



Meeting the robots | Photo source [The National Robotarium](#)

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ROBOTARIUM TO BECOME LARGEST AND MOST ADVANCED CENTRE FOR UK ROBOTICS

 COMPUTING & TECH

The new facility will focus on research areas of hazardous environments, offshore energy, human-robot interaction, assisted living and more

Spotted: A new centre for excellence in robotics research is now under construction in the Scottish city of Edinburgh. The National Robotarium is a €26.17 million high-tech centre based at Heriot-Watt University’s Edinburgh campus. When completed in 2022, it will be the largest and most advanced facility for robotics and AI research in the UK.

The new facility will focus on research in robotics in the areas of hazardous environments, offshore energy, manufacturing, healthcare, human-robot interaction, assisted living and agri-tech. It will also research ways to manage trust between humans and autonomous systems. The 40,000 square-foot building will house research and development facilities for Robotics and Autonomous Systems, Human and Robotics Interaction and High Precision Manufacturing, and will include a living lab for trialling technology in a “realistic home setting”, Springwise was told.

The building itself will include an “intelligent façade” to provide solar heat and recycle warm air, a solar array, and will integrate sustainable urban drainage systems. Some of the many research projects that will find their home at the Robotarium will include SPRING (Socially Pertinent Robots in Gerontological Healthcare), the world’s first multi-user conversational robot for healthcare and the EPSRC ORCA Hub (Offshore Robotics for Certification of Assets), which is advancing technologies to remove humans from hazardous work environments.

In a press release, Professor Yvan Petillot, one of the academic leads of the National Robotarium, describes the vision for the new facility, as cutting-edge resources combined with research expertise which, “will put us in a highly competitive position to elevate the UK onto the global stage in robotics and AI technologies.” He adds that students, “will have the opportunity to apply their

knowledge by working on real-world problems through internships and industry-led group projects facilitated by the Robotarium...”

The timing for the National Robotarium is perfect – the robotics industry is heating up, along with the number of innovations within it. Some recent development highlighted here at Springwise has included a domestic robot [waste sorter](#) and an AI-powered [robotic glove](#).

Written By: Lisa Magloff

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Takeaway:

The National Robotarium is being funded as part of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal, which aims to establish the region as the data capital of Europe. More than this, however, it plans on improving collaboration between industry, academics and government, to super-charge a robotics industry in Britain that promotes entrepreneurship and drives forward product development.