

Robot Ethics Proposal Funded By The DoD

ATLANTA (July 14, 2006)--College of Computing Regents' Professor Ron Arkin was recently awarded \$290K over the next three years from the Department of Defense (DoD) for his proposal titled, An Ethical Basis for Autonomous Systems Deployment. The proposal outlines an approach for both investigating and implementing an ethical basis for the deployment of lethality in autonomous robotic systems.

Arkin will address the ethical dimensions of robotic weaponry and involve the generation of "an artificial conscience" for an intelligent autonomous robotic agent. By applying limits and constraints on a robot's actions as required by the bounds of existing ethical decision-making protocols (e.g., the Geneva Convention) rules of engagement, and other ethical and military requirements, Arkin's study will provide a fundamental contribution toward the deployment of intelligent robotic weaponry.

"Given the far-reaching consequences and ethical aspects of this technology," says Arkin, "the military can judiciously determine the most effective and appropriate usage an intelligent autonomous robotic agent."

The net effect of Arkin's research will be: to produce robots that can perhaps act more humanely than humans do under highly stressful conditions, as evidenced by acts such as those

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committed at Abu Ghraib; to provide warnings in the field to military decision makers about the potential ethical consequences of battlefield and tactical actions regarding the use of this technology; and to ensure that accountability for the use of these systems is engineered into them from the onset.

Arkin has conducted research into intelligent autonomous systems for twenty years, focusing heavily on military applications. He is also recognized as a leader in the robot ethics community, and holds several significant positions of responsibility in relevant professional societies.

For more information about Regents' Professor Ron Arkin, [click here](#).