

Starship Technologies draws attention with ground-based robot delivery solution

January 21 2017, by Nancy Owano



(Tech Xplore)—"Say hello to your personal courier. I'm here to deliver anything you need. Just tell me what, when and where and I'll do the rest."

"Your tireless delivery bot will always be on hand to lighten your load."

Wait, when did life become so comfortable? Wasn't there luxury convenience in something called UPS? And what about wonderful Amazon? Well, some people are excited about a [robot](#) revolution in the wings, in a new era of instant, unscheduled delivery (think small orders and think local). This is from Starship Technologies.

Starship Technologies was launched in 2014 by Ahti Heinla and Janus Friis. Its company site noted its "engineering expertise, combined with our experience of co-founding Skype."

The ground-based robotic delivery procedure is to make customers happy in Redwood City, California, and Washington DC.

The delivery [concept](#) involves a combination of mobile technology, little robots and a local hub system.

What is meant by hub system? "Parcels and groceries are directly delivered from stores or specialized hubs, at the time that the client requests via a mobile app. It takes 5 to 30 minutes for the shipment to arrive and the robots' entire journey can be monitored on a smartphone."



Starship robots can carry items within a 3-mile (5km) radius, said the site. The robots weigh no more than 40 pounds, fully loaded. Chris Davies in *SlashGear* remarked that the "robots look more akin to miniature moon rovers, with their squat bodies and six [wheels](#)."

Davies said the Starship Technologies robots trundle at up to 4 mph on sidewalks. "The fact that they co-exist in that way with pedestrian traffic means they require approval from cities; in the case of Redwood City, CA, and Washington D.C., that was secured back in November last year."

Recode also reported that the robots will start bringing food to doorsteps in Washington and Silicon Valley, working in delivery mode.

Lee Mathews in *Geek.com* reported that "For now, they'll only be

running routes in two of DoorDash's markets: in Washington D.C. and Redwood City, California. They won't be on their own, either. During the testing phase, each Starship robot will be [accompanied](#) by a human."

"For now," said April Glaser in *Recode*, "Starship's robots will make one [delivery](#) at a time and will only operate during the [day](#)."

She said that the idea is that one day soon these autonomous rovers will share sidewalk space with pedestrians on their own, but for now people will be alongside each robot and these handlers will be taking notes on the robots' performance.

For security, the cargo bay is locked throughout the journey and can be opened only by the recipient. *The Verge* noted there are other safety measures too and "others include the cameras, GPS, built-in alarms, and a two-way radio on each [robot](#)."

More information: www.starship.xyz/

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