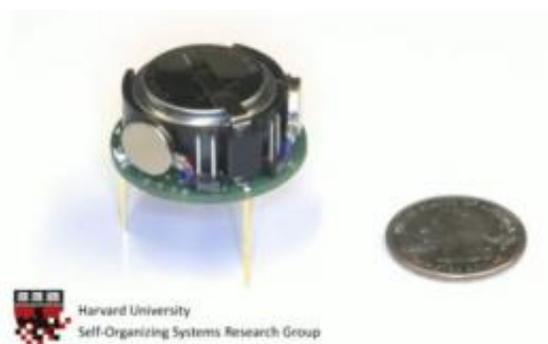


# Kilobots bring us one step closer to a robot swarm

June 17 2011, by Katie Gatto

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(PhysOrg.com) -- When you think about robots, the odds are that you think about something that is fairly large. Maybe you picture a robot arms bolted to the floor of a factory or if you are feeling particularly dramatic maybe you even pictured the terminator. You probably do not think much about tiny robots, but they have some big potential as a robot swarm.

Enter the Kilobots. These small and simple robots are about the size of a US quarter that moves around on a set of vibrating legs. These small robots are able to communicate with each other by blinking lights mounted on their cases. While each individual unit may not seem that advanced or impressive the real impact is what happens when the robots work as a system.

[Swarms](#) of hundreds or thousands of these robots, which each cost about \$14 and take roughly fine minuets to assemble, are not designed to be used on an individual basis. The first group to be used by a research group at Harvard University is starting out with a group of 25. While this may not be the stuff of the nightmare scenarios of a thousands of horror movies as of yet these robots could easily be swarmed by the 1000's if the small scale testing goes well.

The use of the robots does vary depends on how they are programmed. The robots can, for now, only understand simple tasks but with the help of the intelligence of the hive mind the swarm can be surprisingly responsive to the changing environment.

**More information:** [The The Kilobot Project](#), via [IEEE](#)

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