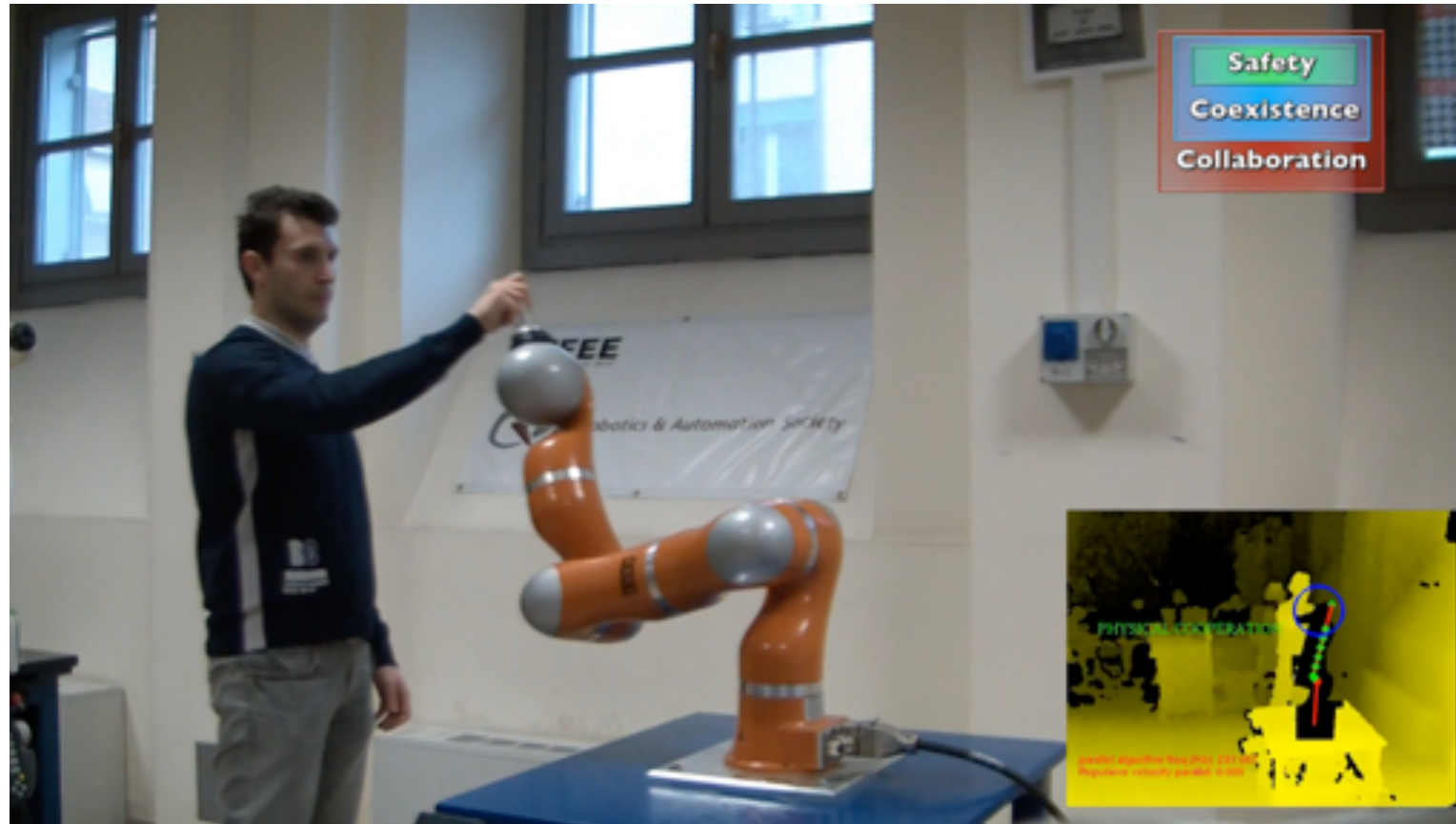
Coexistence is the robot capability of sharing the workspace with humans (**collision avoidance**)

Collaboration occurs when the robot performs complex tasks with **direct human coordination** (mostly, with **physical interaction**)



Safe coexistence and collaboration in pHRI

Excerpt from the finalist video at IROS 2013



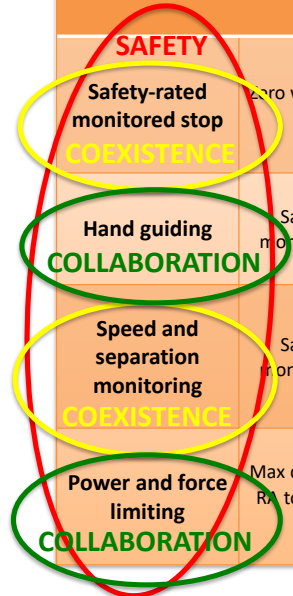
video

- **collaboration** through contact force identification (here, at end-effector only)

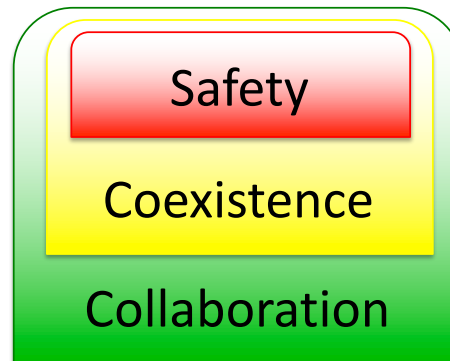
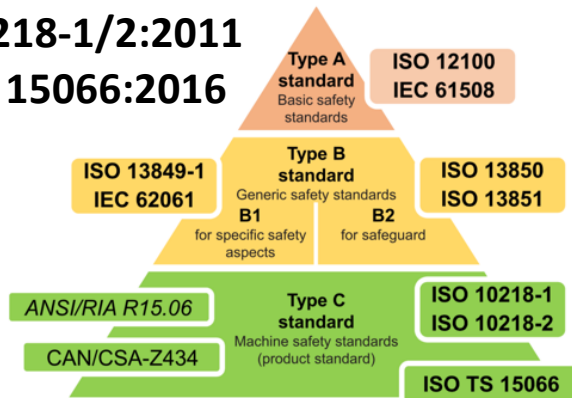
A control architecture for physical HRI

Relation with ISO Standard 10218 and Technical Specification 15066

	Speed	Separation distance	Torques	Operator controls	Main risk reduction
LEVEL 1 - Safety-rated monitored stop SMS	Zero while operator in CWS	Small or zero	Gravity + load compensation only	None while operator in CWS	No motion in presence of operator
LEVEL 2 - Hand guiding HG	Safety-rated monitored speed	Small or zero	As by direct operator input	E-stop; Enabling device; Motion input	Motion only by direct operator input
LEVEL 3 - Speed and separation monitoring SSM	Safety-rated monitored speed	Safety-rated monitored distance	As required to execute application and maintain min separation distance	None while operator in CWS	Contact between robot and operator prevented
LEVEL 4 - Power and force limiting PFL	Max determined by RA to limit impact forces	Small or zero	Max determined by RA to limit static forces	As required by application	By design or control, robot cannot impart excessive force



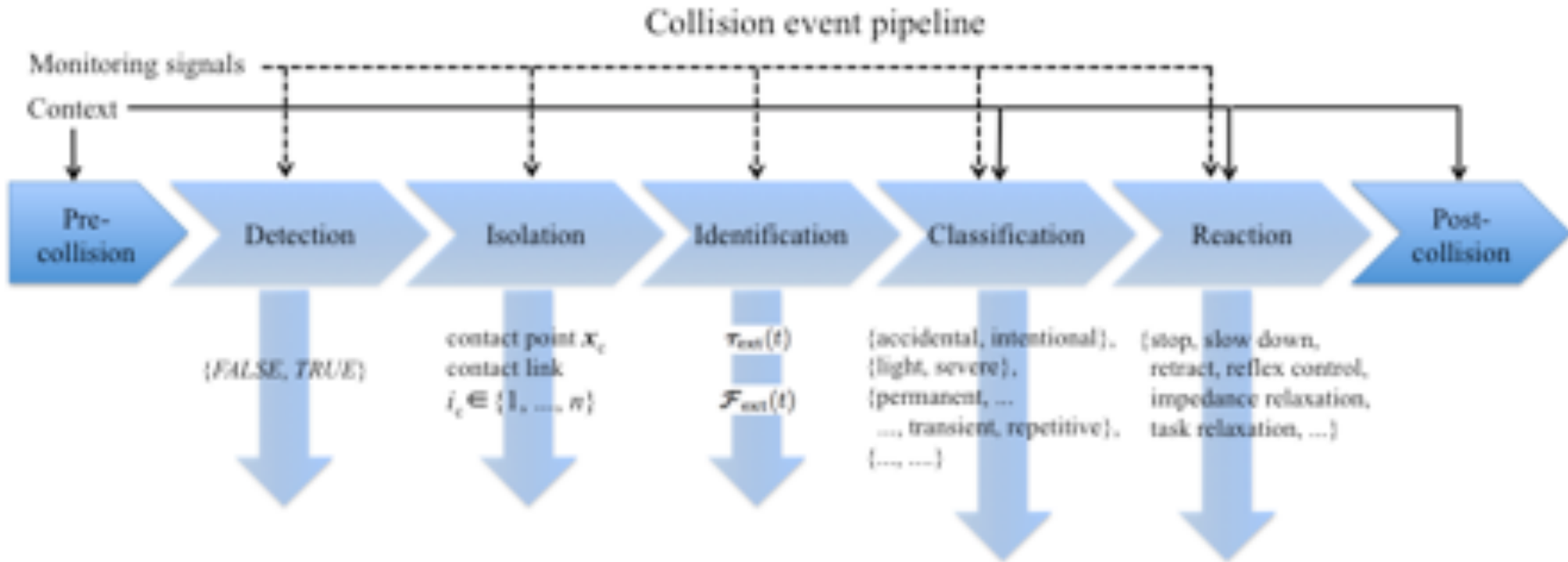
ISO 10218-1/2:2011
ISO/TS 15066:2016



- collision detection and reaction
- workspace sharing
 - with collision avoidance
- coordinated motions & actions
 - with/without contact

Collision event pipeline

Haddadin, De Luca, Albu-Schäffer (T-RO 2017)

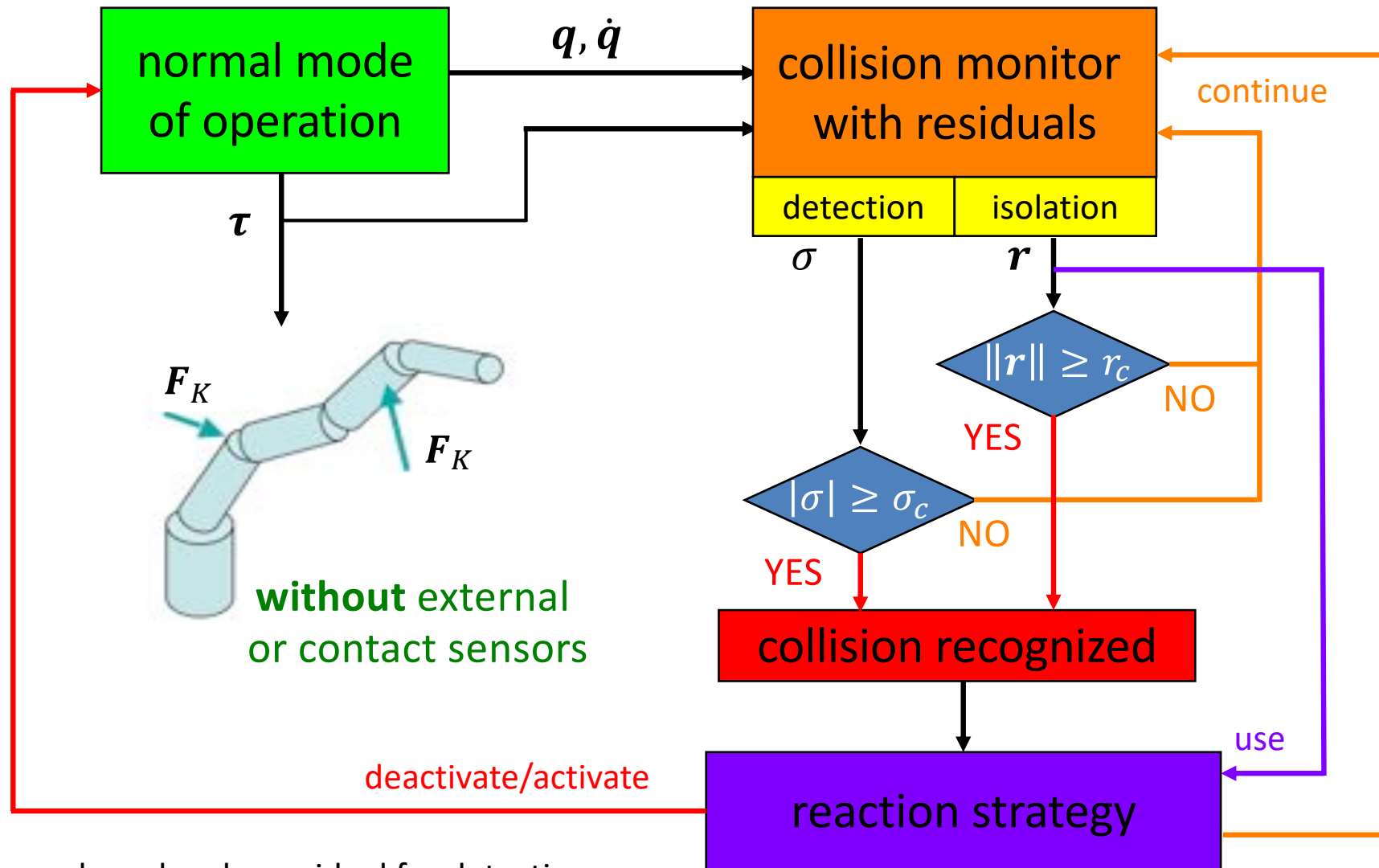


Monitoring signals can be generated from sensors or models (signal- or model-based methods)

Context information is needed (or useful) to take the right or most suitable decision

Monitoring robot collisions

Applies to **rigid and elastic** joints, **with and without** joint torque sensing (IROS 2006)



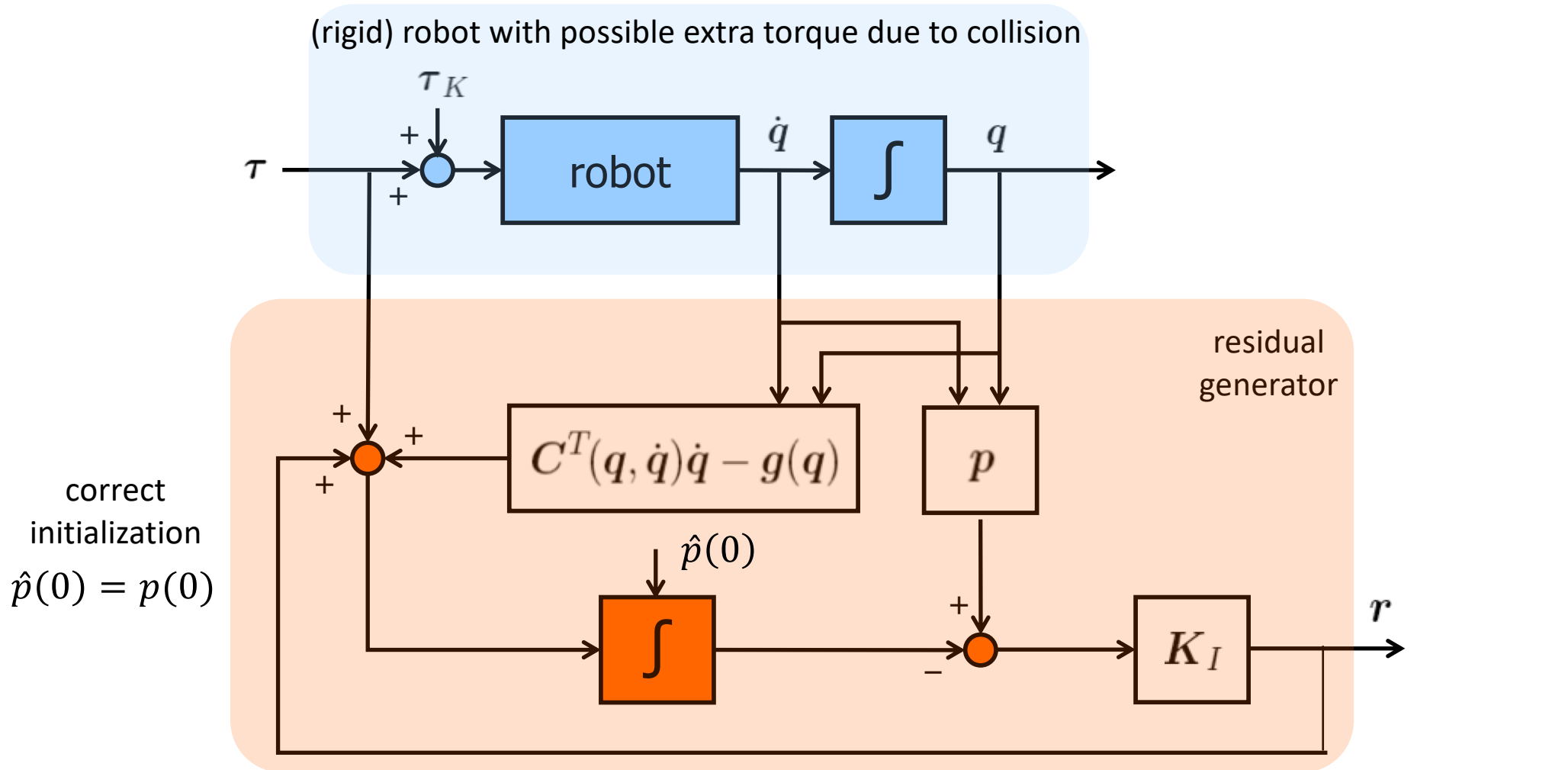
σ = energy-based scalar residual for detection

r = momentum-based vector residual for detection and isolation



Momentum-based residual

Block diagram for the generator of a **vector** residual signal (ICRA 2005, IROS 2006)



$$r(t) = K_I \left[p(t) - \int_0^t (\tau + C^T(q, \dot{q})\dot{q} - g(q) + r) ds - p(0) \right] \longrightarrow \dot{r} = -K_I r + K_I \tau_K$$

Collision detection and reaction

Residual-based experiments on DLR LWR-III (IROS 2006, IROS 2008)



- collision detection followed by different **reaction** strategies
- **zero-gravity** behavior: gravity is always compensated first (by control)
- detection time: **2-3 ms**, reaction time: **+ 1 ms**

3 videos



admittance mode

reflex torque

reflex torque

first impact at 60°/s

first impact at 90°/s

$$\dot{q}_r = K_Q r$$

$$\tau = K_R r$$

Sensitivity to payload changes/uncertainty

Collision detection and isolation after few moves for identification (IROS 2017)

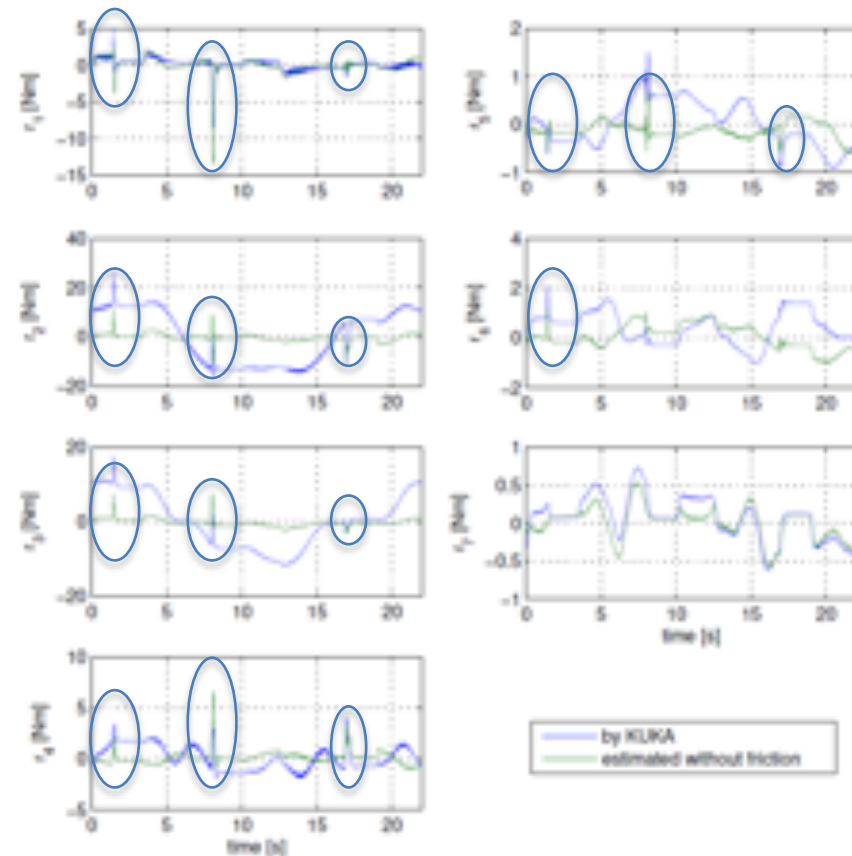


an unknown payload (of 3 kg) is added



video

residuals with online estimated payload after 10 positioning



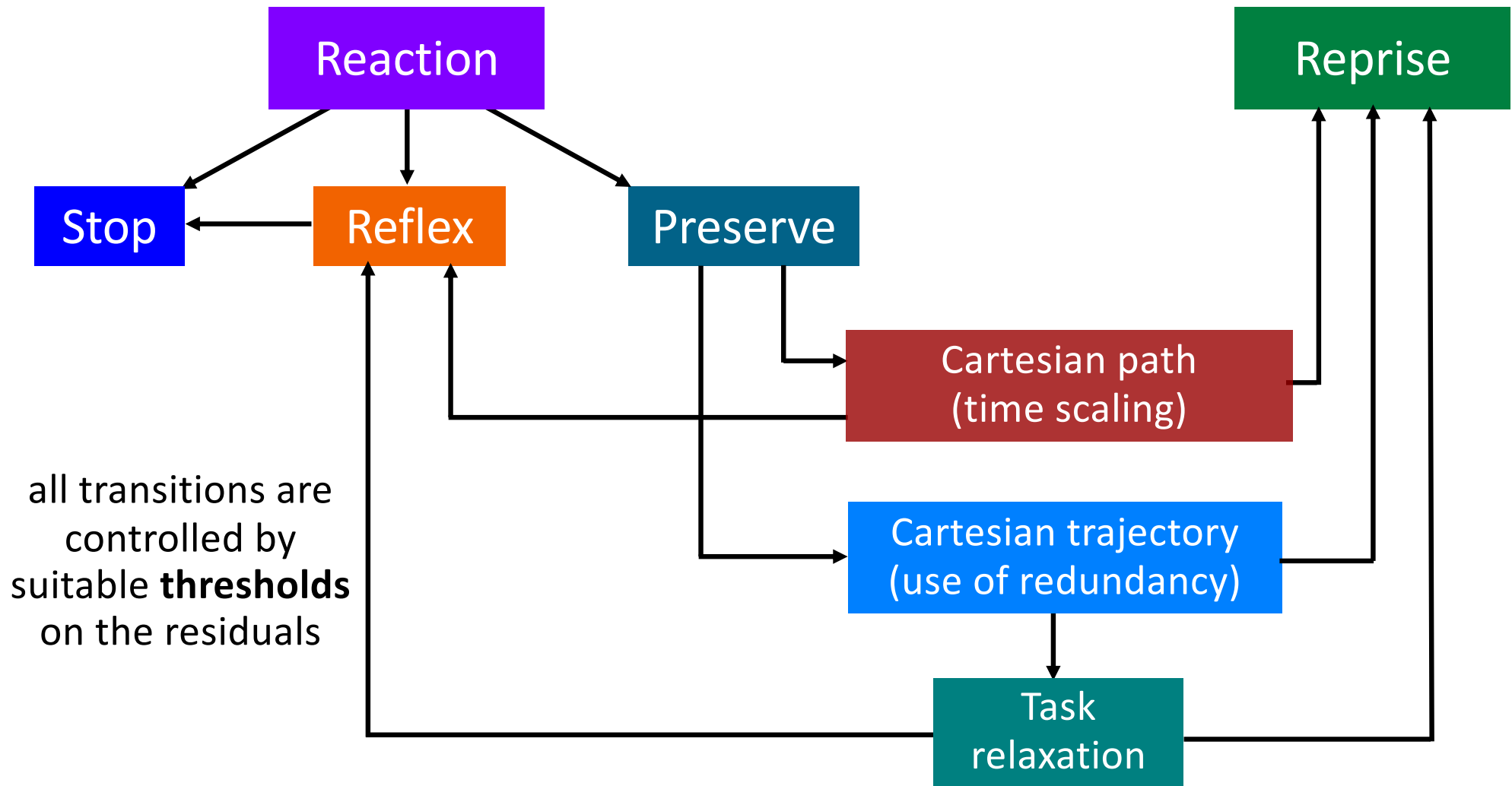
three collisions (link 6 \rightarrow 5 \rightarrow 5) detected & isolated by residuals when exceeding a threshold of 2 Nm

Collision reaction

Portfolio of possible robot reactions



residual amplitude \propto severity level of collision

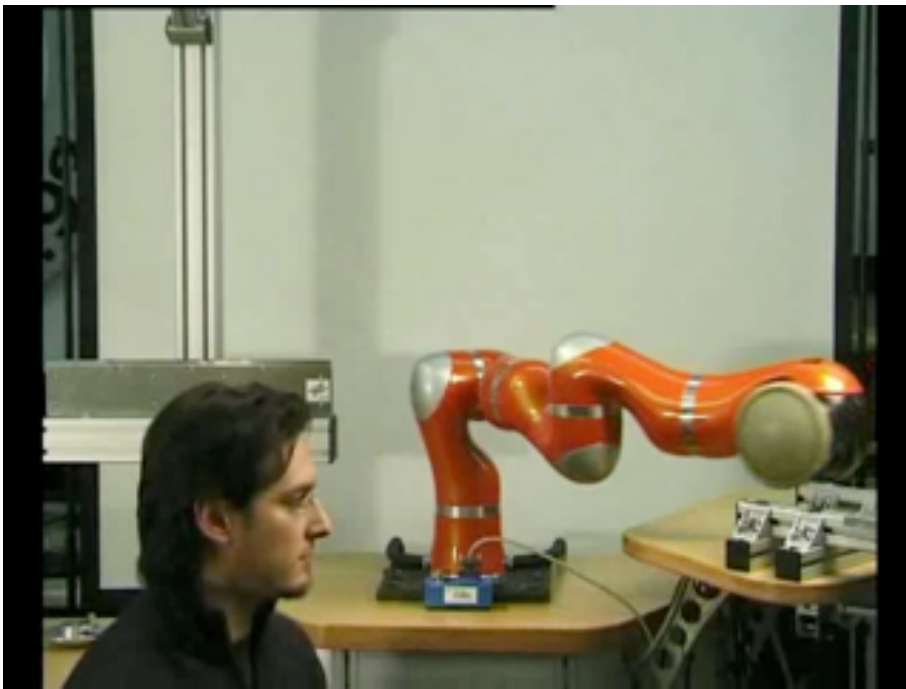


Collision reaction

Further examples (IROS 2008)

- **without** external sensing
- implementation using joint torque sensing (**not** strictly needed)

2 videos



- “volunteer” is Sami Haddadin
(a master student at that time...)



- manipulator is position-controlled on a **geometric path**
- timing **slows down, stops, possibly reverses**

Collision avoidance working in depth space

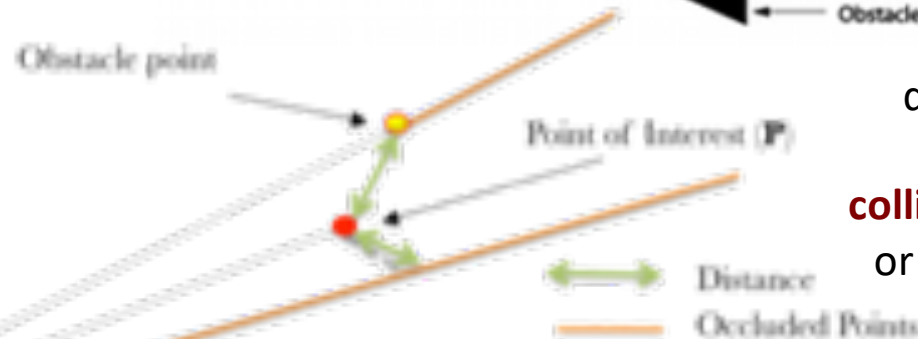
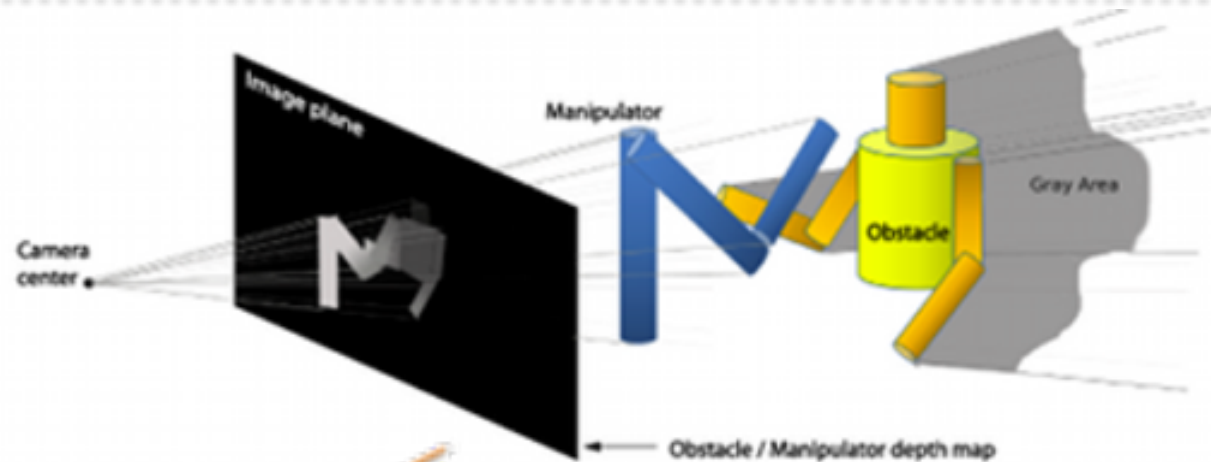
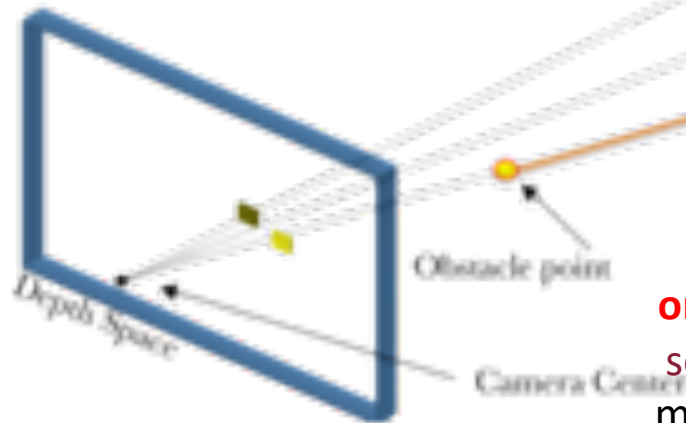
Efficient robot-obstacle distance computations in a 2½D space (ICRA 2012)

$$p_x = \frac{x_C f s_x}{z_C} + c_x$$

$$p_y = \frac{y_C f s_y}{z_C} + c_y$$

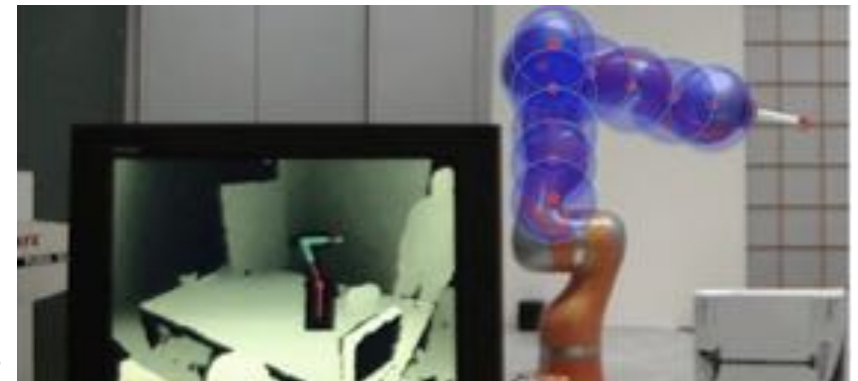
$$d_p = z_C$$

no 3D-Cartesian reconstruction or models
no need to use Point Cloud Library (PCL)



distances are used, e.g., with artificial potentials, for **collision avoidance** during motion or to **slow down/stop** the robot

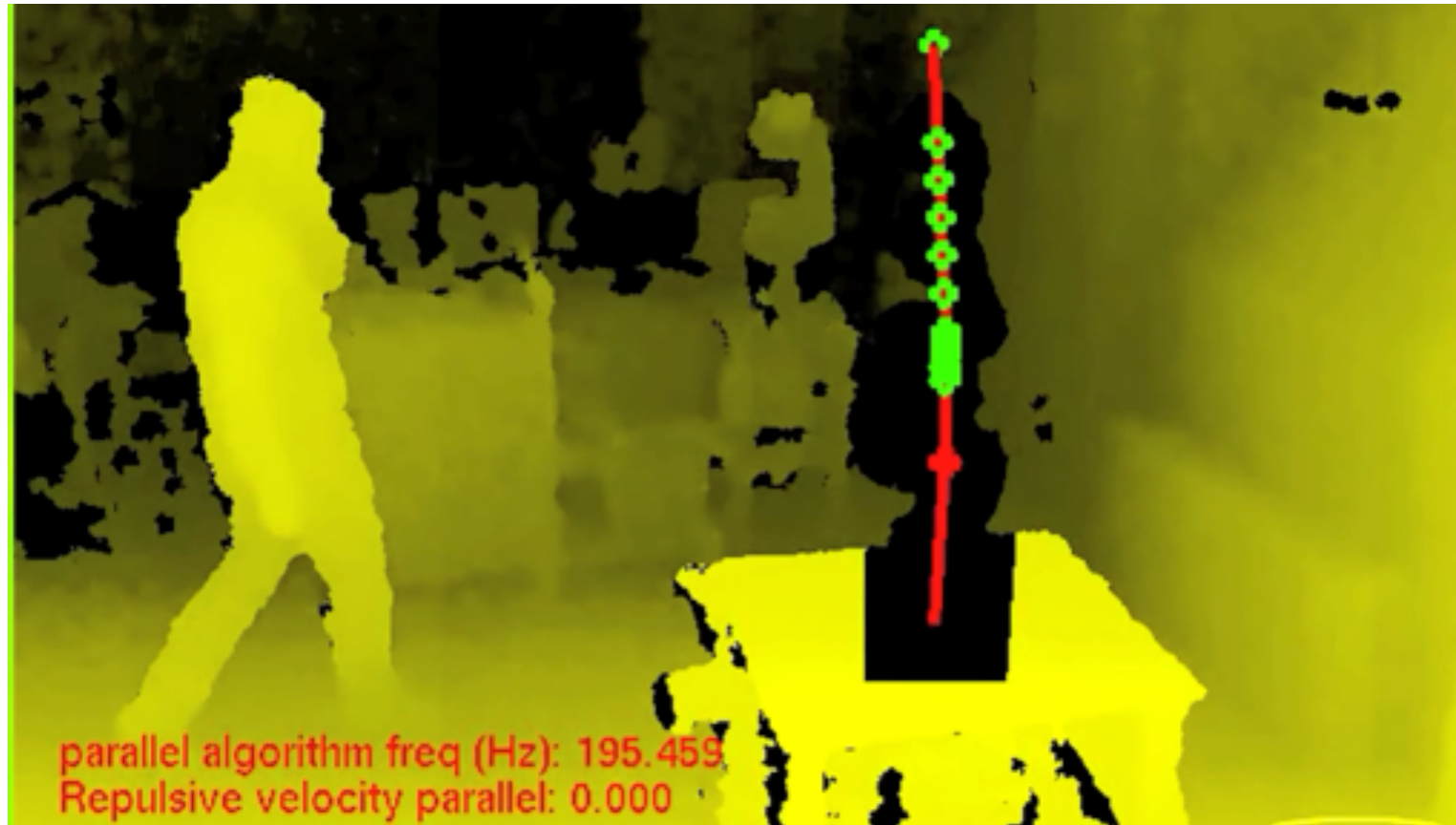
one or **two RGB-D sensors (Kinects)** monitor the robot workspace **@ 300 Hz** with minimal gray areas



see also the video <https://youtu.be/iapfbAflw4>

Safe human-robot coexistence

Excerpt from the finalist video at IROS 2013



video

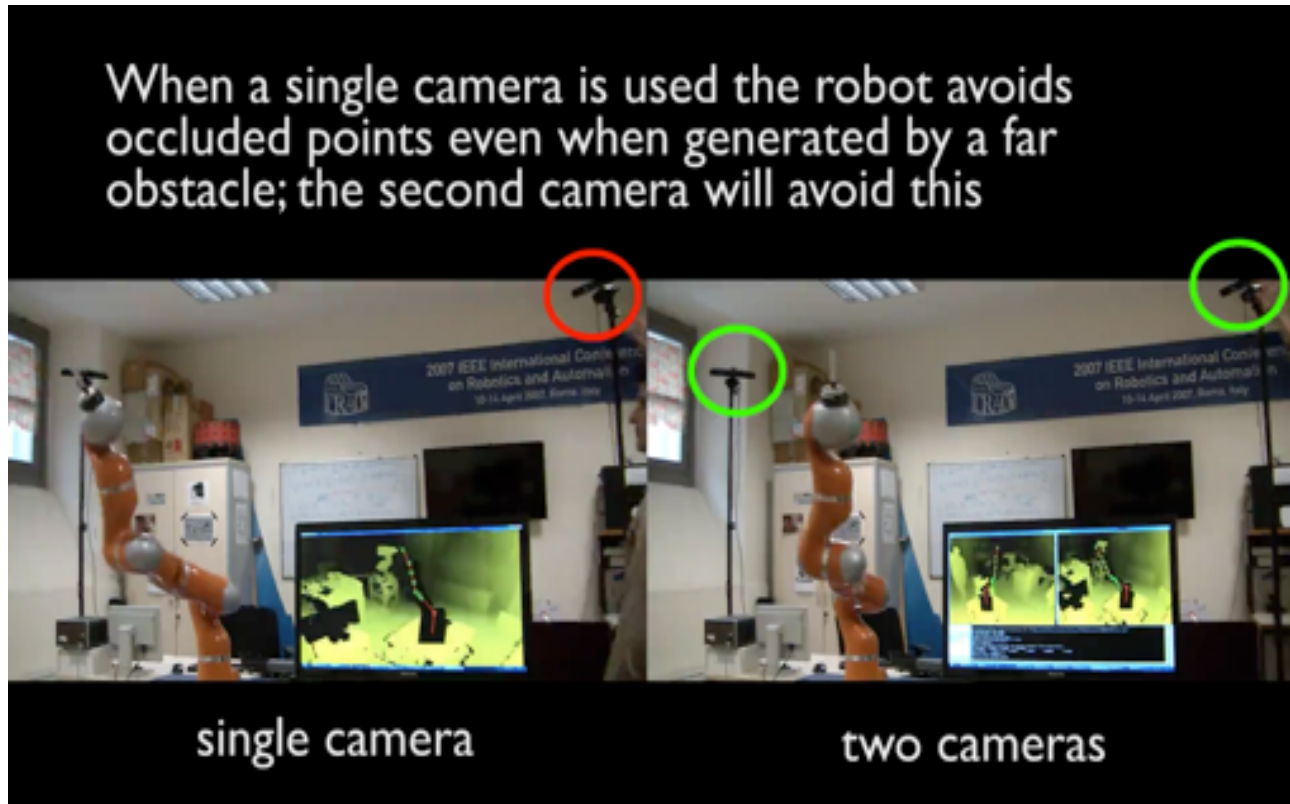
- **coexistence** through collision avoidance using a single Kinect
- the robot is performing a cyclic positional task in the Cartesian space

Monitoring the workspace with two Kinects

...without giving away the depth space computational approach (RA-L 2016)



video



real-time efficiency

extremely fast **also**

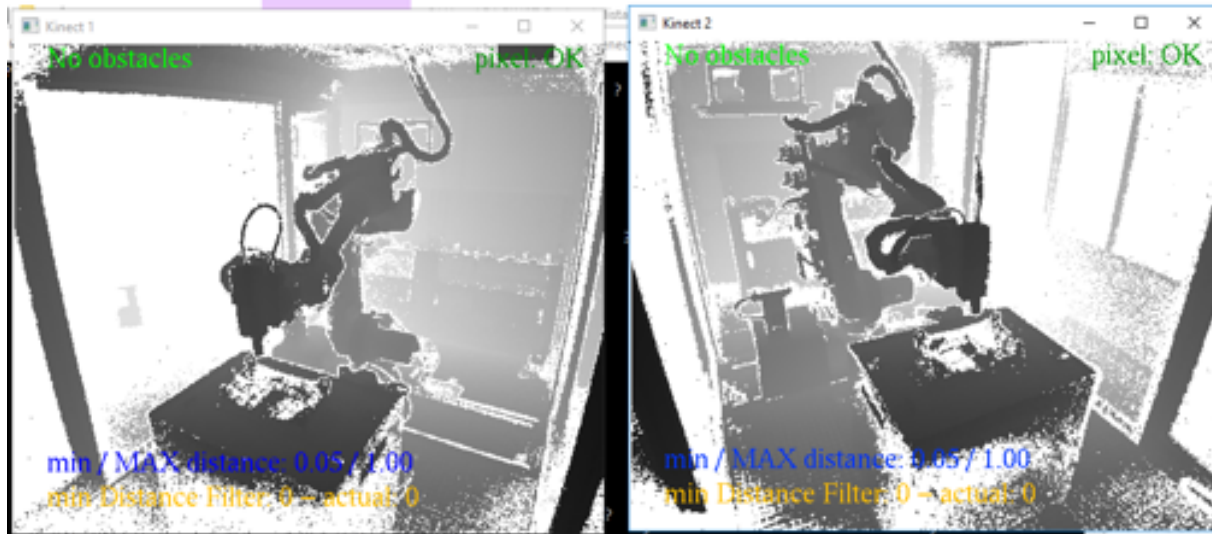
with 2 devices: **300 Hz** rate
(RGB-D camera has 30 fps,
but the KUKA robot works
at 0.5-1 KHz rate)

problems solved by the second camera

- + eliminates collision with false, far away “shadow” obstacles
- + reduces to a minimum gray areas, thus detects what is “behind” the robot
- + calibration is done off-line

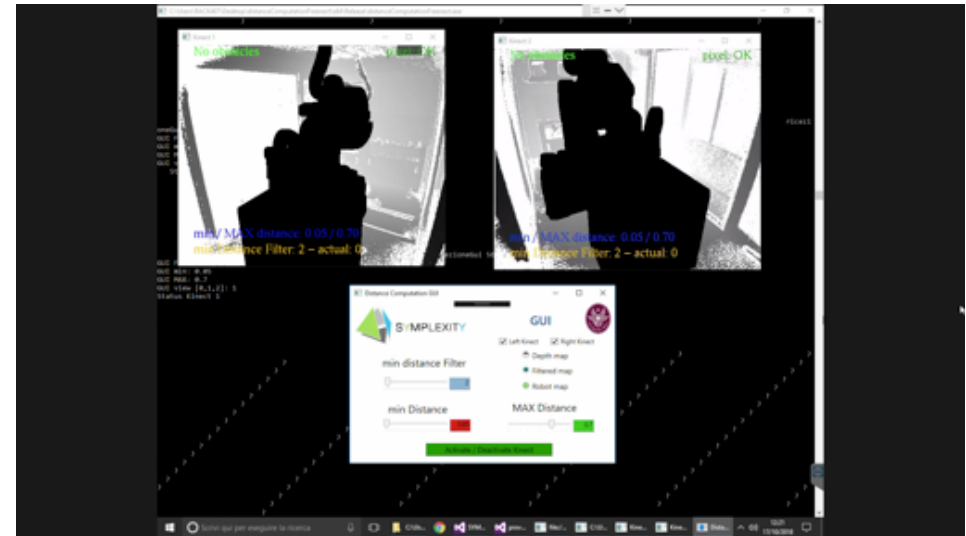
CAD model of the robot and equipments/tools/cables

Filtering out the right parts from the depth images



Safe coexistence in an industrial robotic cell

ABB IRB 4600 operation in an Abrasive Finishing cell with human access



2 videos

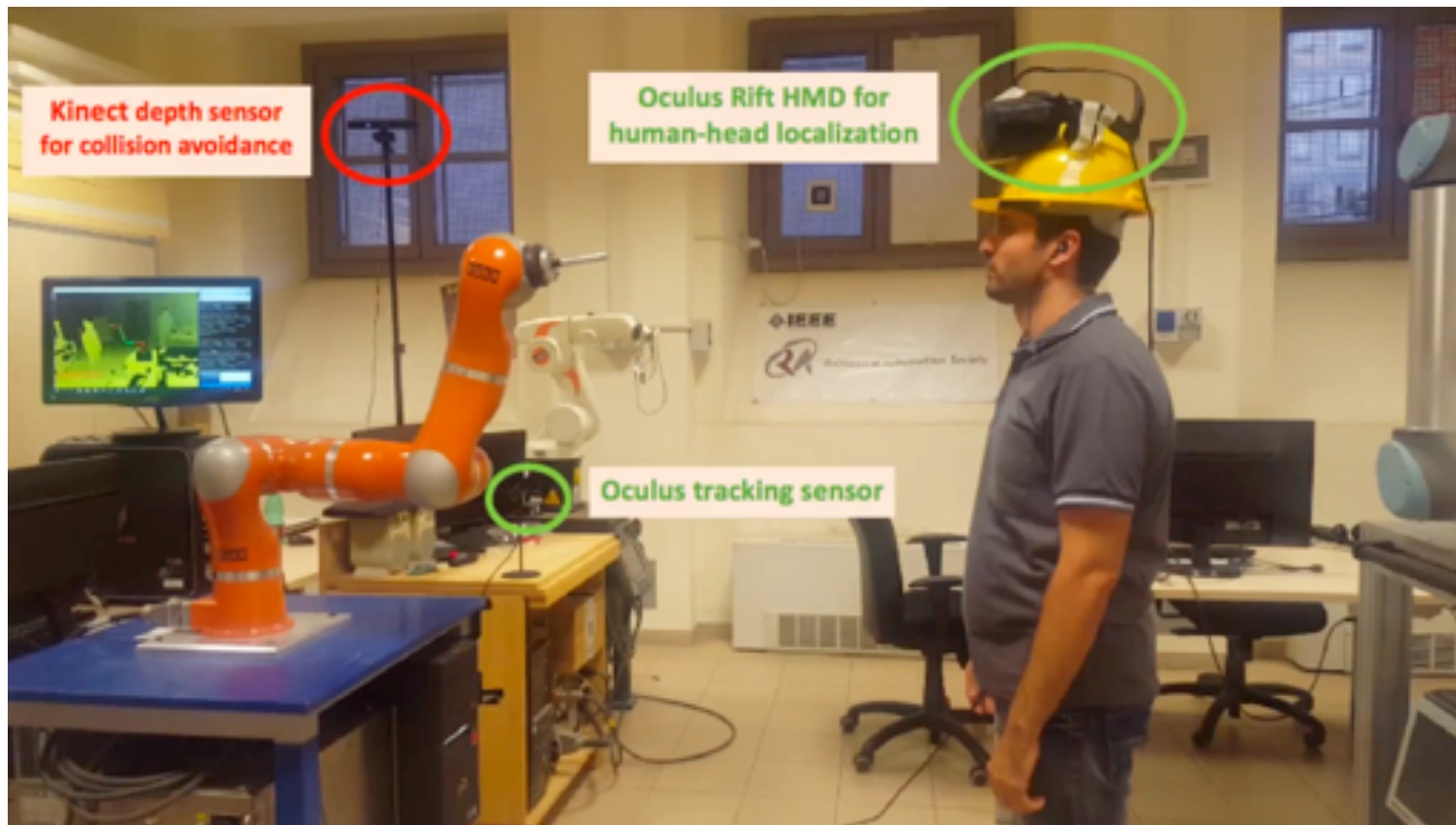
depth images and GUI

- the robot is moving at max 100 mm/s
- no safety zones were defined in the ABB SafeMove software
- a risk analysis & a mitigation plan on the **Kinect** data and algorithm
 - e.g., when the view of one camera is obstructed, safety-certified **laser sensors** are used instead to estimate human distance (in a conservative way)



Coexistence with visual coordination

Robot motion coordinated with the human, avoiding proximity (IROS 2017, RCIM 2021)



video

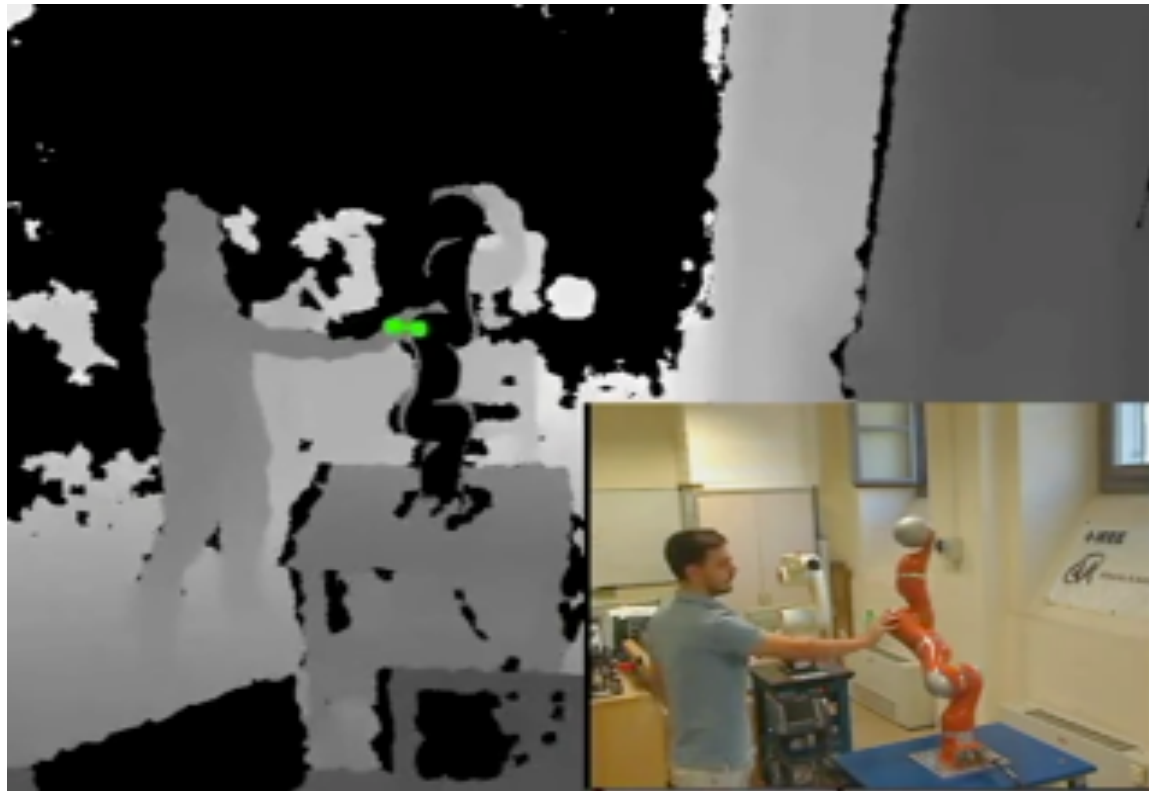
- the robot tracks remotely & points to the head of the human (wearing Oculus Rift)
- it reacts so as to keep a safe distance to human and environment obstacles

Distance and contact estimation



Using Kinect, CAD model, distance computation, and residual to **localize contact** (early 2014)

- when the **residual** indicates a **contact/collision** (and colliding link), the **vertex** in the robot CAD surface model **with minimum distance** is taken as the contact point
- algorithm applied here in parallel to both **left** and **right** hand (no other body parts)



- **parallel** GPU computation on **CUDA framework**: distances between **all robot points** in virtual depth image and **all obstacle points** in filtered depth image (IROS 2017)



Force estimation for collaboration

Combining internal and external sensing

■ Task

- **localize** (in the least invasive way) points on robot surface where contacts occur
- **estimate** exchanged **Cartesian forces**
- **control** the robot to react to these forces according to a desired behavior

■ Solution idea

- model-based residuals to **detect** contact, **isolate** colliding link, and **identify** the joint torques associated to the external contact force
- depth sensor to **classify** human part in contact with the robot and **localize** the contact point on the robot structure (and **contact Jacobian**)
- **solve** a linear set of equations with the residuals, i.e., filtered estimates of joint torques resulting from contact **forces/moments** applied (anywhere) to the robot

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{r} \simeq \boldsymbol{\tau}_{ext} = \mathbf{J}_c^T(\mathbf{q})\boldsymbol{\Gamma}_c = \begin{pmatrix} \mathbf{J}_{L,c}^T(\mathbf{q}) & \mathbf{J}_{A,c}^T(\mathbf{q}) \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} \mathbf{F}_c \\ \mathbf{M}_c \end{pmatrix} &\Rightarrow \begin{pmatrix} \hat{\mathbf{F}}_c \\ \hat{\mathbf{M}}_c \end{pmatrix} = \left(\mathbf{J}_c^T(\mathbf{q}) \right)^\# \mathbf{r} \\ &\Rightarrow \hat{\mathbf{F}}_c = \left(\mathbf{J}_{L,c}^T(\mathbf{q}) \right)^\# \mathbf{r} \end{aligned}$$

Control based on contact force estimation

Used within an **admittance control** scheme (IROS 2014)



video



Additional validation of the virtual force sensor

In static and dynamic conditions, using a hand-held F/T sensor (February 2019)

- comparing the F/T ground truth contact force measure with its residual-based estimation
 - with robot **at rest** (pushing)
 - in **robot motion** (hitting)

Validation experiment 2:

Collision on link 5

Validation experiment 1:

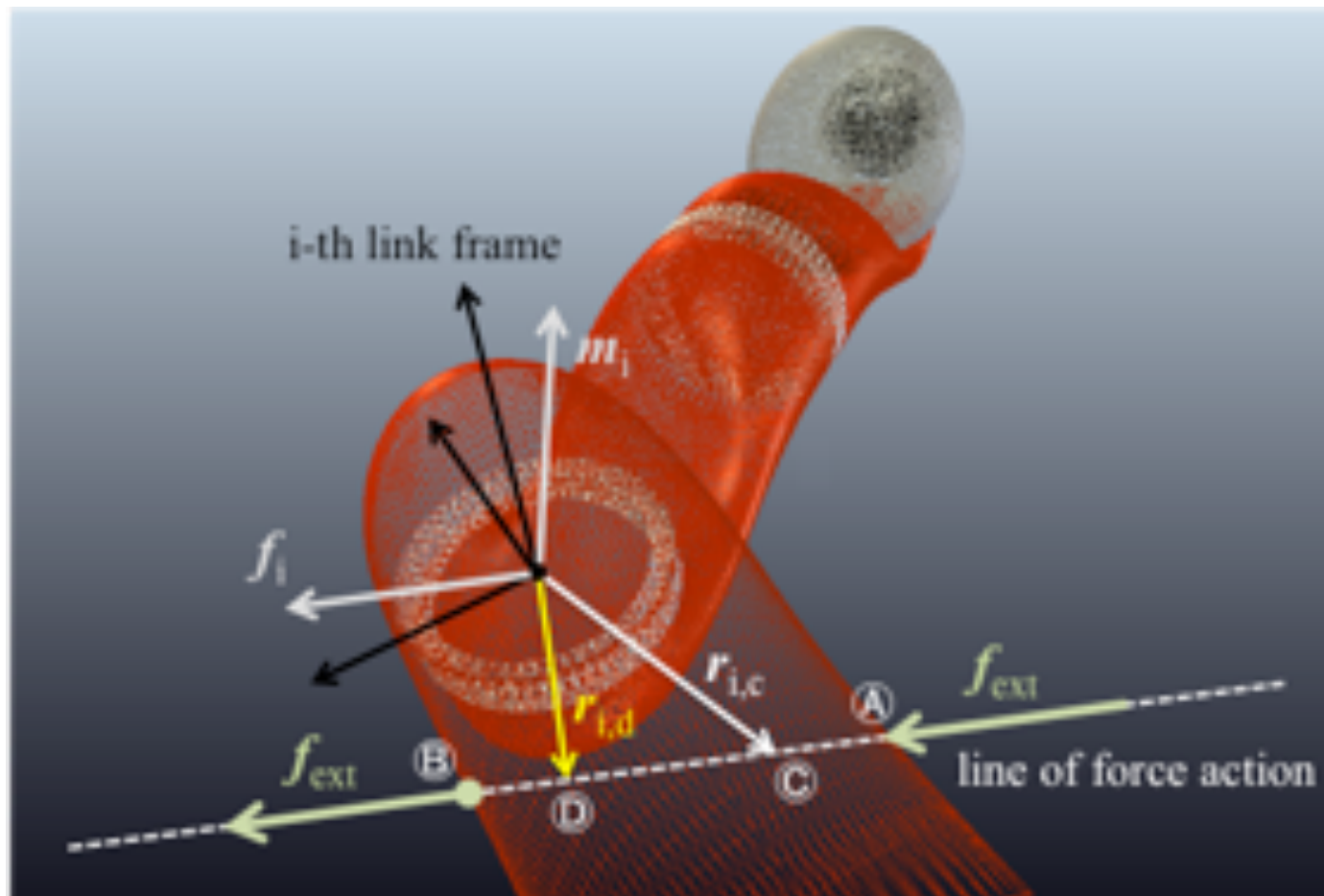
Admittance control scheme

2 videos

Estimation of the contact force

Sometimes, even **without** external sensing (T-RO 2017)

- if contact is sufficiently “down” the kinematic chain (≥ 6 residuals are available), the estimation of **pure contact forces** does not need any external information ...

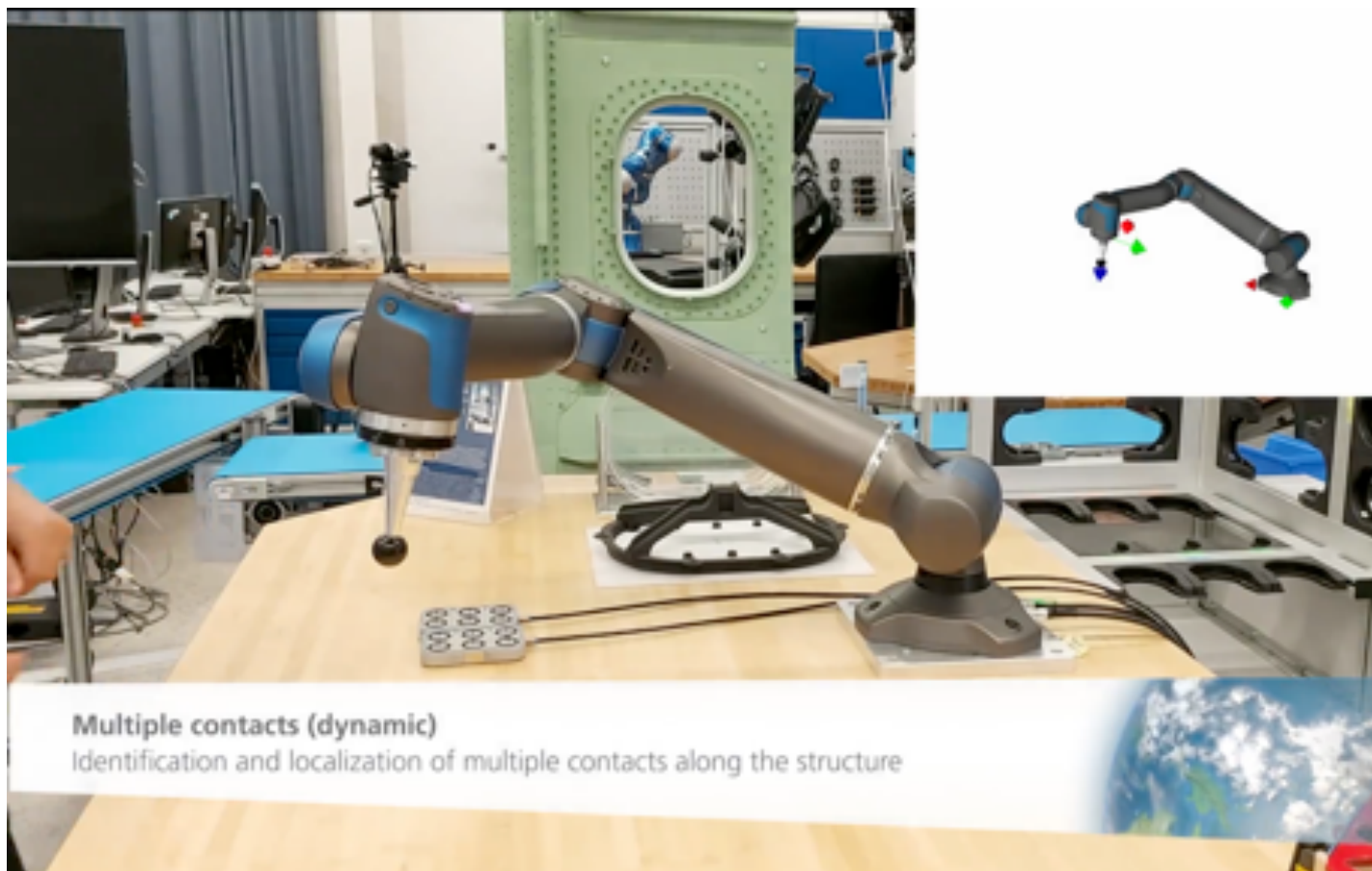


Enhanced collision detection & identification

DLR SARA 7R robot with **joint torque**, **base F/T** and **end-effector F/T** sensors (ICRA 2021)



- **generalized** momentum-based residual exploiting the redundant sensing system
- handles multiple contacts, singularities, and external force/torque estimation



video

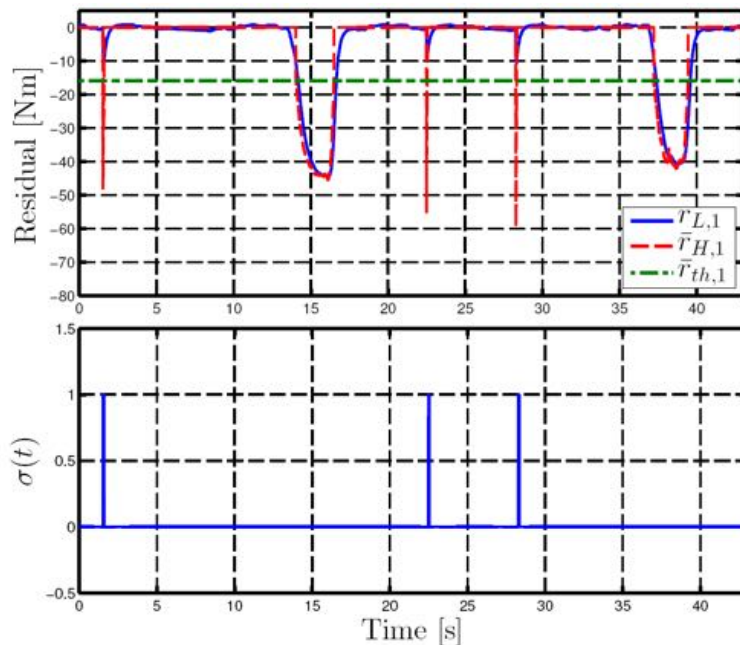
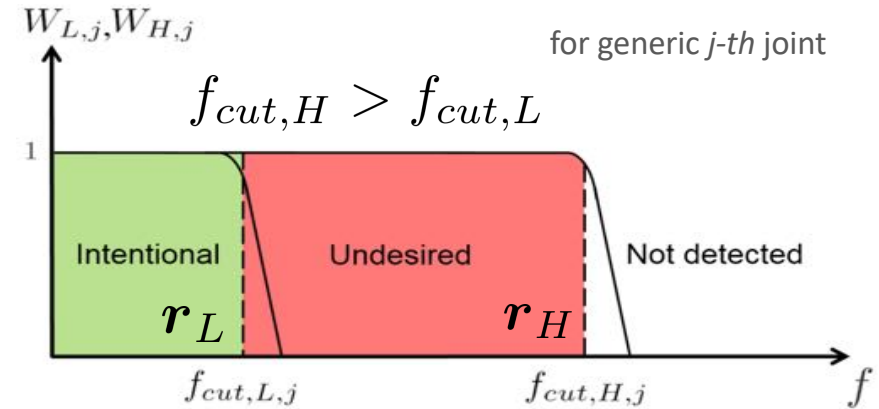
Collision or collaboration?

Distinguishing **hard/accidental** collisions and **soft/intentional** contacts

- using suitable **low** and **high** bandwidths for the residuals (first-order stable filters)

$$\dot{r} = -K_I r + K_I \tau_K$$

- thresholds** prevent false collision detections
- collision**: stop & float \Leftrightarrow **contact**: collaborate



video



Collaboration control

Use of the estimate of external contact force for control (e.g., on a Kuka LWR)

- shaping the robot dynamic behavior in specific **collaborative tasks** with humans
 - joint carrying of a load, holding a part in place, whole arm **force** manipulation, ...
- robot motion controlled by
 - **admittance** control law (in **velocity FRI** mode)
 - **force, impedance** or **hybrid force-motion** control laws (in **torque FRI** mode)all implemented **at contact level**
- e.g., admittance control law using the estimated contact force
 - the scheme is realized at the single (or first) contact point
 - desired **velocity** of contact point taken proportional to (**estimated**) contact force

$$\dot{\mathbf{p}}_c = \mathbf{K}_a \mathbf{F}_a, \quad \mathbf{K}_a = k_a \mathbf{I} > 0$$

$$\mathbf{F}_a = \hat{\mathbf{F}}_c + \mathbf{K}_p (\mathbf{p}_d - \mathbf{p}_c), \quad \mathbf{K}_p = k_p \mathbf{I} > 0$$

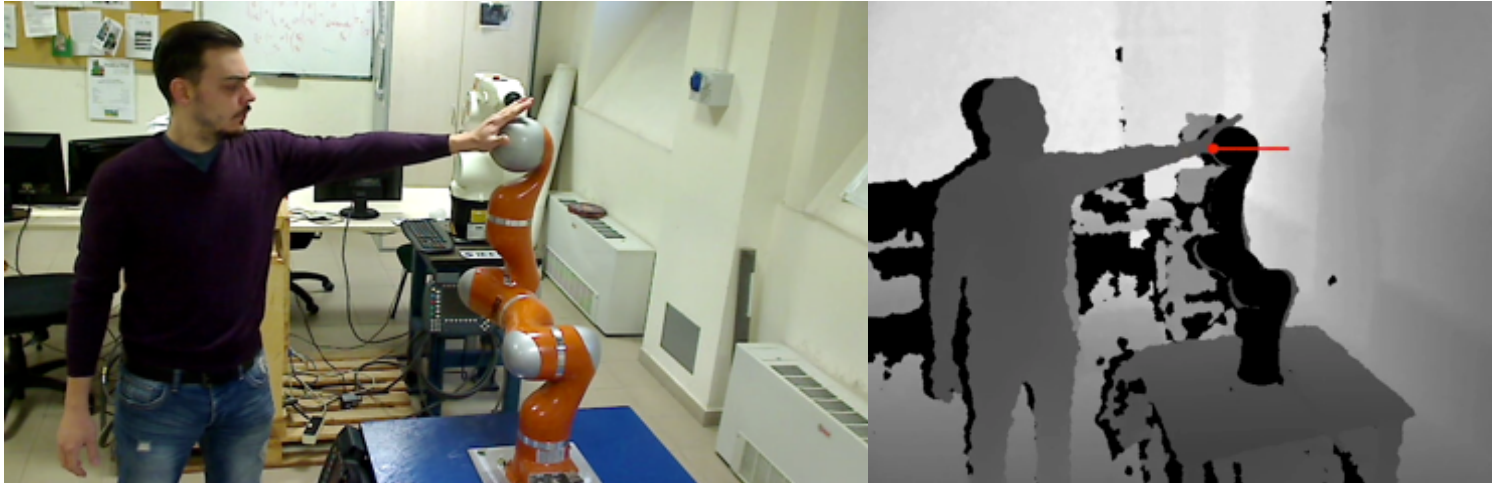
↖ initial contact point position when interaction begins

Contact force regulation with virtual force sensing

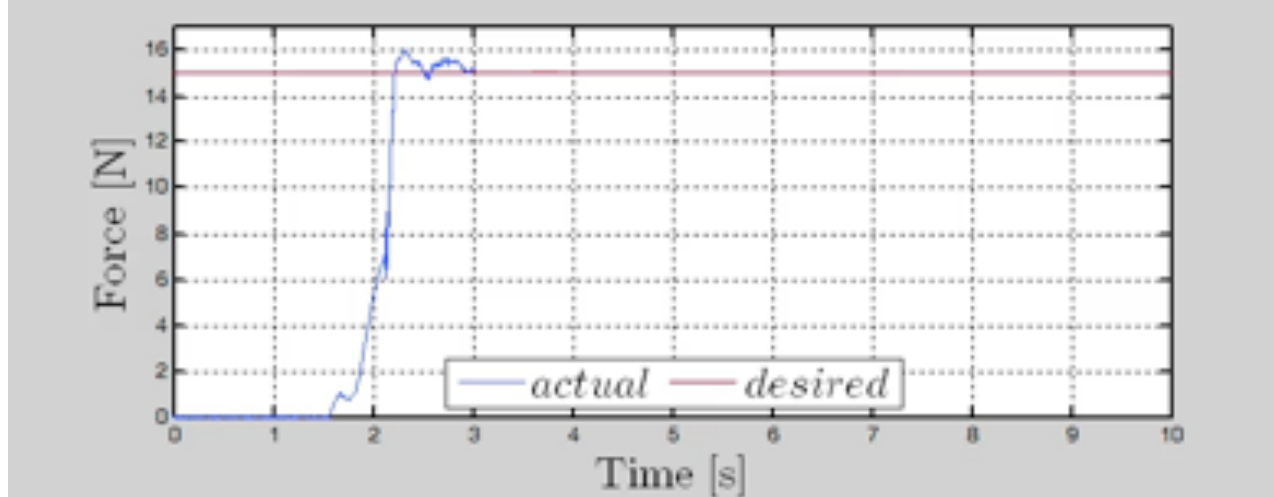
Human-robot collaboration in torque control mode (ICRA 2015)



- contact force estimation & control (any place/any time)



video

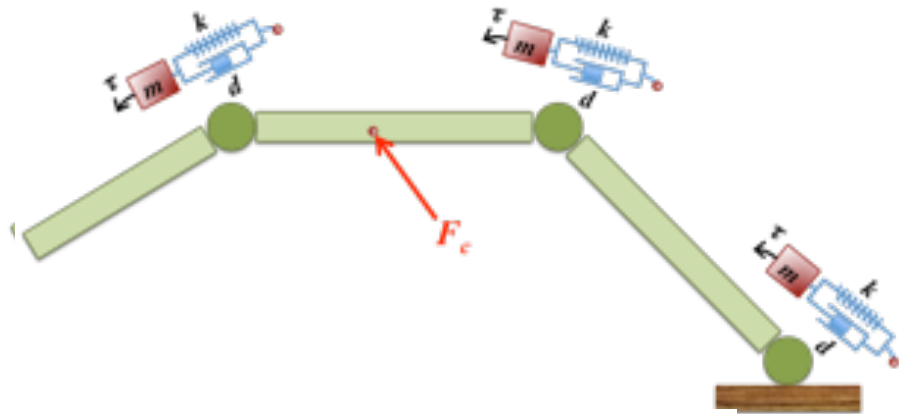


see ICRA 2015 trailer (at 3'26''): <https://youtu.be/glNHq7MpCG8> (Italian); https://youtu.be/OM_1F33fcWk (English)

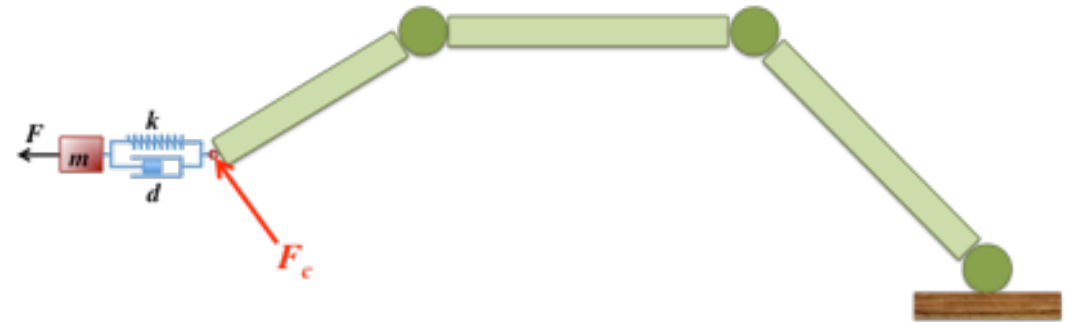
Impedance-based control of interaction

Reaction to contact forces by generalized impedance —at **different** levels

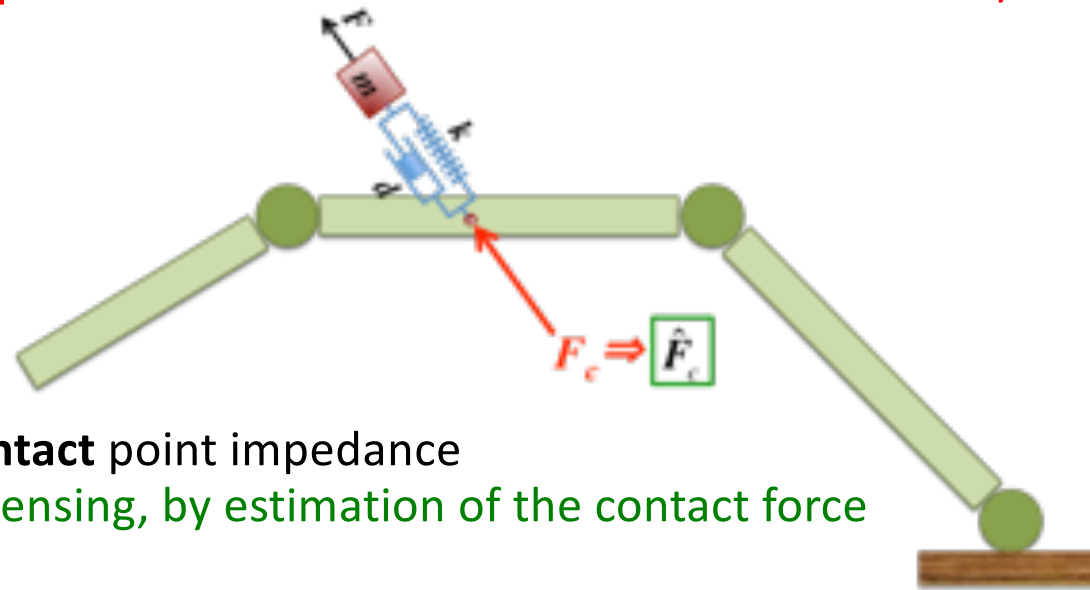
consider a fully rigid robot



Joint impedance
needs joint torque sensors



Cartesian impedance
needs F/T sensor



Contact point impedance
without force/torque sensing, by estimation of the contact force

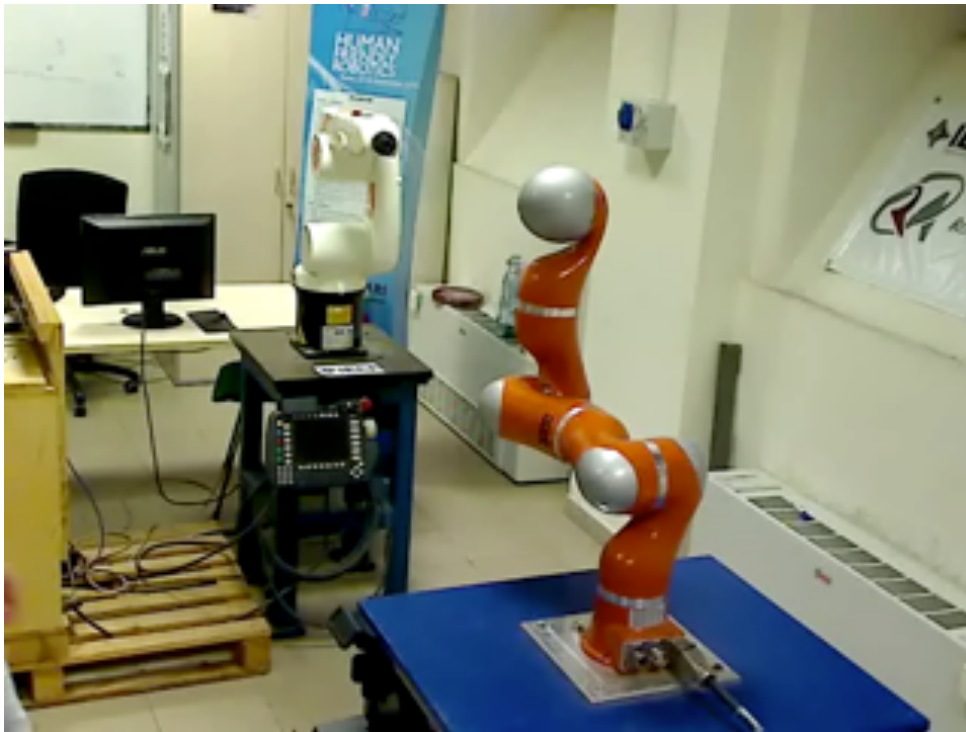
Control of generalized impedance

HR collaboration at the contact level (ICRA 2015)

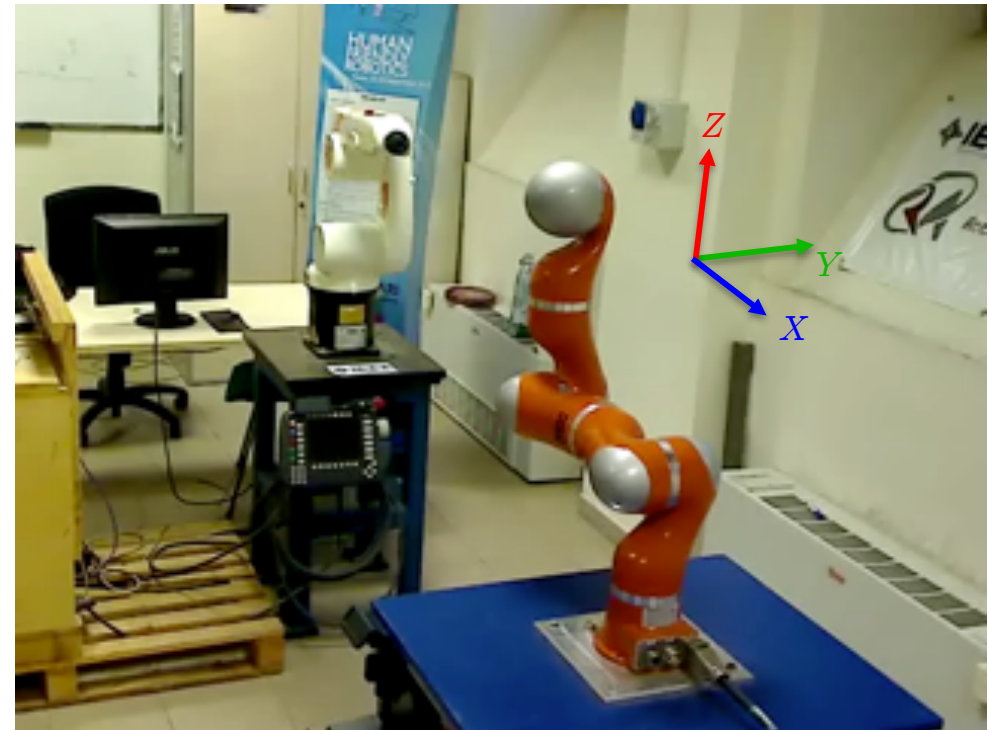


natural (unchanged) robot inertia **at the contact**

$$M_d = \left(J_c M^{-1} J_c^T \right)^{-1}$$



assigned robot inertia **at the contact**
with different desired masses along X, Y, Z



2 videos

contact force **estimates** are used here
only to detect and localize contact
in order to start a collaboration phase

contact force **estimates** used **explicitly** in
control law to modify robot inertia at the contact
($M_{d,X} = 20$, $M_{d,Y} = 3$, $M_{d,Z} = 10$ [kg])

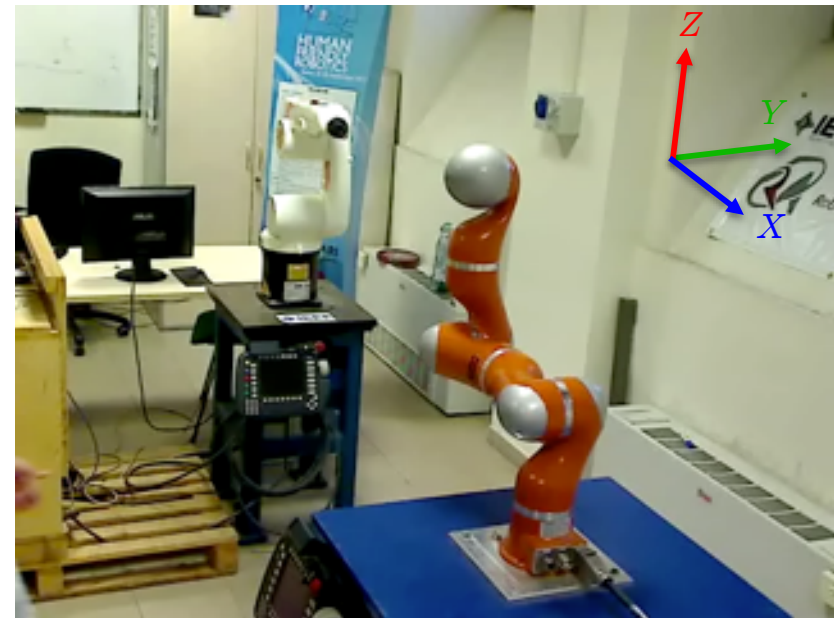
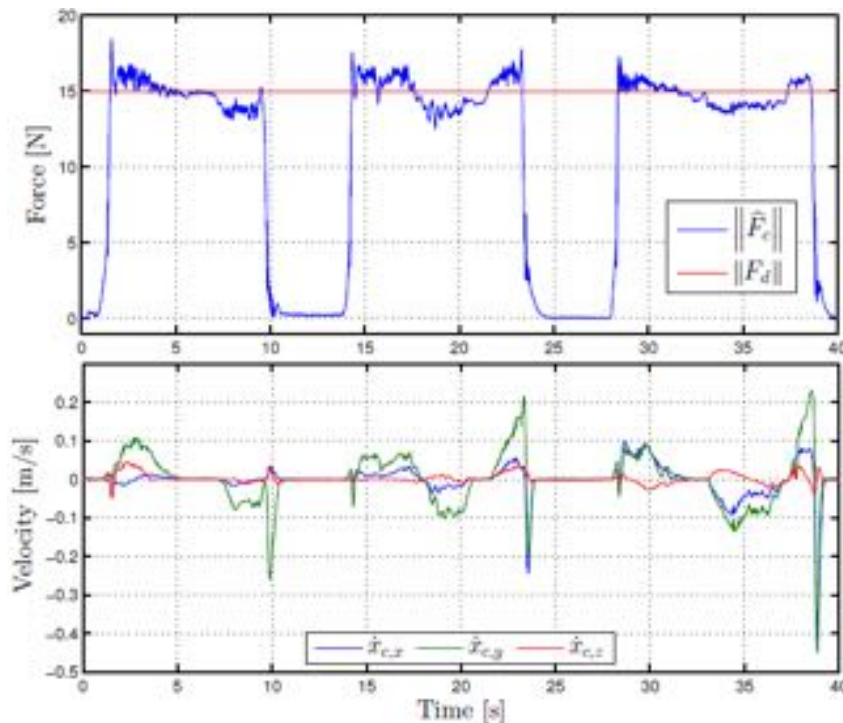
Control of generalized contact force

Task-compatible force control scheme (ICRA 2015)

- regulation of the **norm** of the contact force along the **instantaneous direction** of the **estimated** contact force

$$F_{d,x} = 15 \frac{\hat{F}_{c,x}}{\|\hat{\mathbf{F}}_c\|}, \quad F_{d,y} = 15 \frac{\hat{F}_{c,y}}{\|\hat{\mathbf{F}}_c\|}, \quad F_{d,z} = 15 \frac{\hat{F}_{c,z}}{\|\hat{\mathbf{F}}_c\|} \quad \Leftrightarrow \quad \|F_d\| = 15 \text{ [N]}$$

- in static conditions, the force control law is able to regulate contact forces **exactly**



video

task-compatible control of contact force

Validation with an extra F/T sensor

Force and **hybrid force/velocity** control for collaboration at contact level (February 2019)



- desired contact force along the **estimated contact direction** regulated at 15 N
- ... and trajectory control with constant speed along a circle in the **orthogonal plane**

Control experiment 4:

Hybrid force/velocity control scheme

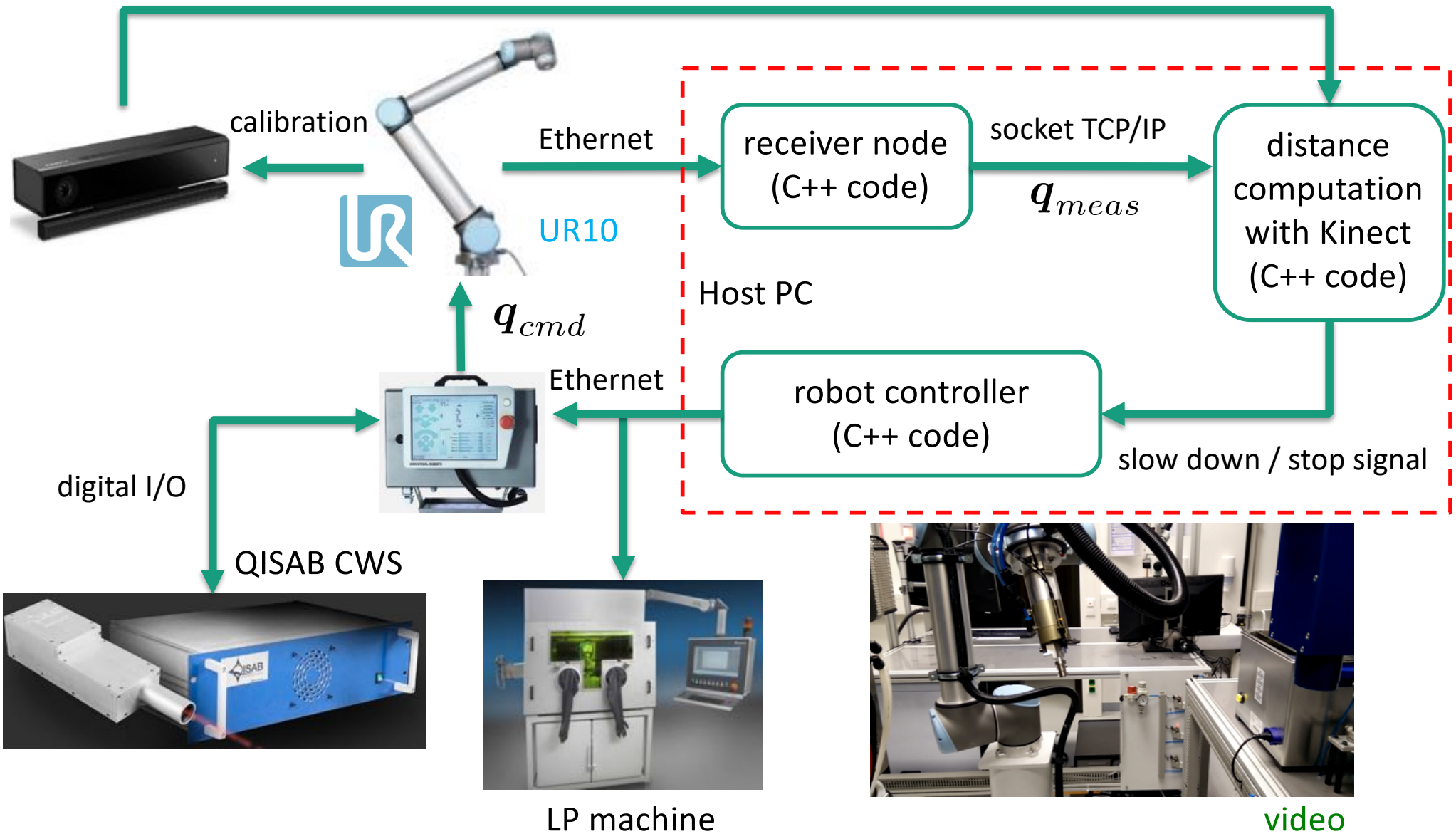
Control experiment 3:

Force control scheme

2 videos

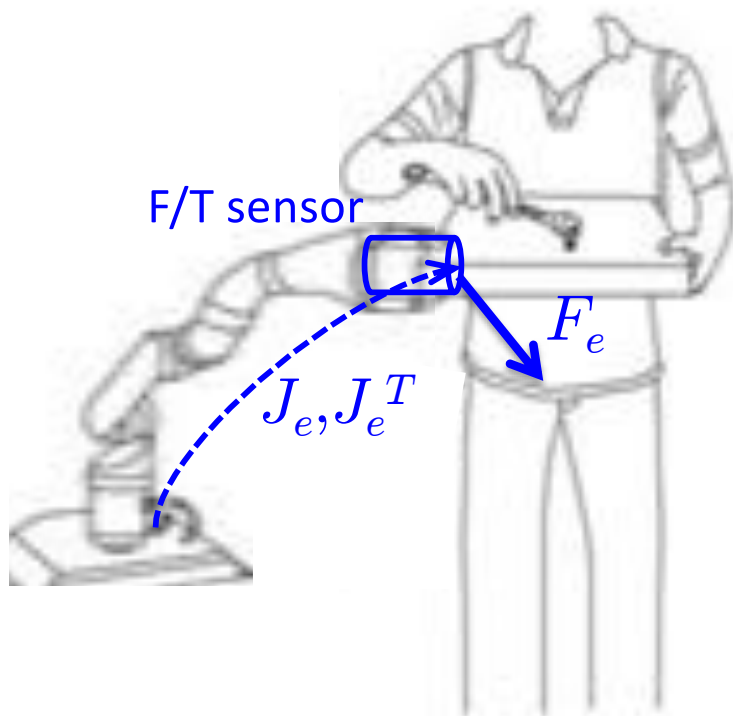
Scenario for HRC in manual polishing

H2020 SYMPLEXITY project: Preparing a metallic part for a laser polishing machine



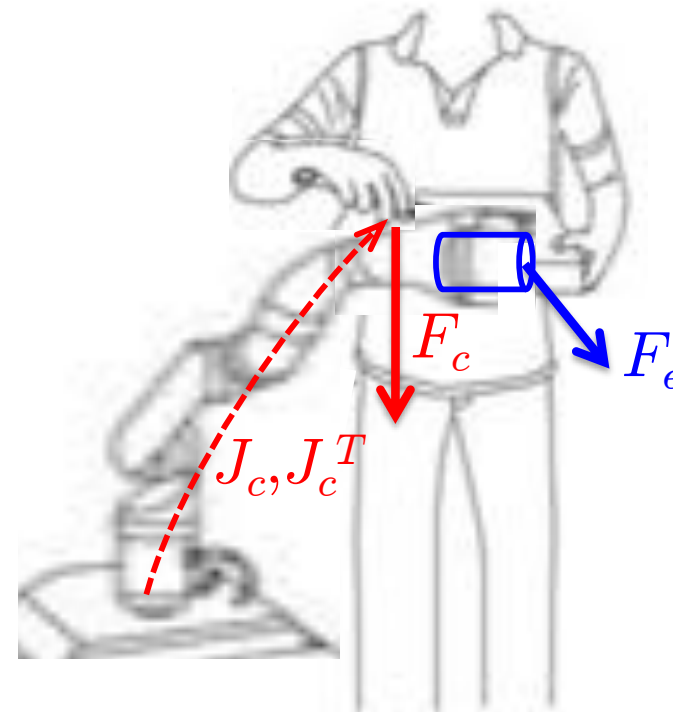
Scenario for HRC in manual polishing

Distinguishing different contact forces (with F/T sensor)



- Force/Torque (F/T) sensor at wrist
- manual polishing force is **measured**
 - end-effector Jacobian is **known**

- contact force at unknown location
- **not** measurable by the F/T sensor
 - possibly applied by the human **while** manipulating the work piece held by robot
 - contact Jacobian is **not** known



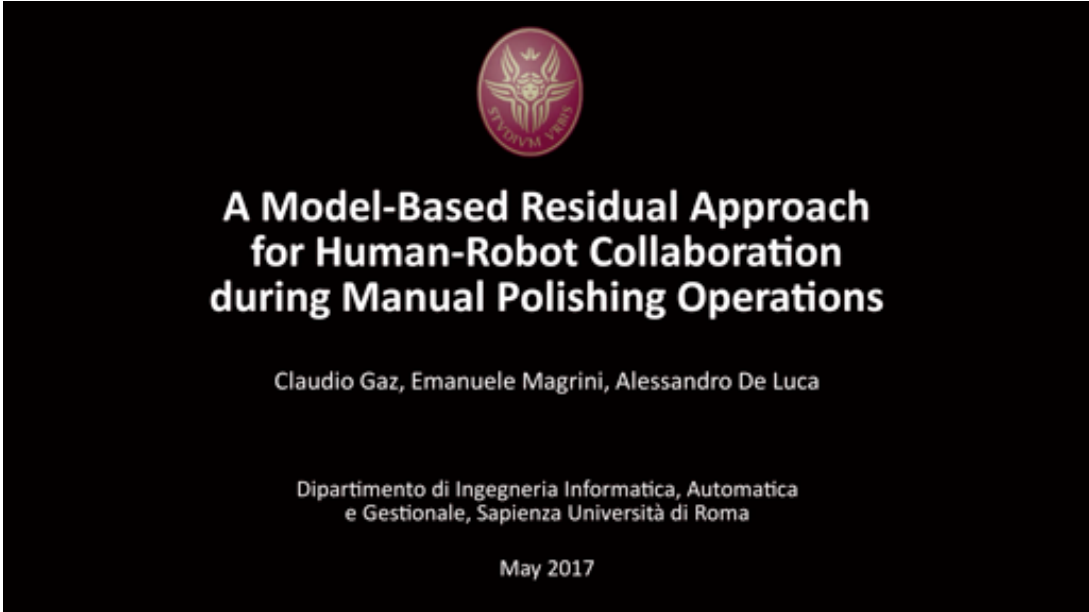


HRC phase with UR10 robot

Experimental results (Mechatronics 2018)



Collaboration phase activated by hand waving (using a Kinect)

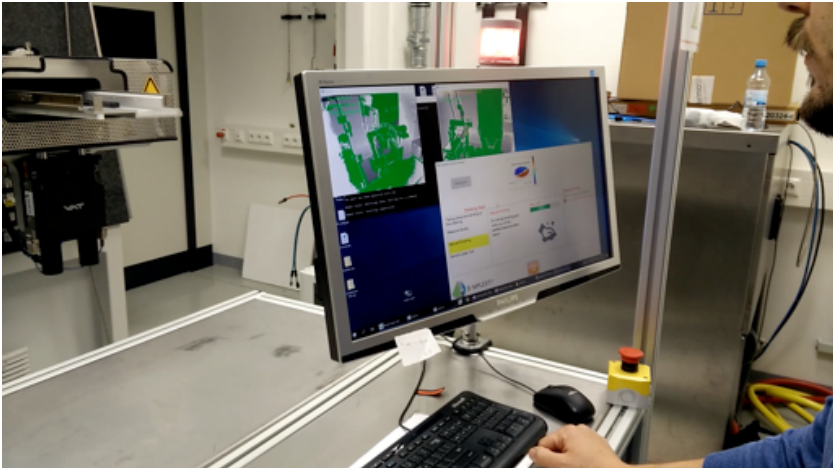


no F/T sensor, switching to FreeDrive mode

with F/T sensor, using our residual method



part to be polished



3 videos

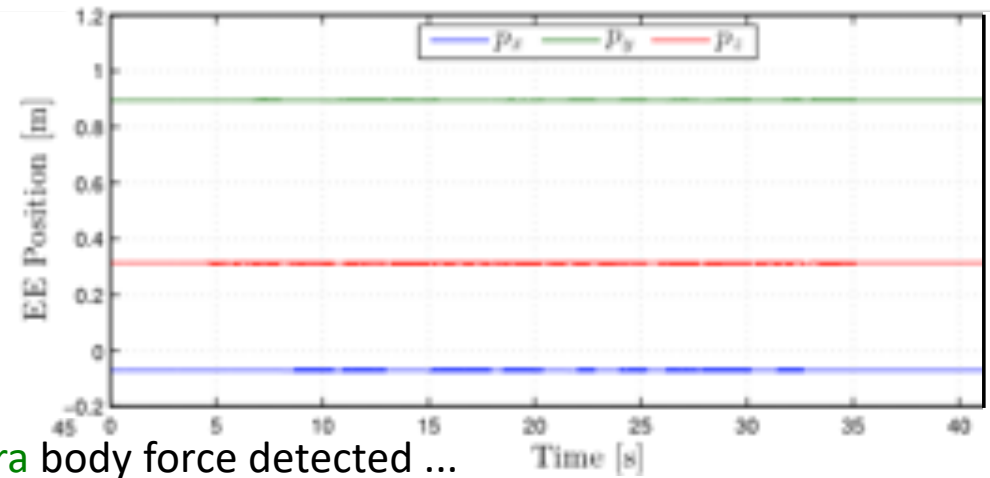
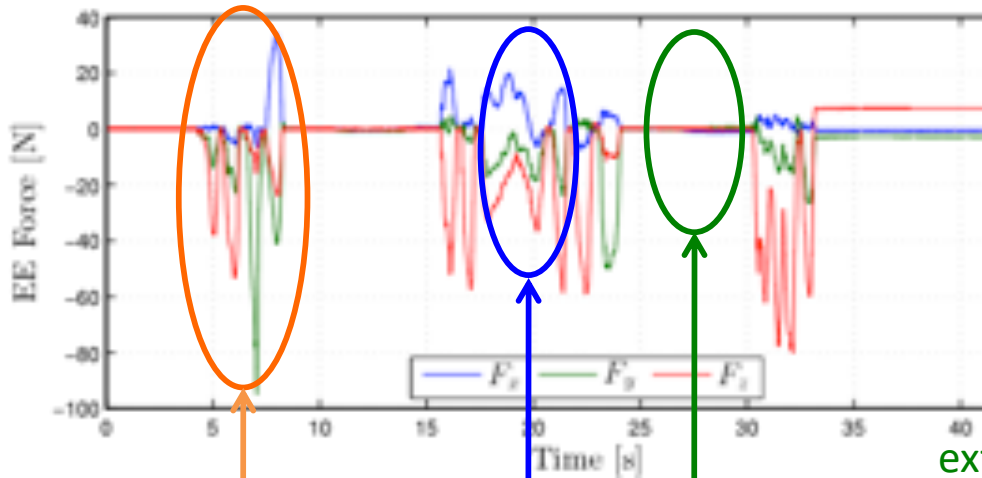
HRC phase with UR10 robot

Experimental results (separating F/T measures from residuals)



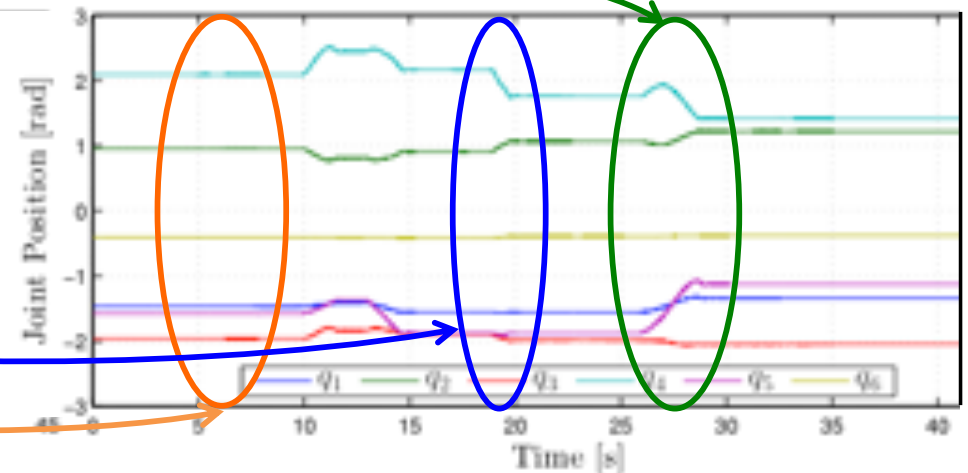
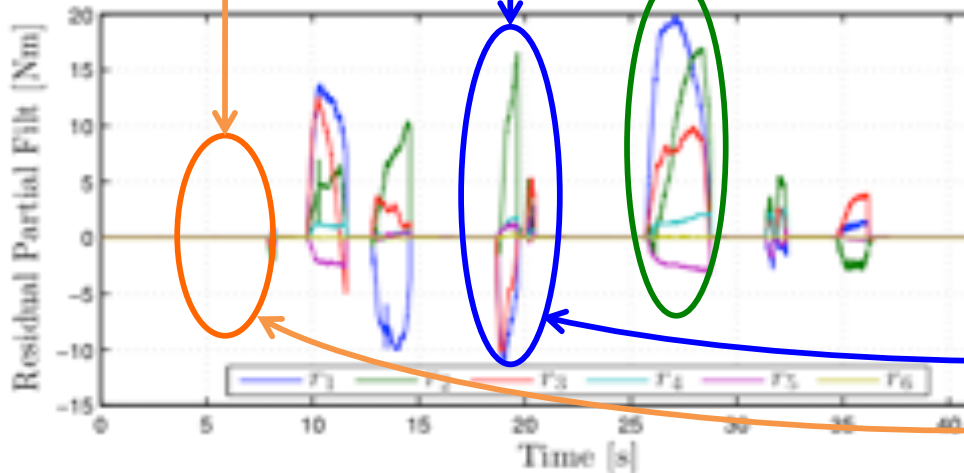
both forces at the same time...

in all cases, no linear motion of EE position!



polishing force only...

extra body force detected ...
... joints move accordingly



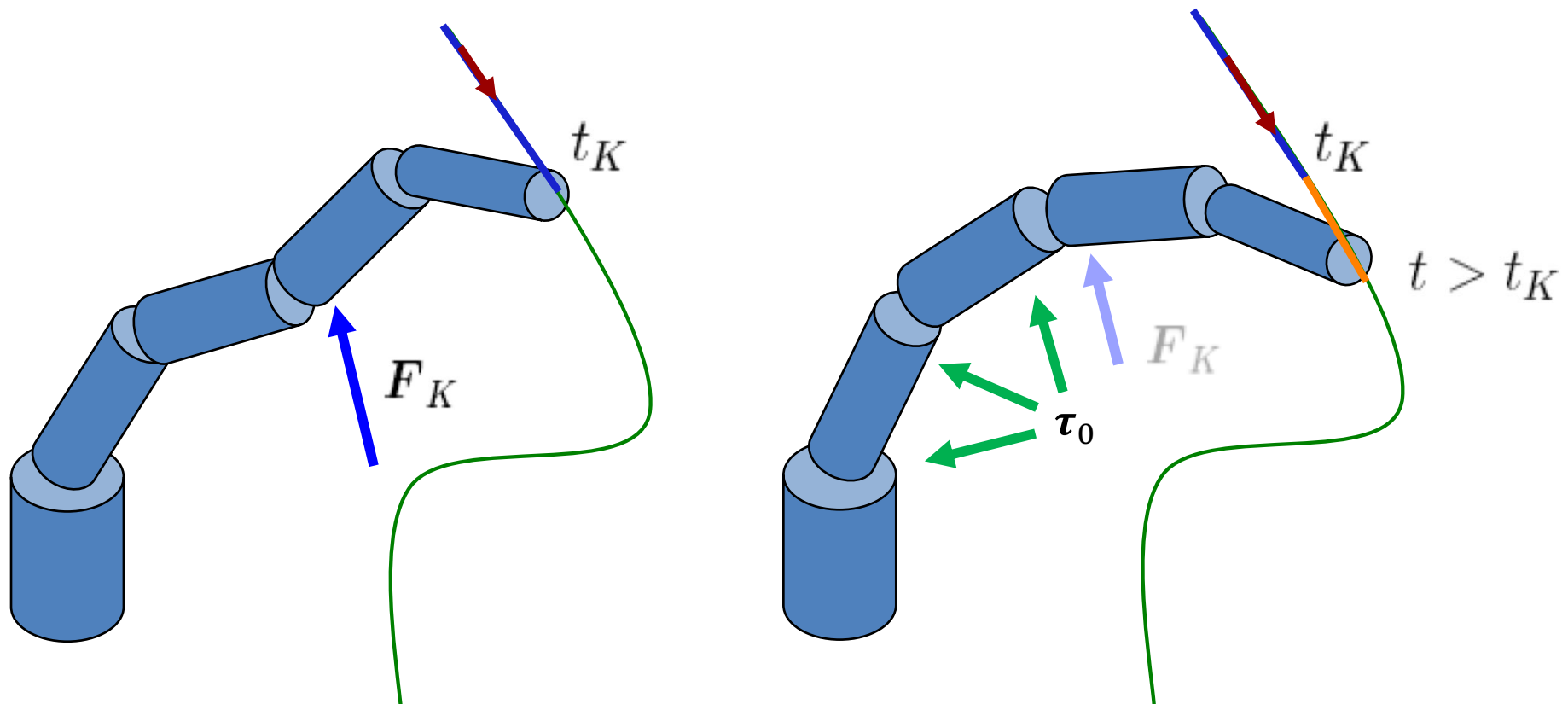
...no joint motion

...joints move due to extra body force only

Use of kinematic redundancy in pHRI

Robot reaction to collisions, in parallel with execution of original task

- collision detection \Rightarrow robot reacts so as to preserve as much as possible (if at all possible) the execution of a planned task trajectory, e.g., for the end-effector



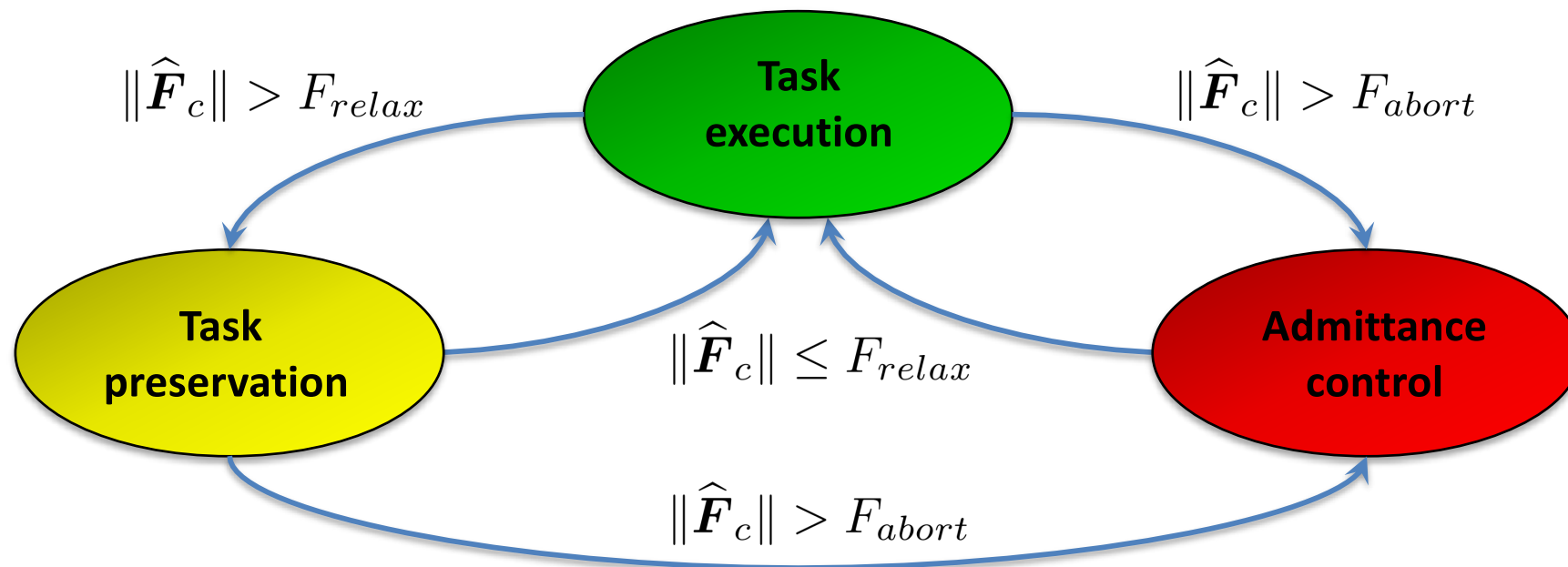
$$\tau = M(q)G(q) \left[\ddot{x} - \dot{J}(q)\dot{q} + J(q)M^{-1}(q)n(q, \dot{q}) \right] + M(q)(I - G(q)J(q))M^{-1}(q)\tau_0.$$



Selective reaction to estimated contact force

Robot control strategy (IROS 2008, IROS 2017)

- execution of original end-effector task preserved while reacting to a detected contact, when the **estimated contact force** is above a threshold F_{relax} but is **not too large**
- using null-space motion, the robot tries to **eliminate, reduce** or **keep low** the contact force
- if the contact force exceeds a threshold F_{abort} , the robot abandons the original task and reacts with **admittance control at the contact**



Use of kinematic redundancy

Robot reaction to collisions, in parallel with execution of original task (IROS 2017)



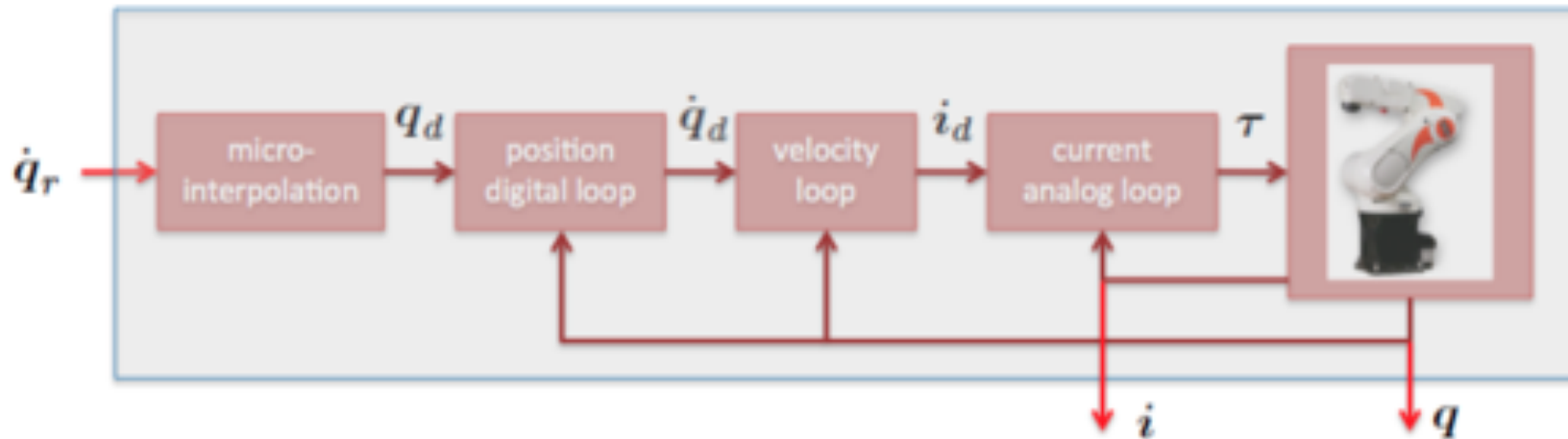
video



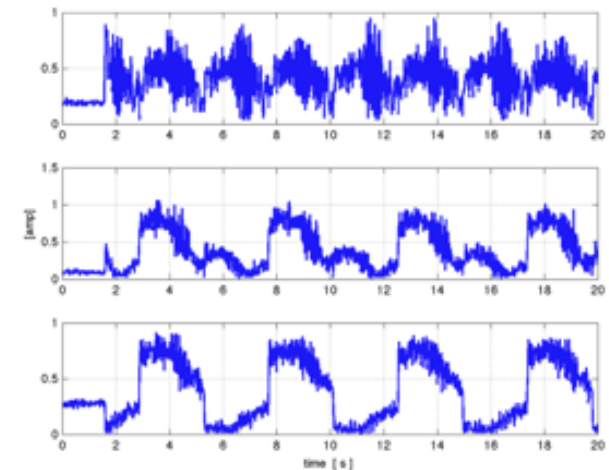
idle ⇔ relax ⇔ abort

HRC under a closed control architecture

KUKA KR5 Sixx R650 robot



- low-level motor control laws are **not known** and **not accessible** by the user
- user programs based on exteroceptive sensors (vision, Kinect, F/T sensor) implemented on **external PC** and communicate **via RSI** (RobotSensorInterface) with KUKA controller **every 12 ms**
- available robot measures are **joint positions** (by encoders) and (**absolute value** of) applied **motor currents**
- the only user commands for the controller, are **velocity** or position references **in joint** (or **Cartesian**) **space**



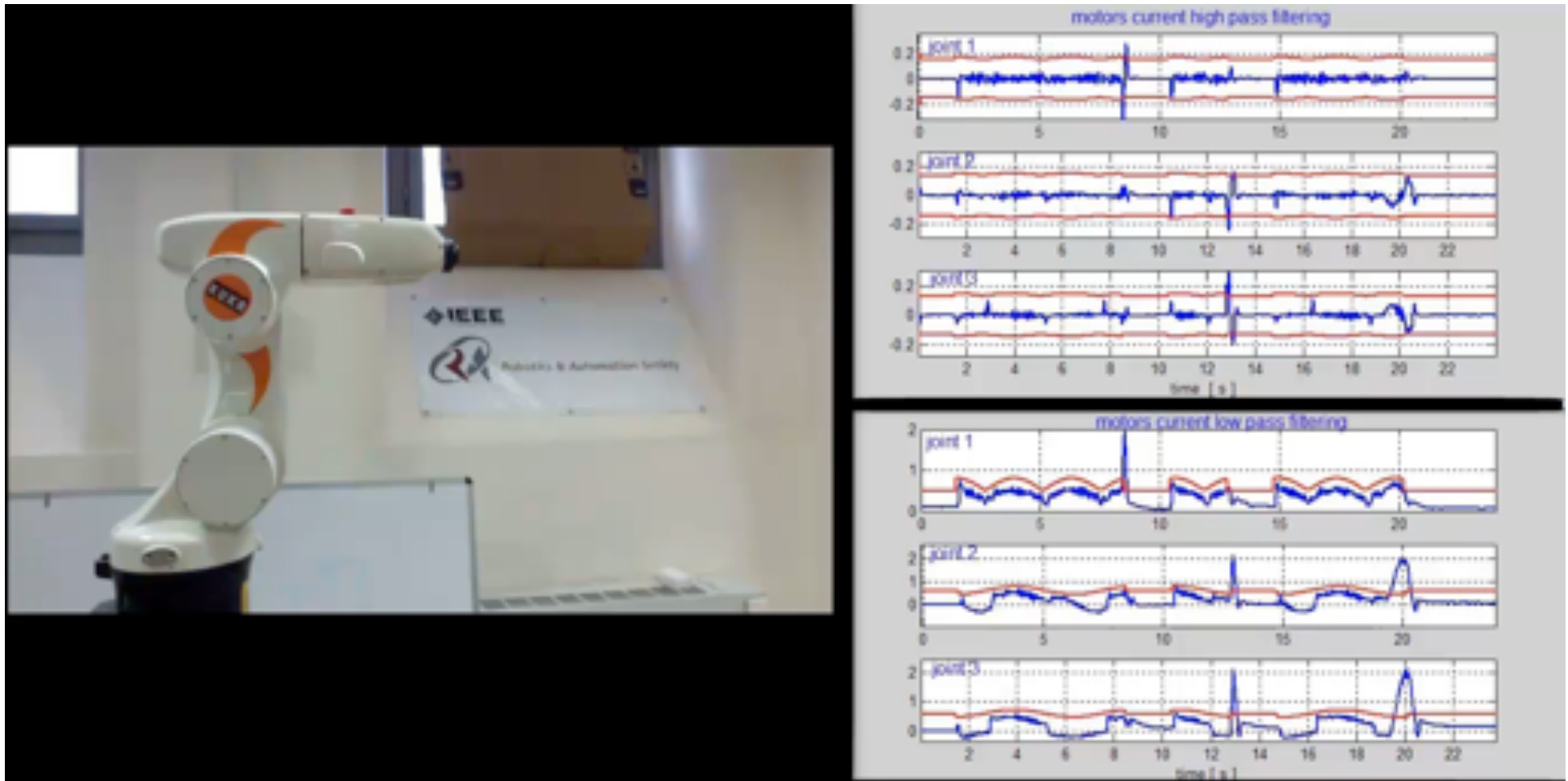
typical motor currents
on first three joints

Distinguish accidental collisions from intentional contacts

... and then either stop or start to collaborate (ICRA 2013)



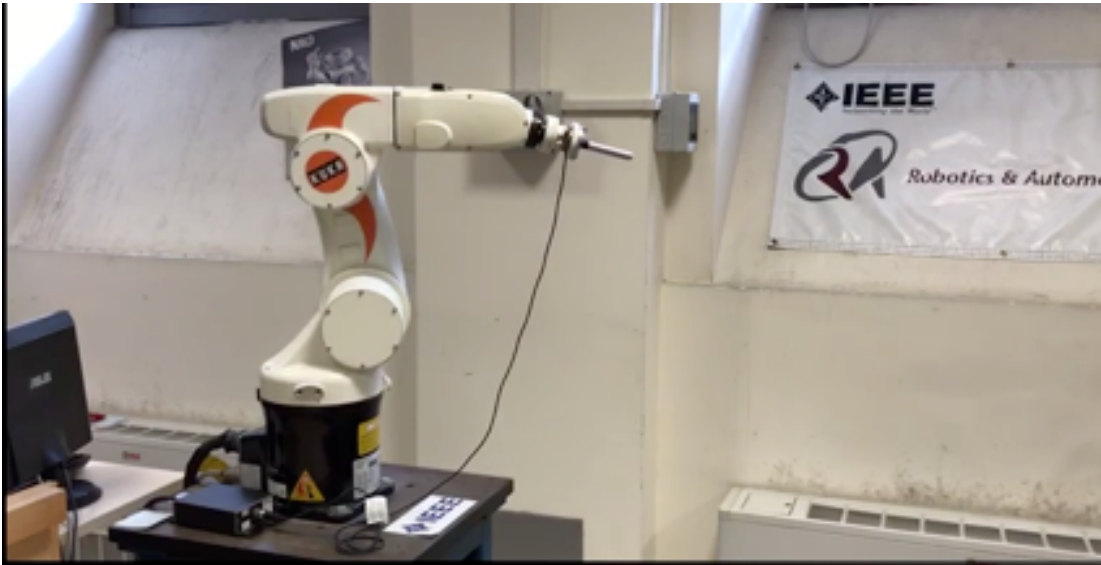
video



using **high-pass** and **low-pass** filtering of motor currents
— here collaboration mode is **manual guidance** of the robot

Combining motor currents and F/T sensor data

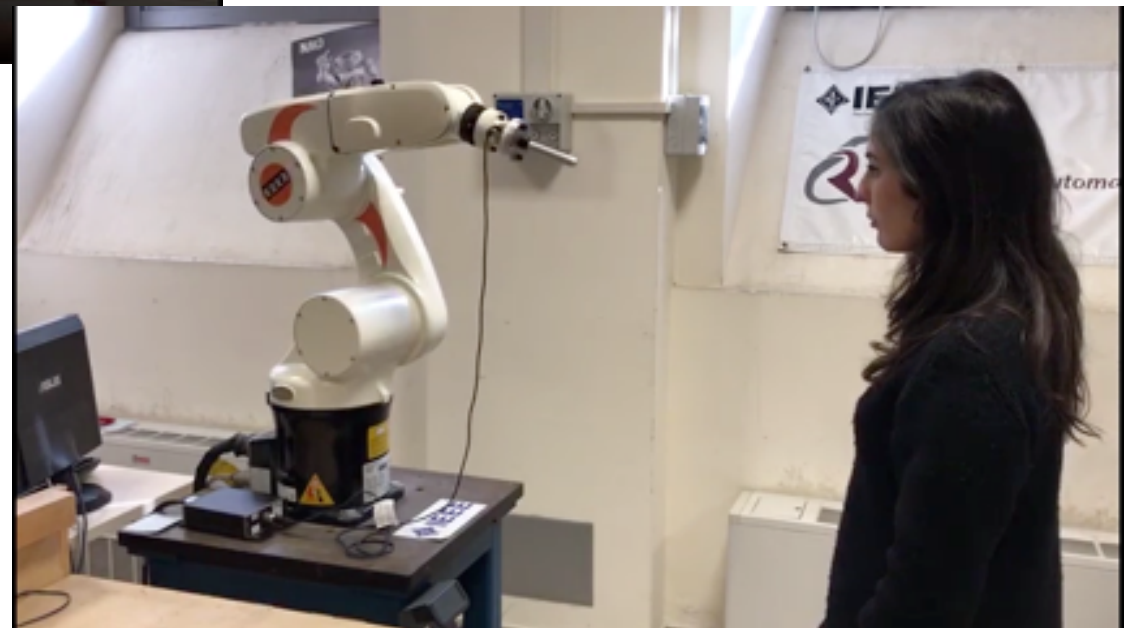
Enhanced flexible interaction by filtering, thresholding, merging signals (ICRA 2019)



2 videos

Robot in cyclic motion between four Cartesian positions

interaction may occur
at the **end-effector**,
on **robot body**, or **both**



Conclusions

Toward a safer and efficient control of human-robot physical collaboration



- framework for safe human-robot coexistence and collaboration, based on a hierarchy of consistent, **controlled** behaviors of the robot
 - collision **detection** (and **isolation**) with model-based residuals
 - portfolio of collision **reaction** algorithms (using also redundancy)
 - real-time **collision avoidance** based on data processed in depth space
 - **coexistence** with visual coordination
 - **distinguishing** intentional/soft contacts from accidental/hard collisions
 - **estimation of contact** force and location, by combining inner/outer sensing
 - “control bricks” for **collaborative tasks**
 - admittance/impedance/force/hybrid laws, **generalized at the contact level**
 - useful behaviors can be obtained also with **limited model information**
 - **applications are coming** from industrial and service stakeholders
 - many interesting **research extensions** ahead
 - human motion and intention prediction, merging models and data
 - integration with AI-based cognitive HRI modules

Our team at DIAG

Robotics Lab of the Sapienza University of Rome (back in 2014)



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- **Videos:** YouTube channel [RoboticsLabSapienza](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRmKpD8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8). Playlist: [Physical human-robot interaction](#)