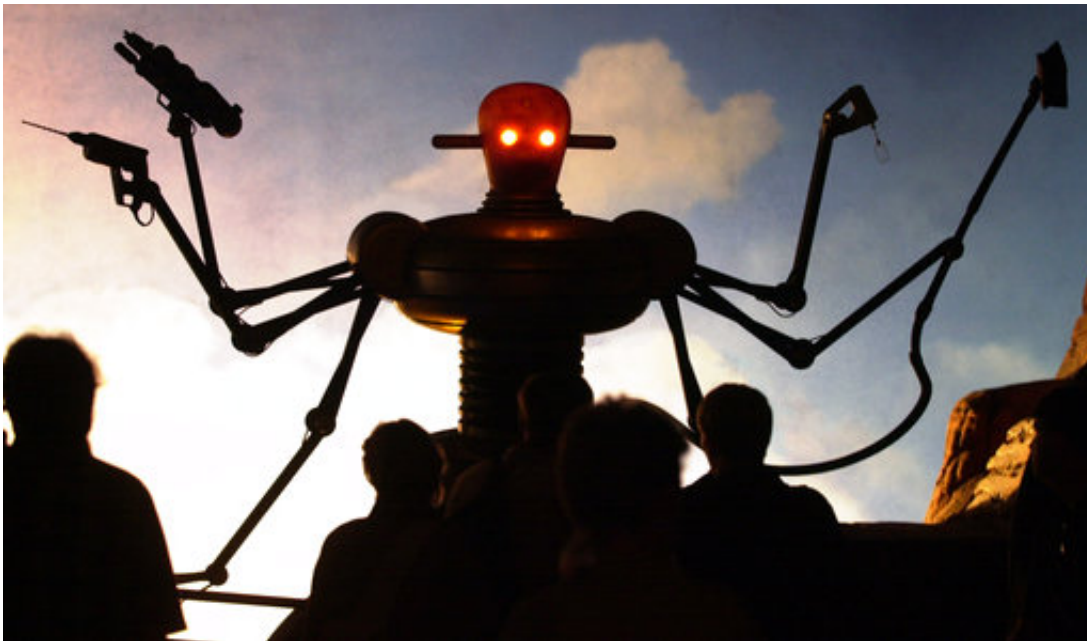


From Isaac Asimov to Aimee Mann, 'robophobia' plagues humans

August 16 2017, by Dan Sewell



In this Tuesday, Aug. 1, 2000 file photo, visitors of the world exhibition Expo 2000 stand in front of a robot display at the "Planet of Visions" exhibit at the Expoground in Hanover, northern Germany. Use of robotics in manufacturing and other sectors is increasing in countries from the United States and China, and robots have long been embraced for a variety of uses in countries such as Japan. There also has long been "robophobia," stoked by science fiction writers and moviemakers. (AP Photo/Fabian Bimmer)

Robots are secretly plotting to kill us. Or enslave us. Or, at best, they will take our jobs, one by one.

From [science fiction](#) written by Isaac Asimov eight decades ago to "Dilbert" cartoons today, the relationship between robots and humans has long fascinated—and worried—people.

There's even a term, "robophobia," for an irrational anxiety about robots and other advanced automation machines.

And there are concerns beyond the ones stoked by watching too much "Terminator ."

Apple computer pioneer Steve Wozniak once suggested that robots would turn us into their pets . Physicist Stephen Hawking and tech entrepreneur Elon Musk have also warned about the dangers of going too far, too quickly, in developing "thinking robots" with programmed intelligence that might keep evolving self-awareness, similar to the humanoids in the HBO series "Westworld ."

Hawking told the BBC in 2014 that "development of full artificial intelligence could spell the end of the human race."

So there's that.

Researchers vary in projections on how long from now, if ever, such a threat could exist.

For now, deaths by robot are very rare among industrial accidents. However, in July 2015, a 57-year-old technician was killed by a robotic machine in an Ionia, Michigan, plant that makes auto bumpers, trailer hitches and chrome-plated plastics. Her husband filed a federal lawsuit, being contested by the defendants, alleging a malfunctioning robot took her "by surprise," crushing her head.



In this Monday, Oct. 3, 2005 photo, a man is disarmed by a robot outside a Wells Fargo bank he tried to rob in Tucson, Ariz. Police said Sgt. Jeffrey Leon Lewis Jr., 33, an Army sergeant from Fort Huachuca, walked into the bank branch here Monday and presented a note saying he had a bomb in his mouth, which was covered in duct tape. No explosives were found in his mouth or backpack or in his vehicle parked nearby, according to police. (Benjie Sanders/Arizona Daily Star via AP)

As [chief technology officer](#) for a private-public effort to facilitate robotic solutions in U.S. manufacturing, professor Howie Choset of Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh sees the fear of robots taking jobs making his mission tougher.

"You have to start this discussion with the baseline that automation and innovation creates jobs," he said, by leading to new products and processes and the new jobs to make and operate them.

"Then you have to ask yourself, why would robots be different? And

people are very quick to say, 'Well, robots are intelligent, they do what humans can do,' and there's this fear that was sort of instilled by science fiction."

Comparing fear of robots to 19th-century worries about the impact of steam engines, Choset said: "Robots are just the next generation of tools."

Singer Aimee Mann, with help from actress Laura Linney, humorously depicted the danger of letting robots help you too much in this music video .



In this April 30, 1950 file photo, a man inspects what is said to be the first robot in history on display in the Deutsches Museum in Munich. The "soldier," which has an automatic bellows that blows a trumpet, was made in 1810 by Friedrich Kauffman of Dresden, Germany (AP Photo/Heinrich Sanden)

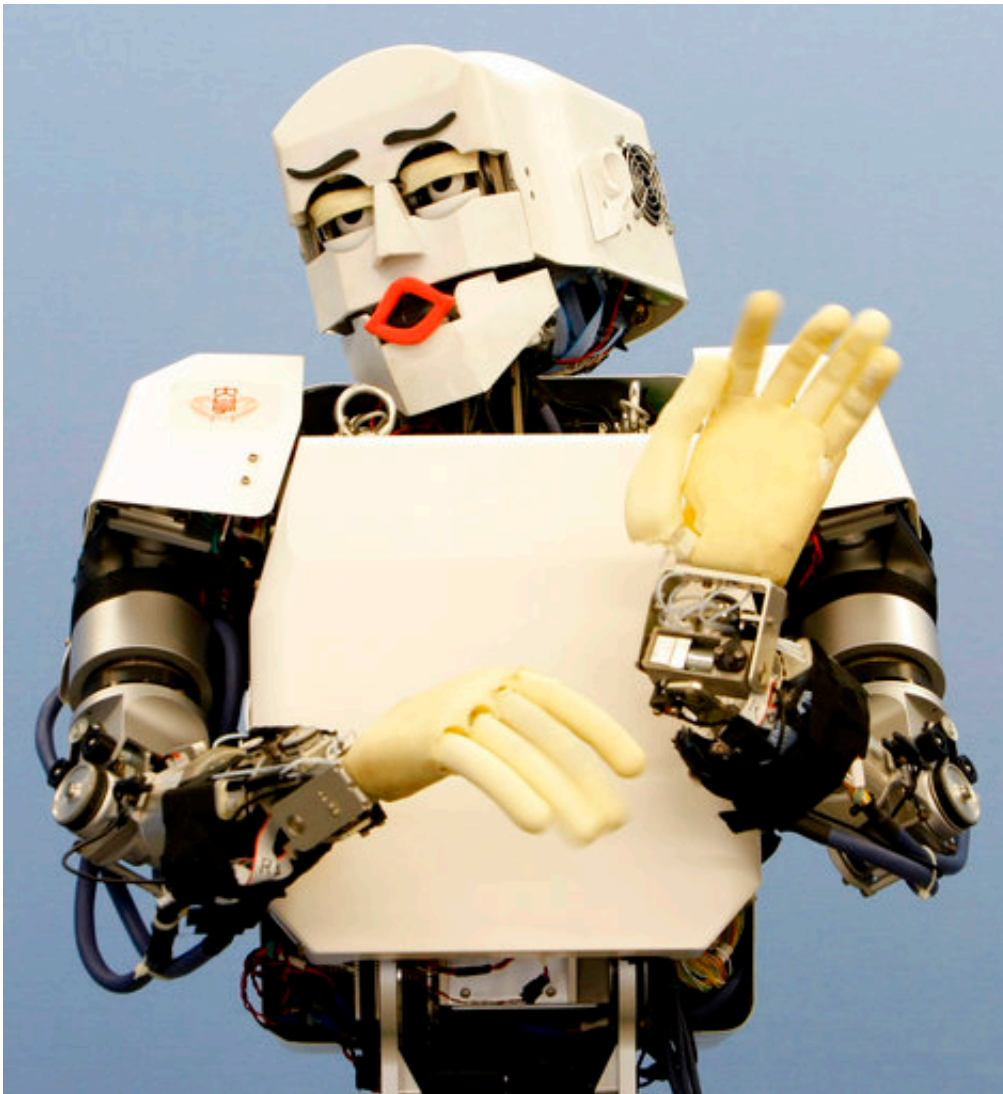
And Choset was amused by a recent "Dilbert" strip about the boss' inability to stop a robot worker who decided to quit.

Chris Boggess, 18, found the 2004 movie "I, Robot," about a rogue killer [robot](#) drawn from Asimov stories, frightening, but he has come to

understand and appreciate their potential through the Butler Tech robotics program at Colerain High School near Cincinnati.

"The first day I walked in, I fell in love. I knew this was where I needed to be," Boggess said. "I like robots, anything about technology."

And if some day thinking robots acquired the ability to threaten humans, he said, "I would probably try to make friends with them."



In this Tuesday, June 23, 2009 file photo, humanoid robot KOBIAN shows an

emotional display of "disgust" during a demonstration at Waseda University in Tokyo. KOBIAN, that can express seven programmed emotions by using its entire body including facial expressions, has been developed by researchers at Waseda's Graduate School of Advanced Science and Engineering, led by Prof. Atsuo Takanashi, and robot manufacturer tmsuk, based in Kita Kyushu, southern Japan. (AP Photo/Shizuo Kambayashi)



This undated file photo shows a German V1 robot bomb flying towards London. Of the 8,000 launched, 2,300 robots got through the gun, fighter plane and balloon defenses, and badly damaged more than a million homes, killing over 5,000 British civilians. (AP Photo)



In this Wednesday, April 20, 1983 file photo, a bomb removal robot, remote controlled by police, at left around the corner, carries a briefcase believed to be a bomb to a waiting truck in New York. It turned out that the suitcase held telephone repairman tools. (AP Photo/David Bookstaver)



In this Thursday, March, 10, 2016 file photo, a pedestrian looks back at a delivery robotic device that has the capacity to hold 6-8 kilograms (13-17 pounds) of cargo in London. The six wheeled intelligent robot that uses GPS systems will make its debut in Greenwich after talks with the local authority led to a partnership with the firm. Greenwich is one of the few areas in the UK that allows unmanned robotic units to be used in public under special license. (AP Photo/Alastair Grant)



In this Monday, April 10, 2017 file photo, Luminar CEO Austin Russell monitors a 3D lidar map on a demonstration drive in San Francisco. Russell, now 22, was barely old enough to drive when he set out to create a safer navigation system for robot-controlled cars. His ambitions are about to be tested five years after he co-founded Luminar Technologies, a Silicon Valley startup trying to steer the rapidly expanding self-driving car industry in a new direction. (AP Photo/Ben Margot)



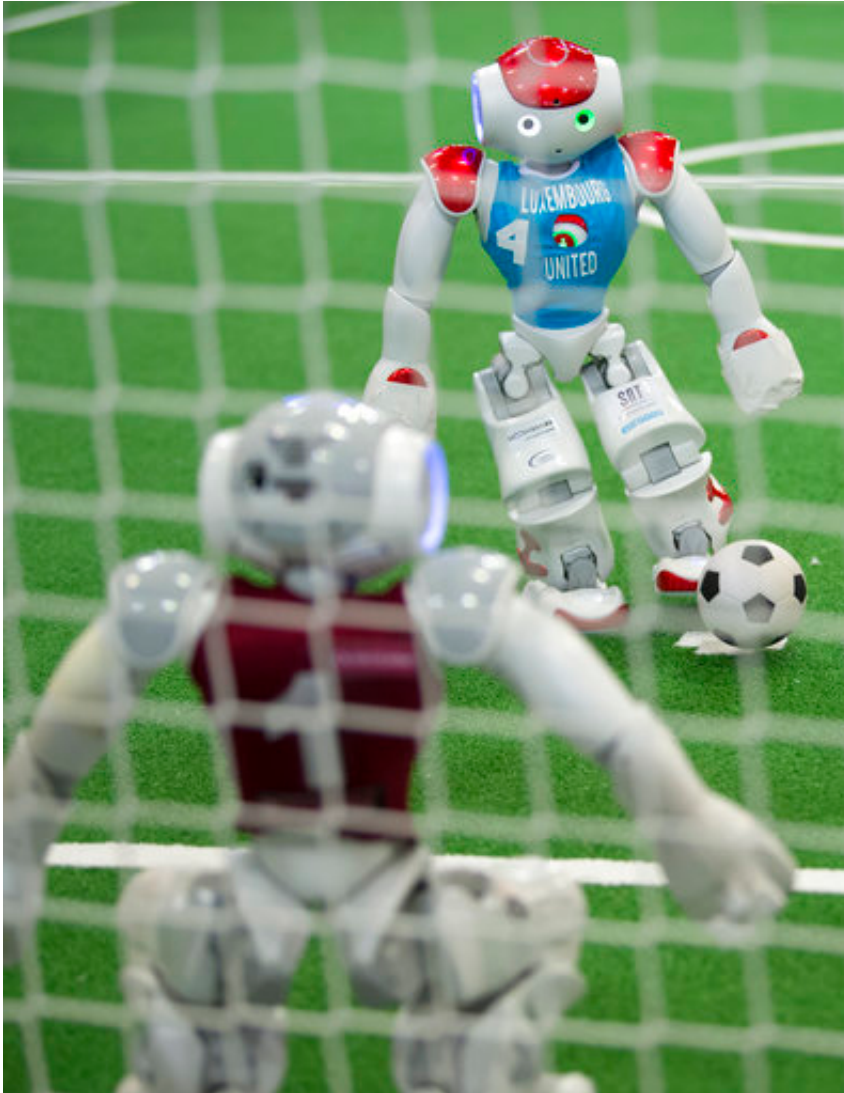
In this Wednesday, July 13, 2005 file photo, robot jockeys race camels at Al Shahaniyya Camel Racecourse on the outskirts of Doha, Qatar. Seven robots participated in the race. In 2004, Qatar banned the use of children as jockeys in camel races. According to the race officials the first ever robot camel race was a successful event. (AP Photo)



In this Monday, July 29, 2002 file photo, a U.S. Army soldier maneuvers Hermes the robot into a cave to detect mines, traps, and other unexploded ordnance as well as weapons or equipment possibly hidden by Taliban or al-Qaida fugitives in the eastern border town of Qiqay, Afghanistan. The war in Afghanistan was the first time robots are being used by the U.S. military as tools for combat. Proponents of the robots believe sending them first into caves, buildings or other dark areas will help prevent U.S. casualties. (AP Photo/Wally Santana)



In this Friday, Aug. 4, 2006 file photo, a diver, right, pushes an underwater autonomous robot in a test pool during the 2006 International Autonomous Underwater competition in San Diego. The challenge was to create a robot that could, free of human control, carry out a series of sinking, swimming and resurfacing tasks in the 38-foot-deep pool. (AP Photo/Chris Park)



In this Sunday, May 7, 2017 file photo, a robot with the Luxembourg team, right, prepares to kick the ball towards the goalkeeper robot from the Italian team 'nomadZ', left, during a soccer match for the Standard Platform Liga competition at the RoboCup GermanOpen 2017 in Magdeburg, Germany. Around 200 teams with more than 1,000 participants from 15 countries demonstrated the state-of-the-art in robotics with competitions such as in soccer, rescue and service robots. (AP Photo/Jens Meyer)



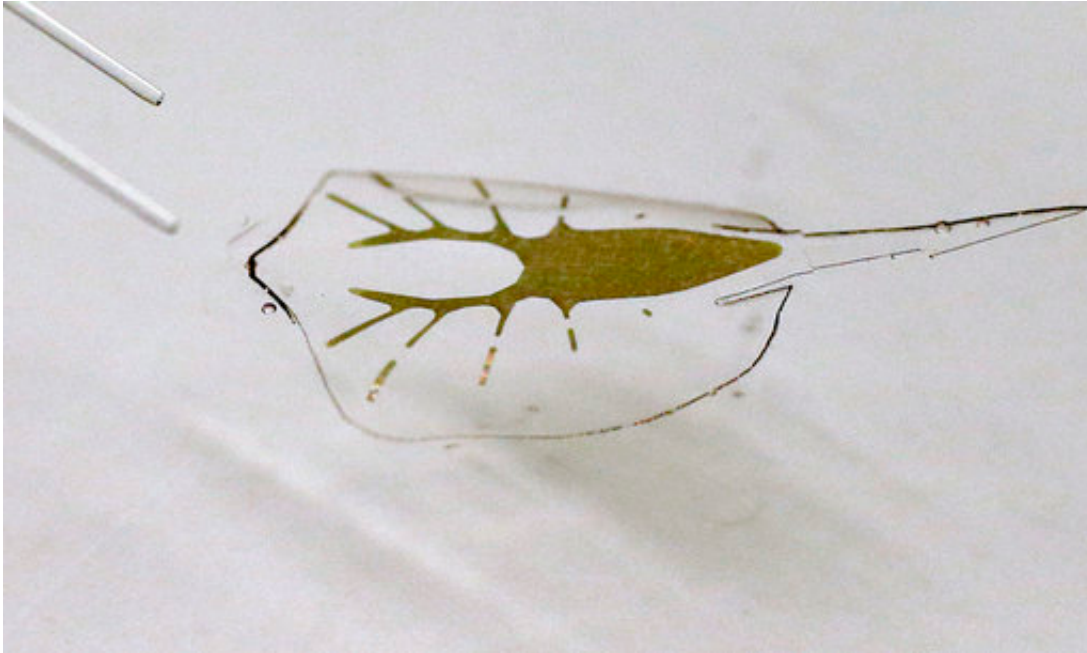
In this Tuesday, Oct. 7, 2008 file photo, robotic suits named HAL (Hybrid Assistive Limb) are demonstrated during a news conference at the headquarters of Cyberdyne, a new company in Tsukuba, outside Tokyo. HAL, which reads brain signals and helps people with mobility problems, will be available to rent in Japan for US\$2,200 for both legs and \$1,500 for a one leg a month and may have far-reaching benefits for the disabled and elderly. (AP Photo/Katsumi Kasahara)



In this Oct. 24, 2014 file photo, researchers Randall Briggs, left, and Will Bosworth monitor a robotic cheetah during a test run on an athletic field at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, Mass. MIT scientists said the robot, modeled after the fastest land animal, may have real-world applications, including development for prosthetic legs. (AP Photo/Charles Krupa)



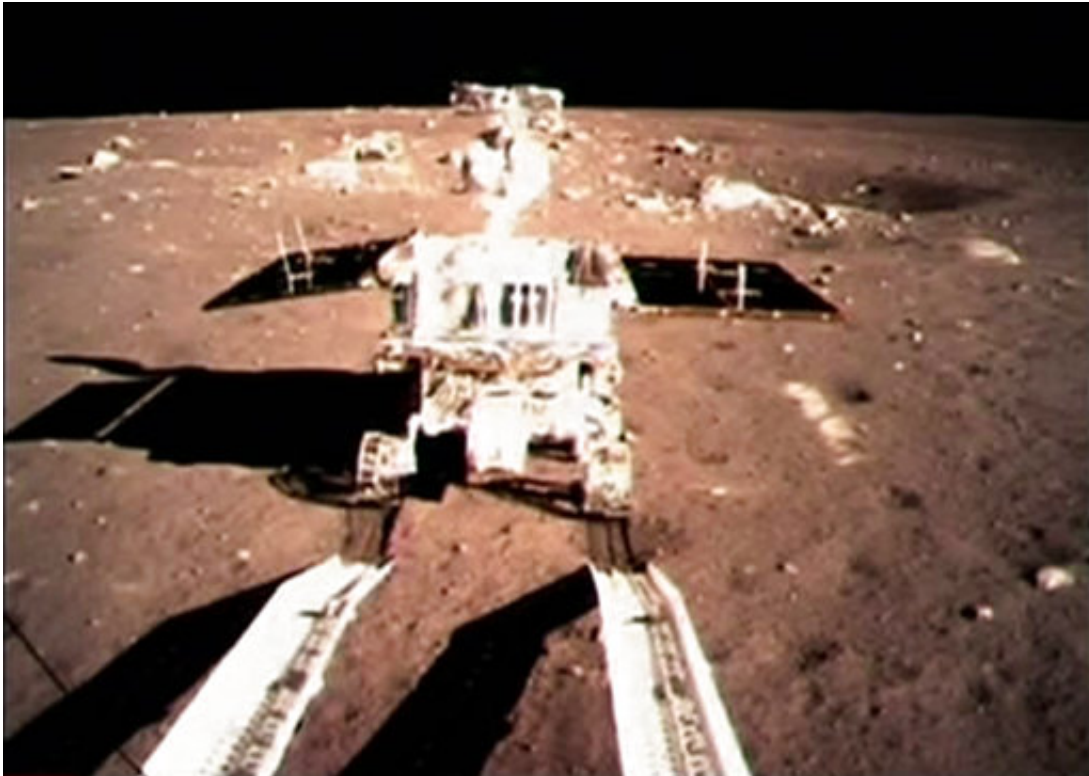
In this July 13, 2016 file photo, Steven Guitron, a mechanical engineering masters student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, points a pipette at a tiny "origami robot" floating toward a "wound" in a stomach model in Cambridge, Mass. Guitron, and others at MIT have developed these tiny ingestible robots which are folded up to be swallowed to complete certain tasks inside the body. So far they can be used to patch wounds, remove foreign objects, and even deliver medicine within the body. The robots unfold when ingested, and can be controlled by magnet forces outside of the body. (AP Photo/Elise Amendola)



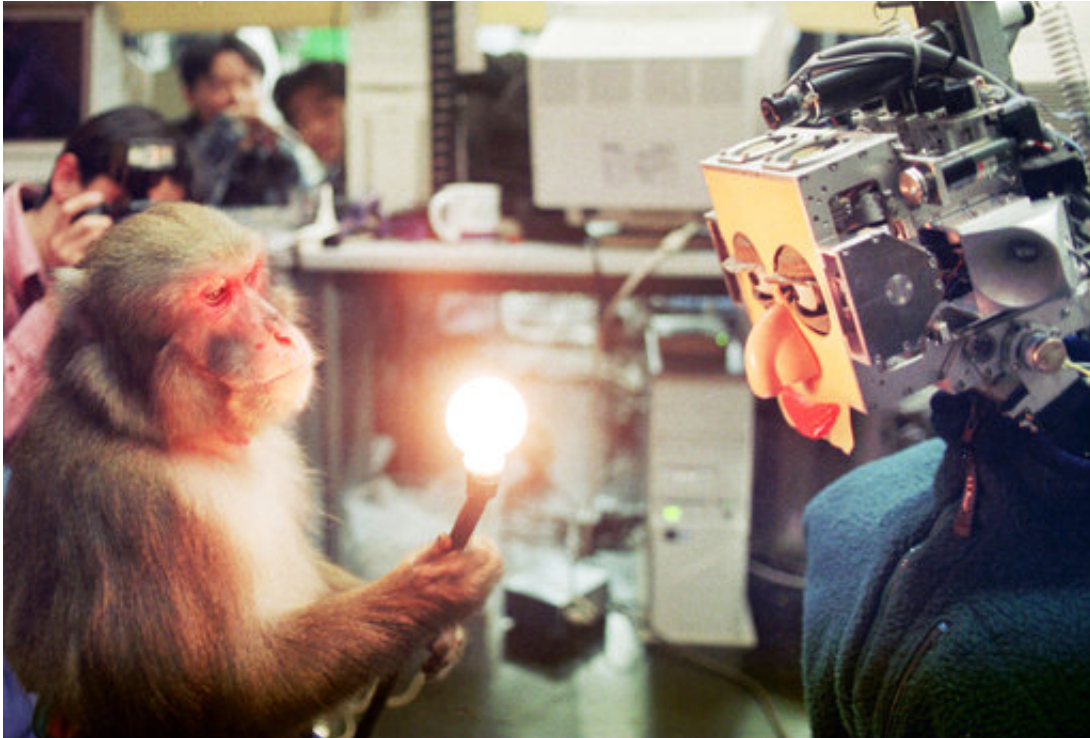
In this Wednesday, Aug. 3, 2016 file photo, a tissue-engineered robot swims in a tank of water in a laboratory at Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass. The stingray-shaped robot, capable of swimming in water after exposure to blue light, has a gold skeleton, silicone fins and the heart muscle cells of a rat. (AP Photo/Steven Senne)



In this Monday, June 23, 2014 file photo, the parking robot "Ray" moves a car in Duesseldorf, Germany. The device will see service for the first time at the Duesseldorf Airport. (Federico Gambarini/dpa via AP)



In this Dec. 15, 2013 photo made by the on-board camera of the lunar probe Chang'e-3 displayed at the Beijing Aerospace Control Center in Beijing, China's first moon rover "Jade Rabbit" touches the lunar surface. (Xinhua via AP)



In this Saturday, Nov. 1, 1997 file photo, the robot "Hadaly 2" follows the movement of a light held by Choromatsu, a 10-year-old male monkey, during an experiment at Waseda University in Tokyo. The university's team, which has been working on humanoid robots for more than 30 years, held the world first ever interface experiment between robot and monkey. (AP Photo/Katsumi Kasahara)



In this Tuesday, Jan. 3, 2006 file photo, "Actroid," a robot made by the Japanese company Kokoro Co., welcomes visitors during a preview of a robot show in Taipei, Taiwan. The company says it can recognize speech in four languages. (AP Photo/Jerome Favre)

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