

Intro

Robotic servants have yet to leave science fiction and enter our homes, but robots look ready to take over just about everywhere else. Thousands already work in car factories and bustle about inside warehouses. Military drones flying above battlefields keep an eye on enemy movements and even fire missiles at targets of opportunity. Robotic guards have even begun standing watch over human prisoners in South Korea. The ongoing rise of robotic workers translated into the sale of 118,000 industrial robots in 2010. Service robots ranging from medical robots to iRobot's Roomba vacuums accounted for another 13,741 units sold. And research labs have only just begun to unveil some of the wildest robots yet for doing jobs such as rescuing earthquake victims or checking nuclear power plants. Here are some of the top robots that made the news in 2011. Follow InnovationNewsDaily on Twitter @News_Innovation, or on Facebook.

Slide 2

Four-Legged Battlefield Robot Evolves into 'AlphaDog' The huge imperial walkers of the "Star Wars" films could have used the balancing technology developed by U.S. robotics firm Boston Dynamics. The company unveiled a bigger "AlphaDog" version of its "BigDog" robot designed to act as a robotic mule for the U.S. military. Its most impressive trait comes from its ability to navigate tough terrain and keep its balance no matter what. Check out the [full story here](http://www.innovationnewsdaily.com/605-alphadog-robot-boston-dynamics.html).

Slide 3

'Wave Glider' Robots Make Assault on Ocean Distance Record Robots have just begun to conquer the world's oceans after underwater drones previously crossed the Atlantic. This time, four new robotic explorers have taken aim at not only setting a new distance record by traveling across 33,000 nautical miles of the Pacific, but also mapping more of the mostly uncharted ocean frontier. Check out the [full story here](http://www.innovationnewsdaily.com/702-wave-gliders-pacific-crossing.html).

Slide 4

Squishy Robots Could Aid Rescue Workers Even robots can use a lesson from the designs of nature's creatures. Scientists took inspiration from starfish and squid to create a flexible, four-limbed robot capable of wriggling into tight places where humans won't or can't go. Check out the [full story here](http://www.innovationnewsdaily.com/702-wave-gliders-pacific-crossing.html).

Slide 5

Velociraptor Robot Runs on US Military Funding Most walking robots do all they can just to keep from falling over, but that could change with the ostrich-like "Fast Runner" robot. The U.S. military-funded design aims to reach running speeds beyond 20 mph with springy legs that could make it a very mobile helper on the battlefield, sports fields or rough terrain during search-and-rescue missions. Check out the [full story here](http://www.innovationnewsdaily.com/685-velociraptor-ostrich-running-robot.html).

Slide 6

Smartphone-controlled Robots Aid Astronauts Robotic space probes have explored distant planets, asteroids and comets for decades, but robots have only just begun to directly aid human astronauts. Three volleyball-size robots capable of free-flying inside the International Space Station serve as semi-intelligent video cameras and perform routine tasks to free up the human crew for more important jobs. Check out the [full story here](http://www.innovationnewsdaily.com/444-nasa-spheres-droids-smartphones.html).

Slide 7

Sailing Drones Tested to Clean Up Oil Spills in Swarms Robots don't always have to use the newest gadgets to do the job. An open-source project aims to deploy ocean drones that use centuries-old sailing technology as they clean up oil spills, clear away ocean garbage patches, and keep an eye on endangered marine life. Check out the [full story here](http://www.innovationnewsdaily.com/629-sailing-robot-oil-spill-cleanup.html).

Slide 8

US Navy's Hope for Carrier-Based Drone Takes Flight The U.S. Navy doesn't want to be left behind as Air Force drones keep watch from above and U.S. Army soldiers deploy handheld scout drones closer to the ground. Its new X-47B drone designed to launch from aircraft carriers has a stealthy, flying wing profile that even had some American townsfolk mistaking it for a UFO. Check out the [full story here](http://www.innovationnewsdaily.com/618-x-47b-drone-cruise-flight.html).

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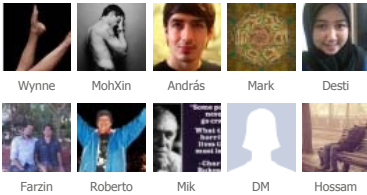
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