

## **Galway Hosts the Seventh Annual World Robotic Sailing Championship and International Robotic Sailing Conference**

Galway City will host the seventh World Robotic Sailing Championship ([WRSC2014](#)) from 9-13 September 2014. Fully autonomous and unmanned sailing boats, up to 2.5m in length compete over a series of short distance racing, navigation and autonomy challenges, taking place around the Port of Galway. This year teams from Galway, Wales, US, Finland, France, Portugal and Russia will participate. This is the first time that Ireland has hosted the event. Organised in conjunction with the WRSC, the International Robotic Sailing Conference ([IRSC2014](#)) will take place on Monday, 8 September, in the Aula Maxima, NUI Galway. IRSC provides a platform to discuss the broad range of scientific problems involved in the design and development of autonomous sailboats.

NUI Galway Engineering Lecturer and event Co-Chair, Dr Fearghal Morgan, said: “The International Robotic Sailing Conference provides international researchers with the opportunity to present and exchange ideas on their work on a wide range of topics related to autonomous surface marine robotics, particularly robotic sailing. Previous IRSC/WRSC events have been hosted in France, Wales, Germany, Canada, Portugal and Austria. We invite participation from anyone who might be interested in this work.” Details of the conference programme and delegate registration can be found at <http://wrsc2014.com/conference/>.

Robotic sailing offers the potential of long range and long term autonomous wind propelled, solar or wave-powered carbon neutral devices. Robotic sailing devices could potentially contribute to monitoring of environmental, ecological, meteorological, hydrographic and oceanographic data. These devices can also be used in traffic monitoring, security, assistance and rescue.

The WRSC competitions propose tasks such as station, speed in different conditions, accuracy, obstacle avoidance, target tracking, endurance and cooperation, all performed autonomously. The competition, originally designed for sailboats, also includes a motorboats category in order to bring together the scientific communities that work on different types of autonomous marine vehicles. A bottle boat competition will also be held with several Irish entries competing.

Event Co-Chair Dermot Tynan of Hewlett Packard, Galway said: “The dependency on changing winds and sea conditions presents a considerable challenge for short and long term route and stability planning, collision avoidance and boat control. Building a robust and seaworthy autonomous sailing robot presents a truly complex and multi-disciplinary challenge for boat designers, naval architects, electronic and embedded systems engineers and computer scientists. Since 2004, events such as [Sailbot](#), [Microtransat Challenge](#), [World Robotic Sailing Championship](#) and the [International Robotic Sailing Conference](#) have sparked an explosion in the number of groups working on autonomous sailing robots. To date, the longest distance sailed autonomously is almost 400km. Many of the challenges in building truly autonomous sailing robots still remain unsolved.”

“We are looking forward to welcoming international teams, many of whom are travelling long distances by sea and overland to bring robotic sailing boats to the West of Ireland. This demonstrates their enormous dedication and enthusiasm.” Information on each WRSC team entry and schedule is available at <http://wrsc2014.com/teams>.

The IRSC/WRSC event also includes two free public exhibitions in the Aula Maxima, NUI Galway on Sunday, 7 September from 2-5pm and on Monday, 8 September from 11am-4pm, at which several of the robotic sailboats will be exhibited. All are welcome. School groups are asked to contact the organisers in advance.

IRSC 2014 and WRSC 2014 are sponsored by Hewlett Packard, NUI Galway, Port of Galway, Galway Bay Sailing Club and Intel Ireland.

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For further information contact:

Dermot Tynan, Hewlett Packard, Galway at 086 2613325 or [dtynan@hp.com](mailto:dtynan@hp.com)

Dr Fearghal Morgan, NUI Galway at 086 3585544 or [fearghal.morgan@nuigalway.ie](mailto:fearghal.morgan@nuigalway.ie)



Seaquester, United States Naval Academy, Length: 2m

Webpage: <http://www.usna.edu/Users/naome/phmiller/SailBot/SailBot.htm>



FASt Autonomous Sailboat, Length 2.5m, University of Porto / INESC TEC

Video (FASt): <http://paginas.fe.up.pt/~jca/roboticsailing.pt/media.html>

Project link: [www.roboticsailing.pt](http://www.roboticsailing.pt)



"Kitty", length 2m, Aberystwyth University, Wales



ABoat United States Naval Academy