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MIT Museum, a good place to start...

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By Chris Pineo

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The MIT Museum provides great access to information about the history of robotics in the Boston area, making it a great place to familiarize yourself with key elements of the local industry.

The exhibit hall takes visitors through some challenges facing robots and researchers throughout history, and today. The challenges began as far back as the 50's, and progress in technology has led to the pursuit of goals that existed then, but researchers were not aware of.

"Many of these same goals existed in the 50's," Jekanthan Thangavelautham Postdoctoral Fellow at MIT's Field and Space Robotics Laboratory. "But we as a research community are better aware of the scale and complexity of the challenge now."

Goals in the field have come to address interactivity between robots and the world around them on new levels.

"Building robots that are self-aware, that behave creatively -in an intelligent way, similar to humans and other primates- and have the ability to learn and grow up much like human and other primate infants is extremely challenging," Thangavelautham said. "It's not clear when or if a breakthrough is on the horizon."

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