

# Easy Robot Software

And the MoveIt! Setup Assistant 2.0

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*Reducing the Barrier to Entry of Complex Robotic Software: a MoveIt! Case Study*  
David Coleman, Ioan Sucan, Sachin Chitta, Nikolaus Correll  
*Journal of Software Engineering for Robotics*, April 2014



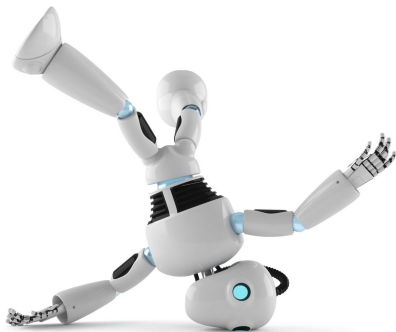
# Outline

- Unique Challenges To Robot Software
- Why Do We Care?
- The 6 Entry Barrier Design Principles
- The MoveIt! Setup Assistant



# Building Robot Software Is Hard

So let's all work together :)





# Unique Challenges Facing Robotic Software

- No single developer can have the necessary **domain knowledge**
- Large variety in **complexity** and scale of robotic platforms.
- Software/hardware interaction with **unstructured real world**.
- Long term desire **reduce reliance on GUIs**.



# Barriers to Entry

*The time, effort, and knowledge that a new user must invest in the integration of a software component with an arbitrary robot.*



# Why do we care?

## **Larger User Bases = Better Software**



# Why do we care? Larger user bases

As number of users increases, bugs are identified and fixed faster [2]

[1] H. Bruyninckx, “Open robot control software: the orocos project,” in Robotics and Automation, 2001. Proceedings 2001 ICRA. IEEE International Conference on, vol. 3.

[2] D. C. Schmidt, “Why software reuse has failed and how to make it work for you,” C++ Report, vol. 11, no. 1, p. 1999

[3] D. C. Schmidt and A. Porter, “Leveraging open-source communities to improve the quality & performance of open-source software,” in Proceedings of the 1st Workshop on Open Source Software Engineering, 2001



# Why do we care? Larger user bases

More users involved in quality assurance,  
documentation, and support [3]

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# Why do we care? Larger user bases

New feature contributions increase (weaker correlation) [2]

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# Why do we care? Larger user bases

Critical mass of skilled contributors has been shown to make open source projects successful [1]

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[2] D. C. Schmidt, "Why software reuse has failed and how to make it work for you," C++ Report, vol. 11, no. 1, p. 1999

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# Why do we care? Hiring and Innovation.

Increase number of creative minds working on  
today's robotic challenge



# The 6 Entry Barrier Design Principles



# The 6 Entry Barrier Design Principles

## Immediacy

Minimize the amount of time to accomplish the most basic task.

```
>hello  
world
```

- Quick start demo
- Cursory feedback to new user that software is worth investing in
- Combat the paradox of the active user



# Paradox of the Active User

*Users never read manuals*



*The paradox is that the users would actually save time in the long run if they learned more about the system before attempting to use it, but these studies showed that in reality people do not tend to invest time upfront into learning a new system.*



# The 6 Entry Barrier Design Principles

## Transparency



Configuration steps are performed automatically for the user while at the same time being as visible as possible

- Understand what parameters are specific to their robot
- "layered" approach of quick initial setup while allowing later customization as needed

# Installation type

This computer currently has no detected operating systems. What would you like to do?

☒ Erase disk and install Ubuntu

**Warning:** This will delete all your programs, documents, photos, music, and any other files in all operating systems.

☐ Encrypt the new Ubuntu installation for security

You will choose a security key in the next step.

☐ Use LVM with the new Ubuntu installation

This will set up Logical Volume Management. It allows taking snapshots and easier partition resizing.

☐ Something else

You can create or resize partitions yourself, or choose multiple partitions for Ubuntu.

Quit

Back

Install Now







# The 6 Entry Barrier Design Principles

## Reconfigurable



The automatically generated parameters and default values for the initial setup of a robot should be easy for the user to modify at a later time.

- Typically chosen to work with the largest number of robots
- Not optimal for any robot
- Varying applications require different configurations



# The 6 Entry Barrier Design Principles

## Intuitive



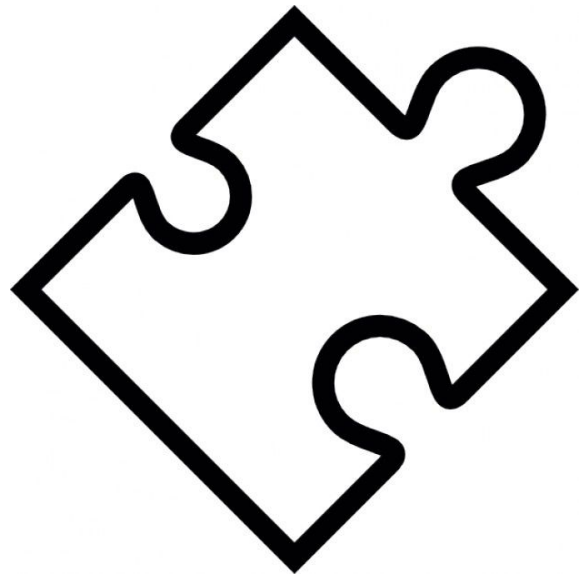
The need to read accompanied documentation, and the amount of required documentation, should be minimized.

- Follow standard design patterns
- Provide interface context clues
- Ideally an interface does not require additional documentation



# The 6 Entry Barrier Design Principles

## Extensible



The user should be enabled to customize as many components and behaviors as possible within the reasonable scope of the software.

- Makes the software far more powerful and re-usable for varying use cases
- Plugin interface



# The 6 Entry Barrier Design Principles

## Documented



The amount of reference material explaining how to use the software should be maximized for as many aspects and user levels as possible.

- No software is intuitive enough to not require documentation
- Different types of documentation are required for different types of users
  - Developers vs end-users





# Movelt! Setup Assistant



# Quick Setup of MoveIt!





# Optimize Collision Checking

Start

**Self-Collisions**

Virtual Joints

Planning Groups

Robot Poses

End Effectors

Passive Joints

3D Perception

Simulation

ROS Control

Author Information

Configuration Files

## Optimize Self-Collision Checking

This searches for pairs of robot links that can safely be disabled from collision checking, decreasing motion planning time. These pairs are disabled when they are always in collision, never in collision, in collision in the robot's default position, or when the links are adjacent to each other on the kinematic chain. Sampling density specifies how many random robot positions to check for self collision.

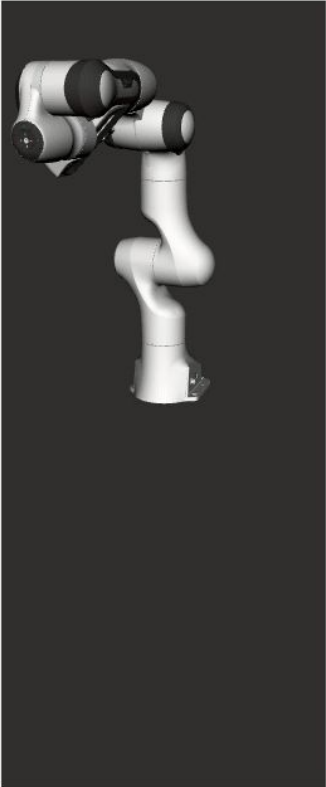
Sampling Density: Low  High 100000

Min. collisions for "always"-colliding pairs: 95%

	panda_link0	panda_link1	panda_link2	panda_link3	panda_link4	panda_link5	panda_link6	panda_link7	panda_hand	panda_leftfinger	panda_rightfinger
panda_link0		✓	✓	✓	✓						
panda_link1	✓		✓	✓	✓						
panda_link2	✓	✓		✓	✓						
panda_link3	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
panda_link4	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
panda_link5				✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		
panda_link6				✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
panda_link7				✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
panda_hand				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓

link name filter

☐ linear view ☒ matrix view







# Specify Metadata

- Planning Groups
- Robot Poses
- End Effectors
- Passive Joints
- Virtual Joints

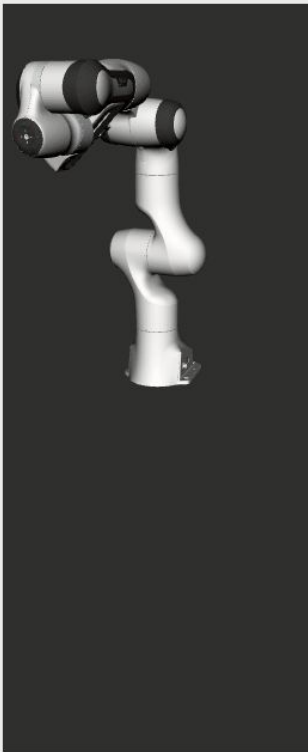
Movell! Setup Assistant

**Define Virtual Joints**

Create a virtual joint between a robot link and an external frame of reference (considered fixed with respect to the robot).

	Virtual Joint Name	Child Link	Parent Frame	Type
1	virtual_joint	panda_link0	world	fixed

Edit Selected Delete Selected Add Virtual Joint





# MoveIt! Setup Assistant 2.0

Special thanks to Mohammad El Khzragy, Open Robotics, and GSoC



# Auto-configure Depth Sensors

Start

Self-Collisions

Virtual Joints

Planning Groups

Robot Poses

End Effectors

Passive Joints

**3D Perception**

Simulation

ROS Control

Author Information

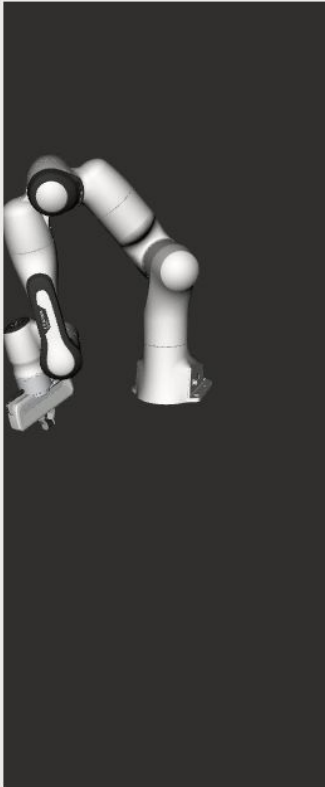
Configuration Files

## Setup 3D Perception Sensors

Configure your 3D sensors to work with MoveIt! Please see [Perception Documentation](#) for more details.

Optionally choose a type of 3D sensor plugin to configure:

None





# Setup Gazebo Simulation Integration

Start

Self-Collisions

Virtual Joints

Planning Groups

Robot Poses

End Effectors

Passive Joints

3D Perception

**Simulation**

ROS Control

Author Information

Configuration Files

## Simulate With Gazebo

The following tool will auto-generate the URDF changes needed for Gazebo compatibility with ROSControl and MoveIt!. The needed changes are shown in green.

You can run the following command to quickly find the necessary URDF file to edit:

roscd franka\_description

Generate URDF





# Setup ROS Control

Movel! Setup Assistant

Start

Self-Collisions

Virtual Joints

Planning Groups

Robot Poses

End Effectors

Passive Joints

3D Perception

Simulation

**ROS Control**

Author Information

Configuration Files

## Setup ROS Controllers

Configure Movel! to work with ROS Control to control the robot's physical hardware

Auto Add FollowJointsTrajectory Controllers For Each Planning Group

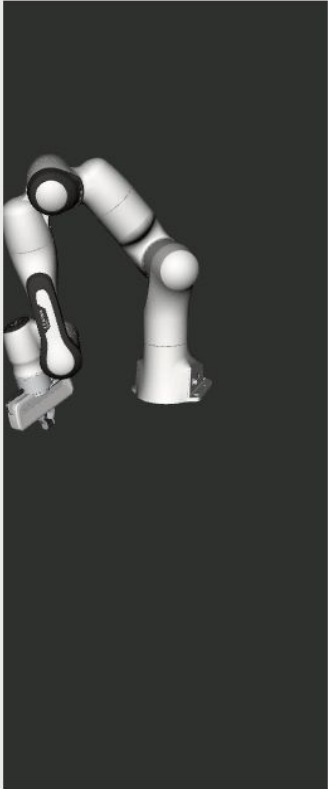
Controller	Controller Type
------------	-----------------

[Expand All](#) [Collapse All](#)

Delete Controller

Add Controller

Edit Selected





# Hello World



# Generated Quick Start Demo

moveit.rviz\* - RViz

File Panels Help

Displays

- Robot Alpha 0.5
- Attached Body Color 150; 50; 150
- Links
  - Planning Request
    - Planning Group panda\_arm\_hand
    - Show Workspace ☐
    - Query Start State ☒
    - Query Goal State ☒
    - Interactive Marker Size 0
    - Start State Color 50; 230; 50
    - Start State Alpha 1
    - Goal State Color 246; 160; 49
    - Goal State Alpha 1
    - Colliding Link Color 255; 0; 0
    - Joint Violation Color 255; 0; 255

Add Duplicate Remove Rename

MotionPlanning

Context Planning Manipulation Scene Objects Stored Scenes Stored States Status

Commands

Plan Execute Plan and Execute Stop

Query

Select Start State:

Select Goal State:

<random valid>

Update

Clear octomap

Options

Planning Time (s): 5.00

Planning Attempts: 10.00

Velocity Scaling: 1.00

Acceleration Scaling: 1.00

☐ Allow Replanning

☐ Allow Sensor Positioning

☐ Allow External Comm.

☒ Use Collision-Aware IK

☐ Allow Approx IK Solutions

Path Constraints

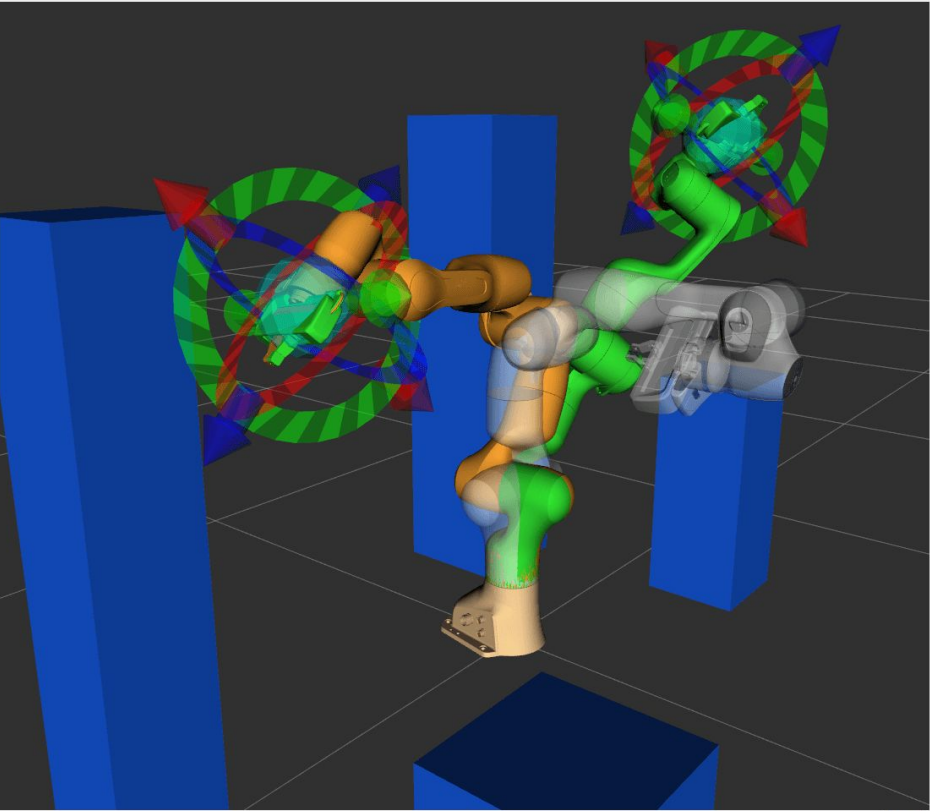
None

Goal Tolerance: 0.00

MotionPlanning - Trajectory Slider

Waypoint: 0 0 Pause

Reset Left-Click: Rotate. Middle-Click: Move X/Y. Right-Click: Move Z. Shift: More options.



31 fps



# New MoveIt! Tutorials

**MoveIt! Motion Planning Framework**

Search docs

- Getting Started
- MoveIt! Quickstart in RViz**
  - Getting Started
    - Step 1: Launch the Demo and Configure the Plugin
    - Step 2: Play with the Visualized Robots
  - Step 3: Interact with the Panda
  - Step 4: Use Motion Planning with the Panda
  - Next Steps
- Move Group C++ Interface
- Move Group Python Interface
- MoveIt! Commander Scripting
- Robot Model and Robot State
- Planning Scene
- Planning Scene ROS API
- Motion Planning API
- Motion Planning Pipeline
- Visualizing Collisions
- Time Parameterization
- Planning with Approximated Constraint Manifolds
- Pick and Place Tutorial
- MoveIt! Setup Assistant
- URDF and SRDF
- Low Level Controllers
- Perception Pipeline Tutorial

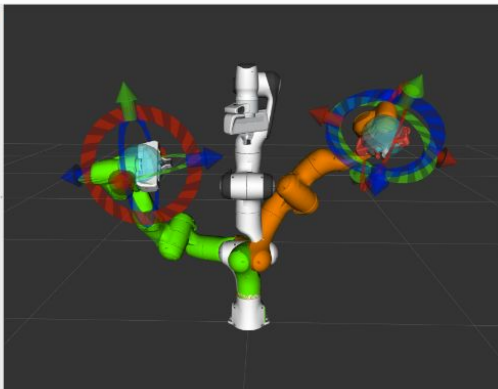


[MoveIt! Website](#)  
[Blog](#)

[Docs](#) » [MoveIt! Quickstart in RViz](#)

[Edit on GitHub](#)

## MoveIt! Quickstart in RViz



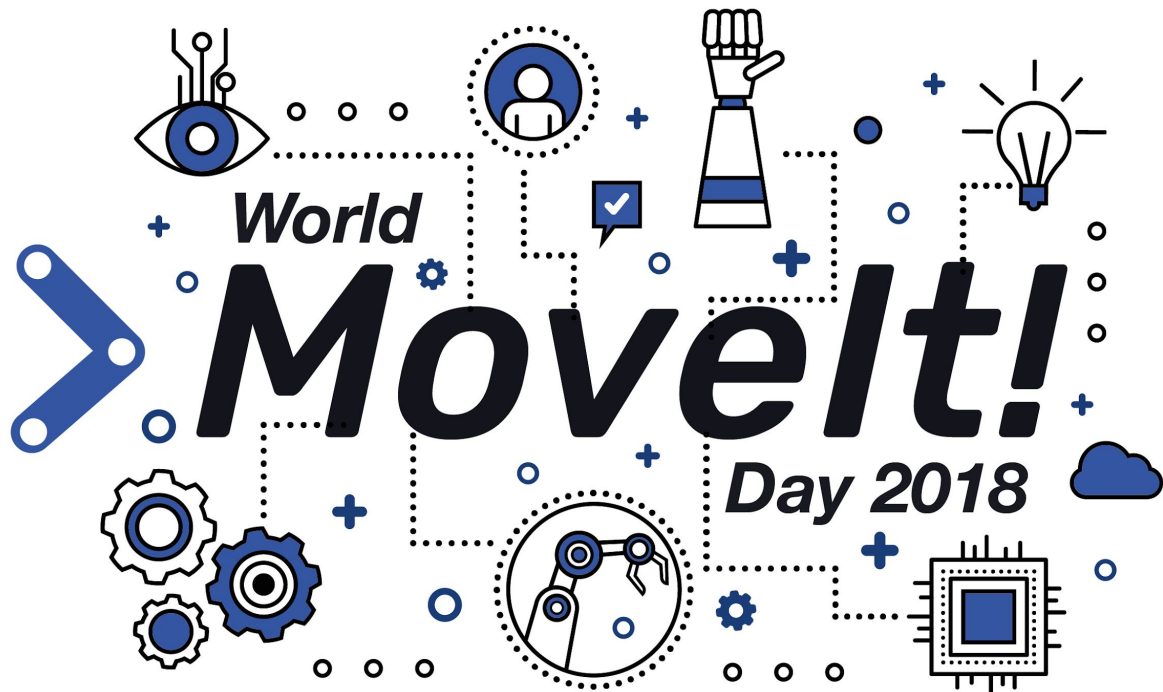
The quickest way to get started using MoveIt! is through its RViz plugin. Rviz is the primary visualizer in ROS and an incredibly useful tool for debugging robotics. The MoveIt! Rviz plugin allows you to setup virtual environments (scenes), create start and goal states for the robot interactively, test various motion planners, and visualize the output.

### Getting Started

If you haven't already done so, make sure you've completed the steps in [Getting Started](#).

### Step 1: Launch the Demo and Configure the Plugin





*Thursday, October 25th, 2018*



# Conclusion

- Robot software is hard
- Make your software easier to use
- Apply the entry barrier design principles
- By building a community around your software, the software gets better
- The MoveIt! Setup Assistant is a good example