

Handout 50. The History of Computer Science: text selection 2

<p>In 1961, Unimate became the first industrial robot. It assembled cars for General Motors. Several variations followed: robots that painted, welded, and fitted. Robots made industry easier, replacing humans for tasks that were too painstaking, or too dangerous.</p>	<p>Robots enabled scientists to explore bionics — the study of muscular movements. They attempted to reproduce human movement: in 1996, the humanoid robot, Honda's P2, could walk up stairs. The versions that followed learned to modify their trajectory while walking, recognize faces and keep their balance.</p>
<p>Robots let us explore where humans cannot survive. Space discovery took off again thanks to robots, which explored the moon and Mars — for example, the rover Sojourner that conquered Mars in 1997. Robots began to be used for entertainment in the new millennium. In 1999, Sony introduced the pet robot Aibo.</p>	<p>From Antiquity, the best clockmakers invented the first automatons: Hero of Alexandria, Leonardo da Vinci, Vaucanson, and others. But automatons don't know how to interact with their environment. Only in 1912 was the first robot invented: Electric Dog. Hammond and Miessner created a little trolley that moved towards sources of light it found.</p>