

Autonomous Robotics: Action, Perception and Cognition: Introduction

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

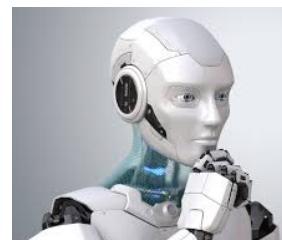
■ Google search “robot” (21 apr 2020)



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

f
b



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



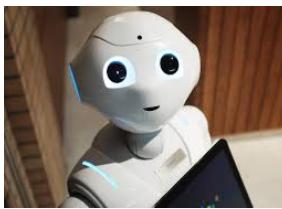
CES 2020 v
cnet.com



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 für SEO ...
neilpatel.com



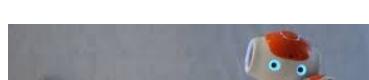
Why Ethical Robots Might Not Be Such...
spectrum.ieee.org



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



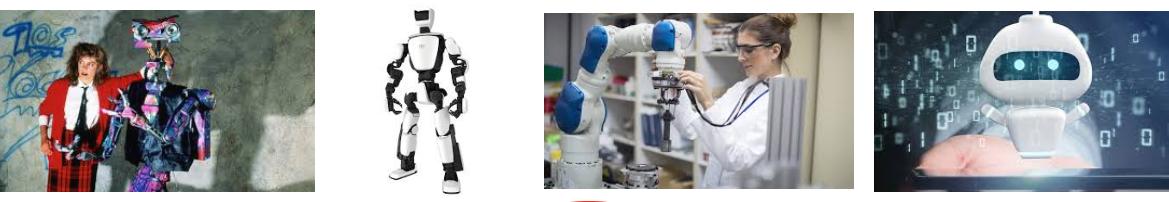
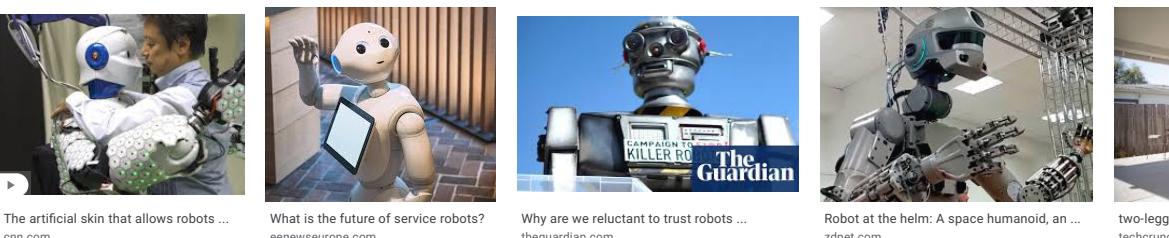
Russia and robots: Steel junk or a ...
bbc.com



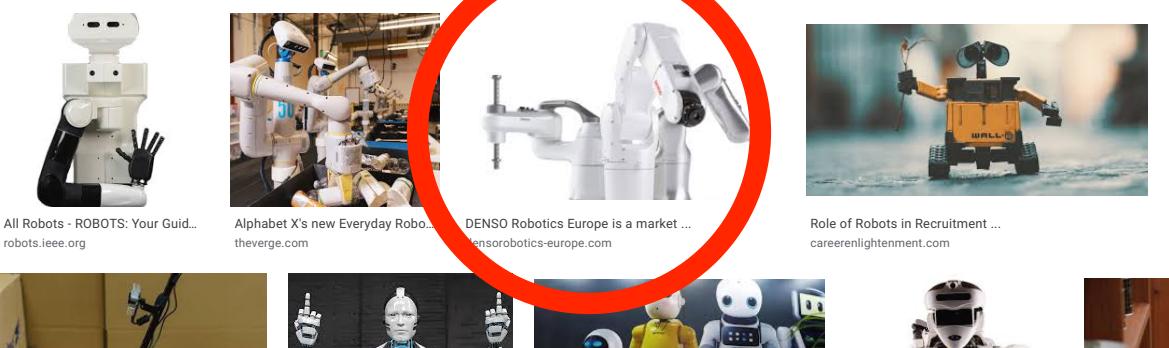
■=> Humanoids (or anthropomorphic) robots

page 2

legged robot



compliant arms



vehicle

no regular
industrial
robot
on first 4
pages

Industrial robots

- in reality, industrial robots are much more common today than humanoids, or autonomous robotic vehicles
- fundamentally, all factory automatization is a form of robotics: “programmable” machines...= flexible machines



Autonomous robotics

- industrial robots are programmed in a fixed and detailed way based on information about the world available to the programmer
- *auto-nomos*: giving laws to oneself:
 - => autonomous robots generate behavior based on sensory information obtained from their own on-board sensors

Autonomous robotics

- aligned with the vision of AI:
 - Russell, Norvig (2020): “The main unifying theme is the idea of an intelligent agent. We define AI as the study of agents that receive percepts from the environment and perform actions”

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

- opposite limit case: autonomous robots are not totally autonomous to do “whatever they want”...
- must receive “tasks”, instructed by “commands”

Autonomous robotics

- autonomy as an programming *interface*:
- give goals to a robot at a high level, using human language and gesture in a shared environment...
- the autonomous robot then deals with the details of how to achieve those goals...



[Ioannis Iossifidis at the INI]

Some examples of (mostly autonomous) robots

Simple, single-task autonomous vehicles



Tennisball collector (GER)



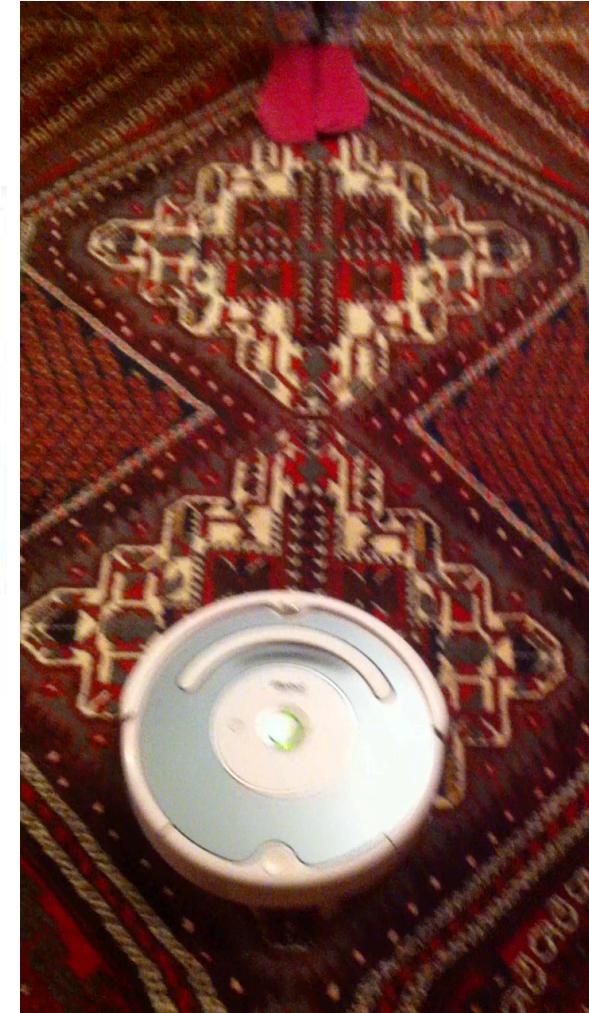
Security (US)



Auto Mower (SWE)



Electrolux (SWE)



[photo credits: WTEC
final report 2006]



Pool cleaner (SWE)



Window cleaner
(GER)



iRobot (US)

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



Lauren I (1993)



Lauren II (1995)



Lauren III (1999)



Lauren III (2004)



AirBug A (2001)



AirBug B (2002)



AirInsect (2003)



Bisam (1998)



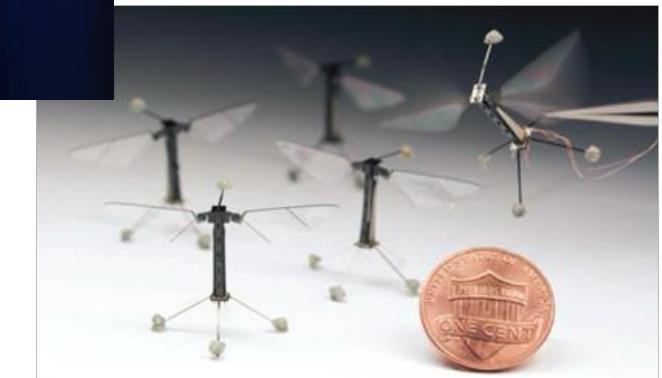
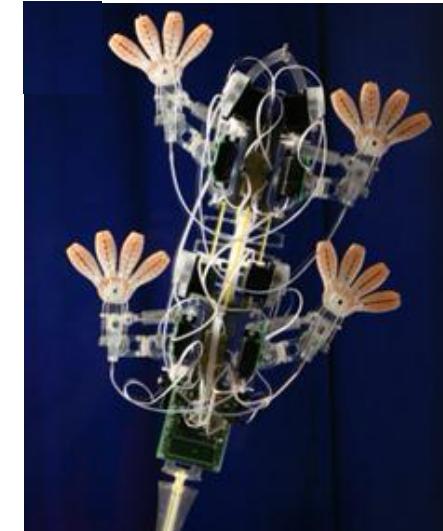
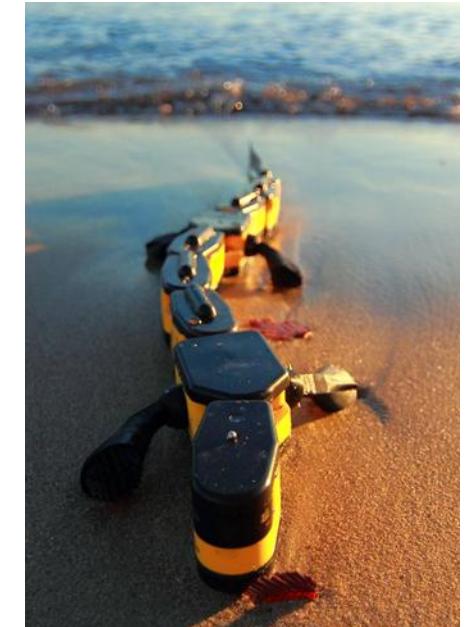
Panter (2001-2004)



Tobieas (2005)

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

Biologically inspired robots



Snakes, crawlers, climbers

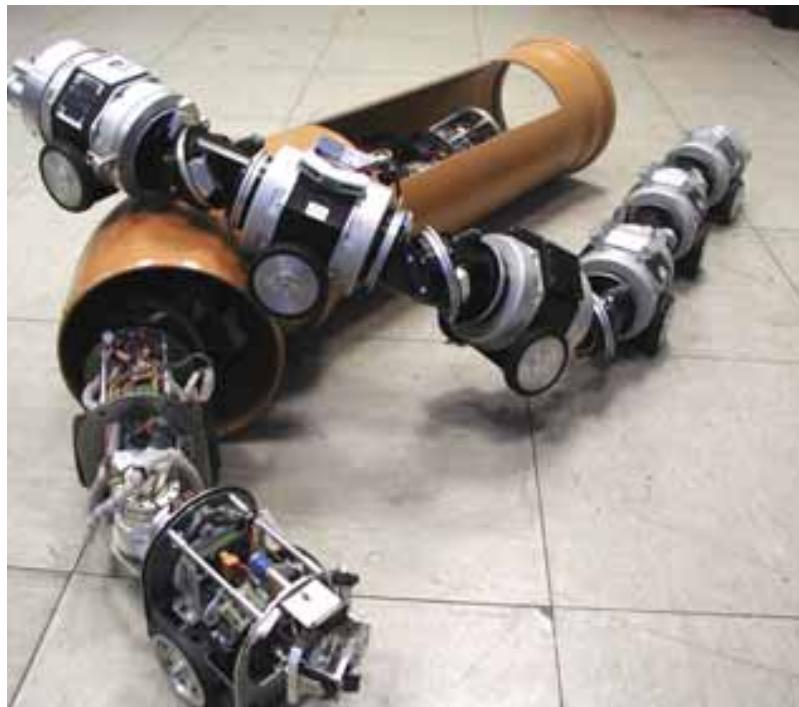


Figure C.57. Inspection robot.

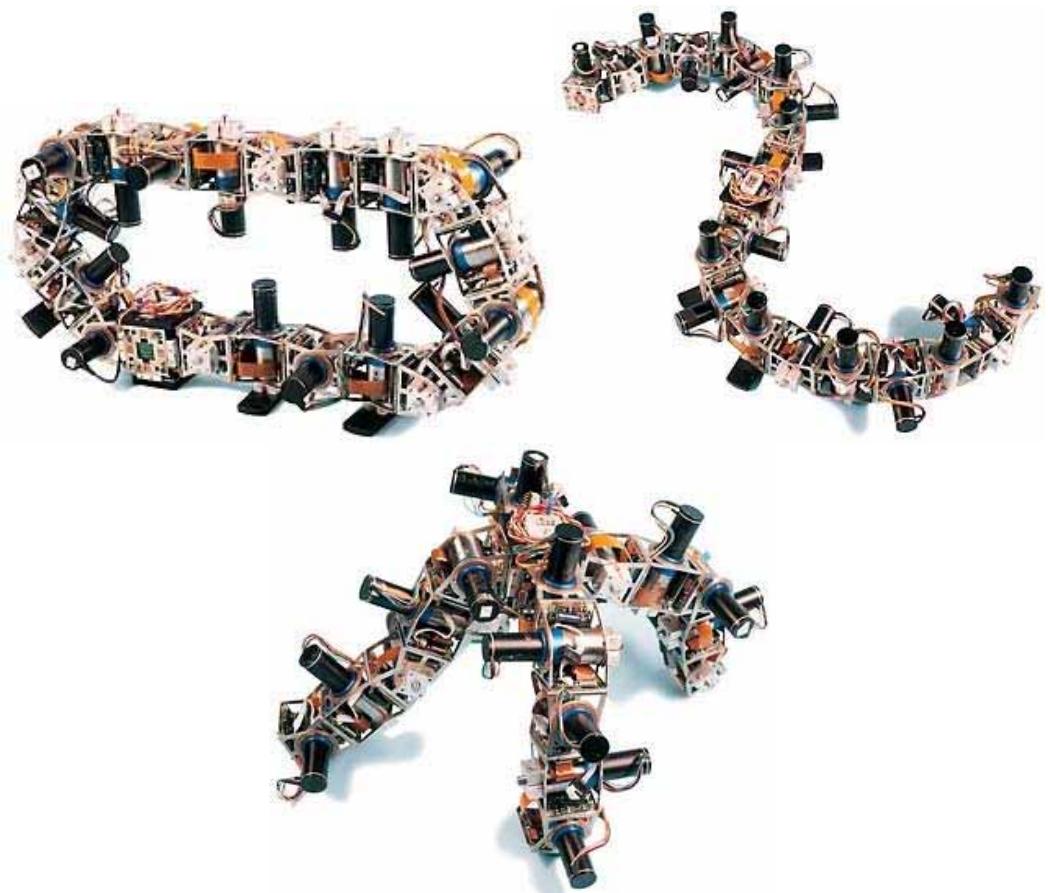


Figure 7.2. Robotic modules can be reconfigured to “morph” into different locomotion systems including wheel-like rolling system (left), a snake-like undulatory locomotion system (right), a four-legged walking system (bottom).

Surface and underwater naval drones



Figure 2.2. IFREMER ASTER autonomous underwater vehicle.

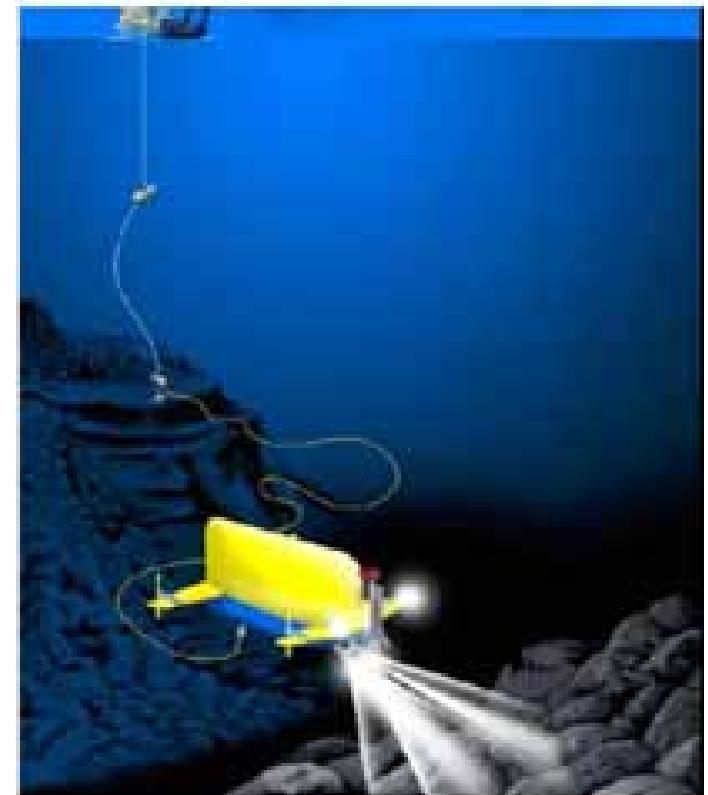


Figure 2.11. HROV (Hybrid ROV) project (Johns Hopkins University (JHU) and Woods Hole (WHOL), U.S.).

Airborne robots (drones)



Robotic manipulators, hands

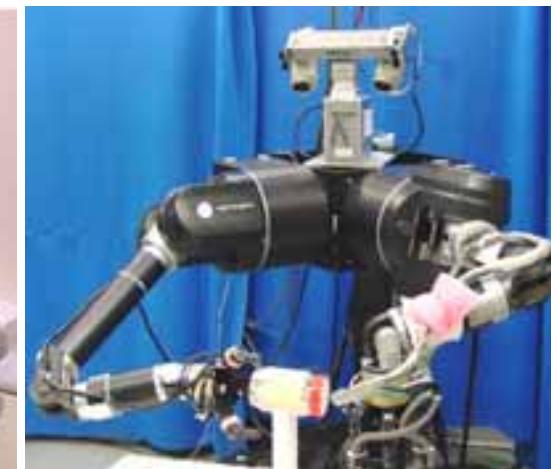
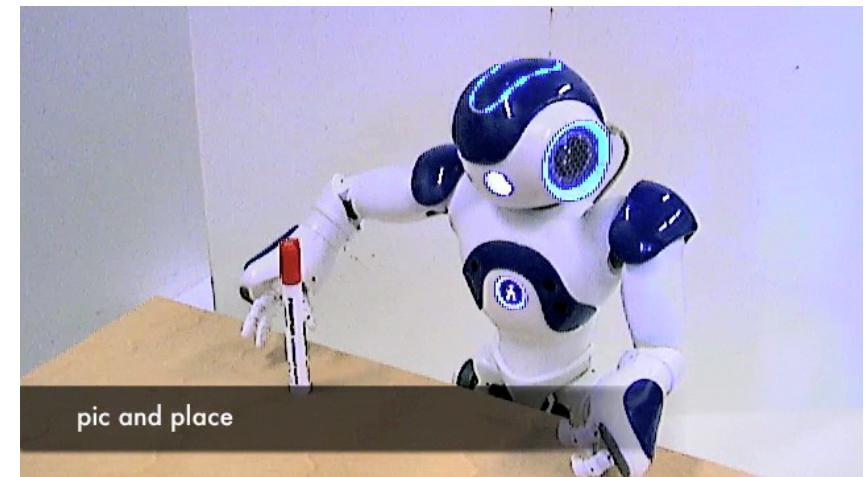
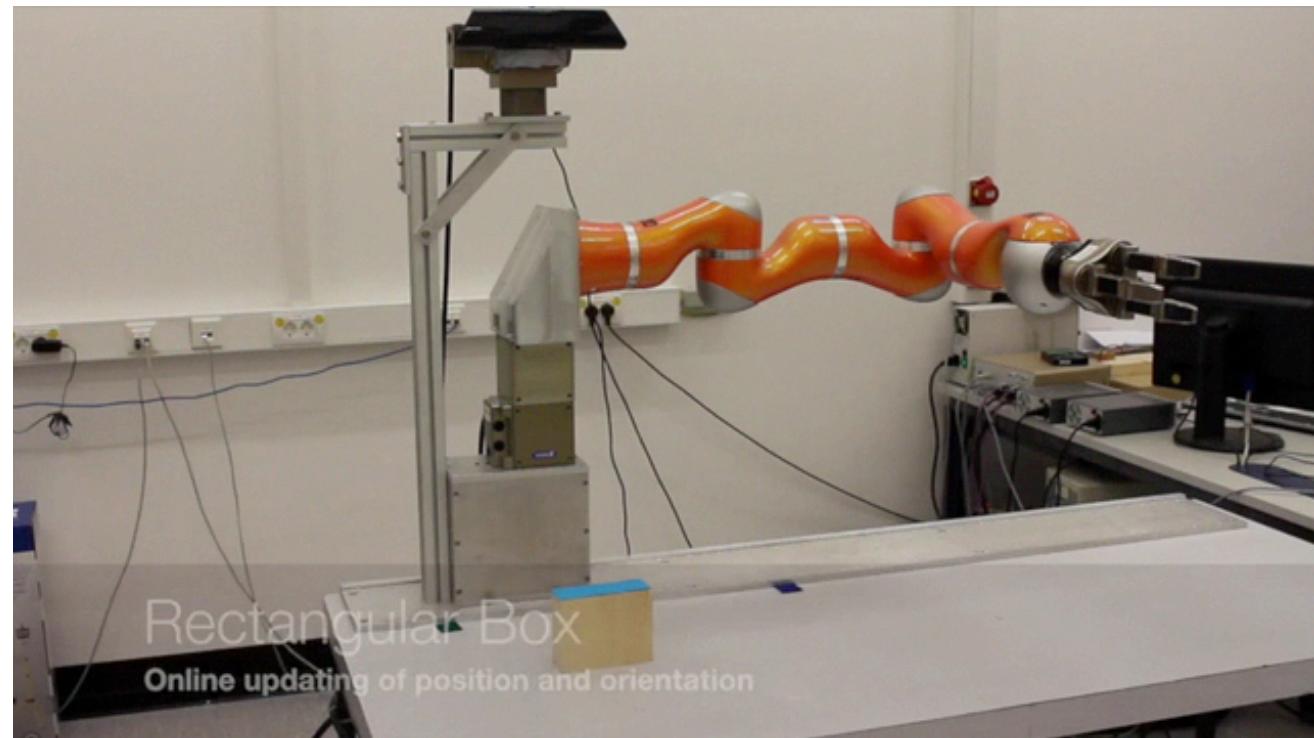
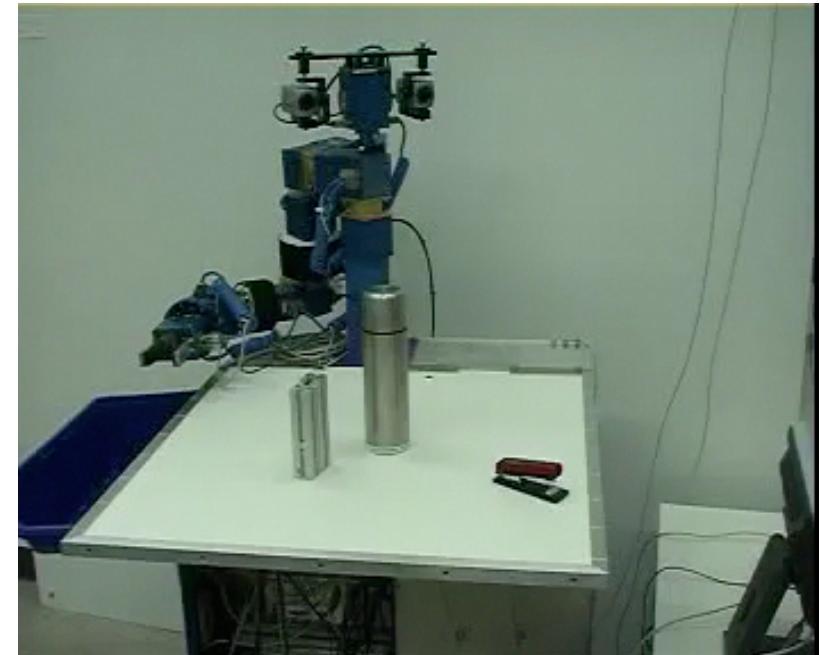


Figure 4.10. Dexterous arms at DLR, NASA and UMASS.

Some of our own robotic manipulators



Mobile robot manipulators



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

[Arnold: 1998-2000]

Why autonomous robots?

■ ideas I tend to hear from people ...

- just generally cool..
- to clean up, to serve drinks..
- robot soldiers..

Toys/entertainment/animation



■ including therapy (autism)



Assistance robotics

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



Military, fire fighting, rescue

- the “ideal” application because the desire to remove humans from the scene is obvious ...
- much research



General Dynamics, USA

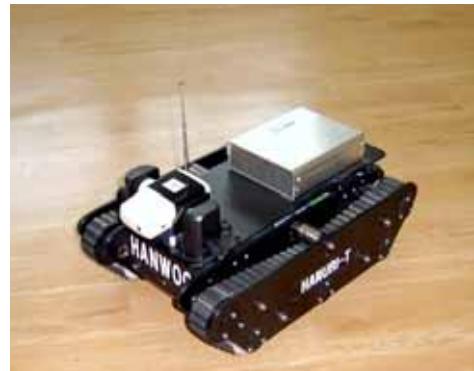


Figure B.11. Military Robot.



Forster-Miller, USA

(Robot ethics...interesting topic)

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

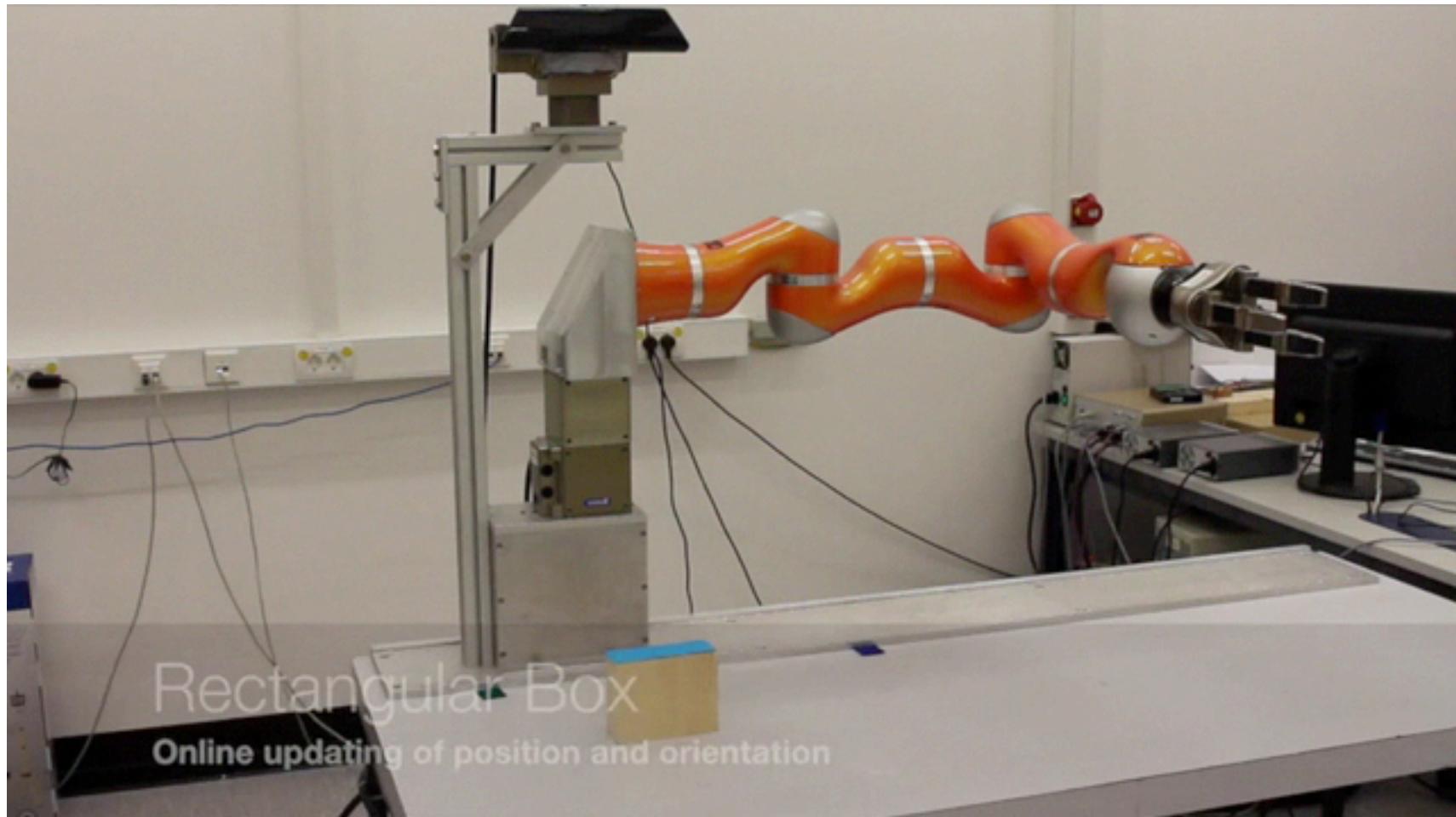
Autonomous vehicles

- well, for autonomous transport...
- the best developed branch of autonomous robotics

[Amazon robotized warehouse]



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
- => fundamental challenge

Autonomous robotics as a “playground” of research

- modern engineering uses modular design that limits the range over which modules interact/interfere
- ...autonomous robotics: requires close, real-time system integration

Autonomous robotics as a “playground” of research

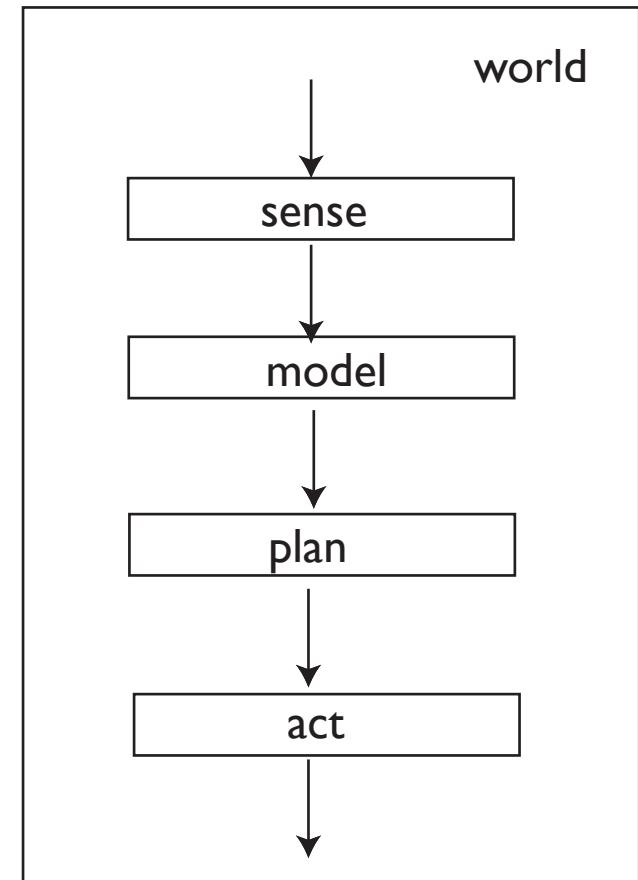
■ highly interdisciplinary field

- sensing
- perception
- modeling
- AI/planning
- mechanics
- control
- compliance
- embedded computing
- communication / data security
- energetics
- user interfaces
- safety
- ethics

Overall conception of autonomous robots: architectures

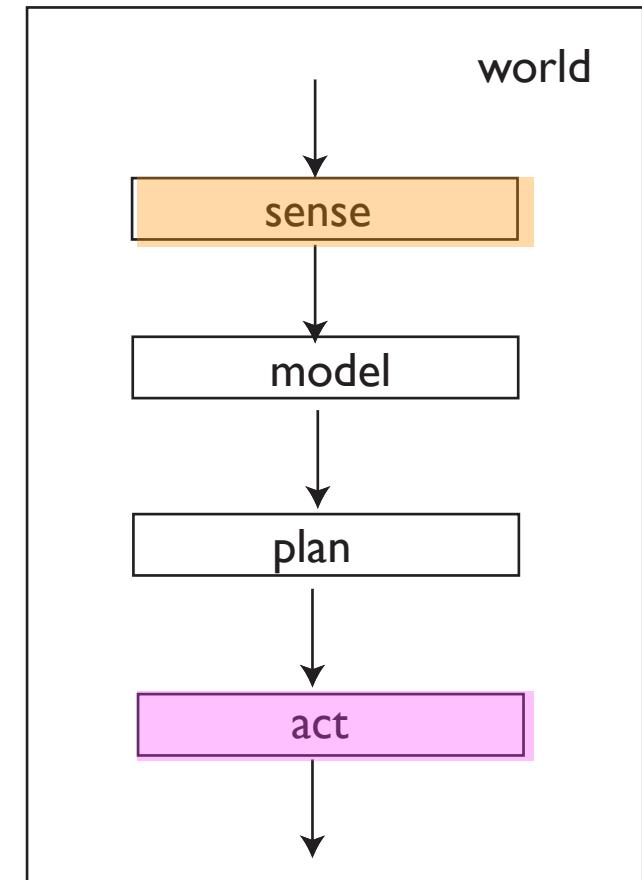
Sense-plan-act

- The classical vision dates back to the 1950's...
- separates the problem into modular functions that follow the sensory stream from sensors to motors



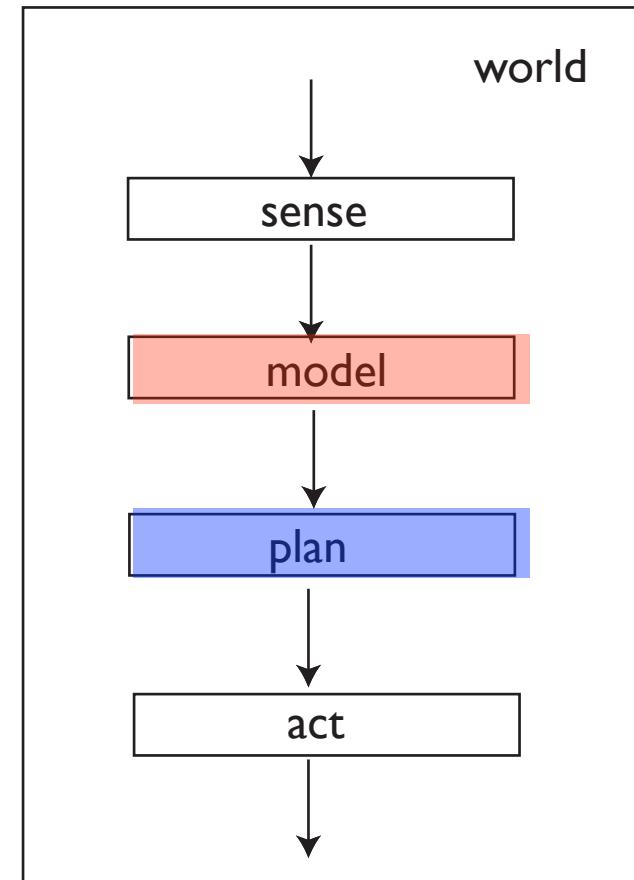
Sense-plan-act

■ sensing and acting are shared with conventional robots/engineering



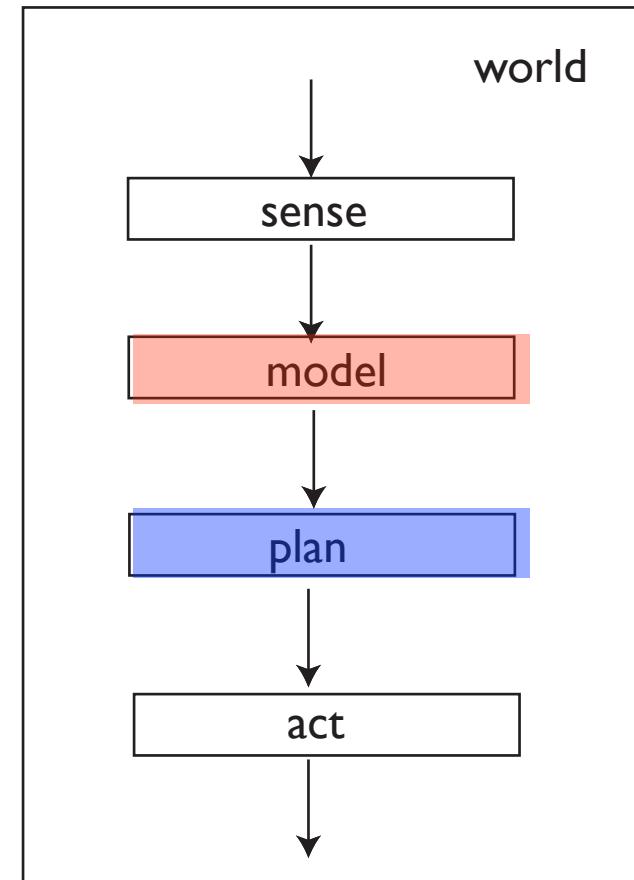
Sense-plan-act

- “intelligence” comes from two core functions
- modeling the world, which entails perception and map building
- planning action, which entails generating sequences of actions that lead to a goal



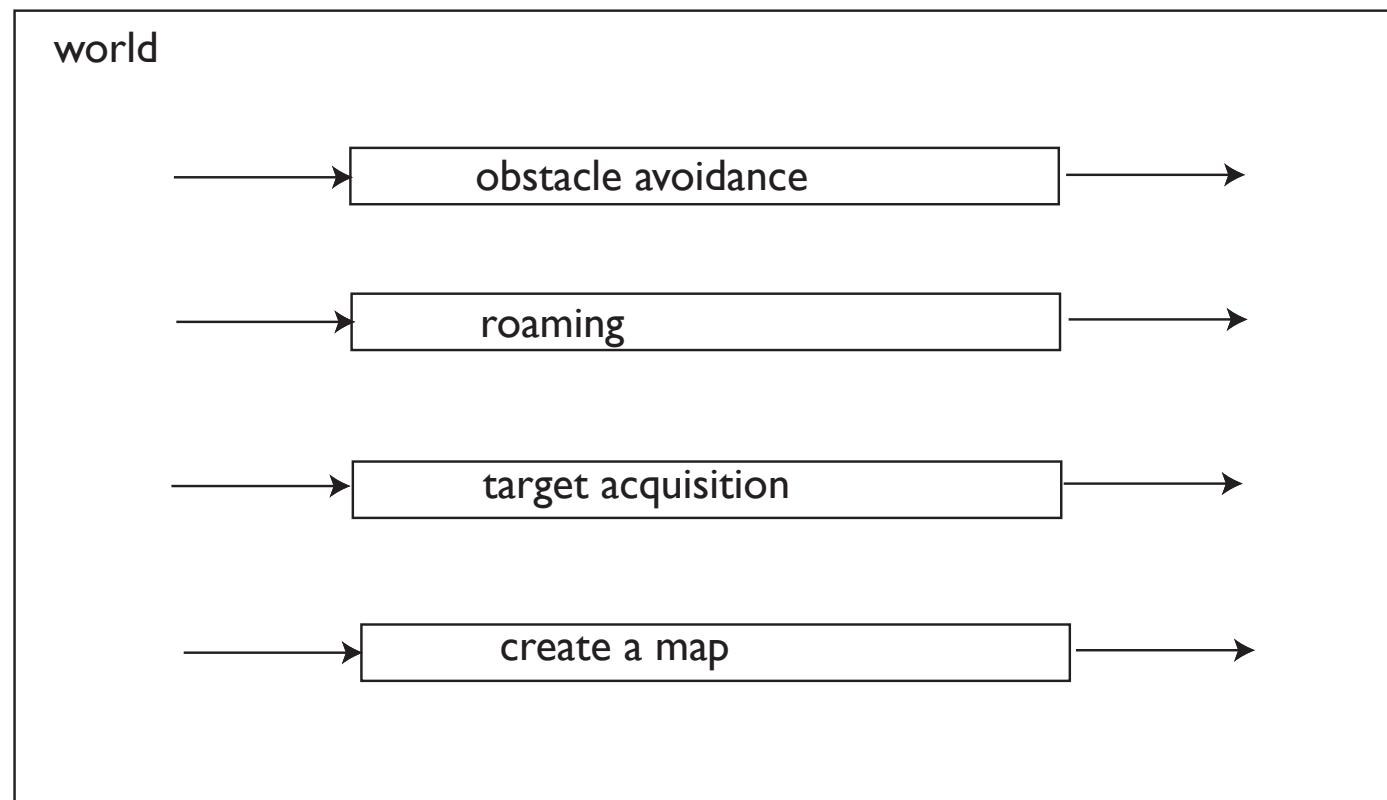
Sense-plan-act

- perception in this most general form is very difficult... => challenge of perception
- planning action separately from control difficult when interacting physically with objects/humans => challenge



Behavior-based

- minimize the difficulty of generating world models by having special purpose perception
- integrate planning and control in individual behaviors



Behavior-based

- quick progress toward simple, special purpose robot vehicles....



[Bicho, Schöner, 1997]

Behavior-based

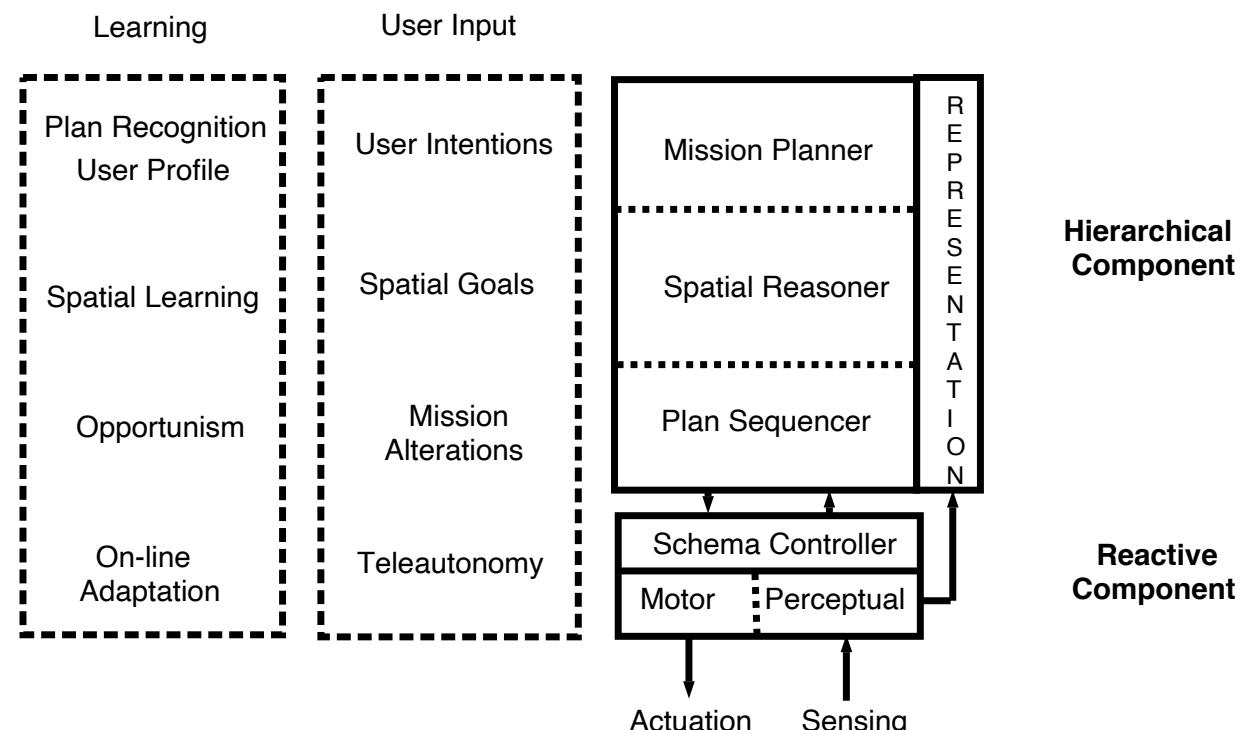
- quick progress toward simple, special purpose robot vehicles....
- but limited scaling to more complex tasks that are oriented at objects, and that require world knowledge => challenge of background knowledge



[Bicho, Schöner, 1997]

Hybrid architectures

- use behavior-based ideas as a “reactive layer”
- use sense-plan-act ideas at a “higher” level of goal-oriented planning



[Arkin, Balch, 1997]

4 major (remaining) challenges

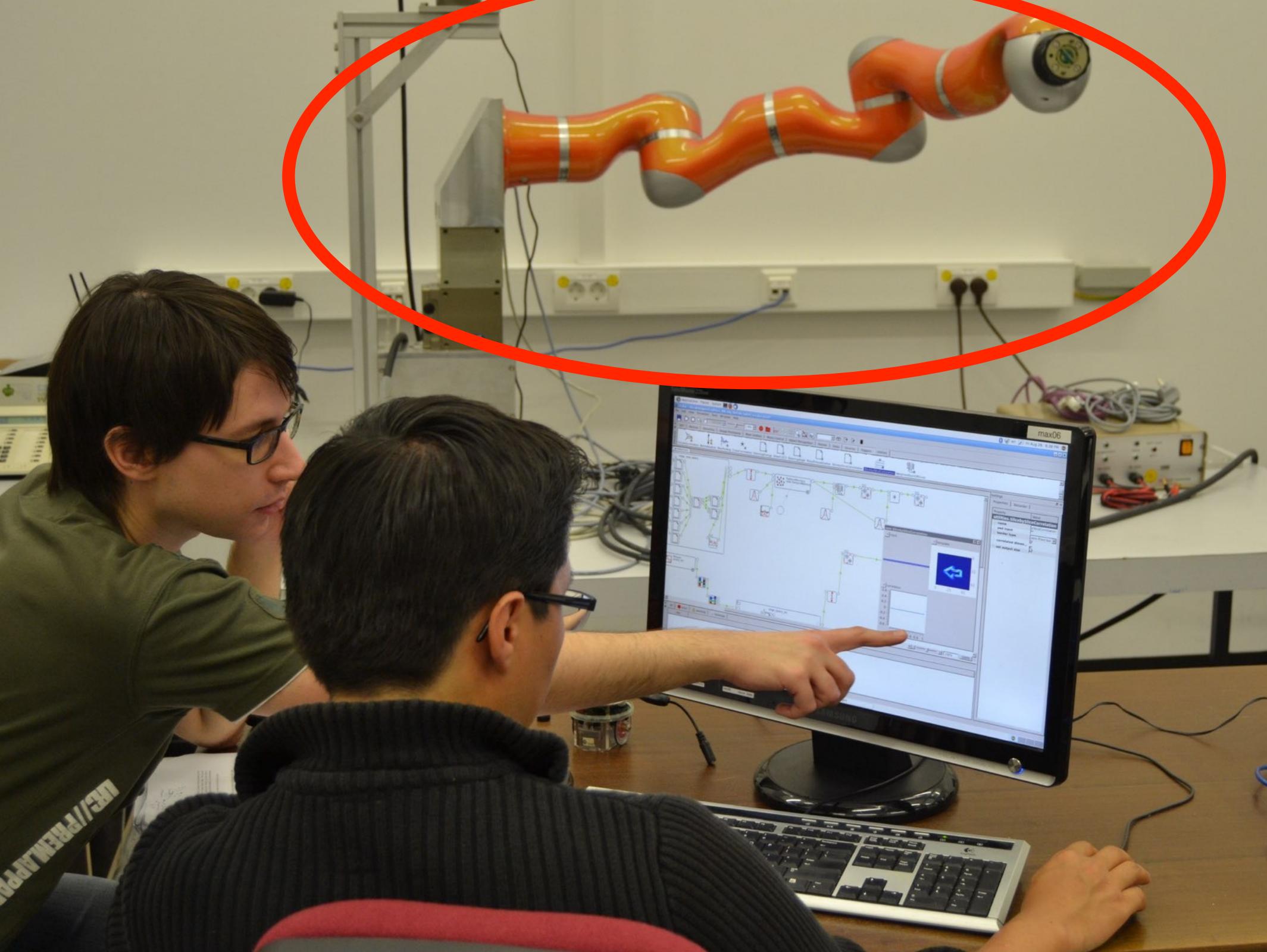
- 1 perception
- 2 interacting with humans
- 3 physical interaction
- 4 background knowledge

(I) Perception

- no autonomy without perception
- perception is NOT estimating the stimulus
- it is learning about the environment and extracting meaning=that what enables action







ME/PERMANENTE

Core problems of scene/object perception

- attention: search!
- detection/classification... invariance
- estimation: pose
- continues to be a research challenge in spite of a resurgence of computer vision for robotic perception ...

Core problems of perception for vehicles

- ego-position estimation (navigation)
- map-formation
- obstacle perception

Core problems of perception for vehicles

- ego-position estimation (navigation)
 - map-formation
 - obstacle perception
- 
- SLAM

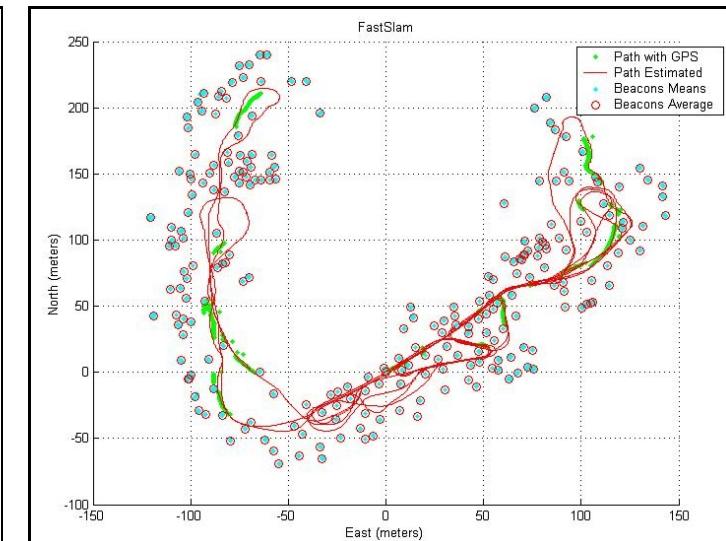
SLAM

■ self-localization and map formation

- building on low-level sensors with invariant information
- using probabilistic thinking...
- => much progress



[Thrun, 2002]



Core problems of perception for vehicles

- ego-position estimation (navigation)
- map-formation
- obstacle perception

SLAM

depth sensing

Range sensing

- step change in depth estimation through laser range sensing

3-D laser scan

- (a) Registered infrared reflectance image.
- (b) Range image: closer is darker



Core problems of perception for vehicles

- ego-position estimation (navigation)
 - map-formation
 - obstacle perception
 - => much progress in SLAM and depth sensing together with probabilistic approaches
- SLAM
depth sensing

(2) Interaction with humans

- in part also a problem of perception
 - e.g. in perceptually grounding language
- understanding language!
- joint attention
- intention perception
- linking to background knowledge



- e.g., “the red cup to the left of the green cup” ...

(3) Physical interaction

- with objects, including humans... when there is contact, force transmission..
- despite the sophistication of modern control, there is a problem at the heart of this
 - the lack of robustness of control (Doyle, 78)... deviations of model from reality generically lead to instability of control!
- limited perception: models of objects/human users are imperfect => problem

(3) Physical interaction

- example: to this day, milling is difficult for industrial robots
 - as instabilities arise as the tool moves through the material...
- milling like many other material transformation is done by specialized machines that are mechanically designed to solve the control problem

(3) Physical interaction

- one cause: separation of control and planning...
- in which control is fast/stiff, so that the plans need no updating
- but that makes high demands on perception and the modeling of objects
- and is unsafe for human workers... due to the large forces generated

Soft robotics

- inspired by human motor control...
- human actuators are compliant, and their visco-elastic properties make them relatively weak compared to the loads they handle...
- reduces demands on perception...
- but makes for challenging control problems... in which movement plans and motor control are tightly interwoven...

(4) Background knowledge

- implicit knowledge about how the world works
 - how to open a door
 - that milk is in the fridge
 - how to grasp a glass 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...

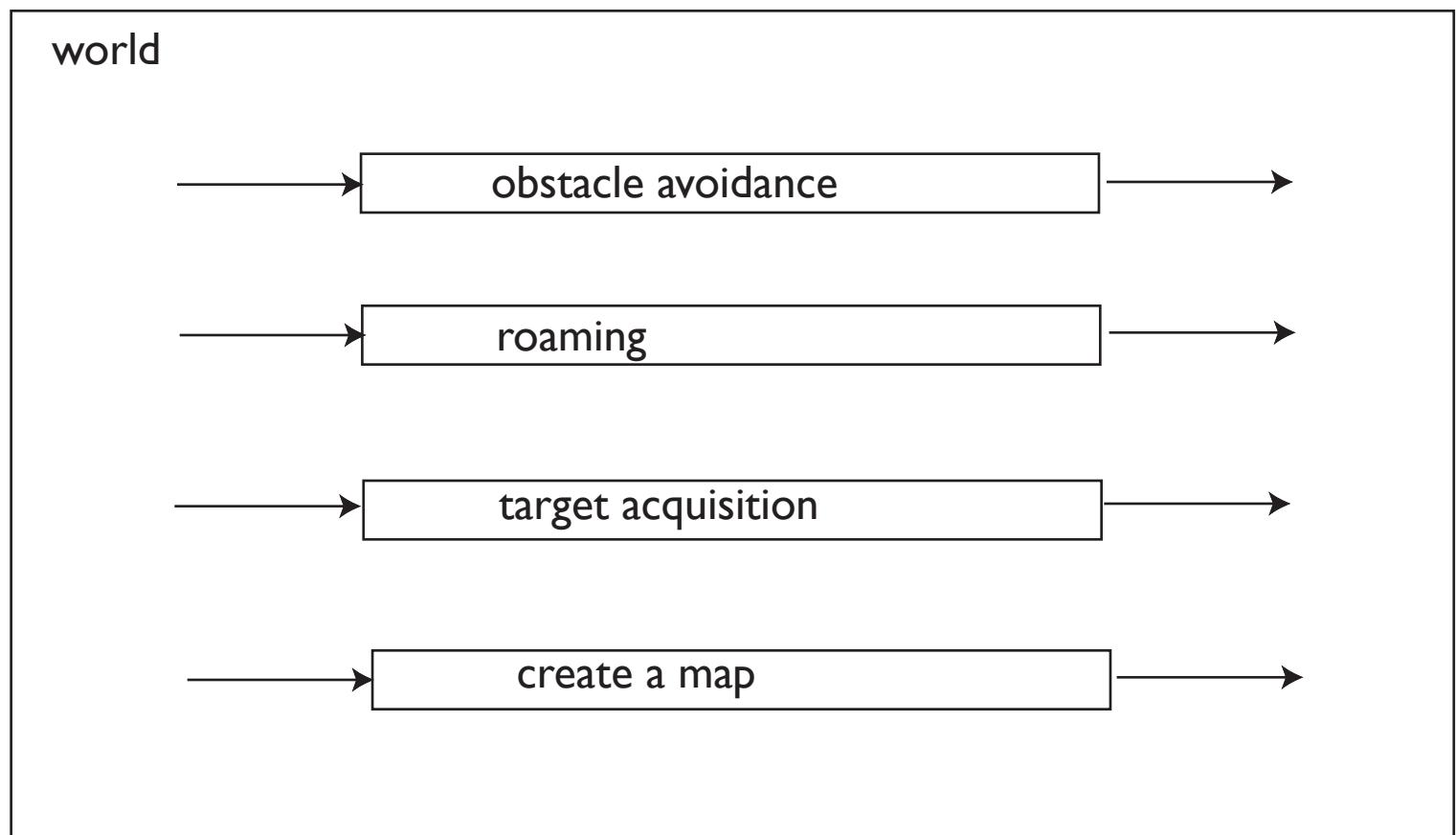
Background knowledge

■ is a core problem of classical artificial intelligence

- knowledge representations
- reasoning
- action planning
- architectures

Background knowledge

Implicit background knowledge in behavior based robotics... the background is in the individual skills and how they are connected



Background knowledge

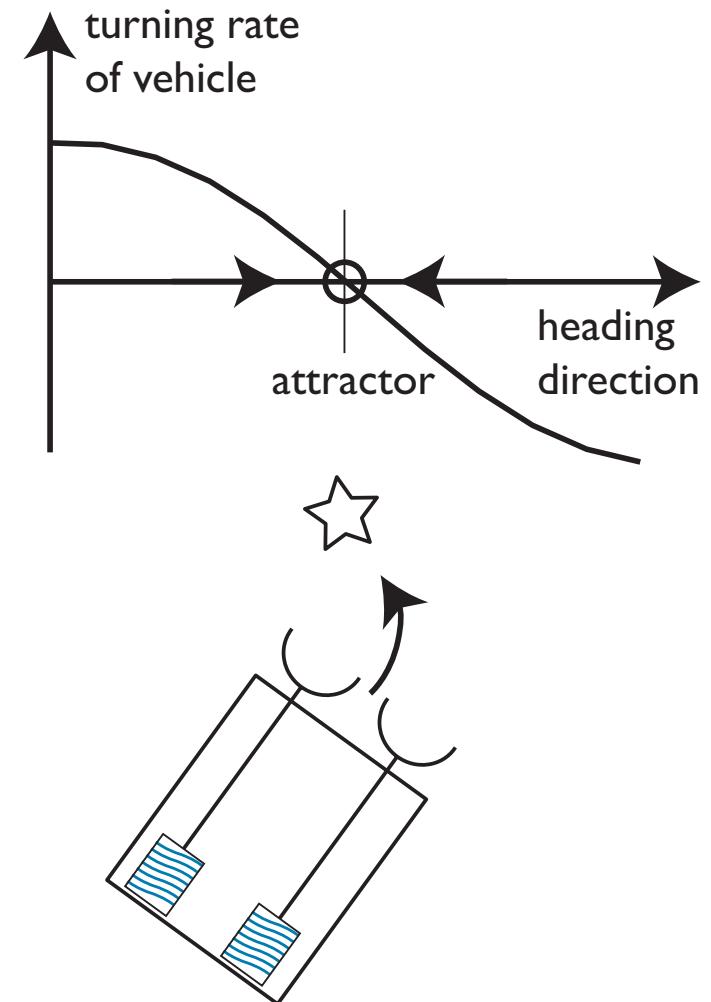
- autonomously acquiring back-ground knowledge continues to be a challenging research frontier...
 - online learning
 - continuous learning
 - autonomous learning
- reinforcement learning is a first attempt... quite limited for real world scenarios

Particular perspective of the course

- this course is NOT a standard introduction into autonomous robotics from a technical point of view
- although it provides some elements of that through
 - a review of approaches to vehicle path planning
 - a review of concepts in robotic manipulators, planning, and control

Particular perspective of the course

- the dynamical systems perspective
 - neural dynamics => WS course on Neural Dynamics
 - “behavioral dynamics” ...



Robotics is an emerging synthetic science
Presently missing foundations include the identification of fundamental physical limits, the development of new **dynamical systems theory**, and the invention of physically grounded programming languages.....

Annual Review of Control, Robotics, and Autonomous Systems

What Is Robotics? Why
Do We Need It and How
Can We Get It?

Daniel E. Koditschek

Department of Electrical and Systems Engineering, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia,
Pennsylvania 19104, USA; email: kod@upenn.edu

Particular perspective of the course

- autonomous robotics as a tool for the theory of cognitive systems
- to test neural models of cognition and behavior...
- => integrative framework of dynamical systems

Syllabus

■ dynamical systems tutorial

■ vehicles

- attractor dynamics approach to motion planning
- other approaches to motion planning
- analogy to navigation in humans and animals

■ robot arms

- kinematics, degree of freedom problem
- dynamics, control
- timing
- movement generation with muscles

Embedding in the field

- the Springer Handbook of Robotics, Siciliano, Khatib (eds) 2016
- ~2200 pages!

Foundations... “classical” robotics (not autonomous robotics)

Part A Robotics Foundations

2 Kinematics

<i>Kenneth J. Waldron, James Schmiedeler</i>	11
2.1 Overview	12
2.2 Position and Orientation Representation	12
2.3 Joint Kinematics	21
2.4 Geometric Representation	25
2.5 Workspace	27
2.6 Forward Kinematics	28
2.7 Inverse Kinematics	29
2.8 Forward Instantaneous Kinematics	31
2.9 Inverse Instantaneous Kinematics	32
2.10 Static Wrench Transmission	33
2.11 Conclusions and Further Reading	33
References	33

3 Dynamics

<i>Roy Featherstone, David E. Orin</i>	37
3.1 Overview	38
3.2 Spatial Vector Notation	39
3.3 Canonical Equations	45
3.4 Dynamic Models of Rigid-Body Systems	47
3.5 Kinematic Trees	51
3.6 Kinematic Loops	58
3.7 Conclusions and Further Reading	61
References	63

4 Mechanism and Actuation

<i>Victor Scheinman, J. Michael McCarthy, Jae-Bok Song</i>	67
4.1 Overview	68
4.2 System Features	68
4.3 Kinematics and Kinetics	69
4.4 Serial Robots	72
4.5 Parallel Robots	73
4.6 Mechanical Structure	75
4.7 Joint Mechanisms	76

Foundations... “classical” robotics (not autonomous robotics)

6 Model Identification	
<i>John Hollerbach, Wisama Khalil, Maxime Gautier</i>	113
6.1 Overview	113
6.2 Kinematic Calibration	115
6.3 Inertial Parameter Estimation	122
6.4 Identifiability and Numerical Conditioning	127
6.5 Conclusions and Further Reading	135
Video-References	136
References	137
7 Motion Planning	
<i>Lydia E. Kavraki, Steven M. LaValle</i>	139
7.1 Robotics Motion Planning	139
7.2 Motion Planning Concepts	140
7.3 Sampling-Based Planning	141
7.4 Alternative Approaches	144
7.5 Differential Constraints	148
7.6 Extensions and Variations	151
7.7 Advanced Issues	154
7.8 Conclusions and Further Reading	157
Video-References	158
References	158
8 Motion Control	
<i>Wan Kyun Chung, Li-Chen Fu, Torsten Kröger</i>	163
8.1 Introduction to Motion Control	164
8.2 Joint Space Versus Operational Space Control	166
8.3 Independent-Joint Control	167
8.4 PID Control	169
8.5 Tracking Control	172
8.6 Computed-Torque Control	174
8.7 Adaptive Control	177
8.8 Optimal and Robust Control	181
8.9 Trajectory Generation and Planning	183
8.10 Digital Implementation	187

Foundations... “classical” robotics (not autonomous robotics)

9 Force Control <i>Luigi Villani, Joris De Schutter</i>	195
9.1 Background	195
9.2 Indirect Force Control	198
9.3 Interaction Tasks	205
9.4 Hybrid Force/Motion Control	211
9.5 Conclusions and Further Reading	216
Video-References	217
References	218
10 Redundant Robots <i>Stefano Chiaverini, Giuseppe Oriolo, Anthony A. Maciejewski</i>	221
10.1 Overview	221
10.2 Task-Oriented Kinematics	224
10.3 Inverse Differential Kinematics	227
10.4 Redundancy Resolution via Optimization	232
10.5 Redundancy Resolution via Task Augmentation	233
10.6 Second-Order Redundancy Resolution	236
10.7 Cyclicity	237
10.8 Fault Tolerance	237
10.9 Conclusion and Further Reading	239
Video-References	239
References	240
12 Robotic Systems Architectures and Programming <i>David Kortenkamp, Reid Simmons, Davide Brugali</i>	283
12.1 Overview	283
12.2 History	285
12.3 Architectural Components	289
12.4 Case Study – GRACE	296
12.5 The Art of Robot Architectures	298
12.6 Implementing Robotic Systems Architectures	299
12.7 Conclusions and Further Reading	302
Video-References	302
References	302

Foundations... autonomous robotics

13 Behavior-Based Systems	
<i>François Michaud, Monica Niculescu</i>	307
13.1 Robot Control Approaches	308
13.2 Basic Principles of Behavior-Based Systems	310
13.3 Basis Behaviors	313
13.4 Representation in Behavior-Based Systems.....	313
13.5 Learning in Behavior-Based Systems	314
13.6 Applications and Continuing Work.....	318
13.7 Conclusions and Further Reading.....	322
Video-References	322
References	323
14 AI Reasoning Methods for Robotics	
<i>Michael Beetz, Raja Chatila, Joachim Hertzberg, Federico Pecora</i>	329
14.1 Why Should a Robot Use AI-Type Reasoning?	330
14.2 Knowledge Representation and Processing	330
14.3 Reasoning and Decision Making	338
14.4 Plan-Based Robot Control	346
14.5 Conclusions and Further Reading	351
Video-References	351
References	352
15 Robot Learning	
<i>Jan Peters, Daniel D. Lee, Jens Kober, Duy Nguyen-Tuong, J. Andrew Bagnell, Stefan Schaal</i>	357
15.1 What Is Robot Learning	358
15.2 Model Learning	360
15.3 Reinforcement Learning	372
15.4 Conclusions	385
Video-References	386
References	386

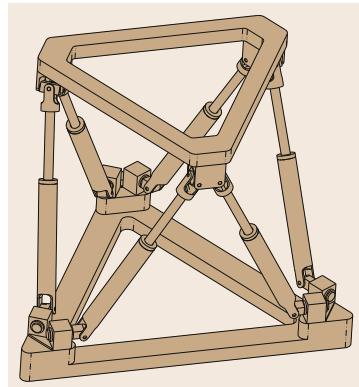
Design

Part B Design

16 Design and Performance Evaluation

<i>Jorge Angeles, Frank C. Park</i>	399
16.1 The Robot Design Process	400
16.2 Workspace Criteria	401
16.3 Dexterity Indices	405
16.4 Other Performance Indices	408
16.5 Other Robot Types	411
16.6 Summary	416
References	416

Design



17 Limbed Systems

<i>Shuuji Kajita, Christian Ott</i>	419
17.1 Design of Limbed Systems	420
17.2 Conceptual Design	420
17.3 Whole Design Process Example	423
17.4 Model Induced Design	427
17.5 Various Limbed Systems	434
17.6 Performance Indices	437
Video-References	439
References	440

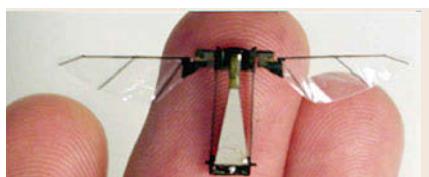
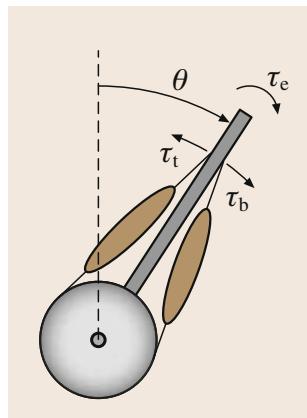
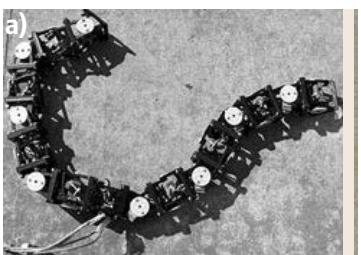
18 Parallel Mechanisms

<i>Jean-Pierre Merlet, Clément Gosselin, Tian Huang</i>	443
18.1 Definitions	443
18.2 Type Synthesis of Parallel Mechanisms	445
18.3 Kinematics	446
18.4 Velocity and Accuracy Analysis	447
18.5 Singularity Analysis	448
18.6 Workspace Analysis	450
18.7 Static Analysis	451
18.8 Dynamic Analysis	452
18.9 Design	452
18.10 Wire-Driven Parallel Robots	453
18.11 Application Examples	455
18.12 Conclusion and Further Reading	455
Video-References	456
References	456

19 Robot Hands

<i>Claudio Melchiorri, Makoto Kaneko</i>	463
19.1 Basic Concepts	464
19.2 Design of Robot Hands	465
19.3 Technologies for Actuation and Sensing	470
19.4 Modeling and Control of a Robot Hand	473
19.5 Applications and Trends	477
19.6 Conclusions and Further Reading	478
Video-References	478
References	479

Design



20 Snake-Like and Continuum Robots

<i>Ian D. Walker, Howie Choset, Gregory S. Chirikjian</i>	481
20.1 Snake Robots – Short History	481
20.2 Continuum Robots – Short History	485
20.3 Snake-Like and Continuum Robot Modeling	487
20.4 Modeling of Locomotion for Snake-Like and Continuum Mechanisms	491
20.5 Conclusion and Extensions to Related Areas	492
Video-References	492
References	493

21 Actuators for Soft Robotics

<i>Alin Albu-Schäffer, Antonio Bicchi</i>	499
21.1 Background	500
21.2 Soft Robot Design	502
21.3 Modeling Actuators for Soft Robotics	508
21.4 Modeling Soft Robots	511
21.5 Stiffness Estimation	513
21.6 Cartesian Stiffness Control	515
21.7 Periodic Motion Control	518
21.8 Optimal Control of Soft Robots	521
21.9 Conclusions and Open Problems	524

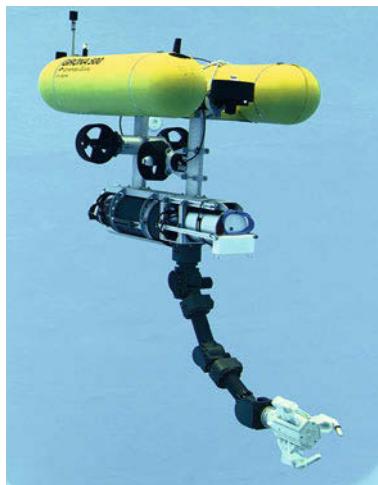
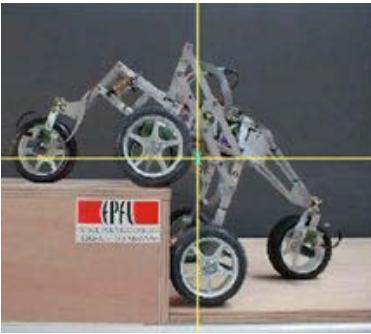
23 Biomimetic Robots

<i>Kyu-Jin Cho, Robert Wood</i>	543
23.1 Overview	544
23.2 Components of Biomimetic Robot Design	544
23.3 Mechanisms	545
23.4 Material and Fabrication	561
23.5 Conclusion	567
Video-References	568
References	570

22 Modular Robots

<i>I-Ming Chen, Mark Yim</i>	531
22.1 Concepts and Definitions	531
22.2 Reconfigurable Modular Manipulators	533
22.3 Self-Reconfigurable Modular Robots	535
22.4 Conclusion and Further Reading	539
Video-References	540
References	540

Design



26 Flying Robots

<i>Stefan Leutenegger, Christoph Hürzeler, Amanda K. Stowers, Kostas Alexis, Markus W. Achtelik, David Lentink, Paul Y. Oh, Roland Siegwart</i>	623
26.1 Background and History	624
26.2 Characteristics of Aerial Robotics	625
26.3 Basics of Aerodynamics and Flight Mechanics	629
26.4 Airplane Modeling and Design	641
26.5 Rotorcraft Modeling and Design	647
26.6 Flapping Wing Modeling and Design	653
26.7 System Integration and Realization	659
26.8 Applications of Aerial Robots	662

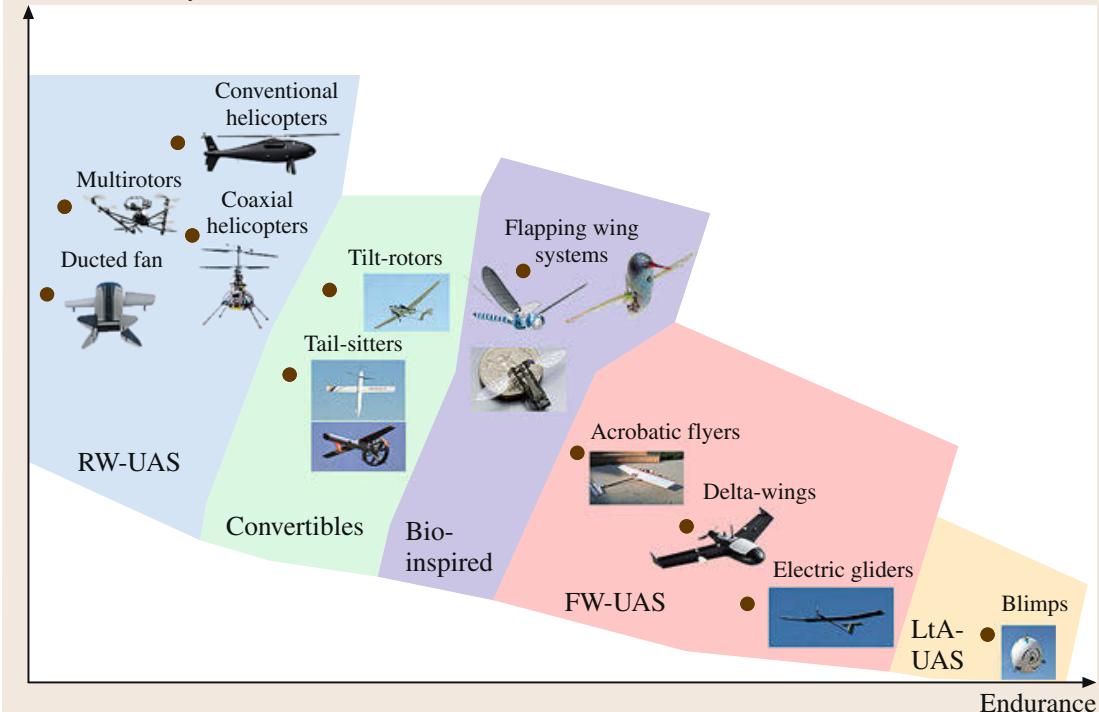
24 Wheeled Robots

<i>Woojin Chung, Karl Iagnemma</i>	575
24.1 Overview	575
24.2 Mobility of Wheeled Robots	576
24.3 Wheeled Robot Structures	582
24.4 Wheel-Terrain Interaction Models	586
24.5 Wheeled Robot Suspensions	589
24.6 Conclusions	592
Video-References	592
References	593

25 Underwater Robots

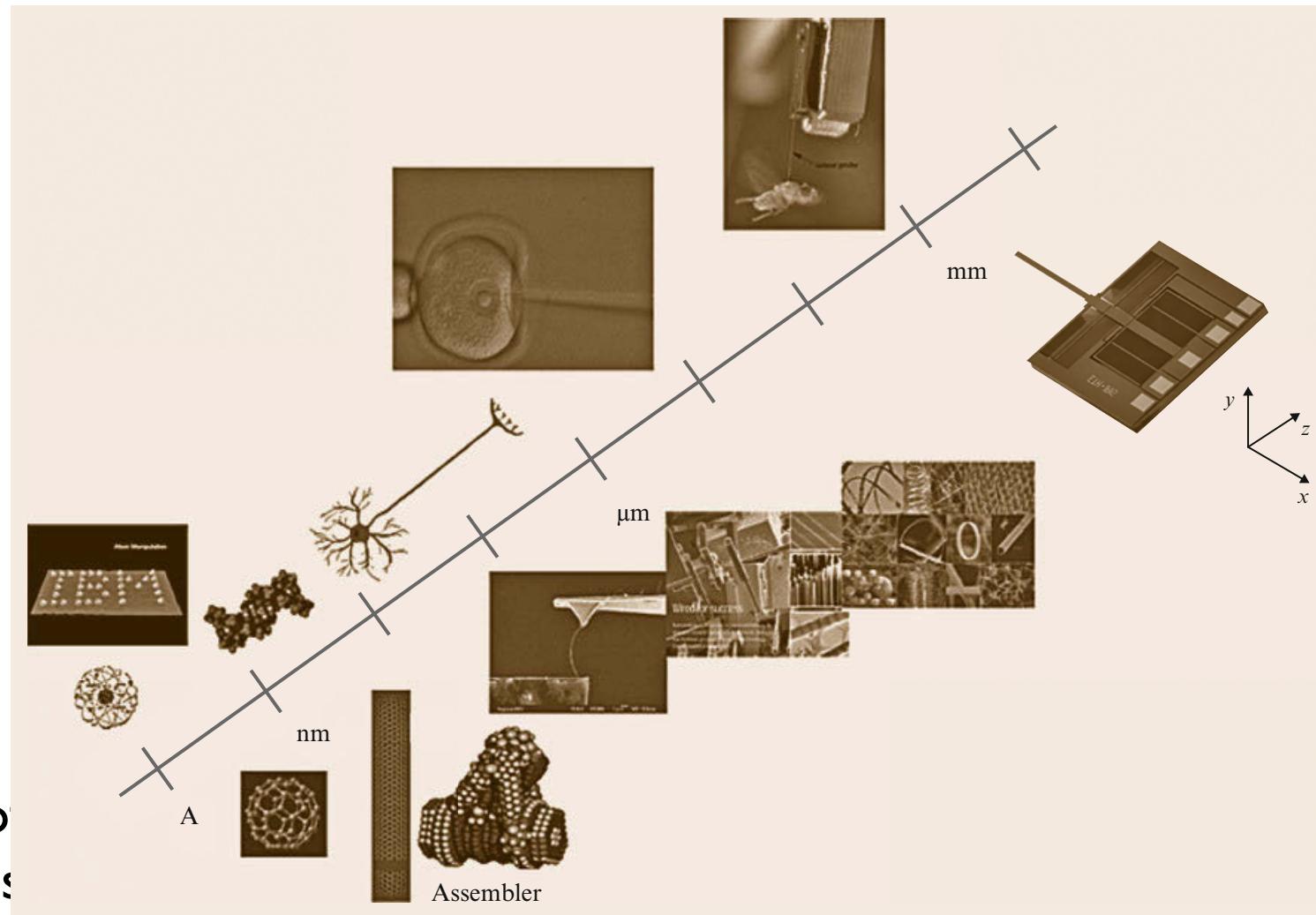
<i>Hyun-Taek Choi, Junku Yuh</i>	595
25.1 Background	595
25.2 Mechanical Systems	596
25.3 Power Systems	599
25.4 Underwater Actuators and Sensors	601
25.5 Computers, Communications, and Architecture	606
25.6 Underwater Manipulators	614
25.7 Conclusions and Further Reading	617
Video-References	617
References	618

Maneuverability



Robot designs

27 Micro-/Nanorobots	
<i>Bradley J. Nelson, Lixin Dong, Fumihito Arai</i>	671
27.1 Overview of Micro- and Nanorobotics	671
27.2 Scaling	674
27.3 Actuation at the Micro- and Nanoscales	675
27.4 Imaging at the Micro- and Nanoscales	676
27.5 Fabrication	678
27.6 Microassembly	681
27.7 Microrobotics	687
27.8 Nanorobotics	692
27.9 Conclusions	704
Video-References	704
References	705



Sensing and perception

Part C Sensing and Perception

28 Force and Tactile Sensing

<i>Mark R. Cutkosky, William Provancher</i>	717
28.1 Overview	717
28.2 Sensor Types	718
28.3 Tactile Information Processing	725
28.4 Integration Challenges	730
28.5 Conclusions and Future Developments	731
Video-References	731
References	731

29 Inertial Sensing, GPS and Odometry

<i>Gregory Dudek, Michael Jenkin</i>	737
29.1 Odometry	737
29.2 Gyroscopic Systems	739
29.3 Accelerometers	742
29.4 IMU Packages	743
29.5 Satellite-Based Positioning (GPS and GNSS)	744
29.6 GPS-IMU Integration	749
29.7 Further Reading	750
29.8 Currently Available Hardware	750
References	751

30 Sonar Sensing

<i>Lindsay Kleeman, Roman Kuc</i>	753
30.1 Sonar Principles	754
30.2 Sonar Beam Pattern	756
30.3 Speed of Sound	758
30.4 Waveforms	758
30.5 Transducer Technologies	759
30.6 Reflecting Object Models	760
30.7 Artifacts	761
30.8 TOF Ranging	762
30.9 Echo Waveform Coding	765
30.10 Echo Waveform Processing	767
30.11 CTFM Sonar	769
30.12 Multipulse Sonar	772
30.13 Sonar Rings and Arrays	773
30.14 Motion Effects	775
30.15 Biomimetic Sonars	778
30.16 Conclusions	779

31 Range Sensing

<i>Kurt Konolige, Andreas Nüchter</i>	783
31.1 Range Sensing Basics	783
31.2 Sensor Technologies	785
31.3 Registration	794
31.4 Navigation and Terrain Classification and Mapping	804
31.5 Conclusions and Further Reading	807
References	807

32 3-D Vision for Navigation and Grasping

<i>Danica Kragic, Kostas Daniilidis</i>	811
32.1 Geometric Vision	812
32.2 3-D Vision for Grasping	820
32.3 Conclusion and Further Reading	822
Video-References	822
References	822

33 Visual Object Class Recognition

<i>Michael Stark, Bernt Schiele, Aleš Leonardis</i>	825
33.1 Object Classes	825
33.2 Review of the State of the Art	826
33.3 Discussion and Conclusions	837
References	838

34 Visual Servoing

<i>François Chaumette, Seth Hutchinson, Peter Corke</i>	841
34.1 The Basic Components of Visual Servoing	842
34.2 Image-Based Visual Servo	843
34.3 Pose-Based Visual Servo	851
34.4 Advanced Approaches	854
34.5 Performance Optimization and Planning	856
34.6 Estimation of 3-D Parameters	858
34.7 Determining s^* and Matching Issues	859
34.8 Target Tracking	859
34.9 Eye-in-Hand and Eye-to-Hand Systems Controlled in the Joint Space	860
34.10 Under Actuated Robots	861
34.11 Applications	863
34.12 Conclusions	863
Video-References	863
References	863

5 Multisensor Data Fusion

<i>Hugh Durrant-Whyte, Thomas C. Henderson</i>	867
35.1 Multisensor Data Fusion Methods	867
35.2 Multisensor Fusion Architectures	880
35.3 Applications	885
35.4 Conclusions	889
Video-References	889
References	890

Manipulation and interfaces

Part D Manipulation and Interfaces

36 Motion for Manipulation Tasks

<i>James Kuffner, Jing Xiao</i>	897
36.1 Overview	898
36.2 Task-Level Control	900
36.3 Manipulation Planning	904
36.4 Assembly Motion	911
36.5 Unifying Feedback Control and Planning	918
36.6 Conclusions and Further Reading	920
Video-References	923
References	923

37 Contact Modeling and Manipulation

<i>Imin Kao, Kevin M. Lynch, Joel W. Burdick</i>	931
37.1 Overview	931
37.2 Kinematics of Rigid-Body Contact	932
37.3 Forces and Friction	936
37.4 Rigid-Body Mechanics with Friction	939
37.5 Pushing Manipulation	942
37.6 Contact Interfaces and Modeling	943
37.7 Friction Limit Surface	946
37.8 Contacts in Grasping and Fixture Designs	949
37.9 Conclusions and Further Reading	950
Video-References	951
References	951

38 Grasping

<i>Domenico Prattichizzo, Jeffrey C. Trinkle</i>	955
38.1 Models and Definitions	956
38.2 Controllable Twists and Wrenches	961
38.3 Compliant Grasps	965
38.4 Restraint Analysis	967
38.5 Examples	975
38.6 Conclusion and Further Reading	985
Video-References	986
References	986

39 Cooperative Manipulation

<i>Fabrizio Caccavale, Masaru Uchiyama</i>	989
39.1 Historical Overview	990
39.2 Kinematics and Statics	991
39.3 Cooperative Task Space	995
39.4 Dynamics and Load Distribution	996
39.5 Task-Space Analysis	998
39.6 Control	999
39.7 Conclusions and Further Reading	1003
Video-References	1004
References	1004

40 Mobility and Manipulation

<i>Oliver Brock, Jaeheung Park, Marc Toussaint</i>	1007
40.1 Grasping and Manipulation	1009
40.2 Control	1013
40.3 Motion Generation	1017
40.4 Learning	1021
40.5 Perception	1025
40.6 Conclusions and Further Reading	1029
Video-References	1029
References	1030

41 Active Manipulation for Perception

<i>Anna Petrovskaya, Kaijen Hsiao</i>	1037
41.1 Perception via Manipulation	1037
41.2 Object Localization	1038
41.3 Learning About an Object	1049
41.4 Recognition	1054
41.5 Conclusions	1057
Video-References	1058
References	1058

42 Haptics

<i>Blake Hannaford, Allison M. Okamura</i>	1063
42.1 Overview	1064
42.2 Haptic Device Design	1068
42.3 Haptic Rendering	1071
42.4 Control and Stability of Force Feedback Interfaces	1073
42.5 Other Types of Haptic Interfaces	1075
42.6 Conclusions and Further Reading	1079
References	1079

43 Telerobotics

<i>Günter Niemeyer, Carsten Preusche, Stefano Stramigioli, Dongjun Lee</i>	1085
43.1 Overview and Terminology	1085

Moving in the environment

Part E Moving in the Environment

45 World Modeling

<i>Wolfram Burgard, Martial Hebert, Maren Bennewitz</i>	1135
45.1 Historical Overview	1136
45.2 Models for Indoors and Structured Environments	1137
45.3 World and Terrain Models for Natural Environments	1141
45.4 Dynamic Environments	1149
45.5 Summary and Further Reading	1149
Video-References	1150
References	1150

46 Simultaneous Localization and Mapping

<i>Cyrill Stachniss, John J. Leonard, Sebastian Thrun</i>	1153
46.1 SLAM: Problem Definition	1154
46.2 The Three Main SLAM Paradigms	1157
46.3 Visual and RGB-D SLAM	1166
46.4 Conclusion and Future Challenges	1169
Video-References	1170
References	1171

47 Motion Planning and Obstacle Avoidance

<i>Javier Minguez, Florant Lamiraux, Jean-Paul Laumond</i>	1177
47.1 Nonholonomic Mobile Robots: Where Motion Planning Meets Control Theory	1178
47.2 Kinematic Constraints and Controllability	1179
47.3 Motion Planning and Small-Time Controllability	1180
47.4 Local Steering Methods and Small-Time Controllability	1181
47.5 Robots and Trailers	1184
47.6 Approximate Methods	1186
47.7 From Motion Planning to Obstacle Avoidance	1187
47.8 Definition of Obstacle Avoidance	1187
47.9 Obstacle Avoidance Techniques	1188
47.10 Robot Shape, Kinematics, and Dynamics in Obstacle Avoidance ...	1194
47.11 Integration Planning – Reaction	1196
47.12 Conclusions, Future Directions, and Further Reading	1198
Video-References	1199
References	1199

48 Modeling and Control of Legged Robots

<i>Pierre-Brice Wieber, Russ Tedrake, Scott Kuindersma</i>	1203
48.1 A Brief History of Legged Robots	1204
48.2 The Dynamics of Legged Locomotion	1204
48.3 Stability Analysis – Not Falling Down	1209
48.4 Generation of Dynamic Walking and Running Motions	1214
48.5 Motion and Force Control	1222
48.6 Towards More Efficient Walking	1225
48.7 Different Contact Behaviors	1227
48.8 Conclusion	1228
References	1228

49 Modeling and Control of Wheeled Mobile Robots

<i>Claude Samson, Pascal Morin, Roland Lenain</i>	1235
49.1 Background	1236
49.2 Control Models	1238
49.3 Adaptation of Control Methods for Holonomic Systems	1240
49.4 Methods Specific to Nonholonomic Systems	1241
49.5 Path Following in the Case of Nonideal Wheel-Ground Contact	1255
49.6 Complementary Issues and Bibliographical Guide	1261
Video-References	1263
References	1263

50 Modeling and Control of Robots on Rough Terrain

<i>Keiji Nagatani, Genya Ishigami, Yoshito Okada</i>	1267
50.1 Overview	1268
50.2 Modeling of Wheeled Robot in Rough Terrain	1270
50.3 Control of Wheeled Robot in Rough Terrain	1274
50.4 Modeling of Tracked Vehicle on Rough Terrain	1276
50.5 Stability Analysis of Tracked Vehicles	1278
50.6 Control of Tracked Vehicle on Rough Terrain	1279
50.7 Summary	1281
Video-References	1281
References	1282

51 Modeling and Control of Underwater Robots

<i>Gianluca Antonelli, Thor I. Fossen, Dana R. Yoerger</i>	1285
51.1 The Expanding Role of Marine Robotics in Oceanic Engineering	1285
51.2 Underwater Robotics	1287
51.3 Applications	1302
51.4 Conclusions and Further Reading	1303
Video-References	1304
References	1304

Moving in the environment

52 Modeling and Control of Aerial Robots

<i>Robert Mahony, Randal W. Beard, Vijay Kumar</i>	1307
52.1 Overview	1307
52.2 Modeling Aerial Robotic Vehicles	1309
52.3 Control.....	1316
52.4 Trajectory Planning.....	1324
52.5 Estimating the Vehicle State	1328
52.6 Conclusion	1330
Video-References	1331
References	1331

53 Multiple Mobile Robot Systems

<i>Lynne E. Parker, Daniela Rus, Gaurav S. Sukhatme</i>	1335
53.1 History.....	1336
53.2 Architectures for Multirobot Systems.....	1337
53.3 Communication.....	1339
53.4 Networked Mobile Robots	1340
53.5 Swarm Robots	1351
53.6 Modular Robotics.....	1354
53.7 Heterogeneity.....	1357
53.8 Task Allocation.....	1359
53.9 Learning.....	1361
53.10 Applications.....	1362
53.11 Conclusions and Further Reading	1366
Video-References	1366
References	1367

Robots at work

Part F Robots at Work

54 Industrial Robotics

<i>Martin Hägele, Klas Nilsson, J. Norberto Pires, Rainer Bischoff</i>	1385
54.1 Industrial Robotics: The Main Driver for Robotics Research and Application	1386
54.2 A Short History of Industrial Robots	1386
54.3 Industrial Robot Kinematics	1392
54.4 Typical Industrial Robot Applications	1393
54.5 Safe Human–Robot Collaboration	1405
54.6 Task Descriptions – Teaching and Programming	1409
54.7 System Integration	1414
54.8 Outlook and Long-Term Challenges	1416
Video-References	1418
References	1418

55 Space Robotics

<i>Kazuya Yoshida, Brian Wilcox, Gerd Hirzinger, Roberto Lampariello</i>	1423
55.1 Historical Developments and Advances of Orbital Robotic Systems	1424
55.2 Historical Developments and Advances of Surface Robotic Systems	1430
55.3 Mathematical Modeling	1437
55.4 Future Directions of Orbital and Surface Robotic Systems	1452
55.5 Conclusions and Further Reading	1457

56 Robotics in Agriculture and Forestry

<i>Marcel Bergerman, John Billingsley, John Reid, Eldert van Henten</i>	1463
56.1 Section Scope	1464
56.2 Challenges and Opportunities	1465
56.3 Case Studies	1467
56.4 Conclusion	1487
Video-References	1488
References	1489

57 Robotics in Construction

<i>Kamel S. Saidi, Thomas Bock, Christos Georgoulas</i>	1493
57.1 Overview	1494
57.2 Offsite Applications of Robotics in Construction	1499
57.3 Onsite Applications of Single Task Construction Robots	1504
57.4 Integrated Robotized Construction Sites	1511
57.5 Currently Unsolved Technical Problems	1514
57.6 Future Directions	1516
57.7 Conclusions and Further Reading	1516
Video-References	1517
References	1517

58 Robotics in Hazardous Applications

<i>James Trevelyan, William R. Hamel, Sung-Chul Kang</i>	1521
58.1 Operation in Hazardous Environments: The Need for a Robotics Solution	1521
58.2 Applications	1523
58.3 Enabling Technologies	1537
58.4 Conclusions and Further Reading	1544
Video-References	1545
References	1546

59 Robotics in Mining

<i>Joshua A. Marshall, Adrian Bonchis, Eduardo Nebot, Steven Scheding</i>	1549
59.1 Modern Mining Practice	1550
59.2 Surface Mining	1552
59.3 Underground Mining	1562
59.4 Challenges and Industry Acceptance	1568
59.5 Challenges, Outlook, and Conclusion	1569
Video-References	1571
References	1572

60 Disaster Robotics

<i>Robin R. Murphy, Satoshi Tadokoro, Alexander Kleiner</i>	1577
60.1 Overview	1578
60.2 Disaster Characteristics and Impact on Robots	1581
60.3 Robots Actually Used at Disasters	1582
60.4 Robots at the Fukushima–Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant Accident	1588
60.5 Lessons Learned, Challenges, and Novel Approaches	1591

Robots at work

61 Robot Surveillance and Security

<i>Wendell H. Chun, Nikolaos Papanikopoulos</i>	1605
61.1 Overview	1605
61.2 Application Domains	1607
61.3 Enabling Technologies	1608
61.4 Active Research	1617
61.5 Conclusion	1622
Video-References	1623
References	1623

62 Intelligent Vehicles

<i>Alberto Broggi, Alex Zelinsky, Ümit Özgüner, Christian Laugier</i>	1627
62.1 The Motivation and Approaches to Intelligent Vehicles	1628
62.2 Enabling Technologies	1632
62.3 Road Scene Understanding	1635
62.4 Advanced Driver Assistance	1639
62.5 Driver Monitoring	1645
62.6 Towards Fully Autonomous Vehicles	1647
62.7 Future Trends and Prospects	1650
62.8 Conclusions and Further Reading	1651
Video-References	1651
References	1652

63 Medical Robotics and Computer-Integrated Surgery

<i>Russell H. Taylor, Arianna Menciassi, Gabor Fichtinger, Paolo Fiorini, Paolo Dario</i>	1657
63.1 Core Concepts	1658
63.2 Technology	1662
63.3 Systems, Research Areas, and Applications	1667
63.4 Conclusion and Future Directions	1675
Video-References	1676
References	1676

64 Rehabilitation and Health Care Robotics

<i>H.F. Machiel Van der Loos, David J. Reinkensmeyer, Eugenio Guglielmelli</i>	1685
64.1 Overview	1686
64.2 Rehabilitation Therapy and Training Robots	1692
64.3 Aids for People with Disabilities	1703
64.4 Smart Prostheses and Orthoses	1711
64.5 Augmentation for Diagnosis and Monitoring	1713
64.6 Safety, Ethics, Access and Economics	1715
64.7 Conclusions and Further Readings	1716
Video-References	1717
References	1718

65 Domestic Robotics

<i>Erwin Prassler, Mario E. Munich, Paolo Pirjanian, Kazuhiro Kosuge</i>	1729
65.1 Mobile Domestic Robotics	1730
65.2 Enabling Technologies	1747
65.3 Smart Homes	1754
Video-References	1757
References	1757

66 Robotics Competitions and Challenges

<i>Daniele Nardi, Jonathan Roberts, Manuela Veloso, Luke Fletcher</i>	1759
66.1 Introduction	1760
66.2 Overview	1760
66.3 Competitions Inspired by Human Competitions	1762
66.4 Task-Oriented Competitions	1769
66.5 Conclusion and Further Reading	1780
Video-References	1781
References	1781

Robots and humans

Part G Robots and Humans

67 Humanoids

<i>Paul Fitzpatrick, Kensuke Harada, Charles C. Kemp, Yoshio Matsumoto, Kazuhito Yokoi, Eiichi Yoshida</i>	1789
67.1 Why Humanoids?	1789
67.2 History	1792
67.3 What to Imitate?	1794
67.4 Locomotion	1795
67.5 Whole-Body Activities	1801
67.6 Morphological Communication	1809
67.7 Conclusions and Further Reading	1813
Video-References	1813
References	1813

68 Human Motion Reconstruction

<i>Katsu Yamane, Wataru Takano</i>	1819
68.1 Overview	1819
68.2 Models and Computations	1820
68.3 Reconstruction for Understanding	1825
68.4 Reconstruction for Robots	1829
Video-References	1830
References	1831

69 Physical Human–Robot Interaction

<i>Sami Haddadin, Elizabeth Croft</i>	1835
69.1 Classification	1836
69.2 Human Safety	1839
69.3 Human–Friendly Robot Design	1847
69.4 Control for Physical Interaction	1853
69.5 Motion Planning for Human Environments	1859
69.6 Interaction Planning	1862

70 Human–Robot Augmentation

<i>Massimo Bergamasco, Hugh Herr</i>	1875
70.1 Concept and Definitions	1876
70.2 Upper Limb Wearable Systems	1877
70.3 Lower Limb Wearable Systems	1882
70.4 Whole Body Wearable Systems	1889
70.5 Control of Human–Robot Augmentation Systems	1892
70.6 Conclusions and Further Developments	1902
Video-References	1902
References	1902

71 Cognitive Human–Robot Interaction

<i>Bilge Mutlu, Nicholas Roy, Selma Šabanović</i>	1907
71.1 Human Models of Interaction	1908
71.2 Robot Models of Interaction	1914
71.3 Models of Human–Robot Interaction	1916
71.4 Conclusion and Further Reading	1927
Video-References	1927
References	1928

72 Social Robotics

<i>Cynthia Breazeal, Kerstin Dautenhahn, Takayuki Kanda</i>	1935
72.1 Overview	1936
72.2 Social Robot Embodiment	1936
72.3 Social Robots and Social–Emotional Intelligence	1938
72.4 Socio–Cognitive Skills	1941
72.5 Human Social Responses to Social Robots	1944
72.6 Social Robots and Communication Skills	1946
72.7 Long-Term Interaction with Robot Companions	1950
72.8 Tactile Interaction with Social Robots	1954
72.9 Social Robots and Teamwork	1958
72.10 Conclusion	1959
72.11 Further Reading	1960
Video-References	1960
References	1961

73 Socially Assistive Robotics

<i>Maja J. Mataric, Brian Scassellati</i>	1973
73.1 Overview	1973
73.2 The Need for Socially Assistive Robotics	1974
73.3 Advantages of Embodied Robots over Virtual Agents	1975
73.4 Motivation, Autonomy, and Companionship	1977
73.5 Influence and the Dynamics of Assistive Interaction	1978
73.6 Personalization and Adaptation to Specific Needs and Abilities	1978
73.7 Creating Long-Term Engagement and Behaviour Change	1979
73.8 SAR for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Therapy	1980
73.9 SAR Supporting Rehabilitation	1982

Robots and humans

74 Learning from Humans

<i>Aude G. Billard, Sylvain Calinon, Rüdiger Dillmann</i>	1995
74.1 Learning of Robots	1995
74.2 Key Issues When Learning from Human Demonstrations	1998
74.3 Interfaces for Demonstration	2000
74.4 Algorithms to Learn from Humans	2002
74.5 Conclusions and Open Issues in Robot LfD	2008
Video-References	2009
References	2009

75 Biologically Inspired Robotics

<i>Fumiya Iida, Auke Jan Ijspeert</i>	2015
75.1 General Background	2016
75.2 Methodology	2017
75.3 Case Studies	2021
75.4 Landscape of Bio-Inspired Robotics Research and Challenges	2026
75.5 Conclusion	2028
Video-References	2028
References	2029

76 Evolutionary Robotics

<i>Stefano Nolfi, Josh Bongard, Phil Husbands, Dario Floreano</i>	2035
76.1 Method	2036
76.2 First Steps	2036
76.3 Simulation and Reality	2040
76.4 Behavior as a Complex Adaptive System	2041
76.5 Evolving Bodies	2044
76.6 Seeing the Light	2046
76.7 Computational Neuroethology	2049
76.8 Evolution and Learning	2054
76.9 Evolution of Social Behavior	2057
76.10 Evolutionary Hardware	2060
76.11 Closing Remarks	2061
Video-References	2061
References	2062

77 Neurorobotics: From Vision to Action

<i>Patrick van der Smagt, Michael A. Arbib, Giorgio Metta</i>	2069
77.1 Definitions and History	2070
77.2 The Case for Vision	2071
77.3 Vertebrate Motor Control	2075
77.4 The Role of Mirror Systems	2082
77.5 Conclusion and Further Reading	2089
References	2090

78 Perceptual Robotics

<i>Heinrich Bülthoff, Christian Wallraven, Martin A. Giese</i>	2095
78.1 Perceptual Mechanisms of Object Representations	2097
78.2 Perceptual Mechanisms of Action Representation	2103
78.3 Perceptual Validation of Robotics	2107
78.4 Conclusion and Further Reading	2108
Video-References	2109
References	2109

79 Robotics for Education

<i>David P. Miller, Illah Nourbakhsh</i>	2115
79.1 The Role of Robots in Education	2116
79.2 Educational Robot Tournaments	2117
79.3 Education Robot Platforms	2120
79.4 Education Robot Controllers and Programming Environments	2123
79.5 Robotic Technologies for Student Learning	2127
79.6 Educational Evaluation of Robot Programs	2129
79.7 Conclusions and Further Reading	2131
Video-References	2131
References	2131

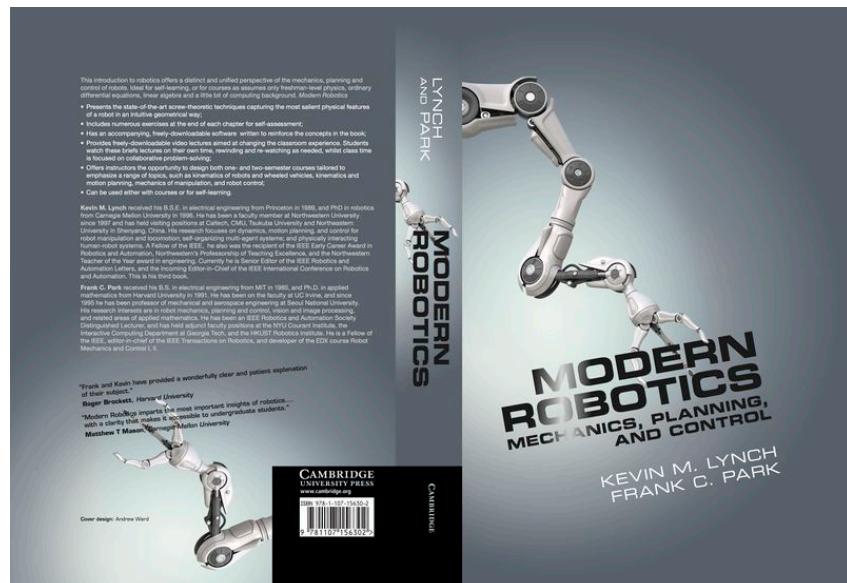
80 Roboethics: Social and Ethical Implications

<i>Gianmarco Veruggio, Fiorella Operito, George Bekey</i>	2135
80.1 A Methodological Note	2137
80.2 Specificity of Robotics	2138
80.3 Cultural Differences in the Acceptance of Robots	2138
80.4 Roboethics Foreshadowed in the Literature	2139
80.5 And Expressed in Real Robotics	2139
80.6 Ethics in Science and Technology	2140
80.7 Ethical Issues in an ICT Society	2143
80.8 Human Principles and Rights	2144
80.9 Legal Issues in Robotics	2146
80.10 Roboethics Taxonomy	2147
80.11 Roboethics Enforced: From Ideals to Rules	2156
80.12 Conclusions and Further Reading	2157
Video-References	2158
References	2159

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MODERN ROBOTICS MECHANICS, PLANNING, AND CONTROL



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