RobotsLAB offers tiny BMW Z4 for NAO robot to drive around (w/ Video)

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Aldebaran Robotics' RobotsLAB, maker and seller of the small humanoid robot, NAO, has built a miniature version of the BMW Z4 for the NAO robot to drive around—and it's for sale to consumers already.

The NAO [robot](#) has made a splash in the educational community—it comes with a dual camera computer system, a sonar sensor to allow for gauging distance, dual infrared emitters along with receivers, eight [pressure sensors](#) and nine tactile sensors. What it can do depends on what programmers come up with—the robot comes with a SDK or a drag and drop visual programming interface and supports JAVA, C++, Python, C# .Net and Matlab. Now, it also comes with a little electric car.

The car has been designed specifically for NAO to drive, which it does by controlling acceleration and stopping and by turning the steering wheel. But the car helps out, it has a laser range-finder built in which is connected to an Arduino computer—the resulting information is fed directly to the NAO. In a demonstration the robot was able to successfully maneuver around objects and people in a controlled environment.

RobotsLAB is selling the NAO/car combo on its website for $9,990, though they are running a promotion that knocks $2000 off the price, making the car available, essentially, for free.

In the demonstration, a NAO drove the [car](#) forwards until an object was found to be in the way—the robot tried to drive around the object but if that wasn't possible, it stopped and backed up at an angle until it found a clear pathway at which point it proceeded moving forward again. The technology is not meant to be the beginning of teaching robots to drive cars (autonomous vehicles are making that moot) but instead to show off the increasingly sophisticated abilities of the NAO robot and the degree of learning that can be offered to those that purchase them. RobotsLAB is aiming its products at teaching facilities, not the consumer market, though it appears as the robot is taught how to do more and more things, it might become more useful to those who could afford to buy one for other purposes, and the software packages that would come with it.

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