Autonomous Robotics: Action, Perception and Cognition

Gregor Schöner
Institute for Neural Computation
Theory of Cognitive Systems
gregor.schoener@rub.de

What comes to your mind when you hear the word “robot”

- Google search “robot” (21 apr 2020)

Nao (robot) - Wikipedia
en.wikipedia.org

more productive than human workers ...
information-age.com

Future Robots and Ensuring Human S...
blogs.3ds.com

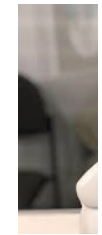
Robots have jumped, raced and rolled a ...
cnet.com

fight the coronavirus in China ...
businessinsider.com

Social robot - Wikipedia
en.wikipedia.org

China says AI robots won't lead to ...
techinasia.com

Could robots be marking your homework ...
bbc.com



CES 2020 v
cnet.com

Humanoid robot job apocalypse — or a ...
pri.org

Here are the coolest robots of 2019 s...
thegadgetflow.com

extend the scope of IoT applications ...
networkworld.com

The time for putting up with stupid ...
cosmosmagazine.com

Eight cute and
dezeen.com

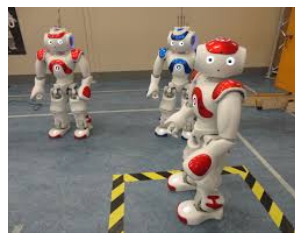
Japanese-Israeli venture offers robots ...
timesofisrael.com

Robots Might Make Human Workers More ...
bloomberg.com

NAO the humanoid and pro...
softbankrobotics.com

Will Robots Rob Us From Our Jobs?
industrywired.com

Robots.txt Datei fürs SEO ...
neilpatel.com



Why Ethical Robots Might Not Be Such...
spectrum.ieee.org

Robots could learn to recognise human ...
techxplore.com

Russia and robots: Steel junk or a ...
bbc.com

- => Humanoids (or anthropomorphic) robots

page 2

legged robot

vehicle

compliant arms

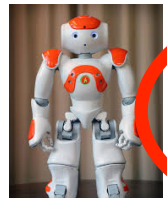
on regular industrial robot on first 4 pages


Those Racist Robots… - Towards Data ...
towardsdatascience.com


redefine personal robots in 2...
scmp.com

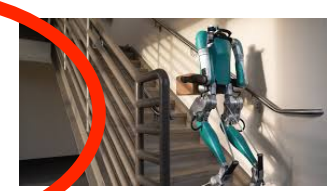

Biped Robot Timelines – How Long Until ...
emerj.com


How Can We Bond With Robots ...
technologynetworks.com


Robot companions are ...
cnet.com

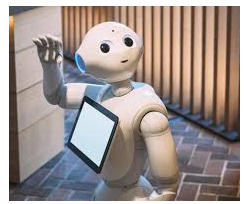
Boston D... ...ics, Asimo, Da Vinci, SoFi ...
youtube.com


DJI makes ... into educational rob...
asiatimes.com


Agility Robotics and Ford team up to ...
parcelandpostaltechnologyinternational.com

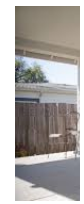
Biobots: Snakeb...
youtube.com


The artificial skin that allows robots ...
cnn.com

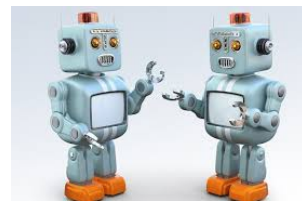

What is the future of service robots?
eenewseurope.com

Why are we reluctant to trust robots ...
theguardian.com


Robot at the helm: A space humanoid, an ...
zdnet.com


two-legge...
techcrunch


5 Industries Majorly Impacted by ...
analyticsinsight.net


4 Robots You Can Use In Real Estate ...
corelogic.com.au


Walmart Shows Robots Are As Easy As 123
forbes.com


5 reasons robots aren't going t...
weforum.org


destroy when they compete with humans ...
marketwatch.com


Toyota Developing Humanoi...
global.toyota


...rative Robots | RIA ...
robotics.org

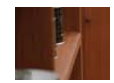

A Technology Trend Every Business Must ...
forbes.com


All Robots - ROBOTS: Your Guid...
robots.ieee.org


Alphabet X's new Everyday Robo...
theverge.com


DENSO Robotics Europe is a market ...
densorobotics-europe.com


Role of Robots in Recruitment ...
careerenlightenment.com



in reality, industrial robots are much more common today than humanoids or autonomous vehicles

- fundamentally, all factory automatization is a form of robotics: "programmable" machines…

Survey of kinds of robots

- other than humanoid or industrial

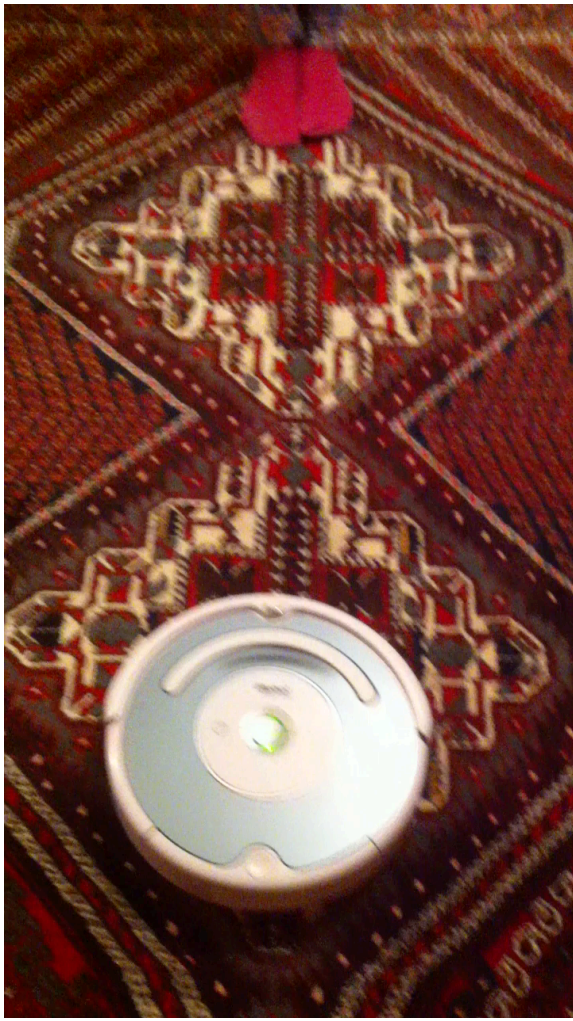
simple, single-task autonomous vehicles

Tennisball collector (GER)

Security (US)

Auto Mower (SWE)

Electrolux (SWE)



Pool cleaner (SWE)

Window cleaner (GER)

iRobot (US)

[photo credits: WTEC final report 2006]

Figure 5.5. Examples of service robots.

some of our own (older) autonomous vehicles

outdoor vehicles

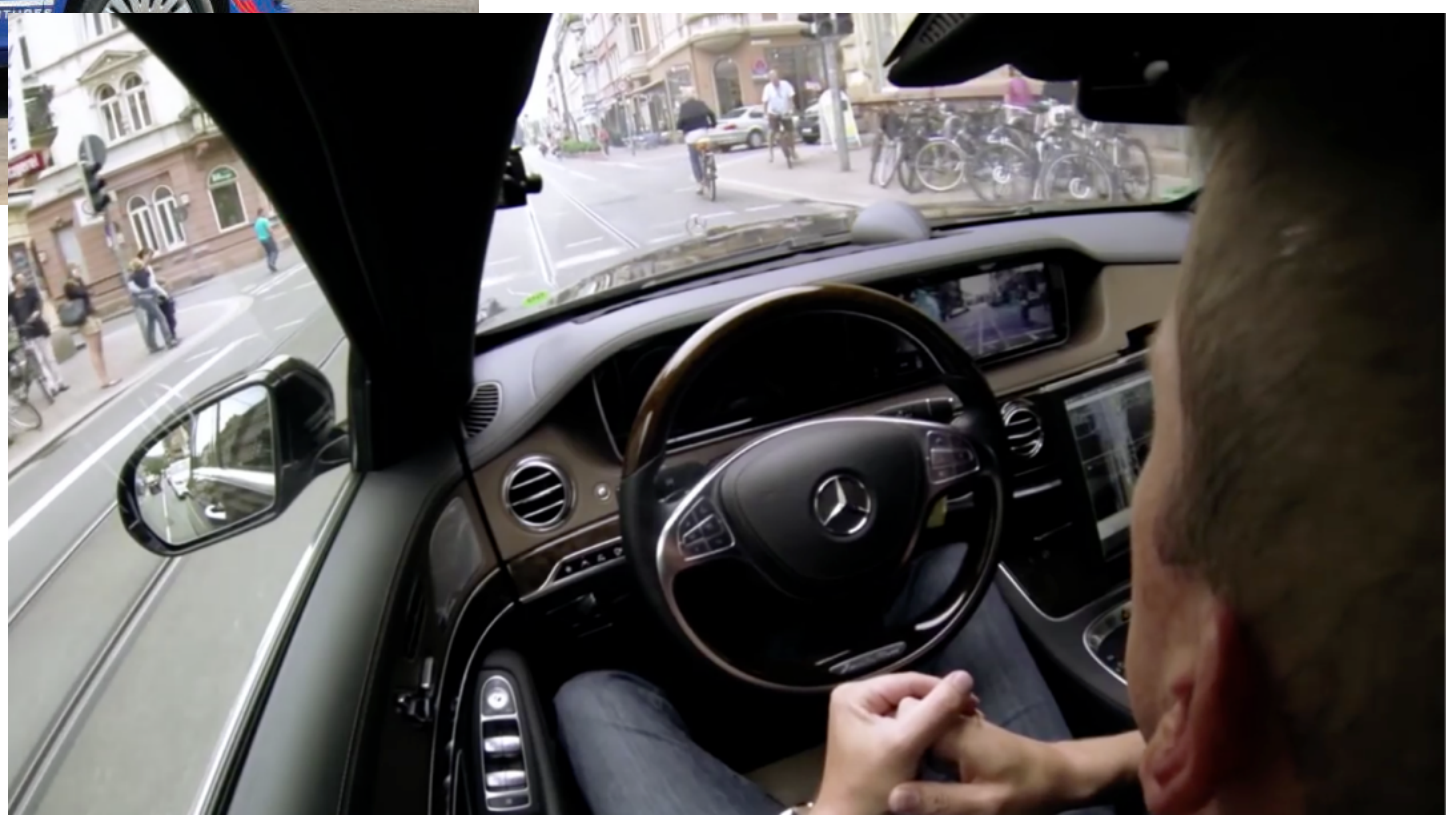
(a)

(b)

Figure 2.3. Agricultural robotic vehicle (Int Harv, U.S.) (a). Mining haul truck (ACFR, Australia) (b).

Figure 2.1. NASA Mars Rover (NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory *(*JPL)).

cars: autonomous driving



legged robots

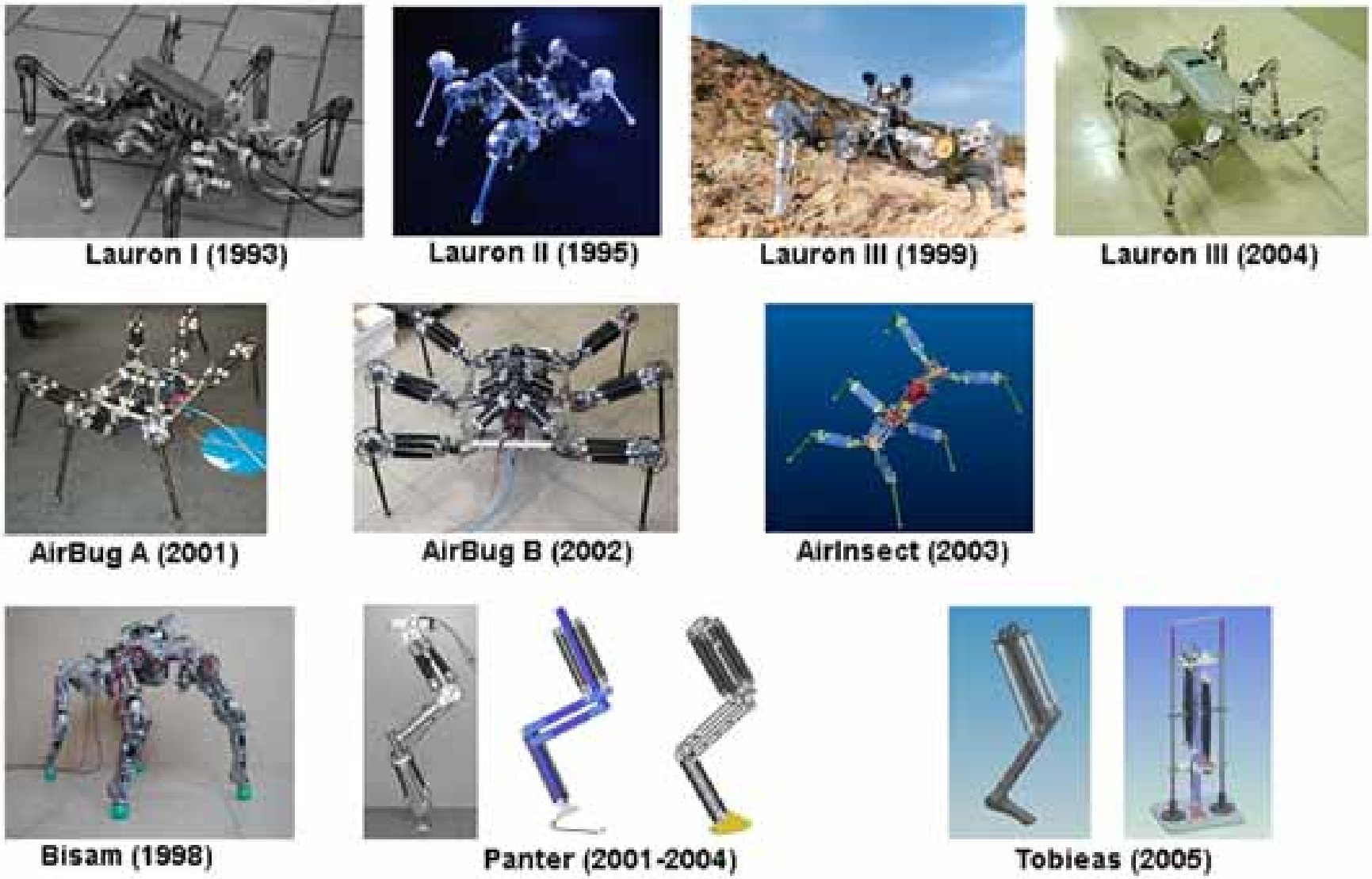
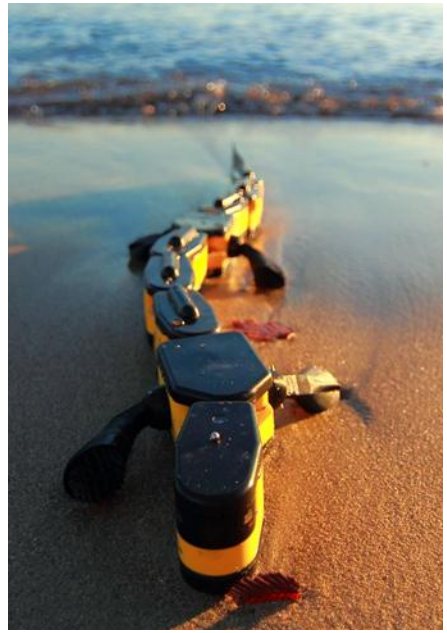
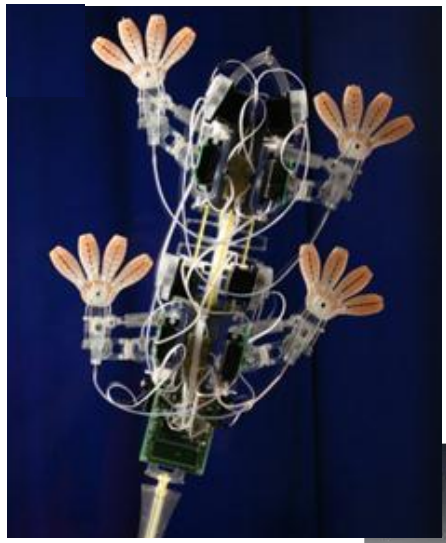
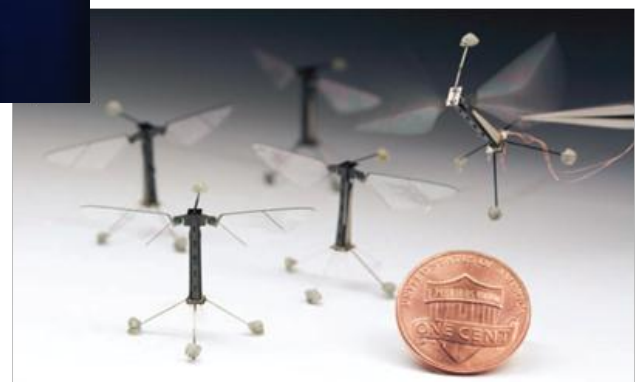


Figure C.58. The walking machines built by Dillmann's group.

biologically inspired robotics







snakes, crawlers, climbers

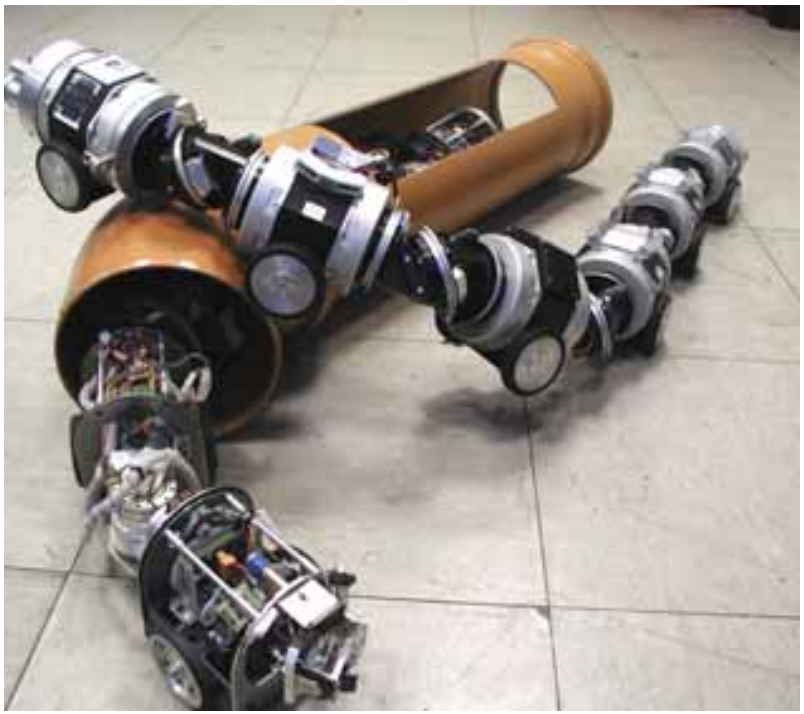


Figure C.57. Inspection robot.

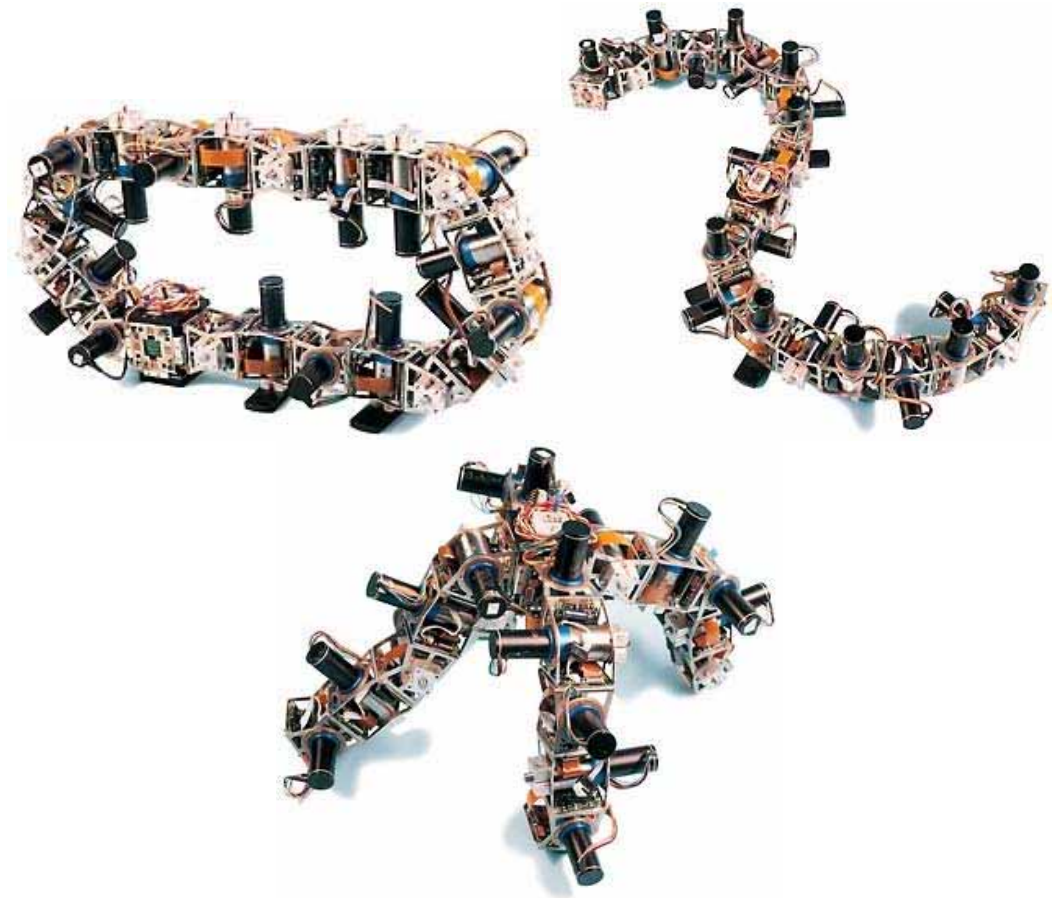


Figure 7.2. Robotic modules can be reconfigured to "morph" into different locomotion systems including wheel-like rolling system (left), a snake-like undulatory locomotion system (right), a four-legged walking system (bottom).

underwater vehicles, ships

Figure 2.2. IFREMER ASTER autonomous underwater vehicle.

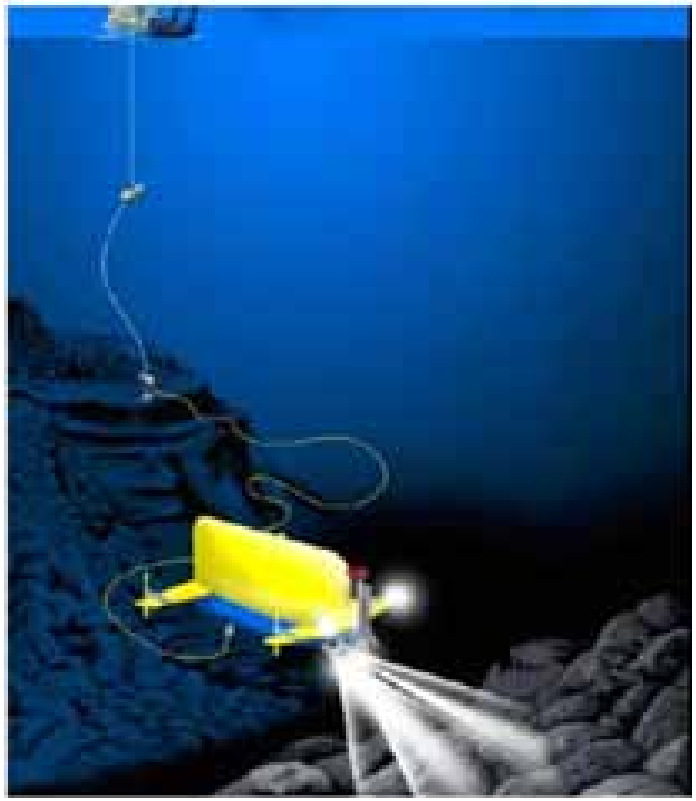


Figure 2.11. HROV (Hybrid ROV) project (Johns Hopkins University (JHU) and Woods Hole (WHOL), U.S.).

airborne robots

robotic manipulators, hands

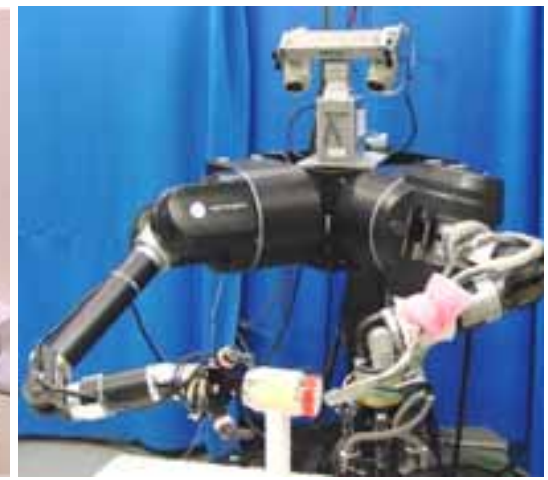
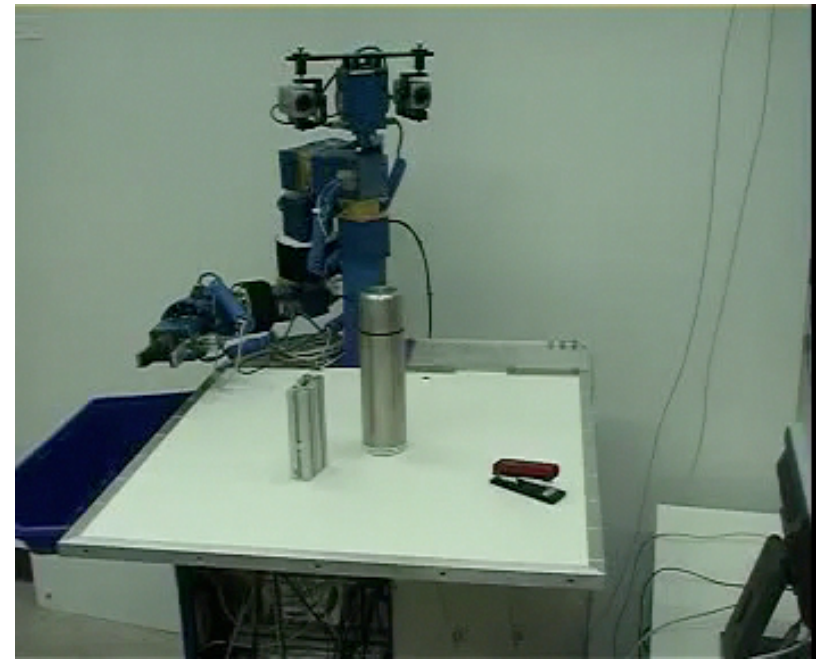
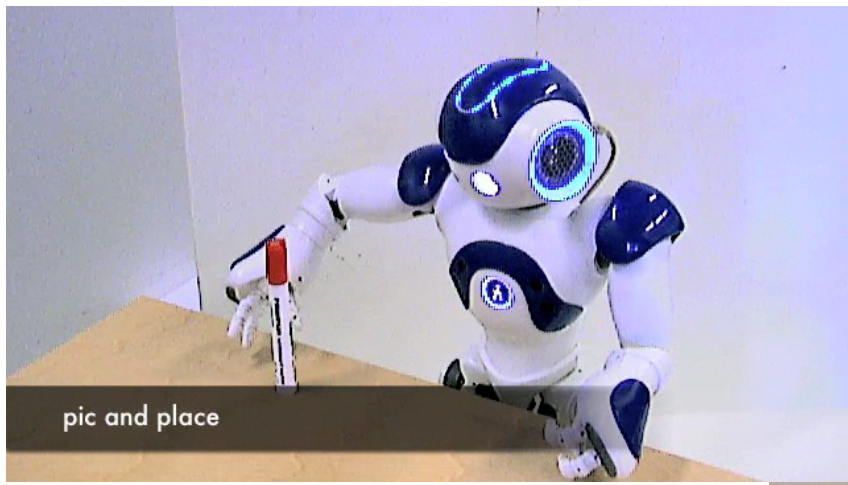
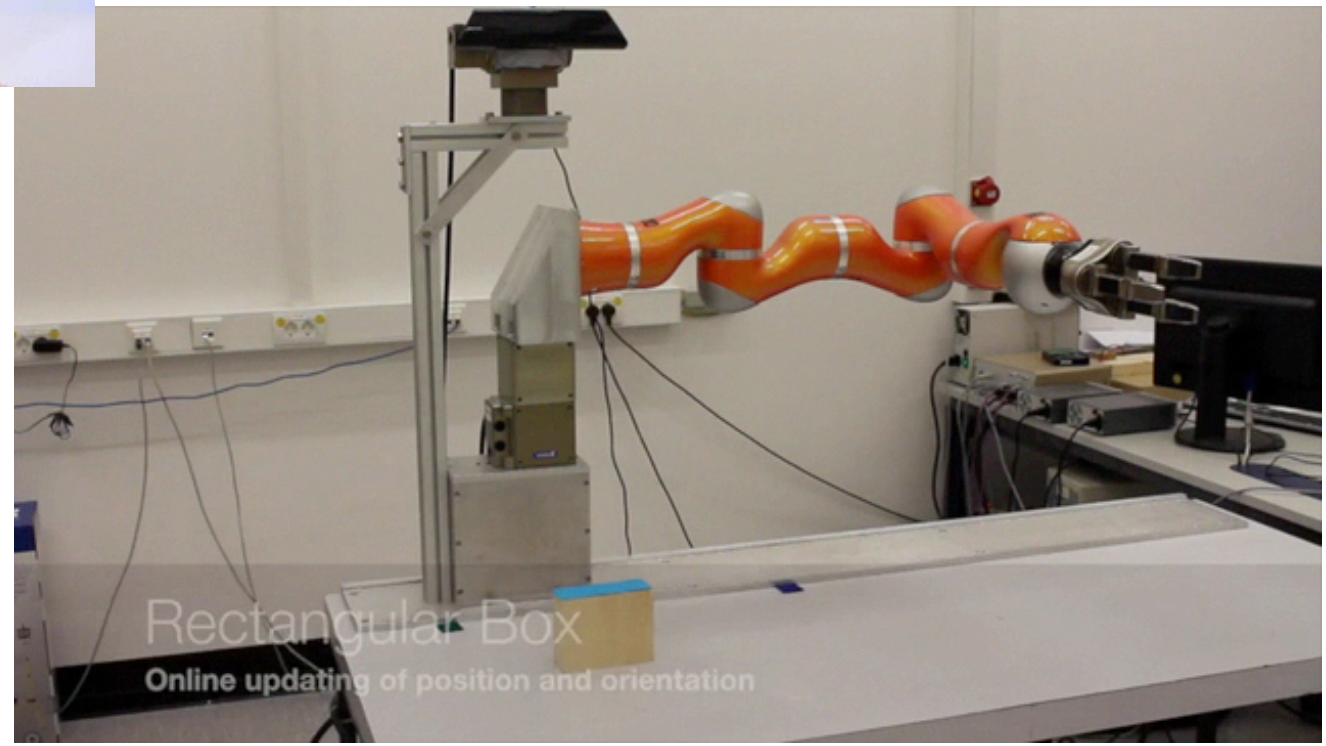


Figure 4.10. Dexterous arms at DLR, NASA and UMASS.

some of our own robotic manipulators



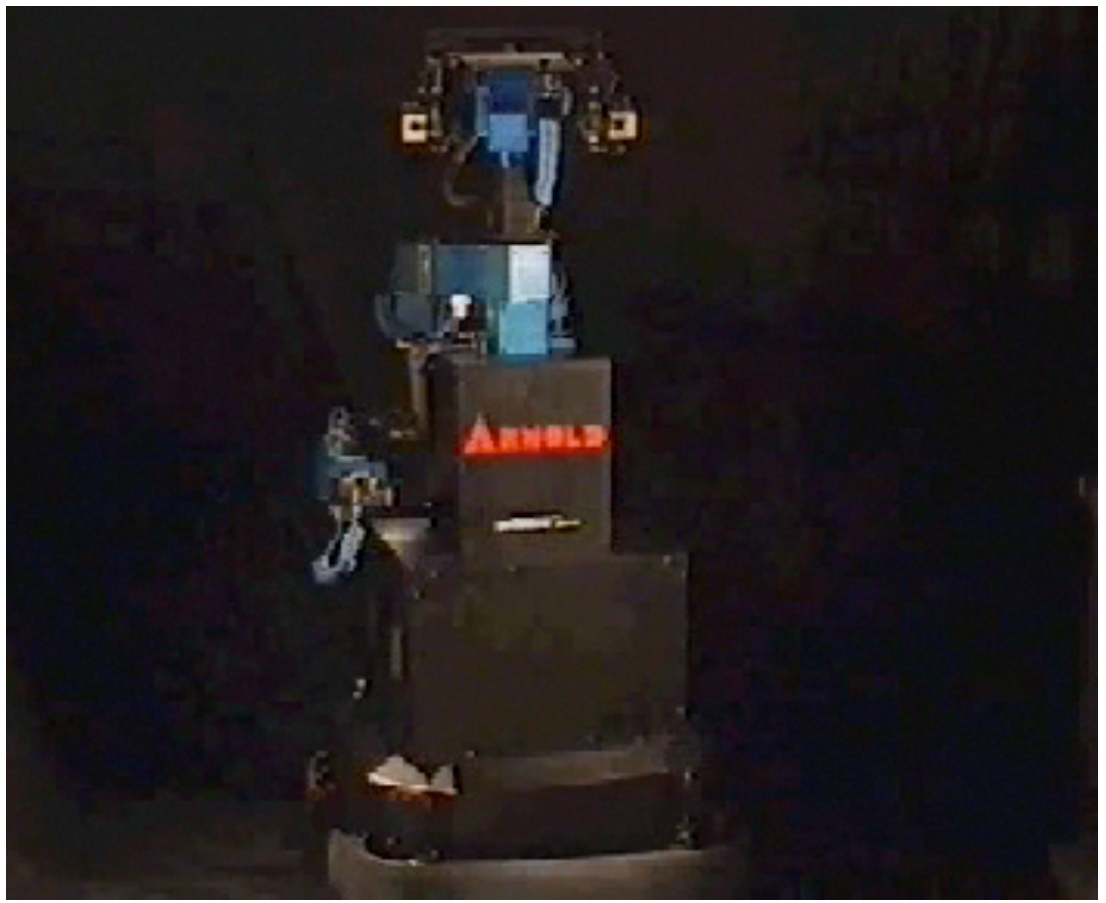




mobile robot manipulators

Figure C.28. Dexterous arm on mobile base, opening door (left), robot passing through doorway (right).

our own mobile robot manipulator



[Arnold: 1998-2000]

autonomous robotics

- *auto-nomos*: giving laws to oneself
- minimally: autonomous robots generate behavior based on sensory information obtained from their own on-board sensors
- in contrast to industrial robots that are programmed in a fixed and detailed way

autonomous robotics

- but: even an industrial robot uses autonomous control to reach its programmed goals…
- => autonomy is expected to go beyond control, include decisions=qualitative change of behavior
  - e.g. avoid obstacle to the left vs. to the right
  - e.g., reach for one object rather than another

autonomous robotics

- but: we do not expect autonomous robots to just do whatever “they want”… we expect to give them “orders”

autonomous robotics

- autonomy as a "programming interface":
  - give instructions to a robot at a high level, in regular human language and gesture in a shared environment…
  - … and let the autonomous robot deal with the "details" of how to achieve goals

why autonomous robots?

why autonomous robots?

- ideas I hear from lay-people
  - to clean up, to serve drinks..
  - just generally cool..
  - robot soldiers..

toy/entertainment/animation

- including therapy (autism)

assistance robotics

- at home, in the work place
- collaborate with human users

autonomous vehicles

- …. well, for autonomous transport…

[Amazon robotized warehouse]

military, fire fighting, rescue

- the "ideal" application because desire to remove human agent from the scene is consensual …
- much research

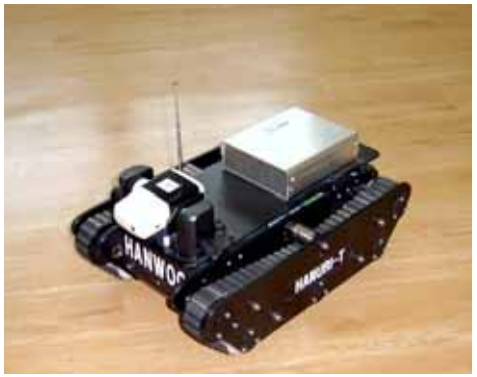
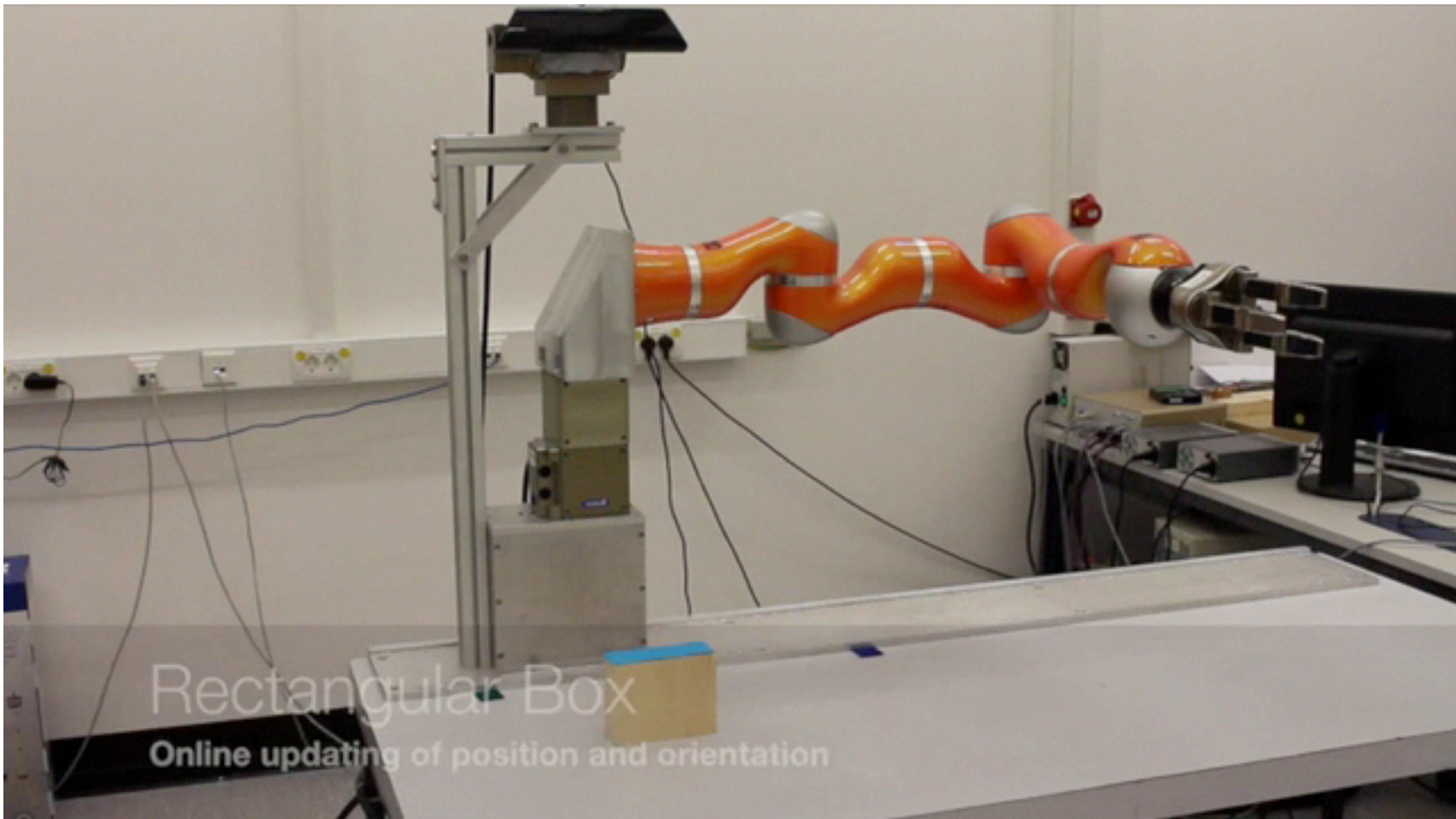


Figure B.11. Military Robot.

(robot ethics…interesting topic)

- may a military robot decide autonomously to shoot
  - …. navy ships do that already…
- may a autonomous car decide between avoiding a pedestrian and preventing danger for car occupants?
  - fundamental problem: off-loading decisions from user to designer …

autonomous robotics as a "playground" of research



autonomous robotics as a "playground" of research

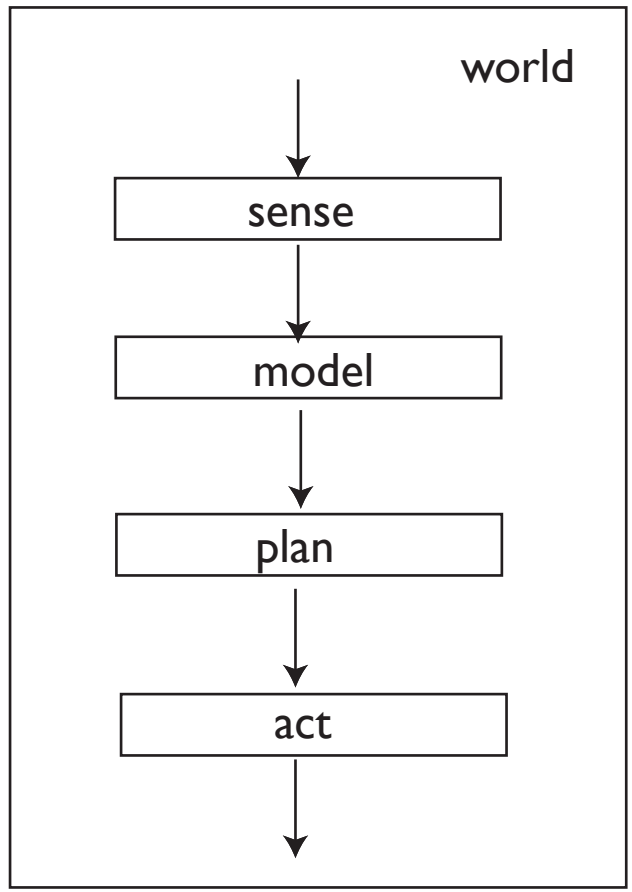
- modern engineering models systems, treating the remainder stochastically…. autonomous robotics act in natural environments that are difficult to model
- autonomous robotics: highly interdisciplinary
- modern engineering uses modular design that limits the range over which modules interact/interfere…autonomous robotics: requires system integration

state of the art: current explosion

- through maturation of technology
- fast computation makes approach real-time that used to be not viable
- laser range finder… probabilistic approaches
- modern software engineering facilitates programming

what is entailed in designing an autonomous robot?

- sensors
- signal processing, digitization
- perception
- action planning
- communication, data security
- optimal control, control
- mechanics, actuators



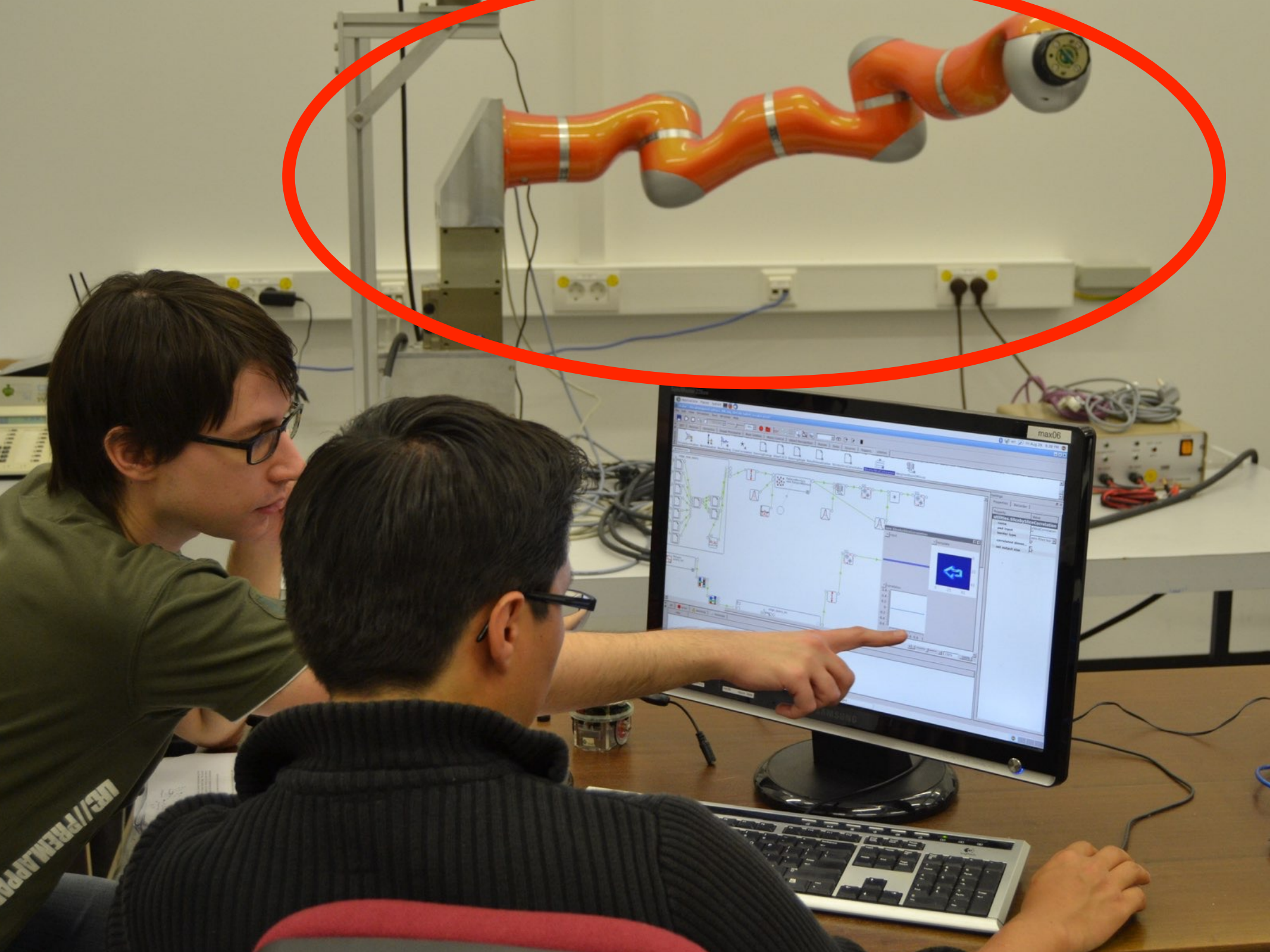
=> an highly interdisciplinary task

4 core problems/challenges

- perception
- interacting with humans
- movement generation
- background knowledge

(1) perception

- no autonomy without perception
- main channel: visual perception
- perception is NOT estimating the stimulus
- it is learning about the environment and extracting meaning=that what enables action
- 4 core problems: attention, segmentation, recognition (invariant), estimation (pose, feature values)


max06

(1) perception

- 4 core problems of perception
  - attention,
  - segmentation,
  - recognition/classification
  - estimation

=> WS lecture course

(2) interaction with humans

- in part a problem of perception as well…
- perceptually grounding language
- intention perception
- gesture recognition
- joint attention
- dialogue management
- emotion recognition

- e.g., "the red cup to the left of the green cup" …

=> WS lecture course

research issues

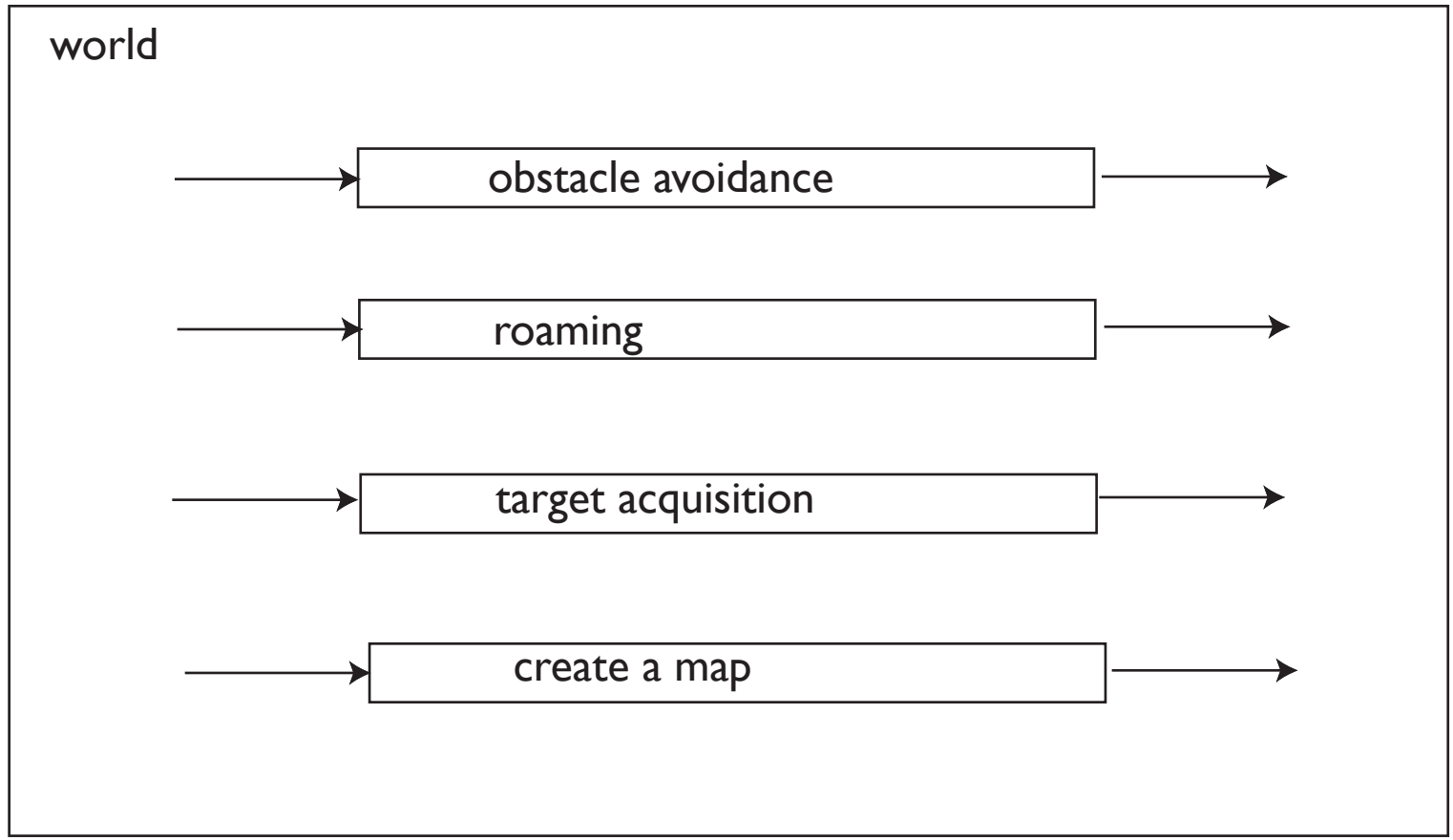
- perceptually grounding language
- intention perception
- gesture recognition
- joint attention
- dialogue management
- emotion recognition

(3) back-ground knowledge

- implicit knowledge how the world works
  - how to open a door
  - that milk is in the fridge
  - how to grasp a glas vs. a cup vs. a spoon
  - how to grasp an object to achieve a particular goal
  - to clear space before moving something to a new place…

- “background” is a core problem of classical artificial intelligence
  - knowledge bases
  - reasoning
  - action planning
  - architectures

- implicit knowledge in behavior based robotics… the background is in the individual skills and how they are connected



background knowledge

- we will cover only a little bit of that…
- by looking at how mechanisms of movement generation facilitate certain tasks…

(4) movement generation

- classical approach
  - motion planning based on precise world models
  - using optimal control to address control problems…
- but:
  - high demands on perception and on modeling of plant/ objects
  - unclear if it works for soft actuation for safe interaction with humans
  - need for flexible, human like movement and movement sequences

this is what we'll cover a lot

- exploit analogies with human movement coordination, movement primitives
- exploit analogy with muscle: soft visco-elastic actuators

Rough plan of course

- [dynamical systems tutorial]
- vehicles; attractor dynamics approach to path planning
- robot arms: kinematics, attractor dynamics approach to reaching movements, synergies
- coordination and timing
- motor control