



## "Always Interesting" AI in the news

<http://www.aai.org/aitopics/html/current.html>

**January 4: New Careers Appear as Old Jobs Fade.** Bill Taylor. *Toronto Star* ([www.thestar.com](http://www.thestar.com)). "Over the last decade, some jobs have vanished, others are fading fast. But lots of new ones have appeared. With the help of Toronto Star library researchers (doing their job), here are some of the coming, going, gone... NEW JOBS \* A.I. programmer: Well, someone has to get artificial intelligence up and thinking.... \* Bio-informatician: Not something to enter into lightly, or without years of study, this is a fusion of molecular biology and computer science. To boldly go into inner space...."

**January 8: Donation Boosts Robotics Team.** Sasha Brown. *Daily News Tribune* ([www.dailynewstribune.com](http://www.dailynewstribune.com)). "Thanks to a \$1,000 donation from Foster-Miller, Inc. a Waltham engineering firm, Waltham High School's robotics team is starting strong this year in the hopes that its diligence will send them west. Last year, the team was disappointed when, despite a strong finish at the regional competition, they were unable to raise the money to attend nationals in Oklahoma.... The team has participated in various fund-raising events — including selling Krispy Kreme doughnuts on Moody Street the day after Thanksgiving and raffling off a new DVD player donated by Watch City Appliance. ... Students created two robots from scratch that were not manipulated by remote control, but, rather, programmed to compete in the Botball competition. ... The 12-student team will receive the competition details Feb. 8. They will then have seven weeks to create their project. They are determined to take it all the way to [Botball] nationals which will be held in California this year."

**January 9: Teachers Tuned In to Mars—NASA's Rover Generates Buzz about Science.** Keith Uhlig. *Wausau Daily Herald* ([www.wausaudailyherald.com](http://www.wausaudailyherald.com)). "The successful landing of NASA's Mars Exploration Rover Spirit has been a bounty for science teachers at all grade levels. ... 'The biggest teaching thing at this point is to try and explain how difficult and complex it is to get those rovers on Mars,' [Wausau West science teacher and planetarium director Chris Janssen] said. He's used the mission to teach about teamwork, how hard work can lead to success and the importance of science. And the

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—Jon Glick, Webmaster, AI Topics

rovers also open up discussions about robotics, radio waves and artificial intelligence."

**January 12: Should Astronauts Go Back to the Moon and to Mars? Question of the Week.** *TIME* online edition ([www.time.com](http://www.time.com)). "President Bush will announce later this week a plan to resume missions to the Moon and send humans to Mars within 20 years, with international help in this goal. Such a plan is likely to be tremendously expensive, and some argue that manned space missions are unnecessary with the level of sophistication in robot probes."

**January 14: Bugs Taking Over Robot Guidance.** Lakshmi Sandhana. *Wired News* ([www.wired.com](http://www.wired.com)). "Large UAVs that fly at high altitudes employ sensing mechanisms based on GPS or radar technologies, but those methods fail when it comes to scaled-down vehicles with smaller wingspans.... To create intelligent artificial-vision packages that weigh only a few grams and contain all the necessary optics, hardware and software, researchers have turned to creatures that manage it all with brains that weigh less than a milligram. 'Insects are a natural source of inspiration for aerospace, primarily since they were the first creatures to fly, 300 million or so years ago,' says Javan Chahl of the Australian Defence Science and Technology Organisation's weapons systems division. Chahl is working along with professor M. V. Srinivasan,

director of the Centre for Visual Sciences at the Australian National University, to design vision and navigation systems based on the honeybee. ... The key lies in understanding how insects perceive their world...."

**January 15: As Ye Sow... A Machine Can Now Do Science.** *The Economist* ([www.economist.com](http://www.economist.com)). "From the Ludites onwards, workers whose jobs have been destroyed by scientific advances have voiced their complaints loudly. Such people might be amused by a paper in this week's *Nature*, in which a group of scientists describe a way of automating science itself. The robot scientist developed by Ross King of the University of Wales at Aberystwyth, and his colleagues, does everything a flesh-and-blood scientist does—or, rather, it does what philosophers of science say that scientists ought to do. That is, it formulates hypotheses from observations, conducts experiments to test them, and then formulates new hypotheses from the results. And worse, from the point of view of the human researcher, it does so as effectively as a person.... One question is, if their robot does make an important discovery, will it be eligible to win a Nobel prize?"

**January 15: A New Robot Makes a Leap in Brainpower.** Faye Flam. *Philadelphia Inquirer* ([www.philly.com](http://www.philly.com)). "A new robot is as good as human scientists at creating and evaluating experiments, its British creators said yesterday. The announcement, on the same day President Bush revealed his plan for sending astronauts to Mars, added fuel to an old debate: Why send humans into space if robots could do the job?... [Michael] Kearns said this latest advance represented just a small part of a burst of progress in recent years in artificial intelligence and robotics. People have begun to take it for granted that computers can recognize voices and faces, give directions, sift through information on the Web, and create complicated models to predict the weather.... Kearns, of Penn, said: 'As soon as someone gets a computer to do it, people say: 'That's not what we meant by intelligence.' People subconsciously are trying to preserve for themselves some special role in the universe.'"