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Panel To Assess U.S. Robotics Technology
Sept. 13, 2005

A report at the upcoming National Science Foundation meeting will study and compare six different types of robotics--including those in medicine and industry--among several countries.

By R. Colin Johnson
[EE Times](#)

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PORTLAND, Ore. — The World Technology Evaluation Center (WTEC) will release its International Study of Robotics on Friday (Sept. 16) at a National Science Foundation conference.

During the NSF conference, "Robots: An Exhibition of U.S. Automaton from the Leading Edge of Research," WTEC will compare Asian and European robotic technology with U.S. robots exhibited at an [NSF workshop](#) last year.

Since then, a six-member panel has toured 50 robot facilities in Japan, South Korea and Western Europe to assess the status of international research.

The NSF report "will detail in which areas that the United States has been first to develop advanced robotics, such as for robot-assisted surgery and mobile or space robots," an NSF spokesman said. "The report will also reveal which specific types of robots are posing a serious challenge to U.S. competitiveness, and in some cases it will show how other country's national strategies or their coordinated funding efforts it putting them ahead of the U.S."

Six different robot types will be studied: robotic vehicles, space robots, industrial and personal robots, humanoid robots, robotics in biology and medicine and networked robots.

More than a dozen U.S.-developed robots will be demonstrated at the NSF exhibition. Exhibits will include a model of the Mars Rover and a humanoid "talking head" from University of Southern California which can be taught to perform tasks that could serve as building blocks for autonomous humanoid robots.



Massachusetts Institute of Technology will show a bipedal robot that learns to walk with algorithms that continually adapt to terrain. MIT will also be showing a "molecule robot" that self-assembles from general-purpose modules. The University of Washington will also be showing self-assembling robots that follow rules encoded on their surface.

Johns Hopkins University will demonstrate its "steady hand" robot for neurosurgical applications. Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute will demonstrate its Solar-Powered Autonomous Underwater Vehicle, a long-endurance underwater robot for sensory mapping, security and environmental monitoring.

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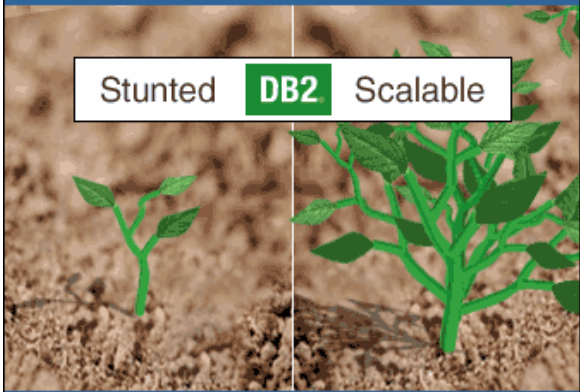
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Carnegie Mellon University will demonstrate the results of its joint venture with the University of Pennsylvania and the University of California Berkeley to master multiple-legged locomotion. The University of Virginia will demonstrate a passive robotic walking aide. University of Minnesota researchers will demonstrate a "scout robot" that can be deployed in hazardous areas and remotely controlled. Drexel University will demonstrate flying robots for both manned and unmanned aerial and terrestrial vehicles.

The WTEC panel results will be [Webcast](#) at noon EDT on Friday (Sept. 16). Questions can be sent via e-mail or phoned in to: 888-455-3612 (code word: "Robotics").

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