The Weeks that Was - Work/Life Balance

It’s a crazy time of the year! We have more visitors and media interested in visiting Robotics@QUT than we can handle, we have ACRA (the Australian robotics conference) and ICRA (the biggest robotics conference in the world) submission deadlines, we have Robotronica, QLD State Advance grants due, a new teaching curriculum course rolling out, and on top of all that we need to continue our normal research and teaching duties. How do we deal with all this work and achieve a reasonable work-life balance?

For a while now, I’ve noticed that we’re all super busy. I often ask myself why am I busy and how can I be more efficient at work and at home while remaining productive. Michael Milford gave a great talk at the recent Robovis on work-life balance highlighting that you have to put in the hours at certain times of your career. This doesn’t mean you always have to work all hours of the day all the time but coming up to a deadline, this might be required.

I think that we choose a career in research and teaching because we love the work. It doesn’t pay what industry would but it’s still fairly comfortable. And you have a choice in where your career takes you… this freedom to me is very important.

We love our work and because of this, we often think about our work outside of standard 9-5 hours. On the flip side, do we have to work 18 hour days and weekends? Hopefully not for an extended amount of time. We should have time to wind down. I think the following article really captures how I think of work and life: https://hbr.org/2015/04/its-the-weekend-why-are-you-working? “Our passion for our work and the pleasure we gain from feeling productive may explain why we so often work on the weekend, but we still need to be sure to make time to recharge”.

The moral of the story is that if you are busting a gut now, make sure that you leave some relaxation time after your deadline to recover. If you are not leaving recovery time for yourself, you’re not working at your optimum… give yourself a break when needed.

ICRA/ACRA

For those in the deep dark tunnel of writing a submission to ACRA and ICRA, please know that there is a light at the end of the tunnel. These are tough weeks but sooo worth it. Getting a paper in ACRA is a great chance to speak to the Australian robotics community while getting an ICRA paper is one of the academic pinnacles in publications for robotics.

Robotronica

I want to take this chance to thank everyone who has put in a huge effort with Robotronica… it looks like it will be an amazing day because of these people. Check out the sheer number of events on the Robotronica site: http://www.robotronica.qut.edu.au/. We’re still looking for volunteers so if you have spare time, please make yourself known if you can help out.

Visitors and Potential Industry Partners

Thank you to all those who have put in huge amounts of time for demos and presentations to various visitors and potential industry partners. The payback may not be immediately obvious to you but Robotics@QUT as a whole benefits immeasurably from these professional demonstrations. As a result, we get more people at our door who will fund all the fun projects that we’re involved in. Indirectly, this means the group as a whole stays healthy in terms of funding and culture.

Finally, during these hectic weeks, I want to thank you all for such tireless enthusiasm and effort. We all really appreciate it.