

Vision

Through the Humanity-Centered Robotics Initiative (HCRI), Brown University aims to become a global leader in the field of creating robots that benefit, learn from, teach, support, and collaborate with people. Brown is uniquely suited to engage in the interdisciplinary study, design, and advancement of humanity-centered robotics and to cultivate an ecosystem of people, ideas, and technology for innovation and societal benefit.

The HCRI unites Brown University faculty and students across numerous departments and schools who are dedicated to robotics as an innovative and societally beneficial technology. Common commitments include (a) identifying societal needs that robots can help fulfill; (b) advancing science and technology of robots that fulfill these needs; and (c) studying and integrating into design the societal impact of robotic technologies, with a goal of averting labor replacement and privileged access to technology.

Research Clusters

The HCRI encompasses a network of research clusters across numerous departments and schools:

Scientific Exploration (Geosciences, Archeology, URI Oceanography);

Motion Systems Science (Bioengineering, Cognitive Science, Computer Science, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Engineering, Orthopedics);

Design and Making (Computer Science, Engineering, Music, RISD, Visual Arts);

Perception and Decision Making (Applied Mathematics, Cognitive Science, Computer Science, Neuroscience);

Robots for Independent Living (Cognitive Science, Computer Science, Public Health, Medical School);

Ethics, Policy, and Security (Cognitive Science, Computer Science, Philosophy, Sociology, Science and Technology Studies; Watson Institute)

Activities, Past and Present

External grant proposals; internal seed proposals; op-eds; new courses and new components in various courses; student internships; interdisciplinary speaker series; sponsored symposia, conferences; film screening; educational outreach; website.

Future Plans

Support for undergraduate and graduate research; internal brownbag series; visiting scholars; center grant proposals; shared space for research and communication in 2015/16; industry collaborations, technology transfer.