

Ford donates Ranger Wildtrak to MR2G

The University of KwaZulu-Natal's Mechatronics and Robotics Research Group (MR2G) will receive a Ford Ranger 4x4 Wildtrak for its participation in the DARPA Grand Challenge.



DARPA is the most prominent research organisation of the United States' Department of Defense and its mission is to sponsor revolutionary, high pay-off research that bridges the gap between fundamental discoveries and military use. The DARPA Grand Challenge was initially created to spur the development of technologies needed to create fully autonomous ground vehicles capable of completing substantial off-road drives.

MR2G was created in 1995 and under the leadership of Professor Glen Bright and the group has established its reputation in the United States and internationally. The research group's staff members and students have collaborated with universities from Australia, New Zealand, Europe and the USA on international research projects in the fields of mechatronics, robotics and advanced manufacturing.

Making a difference

Ockert Berry, vice president of Operations at Ford Motor Company of Southern Africa (FMCSA), says the donation to MR2G demonstrates FMCSA's commitment to going further to make a difference in South Africa's communities.

"We are extremely passionate about innovation, advancing engineering technology and investing in technical expertise. Creating a better world is an important part of Ford's legacy and its vision for the future. Through the DARPA Grand Challenge, South Africa's leading engineering and research minds will have the international platform to showcase their capabilities, proficiencies and ideas on how evolutionary technology makes the world a better place. To us, that is an exciting movement to be part of," said Berry.

MR2G will use the Ranger to incorporate its robotics and mechatronic hardware and software technology including laser range technology and computer processors as part of its showcase for the driverless vehicles challenge.

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