



"Always Interesting" AI in the news

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SPE: Industry Slow to Adopt Downhole Robotics. Guntis Moritis. *Oil & Gas Journal Online*. October 2, 2002 (ogj.pennnet.com). "Joe Donovan, Intelligent Inspection Corp., Houston, chronicled the oil and gas industry's slow adoption of autonomous downhole robots in his presentation at the 2002 Society of Petroleum Engineers Annual Technical Conference & Exhibition in San Antonio today. Currently, his company's robot, called MICROBIG, is undergoing reliability testing. He said the untethered, 30 ft long, 150 lb, 2-in. OD tractor tool will be capable of carrying various tools downhole and working without guidance from the surface because of the artificial intelligence built into the robot. Donovan attributed part of the failure of a past attempt to introduce such a tool to cute naming concepts that were foreign to the oil and gas industry. The 'BORE RAT,' introduced in 1997 came with such terms as 'missions' instead of runs in the hole. These terms had a negative connotation in the market, Donovan said."

The Next Revolution in Household Chores. Monica Collins. *Boston Herald*. September 29, 2002 (www2.bostonherald.com). "Great minds from MIT's Artificial Intelligence Lab designed ROOMBA because they were aware of those 'Jetsons' and 'Star Wars' stereotypes and wanted a more user-friendly robot. The robotics engineers believe if affordable robots are going to go mainstream, the creatures will have to do housework.... When iRobot did focus-group testing in Chicago and the Boston area, groups of soccer moms and young parents were asked: 'Do you want a robot in your home to help with cleaning?' Initially, participants were appalled by the idea. 'They were envisioning a little android who would work the vacuum behind their backs,' [Helen] Greiner said. 'When we showed them (ROOMBA), they had an epiphany: 'Oh my gosh, that will save me time.' ...The biggest stumbling block to robotic success might be public perception, not the reality. Potential buyers must be convinced the bots are user-friendly. My dog must be convinced they don't bite.'"

Man vs. Machine. Dean Reynolds. *ABC News*. October 1, 2002 (abcnews.go.com). "There is no question that technology has made the workplace safer and more effi-

cient. Today a robot can do the jobs of 10 workers. Steel mills are less dangerous. Sorting machines have made the movement of goods more efficient. New cars are turned out in much quicker fashion—all because of technological advances. Organized labor understands that, but, like [Dexter] Cato, feels left out of the discussion. 'We ought to have a say in [the use of technologies],' said Ron Blackwell of the AFL-CIO. 'We ought to be able to shape whether they are going to be technologies that create jobs and help everyone.' ...Jeremy Rifkin, of the Foundation on Economic Trends, suggests the problems are deeper.... 'The bottom line is that by the mid-decades of the 21st century, we're going to replace most workers with intelligent technology.' All of this could end years of labor drudgery, of dead end

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—Jon Glick, Webmaster, AI Topics

jobs, and dissatisfied workers, Rifkin said, 'but we have to rethink what a human being does and how we can get income to him once we replace him with robotics and technology.'"

A 21st-Century Golem. Matej Novak. *The Prague Post*. October 2, 2002 (www.praguepost.com). "In his essay 'The Idea of the Golem,' Gershon Scholem writes, 'Golem-making is dangerous; like all major creation it endangers the life of the creator—the source of danger, however, is not the golem...but the man himself.' Argentine Ambassador Juan Eduardo Fleming had these words in mind when conceiving Project Golem 2002/5763, named after the respective years in the Gregorian and Jewish calendars. 'The pro-

ject's goal,' he says, 'is to rescue, revive and project the values enshrined in golem symbolism and tradition'—a tradition that began in biblical times and has made its way through to the present day. 'Today's Golem,' says Fleming, 'means artificial intelligence, robots, cloning, the Internet, computers.' And as Scholem indicates, these are not evil or destructive on their own but have the potential to become so based on what man, the creator, instills in them."

I Am Japan, Hear Me Roar. Ken Belson. *The New York Times*. October 6, 2002 (www.nytimes.com). "The city-crunching monster has been a lightning rod for social commentary ever since 1954, when the first Godzilla reflected the country's fears of the nuclear age. Nearly 50 years later, the 26th film in the series is set for release in December, and although the producers are not talking, it is already clear that the rise of robotics will be among the issues Godzilla will face.... In the decade since the last Mechagodzilla, Japanese companies like Sony and Honda have released ever-more sophisticated robots, with more fluid motion, realistic voices and sensory detectors. No longer consigned to the factory floor, robots have begun to penetrate the lives of ordinary Japanese, whether as playthings or task-oriented assistants. In response, the director of the newest movie has ditched Mechagodzilla's lumbering stride and rigid body movements, creating something that is less a machine than a sinister and nimble artificial intelligence. 'It is now realistic to believe that humans could build a robot to fight Godzilla,' said Shogo Tomiyama, the producer. Whether or not that would be a good thing is a question the movie will address. The Japanese are fascinated with robotics and are far more comfortable incorporating machinery into their daily lives than Westerners are."

I Love Lucy. Jon Ronson. *The Guardian*. October 19, 2002 (www.guardian.co.uk). "[Steve Grand, creator of the robot, LUCY, speaking:] 'You know why people fear machines? Because they fear that if machines are like us, then we must be machines. Well, I'll tell you—I know machines better than a lot of people, and I'm proud to be a machine.'"