

[✉ Manage Subscription](#)

Tech & Telecom Law News

Fanuc Sued by Northwestern University Over Patents for Robots

By Susan Decker

Feb. 2, 2021, 2:56 PM

Bloomberg Law News 2021-02-02T22:46:14618-05:00**Fanuc Sued by Northwestern University Over Patents for Robots**

By Susan Decker2021-02-02T15:56:29036-05:00

Northwestern University claims Fanuc is infringing three patents for “groundbreaking intelligent assist systems in the field of collaborative robotics,” and should pay royalties on them, according to a lawsuit filed Tuesday in federal court in Chicago.

- Fanuc, the world’s biggest maker of industrial robots, makes a series of machines including the LR Mate, M series and R series as well as panels, pendants and interfaces that are designed for use with various Fanuc controllers, according to the complaint
- Michael A. Peshkin and **J. Edward Colgate**, professors at Northwestern’s McCormick School of Engineering, were critical in inventing intelligent assist devices known as collaborative robots or “cobots” that interact with human operators, Northwestern said
- The three patents cover the architecture, configuration system, and multifunctional hub for intelligent assist systems, according to the complaint
- The university said it sent a letter to Fanuc in May identifying the patents and products it says use the technology
- Fanuc also cited one of the patents in its own application for a patent on a robotic system, the school said
- Related: Robot Orders Surge in Automation Drive Spurred by Virus Risk
- Docket link

To contact the reporter on this story:

Susan Decker in Washington at sdecker1@bloomberg.net

To contact the editors responsible for this story:

Jon Morgan at jmorgan97@bloomberg.net

Ben Livesey

© 2021 Bloomberg L.P. All rights reserved. Used with permission.

© 2021 The Bureau of National Affairs, Inc. All Rights Reserved

Reproduced with permission. Published February 2, 2021. Copyright 2021 by The Bureau of National Affairs, Inc. (800-372-1033)