

**UNECE**United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

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**In 2001, robot investment surged by 26% in the United Kingdom
but is still lagging behind the rest of Europe –
Market is projected to grow by 10% per year in 2002-2005**

Steady increase in robot investment...

Since 1998 investment in industrial robots has steadily increased, reaching 1,941 units in 2001, 26% over 2000 (see figure 1). For the period 2002-2005, the United Kingdom investment in robots is projected to increase by an average annual rate of 9.6%, resulting in 2,800 robots to be installed in 2005.

The estimated stock of robots in use in the United Kingdom increased by 9% to 13,400 units at the end of 2001. By the end of 2005, the stock is projected to increase to just below 21,000 units.

Production and origin of the robots

Of the total 2001 supply, robots fabricated in the United Kingdom accounted for 3%, a share which has fallen rapidly from the record 36% in 1992. Japanese manufacturers had in 1998-1999 a share of about 25% or just under. As from 2000 it surged, reaching a record level of 69% in 2001. This increase in the market share of Japanese suppliers was at the expense of suppliers from Europe, who saw their shares decrease from 64% in 1999 to 22% in 2001.

United Kingdom lagging behind...

For every 10,000 persons employed in the United Kingdom manufacturing industry at the end of 2001, there were 34 industrial robots, compared with 127 in Germany, 63 in France, 62 in Spain (see figure 2). In the United Kingdom motor vehicle industry there are as many as 520 robots per 10,000 production workers.

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Robots prices are down, labour costs are up...

Between 1990 and 2001 prices of industrial robots fell from index 100 to 63, without taking into account that robots installed in 2001 had a much higher performance than those installed in 1990 (see figure 3). If quality changes had been taken into account, it was estimated that the index would have fallen to 31. In other words, an average robot sold in 2001 would have cost only about a third of what a robot with the same performance would have cost in 1990 if it had been possible to produce such a robot in that year. In the last few years, however, the price decline has levelled out.

In the same time, the index of labour compensation in the United Kingdom business sector increased from 100 to 165. This implies that the relative prices of robots have fallen from 100 in 1990 to 22 in 2001 without quality adjustment, and to 14 when taking quality improvements into account.

How much do the robots cost?

Of the robots installed in 2001, about 37% were valued at between £10,000 and £30,000. Robots in the range of £30,000 to £50,000 accounted for 49% of the supply.

At the high end, robots with a unit cost between £50,000 and £100,000 made up only 1% of the 2001 supply, down from 9% in 1999.

Welding and plastic moulding are the dominant application areas

Of the total 2001 stock of operational robots, welding accounted for 49%. With 14%, plastic moulding was the second largest application area, followed by material handling with 8%.

The motor vehicle industry dominates...

The motor vehicle industry was by the far the largest user of industrial robots in the United Kingdom. At the end of 2001, this industry accounted for 60% of the total stock of operational robots. With 16% of the operational stock, the chemical industry was the second largest user. The food industry, fabricated metal products, machinery and electrical machinery industries each accounted for only between 2% and 4% of the total stock.

For the global development of industrial robots and service robots, see a parallel press release (ECE/STAT/02/01) issued on the same day as the present one.

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Figure 1. Estimated operational stock of robots at year-end in the United Kingdom and shipments during the year

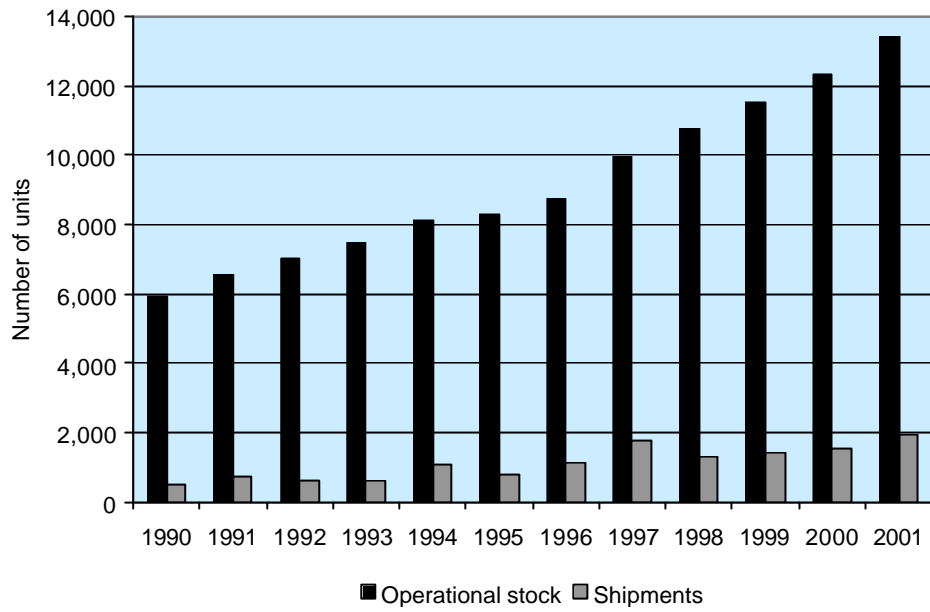
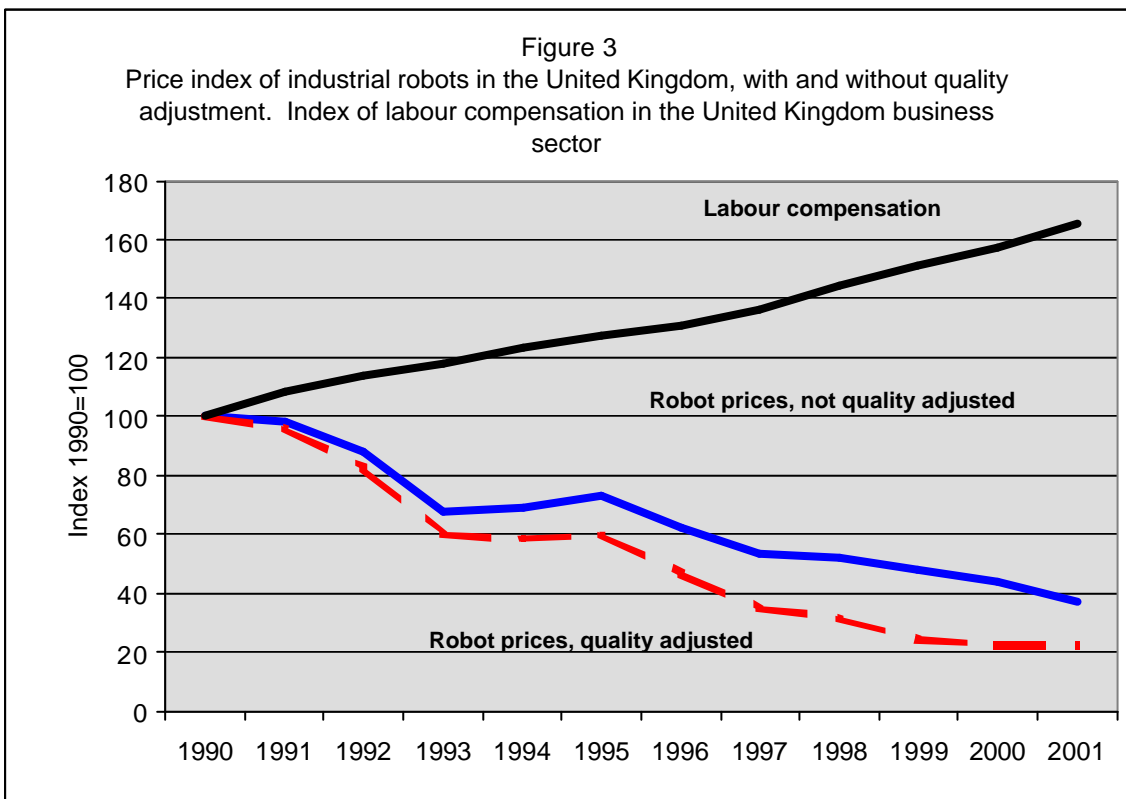
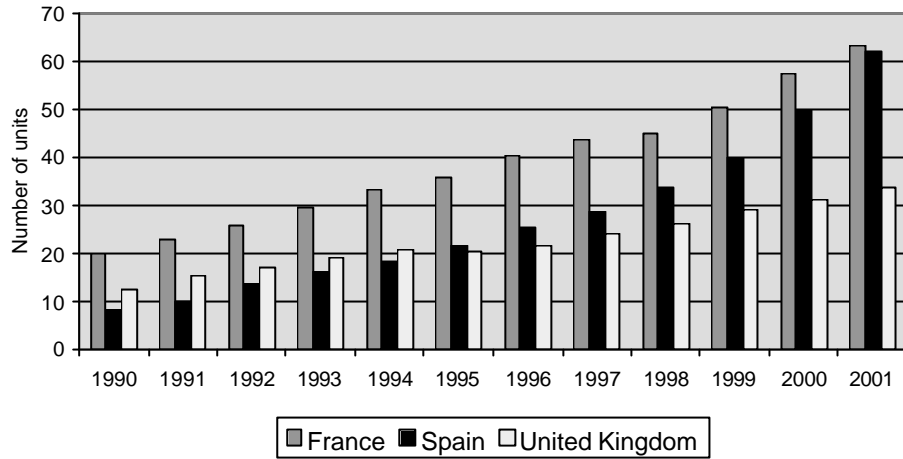
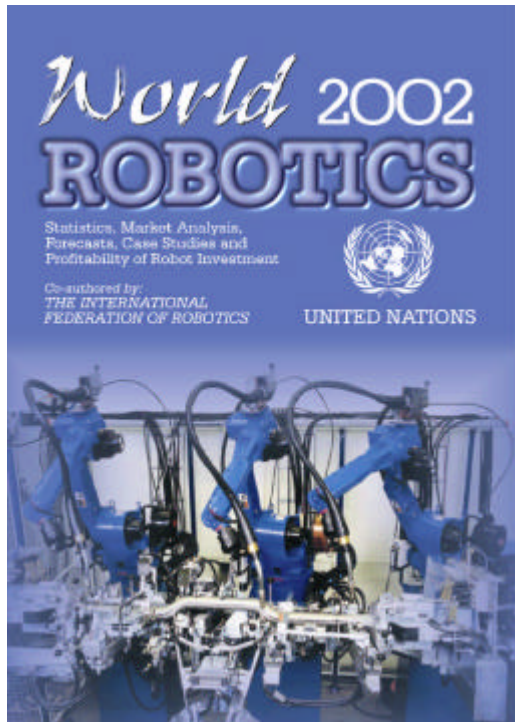


Figure 2. Number of multipurpose industrial robots per 10,000 employees in the manufacturing industry (ISIC rev.3: D)



The publication **World Robotics 2002 – Statistics, Market Analysis, Forecasts, Case Studies and Profitability of Robot Investment** is available, quoting Sales No. GV.E.02.0.8 or ISBN No. 92-1-101047-0, through the usual United Nations sales agents in various countries or from the United Nations Office at Geneva (see address below), priced at US\$ 120:



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