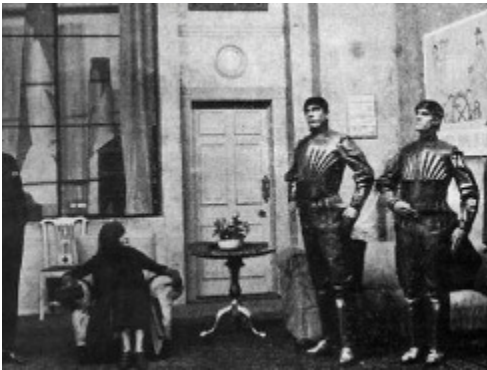


Scientists: Robots Learn to Walk in Stages

Posted by CBSNews.com



A scene from the play RUR, which debuted Jan. 25, 1921

(Credit: Wikipedia)

Our introduction to robotics began on Jan. 25, 1921, with the debut of the Karel Capek play, [R.U.R.](#), a science fiction play which introduced the term "robot" into the lexicon.

So it's altogether appropriate that word comes today of a research project at the University of Vermont, where computer scientists simulated a population of naive "baby" robots, each outfitted with virtual brains and bodies.

"The brains of our robots are very, very simple: They're made up of only a few dozen simulated synapses and neurons," Bongard told [TechNewsDaily](#). (The human brain, by comparison, has 100 billion neurons.)

"Some robots start as snakes slithering toward the target object, but as they approach they begin to grow legs; by the time they reach the target object, they are standing upright on four legs, very much like a dog or horse," Bongard said.

After 5,000 simulations, the team found the perfect bot for carrying out the specified tasks of their virtual world. Moving beyond theory, the researchers then constructed a physical robot using Lego Mindstorm kits. The Lego creation had four legs and wore a brace that allowed it to slowly move from its belly to an upright position. You can read the full story [here](#).

