Big News for Collaborative Robotics (Cobots)

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The age of collaborative robots, or cobots, has dawned. Greg Nichols has authored a pair of articles for @ZDNet titled, "Big announcements from major players in collaborative robotics" and "Robotics in business: Everything humans need to know." According to Greg, "The cobot market is unstoppable as heavyweights compete to expand distribution and bring new products online."

Custom thermoformed tray for use with cobots, manufactured by RapidMade

Greg continues, "Collaborative robots differ from the huge industrial robots used by automakers in that they're smaller, task-agnostic, and easy to program on the fly. Features like force sensors and machine vision enable them to operate outside cages and alongside humans.

Many of these robots actually act as a second pair of dexterous hands to augment the capabilities of skilled workers."

And what has fueled this recent growth? Greg honed it down to four main reasons:

- Falling sensor prices
- Open source development
- Rapid prototyping

- The convergence of disparate technologies

In 2018 alone, I've had opportunity to work on several custom tray projects in support of cobot manufacturing in the automotive, medical, industrial, and electronics manufacturing industries.

Take for example the custom vacuum formed tray pictured above. This tray was created for an automotive device manufacturer reworking a robotic line that was scaling down in size. Working closely with the customer's engineering team, RapidMade provided design assistance (DfM), first articles for performance verification, and ultimately low-volume manufacturing to help the customer expediently and cost effectively reconfigure the robotic line with minimal impact to manufacturing output.

Source: blog.robotiq.com

Grippers paired with custom fixtures (such as the thermoformed tray described) enable these cobots to work effectively with humans, and RapidMade is uniquely positioned to

offer vacuum forming for one-off projects and low-volume manufacturing with NRE's that cost a fraction of traditional tooling charges.

Follow the links provided above read the full articles. To discuss low-volume manufacturing of custom vacuum formed trays, rapid prototyping, or other manufacturing services, please contact HOPEWELL Companies today.

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