VR controlled robot | Photo source Pixabay

VR SYSTEM ALLOWS ROBOTS TO BE CONTROLLED REMOTELY

WORK & LIFESTYLE

The new system could change the future of manufacturing jobs allowing workers to operate machines from anywhere in the world.

The future of work could soon see the ability for manufacturing blue-collar workers to carry out tasks remotely by wirelessly controlling machines in their real-life factory space.

Researchers at MIT's Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory (CSAIL) have developed a system that uses an Oculus Rift Virtual Reality headset and hand controllers to teleoperate a robot. The robot was equipped with multiple sensory displays to enable the controller to pilot the machine to a very high degree of accuracy from a distant location. The controllers on the VR system were used to operate the robot's hands to pick up, move and drop items with ease. While the first tests the researchers attempted were relatively basic – including picking up screws and stacking blocks – it is their belief that the system could eventually be used for more complex tasks, and controlled from hundreds of miles away.

The rise in popularity, with systems such as Oculus Rift and Gear VR for mobile devices, means that more and more companies are working on original ways to showcase the technology. For example, buyers can virtually view houses with a cardboard device, and a recent Kickstarter project helps smokers quit through Virtual Reality. With so many possibilities as yet untapped, what other ways can VR improve our lives?

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